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IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Tim Kaine's Radical Optimism

In the October 24, 2016, issue of *The New Yorker*, in “Kaine Country” (p. 40), **Evan Osnos** profiles Tim Kaine, the Democratic nominee for Vice-President, speaking extensively with Kaine and those close to him, including his wife, Anne Holton, and President Barack Obama. Kaine has never lost an election—from Richmond City Council, in 1994, to Virginia’s lieutenant governor, in 2001, governor, in 2005, and senator, in 2012. Last week, as Clinton and Kaine’s lead in Virginia grew to nine points in an average of polls, the Trump campaign reportedly decided to abandon its Virginia operation. “As a politician, Kaine has elements of Joe Biden’s heart and Barack Obama’s brain: schmaltz in service of political advantage,” Osnos writes. Of their first meeting in 2005, Obama told Osnos, “immediately, I just loved the guy. Part of it is the integrity that he exudes. It’s not phony. You know the guy is who he says he is.” When Obama ran for President in 2008, Kaine was the first major elected official outside of Illinois to endorse him; when Obama became the first Democratic Presidential candidate to win Virginia since Lyndon Johnson, Kaine wept. The thousands of e-mails released by Virginia’s State Library from Kaine’s days as governor “reveal a micromanager: he tweaked the language of press releases, monitored the traffic on major highways, and updated his online bio to reflect new achievements,” Osnos writes. Devout Roman Catholics, Kaine and his family have attended St. Elizabeth’s, a traditionally black church in Richmond, for more than three decades. Holton tells Osnos, “We deliberately put ourselves in a position where we are in a racial minority . . . Virginia’s gotten more diverse, but how do we come together across differences of all sorts?” Republican senator Jeff Flake recalled an early encounter at a charity spelling bee, which Kaine won: “For somebody who headed the D.N.C., he has what seems to be the lack of a partisan bone in his body.”

Paired with “one of the best-known and least-trusted nominees in Presidential history,” Kaine’s “absence of slickness” has “helped the Clinton campaign look less frosty and stage-managed,” Osnos writes. Asked how he would help mend divisions in the country, Kaine told Osnos, “I think that’s going to be the test of a Clinton-Kaine Administration. Can we actually give people more of a sense that here’s a ladder that I can climb?” He continued, “I’ve been a civil-rights lawyer, and I care about the equity issues, but I’ve been a mayor and a governor, so I can do economic-development deals, and I care about the prosperity issues.” But last week, as Trump raged against the disintegration of his campaign, Osnos asked Kaine if his high-minded forecasts of cooperation will look naïve. “I like to get things done cooperatively, but, if I can’t, I know how to battle,” Kaine said. “I have played a major role—not alone, but I’ve played a major role—in turning one of the reddest states in the country into a blue state.” Following the Vice-Presidential debate, on October 4th, the consensus was that Kaine had lost but had probably helped the campaign more broadly. When asked why he had taken such a combative approach to the debate, Kaine told Osnos, “I needed to make sure that the day after that debate there were no new negative stories about Hillary—he couldn’t lay a glove on her . . . The second thing I needed to do was, over and over and over again—maybe to the point of being a little bit annoying—but over and over again, make Governor Pence decide whether he was going to defend his running mate or not.” Of the latest surge of racist rhetoric in America, Kaine said, “I think Donald Trump has made it O.K. for people to vent dark emotions that they have . . . Humans don’t like change. Or they fear change. You grow used to thinking of the world a particular way, and then it starts to change and there’s an anxiety about it.” Obama tells Osnos, “If, in fact, it’s a President Clinton and Vice-President Kaine, they will come into office in a different position than I did. They won’t be confronting a crisis of historic proportions. They will have, hopefully, the luxury of choosing what are the first couple issues to work on . . . they may be able to work on something like infrastructure, that is more likely to lend itself to pragmatic solutions.” Osnos writes, “Kaine, the technocrat and the missionary, puts his greatest faith in habits of mind, in ways of looking at American history that acknowledge both the past and the abiding struggle to improve upon it.”



An Investigator Who Probes Wrongful Convictions Now Doubts a Conviction of His Own

In “A Shot to the Heart” (p. 26), **Stephanie Clifford** writes about Peter Forcelli, a former New York Police Department detective who investigates wrongful convictions, and is now working to exonerate a man whom he helped arrest more than twenty years ago. “I always wondered—and it sounds weird—how did it feel to these guys who arrest the wrong guy?” Forcelli told Clifford. “It feels terrible.” In 1995, Forcelli investigated the murder of a retired N.Y.P.D. cop. Identification by two witnesses led to the arrest of a young Bronx resident named Edward Garry. Garry always maintained his innocence, and there was no physical evidence connecting him to the crime, or any information even placing him in the area. But, as Forcelli told Clifford, “Back then, identification was like the gold standard.” The jury found Garry guilty of second-degree murder, and he received a sentence of twenty-five years to life.

Forcelli was unhappy with the N.Y.P.D.’s practice of abandoning investigations at the moment an arrest was made. “A lot of facts come out after the arrest,” he told Clifford. He joined the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and he now devotes some of his time to cases involving wrongful convictions. The scale of America’s wrongful-convictions problem is becoming ever more apparent—a record number of people were exonerated last year—as is the fact that wrongful convictions disproportionately affect poor people and nonwhites. Blame for wrongful conviction often falls on individuals (the racist prosecutor, the crooked cop), but Forcelli believes the problem is more fundamental—that the workings of the criminal-justice system itself mean that even those who do their jobs conscientiously can sometimes end up putting innocent men in prison. “The sad part is that getting an innocent man out of jail is way, way, way harder than putting a guilty man in jail,” he told Clifford.

In October, 2014, Forcelli testified in a hearing relating to Garry’s current case, which is his fifth formal plea for exculpation. A new suspect had been identified, based on a 1996 request made by Forcelli to compare the crime-scene evidence with the fingerprints of a man name Steven Martinez. Forcelli’s testimony revealed the evidence that could have prevented Garry’s conviction. The hearings dragged on for more than a year; Garry remains in prison, and his fate is uncertain. When he was arrested for the murder, Garry had no mistrust of the police and courts. “I thought at that time that the court system was fair. I always thought, I’ll go to trial and I’ll go home. It didn’t work out like that,” he told Clifford.

Forcelli is following the case closely, thinking about the fact that, although he spent most of his career trying to uncover injustice, he also ended up causing it. “I deprived him of the years of my life that were my best years, the years I got married, the years I had children. I deprived him of those not because we made up any evidence, or we buried evidence, or we tried to push a witness, but because I was part of the process that led to that.”

What Happens When a Country Starts to Melt?

In “A Song of Ice” (p. 50), **Elizabeth Kolbert** reports from Greenland, where she explores the wide-ranging effects of climate change—including the increased acceleration of ice streams, the loss of thousands of huskies that used to be central to Greenlandic life, and the economic opportunities that come with rising temperatures. Kolbert writes, “Just in the past four years, more than a trillion tons of ice have been lost. This is four hundred million Olympic swimming pools’ worth of water, or enough to fill a single pool the size of New York State to a depth of twenty-three feet.” Ice flows faster in some parts of Greenland’s ice sheet than in others, and regions where the flow is particularly swift are known as ice streams. Kolbert visits the East Greenland Ice-Core Project (EGRIP), which sits atop one of the longest and widest ice streams, the Northeast Greenland Ice Stream (NEGIS). At EGRIP, the glaciologist Dorthe Dahl-Jenson and her colleagues are inserting a drill from the top of the ice sheet to the bottom, a distance of more than eight thousand feet. Dahl-Jenson tells Kolbert, “The ice streams have really, really surprised us. To drill down into an ice stream and see: How does it actually flow? How much is it sliding? How much is it melting at the bottom?” All over Greenland, ice streams like the NEGIS are picking up their pace and dumping more and more ice directly into the oceans. Currently, it’s estimated that Greenland is losing about as much ice from calving—icebergs splitting off—as it is from melt. “One group of scientists argues that, of the two forms of loss, melt is the more worrisome, as, in a warming world, it must increase. But the behavior of ice streams is less well understood, and some scientists argue that, for this very reason, increased calving is potentially even more of a threat,” Kolbert writes. Once an ice stream starts to accelerate, it may be impossible to stop—all on its own, the NEGIS has the potential to raise global sea levels by three feet. “When carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere, it takes decades—in a technical sense, millennia—for the earth to equilibrate,” Kolbert writes. “The warming that’s being locked in today won’t be fully felt until today’s toddlers reach middle age. In effect, we are living in the climate of the past, but already we’ve determined the climate’s future.”

Today, Greenland has fifty-six thousand residents, twelve thousand Internet connections, fifty farms, and, by American standards, no trees. The island is ruled by the Kingdom of Denmark, which creates “a lot of postcolonial problems,” according to the Greenlandic novelist Niviaq Korneliussen. “We have a lot of racism going on from both ends.” Though Greenland’s independence movement has nothing directly to do with climate change, the indirect links are many. For Greenland to break away, it would have to sacrifice the annual grant it receives from Denmark, which would leave a gaping hole in its budget. The island is rich in minerals,

which could become easier to access as winters grow shorter and harbors remain ice-free year-round. But the island has no working mines, and, when Kolbert visited this summer, the only one under construction was stalled. Jens-Erik Kirkegaard, a former minister of industry and minerals, blames the collapse in commodity prices: “A few years back, mineral prices were very high, but then they declined very hard.” Still, he was optimistic, because more melt off the ice sheet meant more attention for Greenland: “Climate change does a lot of marketing for us. It’s easier to attract investment.” Like many Greenlanders, Per Rosing-Petersen, a member of parliament, puts his hopes in the population’s resiliency. “Denmark will disappear,” he tells Kolbert. “Holland will disappear. But Greenland will still remain. We’ve been adapting to living conditions for five thousand years.”

The Dynamism of Janet McTeer

In “Walking Tall” (p. 34), **John Lahr** profiles Janet McTeer, the British actress who is reprising her recent West End triumph in Christopher Hampton’s “Les Liaisons Dangereuses” on Broadway this fall. McTeer, who is fifty-five, wants to be known for the parts she plays, not for who she is: after nearly thirty years of consistently high-calibre work that has earned her a Tony Award, an Olivier Award, two Academy Award nominations, and the Order of the British Empire, the Internet has only a scant half-dozen articles about her. McTeer tells Lahr, “There’s a reason I live in the Maine woods, where nobody knows what I do for a living. I think you can be better if someone who’s coming to see you perform has no idea who you really are.” Onstage, McTeer aims to draw the unexpected out of herself and her co-stars. She sees acting as a form of jazz, in which every night is a new variation on a theme. “I want to see live theatre,” she tells Lahr. “I want to not quite know where it’s going—so, when you see performers, you feel like they’re inventing it as they go along, rather than doing something that’s polished.”

In addition to spending time at her home in Maine, Lahr visits McTeer in a Forty-second Street rehearsal room, where she gets ready for the day’s work on “Les Liaisons Dangereuses.” The playwright Hampton tells Lahr that McTeer “can do two or three things at once. She can do something with her eyes that says she’s relishing this, something with her voice that says she has reservations, and something with her body that tells you she really wishes she wasn’t doing this.” Josie Rourke, who directed “Les Liaisons” at the Donmar Warehouse, in London, last year, is remounting and reexamining the show with a cast that is all new, with the exception of McTeer. Of working with a new cast, McTeer says, “I want to absolutely not prepare. I don’t want to come in knowing anything other than the parameters, the boundaries of what I know about the play.” Rourke tells Lahr, “Janet feels a connection between fearlessness and great work. In the rehearsal room, in performance, she drives herself to the edge of what frightens her, and jumps off.”

Plus: In Comment, **Margaret Talbot** examines the role of misogyny in the Presidential race, and considers how ongoing sexism has affected Hillary Clinton’s career (p. 19); in Shouts & Murmurs, **Garry Trudeau** imagines “Air Trump: A Short Play” (p. 33); **Hilton Als** reviews Barry Jenkins’s new film, “Moonlight,” based on a story by the playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney (p. 70); **John Lanchester** considers the future of the euro (p. 73); **Sam Tanenhaus** examines the origins of modern conservatism (p. 77); **Emily Nussbaum** watches the new HBO drama “Westworld” (p. 82); **Anthony Lane** reviews Park Chan-wook’s “The Handmaiden” and Antonio Campos’s “Christine,” starring Rebecca Hall (p. 84); poems by **Annelise Gelman** (p. 47) and **Alan Jenkins** (p. 57); and new fiction by **Otessa Moshfegh** (p. 62).

Podcasts: **Dorothy Wickenden** speaks with **Adam Davidson** and **Evan Osnos** about the Republican revolt; **Burkhard Bilger** speaks with Sabine Bode, a German journalist who is reconciling with her family’s Nazi past; **Otessa Moshfegh** reads her short story “An Honest Woman.”

Digital Extras: Poetry readings by **Annelise Gelman** and **Alan Jenkins**; in a video of an immersive haunted house, the artist Pedro Reyes explores the social, cultural, and environmental topics that dominate today’s political discourse.

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