

The Atlantic

2018 | A YEAR *in* REVIEW

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Welcome to The Atlantic's Year in Review

THIS GUIDE WAS created for you, our readers, to give you a better sense of the impact you've helped make in 2018. We'd like to start by saying: Thank you. None of our journalism would be possible without your support, and for that, we're grateful.

Operating a successful journalistic enterprise in the second decade of the 21st century is no easy thing—not simply because of certain global trends that undermine the aims and ideals of a free press, but also because the business of publishing is changing at breathtaking speed.

The Atlantic is, of course, a print magazine. But it is also a digital destination that attracts tens of millions of readers every month (a “real-time magazine,” as we call it); an events company that engages tens of thousands of attendees every year; a video studio; a podcasting outfit; a creative advertising shop; a digital-strategy consultancy; and, ultimately, a global network of hundreds of writers, editors, designers, coders, technologists, strategists, and other passionate contributors. All have a common purpose: Honor our legacy, and create the conditions for The Atlantic to succeed for another 161 years.

In the following pages, you'll see just a small part of the work we've done this year: a selection from thousands of articles written, hundreds of hours of videos and podcasts and events produced, and other creative projects pursued. We hope it inspires in you the same sense of pride we feel every day as we strive to fulfill our mission.

If you're not already a subscriber or Masthead member, we invite you to join us. Either way, we thank you, again, for your support.

Sincerely,



Bob Cohn,
President



Jeffrey Goldberg,
Editor in Chief

Stories Worth Revisiting

“A great Atlantic story,” says editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg, “is one that combines compelling narrative, rigorous analysis, deep reporting, and strong argument, all in service of the largest idea possible.”

THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA

Franklin Foer’s [March](#) cover feature on Paul Manafort, Donald Trump’s former campaign manager, was one such story. Not only did Foer chronicle the rise and fall of one of today’s most significant political figures, but he also told a broader tale about the moral decline of Washington and the corruption of American politics writ large. Foer showed, in exhaustive detail, the ways Manafort helped create the swamp that Trump later promised to drain. The lobbying firm that Manafort co-founded in 1980—the first to also house political-campaign consultants—obliterated traditional concerns about avoiding conflicts of interest in governmental affairs. One wing of the firm ran campaigns, while the other lobbied the politicians their colleagues helped elect. With this strategy, “the effectiveness and influence of lobbying grew in tandem,” Foer writes.

Foer illustrates how Manafort and his firm opened the floodgates to the foreign money and influence that poured into Washington. His client base included brutal dictators from all corners of the world, whose image he polished just enough to gain them approval from American political elites. Foer asserts that Manafort helped persuade politicians to look past—and ultimately accept—abuses of power, weakening the capital’s ethical immune system from the inside. While Manafort’s role in Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation, and the extent of his relationships with the Russians, are as yet unknown, Foer’s story is crucial to understanding how the forces that threaten to subvert American democracy grew strong.

THE 9.9 PERCENT IS THE NEW ARISTOCRACY

Another deeply reported cover story was Matthew Stewart’s “[The Birth of a New Aristocracy](#),” published in the May issue. Stewart challenges the popular myth that America is a pure meritocracy and shows instead that social mobility falls when income inequality rises, as has been the trend for decades. But rather than casting blame on the often villainized 1 percent, Stewart points the finger at a somewhat larger group, one to which he belongs: the 9.9 percent. Its members are not your typical “wealthy elites”; they are, rather, the college professors, doctors, lawyers, and managers next door. He argues that this group has been responsible, in a number of ways, for the widening class divide—and the loss of opportunity for lower-income Americans to find their way into the upper echelons of society.

Stewart’s piece positions the 9.9 percent as a new aristocracy, one that is passing on its privilege to future generations and throwing up roadblocks behind them. The 9.9 percent live in safe neighborhoods, attend good schools, receive high-quality health care, and belong to social circles that offer opportunities to them and their children. While life seems ideal for these aristocrats—most of whom don’t consider themselves aristocrats at all—the ground is shifting beneath them. Inequality has led to resentment throughout the country. That resentment, in turn, has ushered in political division and instability, most notably in the form of Donald Trump. “The raging polarization of American political life is not the consequence of ... a lack of mutual understanding,” Stewart writes. “It is just the loud aftermath of escalating inequality.”



Mark Peterson / Redux

WHAT I SAW TREATING THE VICTIMS FROM PARKLAND

One of The Atlantic's most-read stories of 2018 was written not by a journalist but by a radiologist. Heather Sher, who has worked in one of America's busiest trauma centers for more than a decade and has diagnosed thousands of handgun injuries, thought she knew everything she needed to know about gunshot wounds. But she was horrified by what she saw when treating victims of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. A week after the shooting, The Atlantic published her article describing, in visceral detail, the damage bullets from an AR-15 inflicted on the bodies of innocent teenagers. Sher explains that a typical handgun bullet cuts through a human organ in a straight line, leaving entry and exit wounds roughly the size of the bullet. But an AR-15 bullet, which travels almost three times as fast, is different. It "passes through the body like a cigarette boat traveling at maximum speed through a tiny

canal," she writes. "The high-velocity bullet causes a swath of tissue damage that extends several inches from its path ... Exit wounds can be the size of an orange." A shooter armed with an AR-15 does not have to be particularly accurate in order to kill, and a victim does not have to be exceptionally unlucky in order to be killed.

Sher's experiences treating many of those victims reinforced her belief that AR-15-style weapons should be banned from civilian use—an argument she forcefully puts forth in her article. She offers concrete recommendations for enacting gun control: Repeal the Dickey Amendment, which bars the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using funds to study gun violence as a public-health issue. Reinstate the Federal Assault Weapons Ban of 1994, which prohibited the manufacture of semi-automatic rifles for civilian use. And change the conversation that consumes Capitol Hill after a massacre such as Parkland—from one about mental health to one about the AR-15, the common denominator in many mass shootings.

More Great 2018 Stories

"The Last Temptation,"

by Michael Gerson

Evangelicals, once culturally confident, have become an anxious minority seeking political protection from the least traditionally religious president in living memory.

"America's Invisible Pot Addicts," by Annie Lowrey

More and more Americans are reporting near-constant cannabis use, as legalization forges ahead.

"The Cruelty Is the Point,"

by Adam Serwer

President Donald Trump and his supporters find community by rejoicing in the suffering of those they hate and fear.

"How the Enlightenment Ends,"

by Henry Kissinger

Philosophically, intellectually—in every way—human society is unprepared for the rise of artificial intelligence.

"Why Rich Kids Are So Good at the Marshmallow Test," by Jessica McCrory Calarco

Affluence—not willpower—seems to be what's behind some kids' capacity to delay gratification.

"Is Something Neurologically Wrong With Donald Trump?,"

by James Hamblin

It is best not to diagnose the president from afar, which is why the federal government needs a system to evaluate him up close.

"The Nastiest Feud in Science," by Bianca Bosker

A Princeton geologist has endured decades of ridicule for arguing that the fifth extinction was caused not by an asteroid but by a series of colossal volcanic eruptions. But she continues the debate.

"The Belief in Our Inferiority Persists," by Jesmyn Ward

"I wonder why I am raising my children in Mississippi, which makes them feel like they are perpetually less."

"Americans Strongly Dislike PC Culture," by Yascha Mounk

Youth isn't a good proxy for support of political correctness, and race isn't either.

"Was There a Civilization on Earth Before Humans?,"

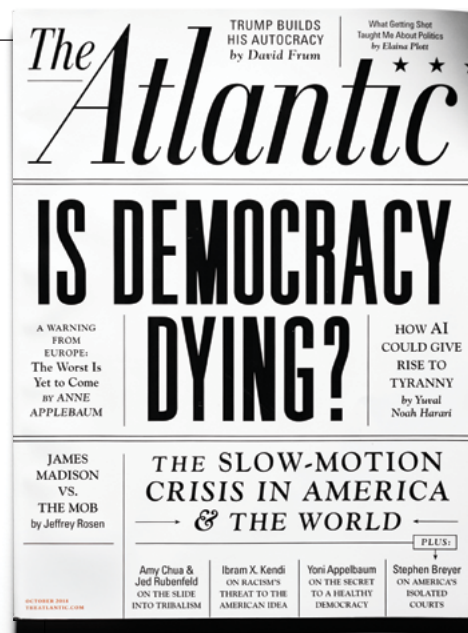
by Adam Frank

An astrophysics professor examines the available evidence.

America and the World in Crisis

Not long ago, our democratic future seemed settled. History had ended; liberalism had won. Today, the picture looks far less certain. Autocracy is on the rise across the world, including in that once unlikeliest of countries: America. And so we must ask: Is democracy dying? That is the question *The Atlantic* explored in its [October issue](#), which featured contributions from Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, historians Anne Applebaum and Yuval Noah Harari, National Constitution Center President Jeffrey Rosen, and other leading journalists and thinkers.

“This issue represents the latest in a series of attempts by *The Atlantic* to understand the trajectory of democracy and the American idea,” Jeffrey Goldberg writes in his editor’s note. “Our hope is that you find this a useful guide to a perilous moment.”



America’s Founding Fathers recognized the fragility of the democratic experiment, which is why they designed the country not as a direct democracy but as a representative republic. In his article “[Madison vs. the Mob](#),” Jeffrey Rosen explains how James Madison and the Framers—distrustful of factions, or, in Rosen’s words, “impetuous mobs”—built into the Constitution cooling mechanisms that would help temper the heat of popular sentiment. But those mechanisms are no match for the unrestrained passions of our current digital age, in which social media further inflame and polarize public discourse. “We are living, in short, in a Madisonian nightmare,” Rosen writes.

Threats to democracy are not, of course, exclusive to the United States. In her essay on [Poland’s unfolding descent into illiberal autocracy](#), Anne Applebaum looks at how the changes taking place in that country, including the proliferation of conspiracy theories and attacks on the free press, have been seen many times over in Europe, where the tactics and rhetoric used by today’s far right are eerily similar to those once employed by the radical left. According to Applebaum, history is circular, the allure of authoritarianism eternal.





Titus Kaphar

Any assessment of democracy today must also consider technology, which Yuval Noah Harari argues is changing in ways that now favor tyranny. In the not-too-distant future, artificial intelligence may render billions of workers economically irrelevant and thus politically insignificant. Surveillance systems and bots could make people easier to monitor and manipulate, allowing those in power to further consolidate control. Far from being the democratizing force it was once hailed as, technology could soon become an essential tool for autocrats—especially if citizens do nothing to stop that dystopian vision from becoming a reality.

While some dangers to liberal societies are yet to be determined, others are persistent and familiar, particularly to Americans. In his article “A House Still Divided,” National Book Award winner and Atlantic contributing editor Ibram X. Kendi argues that racism poses no less an existential threat today than it did 160 years ago, when Abraham Lincoln warned of the disunion that invariably stems from a country “half slave and half free.” Today we see blatant displays of racism across the country, from the Unite

the Right march in Charlottesville, Virginia, to unthinkable hate crimes. And though examples—and awareness—of such explicit hostility may have increased since Donald Trump’s ascent to the presidency, Kendi cites far more insidious policies that have taken root over a longer time horizon: rollbacks of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, reinterpretations of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, racially motivated gerrymandering. Realizing the promise of American equality demands, as Kendi writes, “a renewed commitment to anti-racist policies” and the blanket rejection of racism in all its manifestations, no matter how brazen or subtle.

Other contributors sought to locate solutions to the problems afflicting America. Atlantic senior editor Yoni Appelbaum describes democracy as a habit, one that must be cultivated intentionally. And, he argues, we’ve simply stopped practicing it. Dwindling participation in democratically run organizations, from labor unions to volunteer fire departments, has led to diminished faith in democracy itself. The solution, he believes, lies in schools, where students can assemble, write charters, elect officers, make decisions by majority vote, and work through the messy and frustrating process of self-governance. Like most habits, democratic behavior develops over time, through constant repetition. If democracy is to survive, then it must be practiced, nurtured, and fiercely defended.



Zohar Lazar

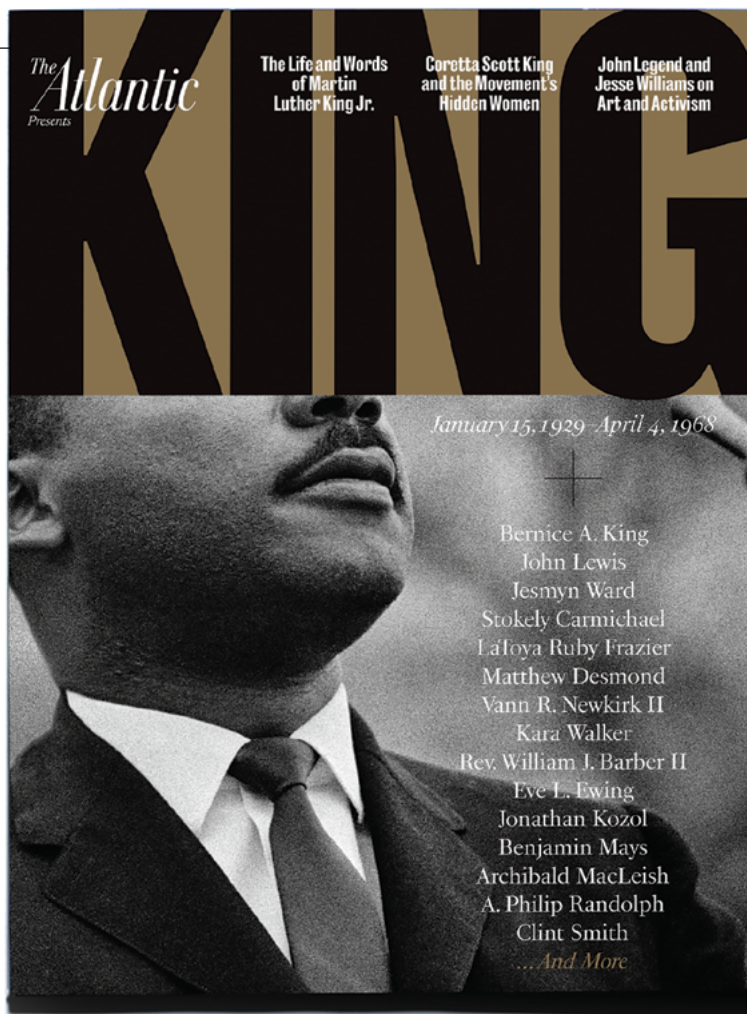
KING: A Special Issue

T HIS YEAR MARKED the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. In honor of his life and legacy, The Atlantic published a special issue—simply titled *KING*—in March. As editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg wrote in his introduction to the issue, “When Vann R. Newkirk, one of our staff writers, and Adrienne Green, the magazine’s managing editor, proposed that we publish a special edition ... I was intrigued, but also concerned that such an issue be an exploration of our fraught moment, and not merely a devotional artifact.” What King identified as the “three major evils” of society—racism, poverty, and militarism—served as a framework for the issue, which sought to illustrate not only the broad scope of the issues he took on, but also how they remain largely unresolved, and just as urgent, today.

The magazine featured rarely published works from King himself, including a 1968 speech that encouraged citizens of Eutaw, Alabama, to join the *Poor People’s March on Washington*, which took place one month after his assassination. Also featured was King’s historic “*Letter From Birmingham Jail*,” which was published in The Atlantic in 1963 and became a landmark document of the civil-rights movement. Written in longhand while King was imprisoned for protesting segregation, the letter criticized “the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice.”

Alongside King’s original writings were new pieces by contributors who commented on the unsteady progress toward his dream of equality. In one essay, National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward reflects on *growing up poor and hungry in Mississippi*, a state that continues to gut social programs that help many lower-income people of color—and, in doing so, undermines King’s vision of a more equal society, which included a guaranteed income for the poor.

Elsewhere in the issue, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Matthew Desmond considers whether the *lack of riots* in American cities today, even as many of the



social evils that incited urban uprisings in the 1960s remain, is a sign of growing suppression rather than increased civility. Responding to a *1967 riot in Detroit*, King observed that unemployment, along with racial discrimination, “could be expected to induce rage and rebellion.” Rage still exists, Desmond argues, but rebellion has been quelled by mass incarceration and white flight from the neighborhoods where fires once burned.

The collection of essays, speeches, interviews, poetry, and photography explored the tumultuous times in which King lived, his evolution from pacifist pastor to labor-rights advocate to anti-war activist, and the state of his vision today. “What we want to do is challenge people,” Newkirk said in an interview with *The Daily Show’s* Trevor Noah. “We want people to read every single article in this issue and come away thinking about something new, something they never even fathomed about Dr. King.”

Featuring:

Lauren K. Alleyne
Rev. William J. Barber II
Matthew Desmond
Eve L. Ewing
LaToya Ruby Frazier
Jeffrey Goldberg
Adrienne Green
Bernice A. King
Eli Lee
John Legend
John Lewis
Benjamin Mays
Vann R. Newkirk II
Bree Newsome
Patrick Parr
A. Philip Randolph
Bayard Rustin
Clint Smith
Jeanne Theoharis
Kara Walker
Jesmyn Ward
Jesse Williams

KING IN THE CLASSROOM

The Atlantic distributed more than 30,000 copies of the KING issue to middle and high schools across the country, and many students used it as inspiration to pursue creative projects. At Sacramento High School, one class redacted words from features in the magazine to create short poems, in a student-initiated assignment called “Black-Out Poetry.” At Kipp Denver Collegiate School, students wrote down their own dreams for the future after reading Lauren K. Alleyne’s poem “Martin Luther King Jr. Mourns Trayvon Martin,” with its refrain, “I dreamed ...” Classes at Georgia’s Fugees Academy wrote personal reactions to stories in the issue; one student recalled being ordered to remove her hijab, and described her resulting shock, confusion, and, ultimately, defiance. Teachers reported how the issue connected students to King’s legacy more deeply and centered his work in the reality of their own lives.



↑ Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy

“
We didn’t want to
make a glossy picture
book that turned
King into a saint. We
wanted to complicate
the idea of who this
man was.

”

Adrienne Green
Managing Editor

New Initiatives



FAMILY

I N MARCH, The Atlantic launched an ambitious new section focused on families. In our magazine, on our website, in video, and in a weekly email newsletter, our journalists examine diverse and complicated issues related to families with the same expansiveness, depth, and rigor that defines all of The Atlantic’s writing and reporting.

The new Family section has covered some of the most crucial challenges America faces, from the perspective of the parents and kids who experience them. Writers explored the task of raising children in a time of rapid cultural, ecological, and technological change—from Sarah Rich on raising her boy to embody a gentle, loving version of masculinity, to Michelle Nijhuis on how she talks to her daughter about climate change, to David French on how America soured on his multiracial family, to Jemar Tisby on the burden that black parents bear of speaking to their kids about race.

The Atlantic’s coverage of families also goes beyond parenting and extends to all manner of relationships. Allie Volpe examined what makes some roommate relationships succeed and others fail. Andrew Cherlin looked at how marriage is now viewed by a large proportion of young American couples as the last step in adulthood rather than the first. And Lori Gottlieb, the psychotherapist behind our weekly “Dear Therapist” column, responded to questions such as “Is it possible to apologize for a sexual assault?” and “Am I compromising too much for my partner?” with profound wisdom and compassion.

—Rebecca Rosen, Family editor

BOOKS

T HE BYLINES that appear in The Atlantic’s archives are a who’s who of great literary minds: Edith Wharton, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Robert Frost, James Baldwin, Sylvia Plath. Indeed, The Atlantic’s founding credo—signed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville, among others—declared that an expansive approach to literature would be one of the publication’s first aims.

In September, The Atlantic advanced this tradition by launching a Books hub on the website. Along with reviews of the latest titles, the section features reinterpretations of cult classics, such as an article by Yosef Lindell on why the fantasy novel *The Last Unicorn* continues to captivate readers; interviews with authors, as in our “By Heart” series, in which they share their all-time favorite passages in literature; and essays about larger literary trends, including Sophie Gilbert’s look at the rise of dystopian novels written by, and concerned with, women.

The Atlantic’s books coverage isn’t limited by genre. Adrienne LaFrance described how contemporary children’s horror stories, such as the ones popularized by R. L. Stine, are a throwback to the Victorian era, when fairy tales provided a fantastical escape from utilitarian life. Naz Deravian recounted how she wrote an Iranian cookbook after the 2016 U.S. presidential election, finding comfort in the “logic and truth” of perfectly measured recipes during a time of increasing anxiety for immigrants. Megan Garber asserted the urgency of poetry—which now takes the forms of tweets, Instagram posts, and Kanye West lyrics—and noted the ways in which poems, contrary to claims that they’re “going extinct,” are invincible, and everywhere.

—Jane Yung Kim, Culture editor



In 2018, The Atlantic launched three new digital sections dedicated to exploring the intricacies of contemporary family life; the urgent, changing world of literature; and the strongest arguments from today's best writers. Below, you'll hear from the editors of the new sections on some of the stories they were most proud to publish this year.

IDEAS

THE WELL-REASONED argument is deeply embedded in The Atlantic's DNA. Think of Ralph Waldo Emerson's call for the emancipation of slaves; Helen Keller's wry, trenchant case for why men should do more housework; or James Fallows's warning that invading Iraq would lead to complications and ramifications that would take at least a decade to resolve—published six months *before* the start of the Iraq War.

Enter The Atlantic's newest editorial initiative, Ideas, which seeks to build on this rich legacy. The section officially launched online in September, featuring pieces by contributors such as Chuck Todd, the moderator of NBC's Meet the Press, who urged his fellow journalists to break with tradition and fight back against the anti-press movement, which started decades before Donald

Trump's outcries against "fake news." Emily Yoffe argued that reforms to Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, are necessary to better protect young women and men on college campuses. Annie Lowrey questioned the popular belief that marijuana is benign and nonaddictive, citing the striking rise in near-constant cannabis use. John McWhorter, a linguistics professor, defended the singular use of the pronoun they for gender-nonconforming individuals, even though it marks "the most challenging change in language I have dealt with in my lifetime."

The essays published in Ideas continue to challenge readers' preconceptions. No one will agree with all of them—in fact, we hope readers will find themselves disagreeing with the things they read in Ideas with some regularity, just as our authors disagree with one another. But we also hope that readers will find their arguments rigorous, their evidence solid, their spirit generous, and their writing lively. There are ever fewer spaces in which readers can encounter a wide array of voices, engaged in honest and earnest conversation. Ideas is one of them.

—Yoni Appelbaum, *Ideas* editor

The Atlantic Crossword

The Atlantic brought back its beloved crossword by popular demand in October. The original Atlantic Puzzler, created by the word-wrangling duo of Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon, appeared for the first time in the September 1977 issue and finished its print run in 2006. The outcry from puzzle solvers was loud and persistent—and inspired a relaunch of the crossword, 12 years later, in a slightly different format: a mini puzzle that gets bigger and more challenging every weekday.

The crossword's new creator, Caleb Madison, explains that his puzzles "take a little bit of creative brain work, rather than just knowing facts." Combining historical trivia with modern pop-culture references and intriguing terminology, the crossword not only informs and educates, but also entertains.

A Monday crossword from Caleb Madison

Across

- 1 Morty's mad-genius grandfather, in a popular Cartoon Network animated comedy
- 5 Low-ranking British nobility addressed as "my lord"
- 6 Humble lodging
- 7 Tissue connecting muscle to bone
- 8 Competitor of Ben & Jerry's and Talenti, in a supermarket freezer

	1	2	3	4
5				
6				
7				
8				

Down

- 1 Fanatically obsessed
- 2 Rhetorical device denoted by a backwards question mark, called a percontation point
- 3 Writes in HTML or JavaScript, say
- 4 Had heard already
- 5 Word after first, second, or third, in baseball



← *Jeremy Raff's The Separated*



← *Daniel Lombroso's Settlers
in the "Most Contentious
Place on Earth"*



← *Nicolas Pollock and
Atthar Mirza's Life
in Juvenile Detention*

Atlantic Studios



ATLANTIC STUDIOS, led by executive producer Kasia Cieplak-Mayr von Baldegg and senior producer Ashley Kenny, includes more than a dozen animators, curators, and producers, all of whom work to translate The Atlantic's long journalistic tradition into video. Their portfolio spans documentaries, animated shorts, and original series. Just this year, Atlantic Studios videos have been screened and honored at the National Magazine Awards, the American Documentary Film Festival, and the Webby's.

One of Atlantic Studios' most ambitious documentaries in 2018 was Jeremy Raff's *The Separated*. An installment in a larger project covering family separations at the Texas-Mexico border, the piece follows a Honduran asylum seeker, Anita, as she is reunited with her 6-year-old son, Jenri, after a month-long separation. At night, in a migrants' shelter, the depth of Jenri's trauma becomes apparent as he cries, "Just take me back to the jail! You're not my mom anymore!" The haunting audio inspired a segment for *This American Life*'s July episode on Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Atlantic Studios continued its reporting on ICE and immigration by collaborating with Franklin Foer for his September cover story. Foer's feature examines how the agency has been radicalized during the Trump administration, escalating deportations and terrifying undocumented immigrants who have resided in the United States for years. Raff and Sophia Myszkowski's documentary *Fear and Anxiety at Refugee Road* focuses on Mauritians who settled in

Columbus, Ohio, after escaping persecution, torture, and enslavement in their native country. For decades, ICE left them alone. Now many in their community have been detained or deported—and others are preparing to flee to Canada rather than risking a return to oppression in West Africa.

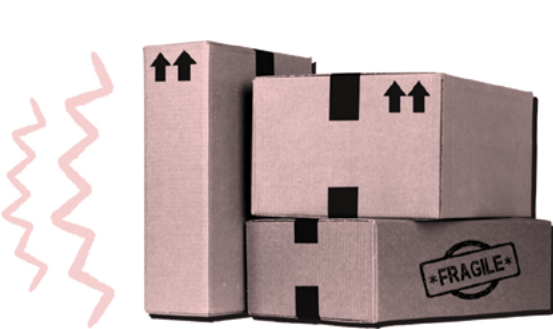
Other editorial collaborations include *Detransitioned*, Nicolas Pollock's intimate portrait of Carey Callahan, who reversed her transition from female to male—a decision that led to harassment from some fundamentalist Christians as well as members of the trans community, and *Settlers in the "Most Contentious Place on Earth,"* Daniel Lombroso's documentary following the Muslim American writer Wajahat Ali across the Israeli-occupied West Bank. After a terrorist attack in the Halamish settlement, Ali remarked, "In the holiest place on Earth, I haven't seen God anywhere."

Some of Atlantic Studios' most ambitious projects in 2018 involved experimentation with animation and virtual reality. Animated shorts by Jackie Lay and Caitlin Cadieux illustrated controversial topics such as universal basic income, America's class problem, and an alternative theory of what caused the dinosaurs' extinction. Pollock's documentary series on youth incarceration in Virginia blended virtual reality with 3-D animation by Atthar Mirza. The films recount the stories of three young people who have experienced the juvenile-justice system firsthand. Viewers are able to go inside the last juvenile-detention center in Virginia—and inside the communities where many of the inmates grew up, and where they'll return after imprisonment.

↑ Jackie Lay's
The 99% Is a
Myth—Here's How
It Breaks Down

Podcasts

Under the guidance of executive producer Katherine Wells, who joined in 2018 from Gimlet Media (and had previously been a video producer here), The Atlantic expanded its podcast universe to include Crazy/Genius, an exploration of the biggest questions at the intersection of technology and culture. Over two seasons, the host, Derek Thompson, wrestled with such predicaments as:



Should we break up Amazon?

An antitrust expert warned that what's good for Jeff Bezos's billion-dollar behemoth is bad for the rest of America, while an economist argued that Amazon isn't big enough.

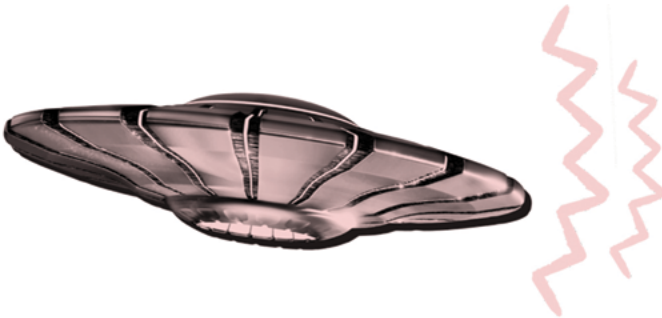
Should we dim the skies to save the Earth?

Some of the world's leading climate experts have considered a "comically dystopian" idea in earnest: Partially block the sun with sulfuric acid, leading to years of gray skies but a cooler-and more hospitable-planet.



Will we ever stop eating animal meat?

Americans are consuming more meat than ever before, with deleterious effects for our health and environment. But the solution may not lie in more moralizing. Instead, could edible insects and lab-grown meat hold the answer?



Why haven't we found aliens?

If the odds that humans are the universe's only life form are one in 10 billion trillion, where is everybody else? One theory suggests that extraterrestrial civilizations have destroyed themselves before they got the chance to traverse the galaxy, while another posits that alien life is so advanced, it exists only digitally, with no corporeal form at all.



Can we extend human life spans to 150?

Scientists are developing drugs that can reverse signs of aging, and neurotechnologies that can restore memories in damaged brains.

But as one philosopher cautions, life extension might lead to a host of new problems.

SEASON 2 OF CRAZY/GENIUS premiered in August and was a featured pick on Apple Podcasts. Fans called the show “captivating,” “serious food for thought,” and “required listening.”

It was an equally busy year for Radio Atlantic, our inaugural podcast, which launched in 2017. The hosts—Matt Thompson, Jeffrey Goldberg, and Alex Wagner—along with producer Kevin Townsend and many Atlantic colleagues, brought clarity and context to a chaotic news cycle. The show covered some of the biggest issues of the year, such as the state of the #MeToo movement in the wake of Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court confirmation hearings, how football became a centerpiece of America’s culture wars, and whether democracy can survive. Wells and her expanding team—including Patricia Jacob, a podcast fellow—are developing even more ambitious programming, to debut next year.

AtlanticLIVE

From festivals in Washington, D.C., and Aspen, Colorado, to summits on sustainability in Los Angeles and urban innovation in Detroit, The Atlantic's events convened journalists, policy makers, entrepreneurs, scientists, and community leaders to examine, in person, some of today's most consequential issues. "There's something incredibly powerful, in this cacophonous age, about gathering people in a room and grappling with these challenges together," says Margaret Low, the president of AtlanticLIVE. Across more than 100 events in 25 cities this year alone, AtlanticLIVE continued The Atlantic's tradition of exploring a diversity of perspectives through the free exchange of ideas.

EDUCATION SUMMIT

May 1, Washington, D.C.

In the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, and teachers' strikes in several states, The Atlantic's fourth annual Education Summit assembled students, teachers, school administrators, and education experts from across the country to consider the future of the American school system—and how to make classrooms safer, more inclusive, and more beneficial to all students.



↑ Kentucky high schooler Keaton Conner speaks with Atlantic contributing editor Alison Stewart about the terror and panic of the school shooting she survived just four months earlier. (Kristoffer Trippelaar)

PULSE SUMMIT ON HEALTH CARE

April 9, Boston, Mass.

In Boston, one of the U.S.'s major hubs of medicine and biotech, The Atlantic asked why a country that spends far more on health care than its developed-world counterparts does not have better health outcomes. The second annual PULSE Summit brought together experts including doctors, patient advocates, and policy makers to examine ways to fix a health-care system that often leads Americans to fear the cost of care more than illness itself.



↑ Drug Policy Alliance's Cassandra Frederique, Harvard Medical School's John Kelly, and NYU Langone Health's Lipi Roy discuss new approaches to tackling the opioid epidemic with Atlantic senior editor Ross Andersen. (Nile Scott)



← Kamala Harris speaks with Emerson Collective founder and President Laurene Powell Jobs about what the Kavanaugh hearings meant to her as a lawyer who has represented survivors of sexual violence. (Kristoffer Tripplaar)

↓ Hillary Clinton and Jeffrey Goldberg discuss the state of American politics, from polarization in Congress to the White House's approach to truth and justice. (Kristoffer Tripplaar)

THE ATLANTIC FESTIVAL

October 2-4, Washington, D.C.

The Atlantic Festival, formerly known as Washington Ideas and now in its 10th year, hosted 117 speakers and 3,000 attendees over three days and nine venues in D.C. Not far from the Capitol Hill chamber that had just seen the tumultuous testimonies of Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court confirmation hearings, the festival became a forum for contending with a deeply divided nation. The lineup featured members of the Senate Judiciary Committee—Chris Coons, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, and Kamala Harris—along with national figures including Hillary Clinton and John Kerry; Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the president; and Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve chairman.



New Faces at



ELLEN CUSHING, senior technology editor, is leading The Atlantic's new San Francisco bureau. She and her growing crew of journalists are helping to expand The Atlantic's technology reporting at a time when the behemoths of Silicon Valley are wielding unprecedented and increasing influence over people's lives. Their stories will not only cover the latest technological developments and how they're changing the way we live, but also explore, and expose, the inner workings of the industry. Cushing is no stranger to investigative journalism; before joining The Atlantic, she oversaw BuzzFeed News's reporting on sexual assault and harassment. Silicon Valley is "a world-historic locus of power," she says. "It's critical that we approach it with no less tenacity than we would any other little-regulated group that makes decisions that affect millions of people."



VERNON LOEB joined The Atlantic as politics editor after spending decades working for some of America's most influential newspapers. As a foreign correspondent for The Philadelphia Inquirer, he covered the Tiananmen Square protests, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, and the Gulf War. He reported on the CIA and the Pentagon for The Washington Post before heading an investigative team at the Los Angeles Times. In 2014, he became managing editor of the Houston Chronicle, which was honored as a 2017 Pulitzer Prize finalist for its coverage of Hurricane Harvey. At The Atlantic, Loeb oversees a team of writers who give readers a deep understanding of both breaking news and larger political trends. "We go our own way to differentiate ourselves from the pack," he says. "Part of separating ourselves from the pack is being willing to report much more deeply and write much more daringly."

This year, The Atlantic added to its ranks of talented staff in the newsroom and throughout the organization. Meet a few of the new team members who are helping to shape the future of The Atlantic's journalism.

The Atlantic



PRASHANT RAO, global editor, is at the helm of The Atlantic's expansion in Europe, managing a team of journalists based in London and Paris, as well as New York and Washington, D.C. Rao joins The Atlantic from The New York Times, where he wrote and edited stories about economics and finance as deputy Europe business editor. Before joining The Times, he served as Baghdad bureau chief for the international news agency Agence France-Presse, covering several tumultuous elections and the fall of Mosul to the Islamic State. He and his team at The Atlantic strive to "tell stories that offer context and analysis about what's happening in the world," he says. "That means looking not only at what governments do, but also at how cultures are changing—or being changed." As for his ambitions in 2019, Rao wants to delve into the forces reshaping the world as we know it, including populism, migration, and the fraying of the postwar order.



LAUREN N. WILLIAMS began her role as a senior editor on The Atlantic's culture desk this summer. Most recently, Williams was a 2018 fellow at Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism, studying how black women have influenced cultural trends in the United States. She was previously at Essence, where she worked as both a news and features editor, assigning stories on politics, education, gun violence, the justice system, and more. At The Atlantic, Williams works with a team of writers who examine the intricacies of American culture in nuanced and unexpected ways. Looking ahead to next year, Williams wants to focus on the intersection of hip-hop and the #MeToo movement—"The genre hasn't yet had its reckoning," she says—as well as the screenwriters, showrunners, producers, and other players who are shaping the entertainment industry from behind the scenes.



CHRISTI PARSONS joined The Atlantic this spring as director of the Talent Lab, which supports the newsroom both in recruiting talented journalists and in nurturing their growth and development. Along with deputy director Bhumi Tharoor and researcher Abdallah Fayyad, Parsons plays a key role in helping The Atlantic achieve one of its paramount goals: ensuring that the masthead is representative of America in all its diversity. Parsons is a longtime political journalist, having served as a White House correspondent for the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Tribune. At the Tribune, she tracked Barack Obama's ascent from the Illinois statehouse to the U.S. Senate to, ultimately, the executive office. In 2015, she served as president of the White House Correspondents' Association. Now she and her team in the Talent Lab extensively research and identify fellow journalists who not only fit The Atlantic's style of reporting and writing but also introduce new and surprising perspectives to the editorial department.

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