

**'Please stop this violence': Security tightens in Minneapolis and nationwide ahead of jury deliberations in Derek Chauvin trial** TREVOR HUGHES USA TODAY, April 19, 2021

Security tightened across the region and nationwide as jurors were set to begin deliberations in the murder trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin.

Chauvin faces multiple charges stemming from last May's death of George Floyd. Video shown to jurors shows Chauvin, who was swiftly fired, kneeling on Floyd's neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds.

5 Floyd's death sparked nationwide protests and calls for comprehensive police reform to protect Black communities. Both sides in the Chauvin trial gave their closing arguments Monday, and the 12-member jury will be sequestered in a secure location during their deliberations.

"We are just asking for justice," said Black Lives Matter Minnesota co-leader Trahern Crews.

10 Authorities across the country, from New York to Los Angeles and Chicago, have stepped up security in case a wave of violence follows the verdict.

At a news conference Monday afternoon, Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo acknowledged the difficult balance law enforcement has in respecting the First Amendment rights of the community while protecting it from damage. Arradondo, who is Black, said he understands the community's trauma.

15 "Our children are watching us in this moment right now. We have to ask ourselves, how are we doing to respond? Are we going to leave them in despair? Are we we going to leave them feeling a sense of hopelessness, negativity, that they have no chance, that they can't rise from challenges and trials and tribulations? Or are we going to say to them this does not have to be your tomorrow?"

Community leaders are asking for calm, warning that the police response to destruction will be severe – and violence will risk setting back carefully developed relationships between law enforcement and residents.

20 "Please stop this violence. Don't tear up our city any longer," said the Rev. Ian Bethel of New Beginnings Baptist Church, speaking at a city-organized news conference.

Also on Monday, NAACP President Derrick Johnson met with the Minneapolis mayor and police chief before touring George Floyd Square, the activist-occupied intersection outside Cup Foods where Floyd died. Speaking to reporters, Johnson said the trial is about far more than Chauvin's guilt or innocence, and could have implications that echo through history.

25 "And now we hope that this jury received what we all witnessed, received what we saw during the trial, and they make sure that our justice system actually works for a change. The globe is watching," Johnson said. "Right now, we're looking at Selma, Alabama. Right now, we're looking at the realities that we witnessed throughout the civil rights movement."

30 He added, "But this is a new movement where we must reform our criminal justice system. We must have a higher standard for law enforcement officers. We must ensure that young people who live in inner cities and African-Americans who live in rural areas can feel comfortable about law enforcement agencies."

35 Minneapolis city leaders said they are worried not just about anti-police protests but the possibility that white nationalists might seize the moment to sow chaos. Facebook, acknowledging the role its platform could play in spreading calls for violence, said it would remove posts it says "praises, celebrates or mocks George Floyd's death."

The company added: "Our teams are working around the clock to look for potential threats both on and off of Facebook and Instagram so we can protect peaceful protests and limit content that could lead to civil unrest or violence. This includes identifying and removing calls to bring arms to areas in Minneapolis, which we have temporarily deemed to be a high-risk location."

40 For the people living and working downtown, the security measures mean road closures and armed soldiers patrolling the streets. Government officials are promising a swift response to any violence or property destruction after largely standing back in the days after Floyd's death.

45 Curfews have been intermittently ordered, although none are now in effect. "A best-case scenario is continuing what we've been experiencing for the past few weeks: protecting the First Amendment rights of those who want to protest, to allow them to materialize the pain and trauma that has been experienced, and to also continue protecting property and businesses," said Jonathan Weinhagen, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

While the weeks during the trial were largely peaceful, a police officer in the nearby suburb of Brooklyn Center shot and killed a Black man, Daunte Wright, on April 11 during a traffic stop, sparking new protests and demands for reform. Authorities reported no arrests in demonstrations Sunday.

50 Thousands of police and members of the National Guard have been activated, with guard troops carrying unloaded rifles at key intersections in Minneapolis. Authorities, without releasing details, said someone shot at guard members early Sunday, injuring two.

Downtown Minneapolis has largely been boarded up. The few stores and restaurants still open were hanging "Open" signs on plywood protecting their glass.

55 Weinhagen said many downtown offices remained closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, and the heavy security and concerns about violence are just one more challenge for small businesses.

Public schools are returning to remote learning Wednesday, and school officials warned parents that violence could break out. [...]

**Every reason the woke National Trust placed 100 properties on BLM-inspired list of shame including homes of Winston Churchill, Rudyard Kipling and William Wordsworth.** By Kathie FEEHAN *Mail Online*, September 22, 2020.

**1** The National Trust has come under fire after it published a list of nearly 100 properties under its management that it says have links to slavery and colonialism. Members have threatened to cancel their subscriptions and historians have accused the Trust of being 'unfair' after the homes of Winston Churchill and Rudyard Kipling were among the 93 properties. Critics have accused the 'out of touch' Trust of 'woke virtue signalling' and 'alienating' fee-paying

**5** members who say the organisation is simply jumping on the Black Lives Matter bandwagon. The 115-page report, released on Monday, gives extensive history and details shedding light on the links they have identified between 93 properties under their guardianship and colonialism and the slave trade. Reasons behind properties' inclusion on the list range from being owned by families who also owned plantations to more distant links such as Rudyard Kipling's home being included because 'the British Empire was a central theme and context of his literary output'.  
**10** The Trust said the year-long audit was ordered before the Black Lives Matters protests, which saw a statue of Edward Colston toppled from a plinth and thrown into a harbour in Bristol because of his role in the city's slave trade. It comes as the organisation prepares to slash 1,200 jobs after losing £200 million in revenue due to the pandemic. The National Trust said it does not want to censor history, but added that it has a duty to inform its visitors about the origins its properties. The survey also listed properties belonging to figures who fought against

**15** colonial exploitation and the slave trade.  
Andrew Roberts, author of *Churchill: Walking with Destiny*, commented on Twitter: 'The National Trust's latest excursion into wokery - the latest of many - is to draw up a blacklist of its properties that are connected to Colonialism and Slavery (mixing the two very separate things up) & putting Chartwell on it: Sad and wrong.' He later told the Telegraph: 'It's a sign of how ignorant the National Trust has tragically become that it mixes up slavery

**20** with colonising, considering that Britain's mutually beneficial relationship with her colonies - to which Churchill was proud to dedicate his life - continued long after slavery ended in 1833, which was 41 years before Churchill was born.' Meanwhile, Dr Warren Dockter, a Churchill expert, told the newspaper: 'I think it's unfair to throw him in with Clive of India. He was a diehard imperialist, make no mistake, but he wasn't an Edward Colston or a slave trader.'  
**25** The trust has insisted it does not want to censor history, but that it has a duty to ensure its supporters and visitors know about the origins of some of its properties. Lucy Trimnell, a Conservative councillor in Somerset, wrote online that she would cancel her family's membership, adding that she 'cannot support the naming and shaming of innocent families who left these properties to the custodianship of the National Trust'. The trust said the year-long audit was ordered before the Black Lives Matters protests and say the audit was commissioned in September. It also says a

**30** working group of external specialists, chaired by museums and heritage consultant Rita McLean, will be advising and steering the Trust in this work in the coming months, and the Trust will also be working with other National Trust organisations around the world 'to connect these histories globally'. Some of the research from the report has already been used to update the Trust's digital content and the Trust say it is supporting a review of visitor information and interpretation at 'relevant properties'.  
**35** The National Trust, which has 5.6million members and 500 historic sites around the UK, said it commissioned the report last September. The audit details properties' links to slave traders but also to families whose plantations used slave labour, and who were paid compensation after the slave trade was abolished. The report also highlights figures involved in Britain's colonial history, including author Kipling and historian Thomas Carlyle, whose former homes are now run by the trust. On Churchill's home in Kent, Chartwell, the report draws on his leadership during

**40** the Bengal Famine of 1943, his 'exceptionally long, complex and controversial life' and his position as Secretary of State for the Colonies (1921-1922) as the reason for its inclusion on the list. Despite noting his opposition to slavery, the home of poet William Wordsworth - Allan Bank in the Lake District - is included because his brother, John, served as Commander of an East India Company ship in 1801 and captained two successful voyages to China. Meanwhile, the report lists Bateman's - the home of author Rudyard Kipling - because 'the British Empire

**45** was a central theme and context of his literary output'.

**In Pulling Trump's Megaphone, Twitter Shows Where Power Now Lies** By Kevin Roose *The New York Times*  
Jan. 11, 2021

In the end, two billionaires from California did what legions of politicians, prosecutors and power brokers had tried and failed to do for years:

They pulled the plug on President Trump.

5 Twitter's decision to permanently suspend Mr. Trump's account on Friday "due to the risk of further incitement of violence," after a decision a day earlier by Facebook to ban the president at least through the end of his term, was a watershed moment in the history of social media. Both companies had spent years defending Mr. Trump's continued presence on their platforms, only to change course days before the end of his presidency.

10 Why these companies' chief executives — Jack Dorsey of Twitter and Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook — decided to act now is no mystery. They have been under pressure for years to hold Mr. Trump accountable, and that pressure intensified enormously this past week, as everyone from Michelle Obama to the companies' own employees called for a permanent ban in the wake of Wednesday's deadly Capitol riot.

15 These companies, corporate autocracies masquerading as mini-democracies, often portray their moderation decisions as the results of a kind of formulaic due process, as if "don't incite an insurrectionist mob" had been in the community guidelines all along. But high-stakes calls like these typically come down to gut decisions made under extreme duress. In this case, Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Zuckerberg considered the evidence, consulted their teams, weighed the trade-offs and risks of inaction — including the threat of a worker revolt that could damage their ability to attract top talent — and decided that they'd seen enough.

20 Journalists and historians will spend years unpacking the improvisational nature of these bans, and scrutinizing why they arrived just as Mr. Trump was losing his power, and Democrats were poised to take control of Congress and the White House. The bans have also turned up the heat on a free-speech debate that has been simmering for years.

25 On Friday night, pro-Trump Republicans raged, claiming Twitter's move was an example of Silicon Valley's tyrannical speech controls. And while many liberals cheered Twitter's decision as an overdue and appropriate step to prevent more violence, some also cringed at the thought of so much control resting in so few hands.

"We understand the desire to permanently suspend him now," Kate Ruane, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, wrote in a statement on Friday. "But it should concern everyone when companies like Facebook and Twitter wield the unchecked power to remove people from platforms that have become indispensable for the speech of billions — especially when political realities make those decisions easier."

30 Above all, Mr. Trump's muzzling provides a clarifying lesson in where power resides in our digital society — not just in the precedent of law or the checks and balances of government, but in the ability to deny access to the platforms that shape our public discourse.

35 Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Zuckerberg's names have never appeared on a ballot. But they have a kind of authority that no elected official on earth can claim. This power appears mostly in subtle and unspoken ways — like the eerily calm, hostage-like video Mr. Trump filmed on Thursday, hours after Twitter and Facebook threatened to delete his accounts. In the video, Mr. Trump conceded that he had lost the election and condemned the Capitol attack, two things he had stubbornly refused to do even as Congress talked of impeaching him a second time and his own Cabinet members discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to remove him from office.

40 Legal and political concerns certainly pressured the president to adopt a more conciliatory stance. But there was another interpretation of his change of heart: Mr. Trump would rather lose his presidency than his posting privileges.

45 In some ways, Mr. Trump — who used to boast that the platforms "would never" ban him — would be correct to make his social media accounts a priority over his remaining days in office. A successful impeachment would be an embarrassing end to Mr. Trump's political career. But losing his huge online following — 88 million followers on Twitter, and 35 million on Facebook — would deprive him of cultural influence long into the future. It takes away the privilege he seems to covet most: the ability to commandeer the world's attention with a push of a button.

50 Mr. Trump is no ordinary inmate in Twitter jail. Unlike other de-platformed partisans, he has a huge right-wing media apparatus that will follow him wherever he goes, and legions of followers who will amplify what he says no matter where he says it. On Friday, his followers pledged to decamp to so-called "alt-platforms" like Gab and Parler, which have less stringent rules. But these apps are tiny by comparison and, because they are largely unmoderated, often amount to last-resort echo chambers for noxious extremists.

If none of the alt-platforms suffices, Mr. Trump may well start his own social network, one where he can post with abandon. And if all else fails, he can always call into Fox News. [...]

**Johnson Pins U.K. Future on U.S. Ties, as European Bonds Loosen.** By Mark Landler *The New York Times*, March 16, 2021.

**1** Having cast off from the European Union, Britain wants to bind itself closer to the United States in a perilous world, according to a long-awaited blueprint for its post-Brexit foreign policy, released on Tuesday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson presented the document — which grew out of a lengthy review of security, defense, development and foreign policies — as an argument for how Britain will stay relevant globally. One way, he said, is to help the **5** Biden administration face down challenges from Russia and China. “In all our endeavors, the United States will be our greatest ally and a uniquely close partner in defense, intelligence and security,” Mr. Johnson said in Parliament. “We will stand up for our values as well as for our interests.” The prime minister and his allies have long argued that Brexit would liberate Britain to act as an agile maritime power on the world stage — a concept they called “Global Britain,” in language more suited to marketing than diplomacy. This 100-page report was an **10** effort to put some meat on the concept. But it was notable less for highlighting the opportunities that await Britain than in stressing the need to prepare for a world of threats and foes. Cyberwarfare, nuclear deterrence, and pressure on China, Russia and other human-rights abusers — all will be unavoidable elements of Britain’s future role, Mr. Johnson said.

Among its specific commitments: a \$32 billion increase in military spending that includes raising the cap on **15** Britain’s nuclear arsenal from 180 warheads to 260, and a plan to deploy its new aircraft carrier, the Queen Elizabeth, to Asia, where it will reinforce the United States Navy in sending a deterrent message to China.

But the report also implicitly acknowledged the limitations Britain faces after Brexit. It says little about cooperation on security with the European Union, which remains its largest trading partner and the giant in its neighborhood. Since Britain and the bloc cemented their split with a trade deal in January, political and diplomatic ties have frayed, **20** and there have been disruptions to trade. Relations with China have also deteriorated since Mr. Johnson restricted the access of a Chinese telecommunications giant, Huawei, to Britain’s 5G network, and China imposed a draconian security law on Hong Kong, a former British colony. Britain has offered visas to more than 300,000 Hong Kong residents who hold British overseas passports.

In the report, Britain characterized China as a “systemic competitor,” language not dissimilar to that used by **25** American officials. Russia, it said, remained a threat, three years after it poisoned several people with a deadly nerve agent in Salisbury, England, prompting a diplomatic backlash. “It is structurally inevitable, given our other relationships, that we should turn to America,” said Simon Fraser, a former head of Britain’s Foreign Office. “For Biden, that is a big opportunity.” Still, he added, the review was a “serious effort to think through the risks and opportunities.”

**30** Critics said some of Mr. Johnson’s initiatives seemed grandiose for a country that is now essentially a midsize power off the coast of Europe. The deployment of the carrier to Asia, for example, harkens to Britain’s imperial past, as does the government’s emphasis on rebuilding its presence in the Indo-Pacific region. The prime minister took note of that criticism, insisting, “Global Britain is not a reflection of old obligations, still less a vainglorious gesture, but a necessity for the safety and prosperity of the British people in the decades ahead.” His aides pointed **35** out that the Indo-Pacific strategy is a tilt, not a pivot, referring to the United States’ strategic shift toward Asia under President Barack Obama, which some analysts said never lived up to its billing. The government said Britain’s interest is not nostalgic but focused on the future. Mr. Johnson has invited the leaders of Australia, India and South Korea to attend a summit meeting of the Group of 7 countries, which Britain is hosting in Cornwall in June. [...]

The transition from Mr. Trump to President Biden had once seemed fraught with risk for Britain. Unlike Mr. Trump, **40** Mr. Biden opposed Brexit and has displayed little interest in pursuing a trade agreement with Britain. Mr. Trump had dangled a trade deal with the United States as a reward for Brexit. But Mr. Johnson has worked hard to cultivate Mr. Biden, announcing policies on climate change and global health, as well as military spending, which dovetail with the priorities of the new president. In November, Britain will play host to the United Nations’ climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. That is expected to give Mr. Biden a stage to showcase the renewed American commitment **45** to the Paris climate accord.

## Column on ‘Wokeness’ Ruining Disney World Experience Draws Backlash By Jesus Jiménez

*The New York Times*, April 24, 2021

A column complaining that Disney World’s “wokeness” is ruining the fun “because Disney cares more about politics than happy guests” drew a sharp backlash online this week.

The guest column, “I love Disney World, but wokeness is ruining the experience,” was written by Jonathan VanBoskerck and appeared online Friday in *The Orlando Sentinel*.

In the column, Mr. VanBoskerck, of North Las Vegas, wrote that he was “strongly rethinking” his commitment to the amusement park and the city of Orlando, Fla., home of Disney World.

“The more Disney moves away from the values and vision of Walt Disney, the less Disney World means to me,” Mr. VanBoskerck wrote. “Disney is forgetting that guest immersion is at the core of its business model.”

Disney has made changes to its parks in recent years to make them more “inclusive” and provide an experience that “all of our guests can connect with and be inspired by,” it wrote in a blog post.

Among the changes, Disney announced last year a “retheming” of Splash Mountain, which was previously based on the 1946 Disney film “Song of the South,” in which a former slave recounts African folk tales.

Changes have extended beyond Disney’s parks, such as with the decision not to stream “Song of the South” on Disney+.

Disney World reopened its Pirates of the Caribbean ride in 2018, replacing a scene that showed pirates selling off women in an auction. The scene now depicts the sale of “townspeople’s most prized possessions and goods,” according to a blog post on the Disney Parks site.

Among other changes, the company announced that it was “building on the story” of the Jungle Cruise at Disneyland and Disney World to “include new adventures that stay true to the experience we know and love — more humor, wildlife and skipper heart — and also reflect and value the diversity of the world around us.”

The Jungle Cruise ride includes an Indigenous character named Trader Sam, who sells shrunken heads. The character was recently removed from the ride.

“We are addressing negative depictions of natives in the attraction,” Disney told *Attractions Magazine*.

In his column, Mr. VanBoskerck said Disney was “taking a woke scalpel” to the Jungle Cruise.

“Every grown-up in the room realizes that Trader Sam is not a representation of reality and is meant as a funny and silly caricature,” Mr. VanBoskerck wrote. “It is no more based in racism than every Disney caricature of an out-of-touch white American dad.”

Mr. VanBoskerck, who described himself as a “Christian and a conservative Republican,” said that he and his family have been Disney customers for decades and that in addition to annual visits to Disney World, the family also takes a Disney cruise “every year or two.”

The Las Vegas Review-Journal and court documents identified Mr. VanBoskerck as Clark County’s chief deputy district attorney. The district attorney’s office and Mr. VanBoskerck did not respond to requests for comment on Saturday. “The parks are less fun because immersion and thus the joy is taking a back seat to politics,” Mr. VanBoskerck wrote. “Immersion should not be sacrificed on the altar of political correctness and appeasing the Twitter mob.”

Then a Twitter mob came for Mr. VanBoskerck, whose comments drew a strong reaction online, including from some politicians.

Representative Val Demings, who represents Florida’s 10th Congressional District where Disney World is, said on Twitter that she supported Disney’s work to be more inclusive. “I am proud to represent a community that is welcoming, tolerant, and always evolving to offer the best possible experience,” Ms. Demings said.

Florida state lawmaker Anna V. Eskamani took a different approach on Twitter.

“So this adult man from Las Vegas is mad about Disney removing racist characters and animatronic rapists from their rides?” Ms. Eskamani said. “Did I get that right?”

Mr. VanBoskerck criticized other changes Disney has made, such as one announced this month to allow “greater flexibility” for Disney employees regarding “forms of personal expression,” such as nail and hair styles and visible tattoos.

“The problem is, I’m not traveling across the country and paying thousands of dollars to watch someone I do not know express themselves,” he wrote. “I am there for the immersion and the fantasy, not the reality of a stranger’s self-expression. I do not begrudge these people their individuality and I wish them well in their personal lives, but I do not get to express my individuality at my place of business.”

Disney announced in a blog post written by Josh D’Amaro, chairman of Disney Parks experiences and products, that the change would allow its cast members to “express their cultures and individuality at work,” and for the company to “remain relevant in today’s workplace.”

Disney did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

The decision is among many the park is taking “to bring a greater focus to inclusivity and belonging for our cast” after listening to cast members about their ideas for change, Mr. D’Amaro wrote.

Mr. VanBoskerck wrote that the next time he rides the Jungle Cruise or looks at Splash Mountain, he will think about Disney’s political agenda. “That’s a mood killer,” he wrote.

**From Best Friends to Platonic Spouses** By Danielle Braff *The New York Times*, May 1, 2021

First came blood brothers, best friends who would solidify their bond by cutting themselves and swapping a bit of blood. Then came the tiny house besties, friends moving into adjoining tiny homes. (“Bestie Row” in Texas, for example.)

5 Today some people are taking their friendships a giant step further: They are platonically marrying each other, vowing to never leave each other’s side for better or for worse.

On Nov. 14, 2020 at Greenwood Hall in East Islip, N.Y., Jay Guercio and Krystle Purificato donned wedding gowns, walked down the aisle, exchanged rings and shared their first and only kiss. Ms. Purificato is in the process of changing her last name to Guercio.

10 “I want her to continue to be my best friend and my life partner,” said Ms. Guercio, a 23-year-old student studying professional communications at Farmingdale State College.

The besties, both queer and open to dating anyone but each other, met in 2011, and decided to get married in September. They sleep in the same bed but their relationship remains platonic.

Ms. Guercio and Ms. Purificato wanted to get mæarried because they wanted to be legally and socially recognized as a family.

15 “We wanted the world to know we are each other’s go-to person in the world, and to be able to handle legal matters with the other appropriately,” Ms. Guercio said. “We are a couple, a unit and partners for life.”

Ms. Guercio said their marriage is stable, it’s long-lasting and it has no conditions.

20 There are no statistics about the number of platonic, best-friend marriages, and many people who are in them aren’t open about their situation. But chat boards on Reddit and within smaller asexual and aromantic communities have popped up recently, suggesting this could be a larger portion of the marriage population than numbers portray. (Asexual is defined as having no sexual feelings or desires; aromantic means having no desire for a romantic relationship. Hetero-monogamous is a sexual relationship between a man and a woman.)

25 “It should be acknowledged that we’ve really normalized heterosexual monogamous romantic relationships to the point of stigmatizing other kinds of relationships,” said Nick Bognar, a marriage and family therapist in Pasadena, Calif. “All of this is to say, I think this probably happens a lot, but people don’t talk about it much because their relationships are invalidated by others when they’re seen as not being part of the norm.”

Historically, marriage was an economic proposition, but it has shifted over time to a choice representing an all-consuming relationship, said Indigo Stray Conger, a sex and relationship therapist in Denver. Under this framework, couples expect each other to fulfill all their needs: social, psychological and economic.

30 “Platonic marriages raise an interesting question related to what elements are most important in a marriage, and what needs partners theoretically must meet for marriages to be successful,” said Jess Carbino, a relationship expert who lives in Los Angeles and is a former sociologist for the dating apps Tinder and Bumble.

35 Kim Reiter, 40, never considered marrying a best friend, though she considers herself to be nonbinary, aromantic and bisexual. Ms. Reiter, who lives in Dortmund, Germany, and is unemployed, tried OkCupid in 2013 and found her husband, who is aromantic and asexual.

They quickly became platonic best friends and married in 2018.

40 “Our daily life is that of best friends: We talk and laugh a lot, watch movies, but there is almost no physical element in it,” Ms. Reiter said. “Sometimes we hug or give massages to each other, and every night we have our good-night kiss, but we have separate bedrooms. We are the most important people in each other’s lives.”

Kema Barton and Dene Brown, of Columbus, Ohio, are both pansexual and have a similar platonic marriage. (Pansexual is defined as sexual, romantic, or emotional attraction toward people regardless of their sex or gender identity.) They have been best friends for seven years, and each has two children from previous relationships. In October 2020, just before Ms. Brown had her second child, the friends decided to get married and make all their life decisions together.

45 They decided to make it official because they wanted to build a family together, to raise their children together and to make all their major choices as a unit.

They’re in the process of buying a house and getting a joint bank account. Their children consider each other brother and sister, and they call each woman Mom.

50 “We’re committed to investing in one another so we can both be successful, and ultimately, we love each other so much,” said Ms. Brown, 30, a disabled Navy veteran. “In every way that you’d look at a husband or a marriage in terms of interpersonal connections and intimacy, it’s there.”

Ms. Brown and Ms. Barton have never been intimate with each other, and they both have given each other the freedom to date outside their marriage.

55 Kimberly Perlin, a psychotherapist in Towson, Md., said that couples in this type of arrangement often find compatibility and understand each other well, while also agreeing to the guidelines without being blinded by romantic feeling. Many of these relationships, she said, begin because the couple wants their family life separate from their romantic lives, as they don’t find their romantic lives to be stable.

[...]

**In a Firm Voice, Queen Opens U.K. Parliament.** By Mark Landler *The New York Times* May 11, 2021

**1** Prime Minister Boris Johnson hoped to use the opening of Britain's Parliament on Tuesday to galvanize his government's agenda after a striking series of victories in regional elections in England last week. But the spotlight shone brightest on Queen Elizabeth II, who appeared in public for the first time since burying her husband, Prince Philip, to handle the age-old pageantry. Squired by her eldest son and heir, Prince Charles, the queen presided over **5** a ceremony she had attended for decades with Philip. Now a widow, and three weeks after turning 95, her voice was firm and steady as she read the Queen's Speech, in which Mr. Johnson's government laid out an ambitious agenda to "level up" the economically depressed north of England with the more prosperous south.

It was the queen's 67th opening of Parliament, a reassuring sign of continuity for Britain's constitutional monarchy after a turbulent period for the royal family. For Mr. Johnson, it was a chance to bring normalcy back to politics, **10** after the turmoil of Brexit and a pandemic that paralyzed the country, leaving more than 127,000 people dead. Mr. Johnson signaled that he intended to keep playing a dominant role in the political arena, proposing to scrap a law that restricts his ability to call general elections. With the government reaping credit for Britain's swift rollout of vaccines and the prospect of a post-lockdown economic boom, Mr. Johnson might decide to call an election a year early, in 2023, to take better advantage of the good news.

**15** The government also proposed that voters be required to show photo identification at polling places in general elections, which it defended as a means to prevent fraud. But opposition parties criticized the move as unnecessary, and said it could suppress turnout, particularly among ethnic minorities — an argument often made about voter ID laws that have been passed by several American states. "Voter I.D. is a disgraceful piece of chicanery," said Baroness Rosalind Scott, a member of the House of Lords and a former president of the Liberal Democrats. "Voter **20** fraud is very rare here, so it's a solution in search of a problem."

It was one of a handful of right-leaning measures — including a crime bill that would allow police to sharply restrict demonstrations and legislation to protect speech on university campuses — that served as a reminder that, for all its Social Democratic-style spending, Mr. Johnson's party is still conservative.

The policing legislation has ignited angry "Kill the Bill" protests in London and other cities, where demonstrators **25** view it as a way to crack down on legitimate gatherings. In Bristol, protesters lobbed rocks and fireworks at the police, which some warned would backfire by stoking public support for the measures. "Johnson's going for what's long been the sweet spot in British politics," said Timothy Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University in London. "Just to the left of center on economics and public provision; quite a long way to the right on pretty much everything else, especially if it has to do with law and order, immigration and now anything that smacks of **30** political correctness gone mad."

Much of the speech, however, was on more familiar, conciliatory ground. The government promised to "deliver a national recovery from the pandemic that makes the United Kingdom stronger, healthier and more prosperous than before." Reading a text prepared by Downing Street, the queen spoke fluently of Mr. Johnson's plans to roll out "5G mobile coverage and gigabit capable broadband" throughout the country. The government will plow money **35** into the National Health Service, a popular measure after it withstood a year of unrelenting pressure from the pandemic and overhaul planning regulations to encourage more construction of single-family houses.

The speech did not directly address perhaps the thorniest challenge facing Mr. Johnson: pressure for a second independence referendum in Scotland, where pro-independence parties expanded their majority in the regional Parliament in last week's election. The government said only that it would "promote the strength and integrity of **40** the union" — a pledge that is likely to involve pouring more public money into Scotland and putting off the Scottish National Party's demands to allow a vote. "The question is, is Boris Johnson right to think that delaying it might help him?" said Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to Prime Minister Tony Blair. "This will be the dominating issue of British politics for the next four or five years."

With strict social distancing rules in place, the ceremony was scaled back and stripped down. The queen was driven **45** from Buckingham Palace in a Range Rover rather than a gilded carriage. She shunned the 18-foot velvet cape and imperial crown that she once wore at state openings in favor of a more sensible lilac coat and hat. The recent death of Philip also lent the proceedings a wistful atmosphere, even though he had turned over the duties of escorting the queen to Charles a few years ago, after his retirement.

5 *'Nothing to Do With Climate Change': Conservative Media and Trump Align on Fires* By Michael M. Grynbaum and Tiffany Hsu *The New York Times*, Sept. 15, 2020

Rush Limbaugh told millions of his radio listeners to set aside any suggestion that climate change was the culprit for the frightening spate of wildfires ravaging California and the Pacific Northwest.

10 “Man-made global warming is not a scientific certainty; it cannot be proven, nor has it ever been,” Mr. Limbaugh declared on his Friday show, disregarding the mountains of empirical evidence to the contrary. He then pivoted to a popular right-wing talking point: that policies meant to curtail climate change are, in fact, an assault on freedom.

15 “Environmentalist wackos” — Mr. Limbaugh’s phrase — “want man to be responsible for it because they want to control your behavior,” the conservative host said on the show. He added that they “want to convince you that your lifestyle choices are the reason why all these fires are firing up out on the Left Coast.”

Hours later, that message leapt to prime time on Fox News, where the host Tucker Carlson said those who blamed climate change for the fires were merely reciting “a partisan talking point.”

20 “In the hands of Democratic politicians, climate change is like systemic racism in the sky,” Mr. Carlson told viewers. “You can’t see it, but rest assured, it’s everywhere, and it’s deadly. And like systemic racism, it is your fault.”

Mr. Limbaugh and Mr. Carlson are two of the most prominent commentators in the right-wing media sphere, where a rich history of climate denialism has merged with Trump-era cultural warfare to generate a deep skepticism of the notion that climate change is a factor in the fires devastating the West Coast.

25 Like President Trump, conservative media stars dismiss climate change — which scientists say is the primary cause of the conflagration — and point to the poor management of forestland by local (and, conveniently, Democratic) officials. Fringe right-wing websites, like *The Gateway Pundit*, have blamed left-wing arsonists, fueling false rumors that authorities say are impeding rescue efforts.

30 Visiting California on Monday to witness the destruction firsthand, Mr. Trump took Western states to task for failing to manage the forests properly. During a meeting with California officials who pushed him to acknowledge the role of climate change in the wildfires, the president said: “It’ll start getting cooler. You just watch.”

“I wish science agreed with you,” Wade Crowfoot, California’s secretary for natural resources, replied.

“Well, I don’t think science knows, actually,” Mr. Trump retorted.

35 The president’s comments were likely to resonate with fans of the conservative media personalities who routinely defend his agenda.

“This has nothing to do with climate change, it has nothing to do with man-made climate change, and it sure as hell would help if these forests in these timber areas were free to be properly managed, but they’re not,” Mark Levin, another popular right-wing radio host, said on his nationally syndicated show on Friday. Like Mr. Carlson, Mr. Levin drew a link between climate advocacy and recent demonstrations for racial justice, suggesting that both causes — widely associated with liberals — offered a cloak for more sinister intentions.

40 “They want to talk man-made climate change because, out of this, they want to control you,” Mr. Levin said. “It’s just like the race stuff — ‘systemically racist’ — well, what do you want to do about it? Control you. Beat you down. You need to change your lifestyle, need to confess to something.”

45 Some right-wing writers see even darker origins in the outbreak of a lethal blaze. *The Gateway Pundit*, a conspiracy website with a healthy online following — its chief writer, Jim Hoft, was welcomed to the White House by Mr. Trump — published posts asserting that left-wing anarchists were to blame, not the environment.

50 “Many arsonists have already been arrested in Oregon, Washington and California, but the Democrats continue to blame the wildfires on climate change,” a *Gateway Pundit* story said on Monday, alongside a video purportedly showing a woman in Oregon confronting an arsonist on her property. The site claimed that mainstream news outlets were ignoring this story because “it goes against their global warming and anti-gun narrative.”

A man in Oregon was charged last week with starting the destructive Almeda Fire in a small town that was under orders to evacuate. But the authorities say rising temperatures are a predominant cause of this year’s outbreak.

55 For the president’s political supporters, the notion that rogue firestarters are causing havoc is an enticing echo of a key message adopted by Mr. Trump and Republican in the presidential race: that regions of the country have been consumed by left-wing violence.

And Mr. Trump continues to play down environmental factors. Asked on Tuesday’s “Fox & Friends” about his policy plans for fighting climate change, the president replied: “You have forests all over the world. You don’t have fires like you do in California.”[...]

60 For environmental advocacy groups, problematic media coverage of the wildfires is not limited to platforms associated with the right.

The Environmental Defense Fund, in a scathing post, said many mainstream news outlets had failed to draw a direct link between the widespread destruction and the dangerous consequences of a changing climate.

“It is like talking about the increased spread of Covid while ignoring the reason it is spreading,” the group wrote.



**Is Mask-Slipping the New Manspreading?** By James Gorman *The New York Times*, Jan. 20, 2021

Something about some men just makes it difficult to keep that mask where it should be.

When I saw Bill Clinton's mask slip below his nose during the inaugural festivities, I figured, well, it could happen to any of us.

But then John Roberts's mask was not entirely covering his nose at different points.

And even Barack Obama's mask dipped below the tip of his nose at one point.

5 A couple months back, then-President Trump's economic adviser Larry Kudlow was spotted outside the West Wing with his mask down.

I realized it's not a Democratic thing. Or a Republican thing. Or an inaugural thing.

It's a male thing. It's like manspreading, but with masks. Call it manslipping.

10 Experts continually remind us that to protect ourselves and others against the coronavirus, a mask should cover your face, from the bridge of your nose to under your chin. But too many of us are letting our masks slip.

Women wear masks too, and of course they sometimes slip. But I see a lot more man slippage. I see it not only in news coverage, but in grocery stores and on the street.

It's not *all* men, of course. But then, not all men take up two or three subway seats. Something about some men seems to make it difficult to keep that mask where it should be.

15 Could it be that male noses are just so big that they can't accommodate masks? Remember the various dubious anatomical explanations for manspreading? That can't be it, because a lot of doctors are male, and doctors, although they might sit wide on the subway, actually know what viruses do, and they get a chance to see what the coronavirus can do. So their natural tendency to inhale all the available air in any given room is tempered by both the Hippocratic oath and the fear of death, and they don't let their masks slip.

20 Could it be that men just need more air than women and children? In scuba diving, the conventional wisdom is that men tend to use more air, partly because of body size. But, experienced divers and instructors tend to use less air, even if they are male. I had a diving partner who was a large man, and he used less air than the dive masters and the women on board. Of course he had been diving for longer than any of the dive masters, and he smoked, so maybe he was used to getting less air.

25 Also, I don't want to be picky and focus on reality, but you can breathe through a mask. It's not as pleasant as breathing without a mask. And you may feel that you deserve more air than you are getting, or that, like a subway seat or the wide-open prairie, the air is a place for a man to stretch out and breathe free. Still the simple fact — and President Biden wants us to return to facts — is that men have no greater need for either the subway seat, or a free breathing nose, than either women or children.

30 Finally, there's the possibility that men are just slob. They are always hitching up their pants, tucking in their shirts, swiping their hair out of their faces. Call it the Bannon theory. But this can't be true, because John Roberts is as neat as any man I've ever seen.

I am left with the conclusion that man slippage is like manspreading. We — some of us — do it because we are, well, men. And you know what men are like.

35 I don't let my mask slip, but it's not because I'm pure at heart. It's because I'm terrified. I'm scared of the virus and of breaking rules. I grew up Catholic, and I know what it feels like to get smacked with a steel-edged ruler if you smile at the wrong time, let alone risk the death of others in the community. I don't actually see any nuns around me, most of the time. But wearing a mask is a small price to pay just in case.

40 Here's where I should offer a solution. Well, I don't have one. I've diagnosed the problem. I leave it to someone else to figure out what to do about it. Maybe Nancy Pelosi has an idea or two.

**Wall Street's cops weren't ready for GameStop. They're paying attention now** By Julia Horowitz, *CNN Business*, January 29, 2021

The cops on the Wall Street beat weren't prepared for an army of day traders coordinating on social media to run up the price of stocks like GameStop (GME), BlackBerry (BB) and American Airlines (AAL). Now, brokers are imposing restrictions on the fly, drawing huge backlash from traders who are crying foul and spreading unsubstantiated theories about nefarious corporate motives.

"To me, what is truly problematic about this is the regulators' flat-footedness," said Gina-Gail Fletcher, a Duke law professor who specializes in market regulation. "Right now, the integrity of the market is at issue," she added.

The problem of asset bubbles, which have cropped up at least as far back as Dutch tulip mania in 1637, isn't new. Neither is gathering online to speculate on stocks: Ahead of the dot-com crash in the early 2000s, Yahoo chat rooms were the place to be. But this time, commission-free trading apps like Robinhood, which provide huge numbers of novice investors easy access to complex financial instruments from their phones, are having a significant impact on market dynamics. Social media, meanwhile, can accelerate the speed at which bubbles form. That means when the GameStop saga ends, and tensions cool, regulators will have tough questions to answer.

"We've seen this before. We know how it ends," said Joshua Mitts, a securities expert at Columbia Law School. "It doesn't mean we can use the tools of yesterday to solve the problems of tomorrow."

The US Securities and Exchange Commission, which regulates stock trading, said in a statement Wednesday that it was "actively monitoring" the situation. On Friday, it added that "extreme stock price volatility" has the potential to cause "rapid and severe losses" for investors and "undermine market confidence." The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, declined to comment.

### What's illegal?

The first order of business, according to experts, will be for the SEC to open an investigation to determine exactly who and what is driving up the price of stocks like GameStop, which has spiked more than 1,400% in the past month. The dominant narrative this week has been of a rag-tag group of amateur traders coordinating on platforms like Reddit and Discord to buy shares of distressed companies that had been targeted by hedge funds and short sellers who had bet that prices would fall.

That behavior, in and of itself, wouldn't be considered illegal, Fletcher said.

"You would need to be able to show some kind of fraudulent activity — meaning [users] said something untrue in order to pump up the stock, or released some false or misleading information," she said. Posting that you love GameStop shares and adding a bunch of rocket emojis likely wouldn't qualify as a pump-and-dump scheme. But the SEC will want to ensure that it has the full picture, and that there aren't bad actors trying to capitalize on the moment.

"To me, it's probable that people are pushing retail investors in one way or another when they have undisclosed positions that are being advantaged by those actions," said Dennis Kelleher, CEO of financial reform group Better Markets. "That's going to be classic market manipulation, and I don't have any doubt that's going on." The SEC said on Friday that it "will act to protect retail investors when the facts demonstrate abusive or manipulative trading activity that is prohibited by the federal securities laws. Market participants should be careful to avoid such activity." [...]

### Who does Wall Street serve?

Broader conversations are also underway on how the GameStop frenzy has exposed cracks in financial markets. Some think the saga demonstrates a need for greater consumer protections, with some inexperienced traders all but certain to lose a lot of money. Others see the democratization of markets as a positive trend, and think that with proper information, people should be allowed to take risks as they see fit. Money managers like hedge funds, they contend, have been gambling with stocks for decades.

"For years, the same hedge funds, private equity firms, and wealthy investors dismayed by the GameStop trades have treated the stock market like their own personal casino while everyone else pays the price," Sen. Elizabeth Warren said earlier this week. "It's long past time for the SEC and other financial regulators to wake up and do their jobs."

Lawmakers have also promised to take a look at short selling, a tactic that lets investors profit when a stock goes down. Reddit investors have drawn attention to the practice in recent days, calling it immoral to intentionally try to drive shares in companies like GameStop lower.

James Angel, a professor at Georgetown University who specializes in market structure, said that while short sellers are often vilified — some rightfully so — they serve an important function in markets.

"You want the stock price to reflect reality, and that means the bad news as well as the good," he said. But once the GameStop dust has settled, there will be plenty of people demanding change — both to help protect investors, and to ensure markets are fair for everyone.

"We're going to have to have a real conversation about the purpose of the stock market, our theory of how it should work, and for whom," Fletcher said.

## In His Speech to Congress, Joe Biden Sets Out a Vision for ‘Competition, Not Conflict’ With China By Charlie Campbell *Time*, April 29, 2021

It was a speech heavy on domestic policy, detailing ambitious plans to revamp American infrastructure, education, jobs and healthcare. But at the heart of U.S. President Joe Biden’s first address to Congress late Wednesday lay a theme common with his mercurial predecessor: competition with China to “win the 21st century.”

5 In a departure from prepared remarks on the eve of his first 100 days in office, Biden felt it necessary to spell out that Chinese President Xi Jinping “is deadly earnest on [China] becoming the most significant, consequential nation in the world. He and others, autocrats, think that democracy can’t compete in the 21st century.”

10 Referencing a two-hour telephone conversation he had with China’s strongman on the eve of the Lunar New Year holiday in February, Biden said, “I told him that we welcome the competition — and that we are not looking for conflict. But I made absolutely clear that I will defend American interests across the board.”

Biden’s tone was far less acrimonious than that of Donald Trump — who went conspicuously unmentioned throughout the 65-minute address to a half-empty Capitol — but left onlookers in no doubt that checking Beijing’s rise will dominate U.S. foreign policy under the new administration.

15 “Decades ago, we used to invest 2% of our GDP on research and development,” said Biden. “Today, we spend less than 1%. China and other countries are closing in fast.”

In a departure from the “whole of society” competition that characterized bilateral relations under Trump, the president said that he would seek ways to work with China where interests aligned. In an easing of COVID-19 restrictions Monday, U.S. officials announced that Chinese students due to attend American universities after July 31 were free to enter the country.

20 Yet there was no mention of an end to the trade war that has so far cost tens of billions of dollars and up to 245,000 American jobs, according to one study. Far from scrapping the tariffs, Biden championed his own nativist economic policy: “American tax dollars are going to be used to buy American products made in America that create American jobs.”

25 “There’s no reason the blades for wind turbines can’t be built in Pittsburgh instead of Beijing,” he added. “No reason why American workers can’t lead the world in the production of electric vehicles and batteries.”

30 When it comes to human rights and democratic principles, Biden also insisted that he would hold China to account. Last month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken labeled Beijing’s treatment of its Uighur Muslim minority “genocide,” as the previous administration did.

35 “I told [Xi] what I’ve said to many world leaders — that America won’t back away from our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms,” said Biden. “No responsible American president can remain silent when basic human rights are violated. A president has to represent the essence of our country.”

### Reactions to Biden’s Speech in China

Biden received a mixed reception in the world’s most populous nation, where some saw his preoccupation with the country as an attempt to intimidate. “Chinese leaders have never talked about China-U.S. competition,” tweeted Hu Xijin, the strident editor of Communist Party (CCP) mouthpiece *Global Times*. “It is you and your team who are talking about China every day. It seems that you have no idea what you should do if [you] don’t compare [yourself] with China. Pity.”

40 Wrote one cynical user on Weibo, the giant Chinese messaging platform, “On the 100th day of Biden’s arrival in the White House, my nostalgia for Trump is overwhelming.”

45 Said another: “Biden is tougher and more insidious with China than Trump. Trump is all explicit, Biden is more conspiratorial.”[...]

Many in China hope that Biden’s more statesmanlike approach will lower the geopolitical temperature. On Friday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered a speech to the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations in which he said China would “welcome the Biden administration to return to multilateralism” and called on the White House to treat his nation fairly.

50 “The key is whether the United States can accept the peaceful rise of a major country with a different social system, history, and culture,” said Wang. “It is undemocratic ... to label China as ‘authoritarian’ or a ‘dictatorship’ simply because China’s democracy takes a different form than that of the United States.”

55 But on this point, as with many, it was clear Wednesday that the two sides remain at odds. Biden declared that he wanted to be “leading with our allies” to preserve the liberal democratic order. “We will maintain a strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific just as we do with NATO in Europe — not to start conflict, but to prevent conflict,” he said. The president added: “The autocrats will not win the future.”

**White America: Awakened?** By Daniel Payne *Politico*, May 25, 2021

One year after the death of George Floyd, there is widespread recognition that America's national reckoning on race still has a long way to go. But another thing is becoming clear: data suggests public opinion on racial justice issues has changed dramatically, powering a sustained and historically significant wave of activism among white Americans.

5 It's a development with wide-ranging political and policy implications, creating the conditions for rethinking approaches to policing, criminal justice, housing and health care disparities, to name a few. President Joe Biden's unprecedented acknowledgment of — and frequent references to — systemic racism is but one reflection of the altered dynamics.

10 On highly politicized and polarizing issues, even a 1- or 2-percentage-point change can be notable, said Drew Linzer, director at Civiqs, the polling firm co-founded by the liberal blog DailyKos.

That's why the 5-percentage point increase in support among white Americans for Black Lives Matter from March 2020 to May 2021 — a period that included the deaths of Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, among others — stands out. When compared with 2017 polling, support among white respondents has jumped roughly 10 percentage points. "I would call this a big shift," Linzer said, adding that changes in opinion like this are  
15 "really unusual."

The question, however, is whether this change in public opinion is fleeting or a sign of a new state of racial consciousness among white Americans. Researchers have warned about the need for caution in declaring decisive victories. "We've had other watershed moments, but American racism seems to be very hard to eradicate," said  
20 Doug McAdam, a professor at Stanford University who has studied American racial politics since the 1970s.

Judy Weston, a 69-year-old retiree from Massachusetts, is one of the white Americans who had their perspectives change, spurring long-term action. "For me, it was because it was so graphic, it was so blatant," she said of the video of Floyd's death. "You couldn't get it out of your mind, you know?"

Weston's reaction, which included attending protests, volunteering and taking part in educational webinars on race in the U.S., resulted in a personal epiphany.

25 Though she was a high school student who watched her classes integrate through busing in the 1960s, she never learned about the history of racism in America. Nothing awakened her to the racism around her as much as Floyd's death and the activism that followed, she says. "We never learned anything about any of this in school. So it is time to really teach everybody about what's going on, what has gone on," Weston said.

30 The sustained change in opinion was also evident in a Washington Post-ABC News poll released last month, which found that, even nearly a year after Floyd's death, 53 percent of white Americans believe more needs to be done to hold police accountable. In 2020, a majority of whites said they believe the justice system is unfair to Black people for the first time in the poll's history.

It's not just white Americans who have changed their minds about race over the past year. Support for BLM increased about 10 percentage points among all demographic groups since 2017, with about half of that increase  
35 happening since Floyd's death. Across the board, the shifts have largely been sustained, Linzer said.

Floyd's death and the protests that followed did more than just change the opinions of many white Americans. Protests for racial justice also picked up more white participants than before, according to researchers, creating a far more diverse group of protesters. "That's just stunning. That's unprecedented," McAdam said. "Typically, those protests don't produce a sort of sea change, but this one did ... it does feel kind of, potentially, like  
40 a watershed."

Dana Fisher, a professor at the University of Maryland who studied protests in the Trump era, said a structure of resistance protesters was already formed, and the events of the summer caused those structures to join the BLM movement.

45 Protesters who were new to the movement — often white Democrats — were already organized and mobilized in a way unique to the Trump era, she said. "This couldn't have happened in the civil rights period," Fisher said.

In follow-up surveys, many protesters remained politically active. In the Women's March in Washington, held in October, protesters rated concerns about police brutality and support for BLM nearly equally with reproductive rights. Racial justice was a more important issue to those surveyed than removing Trump from office.

50 As BLM protests started spreading across the country after the video of Floyd's death went viral, opposition to the movement also grew, according to the Civiqs data. It's impossible to know exactly why, but Linzer said some media coverage of the protests could have resulted in a growing opposition.

Fox News, for example, used the words "violence" and "violent" in July and August 2020 more than at any other time in the past 10 years, according to a cable news analyzer created by Stanford University that aggregates  
55 transcripts from cable news.

Some activists are skeptical of the idea that Floyd's death and the activism that followed pushed white Americans toward justice. At Green Street United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., where anti-racism programs have been an active part of the mostly white congregation for over a decade, the long-term participation and attitudes in the surrounding town are not so clear.

**Boris Johnson's free speech brigade takes aim at Big Tech regulation.** By Annabelle Dickson, *Politico* April 30, 2021.

**1** The Online Safety Bill coming to parliament later this year is a far-reaching effort to clamp down on harmful and illegal forms of online speech, from child exploitation to terrorist propaganda. But as the date draws nearer, senior MPs from Boris Johnson's ruling Conservative Party are sharpening their knives to potentially carve up the bill, which also covers woolier legal areas like misinformation, in the name of free speech. Amid a wider "culture war," **5** the effort to shape online harms legislation is drawing in Tory heavyweights like former Brexit Secretary David Davis, who has warned the bill could end up being authoritarian "by accident," and former Defense Secretary Liam Fox, who has warned it could have "unintended consequences." "The government would be wise when this bill comes forward to give it lots of pre-legislative scrutiny, to think about all the angles," Fox told *Politico*.

How the free speech brigade proceeds could not only affect the bill, but also weigh into international talks on **10** policing the internet, which are taking place among G7 leaders in Cornwall this summer. "I think there are a whole wide range of issues associated with such a bill, which will be very very easy to try to deal with one problem, but be creating another one," added Fox.

When the Johnson government inherited plans to police Big Tech platforms from the prior administration under Theresa May, opponents had hoped the new PM might stick it in the bin. The former *Daily Telegraph* columnist **15** courted controversy in his articles, including one likening veiled Muslim women to letterboxes, and has long cultivated a political brand as a freedom fighter. But he didn't. In December, his government said online content and certain legal activity could be considered harmful if "it gives rise to a reasonably foreseeable risk of a significant adverse physical or psychological impact on individuals." Opponents saw red over the definition. "The Government's proposals ... would be overbearing and fundamentally threaten the right to freedom of expression," **20** said Mark Johnson, a legal and policy officer at advocacy group Big Brother Watch, last week. Yet in an effort to tread a fine line on Big Tech, Johnson's government has given plenty of assurance to the free speech brigade that the bill could not be used to stifle certain viewpoints.

The prime minister put former Culture Secretary John Whittingdale, one of the bill's strongest initial critics, into the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which is overseeing the legislation. Whittingdale warned in **25** 2019 that the bill could do more harm than good, telling a Society of Editors event that he wanted to counterbalance the "rather hysterical pressure" on government to "control the spread of information." Ministers have since flagged safeguards for freedom of expression in the bill, including that firms will "not be able to arbitrarily remove controversial viewpoints," and an appeals mechanism for those who feel posts are unjustly removed. Whittingdale said last week his "very strong belief" in the importance of free speech was "shared equally" **30** by the prime minister and Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden. "We recognize that adults have the right to access content that some might find offensive and upsetting, and as such, this regulation will not prevent adults from accessing or posting legal content, nor require companies to remove specific pieces of legal content," states a factsheet accompanying the government's December announcement.

Yet Conservative MPs remain on their guard. Adam Afriyie, a backbencher who set up an all-party parliamentary **35** group last year to "promote and protect freedom of speech," voiced concerns the legislation could "basically lock down certain views that people find distasteful in a kind of virtuous way." "I'm very, very conscious of the risks of putting one comma in the wrong place and suddenly we have a huge assault on our natural freedom of speech," he said. "And I suspect that it wouldn't be inadvertent if some of these campaign groups get involved to try and get themselves individually recognized." Tory peer Stephen Gilbert, who is currently chairing an inquiry **40** into freedom of expression in the House of Lords, said that while "nobody wants to see illegal content stay online," proposals to regulate legal but harmful content were "fraught with difficulties." "If we are going to penalize platforms that do not have robust processes to take down illegal and harmful content quickly, should we also require that those processes are designed to avoid the systemic over-removal of content?" he asked. "Censorship is itself an online harm." Former Brexit negotiator Davis echoed that view. "In pursuit of **45** sometimes caution over their reputation, they [platforms] are being quite repressive ... And the same problem applies to online harms legislation. How on earth do you make the judgment in this area?" he said. As for Fox, he said youngsters needed help to "become more resilient" against online abuse by encouraging them to defend people who are being bullied rather than stand idly by.

**The British monarchy has a succession problem.** By Anna ISAAC *Politico*, April 16, 2021.

1 Car mechanic, broadcaster, stamp collector, fashion icon, the longest-serving monarch in the history of the United Kingdom — no one has a resume like Queen Elizabeth II's. But even remarkable lives must someday end, as the death of her husband Prince Philip reminded the world last week. And with the queen turning 95 on April 21, planning for the transition is an increasingly pressing issue, for the royal family and for the union over which she 5 presides. It's clear that the U.K. is a country of Elizabethans (to steal a turn of phrase from Australia's former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, a prominent republican). What's less clear is whether it's a country of monarchists.

While the queen remains personally popular, a series of public relations disasters has tarnished the rest of the royal family. A recent poll found that more than 70 percent of people in Scotland, Wales and central England approved 10 of the queen. Only 50 percent of respondents in Wales and central England approved of her heir, Prince Charles. In Scotland, support for Charles was just 41 percent. At question is not whether the U.K. will abolish the monarchy once Elizabeth dies. The institution itself continues to enjoy broad support, according to a poll from October. It's whether — with the U.K. under unprecedented strain from Scottish separatism and the aftereffects of Brexit — any future monarch will be able to provide the same steadying influence as the one whose hand has been on the tiller 15 for more than half a century. One episode that highlights the potentially bumpy road ahead was the queen's handling of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's 2019 request that she suspend parliament during the peak of the Brexit debate—a move then Speaker of the House John Bercow described as a “constitutional outrage.” The queen's decision to grant Johnson's request sparked fury among those opposing Brexit, dragging her into the political fray and causing some to call for a reform of Britain's unwritten constitution—but she ultimately emerged from the 20 so-called prorogation crisis unscathed. It's not clear her son would have been able to do the same. “One of the questions I've been posing is, if you play the prorogation crisis through the lens of Prince Charles, would the same level of trust have been there for the media and the public?” said Catherine Haddon, historian at the Institute for Government and constitutional expert. “They were thinking ‘Well, the queen will want to do the right thing,’” she said. “Whatever happens, she will not want to play politics.”

25 Holding the U.K. together—never mind the rest of the Commonwealth—while presenting oneself as an apolitical guarantor of the British political system will be a tough act to follow, said Haddon. There's so much constitutionally “murky territory” for a modern monarch to wade through. Charles is bound to face huge challenges. “It's not so much that I say for certain he won't be able to do it,” she said. “I just say we need to be conscious of the question.” Planning for a death, particularly one that can destabilize a nation, is a delicate matter. That's why deaths within 30 the royal household have different code names. Elizabeth's is Operation London Bridge. But there's one thing over which even the most careful planners have no control: who comes next. The moment the queen dies, before anyone announces it or the flags reach half-mast, Charles will become king. He will instantly inherit the titles and lands, and become head of a royal family that is once again in turmoil. “The Firm”—as the sprawling royal institution operating behind the palace walls is sometimes called — is no stranger to tabloid controversy. But its 35 members have spent the last few years brushing up against the third rails of the culture zeitgeist.

Oprah Winfrey's interview with Charles' son Prince Harry and his wife Meghan raised allegations of racism among the royal family. Meghan said that before her son Archie was born, there were “concerns and conversations” with one member of the family about his skin color. Harry later clarified that the comments had not come from the queen or her husband, setting off another round of speculation about the identity of the “racist royal.” Meanwhile, Charles' 40 younger brother Prince Andrew has continued to demonstrate that being royal does not necessarily mean being regal. He was sacked from public roles after being tied to Jeffrey Epstein, the disgraced financier and convicted sex offender. [...] And then there's Netflix's “The Crown.” The streaming service's drama about the royals inaugurated a new wave of scrutiny of Charles' breakup with his former wife Diana Spencer — the mother of Harry and Prince William, who is next in line for the throne. Though the series conflates timelines and events, it was for many younger 45 viewers the first account of the event they engaged with.

**Police are still killing people at the same rate as before** Nolan D. McCaskill *Politico*, May 25, 2021

George Floyd's murder, the ensuing mass protests, the renewed calls for police reform and the trial of the former police officer convicted of his murder overshadow a staggering reality: The pace of fatal encounters with police, who have killed about three people per day this year, is on par with last year's daily average.

Through the first four months of the year, there have been just six days in which police across the United States did not kill anyone.

It's a bracing reminder of how little has changed despite a pandemic and intense scrutiny of policing practices in the 12 months since the world witnessed the Floyd killing in Minneapolis.

"There's an effort, at least by some political actors, to give folks false hope that we're turning the corner around police violence," said Scott Roberts, senior director of criminal justice and democracy campaigns at the racial justice group Color of Change. "These numbers show that, as far as we can tell, it'll continue."

Black people like teenager Ma'Khia Bryant, 20-year-old Daunte Wright and 42-year-old Andrew Brown Jr. have all suffered the same fate as Floyd — and so many others before them — in recent weeks: death by police. They are among 89 Black people who have been killed by police this year through May 21, according to Mapping Police Violence. Another teen, Adam Toledo, who was Latino, was shot and killed by police in Chicago in March.

Caron Nazario's life was spared, but the Afro Latino second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical Corps was pulled over by police in Virginia late last year while in uniform. Guns were drawn on him; he was pepper sprayed, forced to the ground and handcuffed following a traffic stop.

Footage of the encounter went public in April, around the same time Wright, who was biracial, was killed at a traffic stop in Brooklyn Center, Minn., miles from where ex-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin went on trial for Floyd's murder.

In a nation in which Black people are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people — and 1.3 times more likely to be unarmed when killed by police — the statistics are damning.

"That strikes me as very hard to think of an innocent explanation or a satisfying explanation for that or a non-invidious explanation," said Clark Neily, senior vice president for criminal justice at the Cato Institute. "I can't come up with an explanation that is anything other than concerning for that. It suggests, presumably, a higher level of suspicion and fear on the part of police and a greater willingness to resort to lethal force without hesitation, and that's quite concerning."

In interviews, activists were able to highlight some signs of progress in their long battle to severely limit fatal encounters with police. They mentioned Colorado and New Mexico, for example, as the only two states to end qualified immunity, which shields police from lawsuits by victims or their families for alleged civil rights violations, and the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program in Eugene, Ore., where unarmed mental health professionals respond to mental health, homelessness and addiction crises.

But activists are also clear-eyed that much more work needs to be done. They call attention to the fact that nonprofits and the media are doing the legwork on tracking fatal police encounters because the federal government fails to collect and publish such data.

"It's a huge issue," said Nancy La Vigne, executive director of the Council on Criminal Justice's Task Force on Policing.

The nonprofit think tank launched the independent task force in November, and it released five priorities for police reform last week: national training standards, a federal decertification registry, duty-to-intervene and mandatory reporting policies, trauma-informed policing and increased data collection and transparency.

"Data equals accountability," La Vigne said. "Every agency should make public their use of force incidents. Every single agency."

The CCJ task force's priorities call for national training standards, a federal decertification registry, duty-to-intervene and mandatory reporting policies, trauma-informed policing and increased data collection and transparency.

Maurice Mitchell, a strategist with the Movement for Black Lives and national director of the Working Families Party, described the cyclical nature of police killings of unarmed people of color like this: public outrage, a mass movement then government response. The problem he laid out is that government officials tend to focus on symptoms and process, instead of root causes and outcomes.

A national registry of police misconduct, ending qualified immunity, establishing commissions and even Justice Department consent decrees are all reactive policy measures that occur after harm has already been done, he said.

"All these things are not bad, but what we hit the streets for were very clear outcomes, and what we spoke about were the root causes," Mitchell said. "We need to interrupt this cycle where Black folks and advocates and others are demanding very, very clear outcomes, which is a very simple outcome: We live in a society where our government doesn't kill us. We believe it's the actual number and density of interactions that people have with police officers that lead to these instances." [...]

**The grim truth behind Britain's stately homes.** By Joe Minihane *CNN*, September 27, 2020.

**1** Grand buildings replete with turrets, picture windows and kitchen gardens. Perfectly manicured lawns. And hundreds of rooms stuffed with antiques and objet d'arts from across the globe. Few things are as quintessentially English as a stately home. Tourists love them. And they're a guaranteed box office draw, as "Downton Abbey" and "Pride and Prejudice" can attest. But there's a more disturbing side.

**5** Many of these country estates are indelibly linked to brutal legacies of slavery and colonialism. And while their grim origins may have been previously overlooked, they're now facing a new level of scrutiny that -- amid raging debates over how Britain reckons with its imperial past -- has exploded into its own cultural conflict.

At the center of the controversy is a new report into the matter by the National Trust, a heritage body created in 1895 to preserve places of natural beauty and historic interest across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**10** Published this month, the report identifies 93 places, roughly one third of all of its properties, that it says were built, benefited from or connected to the spoils of slavery and colonialism.

They include Chartwell, Winston Churchill's former home in the southeastern county of Kent, Devon's spectacular Lundy Island, where convicts were used as unpaid labor and Speke Hall, near Liverpool, whose owner, Richard Watt traded rum made by slaves and purchased a slave ship in 1793 that trafficked slaves from Africa to Jamaica.

**15** Some 29 properties were found to have benefited from compensation after owning slaves was abolished in Great Britain in 1837, including Hare Hill in Cheshire, where the owners, the Hibbert family, received the equivalent of £7 million (\$8.8 million) to make up for the loss of slaves.

The National Trust says it's chosen now to highlight this issue because of rising public awareness that, in the UK, hit the headlines with the divisive tearing down of an 18th-century slave trader's statue in the port city of Bristol.

**20** "At a time when there's an enormous interest around colonialism more broadly and indeed slavery more specifically, it felt very appropriate, given that we care for so many of these places of historical interest, to commission a report that looks right across them and try to assess the extent of those colonial legacies still reflected in the places we look after today," says John Orna-Ornstein, the National Trust's director of culture and engagement. Not everyone agrees. And in some cases, the response has been one of indignation and fury.

**25** When the National Trust first trailed its report and highlighted the connections on Twitter to mark UNESCO's Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, there was an inevitable backlash.

Replies to a Twitter thread that detailed how mahogany felled by enslaved Africans was used to build furniture for stately homes in the 18th century were swift in their disdain.

One complained, "Are you for real?" Others said they were cancelling their National Trust membership in protest, **30** saying the past couldn't be changed and that historical buildings were there to be enjoyed, no matter their past. One said they did not want the National Trust to "ram it down our throats," while others talked darkly of "history being erased." Opinion pieces in newspapers decried supposed attempts by the Trust to somehow talk Britain down by revealing the truth about its past.

Former newspaper editor Charles Moore, writing in the right-leaning *Spectator* magazine, accused the Trust of **35** creating a "shameful manifesto" that rejects objectivity in favor of a binary interpretation of history designed to make its members "ashamed to be British."

The report's mention of revered wartime leader Winston Churchill in connection with contentious colonial era governance has drawn particular ire.

Oliver Dowden, the UK's culture minister, told the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper the organization should focus on **40** "preserving and protecting" British heritage. "Churchill is one of Britain's greatest heroes," he told the paper. "He rallied the free world to defeat fascism. It will surprise and disappoint people that the National Trust appears to be making him a subject of criticism and controversy."

For its part, the National Trust says that it is merely providing added historical context. "The role of the National Trust is a very clear one," says Orna-Ornstein. "Our role is to be as open and honest as we can, to tell the full history **45** of the places and collections that we care for and to not do more than that."

Despite threats online to cancel memberships these have remained steady and many people have expressed interest in hearing more about these connections, he says.



**Brexit is just weeks old, and it's already threatening fragile political stability in Northern Ireland.** By Nic Robertson *CNN*, February 6, 2021

**1** Northern Ireland's Brexit backlash has arrived. It snuck in through a side door the European Union rashly opened last week when it threatened to trigger the most contentious part of the Brexit deal, article 16 of the Northern Ireland protocol, and has quickly escalated. The EU Commission announced it could invoke the clause to impose controls on exports to Northern Ireland -- which unlike mainland Britain, remains part of the Single Market -- to prevent

**5** vaccines traveling out of Ireland and into Britain via Northern Ireland. Hours later, Brussels backed down from the threat amid furious protestations from UK and Irish. But the damage was done. Brexit's tightly wound terms, dictating an open border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and controls on Northern Ireland sea border with mainland GB, began unspooling almost immediately. The province's top politician, pro-Brexit First Minister Arlene Foster's retort was predictably icy: "This is an incredibly hostile and aggressive act by the European Union." Foster's **10** Democratic Unionist Party, DUP, are pro-British, pro-Brexit, but opposed to the new EU/UK trade deal that demands customs checks on some goods arriving in Northern Ireland from the UK mainland.

Within days British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was threatening to scupper those checks, potentially further unraveling the trade deal he so tortuously agreed to less than two months ago, further heightening tensions in Northern Ireland. None of it augers well for the new EU/UK relationship, nor the fragile political stability in **15** Northern Ireland, particularly as the first casualty could be its most precious commodity, enduring peace in Northern Ireland.

In the days after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's gross diplomatic faux pas, a crude scare campaign of rough written graffiti daubed Northern Ireland's walls. The stark warnings threatened port workers, "all border port staff are targets" and "no Irish Sea border," an apparent rejection of Johnson's Brexit deal. This was **20** quickly followed by Northern Ireland's DUP Agriculture Minister, Edwin Poots telling port workers in Belfast and Larne to stay away from work. EU officials who work with them on new post-Brexit checks on live animals and fresh food were also advised to stay home. On Friday, some of them returned to work. While these apparently intimidating threats are not a harbinger of a return to the paramilitaries and the dark days of the 1970s, 80s and 90s sectarian violence known as "The Troubles," it is a reminder that the emotive forces that underpinned it remain **25** malevolent, and in some cases motivated. Only this past week in Belfast police stopped a gang of almost two dozen masked men, who local media reported were linked to a feud within a pro-UK loyalist paramilitary group. Northern Ireland is still riven by identity politics of pro-British and pro-Irish visions, and these latest developments hint at a perhaps unintended symbiosis of a potential paramilitary threat aligning with politicians' goals, just as they did, to deadly effect in the past.

**30** DUP MP Ian Paisley Jr., who follows his father as an outspoken bastion of pro-British sentiment, warned Johnson: "I tell you that the protocol has betrayed us and has made us feel like foreigners in our country." [...] A reality for Paisley and Foster alike is post-Brexit, the DUP's popularity is fading, according to polls published this week in the province's flagship newspaper, the Belfast Telegraph. Some supporters heading for harder line fringe Unionist outfits and some for the Province's political middle ground, the Alliance Party. None of these repercussions **35** seemed relevant last week during the acrimonious dispute over who is more entitled to tens of millions of doses produced by British-Swedish drugmaker AstraZeneca: the UK or the EU. At the time it stunned seasoned EU hands: Finland's former PM and EU political insider Alexander Stubb called it "nativist and protectionist" an act of "vaccine nationalism."

Most galling for Northern Ireland's pro-EU politicians, like Belfast South MP Claire Hanna of the moderate pro-**40** Irish SDLP, is that despite some empty food shelves in supermarkets, many felt they'd dodged a Brexit bullet. "We were probably getting to a point where people were getting over the initial shock of Brexit," Hanna told CNN. But it seems too late now. The cat is out of the bag, and the DUP's anger, and opportunity to recoup support, is unleashed. Despite von der Leyen's swift backtracking, Foster's party is demanding the protocols be scrapped, returning Brexit to the top of the political agenda.

**45** Political tensions are escalating: anti-Brexit, hardline pro-Irish nationalists Sinn Fein say the DUP only have themselves to blame.

**Guns: The US has a problem. Here's what to know.** By Holmes Lybrand *CNN*, June 4, 2021

Another spate of mass shootings this week continued to shake the US, adding to what feels like an increasingly violent time as the country emerges from shelter-in-place orders and restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

On Sunday, two people were killed and 21 others wounded after three masked suspects opened fire at a crowd outside a concert venue in southern Florida, according to police. Three days later, six people were injured in a mass shooting in Springfield, Ohio. During the previous weekend, there had been at least 12 mass shootings across the country, according to CNN reporting and analysis of data from Gun Violence Archive.

CNN defines a mass shooting as an incident with four or more people killed or wounded by gunfire -- excluding the shooter; so does the Gun Violence Archive.

In the past few months, the US has witnessed a seemingly constant stream of mass killings. After a mass shooting in March left 10 dead at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado, President Joe Biden called for Congress to act and promised legislative action. Those demands from the President were renewed in April, following mass shootings in South Carolina and Texas

"They've offered plenty of thoughts and prayers, members of Congress, but they have passed not a single new federal law to reduce gun violence," Biden said during an event on April 8 announcing new federal gun-control measures. "Enough prayers; time for some action."

Here's what to know about gun violence and gun ownership in the US today.

### **Gun violence**

More than 8,100 people have died from gun violence in the US this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, with over 240 mass shootings as of June 1. In May, the archive told CNN there has been a 23% uptick in deaths from gun violence this year.

That comes against a backdrop of rising crime, though not all of it gun-related. In 2020, as the pandemic devastated the country, major cities saw homicides increase more than 30%, and the crime surge seen last year has continued well into 2021.

The increase is a seemingly stark contrast to years of decreasing rates of crime in the country. In the US, crime rates have been declining since the 1990s, with violent crime -- which includes crimes such as murder, rape, aggravated assault and robbery -- dropping 13.4% from 2001 to 2010, a decline that continued over the next nine years, dropping 3.8% from the 2010 levels in 2019 -- though violent crime did tick up in 2016 and 2017.

FBI crime data is not yet available for all of 2020, leaving questions as to whether the increase in murders in major cities was also occurring throughout the majority of the US during the pandemic.

### **Gun purchases in the US**

Gun purchases remain at record-breaking levels, and there are shortages of ammunition. In 2020, firearms sales broke records, with nearly 23 million guns purchased, according to estimates from Small Arms Analytics, a consulting firm based in Greenville, South Carolina. The number represented a 65% increase from 2019, according to Small Arms Analytics, and was significantly higher than the previous record of 15.7 million guns purchased in 2016.

Americans purchased nearly 9.2 million firearms in the first five months of 2021, compared with the 8.7 million purchased during the same period in 2020, according to a new analysis from Small Arms Analytics.

Even before the record-breaking year of 2020, private citizens in the US owned far more firearms than those in any other country.

As of 2017, 393 million guns were owned by civilians in the US, according to a 2018 Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey report, which was "more than those held by civilians in the other top 25 countries combined."

### **National gun control efforts**

While Biden has promised gun control action and has taken steps of his own, like changing federal regulations to include so-called ghost guns as firearms -- a move that will most certainly face legal challenges -- efforts to tighten gun restrictions have stalled in Congress.

The Democratic-controlled House has passed two gun control measures this year focused on requiring federal background checks for all purchases, including private sales, as well as expanding the time frame authorities have to complete those checks.

The Senate, with its narrow Democratic majority, would likely need every Democrat and 10 Republicans to push the legislation through. Despite some Republican senators voicing support for expanding background checks, there is currently not enough momentum or agreement among lawmakers to break the almost-guaranteed filibuster.

**What the controversy over 'Minari' says about being American** By Catherine E. Shoichet *CNN* March 1, 2021

Monica Yi stares at a rickety trailer in the middle of an empty field in rural Arkansas. "What is this place?" the stunned wife asks her husband. Jacob Yi replies without hesitation: "Our home."

It's the opening scene of "Minari." These words, like many lines in the movie, are spoken in Korean. Jacob and Monica are immigrants, and like more than 20% of the US population, they don't speak much English at home.

5 So when the Golden Globes aired Sunday, this American movie written and directed by an American man about a family's struggles on their American farm competed -- and won -- in a surprising category: best foreign-language film.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association's rules made it ineligible for best picture. That sparked controversy and serious questions about racism in Hollywood. And with the movie's recent release for rental on streaming services, the conversation is far from over.

10 "It feels personal. ... It feels like the 'where are you from?' question that Asian Americans always get," says Nancy Wang Yuen, a sociologist and author of "Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism." "The assumption is that if you have an Asian face, you must not be from here.

**'Minari' is an American story in more ways than one**

15 Lee Isaac Chung, the Colorado-born writer and director of "Minari," says he based many details in the script on his own experiences growing up as the child of Korean immigrants on a farm in Arkansas.

The movie gets its title from the Korean name for a resilient herb. But there's no doubt that the vivid, richly textured scenes of the film tell a decidedly American tale -- from pastoral Ozark landscapes to country church pews to the Yi family's home.

20 "Minari" swept top prizes at Sundance last year. It's also winning rave reviews from people whose communities it depicts -- immigrants and non-immigrants alike. An Arkansas Times journalist recently called it "the most authentic coming-of-age story I've seen reflected on screen about our part of the world."

Chung says he credits Pulitzer-winning novelist Willa Cather -- who chronicled life on the American Plains more than a century ago -- for inspiring him to tell it.

25 About her books "O Pioneers!" and "My Antonia," Cather once said she had written stories inspired by her own upbringing after years of imitating cosmopolitan authors in New York.

"She wrote that her work really took off when she stopped admiring and she started remembering," Chung told CNN. "And that's what got me to sit down finally and just write out my memories. And that became the kernel of a film."

30 **Why the film's Golden Globe nomination struck a nerve**

The memories Chung weaves together in "Minari" are something many Americans who grew up in immigrant families can relate to: The joy of a visiting family member bringing spices from home, the struggles of different generations to connect, the pent-up emotions of parents risking everything to support their family, the faces of children who are trying to fit in.

35 To Yuen, it feels momentous. "A lot of us are seeing our stories on screen for the first time," she says.

So when news first broke that the Golden Globes' eligibility rules would force "Minari" to compete in the "best foreign-language film" category, it stung.

Actor Daniel Dae Kim and other Asian celebrities swiftly took to social media to share their dismay. Kim described it as "the film equivalent of being told to go back to your country when that country is actually America."

40 For some, it was déjà vu to the previous year, when Lulu Wang's 2019 film "The Farewell" was shut out of the award ceremony's best comedy race because much of the movie was in Mandarin Chinese.

"It's great these films are being made, but it's terrible that they're being put in the foreign language categories," Yuen says. "We shouldn't be punished for telling different American stories that haven't been told before."

45 And it's particularly troubling, Yuen says, at a time when Asian Americans are increasingly facing verbal and physical attacks.

"When you call 'Minari' a foreign film, it doesn't help the kind of general anti-Asian sentiment, the perpetual foreigner stereotype that Asian Americans are dealing with, not just in an abstract representational way, but in a lived experience, under attack by our government and individuals."

50 **What the awards' rules say**

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association's rules for the Golden Globes state that only films with 50% or more of their dialog in English are eligible to compete in the awards' best motion picture categories.

Other awards use different criteria. The Oscars, for example, allow films in any language to compete for best picture. And last year "Parasite," a Korean-language film set in Seoul, became the first non-English film to win the award.

55 The Golden Globes' rules aren't new. But some are arguing it's long past time for the association to reevaluate the criteria it uses for its prestigious prizes. [...]

**Trump fights for a job that he's not doing as coronavirus rages** Analysis by Maeve Reston *CNN*, December 18, 2020

When the history of the pandemic is written, one of the great mysteries will be what President Donald Trump was doing in the waning days of his presidency as the number of Covid-19 deaths in the US soared past 3,000 each day, the virus spread unchecked and Congress dithered over the details of an emergency relief package that could be the difference between people being able to eat and being forced to sleep on the streets this holiday season.

Trump ran for president pretending he was the consummate dealmaker, the chief executive who could make things happen with a snap of his fingers. He will go down in history as a president who worsened the grief and tragedy of the most consequential pandemic in 100 years by being contemptuous of masks and the safety precautions designed by his own administration -- a man incapable of empathy, who chose to remain cocooned in his White House bubble at a time when leadership would have mattered.

For weeks now, Trump has spent most of his time plotting how to nullify the results of President-elect Joe Biden's November victory as he has fleeced his supporters to pay for a string of ill-conceived lawsuits that were tossed out of court by some of his own judicial appointees. When those efforts failed, he began looking ahead to January 6 when a joint session of Congress meets to formally count the Electoral College results -- seeing another opportunity to try and thwart the democratic process.

In his comfort zone of the Twittersphere -- where he's put out countless false tweets claiming the election was "swindled" -- Trump has been silent about the disturbing hacking campaign, suspected to be tied to Russia, that has endangered US national security. Despite being briefed on the massive data breach by top intelligence officials Thursday, he hasn't said anything about risks to the federal government or how he planned to address it.

Sen. Mitt Romney, who has been a critic of the President, called the hacking "the modern equivalent of almost Russian bombers reportedly flying undetected over the entire country," speaking to SiriusXM on Thursday. "And in this setting, not to have the White House aggressively speaking out and protesting and taking punitive action is really, really quite extraordinary."

Biden, without mentioning Trump or his administration, tried to draw the contrast. "Our adversaries should know that, as President, I will not stand idly by in the face of cyber assaults on our nation," he said in a statement Thursday.

Perhaps most baffling about Trump's disappearance, he has stayed out of the public eye when he could have taken a victory lap following the US Food and Drug Administration's historic authorization of the first Covid-19 vaccine -- despite his previous insistence that he should get all the credit for the vaccines because of his effort to push the companies developing them harder than they'd ever been pushed before.

But if he emerged to herald the vaccine, he would have also had to acknowledge the suffering afflicting America, both from illness and economic hardship, which he knows will reflect poorly on his legacy. The US now has more than 17 million Covid-19 cases and the daily number of new coronavirus cases in the United States is nearing 250,000. Trump has also lost his primary talking point about how the economy is coming roaring back: Jobless claims released Thursday showed that 885,000 Americans filed for first-time unemployment benefits last week.

Trump issued a sunny tweet glossing over that troubling news Thursday: "All-time Stock Market high. The Vaccine and the Vaccine rollout are getting the best of reviews. Moving along really well. Get those 'shots' everyone!" the President tweeted, ignoring the fact that scarce vaccine doses are only being allotted to front-line health workers, residents at long-term care facilities and some government officials. "Also, stimulus talks looking very good," he added

### **Stimulus talks hurdle toward a key deadline**

But as Congress tries to structure a Covid relief package that will have bipartisan support in both houses — with much-needed aid for millions of unemployed Americans as well as small businesses that are on the brink of collapse — the President has not used his supposed negotiating prowess to get the deal across the finish line.

As leaders claim that they are close to a deal, some progressives and conservatives have formed an unlikely alliance to advocate for increasing the size of the \$600 direct payments that are expected to go out to cash-strapped Americans. Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri said he planned to call for a vote Friday on his bill providing direct payments of \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for families. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent, has also demanded the larger direct payments.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday evening that conversations "are still underway and making progress" and told his members to be prepared to work through the weekend. Even though these negotiations should have been completed months ago as unemployment and other benefits began expiring and worsening cases led to new Covid lockdowns by local officials, McConnell blamed the delays on Democrats. [...]

**A vaccination site meant to serve a hard-hit Latino neighborhood in New York instead serviced more Whites from other areas** By Nicquel Terry Ellis *CNN* January 30, 2021

A Covid-19 vaccination site in a Latino neighborhood in New York City hard hit by the pandemic saw an overwhelming number of White people from outside the community show up to get the shot this month, city leaders say, laying bare a national disparity that shows people of color are being vaccinated at dramatically lower rates.

The site at the Armory Track & Field Center in Washington Heights was launched Jan. 14 by New York-Presbyterian Hospital and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Vaccine appointments were initially offered to people age 65 and older who live in New York state.

Lawmakers who represent Washington Heights and a doctor who staffed the site last week said the first wave of vaccinations went to many White New Yorkers over 65 who traveled to the Armory from other parts of the city and state.

Mayor Bill de Blasio on Friday called it "outrageous."

"The more I learn about this, the angrier I get," de Blasio said during a virtual press briefing. "Somehow instead of focusing on the Latino community of Washington Heights, a place that really was hit hard by Covid, instead the approach was somehow conducive to folks from outside the community coming and getting vaccinated but not folks who live right there in Washington Heights. Totally backwards."

**'New Yorkers of color' were to get shots**

The issue at the Washington Heights site is a glaring example of the inequity in vaccine access across the country.

In a news release announcing the launch, Cuomo said the goal of the partnership with New York-Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medicine and Columbia University Irving Medical Center was "making sure New Yorkers of color aren't left behind."

CNN reached out to New York-Presbyterian on Wednesday to ask about the disparity and a hospital spokeswoman provided a statement saying "effective immediately" the site would dedicate all appointment slots to New York City residents, with at least 60% reserved for eligible residents in the Washington Heights, Inwood, North and Central Harlem, and South Bronx communities.

New York-Presbyterian said in an email to CNN Friday that in the last two days more than 80% of the people vaccinated have been residents of those communities.

"An ongoing engagement initiative is focused on reaching eligible Northern Manhattan residents and getting them registered for appointments," the hospital said in its statement Wednesday. "This process is being undertaken in partnership with more than 40 community-based and faith-based organizations and other partners, and is focused on providing access, overcoming hesitancy and addressing persistent inequities."

More than 25,000 people have been vaccinated at the site since it opened, according to the hospital. New York-Presbyterian did not have a racial breakdown of the vaccine recipients.

Washington Heights and neighboring Inwood, which according to the 2018 NYC Health report are 72% Latino, have been a hotbed for Covid-19 cases. Latinos make up 30% of deaths in New York City.

**'It's like 'The Hunger Games' '**

New York City Councilman Mark Levine told CNN the initial sign-up process for the Armory site required several steps for registration and eligibility screening and did not accommodate the Washington Heights residents who don't speak English and aren't tech savvy.

In Washington Heights/Inwood, 37% of residents have "limited English proficiency," according to the 2018 NYC Health report.

A Jan. 14 statement on the state of New York's website said people who were eligible to get the vaccine could sign up through a portal site for Columbia, New York-Presbyterian, and Weill Cornell Medicine patients or create a new account on a separate page.

"It's like 'The Hunger Games,'" Levine said. "People who don't have a computer, don't have good internet, aren't comfortable with technology, maybe have limited English language skills, they are not getting through. And that's reflected in who is showing up at these sites."

Dr. Susana Bejar of Columbia University Irving Medical Center said she witnessed the disparity in Washington Heights firsthand when she volunteered at the Armory as an appointment verifier on Jan. 23.

Bejar said of the 2,400 people who received the vaccine that day, most were not from the local community. "Simply put, I've never seen so many White people in Washington Heights," Bejar tweeted on Sunday.

Bejar said the site needs to prioritize Washington Heights residents by allowing same day and walk-in appointments, reserving vaccines for those who live in the community, offering help to people who are struggling to sign up on the smartphone app, and ensuring residents have time to schedule their appointments.

"It's hard to do both speed and equity," Bejar told CNN. "When the vaccines are primarily distributed through a smart phone application in English to whoever refreshes the application first, longstanding structural inequities will replicate themselves unless the medical community makes a conscious and consistent effort to address them." [...]

**Church to consider removing or altering slavery monuments.** By Harriet Sherwood *The Guardian*, May 9, 2021.

**1** The Church of England is to review thousands of monuments in churches and cathedrals across the country that contain historical references to slavery and colonialism, with some expected to be removed. Guidance to be issued this week encourages the C of E's 12,500 parishes and 42 cathedrals to scrutinise buildings and grounds for evidence of contested heritage, and consult local communities on what action to take. Although decisions will be made at a **5** local level, the guidance stresses that ignoring contested heritage is not an option. Among actions that may be taken are the removal, relocation or alteration of plaques and monuments, and the addition of contextual information. In some cases, there may be no change.

The guidance comes after Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, called for a review of the C of E's built heritage following the Black Lives Matter protests last summer and the toppling of a statue of slave trader Edward **10** Colston in Bristol. "Some [statues and monuments] will have to come down," Welby said at the time. An anti-racism taskforce set up by the archbishops of Canterbury and York last month urged the C of E to take decisive steps to address the legacy of its involvement in the slave trade. It said: "We do not want to unconditionally celebrate or commemorate people who contributed to or benefited from the tragedy that was the slave trade." Action has already been taken in a number of places. Bristol Cathedral has removed a window dedication to Colston; St **15** Margaret's church in Rottingdean, Sussex, has removed two headstones in its graveyard which contained racial slurs; and St Peter's in Dorchester has covered up a plaque commemorating a plantation owner's role in suppressing a slave rebellion. Becky Clark, the C of E's director of churches and cathedrals, who produced the guidance, told the *Observer*: "Our church buildings and cathedrals are the most visible part of the C of E, a Christian presence in every community. The responsibility to ensure they include, welcome and provide safe spaces for all is a vitally **20** important part of addressing the way historic racism and slavery still impacts people today."

The guidance is likely to be controversial, both among those who call for all contested heritage to be removed, and those who say such heritage is an important part of the nation's history. But Clark said the guidance sought to "empower rather than shut down conversation". Rather than being prescriptive, it was intended to steer parishes through the process of evaluating built heritage and determining what action to take. "It doesn't make political **25** statements, except to say the history of racism and slavery is undeniable, as is the fact that racism and the legacy of slavery are still part of many people's lives today. Responding to those in the right way is a Christian duty. Doing nothing is not an option. There has to be engagement with this. "The job of local parishes is to figure out how this impacts our communities today. Are there people who feel this church is not for them because of the built heritage, and what can we do about it?" As well as statues and monuments that "celebrate or valorise those involved in the **30** slave trade", there were also "simple memorials to somebody who was loved by their family", she said.

At St Margaret's Rottingdean, a Grade II listed 13th-century church on the Sussex coast, the gravestones of two music-hall singers who died in the 1960s have been removed following a consistory court judgment that their inscriptions contained words that were "deeply offensive". Although the flint-walled churchyard is the legal responsibility of the parish priest, the headstones are the property of the descendants of G. H. Elliott and Alice **35** Banford, who wore blackface in their performances. A judgment in February by Mark Hill, chancellor of the diocese of Chichester, said the descendants had been traced and had agreed to the stones being recut to remove the "derogatory and racist" term. Hill added: "Mindful of the public interest (and hostility in some parts) concerning this matter, it would be inappropriate to direct the immediate reinstatement of the headstones." He suggested the work be completed within two years, although the time period could be extended.

**40** At Bristol Cathedral, a dedication to the 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston has been covered and will be eventually replaced with plain glass. Additional information about Colston, the slave trade and C of E's links to slavers will be provided.

**Plaid Cymru has a mountain to climb, but Welsh independence is no pipe dream.** By Simon Jenkins *The Guardian* May 1, 2021

**1** Next year is the centenary of the founding of the Irish Free State and the path to full independence. It is just conceivable that Scotland could celebrate by striking out alone too. But Wales? Surely not.

The Welsh Senedd elections on 6 May seem likely to confirm Labour's Mark Drakeford in office in Cardiff. But he may have to rely on Welsh nationalist backing from Plaid Cymru. That party's polling is following a very similar **5** trajectory to Scotland's nationalists a decade before gaining power in Edinburgh in 2007. After long languishing in single figures, Plaid polls steadily around 20%, running close with the Welsh Tories. At one point in 2019, YouGov briefly gave Plaid the lead. Meanwhile, Welsh enthusiasm for independence, once minimal, is running at more than a third of the electorate, or 39% "if Wales could rejoin the European Union", according to polling. A significant 58% of the newly expanded younger vote of 16- to 34-year-olds is pro-independence in this scenario.

**10** Polls for the "non-political" YesCymru independence movement have registered an 11-point increase in support to 33% since December 2019. Whether this is attributable to Covid is moot, but the separate handling of the pandemic in Cardiff appears to have reduced previous scepticism towards devolution.

Adam Price, Plaid's leader, is a former MP and academic researcher. He knows he has a mountain to climb. Wales has independence parties like it has nonconformist chapels. The task for Price is to give independence **15** substance, to fill what he calls a vacuum between "indy curious" into "indy plausible". A party founded in 1925 to keep Wales Welsh-speaking must now describe how a real Wales might look after being ruled as "England and Wales" since the Tudors.

Last September, Plaid published an impressive report, *Towards an Independent Wales*, which met the sceptics head on. It was almost a Welsh version of America's Federalist Papers. It grappled in detail with a Welsh constitution, **20** justice system, education, finance and foreign relations. It pointed out that there was nothing unusual in small state independence. There are seven smaller countries in the EU, and plenty such as Lithuania, Slovakia and Ireland which have complex, fiddly borders. As for relations with England, the report was openminded, examining confederal models from the EU to Benelux and Spain. It even proposed "an explanatory referendum", in which various options are presented to the voters. Above all, the report faced head-on Wales's dependency on British

**25** subsidy, the result of a crippling fiscal deficit of 18%. According to the Institute for Government last week, each Welsh citizen is net recipient of £4,400 a year from the UK exchequer, against England's £90 and Scotland's £2,500. As in Scotland, Welsh independence advocates draw heavily on Irish experience. Ireland in 1922 was as dependent financially on Britain as is Wales today. London's postcolonial legacy to Dublin was a band of Treasury officials who made George Osborne seem profligate. At the moment of liberation, Irish pensions and welfare benefits were

**30** cut and extreme austerity imposed. Ireland was pulled round by EU membership in 1973 and by International Monetary Fund aid. More crucial was its switch from a fierce Anglophobia to a brash internationalism. The Irish government slashed taxes for immigrants and foreign companies, welcomed tourists and managed to reverse the curse of emigration. By the 1990s the Celtic Tiger was born. There was much economic strife in the aftermath of the financial crash of 2008, but I know of no Irish body of opinion that wants to rejoin England today. To those set

**35** on independence, economics is immaterial. Project fear never works. When it comes to self-determination, sovereignty is all, as the clichés of Brexit attest. Besides, no model can forecast the galvanic impact on an economy of independence itself. As the Basques said of their quasi-autonomy from Spain: "We build the road as we travel." Wales today is better off by far than Ireland in the 1920s or 1960s, even if Plaid Cymru's faith in national banks, commissions and enterprise agencies looks tenuous. Its chief handicap may be similar to Ireland's 100 years ago – **40** the potential for an excluding hostility to newcomers. An independent Wales is to me perfectly feasible, but it would depend not on England's exchequer but on England's tourists, retired people, remote workers, long-distance commuters, returning expatriates, second-homers rich and poor, anyone who can be induced to bring money and talent over the border into Britain's loveliest country. As with the SNP, Welsh nationalism has to tear itself away from reactionary nostalgia to imitate Ireland's hard-headed entrepreneurialism – or it will stay just a pipe-dream

**45** party. By the end of next week, the bizarre "union of four nations", much cited during Covid, could be seriously at risk. Boris Johnson seized power by championing British nationalism, yet he has only contempt for the nationalism of others. Last November Johnson called granting more power to Scotland "a disaster", declaring devolution to be "Tony Blair's biggest mistake". That may soon be another quote he will deny ever having said.

**'Cancel culture' is not the preserve of the left. Just ask our historians.** By David Olusoga *The Guardian* January 3, 2021

**1** This will be a year of disillusionment. Even the rollout of new vaccines and the potential end of the pandemic will not prevent that. The first moment of disillusionment will come the moment we realise that we are still going to be talking about Brexit and still negotiating our future relationship with the EU, particularly around the service sector. As 2020 demonstrated, getting Brexit done doesn't mean it's actually done. [...] For the government and its

**5** cheerleaders, growing disillusionment will bring with it another challenge, because among the many problems that follow the vanquishing of an imaginary enemy is that there is no one left to blame. What happens now that the finger of blame can no longer be pointed at Brussels bureaucrats? What will fill the papers now that stories of "bendy bananas" are off the agenda? Who can be vilified when immigration is not reduced to a trickle, lost industries do not return and Britannia fails to re-emerge, "buccaneering" and "unchained", on to the world stage? While many **10** of the damaging effects of Brexit will be slow to emerge, and others will be blamed on the pandemic, eventually the day will dawn on which it is widely recognised that the buck stops at Westminster, not Brussels. Then what? In the second half of 2020, one strategy for filling the post-Brexit blame vacuum was tried, tested and war-gamed, all of it executed with levels of proactive forward-thinking and strategic planning that the government struggled to muster when dealing with the pandemic. New enemies were identified and the attack lines against them fine-tuned **15** in the focus groups.

Firmly in the crosshairs are black and brown working-class people, who are to be stripped of their class identity so that their interests and their histories can be falsely presented as a dangerous threat to those of working-class white people. Hence the demonisation and deliberate mischaracterisation of the Black Lives Matter movement. But among the new enemies are academics and, in particular, historians, whose work focuses on the histories of empire and **20** slavery. They and the institutions that have commissioned research from them have been subjected to a new order of hostility. Expect more of the same in 2021.

Such strategies are a tactic by which, it is hoped, some of the anger and resentment that was carefully cultivated over decades and targeted at Brussels can now be redirected at enemies within. The name of the game is distraction, but also consolation for those disillusioned by the realities of Brexit Britain, but there is more to it. The government **25** and its supporters also aim to set themselves up as the defenders of British institutions and the champions of British history and in order to stake claim to those titles they are willing to trash both.

To get a glimpse of 2021, take a look back at the second half of 2020. In August, the British Museum was denounced for adding information and gathering new artefacts around its bust of Hans Sloane in order to contextualise, rather than merely memorialise, a prolific collector who gained much of his wealth from slavery. Weeks later, the National **30** Trust was condemned when it revealed that many of the properties under its care have historical links to slavery or imperialism. Research projects and findings that just a few years ago would have drawn little public attention have been presented as existential threats to the nation and one version of national identity, the academics involved in them denounced in newspapers as enemies within for merely doing their jobs. Attacking historians who dare to examine the role of slavery or imperialism in the creation of Britain's national wealth and our culture conveniently **35** creates new enemies who can be paraded before "the people". When the historians in question turn out to be women, as was the case with the National Trust's Colonial Countryside project, the tone of the attacks becomes even more personal and hysterical. But what is under assault here are not just individuals but academic curiosity itself, the lifeblood of scholarship that is now being portrayed as a form of cultural treason or misrepresented as political posturing. Unlike some on the left, I have never doubted that "cancel culture" exists, fuelled by political **40** intolerance and the toxic anonymity of social media. The great myth about cancel culture, however, is that it exists only on the left. For the past 40 years, rightwing newspapers have ceaselessly fought to delegitimise and ultimately cancel our national broadcaster, motivated by financial as well as political ambitions.

Likewise, recent attacks on museums, universities and the National Trust were launched not to win arguments or influence the shape of historical debates but to intimidate other institutions and encourage them to cancel projects **45** they might have been considering; to investigate their own historical links to parts of Britain's past that our leaders and much of our press feel should be jettisoned or left unexamined. This is a war against facts, a flight from reason motivated by a cult of incuriosity. It is culturally corrosive but politically expedient.



**Why every single statue should come down.** By Gary Young. *The Guardian* 1 June 2021.

**1** [...] The story starts in the mid-19th century, when the designers of Trafalgar Square decided that there would be one huge column for Horatio Nelson and four smaller plinths for statues surrounding it. They managed to put statues on three of the plinths before running out of money, leaving the fourth one bare. A government advisory group, convened in 1999, decided that this fourth plinth should be a site for a rotating exhibition of contemporary sculpture.

**5** Responsibility for the site went to the new mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. Livingstone, whom I did not know, asked me if I would be on the committee, which I joined in 2002. The committee met every six weeks, working out the most engaged, popular way to include the public in the process. I was asked if I would chair the meetings because they wanted someone outside the arts and I agreed. What could possibly go wrong? Well, the Queen Mother died. That had nothing to do with me. Given that she was 101 her passing was a much anticipated, if very sad, event.

**10** Less anticipated was the suggestion by Simon Hughes, a Liberal Democrat MP and potential candidate for the London mayoralty, that the Queen Mother's likeness be placed on the vacant fourth plinth. Worlds collided.

The next day, the *Daily Mail* ran a front page headline: "Carve her name in pride - Join our campaign for a statue of the Queen Mother to be erected in Trafalgar Square (whatever the panjandrum of political correctness say!)" Inside, an editorial asked whether our committee "would really respond to the national mood and agree a memorial **15** in Trafalgar Square".

Never mind that a committee, convened by parliament, had already decided how the plinth should be filled. Never mind that it was supposed to be an equestrian statue and that the Queen Mother will not be remembered for riding horses. Never mind that no one from the royal family or any elected official had approached us.

The day after that came a double-page spread headlined "Are they taking the plinth?", alongside excerpts of articles **20** I had written several years ago, taken out of context, under the headline "The thoughts of Chairman Gary". Once again the editorial writers were upon us: "The saga of the empty plinth is another example of the yawning gap between the metropolitan elite hijacking this country and the majority of ordinary people who simply want to reclaim Britain as their own." The *Mail's* quotes were truer than it dared imagine. It called on people to write in, but precious few did. No one was interested in having the Queen Mother in Trafalgar Square. The campaign died a **25** sad and pathetic death. Luckily for me, it turned out that, if there was a gap between anyone and the ordinary people of the country on this issue, then the *Daily Mail* was on the wrong side of it.

This, however, was simply the most insistent attempt to find a human occupant for the plinth. Over the years there have been requests to put David Beckham, Bill Morris, Mary Seacole, Benny Hill and Paul Gascoigne up there. None of these figures were particularly known for riding horses either. But with each request I got, I would make **30** the petitioner an offer: if you can name those who occupy the other three plinths, then the fourth is yours. Of course, the plinth was not actually in my gift. But that didn't matter because I knew I would never have to deliver. I knew the answer because I had made it my business to. The other three were Maj Gen Sir Henry Havelock, who distinguished himself during what is now known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when an uprising of thousands of Indians ended in slaughter; Gen Sir Charles Napier, who crushed a rebellion in Ireland and conquered the Sindh **35** province in what is now Pakistan; and King George IV, an alcoholic, debtor and womaniser. The petitioners generally had no idea who any of them were. And when they finally conceded that point, I would ask them: "So why would you want to put someone else up there so we could forget them? I understand that you want to preserve their memory. But you've just shown that this is not a particularly effective way to remember people."

In Britain, we seem to have a peculiar fixation with statues, as we seek to petrify historical discourse, lather it in **40** cement, hoist it high and insist on it as a permanent statement of fact, culture, truth and tradition that can never be questioned, touched, removed or recast. This statue obsession mistakes adulation for history, history for heritage and heritage for memory. It attempts to detach the past from the present, the present from morality, and morality from responsibility. In short, it attempts to set our understanding of what has happened in stone, beyond interpretation, investigation or critique. But history is not set in stone. It is a living discipline, subject to excavation, **45** evolution and maturation. Our understanding of the past shifts. Our views on women's suffrage, sexuality, medicine, education, child-rearing and masculinity are not the same as they were 50 years ago, and will be different again in another 50 years. But while our sense of who we are, what is acceptable and what is possible changes with time, statues don't. They stand, indifferent to the play of events, impervious to the tides of thought that might wash over them and the winds of change that swirl around them – or at least they do until we decide to take them down.

**How Meghan disrupted ‘invisible contract’ between royals and press.** By Archie Bland *The Guardian*, March 13, 2021.

**1** In an interview stuffed with quotable lines, it was among the most resonant: the “invisible contract”, as the Duke of Sussex called it, that has bound the royal family and reporters together for years. In this telling, it is not that the royals enjoy their media duties, or view them as a responsibility, but that the only way to survive the press is to strike a deal with it. “There’s a reason that these tabloids have holiday parties at the palace,” Meghan said. “They’re **5** hosted by the palace, the tabloids are. You know, there is a construct that’s at play there.” If the royal family’s dislike for the press was in any doubt, perhaps the most memorable confirmation came in Prince Charles’s remarks to his sons, caught by an unnoticed microphone, during a photoshoot in Klosters, Switzerland, on a skiing holiday in 2005. “I hate doing this. Bloody people,” he said through visibly gritted teeth, before focusing on the BBC’s Nicholas Witchell. “I can’t bear that man anyway. He’s so awful, he really is. I hate these people.” They sat for the **10** photos all the same.

Now that Harry and Meghan have so explicitly identified that contract, it is hard to see them, at least, ever having a way back into it. But a seasoned royal communications operative says they have a point – and the deal still exists for the rest of the family. They compared the relationship to that endured by politicians who seek positive headlines. “This is the same battle every prime minister has. There is a quid pro quo relationship – there’s a reason senior **15** officials try to build relationships with editors. It’s about negotiating for favourable coverage.”

“It isn’t explicit stuff,” the former Buckingham Palace senior official argued. “But often in times of a rough period of coverage, there’d be meetings arranged and you might find, for example, that an editor has a pet project that’s important to them on a personal basis.”

In a week that claims of media racism became a central part of the debate over the treatment of Harry and Meghan, **20** Marcus Ryder, a visiting professor in media diversity at Birmingham City University, argued that a mixed-race woman’s arrival in the family fatally disrupted that cosy – if compromised – relationship. “The whole point of a culture like this is that it survives on the basis of unwritten rules,” he said. “And so when somebody comes into that culture from outside, it forces you to address those rules, or even make them explicit, and in doing so reexamine them. It’s often the person from the margins who might make us reassess something like this.”

**25** The final nature of that rupture was further reinforced when it emerged that the couple had complained to Ofcom about Piers Morgan’s discussion on Good Morning Britain of their interview, having already complained to ITV. It came as Associated Newspapers, the publisher of the *Daily Mail*, wrote to the US broadcaster Viacom CBS over what it said was the “indefensible” use of images during Oprah Winfrey’s interview with the Sussexes that had been “doctored or presented as headlines when they were not” to suggest racist coverage.

**30** While Harry and Meghan did not comment further themselves, they made their view on whether the media has a diversity problem even clearer on Friday when they made a launch donation to a new charity, the PressPad Charitable Foundation, which “exists to improve socio-economic diversity within the media” – and announced Ryder as a trustee.

Three former royal reporters declined to comment on whether the old relationship was based on quid pro quos. But **35** Priyanka Raval, an early-career journalist at the Bristol Cable – one of the outlets to withdraw from consideration for the Society of Editors’ Press Awards after it released a statement saying that there was no racism in the British media – said that as a journalist of colour she had long been sceptical of the mix of national newspapers and the monarchy. “It’s the old establishment and the biased establishment, it’s a toxic combination,” she said. “Meghan came in with naive fresh eyes and she might have accidentally disrupted this whole way of being.” Raval said she **40** was proud of the Bristol Cable, which is run as a cooperative, for taking a “principled stance” on the subject, and suggested that the crumbling of the previous consensus on coverage of the royals and racism alike should be used to make way for something better. “I really disagree with the insinuation that we have to close ranks,” she said. “We’re doing journalism in a completely different way.”

**The ‘free speech’ law will make university debate harder, not easier.** By David Renton *The Guardian* 22 May 2021

**1** The government has published its higher education (freedom of speech) bill. Under it, universities will have a new duty to secure freedom of speech for staff members, students and visiting speakers. Anyone (“a person”) will be able to sue (“bring civil proceedings”) where they believe that a university or student union has failed to protect free speech. An official with the Orwellian title of “director for freedom of speech and academic freedom” will have **5** to decide if courses, talks and university policies maintain academic freedom. It is not wrong to think that free speech is often threatened. But much of the intimidation in recent years has come from Conservatives and the right. Take the equalities minister publicly criticising a journalist for doing their job. Or the culture secretary intervening in the curatorial decisions of museums. As for the university sector, in 2019, Warwick lecturer Dr Goldie Osuri was accused of telling students: “The idea that the Labour party is antisemitic is very much an **10** Israeli lobby kind of idea.” This year, Conservative MP Jonathan Gullis (a man who signed a letter that made use of the trope “cultural Marxism”) said that not just Osuri but the staff who investigated her and even her vice-chancellor all “need to go”. In 2020, the Daily Mail newspaper published a story accusing a Cambridge professor, Priyamvada Gopal, of inciting racism. Later, it admitted it had libelled her, apologised and paid her £25,000 in compensation. The conservative commentator Douglas Murray argued, in relation to a tweet that Gopal had **15** authored, that only her race protected her from dismissal.

There is no limit to the range of orders that can be sought under the government’s new bill. Under it, Osuri or Gopal could sue their universities requiring them to say that free speech was absolute and the university would not dismiss them. (It would not give either lecturer any protection against Conservative MPs lobbying for their dismissal.) But the bill empowers a much wider group of people than lecturers. It is almost unique in British law in the breadth of **20** its provision. Compare, for example, our rules on judicial review: if someone wants to challenge a decision of government they must have “standing” – they must be affected by the decision they challenge. But in the bill there is no standing requirement. Any person, any business, any campaign can sue.

Think of what this will do to ministers’ other policies: for example, their insistence that universities must implement the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Critics argue that the **25** definition prohibits criticisms of Israel. If the bill is passed, then any university that has adopted the IHRA definition would be making themselves vulnerable to being sued – by a student, a lecturer, by anyone – for an order requiring the university to rewrite its policies and permit absolute free speech. Isn’t it a good thing if anyone can sue? Not if the result is that every lecture, every seminar, every guest speech could end up in court action. In civil litigation, the loser must pay the winning side’s costs. The law is always, therefore, more attractive to the sorts of **30** public campaigns that can find a wealthy sponsor to pay the bills if they lose. Given the context in which it has emerged, the bill is clearly intended to protect rightwing campaigns, giving them a right to threaten universities in two ways at once. They will use the bill as a shield, demanding that their own speech is protected. They will use it as a sword, complaining that any radical speech is an attack on them. If the bill passes then every time a university celebrates International Women’s Day there will be men’s rights organisations insisting that the university platform **35** them, too. Every historian found to be teaching a course on the slave trade will give rise to demands that another lecture is provided, prioritising the slave owners’ view. The civil servants who drafted the consultation for the bill took the view that all speech should be allowed so long as it was speech that the speaker supported. Equality law, they argued, agreed with them in favour of the maximum possible speech: “A speaking event where the content has been clearly advertised in advance is unlikely to constitute harassment if attenders attend with prior knowledge **40** of the views likely to be expressed.”

## **Don't expect Biden to trumpet lofty aims for his rescue plans – he's simply Mr Fix-it**

Robert Reich *The Guardian*, Apr. 4, 2021

Joe Biden is embarking on the biggest government initiative in more than a half-century, “unlike anything we have seen or done since we built the interstate highway system and the space race decades go”, he says.

But when it comes to details, it sounds as boring as fixing the plumbing. “Under the American Jobs Plan, 100% of our nation’s lead pipes and service lines will be replaced – so every child in America can turn on the faucet or fountain and drink clean water,” the president tweeted.

Can you imagine Donald Trump tweeting about repairing lead pipes?

Biden is excited about rebuilding America’s “infrastructure”, a word he uses constantly although it could be the dullest term in all of public policy.

The old unwritten rule was that if a president wants to do something really big, he has to justify it as critical to national defense or else summon the nation’s conscience.

Dwight Eisenhower’s National Interstate and Defense Highway Act was designed to “permit quick evacuation of target areas” in case of nuclear attack and get munitions quickly from city to city. Of course, in subsequent years it proved indispensable to America’s economic growth.

America’s huge investment in higher education in the late 1950s was spurred by the Soviets’ Sputnik satellite. The official purpose of the National Defense Education Act was to “insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States”. John F Kennedy launched the race to the moon in 1962 so that space wouldn’t be “governed by a hostile flag of conquest”.

Two years later, Lyndon Johnson’s “unconditional war on poverty” drew on the conscience of America reeling from Kennedy’s assassination. But Biden is not arousing the nation against a foreign power – not even China figures prominently as a foil – nor is he basing his plans on lofty appeals to national greatness or public morality.

“I got elected to solve problems,” he says, simply. He’s Mr Fix-it.

The first of these problems was a pandemic that has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans – Biden carries a card in his pocket with the exact number – and its ensuing economic hardship. In response, Congress passed Biden’s \$1.9tn American Rescue Plan – the most important parts of which aren’t \$1,400 checks now being mailed to millions of Americans but \$3,600 checks a child paid to low-income families, which will cut child poverty by half.

Now comes his \$2tn American Jobs Plan, which doesn’t just fund roads and bridges but a vast number of things the nation has neglected for years: schools, affordable housing, in-home care, access to broadband, basic research, renewable energy and the transition to a non-fossil economy.

Why isn’t Biden trumpeting these initiatives for what they are – huge public investments in the environment, the working-class and poor – instead of rescue checks and road repairs? Why not stir America with a vision of what the nation can be if it exchanges fraudulent trickle-down economics for genuine bottom-up innovation and growth? Even the official titles of his initiatives – Rescue Plan, Jobs Plan and soon-to-be-unveiled Family Plan – are anodyne, like plumbing blueprints.

The reason is that Biden wants Americans to feel confident he’s taking care of the biggest problems but doesn’t want to create much of a stir. The country is so bitterly and angrily divided that any stir is likely to stir up vitriol.

Talk too much about combating climate change and lose everyone whose livelihood depends on fossil fuels or who doesn’t regard climate change as an existential threat. Focus on cutting child poverty and lose everyone who thinks welfare causes dependency. Talk too much about critical technologies and lose those who think the government shouldn’t be picking winners.

Rescue checks and road repairs may be boring but they’re hugely popular. Sixty-one per cent of Americans support the American Rescue Plan, including 59% of Republicans. More than 80% support increased funding for highway construction, bridge repair and expanded access to broadband. Biden has made it all so bland that congressional Republicans and their business backers have nothing to criticize except his proposal to pay for the repairs by raising taxes on corporations, which most Americans support.

This is smart politics. Biden is embarking on a huge and long-overdue repair job on the physical and human underpinnings of the nation while managing to keep most of a bitterly divided country with him. It may not be seen as glamorous work, but when you’re knee-deep in muck, it’s hard to argue with a plumber.

**Brexit Is Probably the United Kingdom's Death Knell.** By Brent Peabody *Foreign Policy*, February 3, 2021.

**1** A hundred years ago, Northern Ireland was established, and with it the current shape of the United Kingdom. That familiar form has survived World War II, the Troubles, and no fewer than three referendums on Scotland's political status. But it may not survive Brexit, which has scrambled political allegiances and rekindled separatism in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Today, Brexit has placed unprecedented stress on the already fraying bonds between the **5** United Kingdom's four constituent countries, putting the union's future in doubt. The gravest and most immediate threat comes from Scotland, which headed off an independence referendum in 2014 but could hold a second one soon, thanks to the strength of the Scottish National Party (SNP). The party currently holds 47 of Scotland's 59 seats in Westminster and a further 61 (four short of a majority) in Holyrood. Buoyed by the fallout from Brexit, the SNP is projected to win an outright majority in this year's Scottish Parliament election, claiming a mandate for a **10** second independence referendum in the process. The strong likelihood of a SNP majority in Scotland's devolved Parliament should worry unionists; the last time it happened in 2011, an independence referendum followed just three years after.

Of course, any second independence referendum would have to run through Westminster, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson has promised to "return to sender" any request to hold one. But that could soon change. Britain's **15** next general election is scheduled for 2024, and in the likelihood that neither Labour nor the Tories win a majority, the SNP will play kingmaker. Their price will be a second independence referendum. Labour leader Keir Starmer has ruled out any Labour-SNP coalition, but his calculus could change once faced with the prospect of a fifth consecutive Conservative government. The Tories' Johnson has likewise ruled out any Conservative-SNP coalition, mindful that it could lead to Scotland's departure. But the famously opportunistic Johnson has **20** disappointed unionists before, and it's not out of the question that he could again for political survival. What's clear is that, whether after a landslide in this year's elections for Scottish Parliament or after coalition talks at Westminster, the SNP is in due course to get its second referendum.

And this time, there is every reason to believe they will win it. Polls have shown consistent majorities in favor of independence. The SNP has seen its approval ratings skyrocket over its handling of COVID-19. And the most **25** effective argument deployed against independence in 2014—that secession would jeopardize Scotland's place in the EU—is now void. Moreover, the last referendum revealed deep age disparities that should worry unionists; 67.1 percent of those over 70 voted to stay in the union, while 62.2 percent of those aged 25-29 voted to leave it. In other words, Scotland's older, pro-remain generation is being replaced by one that's both more open to independence and keener on securing Scotland's place back in the EU.

**30** The specter of separatism is just as pronounced across the Irish Sea. When the enclave of Northern Ireland was formed 100 years ago, Protestants—overwhelmingly Unionist—outnumbered Catholics by two to one. But their majority has since disappeared. The 2011 census saw Protestants fall below 50 percent of the population for the first time, and the 2021 census is projected to see Catholics outnumber Protestants outright. These changing demographics became apparent in 2019's U.K. general election, when nationalist parties (who seek to rejoin the **35** Republic of Ireland) won more seats than unionist ones for the first time ever. Polling, too, has shown growing support for reunification, including a landmark 2019 poll that showed a majority in favor of leaving the U.K. It is Brexit, however, that has most reignited the question of Northern Ireland's political status by bringing it into closer union with the Republic. In many ways, Brexit has brought Northern Ireland closer to Dublin than London; goods that travel from Northern Ireland to the Republic face no customs barrier, whereas since Brexit those that travel **40** from Northern Ireland to the rest of Britain now do. Irish unification has also become a more salient issue in the Republic, where the nationalist Sinn Féin (the former political outfit of the IRA) finished narrowly ahead in the 2020 general election. The potent combination of changing demographics, Brexit, and Sinn Féin's newfound prominence south of the border means the question of Irish unification will loom large in the coming decade. Taken together, the dual threats of Northern Ireland and Scotland pose an unprecedented risk to the U.K.'s current shape. **45** And if both were to leave it, it's not unimaginable that Wales could follow them out the door—though it is unlikely. The ties between England and Wales are much stronger, dating back to the Edwardian conquest of Wales in the 13th century and reinforced over eight centuries of closer economic and geographic proximity. And whereas Northern Ireland has the chance of reunification with a buoyant Irish economy, and Scotland hopes to keep reaping the benefits of North Sea Oil, Wales' economic prospects on its own are not as promising.

**The Professional Women Who Are Leaning Out** By Olga Khazan *The Atlantic* May 2, 2021

To be a working mother during a global pandemic is to be constantly torn between your kids and your clients. At times in the past year, Amy Conway-Hatcher, a lawyer at a big firm in Washington, D.C., would overhear her two children having dinner with her husband and not be able to join them, because she was working 80-to-100-hour weeks on a big case.

5 For Allison Fastow, “having it all” meant listening to her 6-year-old sob and bang on her door in search of comfort and not being able to give it to him, because she was in the middle of an important call. “The distance that you have as a parent working outside of the home keeps you from seeing these things,” she told me, and then started to cry. Parents might tell themselves, *My kids love their nanny; they love their teacher*. But sometimes, in moments of anxiety and uncertainty and stress, Fastow said, “there really is no replacement for Mom and Dad.”

10 Last spring, Molly Quigley was working seven days a week as the communications director for Clyde’s, a restaurant group in D.C. Many days, she, too, was in tears, because part of her job was laying off the restaurants’ workers. Meanwhile, her three kids were posted up all around her, doing Zoom school. “I was just, like, yelling at everybody all day long,” she told me. “And my 6-year-old wasn’t staying on his Zoom class. And I finally realized, *I just can’t do it all.*”

15 All three women—Quigley, Fastow, and Conway-Hatcher—have since left their ultra-demanding jobs or are about to. For working parents, “what was barely doable has become impossible,” says Katie Porter, a single mother who represents Orange County, California, in Congress. At one point during a recent Zoom hearing, Porter’s teenage son wandered into the background and began rooting around in the fridge.

20 In part because of pressures like these, nearly 2.5 million women have left the workforce since the pandemic began. About a third of mothers are considering “downshifting” their careers or pulling out of the workforce, according to research from the consulting firm McKinsey. This is the first time in six years that the consultancy has found women expressing such a strong interest in working less. “They were feeling a lot more burned out; they were feeling like they have extra responsibilities outside of the workplace, and not having flexibility at work,” Jess Huang, an author of the McKinsey report, told me.

25 This downshifting is barely perceptible in national data: The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a slight increase in part-time work since the pandemic started, but that is among workers doing so for economic reasons, because they couldn’t find full-time work. Lower-income people have fewer choices than rich people—they might be working a part-time job because that’s all that’s available, or because they can’t afford child care for longer, or because more hours would have meant more exposure to COVID-19.

30 But some women have been so worn down by the competing stressors of the pandemic that they welcome the shift to fewer paid working hours. Over the past several weeks, I’ve talked with half a dozen professional women who have left their full-time jobs, are now working less than full time, and are happier as a result. The women I interviewed are immensely lucky. Most of them have a partner who also brings in income. Most of them made enough at their previous jobs to allow for a brief, low-speed detour. Most of them work in fields in which freelancing or part-time contract work is an option. High-paid office workers, the types of people I interviewed, are  
35 “making choices around work based on their level of sanity, or level of insanity, that they’re willing to put up with,” says Misty Heggeness, a research economist at the U.S. Census Bureau who focuses on families. The level of insanity, never particularly low, has now become more than many can withstand.

40 Some of the women I spoke with hesitated to admit they were working less; that is not the way of the boss lady. Through Sheryl Sandberg, Gloria Steinem, Barbie, Ann Taylor, the real-estate market, *Sex and the City*, and practically every other implement of capitalism, white-collar moms have absorbed the message that you should work as hard as you can and make as much money as humanly possible. Working fewer hours in order to spend more time with your kids isn’t leaning in. It is anachronistic.

45 But the pandemic has reset expectations for how life is supposed to be. When schools and day cares closed, and no free child-care options were available in many states, some parents said, *Well, if the government won’t help me take care of my family, I guess I will do it myself*. “The pandemic kind of forced people to reconsider the enormous sacrifices that they have made over the years for career, job earnings, and market income,” says Nancy Folbre, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. [...]

**Warning royal family may not survive when Queen dies.** By Daniela Elser *News.com.au*, February 1, 2021.

1 On the sad day the Queen passes away, every news organisation, magazine and paper in the world will swing into well-oiled action. The obituaries have long been written; the special editions and commemorative pull out sections designed; the TV stations already know exactly where they will each broadcast from outside Buckingham Palace. For decades now ‘Operation London Bridge,’ the breathtakingly comprehensive action plan about what happens 5 when Her Majesty dies, has been locked in and collecting dust in various drawers in London. However despite the extensive preparation, despite the meetings and the thousands and thousands of hours spent meticulously plotting and scripting even the most minute details, there is one yawning, unknowable chasm that courtiers and HRHs cannot prepare themselves for: Will the monarchy survive once King Charles III is crowned?

Now, a new book has made a startling and portentous claim, which is that the current sovereign will go down in 10 history as the last woman to hold that particular post. In the ominously titled, *The Last Queen*, esteemed journalist Clive Irving writes “Queen Elizabeth II is the longest-reigning monarch in British history and will likely be the last Queen of England.”

He argues that during the Sussexes’ showstopper 2018 wedding at St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle, “She must also have known that she was probably the last queen her country would ever see.” The next three heirs are 15 all male and assuming the youngest, six-year-old Prince George, lives a hale and hearty life (those Saxe-Coburg and Gotha plus Mountbatten genes are made of stern stuff) then there will be a man on the throne for the next 80 years or so.

When the Queen passes away, a fact that is hard to square away with the relatively spritely step of the 94-year-old, there will not be another Queen regnant (a Queen who rules in her own right as opposed to the title given to the 20 wife of the King) for the better of a century at least. Sombre stuff indeed, right?

His case is sound and therefore all the more concerning for monarchists, palace courtiers and people who spend a considerable part of their day writing about the royal family. (Cough.) To Irving’s mind, Her Majesty has made a whopping success of her reign by becoming a regal cipher, an inherently unknowable public figure who has kept up the mystique surrounding her role by resolutely remaining “amazingly unknowable”. However to his mind, and 25 many others, things are likely to get particularly iffy when she heads off to the big racecourse in the sky and her son becomes King Charles III, a man who to Irving has achieved the opposite of his mother: We know far too much about him. For years on end now, we have known about everything from his enduring support for homoeopathy to his thoughts on badger culling, to the overfishing of the Patagonian toothfish, and even his occasional bouts of tampon-fancying. While the Queen has turned dour aloofness and silence into an exquisite art form, Charles has 30 shown no such restraint. Irving points to the fact that the prince has notably inserted himself into several consequential architectural projects which have shaped (or would have shaped) the London skyline. (The prince, for all you modernist buffs out there, seems to fancy some sort of aesthetic return to centuries gone by.) “He is that most dangerous of meddlers who combines ignorance and opinion as a guide to his actions,” Irving writes.

In 2014, “a well placed source who has known him for many years” revealed that once Charles is King, “the strategy 35 will be to try and continue with his heartfelt interventions” in national life. But does the UK – and the Commonwealth – really want a vocal sovereign willing to jump on his high horse whenever the mood strikes? [...] I think there’s a really real risk that if Charles does succeed her that the monarchy will go over a cliff very fast,” Irving recently told Vanity Fair. “This question of the survival of the monarchy hasn’t really arisen since the time of [Edward VIII’s] abdication, but it will come up as a real smack in the face. Charles has a serious problem ... he 40 doesn’t look like an invigorating generational shift, does he?”

**Church of England paves the way for same-sex marriages after three years of behind-closed-doors arguments on issue - as Archbishops apologise for 'damage' caused to LGBT community.** By Steve Doughty *The Daily Mail*, November 10, 2020.

**1** Archbishops have apologised for the 'damage and hurt' caused to the LGBT community as the Church of England yesterday paved the way for same-sex marriages after three years of behind-closed-doors arguments on the issue. Leaders admitted 'talk of truth, holiness and discipleship has been wielded harshly' and promised to make a decision within two years on changing Anglican rules that say gay sex is sinful.

**5** A group led by the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally, will devise a 'way forward for the Church in relation to human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage'. Church leaders have produced a 480-page book, with accompanying films, podcasts and education courses to explore the issue. The Church has been deeply divided over gay rights since 1987, when its parliament, the General Synod, first voted to reinforce traditional teaching that gay sex is sinful. Earlier this year bishops restated the teaching that sex is for married couples only

**10** and that civil partnerships should be 'sexually abstinent friendships'.

Same-sex civil marriages were introduced in 2014 and their predecessor, civil partnerships that carry the rights of marriage in all but name, were brought in in 2005. However the legislation gave faith groups an effective opt-out.

Archbishop Welby said in a foreword to the book, written with the Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, that the Church should be ashamed of causing hurt to gay people. They said: 'As soon as we begin to

**15** consider questions of sexual identity and behaviour, we need to acknowledge the huge damage and hurt that has been caused where talk of truth, holiness and discipleship has been wielded harshly and not ministered as a healing balm. 'Especially amongst LGBTI+ people, every word we use – quite possibly including these in this very foreword, despite all the care we exercise – may cause pain. 'We have caused, and continue to cause, hurt and unnecessary suffering. For such acts, each of us, and the Church collectively, should be deeply ashamed and

**20** repentant. As archbishops, we are personally very sorry where we have contributed to this. The Bishop of Coventry, the Right Reverend Christopher Cocksworth, who helped produced yesterday's new material, said: 'There is no doubt that there are certain decisions in 2022 that the Church will have to face.'

He added: 'There are some who feel this doctrine of marriage is ripe for development.'

Discussions are expected to be completed next year and to lead to 'a timely conclusion in 2022 which would then

**25** be put before Synod.' The Synod has the power to enact legally-binding rules but its deliberations are lengthy. They could mean the first Church of England same-sex marriages would be solemnised by 2025.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, attempted a reform in 2017. But his scheme, which would have allowed blessing services but not marriage for gay couples, went down to an ignominious defeat

**30** in the Synod. It satisfied neither gay rights supporters nor conservative evangelicals, who combined to defeat it. The years since have been devoted to the secretive production of yesterday's book and films, called *Living in Love and Faith*.

The archbishops added: 'Defensiveness is felt, and aggression is experienced, both by those who long for change and by those who believe, sincerely, that change would be wrong and damaging.'

**35** A further statement signed by all the CofE's bishops said: 'Disagreements are to be found among us as bishops. We do not agree on a number of matters relating to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. 'Some of those differences of view relate to the ethics and lifestyle of opposite sex relationships and some relate to questions around gender and pastoral provisions for transgender people. Most pressing among our differences are questions around same-sex relationships, and we recognize that here decisions in several interconnected areas need

**40** to be made with some urgency.'

Any new deal on gay rights and same-sex marriage may follow the same pattern as the row over women priests and bishops, which also ran for decades and ended in compromise. While women are now appointed as both priests and bishops, parishes where traditionalists hold sway continue to maintain men-only clergy.

Jayne Ozanne, a prominent LGBT campaigner and former member of the Archbishops Council, told **45** the Telegraph she welcomed the Archbishops' apology, adding: 'But, listening and learning is not enough. We need to act now to ensure that safeguards are put in place to protect LGBTI+ people.'



**Trump Supporters Storm U.S. Capitol, Clash With Police** By MARISA PEÑALOZA *NPR* January 6, 2021

Thousands of Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, prompting the House and Senate to abruptly take a recess as the U.S. Capitol Police locked down the building. D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser ordered a citywide curfew from 6 p.m. on Wednesday until 6 a.m. on Thursday.

Protesters had amassed in Washington, D.C., to reject the results of the Nov. 3 election, cheering as President Trump himself addressed the crowd and urged them to protest what he falsely claims was a rigged election before marching to the Capitol and pushing past security barriers there.

The protests are timed to coincide with Congress' certification of the Electoral College votes and aim to pressure Republican lawmakers into supporting Trump's effort to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's electoral victory. Trump supporters, many wearing red MAGA hats but no face masks, gathered at The Ellipse where the president addressed them midday Wednesday. The crowd faced the White House and a stage was flanked by two big "Save America March" signs swayed to the beat of the Village People song "Macho Man" and Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean."

After the speech, they pushed past barriers onto the Capitol grounds, while yelling, "Whose Capitol? Our Capitol," NPR's Hannah Allam reports. Police and other security put up more barriers and security layers as protesters breached the initial security layer. Protesters climbed the scaffolding, looking for any way in to get to the Capitol, Allam said, and armed police rushed in tackling them.

As thousands of Trump supporters climbed up the side of the Capitol to get inside, bursts of what appeared to be gas canisters are being fired though it was not clear who was firing them.

Earlier, the mood was celebratory though the rhetoric was angry with speaker after speaker telling the crowd, "We can't back down. This is just the beginning." The president's son Donald Trump Jr. greeted the crowd with: "Hello, Patriots!" Outside the U.S. Capitol, several dozen Trump supporters waved flags and prayed for "angel armies" to intervene, calling on lawmakers inside to "reject" the election. A huge contingent of Proud Boys marched in, some chanting "storm the Capitol" and "1776!" and massed for the Capitol building.

For many in the crowd, it was inconceivable that Congress would certify the November vote, as it's expected to. Echoing the president's words, they pledged to fight, some calling for a rebellion and others vowing to refocus energy on the 2024 race. And they made it clear that Republicans who didn't back Trump would pay a price.

"We're not moving on," said Lawrence Ligas, a 55-year-old from Chicago who said he used to be a Democrat before Trump "earned" his vote. "We are not Republicans. We are the MAGA party. We are patriots," he said.

Nearby, 28-year-old Lisa Hayes was attracting a crowd with her outfit: a white tulle ballgown covered with mail-in ballots marked "STOLEN." "I am the 2020 election," Hayes said. As she was explaining that the importance of election integrity brought her to Washington, a bystander interrupted and gestured toward her thin outfit in 43-degree weather.

"You're not freezing?" he asked Hayes.

"My blood is boiling, so I'm fine!" she replied.

Mayor Bowser had said Wednesday that her city was ready to keep protests peaceful and protesters safe, even though Trump tweeted that Wednesday's protests would be "wild." "I think it's unfortunate that the president himself has incited violence," said the mayor.

Police established a bigger "traffic box" a perimeter where vehicle traffic is restricted, she said, and, "we have our entire police force activated" along with National Guard and with help from other nearby jurisdictions, the mayor said. "All of that is very expensive," said Bowser, "we incur overtime costs when we do that."

The nation's capital is a cradle of protests, and Bowser says it's the city's responsibility to provide support for the movements of the president and the many demonstrations taking place in the Trump administration. The federal government hasn't paid its public safety bill in two years, but Bowser says she's confident that D.C. will be reimbursed. "The federal government owes us about \$100 million," she said. "We will continue to work with the Congress to make sure we're made whole for our emergency fund."

Bowser also praised D.C. police for the arrest earlier this week of Henry "Enrique" Tarrío, leader of the far-right group Proud Boys. Tarrío has been barred from the District and is facing misdemeanor destruction of property charges and two felony counts of possession of high capacity firearm magazines.

According to court documents obtained by NPR, the magazines are AR-15/M4 compatible with a capacity of 30 rounds each, and every magazine is labeled with the Proud Boys insignia.

"I sell on my site," Tarrío told the officers who found the magazines in his bookbag. "I had a customer that bought those two mags, and they got returned 'cause it was a wrong address. And I contacted him, and he's like, 'I'm going to be in D.C.,' so I'm like, 'OK, I'll take 'em to you.' "

Proud Boys members typically dress in black and yellow, but are planning to wear all black, to mimic Antifa, a loose affiliation of far-left activists. The two groups have violently clashed in the past.

The U.S. Park Police confirmed that permits for Wednesday's rally at The Ellipse had all been approved, including an amendment from 5,000 people to 30,000 people. [...]

**For One Immigrant Community, George Floyd's Death Isn't Just About Black And White** By Ashley

Westerman, Noel King, and Matt Kwong *NPR* June 4, 2020

There's something about the video of the George Floyd killing that makes it very specific to the Twin Cities.

The video shows a white police officer and a black male victim — a familiar dynamic in similar videos and killings seen nationwide — but there's a third identifiable person: an Asian American officer seen running interference with the crowd and standing watch. He's now-former Minneapolis police officer Tou Thao, a Hmong American — which is how you know this isn't "any" city. It's Minneapolis.

And his presence not only has heightened slow-burning tensions between the Asian American and black neighborhoods in the Twin Cities area but has also divided his own tightknit immigrant community — which also happens to be the largest urban Hmong enclave in the world.

"If I think about it too much, I might start crying," says Gaosong Heu. She and her husband, Marc, run Marc Heu Patisserie Paris in Frogtown, the St. Paul neighborhood that is the heart of the area's Hmong population — and where she grew up.

"I didn't know that he was Hmong until I saw his name," she says. "Tou Thao is a very Hmong name."

In America, there are only 18 clans of Hmong, an ethnic group from Laos, Vietnam and parts of China that sided with the United States during the Vietnam War. In the early 1960s, the CIA recruited Hmong to help keep the communist North Vietnamese out of neighboring Laos. In return, the U.S. promised to take care of them and their families. When Laos fell to the communists and U.S. troops pulled out in 1975, thousands of Hmong fled as refugees to neighboring Thailand and then resettled in the United States.

Many, like Gaosong Heu's parents, came to the Twin Cities to start a new life. According to 2010 census data, some 64,000 Hmong live in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Thao, who was fired by the Minneapolis Police Department last month, is from that same community. Multiple news outlets report that Thao completed his police academy training in 2009 and had previously been sued by a black man for excessive force, according to the *Star Tribune*.

Derek Chauvin, the Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee into George Floyd's neck for more than eight minutes, has been arrested and charged with second-degree murder. The Minnesota attorney general's office announced Wednesday that it was charging Thao with aiding and abetting and was taking him into custody. "I am ashamed, embarrassed about Tou Thao's complicit behavior in this murder," Heu says. "But more than that, the reaction of my community and almost a defense of him in this case."

The debate over Thao's real or perceived complicity as another man of color is killed has arrived in a community that has always had underlying tensions with its black neighbors. This goes back to the 1970s, when the Hmong arrived as refugees and were "plopped into the most affordable parts of town," says Bo Thao-Urabe, a Hmong refugee and head of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders in St. Paul. She has no known relation to former officer Thao.

"So we live in proximity to black and brown people," she says. But even though Asian Americans were able to help grow neighborhoods like Frogtown into vibrant communities of color, there has always been tension. Hmong Americans rank lowest among Southeast Asian American ethnic groups "across multiple measures of income," with 60% of them low income and more than 1 of 4 living in poverty, according to a recent study from the group Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

"The little resources that come to the community is what you're told is available," Thao-Urabe says. "And so when you have communities who have all kinds of needs, there's tension between communities who feel like they're not getting enough — and it's true, they are not getting what they need."

Since Floyd's death, Thao-Urabe says, people in the Hmong community have been afraid they'll become targets — either online or in real life. Shops all along University Avenue, Frogtown's main thoroughfare, are boarded up. This fear has coupled with the already lingering anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has produced an upsurge in violence against Asian Americans.

Thao-Urabe explains that those Hmong who defend ex-officer Thao argue that he shouldn't be viewed like a "white cop" — that is, assumed to be racist and privileged. She says these people say they face racism that goes unseen, despite the model minority myth perpetuated about Asian American immigrants.

"I think that in America, when we lump Asian Americans together, there is an assumed universal success," she says. "People have this preconceived notion that if you are Asian American, you must be educated. You must make a lot of money — and that is not the experience of this community."

In other words, some believe that when it comes to Thao, reserve judgment.

Both Thao-Urabe and Heu say the divide is bringing up the issue of anti-blackness in the Hmong community.

"And that's something we have to deal with," says Thao-Urabe, noting that there have been reports of Hmong leaders and activists "viciously" attacked online for their support for the black community and the Black Lives Matter movement. Some in the Hmong community argue "you can't be both pro-Hmong and pro-black," she says. [...]

**The Church of England's Imminent Death Brings Opportunities.** By David LARSON *Crisis Magazine*, April 20, 2021.

**1** The Church of England is crumbling so quickly it may barely reach its 500th birthday, in 2034. This is not just my opinion—it's the opinion of the church itself, which in the United States is known as the Episcopal Church and in Canada and elsewhere is typically known as the Anglican Church. Here in the U.S., the Episcopal Church's numbers are rapidly spiraling to zero. [...] Even the mother church in England is in dire straits, with less than one **5** million weekly attendees. Only 2% of the total population of England are regular worshippers in what had been the majority faith a century ago. Catholics, for comparison, have slightly fewer members at 8% (versus 12%) of the English population, but they are twice as likely to attend services (41% versus 21%). Just imagine Oliver Cromwell hearing the news that the papists and even Mohammedans rival them on their own shores.

In the colonies, the lack of attendees is likely a death sentence. Because of the church's position as the established **10** religion in England, though, it may stay on its feet a little longer (at least in a "Weekend at Bernie's" sense), as the shell of the nation's former faith is gradually transformed into a series of historical sites and museums. I do not mean to sound triumphalist at all in drawing your attention to the terminal status of this rival church. I was raised in a conservative Episcopalian family, now a laughable contradiction, and before I abandoned it for teenage rebellion, I loved that church. In fact, setting questions of sacrament and doctrine aside, I preferred it to many of **15** the liturgies I attend now as a Catholic. It felt like a full expression of the English-speaking Christian heritage, connecting you to something bigger, older, and firmer—similar to the pull that brings many to the Latin Mass. So, rather than cheap mockery, I point out this death because I think it presents a few great opportunities for Catholics. The first is maybe the most vital: reestablishing Catholicism as the Church of England (and English speakers), at least in a cultural sense. The Church of England may have had a detour for the last 500 years, but it had been a **20** Catholic body for the 1,000 years before that. This is a fact the Catholic Church can draw on to re-evangelize the English-speaking peoples and return to its role as the people's church.

Right now, to be Catholic in the Anglosphere is to owe an explanation. Maybe you'll respond that you're Catholic because your family is Irish, or Polish, or Hispanic, but your Catholicism will still be evidence that you are not yet fully assimilated. You are even more of an oddity if you are from a traditionally Protestant ethnicity but decided to **25** buck the greater culture for allegiance with Rome.

With the Protestant Church of England on its death-bed, though, we have an opportunity to resurrect the Anglo-Catholic tradition from the ashes and hold it up as the truly traditional Faith of the English-speaking peoples. As G.K. Chesterton said in *The Everlasting Man*, "Christendom has had a series of revolutions and in each one of them Christianity has died. Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of **30** the grave."

To make this resurrection possible, it'll be necessary to make use of the English patrimony—those treasures of English Christianity—many of which predate the 500-year detour. As the Anglican Church has been crumbling, the Church has wisely seen this opportunity and begun this process. In 1980, Pope John Paul II allowed entire congregations of Episcopalians, Anglicans, and Methodists to become "Anglican-use" Catholic parishes. And then, **35** in 2009, Pope Benedict XVI released *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, which allowed these Anglican congregations to band together in ordinariates, which have a similar status to a diocese. The Vatican has also approved amended versions of their resources, like the Book of Divine Worship, an adapted version of the Book of Common Prayer.

It's above my pay grade to know whether it would be best long term to develop this into something similar to the Eastern-rite churches, which are in full communion but operate with their own (approved) liturgies and structures, **40** or whether Catholic parishes in the Anglosphere should just better embrace their English heritage. But in the process, we should make good use of this English patrimony to show how Catholicism is an ancient part of the culture, not a recent interloper.

5 **With second impeachment acquittal, republicans pass another trump loyalty test** By Eric Lutz *Vanity Fair*,  
February 13, 2021

A little over a year ago, as he closed the Democrats' first impeachment case against Donald Trump, Adam Schiff made one last appeal to Senate Republicans: If you don't say "enough" to his conduct now, you'll remove whatever guardrails exist to keep him in check. "He has betrayed our national security," the House Democrat said in February 2020, "and he will do so again."

5 Schiff's prediction proved true: Trump continued to blaze a trail of wanton corruption, moving on from pressuring foreign leaders to help him cheat in the election to pressuring domestic ones—and, when that failed, he spent months lying about "fraud," attacked the democratic process, and unleashed a deadly insurrection at the United States Capitol in a last-ditch effort to remain in power. His offense was even more severe, his wrongdoing even more overt than in pressuring Ukraine's president for dirt on the Bidens. This time, it nearly cost lawmakers, including those who defended him the first time around, their lives.

10 And yet, once again, Trump has skirted justice: the Senate once again acquitted him Saturday, in a 57-43 vote, with only seven GOP lawmakers breaking ranks: Mitt Romney, Lisa Murkowski, Richard Burr, Ben Sasse, Bill Cassidy, and Susan Collins. "The facts are clear," said Burr. "The evidence is compelling that President Trump is guilty of inciting an insurrection against a coequal branch of government and that the charge rises to the level of high Crimes and Misdemeanors. Therefore, I have voted to convict."

15 But 43 other Republicans were apparently unmoved by the Democratic impeachment managers' conclusive and emotionally-charged case against the former president. Democrat Ted Lieu cautioned that failure to act would mean Trump or another would-be authoritarian "can do this again" in the future, while lead impeachment manager Jamie Raskin implored senators to "exercise your common sense about what just took place in our country."

20 "If the Senate acquits Donald Trump, then any president could incite and provoke insurrectionary violence against us again," Raskin said. "If you don't find this a high crime and misdemeanor today, you have set a new terrible standard for presidential misconduct."

25 The disgraced ex-president's defense team in Bruce Castor, David Schoen, and Michael van der Veen didn't refute that case as much as they made noises trying to drown it out, combining legal-flavored language with a pinch of Trumpian defiance, pettifoggery, and whataboutism in hopes of stumbling upon something, anything, Republicans could use to justify the "nay" votes they'd already decided they'd make. Even after huddling on the eve of their brief defense with pro-Trump jurors Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz, and Mike Lee, the lawyers didn't quite manage to come up with anything but nonsense.

30 Meanwhile, Republicans, some of whom enabled Trump's coup attempt, were quick to dismiss the Democrats' damning case, which included chilling surveillance video showing just how close the tragedy at the Capitol, of which five people died, could've have been even worse. As the violent mob made their way through the Capitol, lawmakers were forced to hide; heroic officer Eugene Goodman, at one point, saved Romney as rioters approached. The pro-Trump mob sought out for Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

35 "Most Republicans," Graham said Thursday, "found the presentation by the House Managers offensive and absurd." Josh Hawley, who tried to overturn Joe Biden's victory in a free and fair election, seemed to shrug off the proceedings. At this point, anyone still defending Trump's conduct is either craven or in cahoots with him. If they're cool with Trump's antidemocratic violence, and the prospect of more from him or someone following in his footsteps, they could at least be honest and say so. Instead, Senators made up excuses, most notably that the impeachment process itself was unconstitutional because Trump is no longer in office—an effort led by Rand Paul. Never mind that House Democrats voted to impeach Trump while he was still president, while then-Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to immediately bring back the Senate.

40 It goes without saying, of course, that it doesn't matter if Trump's in the Oval Office or not: Declining to punish him for the coup attempt just because it failed is leaving the door open for it to happen again, be it from Trump in another White House bid or from somebody else who learned from his example. "If we pretend this didn't happen, or worse, if we let it go unanswered," Colorado Representative Joe Neguse said as part of the Democrats' closing remarks Thursday, "who's to say it won't happen again?" A similar unheeded warning already came to fruition one time—what will happen if it happens once more?

**A disturbing, viral Twitter thread reveals how AI-powered insurance can go wrong** By Sara Morrison *Vox*,  
May 27, 2021

Lemonade, the fast-growing, machine learning-powered insurance app, put out a real lemon of a Twitter thread on Monday with a proud declaration that its AI analyzes videos of customers when determining if their claims are fraudulent. The company has been trying to explain itself and its business model — and fend off serious accusations of bias, discrimination, and general creepiness — ever since.

5 The prospect of being judged by AI for something as important as an insurance claim was alarming to many who saw the thread, and it should be. We've seen how AI can discriminate against certain races, genders, economic classes, and disabilities, among other categories, leading to those people being denied housing, jobs, education, or justice. Now we have an insurance company that prides itself on largely replacing human brokers and actuaries with bots and AI, collecting data about customers without them realizing they were giving it away, and using those data points to assess their risk.

10 Over a series of seven tweets, Lemonade claimed that it gathers more than 1,600 "data points" about its users — "100X more data than traditional insurance carriers," the company claimed. The thread didn't say what those data points are or how and when they're collected, simply that they produce "nuanced profiles" and "remarkably predictive insights" which help Lemonade determine, in apparently granular detail, its customers' "level of risk."

15 Lemonade then provided an example of how its AI "carefully analyzes" videos that it asks customers making claims to send in "for signs of fraud," including "non-verbal cues." Traditional insurers are unable to use video this way, Lemonade said, crediting its AI for helping it improve its loss ratios: that is, taking in more in premiums than it had to pay out in claims. Lemonade used to pay out a lot more than it took in, which the company said was "friggin terrible." Now, the thread said, it takes in more than it pays out.

20 "It's incredibly callous to celebrate how your company saves money by not paying out claims (in some cases to people who are probably having the worst day of their lives)," Caitlin Seeley George, campaign director of digital rights advocacy group Fight for the Future, told Recode. "And it's even worse to celebrate the biased machine learning that makes this possible."

25 Lemonade, which was founded in 2015, offers renters, homeowners, pet, and life insurance in many US states and a few European countries, with aspirations to expand to more locations and add a car insurance offering. The company has more than 1 million customers, a milestone that it reached in just a few years. That's a lot of data points.

30 "At Lemonade, one million customers translates into billions of data points, which feed our AI at an ever-growing speed," Lemonade's co-founder and chief operating officer Shai Winger said last year. "Quantity generates quality."

The Twitter thread made the rounds to a horrified and growing audience, drawing the requisite comparisons to the dystopian tech television series *Black Mirror* and prompting people to ask if their claims would be denied because of the color of their skin, or if Lemonade's claims bot, "AI Jim," decided that they looked like they were lying. What, many wondered, did Lemonade mean by "non-verbal cues?" Threats to cancel policies (and screenshot evidence from people who did cancel) mounted.

35 By Wednesday, the company walked back its claims, deleting the thread and replacing it with a new Twitter thread and blog post. You know you've really messed up when your company's apology Twitter thread includes the word "phrenology."

40 "The Twitter thread was poorly worded, and as you note, it alarmed people on Twitter and sparked a debate spreading falsehoods," a spokesperson for Lemonade told Recode. "Our users aren't treated differently based on their appearance, disability, or any other personal characteristic, and AI has not been and will not be used to auto-reject claims."

45 The company also maintains that it doesn't profit from denying claims and that it takes a flat fee from customer premiums and uses the rest to pay claims. Anything left over goes to charity (the company says it donated \$1.13 million in 2020). But this model assumes that the customer is paying more in premiums than what they're asking for in claims.

50 And Lemonade isn't the only insurance company that relies on AI to power a large part of its business. Root offers car insurance with premiums based largely (but not entirely) on how safely you drive — as determined by an app that monitors your driving during a "test drive" period. But Root's potential customers know they're opting into this from the start.

55 So, what's really going on here? According to Lemonade, the claim videos customers have to send are merely to let them explain their claims in their own words, and the "non-verbal cues" are facial recognition technology used to make sure one person isn't making claims under multiple identities. Any potential fraud, the company says, is flagged for a human to review and make the decision to accept or deny the claim. AI Jim doesn't deny claims.

[...]

**Racialising the crisis in policing.** By Luke Gittos *Spiked Online* August 7, 2020.

1 Police in the UK appear to be going out of their way to appear anti-racist these days. *The Times* reported recently that Scotland Yard was considering dropping the term 'Islamist' from its description of terror incidents motivated by radical Islam. Officers have been pictured 'taking the knee' in support of Black Lives Matter. And at the height of the lockdown, the Metropolitan Police effectively ignored the law in order to facilitate the BLM protests in 5 Westminster. Yet still police officers, particularly in the Met, cannot shake the allegation of racism. During the lockdown, officers were found to be 54 per cent more likely to fine black and ethnic-minority people for breaking the rules in London than whites. On 17 July, footage emerged of Marcus Coutain being arrested while a police officer kneeled on his neck – echoing how George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis. Coutain was later charged with possession of a knife in a public place. Last month, two officers were arrested after taking photographs 10 in front of the bodies of two murdered black women. Such disregard for the dignity of the dead was met with justified outrage. Yet it should come as no surprise that anti-racist posturing can exist alongside apparently racist behaviour within an organisation. This apparent contradiction is not contradictory at all. It reflects the fact that today's 'woke police' still grapple with problems of prejudice. It would be surprising if any organisation in the world managed to rid itself completely of prejudiced individuals. But the fact remains that the persistence of racial 15 prejudice is not the most significant problem facing the police today. It is strange that this even needs saying, but the vast majority of current police officers are not racists. They are civic-minded people who deserve our respect. Sadly, this *does* require saying. Many commentators and members of the political class prefer to maintain the myth that little or nothing has changed between the police and the black community since the 1970s, rather than grapple with the specific challenges that the police and the justice system face. It seems that it is easier to blame endemic 20 police prejudice rather than tackle the economic pressures and legal changes that are actually shaping policing today.

Part of the police's embrace of anti-racism is a genuine attempt to make a break with the recent past. In the mid- to late 20th century, policing practises reflected social anxiety about dramatic social change. This is captured by sociologist Stuart Hall in *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, a book published in 1978, 25 but still hailed as a definitive account of race relations and the police. *Policing the Crisis* described the moral panic around 'mugging', which emerged in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hall argued that this panic was part of a shift from a 'consensual to a more coercive management of the class struggle by the capitalist state'. He observed that the postwar contract between the state and the working class, based on increasing welfare provision and social-democratic reform, had broken down, not least because the economic boom that had sustained it had 30 given way to a massive economic slump. The result was an increase in working-class agitation during the 1960s and 1970s. It was in these conditions that media and politicians began to portray a rise in street robbery as part of a deeper social malaise among working-class black men. The ensuing panic about 'black muggers' was used to justify a draconian response from the police and the courts. This panic culminated in the 'Handsworth case', in which a 16-year-old mugger was given a 20-year sentence in order to 'send a message'. The sentence was well in excess of 35 what would normally have been expected for a street robbery. Yet Hall felt it was too simplistic to argue that police forces and the judiciary were 'inherently racist'. Rather, through the language of law and order, West Indian immigrants had become the medium for a broader assertion of control over the British working class.

And it is true: Britain's police in the 1960s and 1970s became increasingly reliant on riot equipment and heavy-handed tactics to respond to relatively minor disturbances. This was not new, of course – the suppression of Irish 40 Catholics in Dublin in the 18th and 19th centuries provided the template for the founding of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. But the shift in approach within the police in the 1970s still marked a significant move away from the postwar politics of consensus.

The increased militarisation of the police became publicly apparent during the Brixton riot of 1981. These riots followed 'Operation Swamp 81', a Metropolitan Police operation motivated by the panic over 'mugging' and violent 45 crime. The operation led to the stopping and searching, and arrest, of hundreds of Brixton residents. It was mistakenly reported that the police had even allowed a young man to die while in police custody. This led to days of riots in which 279 police officers were injured. For Hall, the riots, in which an aggressive, empowered police force fought running battles with Brixton's black community, were inseparable from the broader class conflict of the early 1980s.

**The war for democracy is only beginning.** By Brendan O'Neill *Spiked Online* January 1, 2021.

**1** 'The war is over.' Those were Nigel Farage's words when it was announced that, at the last minute in a year of transition, the UK had struck a trade deal with the European Union. Yes, some of the deal is iffy, especially on fish, Northern Ireland and the creation of new UK-EU committees, but 'on the big stuff', said Farage, this is the end of the war. Boris Johnson deserves credit, Farage later wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, for 'bringing the Brexit wars to **5** an end'.

Farage has been right about many things in recent years, and he deserves a great deal of the credit for bringing about the 2016 referendum in which 17.4 million people expressed their democratic desire to free the UK from the EU. But on this matter, on this 'war', he is wrong. The war is not over. It has only just begun. Brexit is best seen as the first battle in the war; as the first stand-off in a far broader struggle to take back control, not merely from Brussels **10** but from our own elites. The war for democracy must continue, and with vigour.

Farage and others are right to see the trade deal as a very significant moment. Even those of us who are concerned about aspects of the deal – the political annexing of Northern Ireland, the UK's continued lack of control over its waters, our ongoing submission to certain globalist treaties – can and should celebrate the deal as yet another blow to the Remainer elites who still thought, right up until the deal passed through parliament, that they could obstruct **15** Brexit and in the process bin the votes of 17.4million of their fellow citizens.

Watching MPs voting the trade deal through by 521 votes to 73 was a stirring moment. It will go down in British political history as a key instance of the British people bringing their political masters to heel. For make no mistake – many in parliament, especially in the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party but in sections of the Conservative Party too, would rather that Brexit never happened. Some of them, in the long, scandalous two **20** years of the Remainer Parliament between 2017 and 2019, did everything within their power to stop Brexit and to silence the democratic roar of the British people. They will have voted for the trade deal with gritted teeth, but they had no option. We made them do this. Our democratic perseverance between the referendum in 2016 and today is the force that was weighing down on them, far more so than the whips of their own parties.

So the passing of the trade deal is a moment to savour. Even as the government compromises too much to the EU, **25** we can still see in the passage of this deal the people power that was first unleashed in 2016. Indeed, the very existence of the deal is testament to the nearly five-year-long determination of the British people to have their democratic wishes enacted. If the elites had their way, there would have been no trade deal; we would never have reached the point of working out how the UK and the EU should relate to one another post-Brexit. No, Brexit would simply have been stopped. In the words of that arch anti-democrat David Lammy, the Labour MP who furiously **30** devoted himself to thwarting the most important democratic vote ever cast in this country, 'we can stop this madness and bring this nightmare to an end'. He said that *one day* after the referendum. He said to his fellow MPs, many of whom were also seething about the temerity of the dimwitted public in voting for Brexit: 'Wake up. We do not have to do this.'

But they did have to do it. Why? Because we forced them to. We used our right to vote to emphasise the superiority **35** of popular sovereignty over parliamentary sovereignty, of the people's will over the alleged expertise of our elected representatives. We made our point time and again, peacefully and forcefully. We made it in the 2016 referendum (in which 17.4 million of us voted to leave); and in the 2017 General Election (in which 80 per cent of us voted for parties that promised to enact Brexit); and in the 2019 European elections (in which the Brexit Party came top); and of course in the 2019 General Election, in which Boris Johnson and his promise to 'Get Brexit Done' **40** won a historic democratic mandate, including from millions of working-class Labour voters who revolted against Labour over its anti-democratic, anti-working-class promise of a second referendum. In plain English: its promise to void the largest vote in UK history, to subvert the franchise itself.