NEW YORKER

IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Up Close with the Candidate and His Crowds

In the July 11 & 18, 2016, issue of *The New Yorker*, in "Trump Days" (p. 50), **George Saunders** travels to Arizona, Wisconsin, and California, where he attends several rallies for Donald Trump, the Republican Party's presumptive nominee for President, and, through first-hand conversations with fervent followers and anti-Trump protesters alike, presents a vivid portrait of American politics in 2016. According to Saunders, a self-professed liberal, Trump "exhibits such a muddy understanding of certain American principles (the press is free, torture illegal, criticism and libel two different things) that he might be a seventeenth-century Austrian prince time-transported here to mess with us." It's considered an indication of authenticity that Trump generally doesn't speak from a teleprompter. "He is not trying to persuade, detail, or prove: he is trying to thrill, agitate, be liked, be loved, here and now. He is trying to make energy." And make energy he does. "An ungentleness gets into the air when Trump speaks, prompting the abandonment of certain social norms," Saunders writes. He observes a culture of violence at the rallies. Rebecca LaStrap, an African-American Trump protester, was grabbed by the breast, thrown to the ground, and slapped in the face. A protester named Sandra Borchers had a rock thrown at her head. "Where is all this anger coming from?" Saunders writes. "It's viral, and Trump is Typhoid Mary."

"In the broadest sense, the Trump supporter might be best understood as a guy who wakes up one day in a lively, crowded house full of people, from a dream in which he was the only one living there, and then mistakes the dream for the past: a better time, manageable and orderly, during which privilege and respect came to him naturally," Saunders writes. He speaks with several Trump supporters about their grievances with President Obama. "I don't like people shoving Obamacare down my throat, O.K.?" one woman says. "And then getting penalized if I don't have insurance." Is she covered through Obamacare? No, she has insurance through her work. Others express their concerns about immigration. "The question is, Do you want to live like India? Sewage running in the streets?" Kathryn Kobor, a Trump supporter in her seventies, tells Saunders in Phoenix. "Trump just wants the laws enforced. . . . He's not a mean-spirited person." Saunders's attempt to understand what is driving Trump's followers leaves him, at times, hopeful, at others despairing. Saunders writes, "If you are, as I am, a sentimental middle-aged person who cherishes certain Coplandian notions about the essential goodness of the nation, seeing this kind of thing in person—adults shouting wrathfully at one another with no intention of persuasion, invested only in escalating spite—will inject a palpable sadness into your thinning, under-exercised legs, and you may find yourself collapsing, post-rally, against a tree in a public park, feeling hopeless."

How Mike Will Made It

In "Boom!" (p. 34), **John Seabrook** profiles the hip-hop producer Mike Will, speaking extensively with the rising star who, at twenty-seven, has created hits for Miley Cyrus, Jay Z, Kanye West, Rihanna, and Beyoncé, and co-produced "Formation," the song that Beyoncé performed at this year's Super Bowl. "At a time when a lot of music production is an assembly-line process, Will uses chance, spontaneity, and group dynamics," Seabrook writes. The producer turned Apple executive Jimmy Iovine tells Seabrook that Will "understands the record, he understands the artist, and he understands the idea." Iovine continues, "He hustles, he works hard, and he has brilliant ideas." By 2013, Mike Will could work with anyone he wanted to—and he has, pretty much. "Beats are how many hip-hop songs begin; rappers write their rhymes to them. And beatmaking is the way a lot of hip-hop icons begin—Dr. Dre and Kanye West started out as beatmakers. But lots of people can make beats; only a few beatmakers become super-producers," Seabrook writes.

Will shuttles between L.A. and Atlanta, spending more time on the West Coast as his career advances. He grew up in Atlanta, home of the music scene that gave rise to the "trap" sound, heard on records by artists as varied as Gucci Mane, 2 Chainz, and Future. "Will's work with Gucci, in particular, gave him credibility. Soon, he was working with practically every important hip-hop artist in Atlanta," Seabrook writes. Will's mom tells



Seabrook that when her son's career began to take off and he decided to drop out of college she said, "'Son, you'll really know if you made it if Ludacris calls.' And then Ludacris called!"Today, Will, whose producer name is Mike WiLL Made-It, is the founder and C.E.O. of Ear Drummer Records, a music label and production company. Miley Cyrus, who worked with Will on her 2013 album, "Bangerz," tells Seabrook, "Mike could lock you in a studio for five days and not play the same beat twice." Of Cyrus's performance of "We Can't Stop" at the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, where she twerked onstage, Seabrook writes, "If the goal was to put a stake through Hannah Montana's heart, Cyrus and Will succeeded." The next year, Will was freestyling with Swae Lee, of the Rae Sremmurd duo, who said, "O.K., ladies, now let's get in formation." When he heard it, Will said, "That could be a hard song for the ladies. Some woman-empowerment shit." Will sent the song to Beyoncé and her team. A few months later, Will "was chopping it up with LeBron and the Cavaliers, and then Jay Z and Beyoncé just walked up. . . . And Bey was like, 'Yo, I like that "formation" idea,'" Will tells Seabrook. Beyoncé wrote verses for the song, but kept the central concept of "get in formation." Beyoncé, he explains, "took this one little idea we came up with on the way to Coachella, put it in a pot, stirred it up, and came with this smash." Will continues, "It's really a process to make one of these great songs. It's layers. Layers and layers and layers."

A Hospice Nurse's Encounters

In "The Threshold" (p. 62), Larissa MacFarquhar chronicles the daily routine of Heather Meyerend, a hospice nurse in South Brooklyn who visits her sixteen to twenty patients at home at least once every week. The first modern hospice was founded in London in 1967, but hospice used to have a countercultural air about it: "dying at home seemed, for a while, as unconventional as giving birth at home," MacFarquhar writes. Today, roughly twice as many people in America die in hospice as die in hospital. Entering hospice means giving up on curative treatments, and you qualify only if your doctor believes that you have less than six months to live. While some patients die within days of Meyerend's meeting them, others she gets to know well, over many months. Meyerend, like most hospice workers, "feels that it is a privilege to spend time with the dying, to be allowed into a person's life and a family's life when they are at their rawest and most vulnerable, and when they most need help," MacFarquhar writes.

MacFarquhar observed Meyerend and her patients and their families throughout the dying process, documenting the intimate—and everyday—moments. When Meyerend visited a patient's home for the first time, she was "extra alert . . . extra careful, trying to figure out what was going on—the conflicts and rivalries between members of the family . . . and nearly always grief and anxiety and fretting about how to take care of the patient and what to do," MacFarquhar writes. Much of Meyerend's routine visits—taking vital signs, filling medication, assessing symptoms—could be done in a matter of minutes, but she usually spends an hour or more with her charges. "The idea is to be around longer, to chat, to sit close by, to put her hands on the patient's skin as she goes about her checkup." As Meyerend takes her blood pressure, Carmela, a patient in Bergen Beach, says, "I've lived through a lot. I don't care how many books you read, experience is the best teacher." When patients die, their friends and family react differently: some cry, some are calm, some are frightened to be left alone with a body, some fear that the body may come back to life. Wives sometimes throw themselves on the body, weeping and grasping it. "It's a wrenching that happens, a tearing, like a garment that's being pulled apart," Meyerend tells MacFarquhar. "Dying can be long, bewildering, and lonely and painful, frequently undignified," but nonetheless, Meyerend does not fear her own death: she believes there is a life after that's better than this one.

How to Become President of Iceland

In "Cool Runnings" (p. 44), Adam Gopnik reports from Iceland, where he accompanies Guðni Jóhannesson, now President-elect of the country, in the final days of his campaign, speaking extensively with the scholar about his swift and improbable rise to power. Gopnik writes, "It seemed refreshing to follow a Presidential campaign where erudition was revered, where the various sides were more or less sane, and where democracy was seen as a communal enterprise, not as a carnival for television." There are only three hundred thousand-plus people in Iceland, and a Presidential election, even though it gets a huge turnout, will top out at about two hundred and forty thousand voters, about one-third the number in a single congressional district in New York City. Heiða Helgadóttir, a prominent alternative politician, tells Gopnik, "We are convinced that we come from a country of at least two or three million, and nothing dissuades us." The country has recently suffered from double crises—first the banking collapse, in 2008, and then the Panama Papers, this spring. Gopnik writes, "The bank crash had produced a general mistrust of the professional politicians who had let it happen. Guðni might still be an intellectual in good standing, but at least he was not a professional politician with a bad record." Jóhannesson, associate professor of history at the University of Iceland, appeared on television as an expert commentator at the moment when the Panama Papers revealed that the Prime Minister had once owned shares in an offshore company belonging to his wife (no one claims that this was illegal, but it was awkward). Jóhannesson was such a supple and sober guide through the shock that he won over the viewers. He tells Gopnik that following the Prime Minister's resignation, "I was able to describe to people what options the President had . . . and the sort of trickle of support I felt to run turned into a flood."

At Jóhannesson's home on the Wednesday morning before the election, he tells Gopnik, "I have the duty, certainly as a historian, and even more as President, if elected, to tell our story to anyone who wants to listen—objectively, truthfully, because we will only suffer and fool ourselves if we do it any other way." Later, Gopnik watches the final debate between the candidates, with Jóhannesson's wife, the writer Eliza Reid, translating. The next day, Jóhannesson reflects on the debate, telling Gopnik, "I was probably

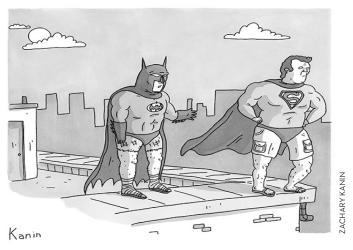
too soft on Brexit last night. I said we have to respect the verdict of the people, but there are obviously Brexiters waking up this morning saying, 'What have we done?'" Later that night, in the ballroom of the Reykjavík Grand Hotel, Gopnik watches as the results come in, and Jóhannesson is declared the winner. Addressing his supporters, Gopnik writes, Jóhannesson "was obviously promising to be the President of all Icelanders, the last step in the choreography of candidacy." Gopnik reflects, "though Iceland certainly had eccentric and distinguished possibilities for President, its play of politics was the familiar one, of television and social media and the month's momentum . . . What happens in one place happens everywhere. No island is an island."

Plus: In Comment, Mark Singer, who profiled Donald Trump for this magazine in 1997, examines how the presumptive Presidential nominee of the Republican Party—whom voters praise for his "authenticity"—has actually, over the years, been assuming a persona, as he is again in this election (p. 27); in the Financial Page, James Surowiecki examines why European leaders, in deciding how they should treat the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, will find economic needs clashing with political ones (p. 32); in Shouts & Murmurs, Colin Nissan imagines a particularly honest wedding announcement (p. 43); Kelefa Sanneh considers what the word "ghetto" reveals about attitudes toward gentrification (p. 80); Emily Nussbaum reviews Season 4 of "Orange Is the New Black," which takes structural racism as its central subject (p. 86); Anthony Lane watches the new Woody Allen film, "Café Society," and a new documentary directed by Roger Ross Williams, "Life, Animated" (p. 88); a Sketchbook by Barry Blitt depicts Uncle Sam in a fight with Donald Trump (p. 77); and new fiction by Michael Andreasen (p. 74).

Podcasts: Jeffrey Toobin and **Dorothy Wickenden** discuss the Supreme Court's recent key decisions, and how the 2016 election will affect the politics of the legal system; and **Michael Andreasen** reads his short story "The King's Teacup at Rest."

Digital Extras: In a video, puppets from "Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed" come to life; images of hospice care by **Eugene Richards**; poetry readings by **Natalie Shapero** and **Terrance Hayes**; and **Richard Brody** comments on scenes from John Cassavetes's film "Faces," from 1968.

The July 11 & 18, 2016, issue of *The New Yorker* goes on sale at newsstands beginning Monday, July 4.



"I feel like bad guys aren't as scared of me in the summer."