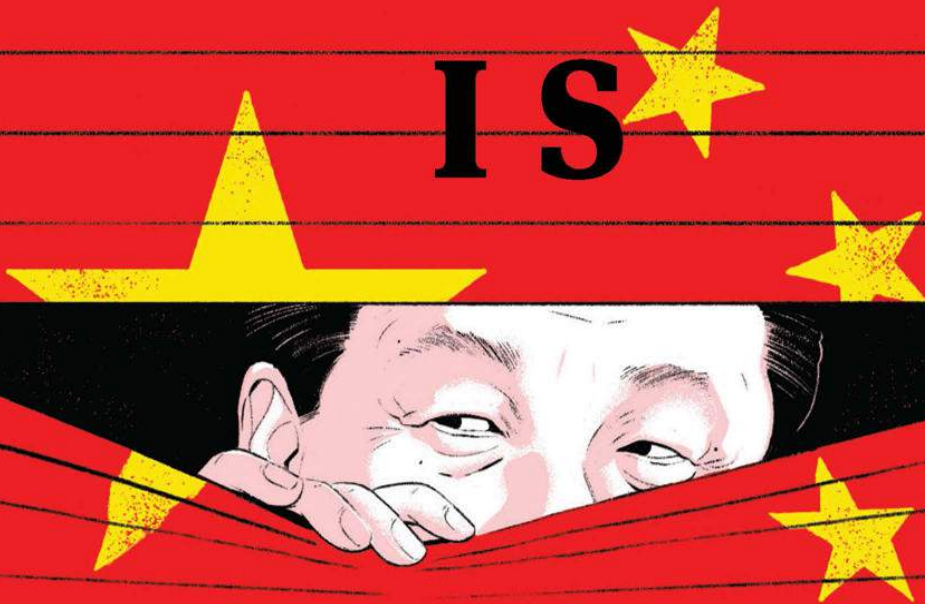


Where Oligarchs Hide Their Money

04.01-08.2022
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CHINA

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WATCHING

The Russian invasion is **reshaping Beijing's plans** to make Taiwan its own



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China Is Watching

Vladimir Putin's bloody invasion of Ukraine and the West's response to it are reshaping Beijing's long-standing intention to make Taiwan its own.

by JOHN FENG
and DAVID BRENNAN

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America's Most Trusted Companies 2022

Newsweek and global research firm Statista team up to find the 400 large publicly traded U.S.-based corporations Americans say they have the most confidence in.

KNOTTY Trust is crucial—but hard to define and measure—for businesses. Additionally, the pandemic is changing how people decide if they can trust a company to do right by its customers, employees and investors.

COVER Illustration by Alex Fine for *Newsweek*





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Washington, D.C. Plea for Help

SCENES

This year's
Academy Award-
nominated movies
are set in some
amazing places.

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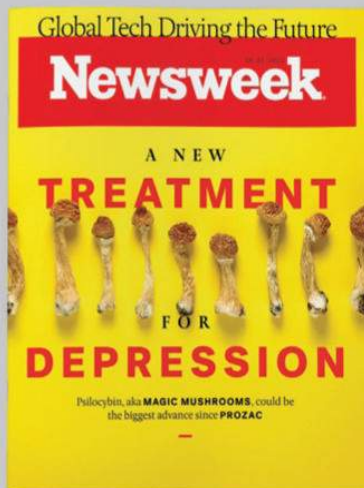
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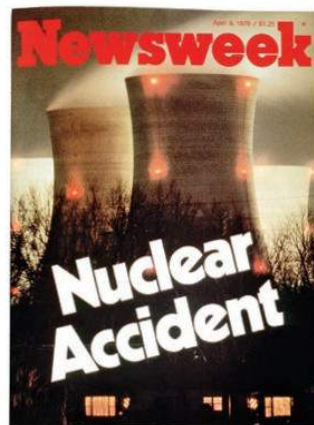
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The Archives

1981

"Of course I'm a black writer," Toni Morrison told *Newsweek*. "I'm not *just* a black writer, but categories like black writer, woman writer and Latin American writer aren't marginal anymore. We have to acknowledge that the thing we call 'literature' is more pluralistic now, just as society ought to be." Morrison, the Nobel laureate and novelist of classics like *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Song of Solomon*, died in 2019. This February, Knopf Doubleday republished a hardcover standalone edition of her only short story, "Recitatif," which originally appeared in a now out-of-print 1983 anthology.



1979

"It began with a brief but terrible bump in the night and quickly grew into the worst commercial nuclear accident in U.S. history," *Newsweek* wrote of Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island meltdown. Now, nuclear threats are making headlines again, as Putin brandishes nuclear weapons in his war against Ukraine.



2019

"They want to do for medicine what Facebook and Google did for social media and internet search," *Newsweek* wrote of a wave of health tech entrepreneurs. The pandemic propelled virtual care into the mainstream; in 2021, U.S. based digital health startups raised a record \$29.1 billion, according to Rock Health. 

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FEATURED EPISODE

The Debate

A civil discussion of hot-button issues of the day

WHEN SHOULD THE U.S. INTERVENE IN FOREIGN CONFLICTS?

► When and where should America get involved, including the current Ukraine crisis? Charles Kupchan, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Jim Hanson, executive director of America Matters, face off about the role of the U.S. in disputes overseas.

HOSTS ► Celeste Headlee, author of *We Need to Talk* and Andrew Tallman, host of *The Daily Break*

IN THEIR WORDS ► “The stronger the U.S. is, the less problems the world has,” says Kupchan. Counters Hanson, “We [don’t have] an obligation to serve as [the world’s] firemen every time a blaze pops up.”



Renée Zellweger

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Your weekly dose of everything pop culture

The Renée Zellweger Interview

► The Oscar-winning actress chats with host H. Alan Scott about her new NBC series, *The Thing About Pam*; plus Danny Pellegrino of the *Everything Iconic* podcast.



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Candid conversations on world issues

Ukraine, From a Middle East Perspective

► Host and former Mideast envoy Jason Greenblatt dissects criticism about what’s seen as a weak response to the Russian invasion from countries in the region.



THE DAILY BREAK

Fun, informative watercooler chatter

From Serious to Surreal

► Spanning the latest news from Ukraine to whether McDonald’s soft-serve is purposely out of order, host Andrew Tallman tackles the day’s trending stories in under 10 minutes.



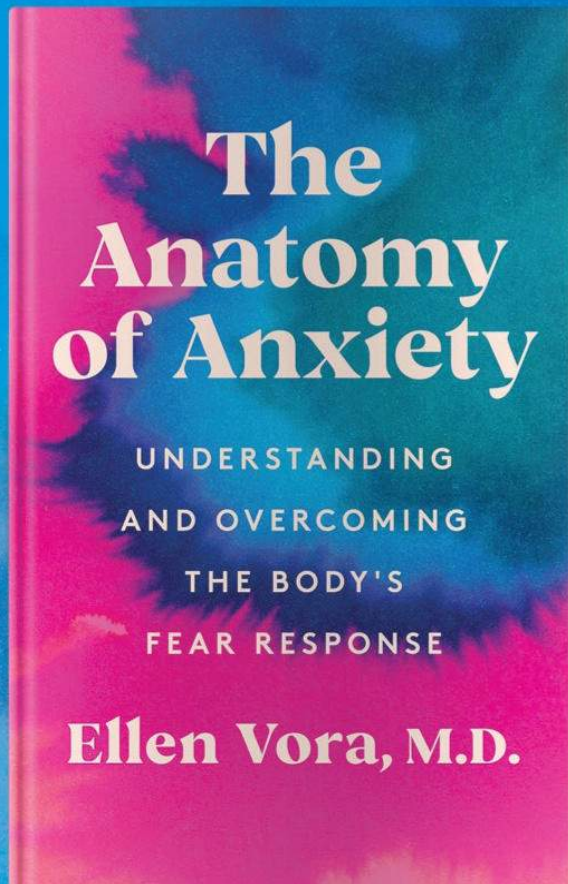
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SHANGHAI

Lockdown Reprise

A worker wearing protective gear walks through a locked-down neighborhood in the city's Huangpu district on March 17. China's COVID-19 case numbers jumped from 100 new cases daily three weeks ago to more than 1,000 this past week. The country is seeing its worst outbreak of the virus since the start of the pandemic two years ago and has responded by locking down residents in at least 11 cities and counties.

HECTOR RETAMAL

HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP/GETTY

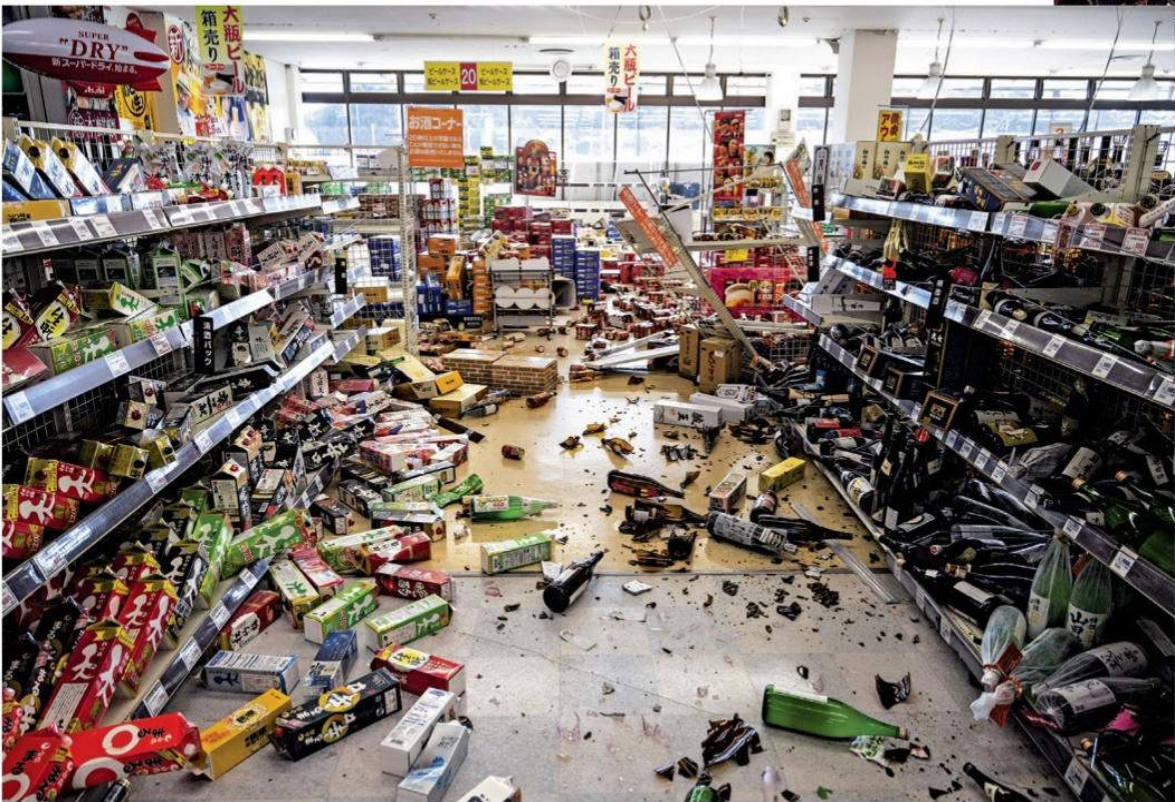


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InFocus



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP/GETTY; J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AFP/GETTY; EARLY TRIBAL/LEAU/AF/GETTY



CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA

Flower Power

A worker carries bundles of flowers while tending to giant tecolote ranunculus blooms at Carlsbad Ranch on March 16. The working agricultural flower farm in North San Diego County features approximately 70 million ranunculus flowers spread across nearly 50 acres. The plants bloom for six to eight weeks a year, typically from early March to early May.

📷 ▶ PATRICK T. FALLON



SHIROISHI, JAPAN

Helter Skelter

A supermarket stands littered with wrecked merchandise the morning after a 7.4-magnitude earthquake occurred off the coast of the Fukushima prefecture on March 16. The quake killed at least four people, injured more than 100 others and cut off power to millions of homes. It is the nation's second-largest earthquake since March 2011's devastating one, which killed more than 18,500 people.

📷 ▶ CHARLY TRIBALLEAU



WASHINGTON, D.C.

Plea for Help

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses Congress virtually on March 16 to appeal for more military assistance to fight Russia's invasion. He invoked images of Pearl Harbor and 9/11, saying, "Remember...when evil tried to turn U.S. cities into battlefields, when innocent people were attacked from air." Afterward, President Joe Biden pledged an additional \$800 million in security assistance to the nation.

📷 ▶ J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Periscope

NEWS, OPINION + ANALYSIS



Dmitry Rybolovlev

Roman Abramovich

Igor Krutoy

SEIZE THE DAY
In the last few decades, rich Russians inked real estate purchases so eye-popping that they made headlines. That notoriety is coming back to haunt them.

“We should chop America into seven different countries. Seriously.” ▶ P.18



BUSINESS

Russian Oligarchs Take Manhattan

The story of how a small coterie of fabulously wealthy Russians laundered billions in New York City's luxury condos—and how the Feds are now in pursuit

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shone the spotlight on a small coterie of fabulously rich Russians with ties to President Vladimir Putin. Many of these so-called oligarchs amassed great wealth through the privatization of state assets after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Some played a role in Putin's rise to president in 2000, though he subsequently clipped their influence on politics while allowing them to thrive. They've continued to do so despite the sanctions imposed when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. **The invasion of Ukraine has triggered condemnation of Putin and made his rich friends pariahs. The U.S., Europe and others have vowed to seize their big bank accounts, fabulously equipped yachts and fantastically overpriced real estate—much of which casts a long shadow over New York City, as NEWSWEEK contributor Adam Piore documents in his book, THE NEW KINGS OF NEW YORK: RENEGADES, MOGULS, GAMBLERS AND THE REMAKING OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS SKYLINE (The Real Deal, May). In this adaptation, he tells how the oligarchs reshaped the city's skyline and how U.S. authorities are in pursuit.**

THROUGHOUT THE LATE 2000S AND EARLY 2010S, the growing presence of fabulously wealthy Russian oligarchs in high-end housing markets such as Manhattan, Miami and Los Angeles was the real estate industry's worst-kept secret. Although many eschewed publicity, they weren't hard to spot. They often arrived by private jet and pulled up to luxury buildings around town in cars that cost more than most two-family homes, along with entourages of bodyguards, assistants and traveling maids. They inked purchases so eye-popping that some of them inevitably made the newspapers.

Those headlines may soon come back to haunt them. During his State of the Union address earlier this month, President Joe Biden announced his intention to “go after the crimes of Russian oligarchs,” and to “find and seize their yachts, their luxury apartments, their private jets.”

“Tonight, I say to the Russian oligarchs and corrupt leaders who built billions of dollars off this violent regime, no more,” Biden said. “We’re coming for your ill-gotten gains.”

Soon after, the U.S. Justice Department announced the creation of Task Force KleptoCapture, a new unit that promised to

by
**ADAM
PIORE**

Illustration by GLUEKIT

NEWSWEEK.COM

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Periscope

“use every tool to freeze and seize” the assets of any Russian the Biden Administration places on a sanctions list.

It’s a good bet they will begin by trying to find the owners of what some have called the “world’s most expensive safe deposit boxes”—scores of high-end condos in luxury towers that have sprung up in big U.S. cities in recent years and constitute some of the juiciest forfeiture targets. But identifying those assets won’t be easy. Anti-corruption and law enforcement experts have been warning for decades that American money-laundering and financial-disclosure laws—particularly in real estate—have failed to keep pace with those of many European nations, increasingly making the U.S. a mecca for those looking to hide their money in plain sight.

The properties in question, which are often worth tens of millions of dollars, are especially appealing to those who reside in unstable countries or have reason to fear their assets may someday be confiscated elsewhere. Due to the relative stability of the U.S. political system and the U.S. dollar, these foreign property buyers can be reasonably assured these assets will retain their value. The U.S. legal system can usually be counted on to protect the rights of property owners. And the origin of the money used to buy the assets can be easily obscured by funneling the money through a labyrinth of trusts and LLCs. Thanks to aggressive lobbying by the real estate industry and other special interests, in many U.S. states it’s often easier to obscure one’s identity by setting up an anonymous shell company than to get a driver’s license.

“There’s a bunch of this money in condos,” says Gary Kalman, U.S. director of Transparency International, a nonprofit that monitors corruption. “But much of it they’re never going to

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS The sun sets on eight needle-thin towers along a stretch of West 57th Street, south of Central Park in New York City, known as Billionaires’ Row.

be able to figure out. And that should be a scary wakeup call to Congress to close these gaps as soon as they can. It’s a problem.”

Nowhere is the influence and presence of this Russian money more evident—and more maddeningly difficult to pin down—than in Manhattan. Over the last decade, the city’s developers have put up a series of supertall, jagged, toothpick towers at the bottom of Central Park, designed and marketed to the world’s .01 percent, a tiny group in which Russian oligarchs are disproportionately represented.

These condos, which can fetch upwards of \$200 million each and cast shadows over the park’s beloved Great Lawn, have helped drive Manhattan land prices into the stratosphere and contributed to a populist anti-development backlash that in 2019 derailed the city’s long-sought efforts to lure Amazon to build a second headquarters.

Is it fair to blame the Russians? Jonathan Miller, one of the city’s leading real estate appraisers, makes a compelling case. He attributes the frenzy of building at the foot of the park to a single transaction: the 2011 sale of former Citigroup chairman Sandy Weill’s 7,000-square-foot park-facing penthouse at 15 Central Park West to the Russian fertilizer king Dmitry Rybolovlev, who agreed to pay \$88 million—double the amount Weill had paid just a few years before. Rybolovlev, who owns the professional soccer club AS Monaco FC and in 2008 purchased Donald Trump’s Palm Beach mansion for \$95 million, put the condo in the name of his college-age daughter. He



was soon sued by his estranged wife, Elena, who accused him of shielding his assets from her by using trusts linked to their children to spend freely.

Whatever his motivations, the Rybolovlev transaction changed the city’s real estate landscape.

“That number was so shocking,” Miller told me. “It looked like he just picked a number out of the air. That sale triggered a new thinking in New York—it was the catalyst that lit the fuse.”

The price came to \$12,571 per square foot for real estate that, just seven years earlier, many had been skeptical could fetch even \$2,000 a square foot. It sent the amount developers were willing to pay for real estate around the park, and other desirable areas of Manhattan, sky high. To make back the money required to win bidding for coveted Central Park-facing real estate, developers created more products designed to appeal to the world’s ultrarich.

In the years following that sale, ultra-luxury real estate, costing \$10 million and up, would account for roughly



GARY HERSHORN/GETTY

BUSINESS

50 percent of all new construction, according to Miller. Fertilized by Rybolovlev's free-spending ways, eight needle-thin towers sprouted like gleaming, metallic weeds along a stretch of West 57th Street south of Central Park, an area that would come to be known as Billionaires' Row.

These apartments offered all the luxury money could buy, with towering Cathedral ceilings, herringbone floors, corridors sheathed in silk wall coverings, marble bathroom fixtures, steam showers, handcrafted kitchen cabinetry, built-in wine cellars, and floor-to-ceiling glass walls with king of the world views of the park and Manhattan south.

The greatest amenity these opulent dwellings offered to Russian oligarchs, and others looking for a safe place to park their cash, was anonymity.

Unlike the tony Upper East Side co-ops that have traditionally housed Manhattan's financial elite, these towering monstrosities lacked the nosy, societal gatekeepers of traditional co-op boards—who had famously

turned their noses up at a wide array of celebrities, from Richard Nixon to Barbra Streisand. Every new building on Billionaires' Row was a condominium. And there was only a single requirement for admission and membership in these towers—money, heaps of it.

Temporary exemptions

The nation's gaping real estate disclosure loopholes are well known to policymakers in Washington. In the wake of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations helped shape the most sweeping anti-money laundering legislation passed in a generation, pushed through as part of the USA Patriot Act.

The legislation required a long list of industries to conduct some level of due diligence on their clients, including buyers of jewelry, hedge funds and real estate. It stipulated that those involved in selling such assets be required to analyze risk, know their clients and take steps to avoid handling dirty money. But the U.S. Treasury Department, overwhelmed by all the rules that had to be issued, granted a temporary exemption to realtors (along with investment advisers and those selling yachts and aircraft).

"Here it is, 20 years later," says Elise

Bean, who was the Senate committee's chief counsel. "And they've still got that 'temporary' exemption."

These exemptions coincided with a significant spike in the number of Russian buyers interested in U.S. real estate in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

Though most preferred anonymity, the ones that made it in the media were memorable characters. Andrey Vavilov, a former deputy finance minister and hedge fund magnate, survived a car bombing in a Kremlin parking lot. In the late 1990s, Russian federal prosecutors investigated whether he embezzled \$230 million during the sale of MiG fighter jets to India (he denied the accusations and the case was eventually closed when the statute of limitations expired). In 2008, he sued Plaza Hotel developer Elad Properties, complaining that two penthouses in the famous Manhattan property he'd committed to buy for a cool \$53.5 million had been ruined by narrow windows that "make the space more closely resemble an attic than a luxury penthouse living room." (He later acquired a condo at Time Warner Center more to his liking: a \$37.5 million, 8,275 square foot penthouse with his-and-her master bathrooms and 360-degree city views.)

Vavilov's former neighbor at the Plaza, Russian entertainment mogul Igor Krutoy, gained prominence when he set the record for most expensive condo (before Rybolobeva smashed it), ponying up more than \$48 million for a 6,000-square foot apartment in the building. He later shelled out another \$23.9 million for a mansion on Southampton's tony Gin Lane, telling his brokers he planned to demolish it and build a new one.

Perhaps the most prominent oligarch known to have purchased real estate in the city was Roman Abramovich, a close Putin associate, who built a

"In order to move money out of Russia, you need to prove that taxes have been paid on those funds. And it's not a country where people like to pay taxes."

fortune by gaining control of natural resources, such as oil and aluminum, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He owns the high-profile Premier League soccer team Chelsea, a \$600 million yacht and is reportedly worth at least \$12 billion. He acquired six Upper East Side properties, including a block of townhouses being combined into a mega mansion, worth an estimated \$92.3 million.

Many Russian buyers hid behind lawyers, underlings or the private bankers who managed their wealth. At the very least, these advisers played a key role in many of these transactions, serving as the gatekeepers for real estate agents looking to meet them—which many did, particularly during down markets.

Nikki Field, who headed a Sotheby's brokerage team dealing with the city's toniest product, was in Moscow within three weeks of the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008. At the time, she recalled, the phone in her office was ringing off the hook with calls from wealthy clients suddenly out of a job or in financial distress, and eager to offload second homes or, if they worked at recently shuttered Lehman or Bear Stearns, sell their Manhattan properties. Field, a trim, charismatic former Pan Am flight attendant and marketing executive, quickly realized she had a problem. With credit frozen and billionaires hoarding bars of gold in preparation for the possible collapse of the western banking system, no one in the city was buying.

"Now we had to take these properties that they were leaving and sell them quickly," she said.

Ironically, the biggest challenge interested Russian buyers faced, and the ones most likely to cause headaches for those financial advisers, was not U.S. regulatory requirements, which were relatively few, but the ones

they faced from their home country.

"In order to move money out of Russia, you need to prove that taxes have been paid on those funds. And it's not a country where people like to pay taxes," says Edward Mermelstein, a Ukrainian-born former real estate attorney who, when I first spoke with him back in 2012, told me he had handled more than 500 deals for Russians, but only dealt with clients who actually paid their taxes.

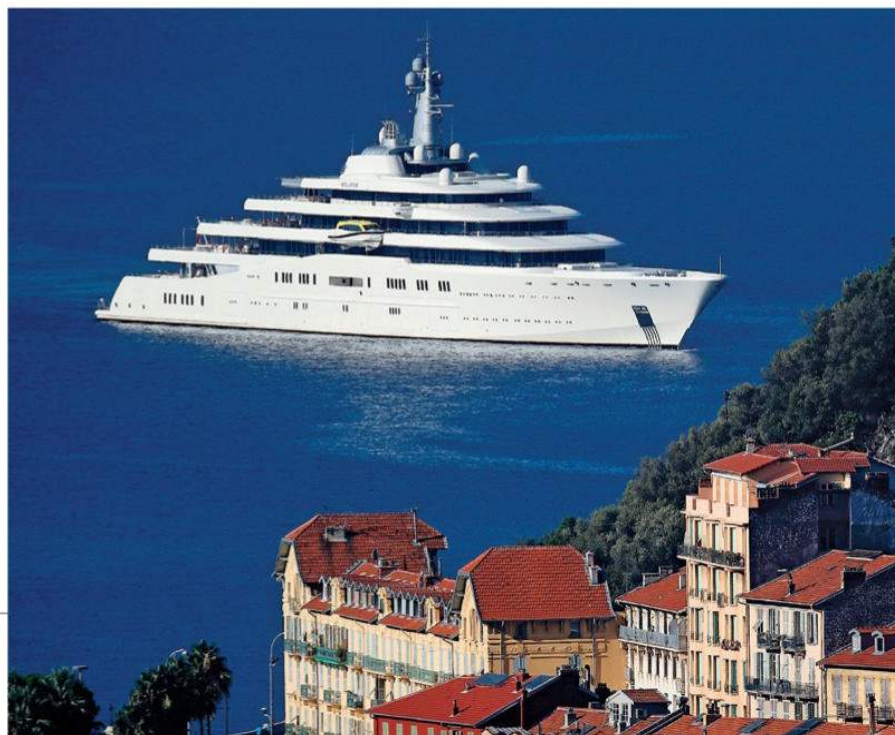
By contrast, in the U.S., under current laws, real estate agents "are under no obligation to ask the right questions

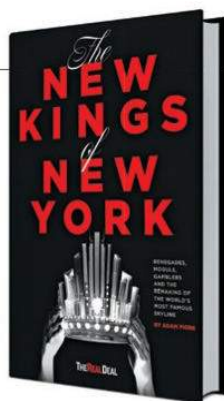
and could basically file paperwork and buy and sell property without asking those questions," notes Transparency International's Kalman.

True owners

In 2015, *The New York Times* splashed the first story in a multipart investigation, entitled "Towers of Secrecy," across the front-page of its Sunday newspaper. The series cast a spotlight on the gaping holes in disclosure requirements and their potential to be used in money laundering by linking sales in New York City's tony Time Warner Center to a number of shady foreign buyers hiding behind LLCs. These included a gregarious Malaysian socialite and Hollywood producer named Jho Low. He would later be accused of looting the national treasury and laundering money on behalf of the Prime Minister's son (some of which Low used to finance the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* and to party with Paris Hilton in Las Vegas and St. Tropez). Others who were singled out

"This should be a scary wakeup call to Congress to close these gaps as soon as they can. It's a problem."





MONEY MEN Adam Piore takes on the Russian oligarchs in his book *The New Kings of New York*. Below: Roman Abramovich's yacht, *The Eclipse*—here arriving in Nice in 2013—is the world's second largest private yacht.

included a Colombian politician subsequently jailed for corruption, and a Russian oligarch named Vitaly Malkin, who had been involved in a 1996 deal to restructure the government of Angola's \$5 billion debt to Russia. That deal, the *Times* noted, "has become a symbol of official plundering in Africa among anti-corruption advocates."

A few months later, the Treasury's Financial Crime Enforcement Network (FinCEN), instituted what it called a "Geographic Targeting Order," a temporary measure focused on new anonymous, all-cash transactions exceeding \$3 million in Manhattan and \$1 million in Miami. The new rules, which required title insurance companies to identify the true owners of American shell companies involved in the transactions, sounded promising on paper.

In practice, however, most money laundering experts say that the GTOs are littered with loopholes. For instance, anyone who wishes to avoid the requirements can simply forgo title insurance. Transparency International's Kalman says many in law enforcement view the GTOs as having been useful for "information gathering purposes—to see what they could get back and learn how they might be improved."

The opportunity to apply those lessons may now be at hand. In 2021, after decades of inaction, Congress finally passed new legislation aimed at strengthening American money laundering laws. Among other things, the new laws will require all entities formed in the U.S. to disclose their beneficial owners. And they instruct FinCEN to create a non-public registry for regulators, law enforcement and some financial institutions.

Soon after taking office, Biden announced his intention to make fighting money laundering a priority and unveiled a comprehensive

anti-corruption strategy for the federal government. The document explicitly mentions real estate, indicating that he was considering extending the bank secrecy act to those involved in real estate closings, which would require them to have an anti-money laundering program. Bean, the former Senate investigator, is hopeful.

"For the first time we would set up a system to find out who's behind all of these entities that we're creating and unleashing on the rest of the world, when we have no idea who's behind them," she says.

None of this, however, is likely to be of much help to Biden's Task Force KleptoCapture, which will have a limited toolset with which to root out assets owned by sanctioned oligarchs.

Kalman notes that their best hope lies in targeting the small minority of oligarchs who bought property long before Russia invaded Crimea and the U.S. first raised the specter of sanctions and "were not all that interested in hiding their identity."

"A number of them—not many—gave money to charitable organizations and were trying to build their reputations in the United States," he says.

If that fails? "You hate to rely on this, but not every criminal is a genius and sometimes people just file things," he says. "So you can hope that somebody did something sloppy. But I think there's a bunch of this money and a

bunch of these condos that they're never going to be able to figure out. I think finding these assets is going to be very difficult."

One obvious target is Roman Abramovich, who was sanctioned in late March by British authorities. He appeared at the top of a list of sanction targets proposed last year by imprisoned anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny, who labeled the oligarch "one of the key enablers and beneficiaries of Russian kleptocracy." Others have called him "Putin's banker." By some accounts, Abramovich, who was also close to former President Boris Yeltsin, was the first to recommend the leader appoint Putin to succeed him.

But going after his assets won't be easy. He signed over the deeds to most if not all of his Manhattan properties to his former wife, Dasha Zhukova, in 2018.

"The UK action will pressure the US to follow suit," Ross Delston, an independent anti-money laundering expert and former banking regulator, says, but notes: "You're allowed to give gifts. Our laws protect private property."

If the U.S. tries to go after the New York properties, "then the question would be is it derived from a criminal offense? And was [Zhukova] a knowing beneficiary? Was she involved in the underlying crime, if there was one?"

"Establishing that's all very hard to do," he says. "And I guarantee you she's going to have the best lawyers money can buy." **N**

► **Adam Piore** is an award-winning journalist based in the New York area and a contributing writer for *NEWSWEEK*. His feature articles have also appeared in *CONDE NAST TRAVELER*, *GQ*, *MOTHER JONES*, *PLAYBOY*, *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, *THE ATAVIST*, *BUSINESSWEEK* and many others. He is the author of three books. Twitter @adampiore

OPINION

Civil War 2.0: An Unmanageable Divorce

Splitting up red and blue America sounds good to some of us. But it would be an economic disaster

THERE'S A LOT OF CHATTER these days, sometimes wistful, about Civil War 2.0. Recently, Senator Ted Cruz, the Texas Republican, said Texas could take its oil, NASA and go its own way. In January, professor Barbara Walter warned of the possibility of another war between the states in her book, *How Civil Wars Start: And How to Stop Them*. A few years back, a *The Week* editor Bonnie Kristian, said, "We should chop America into seven different countries. Seriously."

And in 2020, right-wing provocateur Candace Owens tweeted, "I wonder if we're past the point of reconciliation with the Left. Maybe we'd all be happier letting them pick a few states they can turn into their own country w/ no guns, no police, no statues, no genders, no flags, no men and no electricity."

Tempting, Candance, yes. But it's a bad idea for a lot of reasons. One big one that's often ignored: Economically, splitting up would be a \$100 trillion mistake.

Look, we get it. Everyone is exasperated. Both sides fantasize about simply going our separate ways, creating two countries of like-minded people and living happily ever after. If "happily ever after" means living in countries

with lousy economies and a mountain of debt, then okay.

If splitting led to a civil war, it would cost millions of lives and trillions of dollars. Estimating the fully loaded costs of war is tricky business, but safe to say modern wars are expensive. According to the Watson Institute at Brown University, U.S. wars post-9/11 have cost \$8 trillion in

military spending alone. But the bigger (and trickier) part is what wars do to the economy. It's estimated the Yugoslavian Civil War in 1991 reduced GDP by 20 percent a year

with industrial production down by 50 percent, along with 20 percent unemployment.

Even in the improbable case that a split would happen peacefully, there would be additional one-time costs of dismembering infrastructure, including splitting up power, communication and transportation grids. That would cost billions, at least.

Either way, there'd be huge ongoing costs due to economic inefficiency. We've personally worked in 50 different countries around the world. And we can say without hesitation that the U.S. is the greatest economic engine on the planet. There are many components that contribute to that

standing, but much of it comes down to scale. Dividing up America would destroy those economies of scale. Everything would be more expensive and harder to get. Companies would need to duplicate manufacturing and distribution facilities. Supply chains, already strained, would be longer and more complex. Jobs would be fewer—and it would be more difficult to relocate to take advantages of opportunities. Risk would increase. During the big ice storm of 2021, millions of Texas residents grappling with power outages learned firsthand the risks associated with relying on a system not fully integrated into the national grid.

People on both sides might believe taxes would be lower if the country were split up—say, blue states not having to send money to "moocher

GETTY



states” or red states not contributing to welfare. It’s more likely that tax burdens would increase. Many of the biggest-ticket federal budget items like Social Security and Medicare aren’t going away. Also, scale applies to government, just as it does to business. On a per citizen basis, it’s more costly to run two governments than one. Defense spending, which for the U.S. is around \$800 billion a year, might well explode. After the split, each side would be sharing a 2,000-mile acrimonious border with a nuclear neighbor—think Russia-Ukraine.

But it could be much worse. What if the U.S. broke up not into two countries, but a dozen or a hundred? That’s more likely than two. In 1860, the division was regional. Today the red-blue split is mostly rural-urban. That doesn’t lend itself easily to

division. We built a computer model that included voting and Census data for every county in the U.S. We then tested different ways to split up the country into geographically cohesive red or blue countries. No matter how we gerrymandered the map, we couldn’t do it.

Consider Senator Cruz’s example:

Both sides fantasize about simply going our separate ways, creating two countries of like-minded people and living happily ever after.

Texas. There are 254 counties in Texas. Of those, 232 went for former President Trump in 2020. Nonetheless over five million Texans voted for President Biden, almost half the electorate. Two thirds of those voters live in or around five big metro areas, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Houston, Austin, San Antonio and El Paso. Those five cities also contain half of Texas’ population and three-fourths of its economic output. What would happen to the blue voters in those cities after a Civil War? Take it or leave it? Better red than dead?

Or would the cities exist as blue islands in a sea of red—modern day Berlins? And before red voters say “damn straight,” they should realize it’s not just a blue problem. What about red voters who live in blue states? According to *Washington Post* correspondent Philip Bump, who covers the numbers behind politics, more Trump voters live in blue states than red ones. Mass relocations or walled cities? (Unfortunately we have a lot of experience lately with building walls, and they seem to run about \$20 million per mile. More billions.)

In short, even if Americans are not compelled by our shared history and culture to stay together and work it out, we should be swayed by the realization that splitting up would burden our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with crippling debt and sub-scale economies.

It would be an expensive, and unmanageable, divorce. ■

► **Sam Hill** is a former C-suite executive and writer, whose work has appeared in *FORTUNE*, *THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW* and *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*. **Hank Gilman** is a senior contributing editor at *NEWSWEEK*. **Giacomo Eisler** of *Indiana University* and **Luz Dunn** of *Databay* also contributed to this essay.





How Meineke Drives Customer Loyalty With Oracle

By offering more than points, Meineke Rewards shows how to drive customer loyalty. Meineke has always wanted its Meineke Rewards loyalty program to give customers more than the punch-card approach of “Buy four oil changes, get the fifth free.” So Meineke gives its rewards members benefits like 5 miles of free towing to the nearest Meineke Car Care Center, as well as points toward free services like tire alignments and oil changes. Meineke customers enjoy the loyalty program because it’s free, easy to use and they can earn significant discounts on necessary maintenance and repair services.

One of Meineke’s most popular services, offered at most Car Care Centers, is the Meineke eInspection tool, a free, 23-point inspection that lets technicians use a computer tablet to diagnose and photograph problems. From there, customers receive a text or email with photos and descriptions of problems in real time, so they can approve the suggested services, if any, on the spot.

Meineke Rewards, named by Newsweek as one of America’s Best Loyalty Programs in 2021, combines top-notch service and technology to drive one-of-a-kind customer care.

For the many U.S. drivers who don’t know how to repair a car themselves, it can oftentimes feel overwhelming to take their car in for servicing. The Meineke eInspection tool is a way to establish trust between the customer and technician because the customer is seeing what the technician is seeing.

The Meineke Rewards program, which runs on the Oracle CrowdTwist Loyalty and Engagement platform, recently earned a spot on Newsweek’s list of America’s Best Loyalty Programs for 2021.

Loyalty programs have only become more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as marketers watch consumers leave behind their favorite brands with, well, wild abandon. In an effort to make life easier or more comfortable for themselves during the pandemic, 43 percent of consumers sampled new brands in 2020, according to a recent Oracle study of consumer habits. The study analyzed purchase data, representing over 75 million U.S. households and \$762 billion in consumer spending from February through December 2020.

“Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, brands are reinforcing their loyalty efforts to re-engage customers,” states a recent Forrester report authored by vice president and principal analyst Mary Pilecki. “Marketers need a loyalty solution provider that intimately understands them and their customers in order to help [marketers] them be more agile, pivot faster, and thrive in an environment where everyday loyalty programs are ubiquitous.”

Seven Features Drivers Like Best About Meineke Rewards

The award-winning Meineke Rewards program was built with customers in mind. The following are seven key benefits:

- 1 It's easy to join and use, with sign up at the cash register or online.
- 2 The benefits are simple, with each \$1 spent equaling one point earned.
- 3 You can redeem points for services like tire alignments or oil changes.
- 4 The program routinely runs double-point promotions.
- 5 Points don't expire as long as drivers stay active in the program.
- 6 Members get 5 miles of free towing to the nearest Meineke Car Care Center.
- 7 Members can log in to their Meineke Rewards account to see their vehicle's entire repair history.



Meineke credits its Newsweek recognition as one of the nation's best loyalty programs to its "dedicated franchisees." Meineke franchisees run approximately 750 Car Care Centers in the U.S. and a smaller footprint in Canada.

Designed With Drivers in Mind

When Meineke redesigned its rewards program and moved to Oracle CrowdTwist, the company wanted to be able to go beyond the simple spending-driven model of loyalty programs often used by coffee shops and similar businesses.

Oracle CrowdTwist enables brands to build 360-degree customer profiles, connect digital and physical experiences, engage with customers in relevant ways beyond transactions, and nurture customer loyalty with personalized experiences and rewards.

This customer-centric approach helps Meineke marketers create promotional campaigns, such as those based on particular locations and vehicles. Drivers of trucks in northern regions might be interested in snow tires during the winter months, while drivers in southern regions might be interested in dehumidifiers and air conditioners as temperatures increase.

In addition, Oracle CrowdTwist offers Meineke marketers a library of tools for designing bonus campaigns, such as double points on oil changes. Next year, the team plans to launch regular surveys of Meineke Rewards members, powered by Oracle CrowdTwist, to allow customers to drive their own benefits.

Embracing Technology

Sam Meineke launched the first Meineke store—known for its mufflers—in 1972 in Houston. The Meineke business has grown into a network of independently owned and operated Car Care Centers, which offer complete repair and maintenance services and employ top-notch technicians who are crazy about cars.

Today, Meineke excels in its use of modern technology, like its Meineke inspection tool. With its loyalty program, Meineke has again blended technology with a deep understanding of customers and cars to build something truly special.



A close-up portrait of Xi Jinping, the President of China, looking down and slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie with a small blue pattern.

THE RUSSIAN INVASION
IS RESHAPING BEIJING'S PLANS
TO MAKE TAIWAN ITS OWN

CHINA IS WATCHIN

BY
John Feng
AND
David Brennan

GREG BAKER/AFP/GETTY



COMMON GROUND

Both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin have claimed bordering lands—Ukraine for Russia, Taiwan for China—as part of their national heritage.

W

HEN RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR

Putin ordered the first of his 190,000 troops into Ukraine on February 24, the invasion had a seismic effect on Europe and the Western world. But tremors were also felt some 5,000 miles to the east: Taiwan rapidly became a trending topic.

For years, the world has speculated nervously on when President Xi Jinping will finally make good on the Chinese Communist Party's vow to annex Taiwan, a self-ruling island off the east coast of the People's Republic of China—an act that threatens to provide the spark that ignites a hot war between Beijing and Washington.

The developments in Ukraine offer Beijing a hazy window into its own future. Russia's many failures and miscalculations in its blitzkrieg, and its struggle to assert full control in Ukraine against a fierce, well-armed and highly motivated resistance, are tough meat for Xi's Taiwan planners to chew on.

So too is the unexpectedly unified and powerful Western response to Russia's aggression. Moscow now sits atop a pile of economic rubble because of devastating sanctions. As Russia counts the cost in rubles and bodies, Washington believes China's calculations about annexing Taiwan are changing as a result.

Putin's Prism

AS THE KREMLIN BROADCAST PUTIN'S PRE-RECORDED hour-long address in the February 21 prelude to the full-scale dawn invasion that followed three days later, his framing of Russians and Ukrainians as "one people," and his argument that Ukraine's statehood was a demonstrable fiction and a mistake, likely sounded eerily familiar to those in Taiwan.

Leaders in Beijing have employed similar historical narratives for decades. The Taiwan public has made clear its preference for an identity that is distinctly Taiwanese, and its rejection of any existence that isn't wholly free and democratic. Yet China likens the island's 23.5 million people to political hostages who have been led astray by a small cabal of radical separatists backed by the United States.

Putin told Russians fantasies about liberating Ukraine's long-suffering people from bandits and neo-Nazis. His soldiers, it was said, would be welcomed with flowers and smiles.

A comparable picture appears to exist inside Zhongnanhai, the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party, in the minds of Xi and those



in his inner circle. It's difficult to say whether the Chinese leadership truly buys into this worldview. What's known is its patience and determination to unify Taiwan with China in order to achieve Putin-esque national glory.

A pretext for a Chinese invasion could read very similarly to Putin's justification for going to war.

China expert Didi Kirsten Tatlow, a senior fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, thinks Putin may even have borrowed the idea from Xi—an example of "authoritarian

CHINA LIKENS TAIWAN'S

**23.5 MILLION PEOPLE TO POLITICAL
HOSTAGES LED ASTRAY BY A SMALL**

**CABAL OF RADICAL SEPARATISTS
BACKED BY THE U.S.**

learning,” she says, “in framing and making its claim to Ukraine in atavistic and historical terms, denying it statehood or even identity, as China has done for decades with Taiwan.”

The Kremlin's Miscalculations

CHINA DOES NOT NEED TO LOOK HARD TO FIND Russia's miscalculations so far—and there are plenty for Beijing's strategists to analyze.

Though Russia may yet achieve its near-term military objectives by capturing Kyiv, Moscow's apparent political objectives—forcing neutrality and territorial concessions out of Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky—are far from guaranteed.

It is surely not escaping Beijing's notice, for example, that Russia's military progress has been slower than expected. The invading forces broke from the Russian doctrine that relies on overwhelming use of artillery and long-range fires—rockets and missiles—to soften up defenses for the battalion tactical groups that would then smash Ukraine's mechanized forces.

Moscow instead seemed to hope that “thunder runs” and airborne operations by small, specialized units could quickly penetrate Ukrainian defenses and decapitate Zelensky's government in Kyiv. These high-risk operations have failed, with units bogged down and destroyed by highly motivated, well-trained and well-armed Ukrainian defenders.

The Russian military has since fallen back on more established tactics. Massed armored columns are now snaking their way toward Kyiv and other major objectives. But this means slower progress, more strain on Russian logistics and more opportunity for Ukrainian counterattacks and asymmetric harassment, all while Western sanctions strangle Russia's economy.

Also noteworthy to Chinese observers: There's no indication that the Ukrainian people would accept a leader appointed by the Kremlin, or that their post-2014 shift to the West would be moved by Moscow's coercion and the destruction wrought upon their cities. This is only likely to become more protracted. Russia's slow progress is giving way to frustration. Russian bombardments are becoming more indiscriminate, killing and wounding more civilians while destroying homes and vital civilian infrastructure. Ukrainians already had little interest in living under the Russian yoke. The brutality of the invaders will only have deepened the animosity.

A Russian military victory would inevitably be followed by an entrenched and potent guerrilla resistance, likely financed, armed and trained by Western militaries and intelligence agencies. The shock to Europe's system appears to have united NATO and the European Union, although both blocs have been criticized by their Ukrainian partners for not doing enough to cow Moscow.

Still, Russian aggression has prompted an unprecedented Western realignment, and that is, no doubt, another development being eyed closely by Beijing. Germany is rearming; the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline between Russia and Germany is dead; Sweden and Finland, longtime holdouts, are discussing NATO membership; and perennially neutral Switzerland is imposing financial sanctions.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Left: Putin and Xi (here, during a 2018 meeting in Beijing) have grown more friendly lately. Below: Ukrainian casualties include a destroyed bridge in Borshchiv (top) and a wounded soldier in a Kyiv hospital (here, visited by President Volodymyr Zelensky).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SERGEI ILNITSKY/AFP/GETTY; MARCUS YAM/LOS ANGELES TIMES/GETTY; UKRAINIAN PRESIDENCY/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY

Russophiles can no longer support rapprochement with a toxic Kremlin, and Western capitals are being forced to review their longtime tolerance of dirty Russian money and Putin-allied oligarchs.

None of this is in Russia's long-term strategic interests, and it's upon these theoretical future battlefields where Beijing's calculus might shift.

China's Calculations

ANALYSTS IN TAIPEI AND WASHINGTON HAVE LONG speculated that a Chinese attack could begin with a limited advance into Taiwan's outlying islands of Kinmen and Matsu, which sit a short distance from the Chinese mainland.

However, capturing those territories without making a move on Taiwan proper could have an impact similar to that seen after Russia's annexation of Crimea and occupation of the Donbas: It risks removing some of the most China-friendly segments of the electorate and likely will solidify Taiwan's identity and alignment with the West.

To be sure, Taiwan's defense planners don't believe a minor incursion is the most likely scenario either. During an early March hearing in the island's legislature, Taiwan's defense minister, Chiu Kuo-cheng, predicted a full-scale military campaign complete with saturation attacks on all territories as well as a simultaneous and rapid amphibious assault.

He told one lawmaker: "The objective of any invasion by the Chinese Communist Party would be to occupy Taiwan. They are already capable of taking Kinmen and other outlying islands, so why haven't they done it? Because they need to be confident that they can do it in one attempt. If not, they'll end up in the same situation Russia faces in Ukraine. That's giving them pause."

Bonnie Glaser, director of the Asia Program at the German Marshall Fund, expects the Chinese military to closely study Russia's operation in Ukraine before drawing clear lessons. "One possible lesson is that the initial strike should use significant levels of force," she says. "If Taiwan makes significant territorial defense preparations, the PRC will have to factor that into their planning in ways they may not have done in the past."

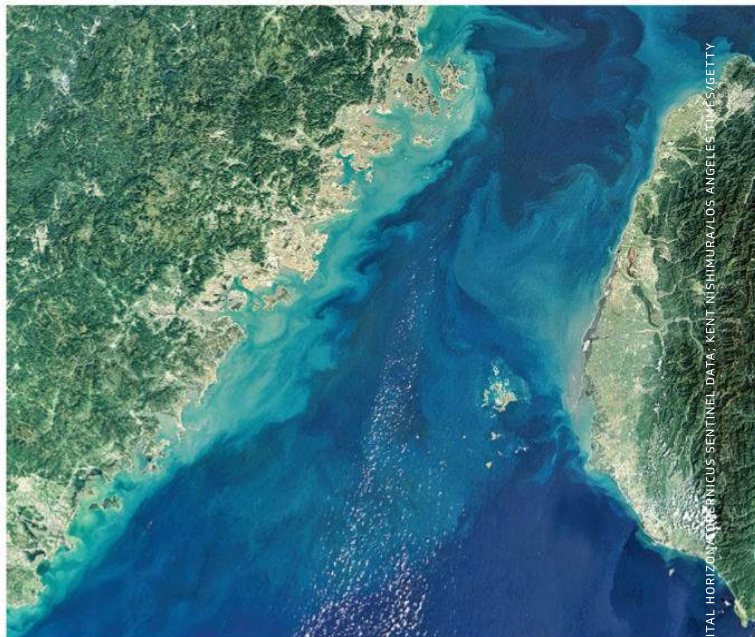
Like Ukraine, Taiwan's armed forces would be at a numerical disadvantage compared to the invading force. However, they would also be fighting on home turf with both indigenous and

American-made weapons and equipment. The defenders have some geographical advantages on their side, too, beginning with the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait, which is marred by poor sea conditions in certain seasons and not suitable for crossing.

Christina Chen, an assistant research fellow at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research in Taipei, believes the importance of substantial anti-armor and anti-aircraft weapons to repel an invasion is already a notable takeaway from the conflict in Europe.

POINTS OF VIEW

From top: Activists in 2016 demonstrate their desire for Taiwan's independence; just 100 miles of water separates the island of Taiwan from mainland China; and CIA Director William Burns warns the West not to underestimate Beijing's determination to control Taiwan.



FROM TOP: CRAIG FERGUSON/GETTY; GALLO IMAGES/ORBITAL; HORIZON/AMERICUS SENTINEL DATA; KENT NISHIKURA/LOS ANGELES TIMES/GETTY



“Training of militia and reserve forces would be necessary if vast amounts of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles are to be put into effective use,” Chen says. “Also, Ukraine has managed to keep the majority of its combat power (tanks, aircrafts) intact. Most of all, its air defense system has not been much disrupted. As a result, the Russians do not have total advantage in the air, and the Ukrainian forces can launch attacks when necessary. The Ukrainian experience shows that a small defensive force operating on home soil can be powerful.”

Whether the Taiwanese public would resist a Chinese invasion through some form of insurgency cannot be known in advance. Few predicted the level of resolve among Ukraine’s civilians. Taiwan is making reforms to reserve training and civilian mobilization—moves many believe aren’t being implemented with enough urgency.

Recent surveys show that the public’s will to fight is there. A late 2021 poll by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and National Chengchi University of nearly 1,300 Taiwanese found that 72.5 percent were

willing to fight for their country if China uses force against it with the goal of unification.

“I think the [polling] suggests a high likelihood of civilian resistance to occupation,” says Chen, whose organization has done similar surveys—and it could reach new levels after watching the heroics in Ukraine.

China knows it doesn’t yet possess the capabilities to achieve a quick and successful takeover of Taiwan, Chen argues. “A military invasion, however, might happen if serious upheavals happen in China, which may drive Xi to take the risk.” She cites a “major power struggle between Xi and his political opponents” as one example.

When the fighting does start, however, the humanitarian crisis would be even more catastrophic, with no land borders for Taiwan’s millions of refugees to flee across. Unlike the 3 million refugees from Ukraine who have managed to escape, no one in Taiwan would be able to leave the war zone and it would be even more difficult to bring in humanitarian supplies.

**ONE POLL OF TAIWANESE
PEOPLE FOUND THAT
MORE THAN 72 PERCENT WERE
WILLING TO FIGHT AGAINST
A CHINESE INVASION.**

Beijing Does the Math

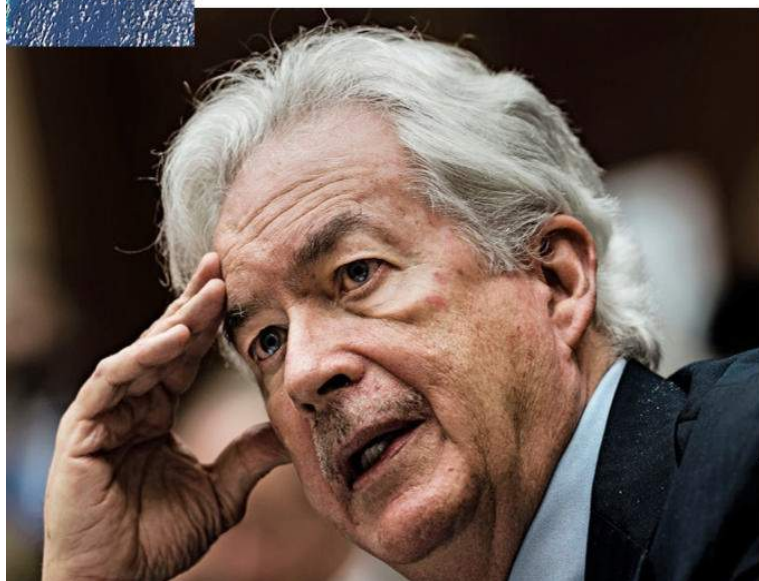
AT A HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE hearing in early March, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines assessed that, as a result of the Russian invasion and subsequent reaction in the West, China is already more reluctant to invade Taiwan than it was just a few months ago.

“The view is both that it is likely to reinforce China’s perspective on the seriousness with which we would ap-

proach an infringement on Taiwan and in the unity that they’ve seen between Europe and the United States, particularly in enacting sanctions,” she said.

At the same session, CIA Director William Burns said Beijing had been “surprised and unsettled” by Ukraine’s resistance and the strength of the Western reaction. But both said the Chinese leadership’s determination and readiness to use military force shouldn’t be discounted.

Perhaps most surprising is the private sector’s response to Putin’s war. More than 400 companies have withdrawn from Russia or suspended or scaled back operations. They include energy giants BP, Shell and ExxonMobil, according to a growing list compiled by the Yale School of Management.



**"ONE POSSIBLE LESSON IS THAT THE INITIAL STRIKE
SHOULD USE SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF FORCE."**



ARMED AND READY
Taiwan forces conduct live-fire war games as part of a military exercise, in the face of the growing threat from China.



SAM YEH/AP/GETTY

A similar reaction to an attack on Taiwan is far from assured, despite the enormous consequences it could have on global supply chains and major economies. Taiwan's lack of formal diplomatic relations with most countries in the world could be a factor; its absence of representation within the United Nations system could be another. But the key consideration would be the centrality of the Chinese market to the global economy, experts say.

"Beijing is likely surprised by the degree of unity in the international community condemning the invasion—141 countries in the UN—and especially the widespread support for sanctions," Glaser says. "It is uncertain, however, to what degree countries would be willing to impose such harsh sanctions on China, which is the second-largest economy in the world and the largest trading partner of over 100 countries. In my judgment, if the PRC decides that it is necessary to use force against Taiwan, the circumstances will be quite dire and China's leadership will have determined that they are willing to pay a high cost in order to achieve unification."

Tatlow says the outbreak of war has been a "visceral shock" for Europe. The possibility of a conflict across the Taiwan Strait is growing in the collective consciousness, but its impact would be different, she says, and sanctions might be targeted rather than sweeping. "There is the distinct possibility that the Russia sanctions are going to prove to be a 'dry run' for China, should it choose to invade Taiwan," she says.

Economic analysts in Beijing may already be crunching the numbers to determine the financial impact of Western sanctions on certain critical sectors, to see whether—or when—China might possess the wherewithal to weather a similar storm.

According to Tatlow, Europe, including Germany, is just now coming to grips with how it had emboldened Putin's authoritarian rule. China's touting of its "no limits" partnership with Russia in the same month as the invasion could lead to a similar awakening, accelerated by Beijing's apparent reluctance to distance itself from the worst of Moscow's depredations in Ukraine—a phenomenon of the new Cold War and Beijing's eagerness to get one over on the West in general and the U.S. in particular.

It's dawning on Europe what China and Russia's long-term plan to "change the world order" really means, Tatlow says.



A Different American Response

FOR CHINA, THE BIGGEST VARIABLE IN A HYPOTHETICAL cross-strait conflict is one it's already considering—the likelihood of Taiwan receiving foreign military support. Most analysts already see Beijing's military planners factoring in intervention by the U.S. as a minimum. Its expanding nuclear and conventional long-range strike capabilities are not for Taiwan; they aim to deter Washington by targeting American bases in Japan, Guam, Hawaii and even the continental U.S.

Several months before Russia's invasion, when President Joe Biden made it clear that no U.S. troops would fight in Ukraine, it was considered a prudent move that could greatly reduce the possibility of a

nuclear clash with Putin. If it comes to the defense of Taiwan, the U.S. will face a similarly difficult decision when challenged by an arguably more capable and rapidly modernizing adversary in China.

Yet Washington's position on the matter remains purposefully ambiguous—unlike its repeated statements that it won't send troops to Ukraine, the Biden administration has stuck with the longstanding U.S. policy of not publicly committing to or dismissing the possibility of defending Taiwan militarily. At a House Armed Services Committee hearing in early March, Ely Ratner, the Pentagon's assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, told lawmakers America's response would be different. "I'm confident that some of

ECONOMIC BLOWS

Clockwise, from left: Joe Biden calling for an end to trade with Russia; key administration officials Avril Haines and Ely Ratner; China's status as a major trade partner of many nations would make it tricky to impose sanctions if Beijing invades Taiwan (here, Lianyungang Port).

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG/GETTY (2); ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY; WANG JIANMIN/XINHUA/GETTY



**"IT IS UNCERTAIN TO WHAT DEGREE
GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE WILLING
TO IMPOSE HARSH SANCTIONS ON
CHINA, THE LARGEST TRADING
PARTNER OF OVER 100 COUNTRIES."**



WORLD

our closest partners would be with us in a Taiwan contingency," he said.

One growing impression is that a significant response from Japan is likely. Tokyo at the least would render large amounts of humanitarian aid. It could also permit deployment of U.S. troops from Japan-based facilities closest to Taiwan. Whether the Japan Self-Defense Forces have an active role to play is another question, given the limitations of its postwar constitution. When Japan is permitted to engage in collective self-defense with its treaty ally, it must first be contingent upon an existential threat to Japan itself.

Taiwan could be more isolated from allied help than Ukraine, which shares borders with four EU and NATO nations. Russia has already warned it might target convoys bringing weapons and supplies from the EU to Ukraine, and destroyed a key military base close to the Polish border. Realistically, Moscow won't be able to stop them all, but a Chinese air and naval blockade of Taiwan might prove very effective.

Lessons to Learn

WHEN HOSTILITIES FIRST BROKE OUT in Europe, officials in Beijing and Taipei both said that the situations in Ukraine and Taiwan shouldn't be compared. There are few similarities

between the two, especially from an American perspective, either in terms of size, location or the importance of their respective economies.

But in Taiwan, a significant portion of the public has projected Ukraine's fate onto its own, even if only for reasons of morale.

This has been reflected in action, too. On March 16, a government-backed account collecting funds for Ukraine's humanitarian aid topped \$22 million in two weeks, the largest donation drive in recent memory since Japan's earthquake and tsunami in 2011, when Taiwan's relief eventually totaled \$260 million.

With the fighting in Ukraine still ongoing and the military and political outcomes yet to be decided in either Kyiv or Moscow's favor, experts agree that it's far too early to draw definitive conclusions.

What's certain is that Beijing will have taken lessons from the first three weeks of the conflict—and Taiwan will have done so too. **N**





Newsweek

AMERICA'S
MOST

Trusted

COMPANIES

2022

JACOB ANMENTORP LUND/GETTY

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RUST IS SOMETHING THAT SEEMS TO BE IN SHORT supply in the world right now. A recent international study of trust in different institutions by Edelman Research, for instance, referred to a “cycle of distrust” fueled by widespread lack of faith in government and media. Non-governmental organizations and businesses were generally considered more trustworthy.

Trust is as crucial for any business as employees, capital and customers. If customers, employees and investors feel they can't rely on a company to be honest and fair with them, that company can't function for long. And in recent years, particularly through the pandemic, trust has taken on more meaning for businesses than just square dealing and avoiding scandal. Increasingly, consumers, employers and investors also want to know that a company shares their beliefs and values before they'll come aboard.

Unlike other things businesses need every day like cash flow or sales, though, trust can be hard to measure. To try to fill that gap, *Newsweek* and Statista are proud to present our first annual ranking of America's Most Trusted Companies. We looked at publicly traded U.S. corporations in 22 industries with \$500 million or more in annual revenues and then surveyed 50,000 U.S. residents. Respondents were asked about companies they knew well and were, asked among other things, if they believed individual companies treated their customers fairly, treated their employees fairly and would be good long-term investments. The result is a list of 400 companies Americans trust the most, ranked by industry. We've also noted the state where each is based.

There were varying numbers of companies in different industries. The category with the most ranked companies was energy and utilities with 33, followed by retail with 32. The category with the fewest rankings was aerospace and defense with three. Perhaps not surprisingly, across industries, the companies that inspired the most trust tended to be long established. The food and beverage ranking, for instance, includes household names like Campbell Soup, Kellogg and Molson Coors. The financial services list includes industry fixtures like American Express and Berkshire Hathaway. The health care and life sciences list, however, included at least one name most Americans had never heard of until the last two years: COVID-19 vaccine maker Moderna.

Whether you are a shopper, a job seeker or an investor, we hope you find these rankings helpful in making choices about which companies deserve your trust. ▶ **Nancy Cooper**, *Global Editor in Chief*

► Aerospace & Defense

- 1 **Aerojet Rocketdyne**
CALIFORNIA
- 2 **General Dynamics**
VIRGINIA
- 3 **Lockheed Martin**
MARYLAND

► Appliances & Electronics

- 1 **Whirlpool**
MICHIGAN
- 2 **Sonos**
CALIFORNIA
- 3 **iRobot**
MASSACHUSETTS
- 4 **Lowe's Companies**
NORTH CAROLINA
- 5 **Hamilton Beach Brands**
VIRGINIA
- 6 **Carrier Global**
FLORIDA
- 7 **Welbilt**
FLORIDA
- 8 **GoPro**
CALIFORNIA
- 9 **Kodak**
NEW YORK

► Automotive & Components

- 1 **Fox Factory**
GEORGIA
- 2 **Harley-Davidson**
WISCONSIN
- 3 **Thor Industries**
INDIANA
- 4 **Motorcar Parts of America**
CALIFORNIA
- 5 **Penske Automotive**
MICHIGAN
- 6 **Dorman Products**
PENNSYLVANIA
- 7 **Genuine Parts**
GEORGIA
- 8 **Tesla**
CALIFORNIA
- 9 **Polaris**
MINNESOTA
- 10 **General Motors**
MICHIGAN
- 11 **Cooper Tire & Rubber**
OHIO
- 12 **Tenneco**
ILLINOIS
- 13 **Navistar**
ILLINOIS
- 14 **Gentex**
MICHIGAN



TESLA

| Banks | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Texas Capital Bank TEXAS |
| 2 | United Bank WEST VIRGINIA |
| 3 | Bank of Hawaii HAWAII |
| 4 | BankUnited FLORIDA |
| 5 | First Republic Bank CALIFORNIA |
| 6 | Community Bank NEW YORK |
| 7 | Columbia Bank WASHINGTON |
| 8 | Regions Bank ALABAMA |
| 9 | Berkshire Hills Bank MASSACHUSETTS |
| 10 | Truist NORTH CAROLINA |
| 11 | Webster Bank CONNECTICUT |
| 12 | Trustmark MISSISSIPPI |
| 13 | Huntington OHIO |
| 14 | Hancock Whitney MISSISSIPPI |
| 15 | U.S. Bank MINNESOTA |
| 16 | Pacific Western Bank CALIFORNIA |
| 17 | KeyBank OHIO |
| 18 | WesBanco WEST VIRGINIA |
| 19 | Fifth Third Bank OHIO |
| 20 | Old National INDIANA |

| Construction | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Beazer Homes USA GEORGIA |
| 2 | First Solar ARIZONA |
| 3 | Azek Company ILLINOIS |
| 4 | LGI Homes TEXAS |
| 5 | Comfort Systems USA TEXAS |
| 6 | Armstrong World Industries PENNSYLVANIA |
| 7 | Great Lakes Dredge & Dock ILLINOIS |
| 8 | JELD-WEN NORTH CAROLINA |
| 9 | Lennox International TEXAS |
| Consulting & Professional Services | |
| 1 | United Rentals CONNECTICUT |
| 2 | Advantage Solutions CALIFORNIA |
| 3 | Crawford & Company GEORGIA |
| 4 | ADT FLORIDA |
| 5 | Automatic Data Processing NEW JERSEY |
| 6 | Iron Mountain MASSACHUSETTS |
| 7 | Grand Canyon Education ARIZONA |
| 8 | Rollins GEORGIA |
| 9 | Nielsen NEW YORK |



| 10 | CorVel CALIFORNIA |
|----------------|--|
| 11 | Booz Allen Hamilton VIRGINIA |
| Consumer Goods | |
| 1 | Hasbro RHODE ISLAND |
| 2 | Yeti TEXAS |
| 3 | Procter & Gamble OHIO |
| 4 | Colgate-Palmolive NEW YORK |
| 5 | Funko WASHINGTON |
| 6 | Newell Brands GEORGIA |
| 7 | Church & Dwight NEW JERSEY |
| 8 | Mattel CALIFORNIA |

| | |
|----|---|
| 9 | Reynolds Consumer Products ILLINOIS |
| 10 | Sally Beauty TEXAS |
| 11 | Johnson Outdoors WISCONSIN |
| 12 | Herman Miller MICHIGAN |
| 13 | Kimball International INDIANA |
| 14 | Steelcase MICHIGAN |
| 15 | Kimberly-Clark TEXAS |
| 16 | Energizer MISSOURI |
| 17 | Tupperware Brands FLORIDA |
| 18 | Vista Outdoor MINNESOTA |

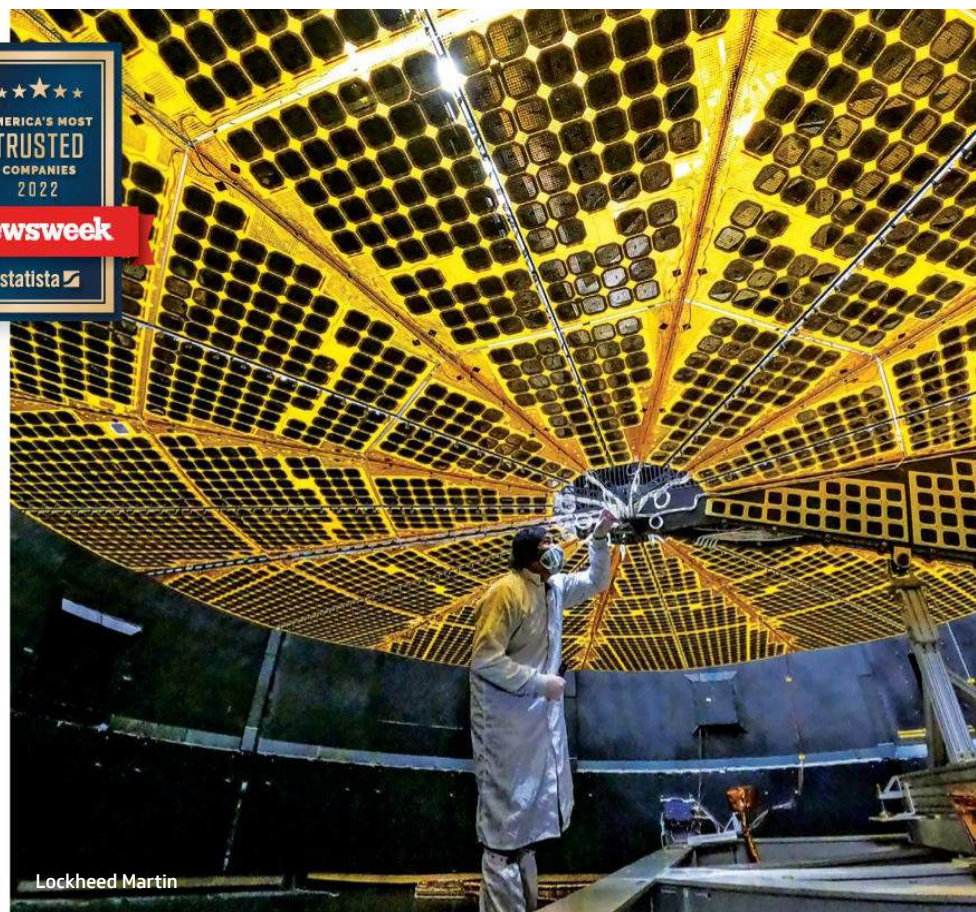




- 19 **The Container Store**
TEXAS
- 20 **Scotts Miracle-Gro**
OHIO
- 21 **Estée Lauder Companies**
NEW YORK
- 22 **Bed Bath & Beyond**
NEW JERSEY
- 23 **Ethan Allen**
CONNECTICUT
- 24 **Tempur Sealy**
KENTUCKY
- 25 **LifetimeBrands**
NEW YORK

► **Energy & Utilities**

- 1 **Magnolia Oil & Gas**
TEXAS
- 2 **US Ecology**
IDAHO
- 3 **National Energy Services Reunited**
TEXAS
- 4 **Oil States International**
TEXAS
- 5 **Gulfport Energy**
OKLAHOMA
- 6 **Renewable Energy**
IOWA
- 7 **Pioneer Natural Resources**
TEXAS
- 8 **Global Partners**
MASSACHUSETTS
- 9 **National Fuel Gas**
NEW YORK
- 10 **DTE Energy Co.**
MICHIGAN
- 11 **Waste Management**
TEXAS
- 12 **Spark Energy**
TEXAS



Lockheed Martin

- 13 **Geo**
FLORIDA
- 14 **American Water Works Company**
NEW JERSEY
- 15 **American Electric Power Company**
OHIO
- 16 **Southwest Gas**
NEVADA
- 17 **Southern Company**
GEORGIA
- 18 **NRG Energy**
TEXAS
- 19 **Baker Hughes**
TEXAS
- 20 **Ameren**
MISSOURI
- 21 **Alliant Energy**
WISCONSIN
- 22 **Hess Midstream**
TEXAS

- 23 **Kinder Morgan**
TEXAS
- 24 **Consol Energy**
PENNSYLVANIA
- 25 **AES**
VIRGINIA
- 26 **Helix Energy Solutions**
TEXAS
- 27 **Xcel Energy**
MINNESOTA
- 28 **Vistra**
TEXAS
- 29 **Phillips 66**
TEXAS
- 30 **Babcock & Wilcox Enterprises**
OHIO
- 31 **Chesapeake Energy**
OKLAHOMA
- 32 **WESCO International**
PENNSYLVANIA

- 33 **Comstock Resources**
TEXAS

► **Financial Services**

- 1 **Fidelity National Information Services**
FLORIDA
- 2 **World Acceptance**
SOUTH CAROLINA
- 3 **Brinks**
VIRGINIA
- 4 **Synovus Financial**
GEORGIA
- 5 **Coinbase Global**
DELAWARE
- 6 **MoneyGram International**
TEXAS
- 7 **Black Knight**
FLORIDA
- 8 **Berkshire Hathaway**
NEBRASKA



9 Global Payments
GEORGIA

10 Morningstar
ILLINOIS

11 Deluxe
MINNESOTA

12 American Financial Group
OHIO

13 T. Rowe Price
MARYLAND

14 Visa
CALIFORNIA

15 Invesco
GEORGIA

16 First American Financial
CALIFORNIA

17 PayPal
CALIFORNIA

18 American Express
NEW YORK

19 Square
CALIFORNIA

20 Ameriprise Financial
MINNESOTA

21 LoanDepot
CALIFORNIA

► Food & Beverage

1 Campbell Soup
NEW JERSEY

2 Hershey
PENNSYLVANIA

3 Flowers Foods
GEORGIA

4 Boston Beer Company
MASSACHUSETTS

5 Simply Good Foods
COLORADO

6 Kraft Heinz
ILLINOIS

7 General Mills
MINNESOTA

8 US Foods
ILLINOIS

9 Kellogg
MICHIGAN

10 Hormel Foods
MINNESOTA

11 UTZ Brands
PENNSYLVANIA

12 Coca-Cola
GEORGIA

13 Fresh Del Monte
FLORIDA

14 B&G Foods
NEW JERSEY

15 Mondelez
ILLINOIS

16 Pepsi Company
NEW YORK

17 Keurig Dr Pepper
TEXAS

18 Sysco
TEXAS

19 Sanderson Farms
MISSISSIPPI

20 Molson Coors
ILLINOIS

► Health Care & Life Sciences

1 Teladoc Health
NEW YORK

2 Community Health Systems
TENNESSEE

3 Healthcare Services Group
PENNSYLVANIA

4 Premier
NORTH CAROLINA

5 Moderna
MASSACHUSETTS

6 SAGE Therapeutics
MASSACHUSETTS

7 Allscripts Healthcare Solutions
ILLINOIS

8 Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.
NEW YORK

9 Regeneron Pharmaceuticals
NEW YORK

10 Goodrx
CALIFORNIA

11 Teleflex
PENNSYLVANIA

12 National Healthcare
TENNESSEE

13 Blueprint Medicines
MASSACHUSETTS

14 CVS Health
RHODE ISLAND

15 Becton, Dickinson and Company
NEW JERSEY

16 NextGen Healthcare
CALIFORNIA

17 Acadia Healthcare
TENNESSEE

18 Merck & Co.
NEW JERSEY

19 UnitedHealth Group
MINNESOTA

20 Genesis Healthcare
PENNSYLVANIA

21 Masimo
CALIFORNIA

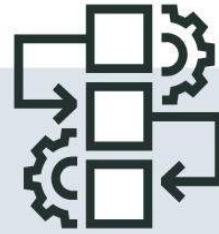
► Insurance

1 American National
TEXAS

2 Safety Insurance
MASSACHUSETTS

3 Loin National
PENNSYLVANIA

4 Fidelity National Financial
FLORIDA



► METHODOLOGY

For the first time, *Newsweek*, in collaboration with market research partner Statista, recognizes America's Most Trusted Companies in 22 industries according to U.S. residents' evaluations.

The Most Trusted Companies have been chosen based on a holistic approach to evaluating trust. The three main public touchpoints of trust have been considered: customer trust, investor trust and employee trust.

The analysis followed a three-step process:

1 _ Market definition: All stock listed companies headquartered in the U.S. with revenue over \$500 million have been considered in the study.

2 _ Extensive survey: The basis of the analysis is an independent survey from a sample of about 50,000 U.S. residents, who rated companies they know in terms of all three touchpoints of trust. A total of 110,000 evaluations of companies were submitted. The field period ran from June 28 to August 13, 2021.

3 _ Vetting of companies: A detailed check for scandals has been carried out. Companies that were involved in any recent scandals or lawsuits relevant to a dimension of trust have been excluded from the analysis.

The top list is sorted and presented by industries. For a full methodology see [newsweek.com/mtc-2022](https://www.newsweek.com/mtc-2022)



American Express

5 Markel
VIRGINIA

6 Progressive
OHIO

7 Brown & Brown
FLORIDA

8 MetLife
NEW YORK

9 Kemper
ILLINOIS

10 Humana
KENTUCKY

11 Brighthouse Financial
NORTH CAROLINA

12 State Auto Financial
OHIO

13 The Hartford
CONNECTICUT

► **Machines & Industrial Equipment**

1 Worthington Industries
OHIO

2 AGCO
GEORGIA

3 Deere & Co.
ILLINOIS

4 Allison Transmission
INDIANA

5 H&E Equipment Services
LOUISIANA

6 Stanley Black & Decker
CONNECTICUT

7 Caterpillar
ILLINOIS

8 Snap-On
WISCONSIN

9 Lincoln Electric
OHIO

10 Trinity Industries
TEXAS

11 Toro
MINNESOTA

12 General Electric
MASSACHUSETTS

13 Mueller Industries
TENNESSEE

14 Grainger
ILLINOIS

15 Generac
WISCONSIN

16 Graco
MINNESOTA

17 Barnes
CONNECTICUT

18 Franklin Electric
INDIANA

19 Crane Co.
CONNECTICUT

20 Cummins
INDIANA

21 Ingersoll Rand
NORTH CAROLINA

22 Illinois Tool Works
ILLINOIS

23 Emerson Electric
MISSOURI

► **Materials & Chemicals**

1 Kaiser Aluminum
CALIFORNIA

2 Century Aluminum
ILLINOIS

3 Quaker Houghton
PENNSYLVANIA

4 Olin
MISSOURI

5 Andersons
OHIO

6 Steel Dynamics
INDIANA

7 Avient
OHIO

8 Boise Cascade
IDAHO

9 Cleveland-Cliffs
OHIO

► **Media & Entertainment**

1 John Wiley & Sons
NEW JERSEY

2 Stride
VIRGINIA

3 Scholastic
NEW YORK

4 Netflix
CALIFORNIA

5 Discovery
NEW YORK

6 Walt Disney
CALIFORNIA

7 Liberty Media
COLORADO

8 Lions Gate Entertainment
CALIFORNIA

9 Pinterest
CALIFORNIA

10 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
MASSACHUSETTS

11 Lamar Advertising
LOUISIANA

12 E. W. Scripps Co.
OHIO

13 iHeartMedia
TEXAS

► **Real Estate & Housing**

1 Host Hotels & Resorts
MARYLAND

2 American Campus Communities
TEXAS

3 American Homes 4 Rent
CALIFORNIA

4 Park Hotels & Resorts
VIRGINIA

5 MGM Growth Properties
NEVADA

6 Extra Space Storage
UTAH

CAL BINGHAM/AMERICAN EXPRESS

7 KB Home
CALIFORNIA

8 Zillow Group
WASHINGTON

9 Forestar Group
TEXAS

10 Duke Realty
INDIANA

11 CBRE
TEXAS

12 Compass
NEW YORK

13 Regency Centers
FLORIDA

► Retail

1 Barnes & Noble Education
NEW JERSEY

2 United Natural Foods
RHODE ISLAND

3 Southeastern Grocers
FLORIDA

4 Kroger
OHIO

5 Amazon
WASHINGTON

6 Kirkland's
TENNESSEE

7 Ulta Beauty
ILLINOIS

8 Sonic Automotive
NORTH CAROLINA

9 Tractor Supply
TENNESSEE

10 Costco Wholesale
WASHINGTON

11 Grocery Outlet
CALIFORNIA

12 Albertsons Companies
IDAHO

13 Haverty Furniture Companies
GEORGIA

14 Petco
CALIFORNIA

15 Burlington
NEW JERSEY

16 Joann
OHIO

17 Target
MINNESOTA

18 Ross Stores
CALIFORNIA

19 Weis Markets
PENNSYLVANIA

20 Dick's Sporting Goods
PENNSYLVANIA

21 1-800-Flowers.Com
NEW YORK

22 Hibbett Sports
ALABAMA

23 Ingles Markets
NORTH CAROLINA

24 SpartanNash
MICHIGAN

25 BJ's Wholesale Club
MASSACHUSETTS

26 Casey's
IOWA

27 TJX Companies
MASSACHUSETTS

28 Williams-Sonoma
CALIFORNIA

29 PriceSmart
CALIFORNIA

30 Walmart
ARKANSAS

31 Etsy
NEW YORK

32 Dollar Tree
VIRGINIA

► Software & Telecommunications

1 American Tower
MASSACHUSETTS

2 Telephone and Data Systems
ILLINOIS

3 Manhattan Associates
GEORGIA

4 VMware
CALIFORNIA

5 Qualtrics International
UTAH

6 Microsoft
WASHINGTON

7 HubSpot
MASSACHUSETTS

8 Motorola Solutions
ILLINOIS

9 Adobe
CALIFORNIA

10 Roku
CALIFORNIA

11 Intuit
CALIFORNIA

12 Slack Technologies
CALIFORNIA

13 RingCentral
CALIFORNIA

14 Lumen Technologies
LOUISIANA

15 Aspen Technology
MASSACHUSETTS

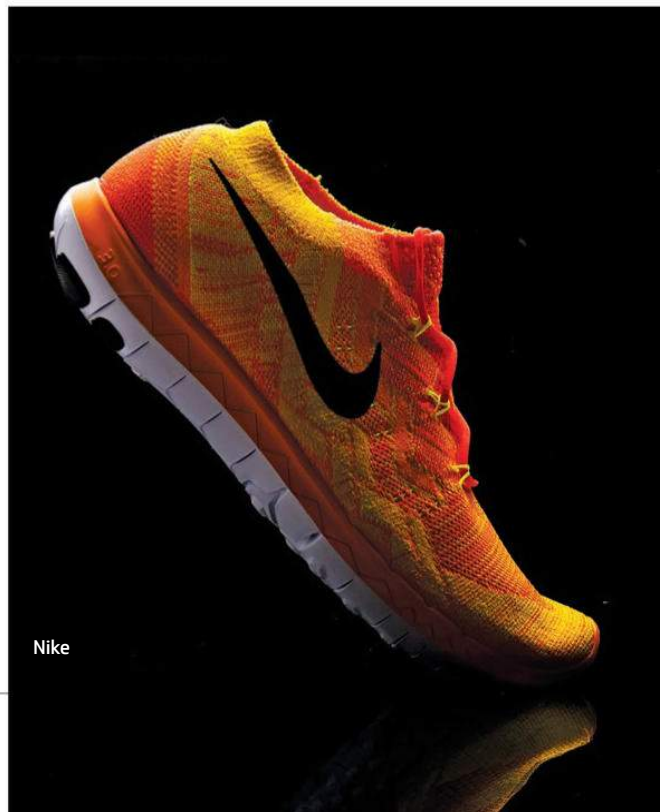
16 T-Mobile US
WASHINGTON

17 IBM
NEW YORK

18 Workday
CALIFORNIA

19 Paycom
OKLAHOMA

20 Crown Castle
TEXAS



Nike

- 21 **Verisign**
VIRGINIA
- 22 **NetApp**
CALIFORNIA
- 23 **ePlus**
VIRGINIA
- 24 **Vonage**
NEW JERSEY
- 25 **Oracle**
TEXAS
- 26 **Equinix**
CALIFORNIA
- 27 **EchoStar**
COLORADO
- 28 **Cincinnati Bell**
OHIO
- 29 **NortonLifeLock**
ARIZONA
- 30 **Rockwell Automation**
WISCONSIN

► **Technology Hardware**

- 1 **Zebra Technologies**
ILLINOIS
- 2 **PC Connection**
NEW HAMPSHIRE
- 3 **NVIDIA**
CALIFORNIA
- 4 **Razer**
CALIFORNIA
- 5 **Silicon Laboratories**
TEXAS
- 6 **National Instruments**
TEXAS
- 7 **Kimball Electronics**
INDIANA
- 8 **Arrow Electronics**
COLORADO
- 9 **Micron**
IDAHO

- 10 **Corning**
NEW YORK
- 11 **Texas Instruments**
TEXAS
- 12 **Intel**
CALIFORNIA
- 13 **Apple**
CALIFORNIA
- 14 **AMD (Advanced Micro Devices)**
CALIFORNIA
- 15 **Semtech**
CALIFORNIA
- 16 **Hewlett Packard**
TEXAS
- 17 **Dell Technologies**
TEXAS

- 18 **SYNNEX**
CALIFORNIA
- 19 **NCR**
GEORGIA
- 20 **Netgear**
CALIFORNIA
- 21 **Qualcomm**
CALIFORNIA
- 22 **HP**
CALIFORNIA
- 23 **Photronics**
CONNECTICUT
- 24 **Western Digital**
CALIFORNIA
- 25 **Honeywell International**
NORTH CAROLINA

- 26 **Cirrus Logic**
TEXAS

► **Textiles, Clothing & Luxury Goods**

- 1 **Unifi**
NORTH CAROLINA
- 2 **Under Armour**
MARYLAND
- 3 **Ralph Lauren**
NEW YORK
- 4 **HanesBrands**
NORTH CAROLINA
- 5 **Levi Strauss & Co**
CALIFORNIA
- 6 **Crocs**
COLORADO

SONOS



7 **Carter's**
GEORGIA

8 **Urban Outfitters**
PENNSYLVANIA

9 **Designer Brands**
OHIO

10 **Lands End**
WISCONSIN

11 **Oxford Industries**
GEORGIA

12 **Chico's FAS**
FLORIDA

13 **Nike**
OREGON

14 **Boot Barn**
CALIFORNIA

15 **Fossil**
TEXAS

16 **Children's Place**
NEW JERSEY

► **Transport, Logistics
& Packaging**

1 **United Parcel Service**
GEORGIA

2 **Crown**
PENNSYLVANIA

3 **Forward Air**
TENNESSEE

4 **FedEx**
TENNESSEE

5 **Graphic Packaging**
GEORGIA

6 **Westrock**
GEORGIA

7 **Atlas Air Worldwide**
NEW YORK

8 **Packaging Corp
of America**
ILLINOIS

9 **U.S. Xpress
Enterprises**
TENNESSEE

10 **Yellow**
KANSAS

11 **Alaska Air Group**
WASHINGTON

12 **Norfolk Southern**
VIRGINIA

13 **Uber**
CALIFORNIA

14 **Echo**
ILLINOIS

15 **Schneider National**
WISCONSIN

16 **Southwest Airlines**
TEXAS

17 **Roadrunner Freight**
ILLINOIS

18 **Heartland Express**
IOWA

19 **Delta Air Lines**
GEORGIA

20 **USA Truck**
ARKANSAS

21 **Radiant Logistics**
WASHINGTON

22 **Frontier Airlines**
COLORADO

► **Travel, Dining
& Leisure**

1 **Marriott International**
MARYLAND

2 **Liberty TripAdvisor**
COLORADO

3 **Starbucks**
WASHINGTON

4 **Bloomin' Brands**
FLORIDA

5 **Hilton Worldwide**
VIRGINIA

6 **Caesars Entertainment**
NEVADA

7 **Brinker
International**
TEXAS

8 **Regis Corporation**
MINNESOTA

9 **Hyatt Hotels**
ILLINOIS

10 **The Cheesecake Factory**
CALIFORNIA

11 **Choice Hotels
International**
MARYLAND

12 **TravelCenters
of America**
OHIO

13 **Penn National Gaming**
PENNSYLVANIA

14 **AMC Entertainment**
KANSAS

15 **Texas Roadhouse**
KENTUCKY

16 **Bluegreen Vacations**
FLORIDA

17 **Wynn Resorts**
NEVADA

STATISTA publishes worldwide established rankings and company listings with high-profile media partners. This research and analysis service is based on the success of [statista.com](https://www.statista.com). The leading data and business intelligence portal provides statistics, business relevant data and various market and consumer studies/surveys.

► VIEW THE LIST ONLINE AT [Newsweek.com/mtc-2022](https://www.newsweek.com/mtc-2022)

UNCHARTED

Oscar-Worthy Film Locales

Despite the ongoing pandemic, this year the show *did* go on. Film crews navigated COVID-19 protocols in locations around the globe, from the Jordanian desert (*Dune*) to the New Zealand mountains (*The Power of the Dog*) to Hiroshima's cityscape (*Drive My Car*). Tune in on March 27 (ABC) to see which of the following nominations win top spots at the 94th Academy Awards, hosted by Regina Hall, Amy Schumer and Wanda Sykes. —MEGHAN GUNN

"What Women Want"

Simone Ashley talks about the second season of period drama, *Bridgerton*. ▶ P.48



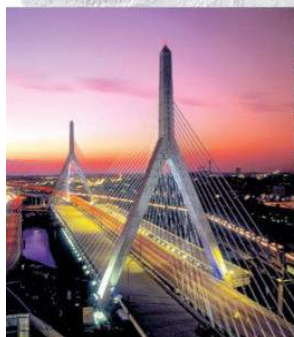
GETTY; FABIO LOVINO/METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURES INC.; TOP RIGHT: STEPHANE CARDONALE/GETTY

House of Gucci ITALY

This film starring Lady Gaga is up for only one Oscar—Best Makeup and Hairstyling—much to the chagrin of Gaga fans who thought she'd take home a nomination for her portrayal of Patrizia Reggiani. Set entirely in Italy, backdrops for the crime drama include the streets of Milan, a villa in Lake Como and the Alps. (See #5 on following spread)



Culture



02

Don't Look Up

BOSTON

This star-studded film made major waves for its black humor and all-too-real allegories on climate change. Rather than premiering in theaters, the movie hit the small screen on Netflix. Now, it's a four-time Oscar nominee up for Best Picture, Best Original Score, Best Original Screenplay and Best Film Editing.



01

Encanto

COLOMBIA

Up for Best Animated Feature, Best Original Score and Best Song, *Encanto* tells the story of a family living in the Colombian mountains. Protagonist Mirabel takes viewers on a journey filled with magical realism and rich Colombian culture. The film was inspired by the town of Barichara.



1



03

Belfast

NORTHERN IRELAND

This coming-of-age film written and directed by Kenneth Branagh details *The Troubles* from the perspective of 9-year-old Buddy, son of a working-class Ulster Protestant family. Shot in Northern Ireland where the conflict took place in real life, *Belfast* scooped up seven nominations this year, including the coveted Best Picture.



04

Parallel Mothers

MADRID

Leading lady Penélope Cruz could make history as the first Spanish woman to receive an Oscar for Best Actress, if she takes the award for her role as Janis (her second Best Actress nomination). The film, set in a Madrid hospital, is also up for Best Original Score for music by composer Alberto Iglesias.



2

3

4

5

05

House of Gucci

ITALY

(See previous spread)



01: GETTY; DISNEY; 02: ROB YOUNGSON/FOCUS FEATURE; 03: SYLVAIN SONNET/GETTY; IGLESIAS MÁS/SONY PICTURES CLASSICS; 04: FABIO LOVINO/METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURES INC.



06

The Lost Daughter
SPETSES, GREECE

Maggie Gyllenhaal's feature directorial debut, adapted from a novel by Elena Ferrante, earned three nominations this year—Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Actress for Olivia Colman's performance and Best Supporting Actress, a nod to Jessie Buckley who plays the younger version of Colman's character.

08

Ascension
GUANGZHOU, CHINA

Filmed in 51 locations across the country, *Ascension* paints a picture of modern China and growing class divides, while exploring global capitalism. Directed and produced by Jessica Kingdon, the flick is a contender for Best Documentary Feature—a title it previously won at the Tribeca Film Festival.



09

Drive My Car
HIROSHIMA

Based on Haruki Murakami's short story of the same name, *Drive My Car* premiered at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival and quickly rose to critical acclaim. While originally meant to be set in Busan, South Korea, the location was changed to Hiroshima due to the pandemic. The film—nominated for four awards—is Japan's first to be nominated for Best Picture.



07

Dune
JORDAN

Fan favorites Zendaya and Timothée Chalamet star alongside one another in the sci-fi film directed by Denis Villeneuve. While filmed in locations all around the globe including Jordan, Israel, Abu Dhabi and Norway, the windswept deserts of Jordan and the United Arab Emirates stand in for the planet Arrakis. *Dune* is up for 10 awards including Best Picture.

10

The Power of the Dog
NEW ZEALAND

A Western psychological thriller based on the novel by Thomas Savage, the story follows two brothers on a ranch in Montana. The movie, however, was mostly shot on the South Island—landscapes also used in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies. *The Power of the Dog* received 12 Oscar nominations, the most of any film in 2022.



TELEVISION

True Crimes

Renée Zellweger stars in a bizarre real-life murder story in NBC's *The Thing About Pam*

by H. ALAN SCOTT



IF YOU'RE A DIRECTOR LOOKING to cast a female actor to play a real-life person, a handful of actresses come to mind, and one of those actresses is Renée Zellweger. She won an Oscar playing one of the most recognizable entertainers in Hollywood history, Judy Garland. Now she's taking these amazing skills of mimicry and applying them to her portrayal of alleged multiple murderer Pam Hupp in NBC's ripped-from-the-headlines miniseries *The Thing About Pam*. The series premiered March 8.

"I want it to be responsible," Zellweger tells *Newsweek*. "It's never to lampoon a person or humiliate a person."

In the series, Zellweger dons a suit to make her appear larger, in addition to prosthetics to assist her transformation into Hupp. But before people even knew much about the part Zellweger was playing, pictures of her in costume set social media aflame with accusations of fat phobia and questions over why another actor who better physically fit the role was not cast.

This conversation is not new to Zellweger, whose physical presence has been a topic of obsession ever since the actress starred in *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Zellweger says she's been able to largely avoid the online chatter. "That's the fun of not being on social media. Who has time for that?" With that said, she does point out that those conversations about an actor's body often revolve only around female actors. "Can we just stop talking about women's bodies? Stop talking about women's bodies!"

For *The Thing About Pam*, Zellweger used everything at her disposal to bring Pam Hupp to life, a difficult task considering the insane true story that inspired the series.

The real Pam Hupp was sentenced to life in prison for the 2016 murder of Louis Gumpenberger in O'Fallon,

FRANK OCKENFELS 3/NBC



ONSTAGE AND OFF Opposite: Zellweger in costume as accused killer Pam Hupp and above as herself in West Hollywood.

Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. Hupp claimed she shot Gumpenberger in self-defense, but prosecutors said the killing was part of a scheme to cover up her involvement in another murder, that of her friend Betsy Faria in 2012. Prosecutors allege Hupp murdered Betsy to cash in on a life insurance policy naming her as beneficiary. Authorities first charged Betsy's husband, Russ, with the killing and Hupp's testimony against him led to his conviction in 2012. His conviction was later overturned in a new trial in 2015. After Russ was cleared, Hupp, posing as a *Dateline* NBC producer, lured the mentally and physically impaired Gumpenberger to her home and killed him, hoping to pin this second murder on Russ.

Investigators believe Hupp may have been involved in the death of her mother in 2013, also for financial gain. Betsy Faria's murder investigation was reopened by the Lincoln County Prosecutor's Office and in July 2021, Hupp was charged with Betsy's murder, with a trial date yet to be determined.

Zellweger says she was drawn to the story by, "The escalating absurdity of her behavior and the choices she makes and what happens around all of it. I was really taken by the story of what happened to Betsy Faria

and Russ Faria."

The Thing About Pam uses *Dateline* NBC's distinctive format (complete with Keith Morrison's familiar narration), but in the framework of a miniseries. *Dateline* not only covered the Pam Hupp case on TV, but it was also the news program's first endeavor into podcasts. Zellweger says, "It was a really wonderful opportunity to explore some deeper social issues like personal bias, confirmation bias, and how that comes into play in the criminal justice system. And it's an interesting way to do it through a *Dateline* podcast."

The Thing About Pam uses dark comedy to send home the absurdity of Pam's story. "I love an opportunity to be cheeky with something," Zellweger says, "What's interesting is we wanted to be really careful with how we navigated the tongue-in-cheek because it's tragic. There's a lot of suffering and loss involved in this case, obviously. So you want to be careful and honorable to the memory of Betsy Faria and what her family experienced. But we just found that it was Pam's choices that she made, the things that are on public record from her interviews, the information that she shared, her personal narrative, it was impossible to tell it without introducing levity, because of the absurdity." Zellweger's Hupp, for instance, carries around an enormous fountain drink and

dramatically stabs her straw into it, while locking her eyes on whomever she's talking to.

"It's the juxtaposition of the making you comfortable to laugh and then the tragedy that's ongoing in this story that makes you stop for a second and really feel the gravity of the consequences, the decisions and the choices that this person made. I think without it, it's much more difficult to kind of tiptoe in the underlying themes," Zellweger says.

She says being able to tell a longer and more personal story attracted her to the idea of a miniseries. "As a creative person, I just thought that there could be a really interesting way of telling it that would be more compelling than just a regurgitation of the facts that other outlets and other mediums have already presented in several different ways very successfully," she says.

This was the first project Zellweger left her home for during the pandemic, and it was a role that required the actress to go through hours of makeup preparation every day. "The process was awesome," she says, "It was peculiar and fun and so stupid. By the third day I got this allergic rash. I'm like, 'Oh my God, that's real glue.' I'm putting real glue on a real face. But it's magic. The fact that they can do it and they can do it safely and so consistently is remarkable."

Outside the production, Zellweger says she didn't do "anything" during the pandemic. "I didn't leave my house—except to do my senior citizen food delivery—for a couple of years there in the canyon. I found that I'm actually suited nicely for that. I like hanging out with my dogs." ■

► **H. Alan Scott** is a senior editor at *NEWSWEEK* and host of *THE PARTING SHOT* podcast. Listen at newsweek.com/podcasts. Twitter @HAlanScott

"The tragedy that's ongoing in this story that makes you stop for a second and really feel the gravity of the consequences."



PARTING SHOT

Simone Ashley

IMAGINE YOU'RE AN ACTOR LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT GIG, AND THEN poof, you're cast as the lead on *Bridgerton*, but have no idea how big the show actually is. That's exactly what happened to Simone Ashley, star of the second season of the Netflix period drama (March 25). "I didn't have a furnished apartment where I could sit down and be like, 'Oh, this is what everyone's talking about.' I was just always on the move." This season focuses on a new pair of love interests. "Each season is based on a different sibling coming out into the marriage market in the 18th century and finding love." Ashley plays Kate Sharma, the love interest of Lord Anthony Bridgerton, played by Jonathan Bailey. While Ashley's character was written to reflect the actress's background, it's not the focus of the season. "As an Indian woman, I want to be seen for my talent. I don't want to be seen for the color of my skin. And I felt that they understood that, and that's what they put into the show." Instead, the focus is on "what women want. It's about what we fall in love with. That's kind of rare."



"I want to be seen for my talent. I don't want to be seen for the color of my skin."

Were you nervous to take on the role of Kate?

Like every other artist, I've spent so many hours waiting for the phone to ring. *Bridgerton* fell in my lap at a very weird time in my life. It was the pandemic, and I was in London couch surfing. Then *Bridgerton* came. I got the job, and by next week we were in it. So if I'm honest, I didn't get a moment to process any of that.

So much of the romance this season is told from the female gaze. Why was that important?

When we were rehearsing the sex scenes, we had an amazing intimacy coordinator and she was like, it's really important for us to portray the woman receiving and experiencing pleasure. It's such a small detail, but it makes such a massive impact.

Do the costumes help you find your character?

You learn a lot about what women went through at that time and how it influenced their lives, their posture and their behavior. I just feel very lucky that my first [period drama] got to be the most colorful and romantic one.

***Bridgerton* was a leader in showing an authentically diverse cast. Does that continue this season?**

What's so wonderful about the show is it's inclusive, but it doesn't dehumanize anyone. It's all about real people with real problems and feelings that anyone can relate to. — *H. Alan Scott*

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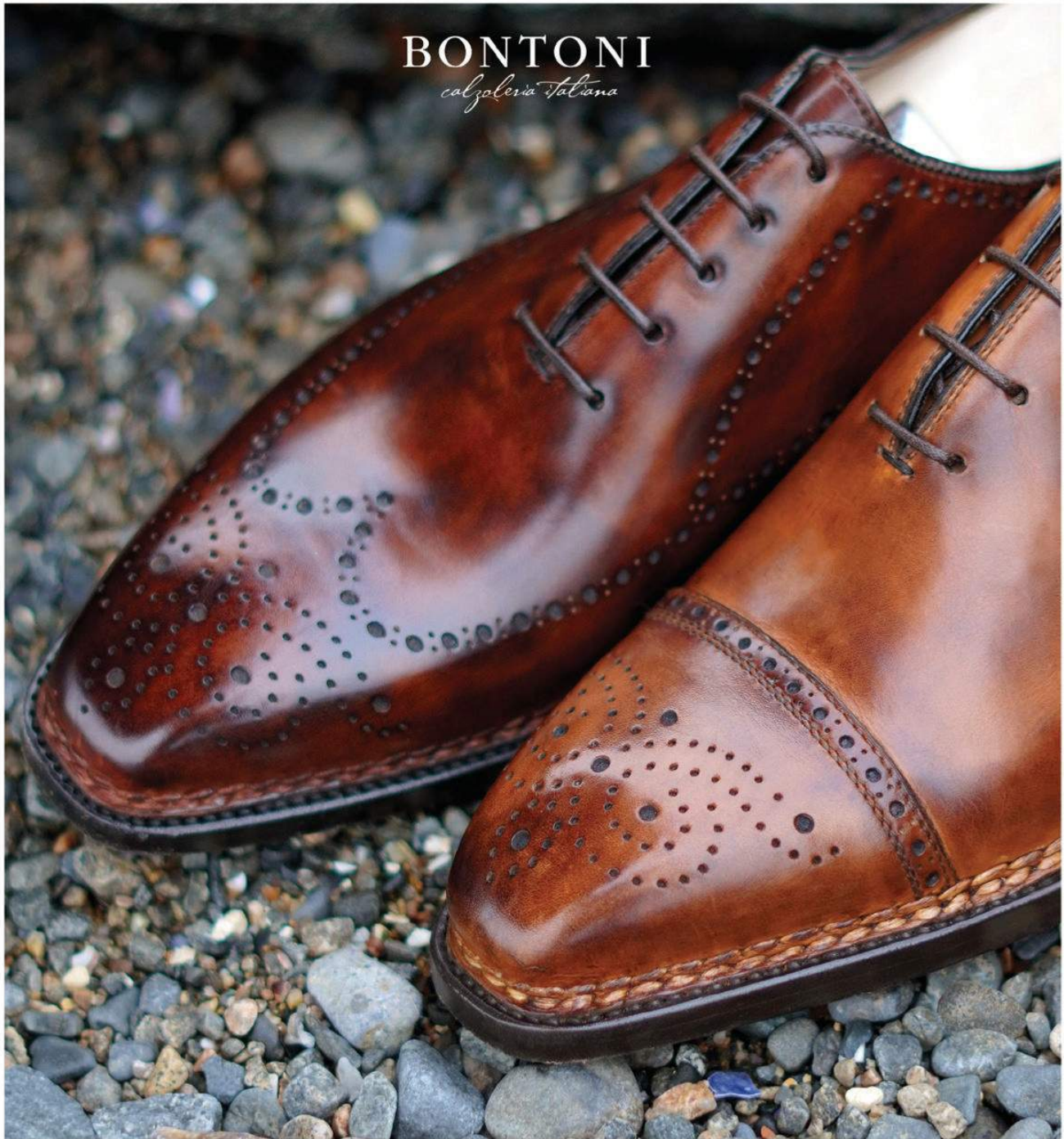
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