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Featuring a Previously Unpublished Short Story by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Trump Administration Disrupts the Daily Briefing

In the March 20, 2017, issue of *The New Yorker*, in "Trolling the Press Corps" (p. 52), **Andrew Marantz** reports from the White House briefing room, where veteran White House correspondents and reporters from far-right outlets speak candidly about the Trump Administration's radical approach to the media. Major Garrett, the chief White House correspondent for CBS News, who sits in the front row, told Marantz, "Historically, the way the White House briefing room has been organized is, the closer you are, the farther you've come." More experienced reporters, he said, "ask questions that are sharper, more informed." For years, the first question of each press briefing has usually gone to the Associated Press, whose reporters sit in the front row, but at press secretary Sean Spicer's first briefing, he took no questions; at his second briefing, the first question went to the New York *Post*. Until recently, the more established correspondents have regarded "floaters"—those who have White House credentials but no assigned seat—as a harmless distraction, the "equivalent of letting a batboy sit in the dugout," Marantz writes. Now they are starting to see the floaters as an existential threat. "It's becoming a form of court-packing," one White House correspondent said. A longtime Washington reporter from a mainstream outlet told Marantz, "I don't mind them bringing in conservative voices that they feel have been underrepresented. Personally, I don't even mind them fucking with the front-row guys. . . . But at what point does it start to delegitimize the whole idea of what happens in that room? When does it cross the line into pure trolling?" When asked whether it would be good or bad for democracy if established reporters got fewer questions relative to the floaters, Garrett said, "We'll see. We're engaged in a grand experiment."

In past Administrations, "the President has usually been too busy with matters of state to hang on his press secretary's every word," Marantz writes. But, a radio correspondent said, "look at [Trump's] daily schedule, and you'll notice how few events are held between 1 and 2 P.M."—the hour during which Spicer almost always conducts his briefings. "The thought that the President of the United States might take the time to sit through an entire briefing, much less all of them, is, frankly, mind-boggling." Another correspondent pointed out how often press aides deliver notes to Spicer while he's at the lectern, and how obediently Spicer seems to respond to the notes' directives. "The reigning theory is that the notes are transcribed messages from the President, watching live from elsewhere in the building," Marantz writes.

Last summer, at a Gays for Trump party at the Republican National Convention, Lucian Wintrich met Jim Hoft, who runs the right-wing site the Gateway Pundit. The two struck up a friendship, and Wintrich, who is twenty-eight and has no professional training in journalism, began writing for the site. He was recently granted White House press credentials. On his way to Washington to join the press corps, Wintrich told Marantz, "The main goal will be to draw attention to the ridiculous hypocrisy of the liberal mainstream media and to push back against them." In Washington, Hoft told Marantz, "The Gateway Pundit, this blog I started in my basement, made it all the way to the fucking White House. Are you kidding me? This is gonna be so epic!"

Who Cares That Opening Ceremony's Humberto Leon and Carol Lim Don't Sew?

In "Mom-and-Pop Shop" (p. 72), **Emma Allen** profiles Humberto Leon and Carol Lim, the founders of the downtown boutique Opening Ceremony, who, despite being outsiders—West Coast, suburban, the children of immigrants, untrained in design—became New York's resident curators of hip and two leading forces in the fashion world. Leon and Lim met as undergraduates at the University of California.

nia, Berkeley. In 2002, they founded their store, on Howard Street, near Chinatown, selling their friend's designs, their own hoodie sweatshirts (sewed by Leon's mom), and apparel and tchotchkes they lugged home from marathon shopping trips to Hong Kong. The actress Chloë Sevigny, who has designed six fashion collections for Opening Ceremony, said, "I first remember being, like, Why is this fucking two-toned sweatshirt everywhere you look?"

As the business grew, Leon and Lim began working with trained designers to develop the Opening Ceremony aesthetic, and continued collaborating with their vast network of deeply devoted friends (including Spike Jonze, David Chang, and Ryan McGinley). Fifteen years out, they have a hundred and eighty full-time employees, a vibrant Web site, a shop in West Hollywood, and four more in Japan. Each year, they've focussed on a different country—they travel there to eat, drink, shop, party, and import their favorite finds. (In 2003, for instance, they introduced New Yorkers to Havaianas flip-flops, from Brazil). Their Howard Street shop has evolved from a scrappy, exposed-plywood clubhouse to a sleek boutique, spread over two adjacent buildings. Lim said, "I worry that now a lot of people's first impressions of the store are 'I'm not cool enough,' that it's too 'fashion.' But when people spend time and strike up a conversation, they seem to get it—like, 'There is stuff for me.'"

In 2011, Leon and Lim were appointed creative directors of Kenzo, a Parisian brand owned by the luxury conglomerate Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE (LVMH). Before they were hired, seventy per cent of Kenzo's customers were over fifty; after three seasons with the duo at the helm, seventy per cent



were younger than thirty. Pierre-Yves Roussel, the chairman and C.E.O. of LVMH, said that he'd been drawn to Leon and Lim because they are such astute merchants: "They have that pragmatism that you find in the U.S. European designers tend to be a bit more snobbish when it comes to doing things that have a larger diffusion and are more accessible price-wise." In a fashion world full of mean-girl types, they have remained the nice "cool kids" in the high-school cafeteria—hosting game nights, karaoke nights, and home-cooked dinners—a distinction that's been key to their success.

Opening Ceremony's spring, 2017, collection was influenced by a collaboration between Leon and the world-renowned choreographer Justin Peck. The première of Peck's twenty-five-minute ballet, "The Times Are Racing," with dancers costumed in Opening Ceremony clothes, served as a substitute for a traditional runway show. "I love thinking about these true dialogues, and then the result is something you can buy," Leon said. Last year, when Leon and Lim received the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award for Fashion Design, Leon told Allen that it was "sort of crazy, because we're not really designers."

Alex Timbers Directs "Joan of Arc," a Musical Call to Arms for the Trump Era

In "Rise Up" (p. 44), **Rebecca Mead** profiles the theatre director Alex Timbers, who specializes in offbeat revisionist fantasies about historical figures, and whose new work, "Joan of Arc: Into the Fire," runs through April 30th at the Public Theatre. Written by David Byrne, formerly of the Talking Heads, "Joan of Arc" recast the story of Joan as a rock musical that spoke to the current political moment. Timbers had expected the show to be opening at the start of a Hillary Clinton Presidency. "I thought the show would be hopeful, and now I'm hoping it stands chest-proud, as the wind blows against it," he tells Mead.

Timbers is best known for helping to generate new work that is unconventional in form and content. Mead writes, "His shows often feel raw, improvisational, and energetic, even though this effect is achieved through highly controlled stagecraft." But Timbers bristles at any implication that his success with avant-garde theatre might preclude his success in the mainstream. "I think it's an easy narrative to say, 'Oh, Alex does edgy, weird things and there isn't always a place on Broadway for that stuff," he tells Mead. "Off Off Broadway and Broadway have a lot more in common than people think. The greatest, most successful Broadway shows—be it 'The Lion King' or 'Rent'—are all doing something formally experimental."

Mead speaks with Oskar Eustis, the Public's artistic director, who said that presenting "Joan of Arc" in the age of Trump gave Timbers's task added urgency: "There is a need to say that legal authority and power are not the most important thing—that the most important thing is the power of conscience, of what we know is right, and that that is not just an internal matter. It is something that can lead a nation to rebel." With "Joan of Arc," Timbers was determined to stir theatregoers, and he kept imagining himself as someone watching it for the first time. "What, when I leave the theatre, do I want to be feeling?" Timbers asks Mead. "Do I want to take action? Is it 'I want to look up Joan on Wikipedia'? Or is it 'I want to start an organization'? That's the kind of stuff I am thinking about."

Confessions of a Watch Geek

In "Time Out" (p. 36), Gary Shteyngart reflects on the months leading up to Donald Trump's election as President, a period in which timepieces became his refuge. Shteyngart bought a Nomos Minimatik Champagner, in April; a vintage Rolex Air-King, in October, as his "feelings of dread spiked"; a Tudor Heritage Black Bay 36, as the Inauguration approached; and, most recently, a Casio H-108 12-Melody-Alarm, in honor of his "first best friend," which he lost to a Hebrew-school bully. A so-called Watch Idiot Savant, Shteyngart attends meetings of the Horological Society of New York; visits the Nolita headquarters of Hodinkee, which publishes "the most passionate watch journalism on the Web"; joins a secret, invite-only gathering of watch enthusiasts, called the RedBar Crew; and travels to Glashütte, in Germany, where his Nomos Minimatik was "born." Shteyngart writes of the RedBar meeting, "I missed out on the culmination of the evening, when all the watches were piled up for an Instagram photo with the hashtag #sexpile, but as I wandered into the autumn night my Nomos beat warmly against my wrist."

Plus: In Fiction, a previously unpublished short story by **F. Scott Fitzgerald**, "The I.O.U.," from 1920 (p. 80); in Comment, **David Remnick** considers why some of Donald Trump's most ardent supporters have taken to using "the Deep State" to describe a nexus of institutions that, they believe, are conspiring to bring down the President (p. 29); in the Financial Page, **Sheelah Kolhatkar** examines Donald Trump's use of the visa category H-2B to attract low-cost, low-skilled seasonal labor at his Palm Beach club, Mar-a-Lago (p. 34); in Shouts & Murmurs, **Shannon Reed** imagines classic musicals updated for the modern era (p. 43); **Adam Gopnik** reads three books that interrogate the premises of the Enlightenment (p. 88); **Dan Chiasson** reads a new study of the poet Robert Lowell, by Kay Redfield Jamison (p. 94); **Emily Nussbaum** watches Ryan Murphy's new show, "Feud," on FX (p. 98); **Anthony Lane** reviews Olivier Assayas's "Personal Shopper" and François Ozon's "Frantz" (p. 100); **Lorenzo Vitturi** photographs the archives of Italian fashion houses, with accompanying text by **D. T. Max** (p. 60); and poetry by **Michelle Brittan Rosado** (p. 60) and **Zoë Hitzig** (p. 84).

Podcasts: Dorothy Wickenden and **Adam Davidson** discuss the Trump Organization's dealings in Azerbaijan; **Mary Karr** reads Terrance Hayes's "Ars Poetica with Bacon" and one of her own poems, and discusses them with **Paul Muldoon**; and **David Remnick** speaks with Stephen Hayes, the editor-in-chief of *The Weekly Standard*.

Digital Extras: Additional photographs from Justin Peck's ballet "The Times Are Racing," dancers costumed in Opening Ceremony clothes; additional photographs of shows directed by Alex Timbers; additional photographs of the archives of Italian fashion houses; and **Michelle Brittan Rosado** and **Zoë Hitzig** read their poems.

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