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INSIDE THE TECH ISSUE

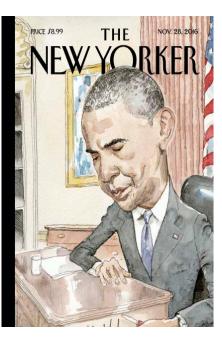
A President Confronts an Election That Changes Everything—And Imperils His Legacy

In the November 28, 2016, issue of *The New Yorker*, in "It Happened Here" (p. 54) **David Remnick** joins President Barack Obama on two pivotal days—the Friday before Election Day, November 4th, travelling with him as he campaigned for Hillary Clinton in the final stretch of the Presidential campaign, and a week later, November 11th, following Donald Trump's shocking victory. In their wide-ranging conversations, the President reflects on the election, its aftermath, and the role he must fill in the final weeks of his term. Just four days before Election Day, Clinton was hanging on to a lead in nearly every poll, and Obama told Remnick, "I'm having fun." But the race tightened considerably in its final week, and "what frustrated Obama and his staff was the knowledge that, in large measure, they were reaching their own people but no further," Remnick writes. The new media ecosystem "means everything is true and nothing is true," Obama said. The President went on, "The capacity to disseminate misinformation, wild conspiracy theories, to paint the opposition in wildly negative light without any rebuttal—that has accelerated in ways that much more sharply polarize the electorate and make it very difficult to have a common conversation." According to Obama, "Trump understands the new ecosystem, in which facts and truth don't matter." On the way to the airport in Charlotte, North Carolina, Obama called Trump "a culmination, a logical conclusion of the rhetoric and tactics of the Republican Party for the past ten, fifteen, twenty years. What surprised me was the degree to which those tactics and rhetoric completely jumped the rails. There were no governing principles, there was no one to say, 'No, this is going too far, this isn't what we stand for." Of Clinton, Obama said that watching her campaign "is a little bit like a parent watching a kid in a sporting match, and you don't feel like you have as much control over it."

"Trump's victory," Remnick writes, "did not merely endanger Obama's legacy of progressive legislation or international agreements. It unnerved countless women, African-Americans, Latinos, Muslims, and L.G.B.T. people, as well as professionals in national security, the press, and many other institutions." The White House was, according to one staffer member, "like a funeral home." Obama and his aides admit that the election results caught them completely by surprise—one staffer told Remnick, "We had no plan for this." The day after Obama first met with President-elect Donald Trump, Remnick arrived in the West Wing. The official line at the White House was that the meeting with Trump went well, but when Remnick asked Obama how things had really gone, the President said that he would tell him "at some point over a beer—off the record." Throughout the campaign, Obama told audiences that, if Trump were to win, eight years of accomplishment would go out the window. Asked if he still believed that, Obama said, "Now that the election is over, no, I don't believe it. Not because I was over-hyping it. I think that the possibility of everything being out the window exists." Obama said that he had accomplished "seventy or seventy-five per cent" of what he set out to do, and "maybe fifteen per cent of that gets rolled back, twenty per cent, but there's still a lot of stuff that sticks." He says that the Affordable Care Act is the most vulnerable, because "in the minds of a lot of the Republican base, it is an example of a big government program designed to take something from them and give it to someone else who is unworthy." Obama refused to interpret Clinton's—and the Democratic Party's—loss as a personal repudiation: "People aren't paying that close attention to how Washington works . . . if things aren't working, if there's gridlock, then the only guy that they actually know is supposed to be in charge and supposed to be helping them is the President." Obama was convinced that Trump won less as a cham-

pion of working people than as an anti-establishment insurgent: "The President-elect, I think, was able to make an argument that he would blow this place up. Hillary may have been more vulnerable because she was viewed as an insider. . . . I don't think it was fair, but that's how it played itself out." If Clinton had won, he said, "I'd just turn over the keys. We'd make sure the briefing books were in order and out we go. I think now I have some responsibility to at least offer my counsel to those who will continue to be elected officials about how the D.N.C. can help rebuild, how state parties and progressive organizations can work together."

With a little more than two months of his Presidency remaining, Obama told Remnick that "the running thread through my career has been this notion that when ordinary people get engaged, pay attention, learn about the forces that affect their lives and are able to join up with others, good stuff happens." Of his post-Presidential role, he said, "Both Michelle and I are interested in creating platforms that train, empower, network, boost the next generation of leadership . . . what we'll be most interested in is programming that helps the next Michelle Obama or the next Barack Obama, who right now is sitting out there and has no idea how to make their ideals live." Obama related the Democrats' losses this year to previous setbacks and recoveries, telling Remnick that "this notion somehow that these irreversible tides have been unleashed, I think, surrenders our agency. It's easier than us saying, huh, we missed that, we messed that up, we've got to do better in how we organize. . . . All of this requires vigilance in protecting gains we've made, but a sense, yes, of equanimity, a sense of purposeful calm and optimism,



and a sense of humor—sometimes gallows humor after results like the ones we just had. That's how ultimately the race is won."

How a Workshop Uses Digital Technology to Craft Perfect Copies of Threatened Art

In "The Factory of Fakes" (p. 66), **Daniel Zalewski** reports from Luxor, Madrid, and Palermo, where he shadows Adam Lowe, the Englishman whose "digital mediation" workshop, Factum Arte, along with its nonprofit wing, the Factum Foundation, has recorded and reassembled everything from a Renaissance painting outside the Pope's bedroom to rock carvings on a remote plateau in Chad. Lowe's project challenges traditional assumptions surrounding conservation. Because an art work can be scanned without physical contact, the facsimile process makes traditional conservation efforts—from repainting to varnishing—seem like an exalted form of graffiti. "An original, you see, is never an original, once it goes through time," Lowe said. A digitally recorded copy can be both a lode of "forensically accurate information" and a vehicle for provoking a "deep emotional response."

Factum is perhaps best known for scanning Tutankhamun's tomb in 2009, and creating a full-sized replica that has been installed about a mile east of the King's resting place. It took two years for Lowe and several dozen technicians to scan and remake the tomb's walls—considerably longer than the ancient Egyptians took to produce them. Zalewski visits the replica in Luxor and is impressed by the quality of Lowe's facsimile. He writes, "There were no Disneyfied abominations . . . I could make out the spot where, in a long brushstroke outlining a baboon's crest, the artist had just begun to run out of paint." After combing through grayscale images of the tomb that Lowe and his team included in a digital version of the facsimle, an English scholar, Nicholas Reeves, detected several ridges that seemed to outline doorways. The tomb of Queen Nefertiti, one of the most celebrated Egyptian royals, has never been found—did one of the sealed doorways lead to her burial chamber? The jury is still out, even though further scans have yielded promising results. In May, Lowe began scanning another tomb, belonging to the pharaoh Seti I, with the understanding that he would also be training Egyptians in the art of making facsimiles. Seti's is the longest and the deepest in the Valley of the Kings and features about fifty times more decoration than Tutankhamun's.

Lowe's facsimiles are a safeguard of sorts against the vandalism, theft, or dismantling of art. In 2015, for example, soldiers from 1818 besieged and destroyed much of what remained of a palace in Nimrud, in what is now Iraq—but facsimiles of an Assyrian winged lion that originally stood there, as well as of other precious objects, had been completed by Factum in 2014 and potentially could be deployed to replace some of the objects obliterated by the group. Factum has also reproduced a lost masterpiece that it was not able to scan. When one of Caravaggio's most celebrated works, the "Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence," was stolen by the Mob from a chapel in Palermo, in 1969, a blurry photograph of the "Nativity" was hung in its place. A few years ago, Lowe decided that he could better restore the chapel's aura using a replica based on photographs of the lost masterpiece. Zalewski flies with him to Palermo, to attend the unveiling. After the replica is presented, Lowe tells Zalewski, "In my dreams, I hope that the people who stole this painting will feel the power that is generated when many people focus on the importance of an object, and the importance of its place, and that tomorrow morning, rolled up outside the chapel, the original painting will be left."

The Prophetic Satire of Charlie Brooker's "Black Mirror"

In "Worst-Case Scenario" (p. 46), **Giles Harvey** profiles the British satirist Charlie Brooker, whose eerily clairvoyant TV series "Black Mirror" answers to a mood of global unease about the breakneck pace of technological development. In 2014, Netflix acquired exclusive U.S. streaming rights for the first two seasons. Last year, in a deal reportedly worth forty million dollars, Brooker and his longtime collaborator Annabel Jones signed a contract with Netflix to make twelve new episodes. "I've never been interested in the school of sci-fithat's about, you know, aliens with croissant-shaped foreheads flying about through Sector Alpha-6," Brooker told Harvey. While some of "Black Mirror"'s scenarios might seem far-fetched, Brooker's meticulous attention to detail gives the show a remarkable plausibility. In the episode "The Waldo Moment," a blue cartoon bear successfully stands for Parliament in Britain, and the public can't get enough of his ribald anti-politics. Critics were unconvinced when it first aired, in 2013, but the episode now seems prophetic. On the night of November 8th, as a Trump Presidency began to look increasingly likely, the show's Twitter account posted: "This isn't an episode. This isn't marketing. This is reality."

In "The National Anthem," the show's début episode, set in a fictional Britain, a member of the Royal Family is abducted, and her release hinges on a single demand: the Prime Minister must have unsimulated sex with a pig on live television. "The idea had been knocking around for a while," Brooker said. "Society wouldn't quite be the same. How would you deal with censorship after that?" Brooker proposed the series to Shane Allen, then the head of comedy at Channel 4. In lesser hands, Allen suggested, the premise would have turned farcical; Brooker's genius was to take "a ridiculous idea and make it feel very rooted and real." Last year, an unauthorized biography of British Prime Minister David Cameron included an anonymous claim that Cameron had, during his student days at Oxford, placed "a private part of his anatomy" inside the mouth of a dead pig during a hazing ritual for an exclusive social club. "Who'd have thought the pig-fucking episode would be the most accurate one?" Brooker said. "I'd never heard the rumor. So when that story broke I was quite weirded out and genuinely worried for a short period that maybe reality is a simulation designed to confuse," he continued. "I hope it doesn't happen again."

A Radical New Procedure Aims to Save Gunshot Victims by Freezing Them

In "Cold Remedy" (p. 36), Nicola Twilley reports from the University of Maryland's R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, in Baltimore, where a team is testing a new procedure that freezes trauma patients who are bleeding out, in order to buy time to operate. Baltimore has one of the nation's highest rates of gun violence, and Shock Trauma admits at least two or three shooting victims each week. For most people who sustain traumatic injuries, death occurs within the hour, primarily because patients lose so much blood that too little is left for the brain. Tom Scalea, Shock Trauma's physician-in-chief, told Twilley, "It is the most frustrating thing, and it happens all the time. Some kid comes in with cardiac arrest from a fixable injury—an easily fixable injury—and you open them up in the T.R.U. and they kind of come back, and then they die . . . all we needed was a few more minutes."

Earlier this year, Shock Trauma announced that it was conducting a trial, directed by Sam Tisherman, of a procedure called Emergency Preservation and Resuscitation (E.P.R.). When a patient loses his pulse, the attending surgeon will, as usual, crack his chest open and clamp the descending aorta. But, instead of trying to coax the heart back into activity, the surgeon will start pumping the body full of ice-cold saline at a rate of at least a gallon a minute—and the patient's body temperature will sink to somewhere in the low fifties Fahrenheit. The patient will remain in this state of suspended animation—no blood, no pulse, no brain activity—for up to an hour, while surgeons locate the bullet holes or stab wounds and sew them up. Then the patient will be resuscitated. Twilley writes, "Cold buys time by slowing things down. Removing energy, in the form of heat, decreases the rate at which chemical reactions—in this case, metabolism—take place."

The E.P.R. study could very well save Baltimoreans' lives, but it is controversial in one important respect. Because of the emergency nature of their injuries, subjects cannot and will not have to consent to this procedure. In the largely African-American community surrounding Shock Trauma—and given the racist history of experimentation on black people—this issue of waived consent has disquieting social implications. The University of Maryland required Tisherman and his team to conduct community outreach and provide for opt-out, but many still feel this is not enough. On the other hand, research into gunshot injuries, from which blacks are more than twice as likely to die as whites, is chronically underfunded. The trauma surgeon John Holcomb said this should be a source of national shame: "There's more funding in relation to the impact of disease for middle-ear infections than there is for injury. Pretty amazing when you consider that trauma is the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of forty-seven." Of the more than nine hundred people who were shot in Baltimore last year, more than ninety per cent were male, more than ninety per cent were black, and most were under the age of thirty. Twilley writes, "It is a virtual certainty that the first person to be selected for E.P.R. will be black, low-income, and male." In the United States, between thirty and forty thousand people a year bleed to death from fixable injuries, and E.P.R. could save people dying from heart attacks or drug overdoses, or even kids who drown in back-yard pools. Holcomb told Twilley, "This is almost like open-heart surgery was back in the sixties. It was only done in one or two places, it was extremely complex, it was considered very experimental. And now it's routine."

In a series of essays, writers reflect on technologies in their lives: **Patricia Lockwood**, on finding poetry in a note-taking app (p. 42); the comedian **Joe Mande**, on inflating his Twitter following with hundreds of thousands of bots (p. 50); **Alison Gopnik**, on whether the danger of "screen time" is overblown (p. 70); and **Alexandra Kleeman**, on her experience cooking with Chef Watson, I.B.M.'s artificial-intelligence app (p. 76).

Plus: In Comment, Jelani Cobb looks at how, in response to Donald Trump's hostility toward immigrants, political leaders in New York and California have vowed to protect their most vulnerable (p. 31); in the Financial Page, James Surowiecki considers why Donald Trump's debt-fuelled extravagance could benefit America's economy and infrastructure (p. 35); in Shouts & Murmurs, Bruce McCall imagines a U.S. citizen application for emergency Canadian residence (p. 45); Amanda Petrusich examines the resurgent appeal of Stevie Nicks (p. 82); Nathan Heller considers what moral claims animals and robots make on humans (p. 87); Peter Schjeldahl visits a Francis Picabia retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (p. 92); Hilton Als attends "Sweat" and "The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World AKA The Negro Book of the Dead," two plays by women playwrights of color (p. 94); Anthony Lane watches Kenneth Lonergan's "Manchester by the Sea" and David Yates's "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find them" (p. 96); poetry by Anna Scotti (p. 38) and Brian Russell (p. 68); and new fiction by Robert Coover (p. 80).

Podcasts: David Remnick speaks with **David Frum**, a prominent neoconservative based in Washington, D.C., who, in response to a Trump Presidency, seeks to make common cause with Democrats to defend basic rights and keep order in government; **Dorothy Wickenden** speaks with **Matt Lewis** and **Kelefa Sanneh** about the relationship between the G.O.P. and the nascent Trump Administration; and Robert Coover reads his short story "The Hanging of the Schoolmarm."

Digital Extras: Anna Scotti and Brian Russell read their poems; art from the Francis Picabia retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art; photographs of re-creating treasured art works; and **Richard Brody** comments on scenes from Christopher Munch's "The Hours and Times," from 1991.

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