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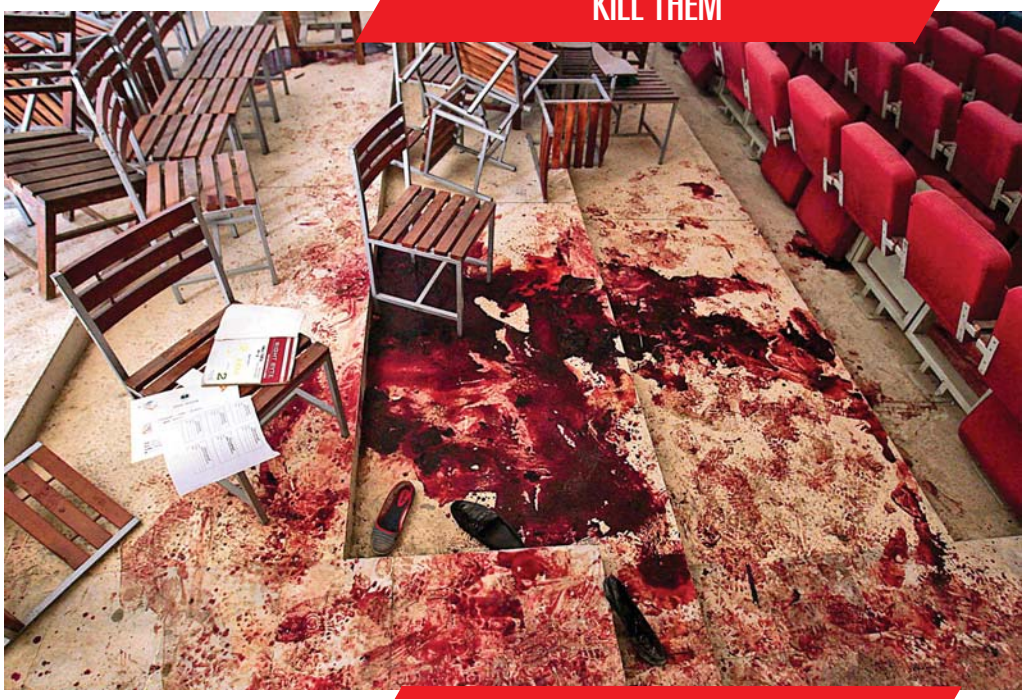

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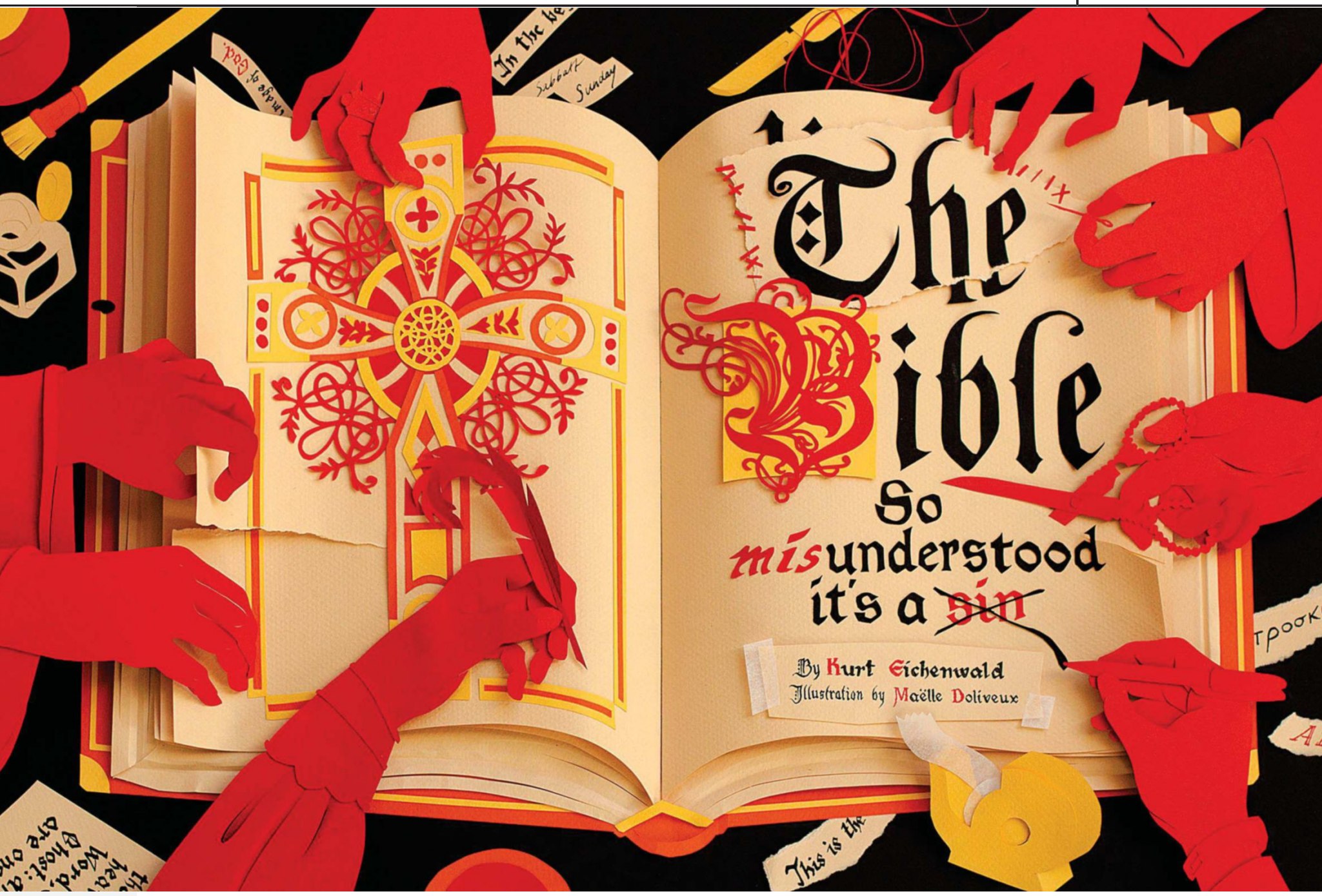


Maelle Doliveux for Newsweek

THE BIBLE: SO MISUNDERSTOOD IT'S A SIN

RELIGIOUS RATIONALIZERS TWIST PHRASES AND MODIFY TRANSLATIONS TO PROVE THEY ARE HONORING THE BIBLE'S WORDS.

They wave their Bibles at passersby, screaming their condemnations of homosexuals. They fall on their knees, worshipping at the base of granite monuments to the Ten Commandments while demanding prayer in school. They appeal to God to save America from their

political opponents, mostly Democrats. They gather in football stadiums by the thousands to pray for the country's salvation.

They are God's frauds, cafeteria Christians who pick and choose which Bible verses they heed with less care than they exercise in selecting side orders for lunch. They are joined by religious rationalizers—fundamentalists who, unable to find Scripture supporting their biases and beliefs, twist phrases and modify translations to prove they are honoring the Bible's words.

This is no longer a matter of personal or private faith. With politicians, social leaders and even some clergy invoking a book they seem to have never read and whose phrases they don't understand, America is being besieged by Biblical illiteracy. Climate change is said to be impossible because of promises God made to Noah; Mosaic law from the Old Testament directs American government; creationism should be taught in schools; helping Syrians resist chemical weapons attacks is a sign of the end times —all of these arguments have been advanced by modern evangelical politicians and their brethren, yet none of them are supported in the Scriptures as they were originally written.

The Bible is not the book many American fundamentalists and political opportunists think it is, or more precisely, what they want it to be. Their lack of knowledge about the Bible is well established. A Pew Research poll in 2010 found that evangelicals ranked only a smidgen higher than atheists in familiarity with the New Testament and Jesus's teachings. "Americans revere the Bible—but, by and large, they don't read it,'' wrote George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, pollsters and researchers whose work focused on religion in the United States. The Barna Group, a Christian polling firm, found in 2012 that evangelicals accepted the attitudes and beliefs of the Pharisees—religious leaders depicted throughout the New Testament as opposing Christ

and his message—more than they accepted the teachings of Jesus.

Newsweek's exploration here of the Bible's history and meaning is not intended to advance a particular theology or debate the existence of God. Rather, it is designed to shine a light on a book that has been abused by people who claim to revere it but don't read it, in the process creating misery for others. When the illiteracy of self-proclaimed Biblical literalists leads parents to banish children from their homes, when it sets neighbor against neighbor, when it engenders hate and condemnation, when it impedes science and undermines intellectual advancement, the topic has become too important for Americans to ignore, whether they are deeply devout or tepidly faithful, believers or atheists.

This examination—based in large part on the works of scores of theologians and scholars, some of which dates back centuries—is a review of the Bible's history and a recounting of its words. It is only through accepting where the Bible comes from— and who put it together—that anyone can comprehend what history's most important book says and, just as important, what it does not say.

Moses carries the ten commandment tablets. Credit: Ken Welsh/DesignPics.com

Playing Telephone with the Word of God

No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times.

About 400 years passed between the writing of the first Christian manuscripts and their compilation into the New Testament. (That's the same amount of time between the arrival of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower and today.) The first books of the Old Testament were written 1,000 years before that. In other words, some 1,500 years passed between the day the first biblical author put stick to clay and when the books that would become the New Testament were chosen. There were no printing presses beforehand or until 1,000 years later. There were no vacuum-sealed technologies to preserve paper for centuries. Dried clay broke, papyrus and parchment crumbled away, primitive inks faded.

Back then, writings from one era could be passed to the next only by copying them by hand. While there were professional scribes whose lives were dedicated to this grueling work, they did not start copying the letters and testaments about Jesus's time until centuries after they were written. Prior to that, amateurs handled the job.

These manuscripts were originally written in Koiné, or "common" Greek, and not all of the amateur copyists spoke the language or were even fully literate. Some copied the script without understanding the words. And Koiné was written in what is known as scriptio continua—meaning no spaces between words and no punctuation. So, a sentence like weshouldgoeatmom could be interpreted as "We should go eat, Mom," or "We should go eat Mom." Sentences can have different meaning depending on where the spaces are placed. For example, godisnowhere could be "God is now here" or "God is nowhere."

None of this mattered for centuries, because Christians were certain God had guided the hand not only of the original writers but also of all those copyists. But in the past 100 years or so, tens of thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament have been discovered, dating back centuries. And what biblical scholars now know is that later versions of the books differ significantly from earlier ones—in fact,

even copies from the same time periods differ from each other. “There are more variations among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament,” says Dr. Bart D. Ehrman, a groundbreaking biblical scholar and professor at the University of North Carolina who has written many books on the New Testament.

Most of those discrepancies are little more than the handwritten equivalent of a typo, but that error was then included by future scribes. There were also minor changes made by literate scribes centuries after the manuscripts were written because of what they decided were flaws in the accounts they were recopying. For example, an early version of Luke 3:16 in the New Testament said, “John answered, saying to all of them.…” The problem was that no one had asked John anything, so a fifth century scribe fixed that by changing the words to “John, knowing what they were thinking, said.…” Today, most modern English Bibles have returned to the correct, yet confusing, “John answered.” Others, such as the New Life Version Bible, use other words that paper over the inconsistency.

But this discussion is about something much more important than whether some scribe in the Middle Ages decided God had not been paying attention while guiding the hand of Luke. Indeed, there are significant differences in copies that touch on far more profound issues. Scribes added whole sections of the New Testament, and removed words and sentences that contradicted emerging orthodox beliefs.

Take one of the most famous tales from the New Testament, which starts in John 7:53. A group of Pharisees and others bring a woman caught committing adultery to Jesus. Under Mosaic Law—the laws of Moses handed down in the Old Testament—she must be stoned to death. The Pharisees ask Jesus whether the woman should be released or killed, hoping to force him to choose between honoring Mosaic Law and his teachings of forgiveness. Jesus replies, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a

stone.’’ The group leaves, and Jesus tells the woman to sin no more.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry gives a closing address at The Response, an event at Reliant Stadium that drew roughly 30,000 people, in Houston on Aug. 6, 2011. Credit: Erika Rich/The Daily Texan/AP

It’s a powerful story, known even by those with just a passing knowledge of the Bible. It was depicted in Mel Gibson’s movie The Passion of the Christ and is often used to point out the hypocrisy of Christians who denounce what they perceive to be the sins of others. Unfortunately, John didn’t write it. Scribes made it up sometime in the Middle Ages. It does not appear in any of the three other Gospels or in any of the early Greek versions of John. Even if the Gospel of John is an infallible telling of the history of Jesus’s ministry, the event simply never happened. Moreover, according to Ehrman, the writing style for that story is different from the rest of John, and the section includes phrases that do not appear anywhere else in the Bible. Scholars say they are words more commonly used long after that Gospel was written.

For Pentecostal Christians, an important section of the Bible appears in the Gospel of Mark, 16:17-18. These

verses say that those who believe in Jesus will speak in tongues and have extraordinary powers, such as the ability to cast out demons, heal the sick and handle snakes. Pentecostal ministers often babble incomprehensible sounds, proclaiming—based in part on these verses in Mark—that the noises they are making show that the Holy Spirit is in them. It's also a primary justification for the emergence of the Pentecostal snake-handlers.

But once again, the verses came from a creative scribe long after the Gospel of Mark was written. In fact, the earliest versions of Mark stop at 16:8. It's an awkward ending, with three women who have gone to the tomb where Jesus was laid after the Crucifixion encountering a man who tells them to let the disciples know that the resurrected Jesus will see them in Galilee. The women flee the tomb, and "neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.''

In early copies of the original Greek writings, that's it. The 12 verses that follow in modern Bibles—Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the Disciples and then ascending to Heaven—are not there. A significant moment that would be hard to forget, one would think.

The same is true for other critical portions of the Bible, such as 1 John 5:7 ("For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one"); Luke 22:20 ("Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"); and Luke 24:51 ("And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven"). These first appeared in manuscripts used by the translators who created the King James Bible, but are not in the Greek copies from hundreds of years earlier.

These are not the only parts of the Bible that appear to have been added much later. There are many, many more—

in fact, far more than can be explored without filling up the next several issues of Newsweek.

Hands of poll workers are seen on a Bible as head precinct judge Deloris Reid-Smith reads the voters oath to poll workers before opening the polls at the Grove Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina Nov. 4, 2014. Credit: Chris Keane/Reuters

Translation Transubstantiation

Then comes the problem of accurate translation. Many words in New Testament Greek don't have clear English equivalents. Sentence structure, idioms, stylistic differences —all of these are challenges when converting versions of the New Testament books into English. And this can't be solved with a Berlitz course: Koiné is ancient Greek and not spoken anymore. This is why English translations differ, with many having been revised to reflect the views and guesses of the modern translators.

The gold standard of English Bibles is the King James Version, completed in 1611, but that was not a translation of the original Greek. Instead, a Church of England committee relied primarily on Latin manuscripts translated from Greek. According to Jason David BeDuhn, a professor of religious

studies at Northern Arizona University and author of Truth in Translation, it was often very hard for the committee to find the correct English words. The committee sometimes compared Latin translations with the earlier Greek copies, found discrepancies and decided that the Latin version—the later version—was correct and the earlier Greek manuscripts were wrong.

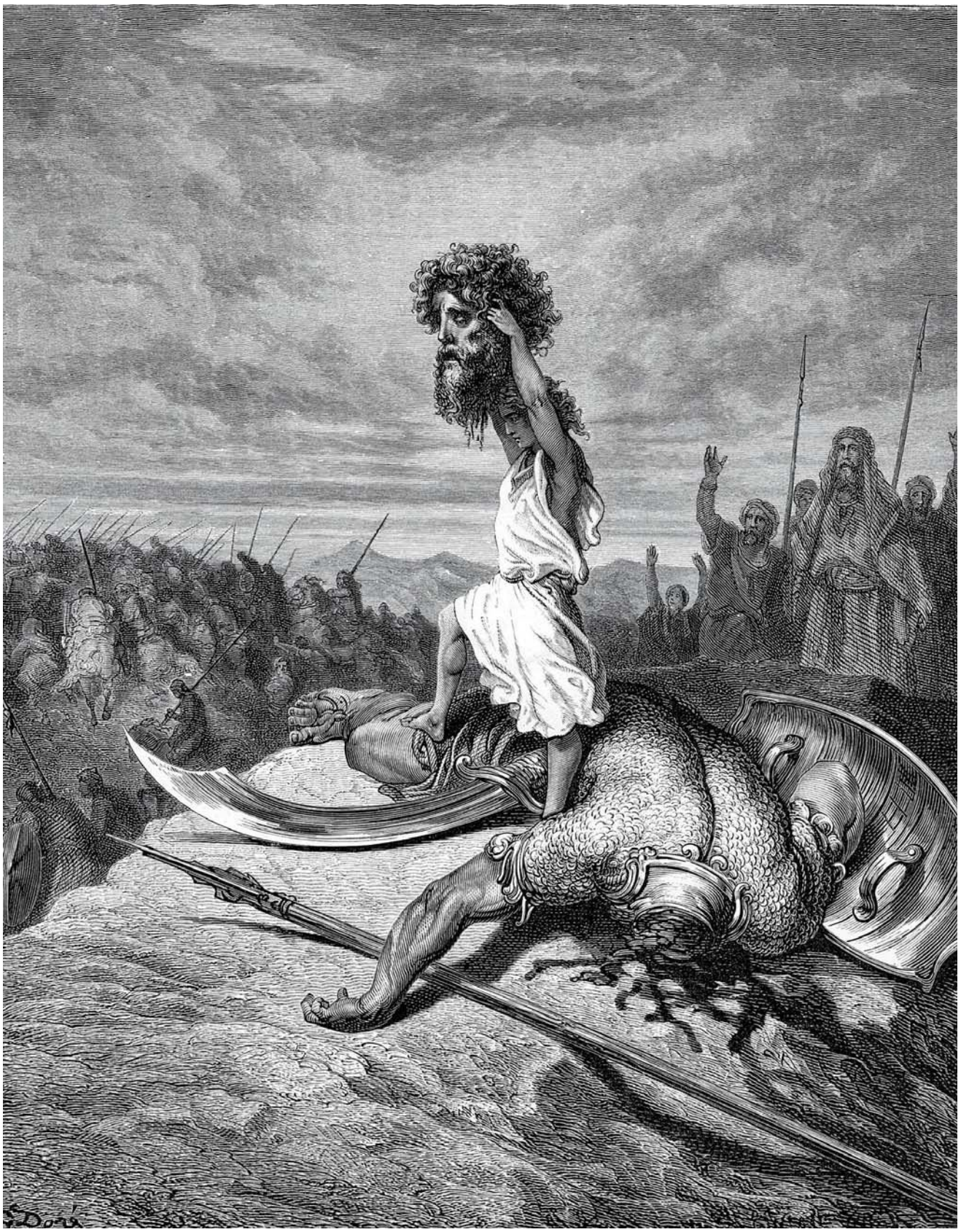
The goal of the translators was to create a Bible that was a gorgeous work that was very accurate in its translation and clear in its meaning, but that didn't happen. "The King James Bible is a beautiful piece of English literature,'' says BeDuhn. "In terms of the other two goals, however, this translation falls short."

For subsequent English Bibles, those slightly off translations in King James were then often converted into phrases that most closely fitted the preconceptions of even more translators. In other words, religious convictions determined translation choices. For example, προσκυνέωa Greek word used about 60 times in the New Testament, equates to something along the lines of "to prostrate oneself" as well as "to praise God." That was translated into Latin as "adoro,'' which in the King James Bible became "worship." But those two words don't mean precisely the same thing. When the King James Bible was written, "worship" could be used to describe both exhibiting reverence for God and prostrating oneself. While not perfect, it's a decent translation.

As a result, throughout the King James Bible, people "worship" many things. A slave worships his owner, the assembled of Satan worship an angel, and Roman soldiers mocking Jesus worship him. In each of these instances, the word does not mean "praise God's glory" or anything like that; instead, it means to bow or prostrate oneself. But English Bibles adopted later—the New International Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the Living Bible and so on—dropped the word worship when it referenced anyone

other than God or Jesus. And so each time προσκυνέω appeared in the Greek manuscript regarding Jesus, in these newer Bibles he is worshipped, but when applied to someone else, the exact same word is translated as "bow" or something similar. By translating the same word different ways, these modern Bibles are adding a bit of linguistic support to the idea that the people who knew Jesus understood him to be God.

In other words, with a little translational trickery, a fundamental tenet of Christianity—that Jesus is God—was reinforced in the Bible, even in places where it directly contradicts the rest of the verse.



David displaying the head of Goliath to the Jews, from the Old Testament, circa 1050 BC. Credit: Hulton Archive/Getty

That kind of manipulation occurs many times. In Philippians, the King James Version translates some words to designate Jesus as “being in the form of God.” The Greek word for form could simply mean Jesus was in the image of God. But the publishers of some Bibles decided to insert their beliefs into translations that had nothing to do with the Greek. The Living Bible, for example, says Jesus “was

God”—even though modern translators pretty much just invented the words.

Which raises a big issue for Christians: the Trinity—the belief that Jesus and God are the same and, with the Holy Spirit, are a single entity—is a fundamental, yet deeply confusing, tenet. So where does the clear declaration of God and Jesus as part of a triumvirate appear in the Greek manuscripts?

Nowhere. And in that deception lies a story of mass killings.

Birth of Christ Credit: Ken Welsh/DesignPics.com

The Sociopath Emperor

Why would God, in conveying his message to the world, speak in whispers and riddles? It seems nonsensical, but the belief that he refused to convey a clear message has led to the slaughter of many thousands of Christians by Christians.

In fact, Christians are believed to have massacred more followers of Jesus than any other group or nation.

Those who believed in the Trinity butchered Christians who didn't. Groups who believed Jesus was two entities —God and man—killed those who thought Jesus was merely flesh and blood. Some felt certain God inspired Old Testament Scriptures, others were convinced they were the product of a different, evil God. Some believed the Crucifixion brought salvation to humankind, others insisted it didn't, and still others believed Jesus wasn't crucified.

Indeed, for hundreds of years after the death of Jesus, groups adopted radically conflicting writings about the details of his life and the meaning of his ministry, and murdered those who disagreed. For many centuries, Christianity was first a battle of books and then a battle of blood. The reason, in large part, was that there were no universally accepted manuscripts that set out what it meant to be a Christian, so most sects had their own gospels.

There was the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, the Gospel of Simon Peter, the Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of Barnabas. One sect of Christianity—the Gnostics—believed that the disciple Thomas was not only Jesus's twin brother but also the founder of churches across Asia. Christianity was in chaos in its early days, with some sects declaring the others heretics. And then, in the early 300s, Emperor Constantine of Rome declared he had become follower of Jesus, ended his empire's persecution of Christians and set out to reconcile the disputes among the sects. Constantine was a brutal sociopath who murdered his eldest son, decapitated his brother-in-law and killed his wife by boiling her alive, and that was after he proclaimed that he had converted from worshipping the sun god to being a Christian. Yet he also changed the course of Christian history, ultimately influencing which books made it into the New Testament.

By that point, the primary disputes centered on whether Jesus was God—the followers of a priest named Arius said no, that God created Jesus. But the Bishop of Alexander said yes, that Jesus had existed throughout all eternity. The dispute raged on in the streets of Constantinople, with everyone—shopkeepers, bakers and tradesmen—arguing about which view was right. Constantine, in a reflection of his shallow understanding of theology, was annoyed that what he considered a minor dispute was causing such turmoil, and feared that it weaken him politically. So he decided to force an agreement on the question.

Cody Walsh, 18, (left) and Eric Hoglund, 21 (center) dance and sing during the opening musical act of the non-denominational prayer and fasting event, entitled "The Response" at Reliant Stadium August 6, 2011 in Houston. Credit: Brandon Thibodeaux/Getty

Constantine convened a meeting in the lakeside town of Nicaea. Invitations were sent around the world to bishops and leaders of various sects, although not all of them. The group included the educated and the illiterate, zealots and hermits. Constantine arrived wearing jewels and gold on his scarlet robe and pearls on his crown, eager to discuss the true essence of a poor carpenter who had died 300 years before.

Things that are today accepted without much thought were adopted or reinforced at Nicaea. For example, the Old Testament was clear in declaring that God rested on the seventh day, making it the Sabbath. The seventh day of the week is Saturday, the day of Jewish worship and rest. (Jesus himself invoked the holiness of the Jewish Sabbath.) The word Sunday does not appear in the Bible, either as the Sabbath or anything else. But four years before Nicaea, Constantine declared Sunday as a day of rest in honor of the sun god.

At Nicaea, rules were adopted regarding the proper positions for prayer on Sundays—standing, not kneeling; nothing was said of the Jewish Sabbath or Saturday. Many theologians and Christian historians believe that it was at this moment, to satisfy Constantine and his commitment to his empire's many sun worshippers, that the Holy Sabbath was moved by one day, contradicting the clear words of what ultimately became the Bible. And while the Bible mentioned nothing about the day of Jesus's birth, the birth of the sun god was celebrated on December 25 in Rome; Christian historians of the 12th century wrote that it was the pagan holiday that led to the designation of that date for Christmas.

The majority of the time at Nicaea was spent debating whether Jesus was a man who was the son of God, as Arius proclaimed, or God himself, as the church hierarchy maintained. The followers of Arius marshaled evidence from the letters of Paul and other Christian writings. In the Gospel of Mark, speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he wrote that "there is but one God, the Father…and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ." In his letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Paul's writings are consistent in his reference to God as one being and Jesus as his son. Same with the Gospel of Matthew, where Peter tells Jesus that he is the "Son of the living God" and Jesus responds that "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.'' Jesus even called out to God as his "Father" as he was dying on the cross.

But Constantine sided with those who believed Jesus was both God and man, so a statement of belief, called the Nicene Creed, was composed to proclaim that. Those who refused to sign the statement were banished. Others were slaughtered. After they had returned home and were far from Rome, some who signed the document later sent letters to Constantine saying they had only done so out of fear for their lives.

About 50 years later, in A.D. 381, the Romans held another meeting, this time in Constantinople. There, a new agreement was reached—Jesus wasn't two, he was now three—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Nicene Creed was rewritten, and those who refused to sign the statement were banished, and another wholesale slaughter began, this time of those who rejected the Trinity, a concept that is nowhere in the original Greek manuscripts and is often contradicted by it.

To this day, congregants in Christian churches at Sunday services worldwide recite the Nicene Creed, which serves as affirmation of their belief in the Trinity. It is doubtful many of them know the words they utter are not from the Bible, and were the cause of so much bloodshed. (Some modern Christians attempt to use the Gospel of John to justify the Trinity—even though it doesn't explicitly mention it—but they are relying on bad translations of the Greek and sentences inserted by scribes.)

To understand how what we call the Bible was made, you must see how the beliefs that became part of Christian orthodoxy were pushed into it by the Holy Roman Empire.

By the fifth century, the political and theological councils voted on which of the many Gospels in circulation were to make up the New Testament. With the power of Rome behind them, the practitioners of this proclaimed orthodoxy wiped out other sects and tried to destroy every copy of their Gospels and other writings.

And recall that they were already working from a fundamentally flawed document. Errors and revisions by copyists had been written in by the fifth century, and several books of the New Testament, including some attributed to Paul, are now considered forgeries perpetrated by famous figures in Christianity to bolster their theological arguments. It is small wonder, then, that there are so many contradictions in the New Testament. Some of those contradictions are trivial, but some create huge problems for evangelicals insisting they are living by the word of God.

Members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., stage a protest outside the non-denominational prayer and fasting event, entitled "The Response" at Reliant Stadium, Aug. 6, 2011 in Houston. Credit: Brandon Thibodeaux/Getty

No Three Kings?

To illustrate how even seemingly trivial contradictions can have profound consequences, let’s recount the story of Christmas.

Jesus was born in a house in Bethlehem. His father, Joseph, had been planning to divorce Mary until he dreamed that she’d conceived a child through the Holy Spirit. No wise men showed up for the birth, and no brilliant star shone overhead. Joseph and his family then fled to Egypt, where they remained for years. Later, they returned to Israel, hoping to live in Judea, but that proved problematic, so they settled in a small town called Nazareth.

Not the version you are familiar with? No angel appearing to Mary? Not born in a manger? No one saying there was no room at the inn? No gold, frankincense or myrrh? Fleeing to Egypt? First living in Nazareth when Jesus was a child, not before he was born?

You may not recognize this version, but it is a story of Jesus’s birth found in the Gospels. Two Gospels—Matthew and Luke—tell the story of when Jesus was born, but in quite different ways. Contradictions abound. In creating the familiar Christmas tale, Christians took a little bit of one story, mixed it with a little bit of the other and ignored all of the contradictions in the two. The version recounted above does the same; it uses parts of those stories from the two Gospels that are usually ignored. So there are two blended versions and two Gospel versions. Take your pick.

There are also deep, logical flaws here that should be apparent to anyone giving the Bible a close read. Many Christians read the Old Testament as having several prophecies that the Messiah will be a descendant of David, a towering biblical figure who was the second ruler of the Kingdom of Israel. And both Matthew and Luke offer that proof—both trace Jesus’s lineage to his father Joseph and from there back to David.

Except…Joseph wasn’t Jesus’s father. Jesus is the son of God, remember? Moreover, the genealogies recounted in the

two Gospels are different, each identifying different men as Joseph's father and grandfather. Mary, the mother of Jesus, can be the only parent with a bloodline to David, but neither Gospel makes any mention of that.

The stories in the four Gospels of Jesus's death and resurrection differ as well. When brought before Pontius Pilate in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus speaks only two words and is never declared innocent. In the Gospel of John, Jesus engages in extended conversations with Pilate, who repeatedly proclaims this Jewish prisoner to be innocent and deserving of release. (The Book of John was the last to be written and came at a time when gentiles in Rome were gaining dramatically more influence over Christianity; that explains why the Romans are largely absolved from responsibility for Jesus's death and blame instead is pointed toward the Jews. That has been one of the key bases for centuries of anti-Semitism.)

And who went to anoint Jesus in his tomb? In Matthew, it was Mary and another woman named Mary, and an angel met them there. In Mark, it was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and a young man met them. In John, it was Mary alone; no one met her. As told in Matthew, the disciples go to Galilee after the Crucifixion and see Jesus ascend to heaven; in Acts, written by Luke, the disciples stay in Jerusalem and see Jesus ascend from there.

Some of the contradictions are conflicts between what evangelicals consider absolute and what Jesus actually said. For example, evangelicals are always talking about family values. But to Jesus, family was an impediment to reaching God. In the Gospel of Matthew, he states, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Then there is what many fundamentalist Christians hold to be the most important of all elements of the Bible: the

Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world. What modern evangelicals want to believe cannot be reconciled with the Bible. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says of the Apocalypse, “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be done”—in other words, the people alive in his time would see the end of the world. Paul in 1 Corinthians is even clearer; he states, “The time is short.” He then instructs other Christians, given that the end is coming, to live as if they had no wives, and, if they buy things, to treat them as if they were not their own. Some evangelicals counter these clear words by quoting 2 Peter as saying that, for God, one day is like 1,000 years.

Two problems: That does nothing to counter what either Jesus or Paul said. And even in ancient times, many Christian leaders proclaimed 2 Peter to be a forgery, an opinion almost universally shared by biblical scholars today.

None of this is meant to demean the Bible, but all of it is fact. Christians angered by these facts should be angry with the Bible, not the messenger.

God Wrestling Dragons

The next time someone tells you the biblical story of Creation is true, ask that person, “Which one?”

Few of the Christian faithful seem to know the Bible contains multiple creation stories. The first appears on Page 1, Genesis 1, so that is the version most people tend to embrace. However, it isn’t hard to find the second version: It’s Genesis 2, which usually starts on the same page. Genesis 1 begins with the words “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”; Genesis 2 starts with “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.”

Careful readers have long known that the two stories contradict each other. Genesis 1 begins with expanses of water that God separates, creating the earth between them. Genesis 2 describes a world without enough water, which

is then introduced. Vegetation exists before the sun and the stars in Genesis 1; it's the other way around in Genesis 2. In Genesis 1, man is created after plants and animals; in Genesis 2, plants and animals are first. In Genesis 1, Adam and Eve are created together; in Genesis 2, Eve is created out of Adam's rib.

This is nothing unusual for the Old Testament. In fact, even though many evangelical Christians insist that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament (including Deuteronomy, which talks about Moses having died and been buried), biblical scholars have concluded that two Jewish sects wrote many of the books. Each prepared its version of Old Testament, and the two were joined together without any attempt to reconcile the many contradictions.

These duplications are known as "doublets." "In most cases," says Richard Elliott Friedman, a biblical scholar at the University of Georgia, "one of the versions of the doublet story would refer to the deity by the divine name Yahweh, and the other version of the story would refer to the deity simply as God." Once the different narratives appearing in the Bible were divided by the word they used to reference God, other terms and characteristics turned up repeatedly in one or the other group. "This tended to support the hypothesis that someone had taken two different old source documents, cut them up and woven them together" in the first five books of the Old Testament, Friedman says.

The doublets make reading the Old Testament the literary equivalent of a hall of mirrors. Take the Genesis story of Noah and the flood. In Genesis 6, God tells Noah to build an ark and load it with animals, and "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Then, in Genesis 7, God again tells Noah to load the ark with animals, and "Noah did all that the Lord commanded him." Under the first set of instructions, Noah was to bring two of every kind of creature onto the ark. But the directions changed the

second time, with Noah told to bring seven of every kind of clean animal and two of every kind of unclean animal.

It gets stranger. In Genesis 7:7-12, Noah and his family board the ark, and the flood begins. Then, in the very next verse, Genesis 7:13, Noah and his family board the ark again, and the flood begins a second time. The water flooded the earth for 40 days (Genesis 7:17), or 150 days (Genesis 7:24). But Noah and his family stayed on the ark for a year (Genesis 8:13).

Even well-known stories have contradictory versions. As every child knows, David killed Goliath; it's right there in 1 Samuel 17:50. But don't tell those children to read 2 Samuel 21:19 unless you want them to get really confused. There, it says in many versions of the Bible that Elhanan killed Goliath. Other Bibles, though, fixed that to make it coincide with the words in 1 Chronicles, were Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath.

These conflicting accounts are only serious matters because evangelicals insist the Old Testament is a valid means of debunking science. But as these example show, the Bible can't stop debunking itself.

In fact, the Bible has three creation models, and some experts maintain there are four. In addition to the two in Genesis, there is one referenced in the Books of Isaiah, Psalms and Job. In this version, the world is created in the aftermath of a great battle between God and what theologians say is a dragon in the waters called Rahab. And Rahab is not the only mythical creature that either coexisted with God or was created by him. God plays with a sea monster named Leviathan. Unicorns appear in the King James Bible (although that wasn't the correct translation of the mythical creature's Hebrew name). There are fiery serpents and flying serpents and cockatrices—a two-legged dragon with a rooster's head (that word was later changed to "viper" in some English-language Bibles). And in Exodus, magicians who work for the Pharaoh of Egypt are able to

change staffs into snakes and water into blood. In Genesis, the “Sons of God” marry the “daughters of man” and have children; the “sons of God” are angels, as is made clear in the Books of Job and Psalms.

Evangelicals cite Genesis to challenge the science taught in classrooms, but don’t like to talk about those Old Testament books with monsters and magic.

N365724 05: Workers paste a public service announcement over a billboard with an anti-homosexuality message on Bay Street in Staten Island, N.Y., on March 8, 2000. The controversial billboard, with a quotation from the Bible, was paid for by an undisclosed party and was covered over by the billboard company after complaints. (Photo by Chris Hondros) •

Workers paste a public service announcement over a billboard with an anti-homosexuality message on Bay Street in Staten Island, N.Y., on March 8, 2000. The controversial billboard, with a quotation from the Bible, was paid for by an undisclosed party and was covered over by the billboard company after complaints. Credit: Chris Hondros/Getty

Sarah Palin Is Sinning Right Now

The declaration in 1 Timothy—as recounted in the Living Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version Bible and others—could not be more clear: Those who “practice homosexuality” will not inherit

the Kingdom of God. But the translation there is odd, in part because the word homosexual didn't even exist until more than 1,800 years after when 1 Timothy was supposed to have been written. So how did it get into the New Testament? Simple: The editors of these modern Bibles just made it up. Like so many translators and scribes before them, they had a religious conviction, something they wanted to say that wasn't stated clearly enough in the original for their tastes. And so they manipulated sentences to reinforce their convictions.

The original Bible verse in Koiné used ἀρσενοκοῖται for what has been translated as "homosexual." For the Latin Bible, it was as masculorum concubitores. The King James Version translated that as "them that defile themselves with mankind." Perhaps that means men who engage in sex with other men, perhaps not.

The next thing to check here is whether 1 Timothy was based on a forgery. And the answer to that is a resounding yes. In 1807, a German scholar named Friedrich Schleiermacher published a letter observing that 1 Timothy used arguments that clashed with other letters written by Paul. Moreover, 1 Timothy attacks false teachings, but they are not the types of teachings prevalent when Paul was writing—instead, they are more akin to the beliefs of the Gnostics, a sect that did not exist until long after Paul's death. And at times, whoever wrote this letter uses the same words as Paul but means something completely different by them. Most biblical scholars agree that Paul did not write 1 Timothy.

But suppose for a moment that 1 Timothy was written by Paul, and that "defile themselves" does refer to homosexuality. In that case, evangelical Christians and biblical literalists still have a lot of trouble on their hands. Contrary to what so many fundamentalists believe, outside of the emphasis on the Ten Commandments, sins aren't ranked. The New Testament doesn't proclaim homosexuality

the most heinous of all sins. No, every sin is equal in its significance to God. In 1 Timothy, Paul, or whoever wrote it, condemns the disobedient, liars and drunks. In other words, for evangelicals who want to use this book of the Bible to condemn homosexuality, most frat boys in America are committing sins on par with being gay. But you rarely hear about parents banishing their kids for getting trashed on Saturday night.

Now let's talk about how 1 Timothy deals with women. U.S. Representative Michele Bachmann, the Minnesota Republican, slammed gay people as bullies last March for opposing legislation that would have allowed Arizona businesses to discriminate against same-sex couples. Well, according to the Bible, Bachmann should shut up and sit down. In fact, every female politician who insists the New Testament is the inerrant word of God needs to resign immediately or admit that she is a hypocrite.

That's because 1 Timothy is one of the most virulently anti-woman books of the New Testament, something else that sets it apart from other letters by Paul. In the King James Version, it says women must dress modestly, can't embroider their hair, can't wear pearls or gold and have to stay silent. Moreover, they can't hold any position of authority over men and aren't even allowed to be teachers—meaning, if they truly believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God, women like Bachmann can't be in politics. In fact, while 1 Timothy has just one parenthetical clause that can be interpreted as being about homosexuality, it contains six verses on the shortcomings of women and the limitations on what they are allowed to do.

Many Christians point to other parts of the New Testament when denouncing homosexuality. Romans, another letter attributed to Paul, is a popular choice. In the King James Bible, it condemns men who lust in their hearts for each other, a translation that holds up pretty well when

compared with the earliest Greek versions. And scholars agree that Romans is a real letter written by Paul.

700 Club co-host Pat Robertson speaks at a press conference, Feb. 3, 1998, at the CBN studio in Virginia Beach, Va., about the impending execution of Karla Faye Tucker, who was put to death later that night in Texas. Credit: Bill Tiernam/The Virginian-Pilot/AP

In other words, Romans is real Gospel, and what it has to say can't be questioned by those who call themselves biblical literalists. Which means televangelist Pat Robertson should prepare himself for an eternity in hell. On his television show The 700 Club, Robertson recently went on a tirade about Barack Obama and, as he is wont to do, prayed for help. "God, we need the angels! We need your help!" Robertson said. "We need to do something, to pray to be delivered from this president."

And with that, Pat Robertson sinned. Because in Romans —so often used to condemn homosexuality—there is a much longer series of verses about how the righteous are supposed to behave toward people in government authority. It shows up in Romans 13:1-2, which in the International Standard

Bible says, “The existing authorities have been established by God, so that whoever resists the authorities opposes what God has established, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.”

So yes, there is one verse in Romans about homosexuality…and there are eight verses condemning those who criticize the government. In other words, all fundamentalist Christians who decry Obama have sinned as much as they believe gay people have.

It doesn’t end there. In the same section of Romans that is arguably addressing homosexuality, Paul also condemns debating (all of Congress is damned?), being prideful, disobeying parents and deceiving people (yes, all of Congress is damned.) There is no bold print or underlining for the section dealing with homosexuality—Paul treats it as something as sinful as pride or debate.

The story is the same in the last New Testament verse cited by fundamentalists who scorn homosexuals. Again, it is a letter from Paul, called 1 Corinthians. The translation is good, and the experts believe it was written by him. But fundamentalists who rely on this better stay out of court—Paul condemns bringing lawsuits, at least against other Christians. Adultery, being greedy, lying—all of these are declared as sins on par with homosexuality.

Of course, there are plenty of fundamentalist Christians who have no idea where references to homosexuality are in the New Testament, much less what the surrounding verses say. And so they always fall back on Leviticus, the Old Testament book loaded with dos and don’ts. They seem to have the words memorized about it being an abomination for a man to lie with a man as he does with a woman. And every time they make that argument, they demonstrate that they know next to nothing about the New Testament.

A fundamental conflict in the New Testament—arguably the most important one in the Bible—centers on whether the Laws of Moses were supplanted by the crucifixion of Christ.

The basic tension there was that Paul led a church in Antioch where he attempted to bring gentiles into Christianity by espousing a liberal interpretation of the requirements to follow the Laws of Moses—circumcision, eating kosher food and other rules spelled out in the Old Testament. Hundreds of miles away, disciples of Jesus and his brother James headed a church in Jerusalem. When they heard about the goings-on in Antioch, a debate ensued: Did gentiles have to become Jews first (like Jesus) and follow Mosaic Law before they could be accepted as Christians?

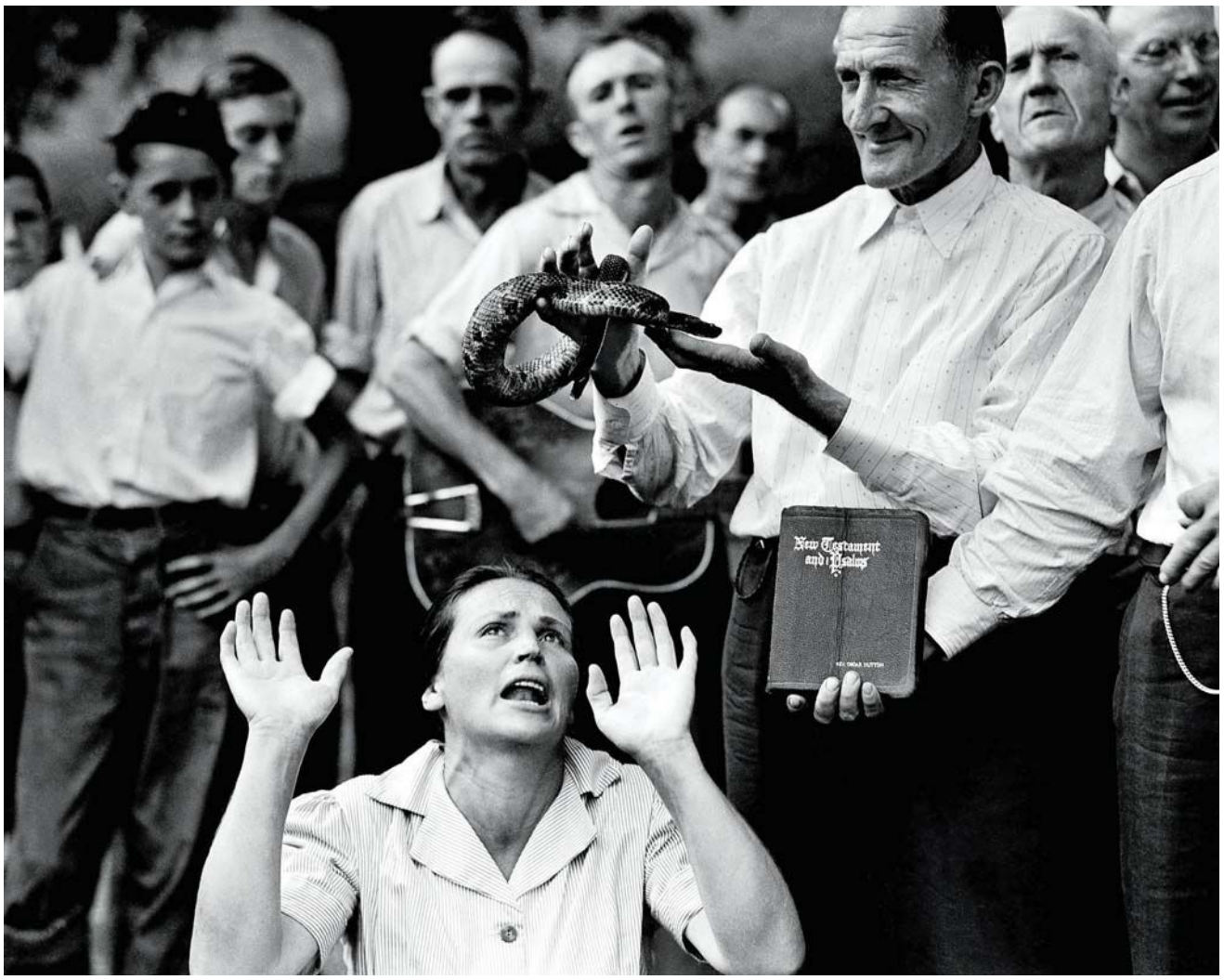
Some of the original disciples said yes, an opinion that seems to find support in words attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets....” The author of Matthew made it clear that Christians must keep Mosaic Law like the most religious Jews, in order to achieve salvation. But Paul, particularly in Galatians and Romans, says a person’s salvation is won by his or her faith in Christ’s death and resurrection—nothing more. Those who try to follow Mosaic Law, Paul believed, risked losing salvation.

In other words, Orthodox Jews who follow Mosaic Law can use Leviticus to condemn homosexuality without being hypocrites. But fundamentalist Christians must choose: They can either follow Mosaic Law by keeping kosher, being circumcised, never wearing clothes made of two types of thread and the like. Or they can accept that finding salvation in the Resurrection of Christ means that Leviticus is off the table.

Which raises one final problem for fundamentalists eager to condemn homosexuals or anyone else: If they accept the writings of Paul and believe all people are sinners, then salvation is found in belief in Christ and the Resurrection. For everyone. There are no exceptions in the Bible for sins that evangelicals really don’t like.

So apparently, God doesn’t need the help of fundamentalists in determining what should be done in

the afterlife with the prideful, the greedy, the debaters or even those homosexuals. Which could well be why Jesus cautioned his followers against judging others while ignoring their own sins. In fact, he had a specific word for people obsessed with the sins of others. He called them hypocrites.



Members of the Pentecostal Church of God, a faith healing sect, surround a woman who has "Got the Spirit" as a man holds a snake above her head in Evarts, Ky. on Aug. 22, 1944. Credit: AP

They Haven’t a Prayer

In August 2011, Texas Governor Rick Perry hosted a massive prayer rally in Houston at what was then known as Reliant Stadium, where the city’s pro-football team plays. Joined by 30,000 fellow Christians, Perry stepped to a podium, his face projected on a giant screen behind him. He closed his eyes, bowed his head and boomed out a long prayer asking God to make America a better place. His fellow believers stood, kneeled, cried and yelled, “Amen.”

Recently, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal announced he would be holding his massive prayer rally at a sports arena in Baton Rouge. More than 100,000 evangelical pastors have been invited.

Jesus would have been horrified. At least, that's what the Bible says.

It is one of the most incomprehensible contradictions between the behavior of evangelicals and the explicit words of the Bible. Prayer shows—and there is really no other word for these—are held every week. If they are not at sports arenas with Republican presidential hopefuls, they are on Sunday morning television shows at mega-churches holding tens of thousands of the faithful. They raise their arms and sway, crying and pleading in prayer.

But Jesus specifically preached against this at the Sermon on the Mount, the longest piece of teaching by him in the New Testament. Specifically, as recounted in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus spoke of those who made large public displays of their own religiosity. In fact, performance prayer events closely mimic the depictions in early Christian texts of prayer services held by the Pharisees and Sadducees, two of the largest religious movements in Judea during Jesus's life. And throughout the Gospels, Jesus condemns these groups using heated language, with part of his anger targeted at their public prayer.

While the words in the King James Bible might be a bit confusing because it is not written in modern English, the New Revised Standard Version is a good substitute here. In it, Jesus is quoted as saying "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

But Jesus says much more, specifically cautioning against the kind of public performance prayer that has become all the rage among evangelicals of late. The verse in Matthew continues quoting Jesus, who says, "Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and

pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward."

Instead, Jesus says the truly righteous should pray alone and in secret, in a room with the door shut. "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you,'' Jesus is quoted as saying.

Indeed, in the dozens of discussions in the Bible about prayer, the vast majority focus on God's ability to know what a person wants. In the New Testament, it is often portrayed as a deeply personal affair, with prayers uttered in prison cells to a God who stays alongside the oppressed.

Moreover, babbling on as Rick Perry and so many like him have about faith and country and the blessings of America runs counter to everything that Jesus says about prayer in the Bible. "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words,'' Jesus is quoted as saying in Matthew. "Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Because God knows what someone needs without being asked, there is no reason for long, convoluted prayers. Therefore, Jesus says in both Matthew and Luke, people who wish to pray should only say the Lord's Prayer. Of course, there is the problem that the Lord's Prayer cited in those two Gospels comes in two versions, so Christians have to choose one or the other.

It seems almost a miracle that those who effortlessly transform Paul's statement about "them that defile themselves with mankind" into "homosexual" can ignore the clear, simple words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. What's most amazing is that, unlike so many questions about the Bible, the instructions on how and where to pray are not only not contradicted; they are reinforced time and again.

The closest Jesus came to public prayer in the Bible was when he was feeding thousands with five loaves of bread and two fish. This story is recounted in each of the Gospels, and each time, Jesus is depicted as either giving thanks to God or looking to heaven and blessing the food. But he is also depicted as praying in all four Gospels, and each time, Jesus does so after heading off to be alone.

Some evangelicals have attempted to explain away this contradiction between the words of the Bible in Matthew and modern public prayer performances by saying Jesus condemned only mass prayer, when the people doing it had made that choice just to be seen. But with governors projected on giant, high-definition televisions, with thousands packed into sports stadiums weeping and waving, with thousands more doing their prayers on TV at mega-churches, it's hard to see what possible reason might exist other than to be seen. God, the Bible makes clear, didn't need anyone to drive to a football stadium so he could hear them.

Which leads to an obvious question: Why don't more Christians oppose prayer in school? If these people truly believe that the Bible is the Word of God, then their children should be taught the Lord's Prayer, brought to their rooms and allowed to pray alone.

That answer doesn't lend itself to big protests or angry calls for impeaching judges. But it does follow the instructions from the Gospels. And isn't that supposed to be the point?

Triumph of Faith, by Tiepolo Giambattista, 18th Century Credit: Photoservice Electa/Universal Images Group/Rex

Judge Not

So why study the Bible at all? Since it's loaded with contradictions and translation errors and wasn't written by witnesses and includes words added by unknown scribes to inject Church orthodoxy, should it just be abandoned?

No. This examination is not an attack on the Bible or Christianity. Instead, Christians seeking greater understanding of their religion should view it as an attempt to save the Bible from the ignorance, hatred and bias that has been heaped upon it. If Christians truly want to treat the New Testament as the foundation of the religion, they have to know it. Too many of them seem to read John Grisham novels with greater care than they apply to the book they consider to be the most important document in the world.

But the history, complexities and actual words of the Bible can't be ignored just to line it up with what people want to believe, based simply on what friends and family and ministers tell them. Nowhere in the Gospels or Acts of

Epistles or Apocalypses does the New Testament say it is the inerrant word of God. It couldn't—the people who authored each section had no idea they were composing the Christian Bible, and they were long dead before what they wrote was voted by members of political and theological committees to be the New Testament.

The Bible is a very human book. It was written, assembled, copied and translated by people. That explains the flaws, the contradictions, and the theological disagreements in its pages. Once that is understood, it is possible to find out which parts of the Bible were not in the earliest Greek manuscripts, which are the bad translations, and what one book says in comparison to another, and then try to discern the message for yourself.

And embrace what modern Bible experts know to be the true sections of the New Testament. Jesus said, Don't judge. He condemned those who pointed out the faults of others while ignoring their own. And he proclaimed, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

That's a good place to start.

Annabel Clark for Newsweek

A STARTUP OF HER OWN

SALLIE KRAWCHECK MADE IT TO THE TOP ON WALL STREET; NOW SHE'S BRINGING OTHER WOMEN UP TO JOIN HER.

"Before I tell you this story, let me set the stage."

I haven't yet posed a question, or even cleared my throat, when Anne Greenwood launches into an anecdote about her colleague Sallie Krawcheck, the former president of the Global Wealth & Investment Management division of Bank of America and former chief financial officer of

Citigroup. Krawcheck has been dubbed everything from "The Last Honest Analyst" (Fortune) to the "First Lady of Wall Street" (New York) to one of the 100 most creative people of 2014 (Fast Company). She was also fired twice, in spectacularly public ways, the first time during America's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Greenwood explains that she was leading one of Smith Barney's top wealth-management offices in Boston when Krawcheck became chief executive officer in 2002. (Greenwood later led Smith Barney's national Retirement Services Group.) "Out of Smith Barney's 600 offices, there were maybe a handful run by women," she says. "How extraordinary it was to have this woman come in as CEO!"

About six months into Krawcheck's tenure, the company announced an all-office conference call. "It's very unusual to have all 600 managers from all offices call in—not unheard-of, but you don't do it that often, because a Wall Street firm doesn't want to freeze everybody."

The call begins and Krawcheck starts talking. Suddenly, she interrupts herself, Greenwood recalls. "She says, 'Everyone please bear with me, I have to put the call on hold.' We're thinking, OK, the head of the Federal Reserve Board must be calling. Something huge has happened in the world economic space."

Ninety seconds later, Krawcheck comes back on the line. Greenwood remembers what she said next as if it happened yesterday. "She says, 'I'm so sorry, you guys, that was my daughter and I promised her that she could always reach me. I made a deal with her that if I take this big job, no matter where I am, what I'm doing or who I'm with, I will take your call. The funny thing is, she couldn't find the pink nail polish. I'm the only one who knows it's in the upstairs bathroom.'

"Immediately there was buzz among the few women in elite positions around the firm," says Greenwood. "I couldn't believe she was so honest about what had happened. Never

in a million years would I have told a male workforce that my daughter couldn’t find the pink nail polish.”

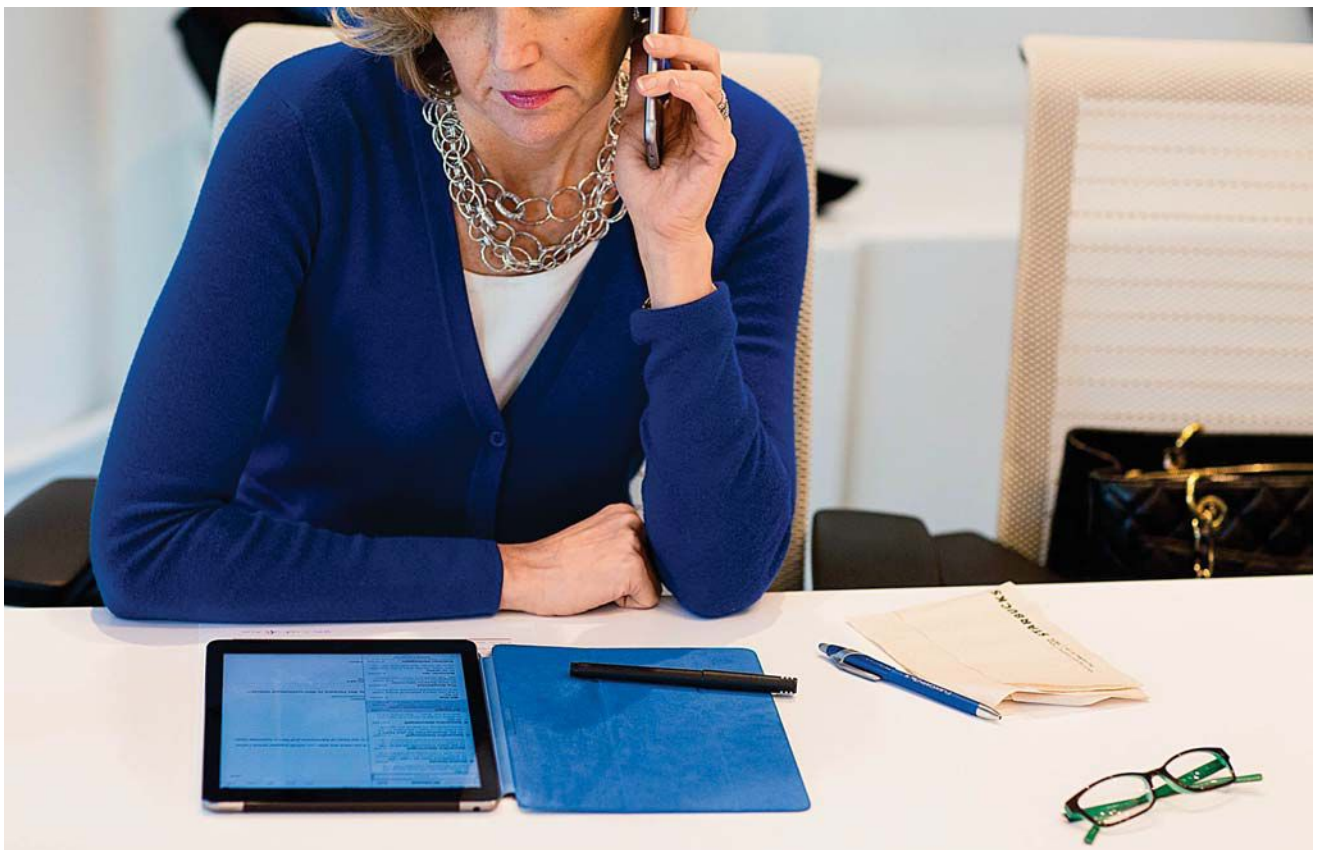
Sallie Krawcheck participates in a phone meeting with the CEO of Pax Ellevate Global Women's Index Fund, a mutual fund which invests in companies that are leaders in advancing women through gender diversity on Dec. 15, 2014. Credit: Annabel Clark for Newsweek

Bullying by Xerox

Krawcheck, 50, didn’t set out to become a titan of finance, or a feminist icon, but having survived some of the most turbulent financial times in the past century as one of the only women at the top her industry, that’s what she’s become. Krawcheck’s mantel is crowded with awards and accolades. From 2002 to 2007, and again in 2009 and 2010, Fortune named her one of the “Most Powerful Women” in business. In 2003, Fortune named her the “Most Influential Person Under the Age of 40.” In 2006, Forbes ranked her No. 6 on its “World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” list. A year later, she received CNBC’s “Business Leader of the Future Award.”

“The fact that she’s a woman is the least interesting thing about her,” says Nilofer Merchant, an author and Silicon Valley executive who has launched over 100 products with

more than $18 billion in sales. “She understands capitalism and what it is that creates value in an economy,” Merchant adds. “She rose through the ranks, juggled everything, did everything in a lean-in strategy, then realized, ‘You know what? Actually, that’s not enough.’”



Sallie Krawcheck answers her phone in her office in New York, Dec. 15, 2014. Credit: Annabel Clark for Newsweek

In May 2013, Krawcheck purchased 85 Broads, now Ellevate Network, a global professional women’s organization offering career advice, networking and other resources to more than 30,000 women. (The company was founded by former Goldman Sachs executive Janet Hanson and named for the company’s original headquarters at 85 Broad Street in lower Manhattan.) Krawcheck also launched the Pax Ellevate Global Women’s Index Fund, the first fund dedicated to the highest-rated companies for advancing women. All of the companies in the fund have one or more women on the board of directors, and 97 percent have two or more on the board. Women hold 32 percent of board positions in companies in the fund and 25 percent of senior

management roles—much higher than the 11 percent global average for both of those categories.

These days, Krawcheck is known as much for her efforts on behalf of women as for her legendary failures. “The number one thing I hear from people is that she said it was OK to fail: ‘If someone like Sallie can fail and admit it, then so can I,’” says Greenwood, who joined Ellevate as director of business development last June. Greenwood often travels around the world, meeting women who’ve joined the network. “The most common thing that comes out of their mouths is, ‘What’s it like to work with Sallie?’ Then their eyes well up in tears!”

Growing up in Charleston, South Carolina, Krawcheck dreamed of being a princess or David Cassidy’s girlfriend. In third grade, she discovered Gloria Steinem. Krawcheck had just become the first person in her grade to get glasses. “They were awful: Coke bottle, tinted yellow, very ’70s,” she recalls. She was miserable, and the kids at school teased her. “My dad said, ‘I have glasses, too. Don’t you want to be like me?’ I said, ‘Daddy, I want to be pretty.’ And he said, ‘Sallie, you are pretty. And look at Gloria Steinem. She has glasses, she’s beautiful, and she’s changing the world.’”

Invoking her third-grade self, Krawcheck says, “Who should I look up to? My dad thinks Gloria Steinem is cool.” She pauses. “I still get chills.”

We are sitting at the Garden restaurant in the Four Seasons in New York City, not far from Ellevate’s headquarters. It’s around 10 a.m., and Krawcheck sips a cup of tea. I mention that I had the opportunity to meet Steinem earlier this year. “Me too. Oh my gosh, I was going nuts,” she gushes. “I asked her—I’ll bet you didn’t think to ask her this; you’re going to be embarrassed in a second—I asked her what happened to her glasses! Did you?”

“No,” I say.

"Stop it! I asked her!" she exclaims, as if we're tween girls talking about meeting Taylor Swift.

"What did she say?"

"She broke 'em! And she's never been able to replace 'em," Krawcheck replies in her soft Southern accent.

Talking with Krawcheck is like getting a sit-down meeting with one of the smartest minds in business while simultaneously hanging out with that friend from college you haven't seen since graduation. One moment, she's citing research that shows the most important relationship a professional woman can have, if she's lucky enough to have it, is with her father. The next, she's referring to herself as an "Energizer bunny." "Sometimes I think about why I'm so energetic and achievement-oriented. I think it came from my family. The way I got attention from my very busy parents was by bringing home As."

Krawcheck's parents married in their early 20s, just as her father started law school, and had four children in just under four years. They were a close-knit family of modest means. "We had one bathroom, no lock on the door," she says. "Everybody was in everybody's hair all the time." Her parents went into debt sending their children to private school, but to them, the alternative was worse: South Carolina had some of the worst public schools in the country. "What better can you do for your children than give them an education and allow 'em the independence to go out on their own and do what they want to do?" says her father, Leonard Krawcheck, an attorney in Charleston.

At her all-girls middle school, Krawcheck was bullied. "There was nothing they could do to me at Salomon Brothers in the '80s that was worse than the seventh grade," she told Fortune in 2006. Her parents moved her to Porter-Gaud School, a prep school in Charleston (Stephen Colbert was a class ahead of her), and she went from getting Cs to being the top student in her class. She also sparkled as she went down the traditional path of good Southern

girlhood, running track, becoming a cheerleader and dating the quarterback. When a guidance counselor told her she could do so much more than date the coolest boy in school, she listened.

Krawcheck attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on the prestigious Morehead Scholarship. After graduating in 1987 with a degree in journalism, she landed her first job on Wall Street as a junior analyst at Salomon Brothers. “Every day there was a Xerox copy of a male—” she pauses, “on my desk. I remember thinking, Wow, I’m gonna use the Xerox machine on a different floor. There was a sense of underlying, muted disdain for women.” Between the rollicking parties, crude jokes and men making passes at female colleagues, “I wouldn’t quite say it was a hostile work environment, but it wasn’t a pleasant work environment.”

Krawcheck left Salomon Brothers after three years to pursue her MBA at Columbia University. She was married at the time, and before graduating in 1992, she turned down a job offer in Los Angeles because, she says, her husband didn’t want to move. She accepted a position at Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette instead—only to see her marriage unravel. They got divorced, but she was stuck as an associate at DLJ, where she rarely received “the good assignments,” was asked to “baby-sit a mediocre, more senior banker” and knew she had been put on “the C team.” After one year, she quit.

DLJ did offer a silver lining: She met her current husband, Gary Appel, now vice chairman of corporate investment-North America, at Investcorp. They married and had two children. Two months shy of her 30th birthday, Krawcheck, then unemployed, was standing in her kitchen peeling a pear when she had her famous eureka moment: “KABOOM! I should be an equity research analyst.”

Sallie Krawcheck hails a taxi to get to her next meeting in New York, Dec. 15, 2014. Credit: Annabel Clark for Newsweek

‘The Right Spouse’

Krawcheck was turned down by pretty much every firm on Wall Street. Lehman Brothers rejected her, three times. Smith Barney passed, too. She accepted the only offer she received, from research firm Sanford C. Bernstein, in 1995. Over the next few years, she earned a reputation for integrity and objectivity. In 2001, she became CEO. In 2002, the same year Fortune named her “The Last Honest Analyst,” Sandy Weill, then chairman and CEO of Citigroup, tapped her to run Smith Barney. “Ah!” she says, as if reliving the excitement of that coup.

Juggling her professional life and family was not easy. “At Smith Barney, I was traveling like a fiend,” she says. “My son, who was probably 7 at the time, came in one night and said, ‘I’m not seeing enough of you.’ [Later,] Gary turned to me and said, ‘What are you going to do about this?’ I said, ‘No, no, no, what are we going to do about this? How will we be more present for him?” (Krawcheck jokes that the smartest thing she ever did was convince her

husband that when their children were toddlers and started screaming “Mommy!” in the middle of the night, they “meant parent of either sex.”)

Krawcheck and Appel tracked their travel schedules on a yearly calendar to ensure at least one parent was home each night. They also told their children they could call them anytime (thus the pink nail polish call). “Whatever personal guilt I felt, I just threw it away,” Krawcheck says. “I’d go on trips and they’d cry ‘Don’t go!’ I’d close the door and I’d cry, but I’d never let them see a conflict there.” Appel also scaled back his workload, going to three days a week while Krawcheck worked at Smith Barney. “If the family’s not right, nothing’s right,” she says, “but you have to have the right spouse.”

In March 2005, Krawcheck was promoted to chief financial officer of Citigroup. Two years later, in what was widely considered a demotion, she became CEO of Citi Global Wealth Management. “The downturn comes and we mis-sold high-risk investments to individual investors as low risk,” she says. “I went through all the data. I said, ‘We didn’t do anything illegal that I can find, or unethical. We were dumb.’” Krawcheck advocated reimbursing their clients. “The CEO did not agree with me. It went to the board. The board agreed with me. And I was later fired.”

This was around the time Zoe Cruz, then co-president of Morgan Stanley, and Erin Callan, then chief financial officer at Lehman Brothers, were fired. All three oustings made national headlines—“The Last Women Standing on Wall Street” (The New York Times); “Women on Wall Street: A Shrinking Club, or Not?” (The Wall Street Journal)—and shone a provocative spotlight on the lack of women in finance just as the financial crisis hit. “What I’ve started to say, which is quite shocking, is that I was fired because I was a woman. I don’t mean in the traditional sense of having different parts, but more I had a very different way of thinking,” she says, citing studies that show women have

a longer-term perspective and are more client-focused and more relationship-oriented than men. “Diversity would have made the financial downturn less, much less, a lot less severe.”

In 2009, Bank of America hired Krawcheck to turn around Merrill Lynch’s global wealth management group. Under her leadership, the unit made $3.1 billion in profit. Two years later, she was forced out. “I got fired, and it was on the front page of The Wall Street Journal. Knuckles!” she says to me, holding up her fist. “Explode it!” We bump fists. “I had breakfast with Moira Forbes [publisher of ForbesWomen] two weeks after Bank of America, and she asked, ‘Why don’t you just disappear?’ I was like, ‘Why?!’”

Fading out of the public eye is not a possibility for Krawcheck. But in the two years following her very public departure from Bank of America, both of her children had health scares. First, her son developed mononucleosis, but due to a genetic abnormality, his condition went misdiagnosed. His spleen was bleeding. He was in and out of the hospital. A year later, her daughter was in a car accident and missed several months of school. “I told everybody for a while, ‘Oh thank gosh I’m not the CFO of Citi, because if I were, I’d have to quit my job to be with my kids,’” she says. “The real answer is, I wouldn’t have quit. I would have done that really badly, and I would have done it really badly with the kids.” She calls her unplanned hiatus from work, when her children needed her most, “an odd gift…. It was terrible and good all at the same time.”

Good Karma

In an era of leaning in, when women account for 86 percent of consumer purchases but just 4 percent of senior venture capitalists, there is a dearth of women in high-powered roles. Ellevate Network is Krawcheck’s newest effort to fight this bias. Gender diversity is good for the economy, for families and for business, she says. “Out of all the research I’ve reviewed, I can’t find anything bad! If

we were to have women fully engaged in this economy, our economy would be 8 or 9 percent larger."

Today, she is an advocate for what she calls inclusive capitalism, where women, millennials and people of difference are fully engaged in the economy. "The research would indicate that we would have a bigger economy, a more stable economy," as well as a reduced retirement savings gap, family-friendly companies, and more innovation, meaning and purpose within corporate America.

Ellevate boasts more than 30,000 members in over 40 chapters across 130 countries. Among its many initiatives are meet-ups where fewer than a dozen women get together. Each one brings an "ask"—I want to be made partner, or I'm struggling to switch industries—and the other women share their advice and experience.

Last October, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella told a conference celebrating women and technology that it was "good karma" for women to wait for a raise instead of asking for one. "Rather than wait for someone like that to get it and, in a more definitive way, move women forward, at Ellevate women help each other move forward," Greenwood says. "At these small meet-ups, women have no ax to grind. They are simply there to give advice and share. Lift all boats, is the way I look at it."

With the memory of the 2008 financial collapse still fresh, Krawcheck is among many people looking for a new model for finance and business.

"Capitalism broke, and I had a front seat," Krawcheck says.

She is the first to admit that Ellevate Network is just one part of the solution. CEOs must prioritize gender diversity on their teams, she says. And older, more established leaders should start to collaborate with young entrepreneurs. That's what Krawcheck is doing. (When I ask who, she name-checks Kathryn Minshew, founder and CEO of The

Muse; Rachael Chong, founder and CEO of Catchafire; and Amanda Steinberg, founder of DailyWorth, among a few others.)

"So many of my peers in business are doing the same thing they've been doing forever. As a result, you learn, but your learning curve flattens substantially," Krawcheck says. Soon after leaving Bank of America, she connected with Arianna Huffington. "I remember looking at her office, and she's surrounded by all these young people. That's it! She may be chronologically aging, but she's not mentally aging. To me, that seemed to be the real ticket: to be with people who are innovating."

With almost 1 million followers on LinkedIn, Krawcheck has built a thriving online presence over the past few years. "She's a visible expert in financial services, with a pedigree, who's talking very publicly about the importance of women in financial services," says Jacki Zehner, CEO of Women Moving Millions, a network of philanthropists working to improve the lives of girls and women everywhere. In 1996, Zehner became the youngest woman and first female trader to become partner at Goldman Sachs.

"[Sallie] may be one of the first to combine network and community with product and platform in the financial services sector…. If she is successful, and I hope she is, it could send a shock wave through the financial services sector," Zehner adds. "'All Eyes on Sallie' is the headline —what is she going to do? Was this [Ellevate Network] a smart move? What is she teaching us about where financial services is going?

"It seems like she's playing it close to the vest. I for one don't know what's coming next, but I have a feeling something big is brewing."

Vatican Pool/Getty

HAIL MARY IN HAVANA: POPE FRANCIS'S DIVINE DIPLOMACY

THE POPE'S HAIL MARY IN HAVANA MAY BE ONLY THE START OF THE VATICAN'S NEW, MORE AUDACIOUS PLANS.

Call it a miracle, or simply an exercise in artful negotiation, but in brokering the historic talks between the United States and Cuba that ended a five-decade-long embargo, Pope Francis managed to accomplish something that had long eluded some of the world's finest diplomats:

resolving a seemingly intractable stalemate between two bitter Cold War rivals.

Yet the pope's ambassadorial audacity with Washington and Havana is perhaps only the start of a more subtle and assertive diplomacy from the pontiff in Latin America, Asia and perhaps even the Middle East. Indeed, the Cuba negotiations were so successful that one participant, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state in charge of the Holy See's foreign affairs, called them a "model" for future talks.

"What came together here was the flower of one of the oldest and most refined diplomatic corps in the world, and someone who comes completely from outside of that," said another Vatican official, who, like others at the Holy See, asked for anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media on this matter. "And they worked brilliantly together."

The agreement didn't come out of nowhere. For all its difficulties with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, the Vatican never broke off diplomatic relations with Havana after the 1959 Communist revolution. In fact, beginning in the mid-1980s, America's two leading Catholic clerics, Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, began visiting the island and regularly meeting with Castro. The two reported back to Washington and started lobbying the White House to loosen the embargo on trade, travel and finance.

Over the next three decades, with mixed success, other senior Catholic prelates continued pressing for improved relations between the U.S. and Cuba. In 1998, they organized Pope John Paul II's visit to Havana, the first ever by a reigning pontiff. They hoped it would create the conditions for a major thaw. Unfortunately, not long after the pontiff touched down in Cuba, the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal erupted, overshadowing that historic meeting

between the two leaders. Today, the Vatican plays down what some have called its grand ambitions for that meeting.

A young couple waits for a collective taxi in Havana on Dec. 18, 2014

Credit: Lisette Poole

"Yes, the Lewinsky affair blew the whole strategy off the map," says a Vatican insider. "But I don't things think things were near a point of fruition then. The idea that it could all have been sorted with Pope John Paul's visit is an exaggeration."

The visit proved to be part of the Vatican's long game and helped pave the way for the recent diplomatic breakthrough. Though previous attempts by Barack Obama at a détente with Cuba broke down during his first term, after his reelection in 2012 the president said he wanted better relations with Havana to be part of his legacy. When the Vatican got wind of Obama's intentions, the Church's diplomatic emissaries began working behind the scenes. By the time Obama shook hands with Cuban leader Raúl Castro at the memorial for Nelson Mandela in front of a jubilant crowd in Johannesburg in 2013, the pontiff and his team

were already hard at work, looking for ways to nurture a deal.

Months later, in March, Obama visited the Vatican, and the pope made his move. The two spent much of their time together talking about U.S.-Cuban relations and Alan Gross, an ailing American aid worker imprisoned on the island. “Gross had been on our map for a really long time,” a Vatican official said. “Pope Benedict had made an appeal to Castro in Cuba [in 2012] to release him.” Encouraged by their conversation, the pope later summoned Cardinal Jaime Ortega, the senior Catholic in Havana, to Rome to start brokering negotiations with the Communist state.

The talks went well, as diplomats from both sides shuttled back and forth to Canada, where most of the secret meetings took place. But they hit a snag earlier this year over a proposal to trade three Cuban spies jailed in the U.S. for an operative imprisoned in Cuba, along with the humanitarian release of Gross. Francis urged Obama and Castro to strike a deal. Gross had become increasingly ill behind bars, and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry privately warned the Cubans that if he died, so too would the negotiations. The plan worked, and the two sides came together. “The stars were all aligned,” a Vatican insider said. “Obama was not having to run for president again. Alan Gross was very ill. Then you had the incredible moral authority of the pope.”

The historic agreement may help ease the testy relationship between the U.S. and Venezuela or even help the Colombian government make strides toward peace with the FARC rebels in Colombia. But Pope Francis’s moral authority won’t produce miracles, Vatican diplomats say. Some observers have hoped the pope could intervene with the Taliban in Afghanistan or with ISIS in Syria and Iraq, but that’s unlikely. “Pope Francis is ready to put his prestige on the line with anybody where he thinks he has a realistic prospect of success,” one ambassador to the Holy See said. “He has told papal diplomats to take risks.

Don’t underestimate him. But let’s not be naive. He also understands the limitations of political power.”

This pragmatism is what will drive the Holy See’s future ambassadorial efforts. Diplomacy may need grand gestures, but as Francis said after helping to broker the Cuba agreement, it also needs piccoli passi—baby steps. Inching the needle forward is what the pope was doing earlier this year when he invited the Israeli and Palestinian presidents to a prayer summit at the Vatican after his visit to the Holy Land.

Today, the pope and Cardinal Parolin are using a similar strategy in China. The country’s 12 million Catholics are divided between underground churches loyal to Rome and a government-sponsored church with bishops appointed by the Chinese Communist Party. The two sides are making progress, which is why the pope recently declined to meet with the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing sees as a Tibetan separatist enemy. “The pope will not take risks where there are no fruits,” one Vatican official said. “He needs to see a possible payoff. He knows the realpolitik.”

Despite his reputation for being a maverick, the pope also knows he has to listen to advice. Last year he was ready to go to Iraqi Kurdistan to support Christians being persecuted by Islamist extremists. He was hoping that his visit could help stop the violence, but when his security officials said it was too dangerous, he demurred. As the Cuba deal demonstrated, we should expect the unexpected from Pope Francis, but perhaps not the impossible.

Paul Vallely is the author of Pope Francis: Untying the Knots, published by Bloomsbury.

Pavel Golovkin/AP

WHO GETS HURT WITH RUSSIA'S FALLING RUBLE?

THE RUBLE CRISIS WILL HURT TURKISH RESORTS, GERMAN RETAILERS AND CENTRAL ASIAN DICTATORS.

When an economic crisis looms, Russians go shopping. As the ruble crashed through new lows last month, tills buzzed late into the night in the mega-malls that surround Moscow's ring road as Muscovites rushed to buy Ikea sofas, new cars and washing machines. Russian state television,

attempting to put a cheerful spin on the ruble's collapse, reported the panic buying as a "consumer boom."

Of course, the rush by Russians rush to spend their rapidly devaluing rubles is anything but a boom, and the buzz of tills is the sound of history repeating. Ordinary Russians are deploying survival skills learned during previous devaluations, in 1992, 1998 and 2008. Lesson number one is convert your rubles into anything hard and tangible, such as foreign currency or a new refrigerator. "Everyone knows the drill—it's pretty much the same for housewives as for bankers," jokes one Western financier who has spent much of the past 20 years riding Russia's roller-coaster economy. "Dump your currency, then settle in to wait out the storm."

This time round, though, Russia's economic meltdown isn't just Russia's problem. Thanks to 15 years of rising oil prices, Russia has become more economically integrated with the rest of the world than at any time in the past century. That means that when Russian consumers' spending power goes off a cliff thanks to the ruble's more than 50 percent decline, the pain is going to be felt by Western retailers. Western banks, too, are nervous that the $610 billion of loans that they made to Russian companies and banks while the good times rolled are not going to be paid back. And a ring of former Soviet colonies in Central Asia and the Caucasus, whose economies are dependent on the remittances of an estimated 7 million of their citizens who work as guest workers in Russia, are worried that the trickle-down will soon dry up. Last but not least, the threat of Russian businesses defaulting on their debt is spreading across emerging markets such as Turkey and India, which should, in theory, be benefiting from lower oil prices as investment funds race to safe havens like the dollar. According to Bloomberg, investment titan Pimco's $3.3 billion Emerging Markets Fund lost nearly 8 percent of its value last month.

Worse, this is a problem that isn't likely to be solved by something as simple as a rise in oil prices. Oil's dive from $110 to less than $60 a barrel over the past year isn't Vladimir Putin's fault—but his decisions to annex Crimea in February and support trigger-happy rebels in eastern Ukraine have made a crisis into a disaster.

U.S. and European Union sanctions introduced after the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 by Russian-backed rebels have effectively made it impossible for Russian companies and banks to borrow on international markets. That poisons Russia's economy at the root. Sanctions mean Russia's Central Bank is the only place Russian businesses can buy dollars and euros—whether it's to pay off debts to foreign creditors or to give nervous bank depositors cash euros. And the Central Bank is fast running out of hard currency, raising the specter of a complete implosion of all of Russia's banking sector.

Russian police officers detain protesters who were going planning on asking Vladimir Putin their own questions at a news conference in Moscow, Russia, Dec. 18, 2014. Credit: Alexander Zemlianichenko/AP

"The situation is critical," warned Sergey Shvetsov, deputy head of Russia's Central Bank—one of the few Russian officials who has dared to speak plainly and publicly about the crisis. "What is happening is a nightmare that we could not even have imagined a year ago." Evgeny Gavrilenkov, chief economist at the investment banking arm of Sberbank, Russia's biggest bank, warned of a "full-scale banking crisis." Over recent months, the Russian government has tried increasingly desperate measures to prop up confidence, from burning through an estimated $100 billion of the country's hard currency reserves on buying up rubles to hiking interest rates from 10 to 17 percent in the middle of the night on December 15. And yet the ruble's slide has only accelerated. The Central Bank's latest gambit to fend off disaster has been to change the rules on how Russian banks calculate their assets, allowing them to value their balance sheets at pre-crisis levels. "This is Potemkin arithmetic," says a senior analyst at a Russian bank, which is busy taking advantage of the new loophole. "It isn't going to fool the markets for long." The Kremlin has made things worse by choosing to bail out Putin cronies, regardless of the consequences for the economy. In mid-December, Putin ordered the Central Bank to issue $10 billion in bonds to bail out the state-owned Rosneft oil company, run by his longtime KGB colleague and former deputy Kremlin chief of staff Igor Sechin. Though the company denied it, Moscow financiers suspect Rosneft immediately used the money to buy hard currency, causing the ruble to tumble hard.

As of press time, the ruble had fallen nearly 50 percent against the dollar in 2014. Russia's gross domestic product has shrunk to $1.1 trillion, smaller than the economy of Texas and half the size of Italy's. The effect has been to double the external debt of Russia's companies to at least 70 percent of GDP, which makes rating agencies extremely nervous. According to Standard Bank's head analyst, Tim

Ash, “A Russian downgrade to junk is only a matter of time.”

U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said in mid-December the Russian economic crisis should have little impact on the U.S. economy, since trade and financial links are relatively small. But other nations are not so immune.

Fears of a Russian default have already hit the shares of Austria’s Raiffeisen bank, which has lent 240 percent of its tangible equity to Russian companies and individuals. France’s Société Générale, Russia’s biggest external lender, has $30 billion of exposure to Russia, or 62 percent of its equity.

After Russia’s panic-driven shopping boom exhausts itself, retailers are facing a major downturn—which will be passed on to suppliers around the world. Last month BNS Group—which sells Calvin Klein, Armani Jeans, Michael Kors and TopShop in Russia—halted new orders for most of its brands. Russia’s biggest European trading partner, Germany, in 2013 exported $46 billion of goods, from cars and heavy machinery to electronics and food, involving 10 percent of all German manufacturers. “No one can tell exactly how bad it is going to get,” says Rolf Witte, an industrial analyst at Germany’s Deutsche Bank. “But the question is whether the collapse of the Russian market is going to derail Germany’s economic growth.” China exports a similar amount to Russia—and Japan’s electronics sector and Brazil’s meat packing industry also stand to lose heavily.

Tourism, from Turkey to Thailand, will be hit too. Since the summer, five out of six of Russia’s top travel agents have gone bankrupt as the ruble cost of foreign holidays soars. Nearly 4.5 million Russians visited Turkey in 2013—accounting for 12 percent of all its visitors—a number that is set to dive. Resorts like Antalya’s 900-room Kremlin Palace Hotel, which boasts a life-size copy of St. Basil’s Cathedral and a disco in the shape of the Kremlin’s Senate

Palace—are bracing for a severe downturn. “We are deeply linked with Russia’s economy,” says the Kremlin Palace’s marketing director, Turker Morova. “The fall of the ruble is going to have a bad impact on our tourism industry.” In London, where wealthy Russians this year made up over 20 percent of buyers of property worth over £10 million between April and October, real estate agents are also braced for a downturn. Christie’s International Real Estate reports that this year has already seen a 70 percent drop in the number of Russians buying London homes in the under £5 million range.

Fortunately for Europe, no single exporter is so heavily exposed to Russia that it faces immediate ruin. The same cannot be said of the nations of the former Soviet Union, which are heavily dependent on the money sent back from their citizens working in Russia. Tajikistan—one of the poorest countries in the world—is dependent on remittances for 42 percent of its GDP, according to the World Bank. The majority of that money comes from Russia and has resulted from a decade-long building boom. Kyrgyzstan is in the same boat, with 31 percent of its income from remittances, as are Moldova with 25 percent and even gas-rich Uzbekistan with 12 percent. With the exception of Moldova (which is trying to join the European Union), all those Central Asian nations are governed by fragile dictatorships that will be shaken by the onslaught of falling remittances.

“They say a rising tide floats all boats,” says a former U.S. ambassador to Central Asia, now an energy consultant, not authorized to speak on the record. “Now we’re seeing the falling tide. And it’s the leakiest boats that go aground first. … We could be seeing a wave of political unrest in Central Asia for the first time in a generation.”

Whether it’s scuppering Europe’s fragile economic recovery or fomenting revolution in Russia’s backyard, the quadruple whammy of falling oil prices, a failure to diversify

Russia’s economy, rampant corruption and crippling Western sanctions is spreading fast beyond Russia’s borders in unpredictable ways.

Brendan Smialowski/Getty

THE FED'S SPECIAL COOKIE JAR

HOW THE NEW YORK FEDERAL RESERVE BENT THE RULES TO KEEP CITIBANK AFLOAT.

In spring 2009, a bank examiner inside the Federal Reserve Bank of New York called colleagues with worrisome news: Yet another crisis was brewing for Citigroup, the global banking giant that despite taking more than $476 billion in bailout cash and guarantees, the most of any rescued bank, was near collapse.

That financially tumultuous spring, Citigroup wasn't just another casualty in the fallout of the 2007–2008 mortgage meltdown. With around $1.9 trillion in assets, it was so woven into the fabric of American and global financial life, and so infested with soured mortgage-related loans and derivatives, that Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke had six months earlier deemed the behemoth too big to fail, later telling a government bailout inspector that it was "not even a close call to assist them."

Now the problem, the New York Fed bank examiner told colleagues, was that another regulator, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, planned to lower a critical rating it held on the precarious financial health of Citibank, the main banking subsidiary of Citigroup.

Lowering the rating, then-FDIC Chair Sheila Bair wrote in her 2012 book Bull by the Horns, would have delivered a gunshot to Citibank by putting it on the FDIC's very public list of problem bank assets. (While the list does not name banks, assets as large as Citibank's would have been easily identifiable.)

It would also have done something else previously unreported, former New York Fed sources tell Newsweek. It would have forced the New York Fed to restrict Citi's ability to take part in the routine money shuffle banks need for basic operations: temporarily overdrawing their Federal Reserve accounts each day by hundreds of billions of dollars as payments from around the globe clear at different hours, then topping off the accounts by day's end.

Amid the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression, not being able to participate in that money shuffle, known as "daylight overdraft credit," would have sent Citibank scrambling to the Fed's beggar's window, a facility known as the "discount window." Even in ordinary times, banks don't like using that alternative because it signals to investors and trading partners that a bank is in

trouble. In a crisis, it can easily send a troubled bank's investors, shareholders and trading partners running.

Citibank, long a bellwether stock, never showed up on the FDIC's "problem bank assets" list—on May 26, 2009, Bair wrote, she got a call from Bernanke "asking that the FDIC not downgrade." But downgrade or not, Citigroup had a liquidity problem on the horizon, and the quality of their assets was questionable, according to the two former New York Fed sources. So in mid-2009, these two sources say, the New York Fed quietly made an unusual, previously unreported deal with Citigroup.

The New York Fed would allow Citibank to continue to overdraw that all-important "daylight overdraft" account, although at reduced levels. In a companion, also atypical move, the New York Fed forced Citigroup to park some $30 billion in collateral, consisting of Treasury bills and soured derivatives whose value Fed officials discounted, in a Federal Reserve account as insurance that the bank would eventually square things in its overdraft account. The move was risky, one of the Fed sources adds: "If word got out on this, Citibank's counterparties might flee, squeezing the entity further with liquidity pressure."

Through the behind-the-scenes maneuver, the New York Fed gained something as well, one of the former officers says: a failing bank that looked better than it was and thus a regulator that appeared in control of the crisis.

The conventional wisdom about the New York Fed, which oversees Wall Street banks, is that the 2008 crisis cast a harsh light on how often the agency is in bed with the banks it oversees, a money-world condition known as "regulatory capture." The fresh part of that phenomenon, underscored by the previously unreported solution the New York Fed devised for Citigroup, is that the Fed had an interest not just in making the banks it regulates look good but in making itself look good. With Citigroup, one of the former New York Fed sources said, "People were going to

say, ‘Why didn’t you uncover this earlier?’ It’s an admission of failure.” Added the second source: “We’re the ones who are supposed to know the real-world impact, and it looked like we didn’t.”

“Citi was in much more serious trouble than people outside” both the bank and the New York Fed knew, “and the Fed wanted to keep that out of the public eye,” says Janet Tavakoli, a derivatives expert based in Chicago. “It needed to say that Citi, and the banking system, were healthier than they really were, so that their authority to regulate them didn’t get stripped away.”

It’s not known whether the New York Fed allowed similar breaks for other troubled banks, or when Citi’s unusual collateral arrangement ended. Asked about the issue, Andrea Priest, a spokeswoman for the New York Fed, wrote in an email, “Sorry, we don’t comment on confidential supervisory information.”

Told of the overdraft privilege, Nancy Bush, a bank analyst, tells Newsweek, “I would think that this is an indication that things were way worse than even we knew.”

Asked about the special arrangement, Mark Costiglio, a Citigroup spokesman, declined to comment.

The backdoor deal appears to have helped keep Citigroup, now America’s third-largest bank in terms of assets, out of the grave. Since the mortgage meltdown, it has managed to grow earnings and shed some toxic assets even though it continues to struggle with probes into its role in manipulating foreign currencies. But Citigroup has also ramped up its dealings in derivatives, a complex, risky bet that fueled the credit crisis during the 2008 collapse; the company had some $62 trillion in such contracts as of end-June 2014, up from $37 trillion in June 2009, according to data from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, another regulator.

The Federal Reserve is under increasing scrutiny from whistle-blowers, critics and Congress over assertions that its cozy ties with Wall Street, particularly at the all-important New York branch, prevent it from regulating big banks and stifle debate and dissent. Seven years after the crisis began, that culture hasn't changed, say former Fed officers and some critics of the institution. The New York branch "is arrogant to the point of a lack of self-awareness," says one of the former senior officers, who is now back on Wall Street.

The main Federal Reserve, to which the branch nominally answers, can appear to be on a different planet. Bernanke was not aware that his all-important New York branch had downgraded Citigroup's CAMELS Rating when he asked Bair not to do the same, Bair said. (The Fed rating is not as significant to a bank's operations as the FDIC rating.) To this day, argues Lou Crandall, chief economist at Wrightson ICAP LLC, an advisory firm in Jersey City, New Jersey, the New York Fed "culture is to make banks safe, which means you may not have an enforcement culture."

This can also lead to inconsistency. The first former New York Fed officer said that the unusual collateral arrangement risked creating "the appearance that we were not applying special arrangements equally across the board." After all, the Fed had allowed Lehman Brothers to go bankrupt just eight months earlier. "Lehman just wasn't a good member of the old boys club," the source says.

By all accounts, the New York Fed was deeply worried about Citigroup. The rating at issue in May 2009, CAMELS —which stands for Capital adequacy, Asset quality, Management, Earnings, and Liquidity and a bank's Sensitivity to market risk—is perhaps the single most important factor in driving the capital banks access. A "1" means solid, while a "5" means you're about to go belly up, if not already being scooped out of the tank. Bair wanted to downgrade Citibank from a less-than-satisfactory 3 to a

'yikes' 4, the New York Fed bank examiner told colleagues, according to the two sources.

Around the time of the examiner's May 2009 conversation with colleagues, the Fed said publicly that Citigroup could potentially lose as much as $104.7 billion by 2010, a sum that would nearly wipe out the amount of assets Citigroup held against losses, a key metric known as tier-one capital. Only six months earlier, in November 2008, the Fed, through the New York branch, had guaranteed $301 billion of Citigroup's troubled assets, a move that suggested people at the highest levels of the New York Fed (and by extension the Federal Reserve) grasped how bad Citigroup's problems were.

Only they didn't. Worse, the Fed wasn't even aware that it didn't know, according to the two former senior New York Fed officers, who were in different departments but each close to the issue. The branch, the two former officers say, was "very unaware of the extreme degradation" of certain Citi assets the Fed had guaranteed six months earlier, complex derivatives backed by soured mortgages known as a collateralized debt obligations.

Even as New York Fed staffers dubbed Citi "Shitty," according to one of the former New York Fed officers, the competency and credibility of the New York Fed's handling of Citigroup was already under question. Take a little-noticed critique of the branch, buried in the 2011 Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission report, a 633-page autopsy of the crisis, by its peers in Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and elsewhere. The critique, a December 2009 "Operations Review Report" of the New York Fed's Bank Supervision Group, focused on the group's supervision of Citigroup over 2004 through 2008, when the bank was building up massive positions in risky mortgage-backed assets that would soon tank. The report trashed the New York Fed, saying the supervision group for Citigroup had been "less than effective"—the same finding of a similar review in May

2005. “The team has not been proactive in making changes to the regulatory ratings of the firm,” the 2009 report said, adding that Citigroup examiners “lacked the appropriate level of focus on” Citigroup’s “risk oversight and internal audit functions.”

Peter Wallison, a financial policy expert at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, argues that because the Federal Reserve is both a regulator of Wall Street banks (through the New York branch) and a conductor of monetary policy (funneled through the New York branch), it has an incentive to make those regulated banks appear solid, even when they’re not. Letting outsiders know that a special cookie jar was needed to keep Citigroup alive could have sent destabilizing signals to the market.

Why should people care now? Because Citigroup is still trying to get rid of hundreds of billions of dollars in toxic assets, in large part through a planned initial public offering of OneMain Financial Holdings Inc., a core piece of the “bad bank” Citigroup set up in early 2009 to house what was initially a whopping $875 billion in sketchy consumer loans.

The New York Fed “wants to continue to have the banks look profitable because that is something they as regulators got some psychic reward for,” Wallison says. “Their main incentive is to ensure the economy is growing—even if the banks are making that happen in a dangerous way.”

Word Lens

MOTHERLESS TONGUE

FORMERLY SPOTTY TRANSLATION SERVICES ARE BECOMING BULLETPROOF WITH BETTER TECHNOLOGY.

Kunal Sarda remembers the first time a foreign language proved a crucial barrier. “I was traveling in France a few years ago, and I found myself caught in the back of a taxi at 2 in the morning without my wallet, trying to explain to the taxi driver what had happened but unable to do so,” recalls the 32-year-old entrepreneur. “My partner had a similar story; he was caught in China, really sick, and he could not explain to the pharmacist what medications he needed.

He could actually see the medicine over the pharmacist's shoulder."

Those frustrations led Sarda and his partner, Ryan Frankel, to found VerbalizeIt, a company that instantly pairs international travelers with live translators via phone call or video chat. In 2012, a few months after forming, the New York startup gained a national audience when Sarda and Frankel appeared on Shark Tank and secured an investment deal with the show's resident curmudgeon, Kevin O'Leary. (Sarda says that once the cameras stopped rolling on Shark Tank, they chose to decline O'Leary's deal due to terms in the contract they found overly restrictive.)

VerbalizeIt is just one of many new language-interpretation services to recently secure a foothold in the United States's $37 billion translation industry. The company (and other person-to-person services) share the space with automatic translation software (or statistical machine programming); person-to-person is most favored for business users due to its lower margin of error, and because individual interpreters can offer guidance on any conversational idioms and street directions that could prove tricky if misinterpreted. (VerbalizeIt takes this one step further by regularly quizzing its translators on geography.) Automatic apps and programs, with their less fluid but usually coherent results and broader vocabulary, are the most popular option for leisure travelers; Google Translate and iTranslate are the leaders in this field, not least because they are free and include voice-recognition options.

Machine translation is not a new endeavor—Google offered its first translation service, of eight languages to and from English, in 2001. Accuracy was poor and remained so for many years. However, Google Translate has improved dramatically in the past few years and currently supports 80 languages, from Afrikaans to Zulu. This is due to the slow-build nature of statistical databases, which provide the

most common translation option for inputted words, explains Google Communications Manager Roya Soleimani.

"We use millions of documents that exist on the Web and translations of those documents. So, for example, the word dog appears hundreds of thousands of times and, in a translation of those same documents, the word is perro [in Spanish]," says Soleimani. "Over time, the translate functionality has improved so much because it's feeding more information into the machine, and it's learning as we go."

Microsoft and Google both announced recently that they're a few years from developing universal, real-time translation software; Microsoft partnered with Skype and demoed an interpretive language software in October that greatly improved the lag time of its Microsoft Translator predecessor. Google is even more advanced in the realm of simultaneous translation, and spurred on the discussion last fall when it acquired the popular app Word Lens. The program, which was called "mind-blowing" by the weblog Lifehacker when it debuted in 2010, allows users to train their smartphone camera on foreign text and see real-time translation via text replacement on their screen. Word Lens is a streamlined advancement on Google's current camera translation feature for Android, which allows users to take a cameraphone photo of text and highlight words for translation. The company is planning to integrate Word Lens and Google Translate next year.

Translation services are now dependable travel tools for many, instead of the sometimes-accurate, sometimes-not Web contrivances they were a decade ago. In large part, this is due simply to the large number of resources committed to making translation work. VerbalizeIt, for example, employs 21,000 interpreters/translators around the world who collectively speak 150 languages, and Google processes over 1 billion translations a day. Such globalization also means new employment nationally; the Bureau of Labor

Statistics projected 46 percent job growth for translators and interpreters by 2022.

Soleimani said that the life benefits of such translation services are both immediate and more experiential. “If you’re traveling and have a peanut allergy, and for you it’s life or death, you can ask your waitress if your dish has peanuts,” she said. She added that these new developments also promote “the ability to keep yourself engaged [abroad], to interact with the local community, to get more immersed. It’s a very exciting time.”

Tim Shaffer/Reuters

FREEZING PEOPLE AFTER HEART ATTACKS COULD SAVE LIVES

DOCTORS ARE HARNESSING PROFOUND HYPOTHERMIA (PUSHING BODY TEMPERATURES TO AS LOW AS 50 DEGREES) TO SAVE LIVES.

Chris Brooks was a healthy 22-year-old, working part time in construction and finishing up his last year in college. One evening, he went out bowling with friends, returned home to his parents' house in Middletown Township, Pennsylvania, and lay down on the couch to sleep. Then

his parents noticed something strange: He appeared to have stopped breathing.

His mother shook him. No response. She panicked and called 911, but by the time the paramedics arrived, Brooks's heart hadn't been beating for nearly 15 minutes. He was in cardiac arrest. The paramedics were able to resuscitate Brooks by administering an electric shock to the heart, getting him to breathe again, but he wasn't yet in the clear.

Typically, a person who goes over five minutes without heartbeat, blood flow or oxygen is in serious danger of permanent brain damage. Less than 10 percent of those who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survive, because it usually takes much longer than five minutes to get such people from their home to the help they need. And among those who survive, about 1 in 10 will have severe brain damage.

To reduce the damage to his brain and organs, Brooks was rushed to the University of Pennsylvania, where Dr. Lance Becker and his team cooled the young man's core temperature to below 90 degrees Fahrenheit—a process called "induced hypothermia." This is often done to cardiac arrest patients, either by injecting them with a cold saline solution or placing ice packs on them to increase their chances of complete recovery.

The dose of cold saved his life. Brooks had no brain damage, a remarkable feat that has led doctors to explore more ways to use induced hypothermia in emergency settings.

Now Dr. Sam Tisherman and his team at the University of Maryland, in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, plan to put 10 patients into a more severe form of hypothermia than what Brooks got, something known as "suspended animation." They'll flush their bodies with a cold fluid, cooling (and therefore preserving) tissue. The experimental trial, known as emergency preservation and resuscitation for cardiac arrest from trauma (EPR-CAT), is

funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, and it is the first time doctors are harnessing profound hypothermia (pushing body temperatures to as low as 50 degrees) to save lives.

"[When] people think of [suspended animation], they think about space travelers being frozen and woken up on Jupiter, or Han Solo in Star Wars," Tisherman, a professor of surgery at the University of Maryland, recently told the BBC. "That doesn't help, because it's important for the public to know it's not science fiction—it's based on experimental work and is being studied in a disciplined manner, before we use it to stop people dying."

Slowing Death's Spiral

Cooling your body down even just one or two degrees from its normal core temperature of 97.5 to 99 degrees will make you shiver relentlessly; once you're down to 90 degrees or lower, you will begin to experience sluggishness, apathy and mental impairment. Then it's only a few hours before your organs fail and you freeze to death.

But hypothermia—when your core body temperature drops so low that normal metabolism and bodily functions cease—is something of a medical contradiction. Though it can lead to death, it can also slow down the dying process. It all depends on timing.

The remarkable case of Anna Bågenholm shows how dangerous—and protective—extreme cold can be. In 1999, the 29-year-old Swedish radiologist was skiing in Norway when she fell into a frozen stream, becoming trapped headfirst under a 7-inch layer of ice. After 40 minutes, she suffered circulatory arrest; she wasn't pulled out until over an hour after falling in. Yet the severe cold had cooled down her brain and body to a core temperature of 56.7 degrees, and after being rescued and revived, she woke up without any brain damage and recovered completely after a few months.

"We know that if you've been under warm water for three to four minutes, you're basically unsalvageable," says Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht, a physiologist at the University of Manitoba in Canada. "But if you've fallen and slipped underneath the ice, you may survive 30 to 40 minutes of drowning. Given that the oxygen supply to the brain has stopped, a colder brain can survive a longer period of anoxia."

Death is not like falling off the edge of a cliff. It's a much more gradual process, involving something akin to a chain reaction within the cells. "There are pathways that lead the cell toward death, and we know that when a person gets in critical condition, many of those pathways are activated," says Becker. "So the cells begin to spiral toward death. [But] cooling slows down that death spiral."

With hypothermia, that period of time in between life and death might more accurately be called a "hibernation-like state," or temporary death, Becker explains.

There are stories of young children surviving for several hours in the freezing cold after entering a hibernation-like state spurred by hypothermia. Erika Nordby, "Canada's miracle child," was revived after spending two hours without a heartbeat in the snow, her core body temperature reaching 61 degrees. And there's Bågenholm, who also lived to tell her chilling tale. These cases give hope to doctors who aim to use hypothermia in a controlled, clinical setting.

An Ice Pack to the Groin

Therapeutic hypothermia dates as far back as the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800s, when a surgeon working with troops observed that wounded soldiers who were warmer and closer to the fire fared worse than his patients out in the cold.

Led by hypothermia pioneer Dr. Peter Safar, doctors began applying hypothermia experimentally in the ER during the 1950s and 1960s, using it to reduce tissue injury

and brain damage from lack of blood flow, particularly in cardiac arrest and stroke patients. They found that by decreasing the brain's demand for oxygen, hypothermia lessened the production of neurotransmitters, slowed down brain activity and reduced the amount of free radicals that might damage the brain. Icing the whole body down for about 24 hours protected other organs too, including the kidneys and liver. "Mild cooling… by even two or three degrees could make much of a difference" in saving someone's life, Becker says, and doing the opposite—warming someone up—made the person less likely to survive.

The current standard of care after cardiac arrest involves cooling the patient to "mild hypothermia" at 90 to 93 degrees for 12 to 24 hours. After suffering cardiac arrest, a patient is given cardiopulmonary resuscitation to get the heart beating again; in the emergency room, doctors then use cooling blankets, wet towels and ice packs placed on the groin or neck to induce mild hypothermia. This is what saved Chris Brooks.

A similar mechanism may have preserved former Buffalo Bills tight end Kevin Everett's ability to walk. During a 2007 game, he suffered a life-threatening spinal cord injury that left him temporarily paralyzed. Doctors used cold therapy to reduce inflammation and damage, which may have been critical in protecting his nervous system after the trauma. Today, he is walking again.

Drain the Blood

EPR-CAT is a far more risky and experimental procedure than the standard cooling. In the University of Pittsburgh trial, doctors plan to push the temperatures of patients as low as 50 to 59 degrees—much lower than anything tried in the past. They'll do it by flushing the patients' blood with an ice-cold saline solution. This, Tisherman says, "has not yet been done in humans."

Tisherman hypothesizes that flooding the blood of trauma patients with extremely cold fluid will allow them to "tolerate not having [blood] flow while the surgeon tries to find and control the bleeding" after a gunshot wound or other form of traumatic blood loss. Unlike cardiac arrest from heart disease cases, people whose hearts stop due to trauma and blood loss cannot be resuscitated simply by CPR, which is why such cold temperatures are being used. During EPR-CAT, doctors place a large tube into the aorta and flush cold saline, a salty fluid, through the body. Afterward, a heart-lung bypass machine would be used to revive blood circulation and oxygenation.

The method has been attempted on animals. A 2006 study examined the impact of "deep" (59 degrees), "profound" (50 degrees) and "ultra-profound" (41 degrees) hypothermia in pigs with uncontrolled bleeding wounds and found that the animals that underwent profound hypothermia had the highest survival rates. In 2000, researchers flushed the arteries of dogs in cardiac arrest with ice-cold saline, finding that it improved their chances of survival with no brain damage.

But, as with any new human experimental treatment, there are concerns. Doctors know that if not implemented properly, hypothermia may reduce the blood's ability to clot (certain drugs will be needed to maintain blood clotting). And it's possible that even after inducing profound hypothermia, the patient will be resuscitated but have brain damage.

"The trick would be the implementation," Becker says. "Draining the blood out and rapidly cooling a person to a deep level—we try to do it every day, and it's just doggone hard to do.… But I would say it's very likely that the idea is correct."

If successful, the trial could revolutionize resuscitation research. "Right now, with our current resuscitation strategies for cardiac arrest, less than 1 in 10 survive,"

Tisherman says. “If we can bring that up to 15 percent or 20 percent, that would potentially be a game-changer.”

Bart Ah You/Modesto Bee/ZUMA

WORKING 9 TO 5, PAST 9...

GET READY FOR HORIZONTAL WORK, IN WHICH YOU DO MANY JOBS OVER THE COURSE OF A DAY.

Doing one job at a time is about to become as quaint as having one phone in the house. In your new career, you'll get to have many different jobs every day.

We're seeing the dawn of the era of horizontal work, an amalgam of jobs that cut across our lives. Other terms being thrown around are "invisible work" and "micro-entrepreneurship." However you label it, technology is

allowing people to earn money from all their different assets and skills at the same time.

Millennials seem drawn to such a lifestyle. It can lead to a blending of work and other facets of life that one organization, Live in the Grey, promotes as giving us “more purpose, more meaning, more fun.”

Either that or it will grind us into dust, because we can’t find a relaxing few minutes to just sit on the couch drinking beer and repeatedly watching Lauren Graham’s scenes in Bad Santa. Not that I know anyone who does that.

A startup called Recruitifi helps illustrate how technology is facilitating horizontal professionals. The core purpose of Recruitifi is to create an Uber-ish platform for the recruiting universe. Today, when a big company wants to hire an executive, it will usually turn to a headhunting firm, which in turn draws from the candidates it knows. Recruitifi’s technology pools all kinds of headhunters on one side, and all kinds of corporate clients on the other, much the way Uber pools drivers on one side and riders on the other, with a clever app in between. In theory, Recruitifi should let headhunters get to see vastly more job openings than they can try to fill, and companies see candidates from a vastly larger pool of recruiters.

But there is an intriguing by-product to Recruitifi: Anyone can become a recruiter, much as Uber lets anyone become a taxi driver or Airbnb lets anyone become a hotelier. “There is really no barrier to entry,” CEO Brin McCagg says. So let’s say you’re a successful and well-connected breakfast cereal marketing manager. You probably know a whole lot of good breakfast cereal marketing managers. You could set up an account on Recruitifi, keep an eye on the demand for breakfast cereal marketers and propose candidates for openings. If your candidate gets hired, you get paid like a real recruiter. Now you have a new line of work that’s really just monetizing an asset—your network—that had been sitting idle.

To some extent, eBay started this in the late 1990s when it created a platform that let people sell another kind of idle asset: the crap lying around in their houses. Etsy developed a way to let you sell a skill you may not get to use in your 9 to 5 job, like your ability to make a smokin' rubber catsuit. Airbnb is a way to monetize the extra room in your house. Airbnb says that in New York alone it supports 4,580 "jobs," most of them very part time. Those hosts make an average $7,530 a year renting out space.

The new wave of Recruitifi-ish services takes all that to a more professional level. DigitalOcean, for instance, is making it easy and cheap for an individual to build a smartphone app and set it up as a stand-alone business. It's so easy you could do it as a hobby, instead of painting toy soldiers. Quirky, backed in part by General Electric, lets anyone submit an idea for an invention. If the idea gets chosen by Quirky's community, Quirky manufactures and sells the product and pays a percentage to the inventor. One artist has been paid more than $400,000 for coming up with a new, cool type of extension cord.

Big companies will increasingly crowdsource the kinds of work they never used to let anyone outside their walls touch. Last year, GE opened up a public contest it called the Bracket Challenge. The jet engine division needed a new lightweight design for brackets that would help hold an engine on an airplane. (So it's kind of an important part.) About 700 people from all over the world submitted designs. GE chose a design by M Arie Kurniawan, who works at a two-person engineering shop in Indonesia. Kurniawan won $7,000, and GE got a part that's 84 percent lighter than its predecessor.

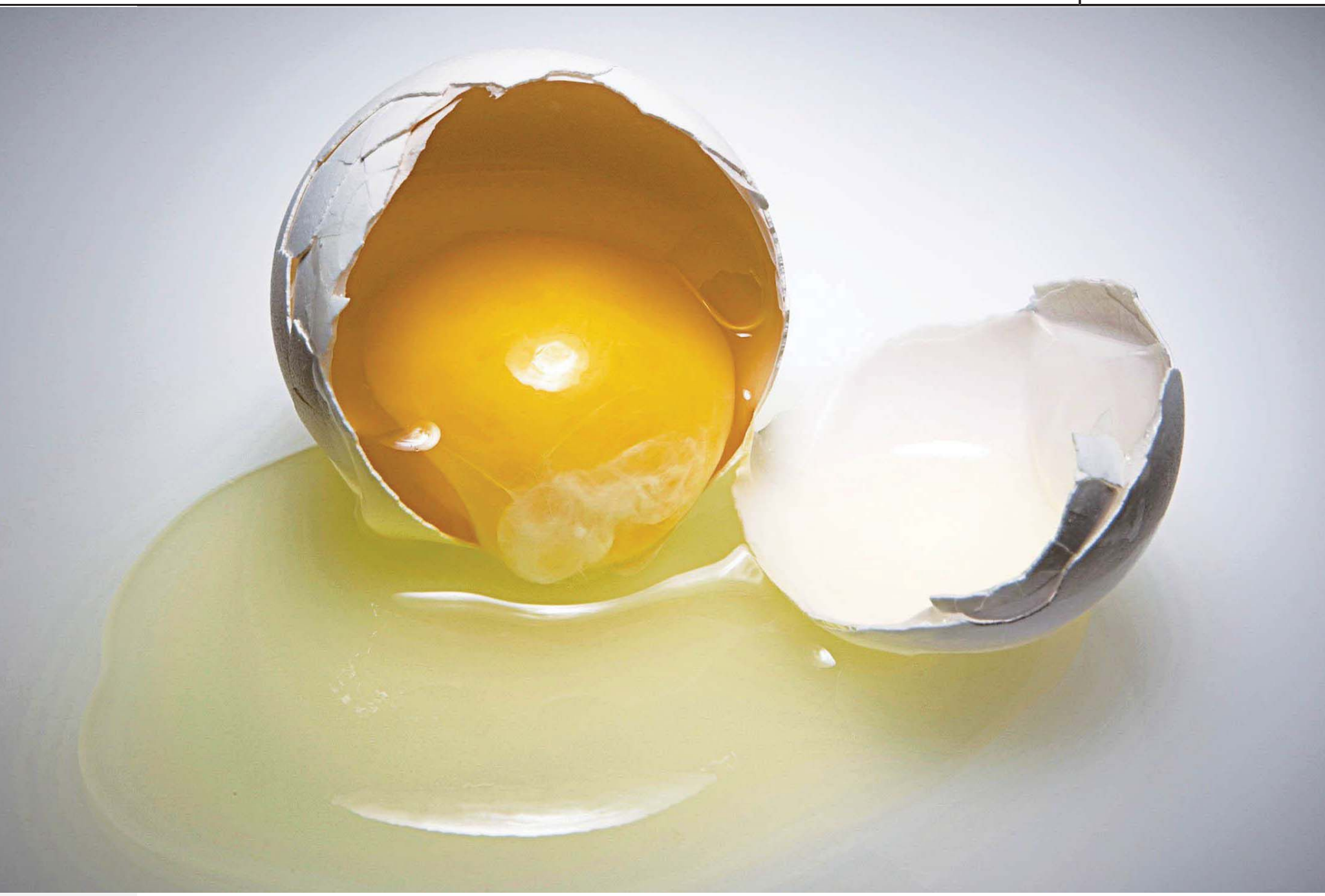
As more technologies help more people do this kind of work, you can see where it will lead: If you have a full-time job, you might spin off your professional assets by recruiting a bit, inventing some stuff, building an app and doing work posted by corporations, all while selling personal assets like

rides in your car or a bed in your house. Live in the Grey asks why anyone would want a single job that eats up 40 hours a week. Better to piece together work and passions in a way that makes you enough money and offers a more balanced life.

On the other hand, this is not how Western society has operated for the past 100 years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics misses this kind of work when it measures employment and wages, so the government understands the micro-labor market as well as JWoww grasps the physics in Interstellar. Inbred patterns like the morning commute and standard school day clash with horizontal work schedules. This could be an adjustment as jarring as last century's shift from agricultural work to office work.

Studies by author Erik Brynjolfsson and others predict that technology such as artificial intelligence will destroy many of today's professional, knowledge-worker jobs. But these other technology platforms—Recruitifi, Etsy, crowdsourced invention contests—will create vast numbers of micro-jobs. The idea of a job is changing into something more like a market for whatever you can do.

Double bonus if you can find me a way to cash in on extraordinarily detailed knowledge of Bad Santa.



James Burger/Getty

THE EGG-FREE EGG

WORLD-CLASS CHEFS WORK TO MAKE THE FIRST EGGLESS EGG THAT YOU CAN FRY.

Chris Jones remembers well the meals he made for himself in the earliest days of his cooking career as a poor journeyman apprentice, long before he achieved any fame as a contestant on Top Chef: ramen soup with an egg on top, washed down with a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon. While the ramen and PBR still fit harmoniously with Jones's life today working for a San Francisco–based startup, the egg doesn't. As the director of culinary innovation at Hampton Creek Foods, Jones is one of about 70 employees working for a

company whose mission is no less than abolishing chicken eggs from the American diet.

It's not a wholly original idea. An egg replacement derived from chia seeds and garbanzo beans exists, as does another created from potato and tapioca starch. But Hampton Creek Foods has arguably attracted the most attention. Since its founding almost three years ago, the company has sought to reinvent popular foods such as mayonnaise and cookie dough that require the gelling, binding and emulsifying properties of eggs. It does this by substituting proteins extracted from plants for chicken eggs. Co-founders Josh Balk and Josh Tetrick came to their plant-based egg solution after extensive trials extracting and analyzing the proteins of over 4,000 different plants worldwide. They found about a dozen plants—the Canadian yellow pea was the best of them—that mimicked egg emulsion, without any of the environmental effects of the caged-chicken industry—fecal matter, dust and ammonia, to name some—or any of the high costs associated with the free-range chicken business. Investors, among them Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates, have put $30 million into the startup so far, , and the company recently announced an additional $90 million in venture capital funding from investors including Marc Benioff of Salesforce and Eduardo Saverin, co-founder of Facebook. Hampton Creek's current line of products—Just Mayo, Just Cookies and Just Cookie Dough—can now be found in stores like Whole Foods and Wal-Mart.

"The deep, deep why behind everything we're doing is this recognition that the food that we feed ourselves today is explicitly shitty for our body and for the planet," says Tetrick, a 34-year-old Alabama native who worked in Africa for seven years, including a stint with the United Nations Development Programme in Kenya. "Food that is better for the body and the world—what if it's more delicious and more affordable?"

At the core of Hampton Creek's philosophy is the belief that the environmental footprint of global egg production—the land, water, and fossil fuels required—is unsustainable. It takes about 39 calories of energy to farm one calorie's worth of egg protein. And in 2007, 59 million tons of eggs were produced, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, a number expected to dramatically increase by 2030. All that farming is rendering huge amounts of environmental damage: Excess nitrogen and phosphorous from chicken manure contaminate rivers, and ammonia ventilated from henhouses pollutes the soil.

Eggs are clearly bad for the health of the planet. As for our health, disagreement abounds over any association between eating eggs and heart disease, but egg yolks are high in cholesterol and can lead to buildup of carotid plaque in the arteries, especially if you already have high cholesterol or other heart health risks.

Hampton Creek's products might be cholesterol-free and safe for those with egg allergies, but what Tetrick is really after is a reimagination of the entirety of food production. If Hampton Creek can figure out how to replace eggs with the proteins of plants that don't use much land or water, are relatively inexpensive and could be grown by farmers around the globe, it might figure out a way to better feed the world's catastrophically increasing population.

Leading this effort is an elite lineup of trained chefs. Along with Jones, who left the restaurant world in 2012 for his job at Hampton Creek, there's pastry chef Ben Roche and Trevor Niekowal, the startup's two research-and-development chefs. All three used to work together at Moto, the Chicago restaurant once routinely featured on the Discovery Channel show Future Food. (Roche was a co-host with Moto owner Homaro Cantu.) In a former time, the three chefs, who are all in their early 30s and have more than 50 years of restaurant experience among them, lived for the Saturday night dinner shift, when recipes and dishes they

had perfected and prepared were given their final test: the plate of a hungry patron. Those days are gone, traded in for a 9-to-5 in which the goal is to create Just Scramble, a liquid scrambled egg made wholly from plant proteins and set for release in 2015.

The greatest moments of discovery for these chefs are often bittersweet; their optimism surrounding a startup poised to disrupt your morning plate of over-easy eggs wears thin when they realize how removed they are from your breakfast experience. “As a chef, a lot of things are instant gratification,” Jones says. “If you have a great service or a bad service, you know right away. In the lab, you’re working on a formula months on out, and you have to take the victories as they come.”

The present version of uncooked Just Scramble looks as if a person took an egg and whisked it up with a fork—a big victory, according to Roche, who says that at one point it had the viscosity of pancake batter. Now it’s more watery and cooks almost instantly when dropped into a sizzling skillet, just as a chicken egg would. “It’s definitely heading in a positive direction,” says Roche. “It cooks up more like an egg. It looks like an egg. It has a very similar mouth-feel to an egg.”

The experimentation goes down inside the spacious, garage-like kitchen-laboratory-office of Hampton Creek Foods, where Jones and his cooking compatriots are huddled over stoves and pans and seated beside bioengineers, food scientists and data analysts. “We’re that intuitive tool that these scientists need,” says Jones. “A lot of the times we’re answering the question ‘What works?’ as opposed to why it works.”

Indeed, while the bioengineers and food and data scientists are busy picking apart plants—the goal is to create a database of the more than 400,000 plants known to man for their potential applicability in food—analyzing proteins, and determining which have certain properties more amenable

to coagulation or emulsion, Hampton Creek's chefs have the grand task of figuring out how all of Hampton Creek's food products are functional and flavorful. In other words, they are responsible for figuring out if they've got a product your grandmother would put in her kitchen cabinet.

"I don't like when people think these innovative new food companies are making science-food or growing weird things in test tubes," Roche says. "We're making real food."

Hampton Creek's opponents beg to differ. Unilever, the $60 billion multinational food corporation behind Hellmann's mayonnaise, had filed a lawsuit against Hampton Creek Foods in U.S. federal court for, Unilever claimed, falsely advertising Just Mayo—whose label features an egg shooting up from a plant stalk—as, well, mayo. Unilever eventually dropped the suit, "so that Hampton Creek can address its label directly with industry groups and appropriate regulatory authorities," said Mike Faherty, vice president for foods of Unilever North America, in a statement.

Hampton Creek's efforts to replace eggs pit the company against a very powerful industry. They've already started to see some pushback: Late last year, for example, Buzzfeed reported that, in an effort to steer consumers away from egg replacements, the American Egg Board—a large egg marketing organization whose members are all egg producers—was purchasing advertisements that ran whenever someone performed a Google search for Hampton Creek products.

But Hampton Creek is focusing on the frying pan test at hand instead of possible courtroom battles. "People cook eggs thousands of different ways with different fats in the pans, with different heats, with different pans, with different style stoves," Niekowal says. "The true test is when we can have 50 people walk through and cook our egg off and it turns out perfectly."

It’s a tall order. An egg produced from plant proteins might gel, but if the gel doesn’t hold any water once it’s in the pan, the egg will evaporate the instant it touches the pan’s hot oils. Discovering complementary foods that react well with plant proteins to drive and mimic egg emulsion—something Jones, Roche and Niekowal are tight-lipped about—took six months. Niekowal recalls being overwhelmed leaving his post at Portland, Oregon’s Le Pigeon restaurant—a two-time James Beard Award recipient—taking his first step into Hampton Creek Foods, and being told to create an egg from a plant.

“Here you might have two weeks where you’re not hitting very well. Things are just not going well. Your experiments aren’t turning out the right way,” says Niekowal. “But you’re also not just serving 100 people. Instead of touching 120 people a night who are paying upward of $200 a head, we can do this for millions of people every single day of our lives.”

Dan Genis

CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM PRISON

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING, WHICH ISN'T EASY TO DO WHEN YOU'RE IN SOLITARY.

I wish I could have seen my wife's face when she opened the Christmas card I sent her in 2010. The previous year she had gotten my ponytail, and I knew I had to up the ante the following holiday, so I bought a card made by the local maestro. The cover depicted Santa Claus and his reindeer sleigh floating over the walls of a prison to bring inmates gifts. Opening it revealed the outcome: Some prisoners were

plundering his bag of presents, while others were assaulting the mythical figure adored by greedy children. Sexually.

I didn't witness her reaction to this desecration of Christmas because I was in prison. Despite considering myself generally nice, in 2003 I had done something unequivocally naughty. We had married only a few months before my arrest and kept the relationship alive until my release from prison in February of this year. The U.S. Postal Service played a large part in its survival. After the thousands I spent in postage while inside for 10 years, I never planned to mail another card. However, there is no other way to send season's greetings to friends still incarcerated, so I am still licking envelopes, but knowing the cards I send will seem wimpy compared with those made by convict artisans; Hallmark lacks anatomically correct depictions of Class A felonies in its stock of yuletide imagery.

Prisoners send out a lot of letters and gifts; I had never heard of Columbus Day cards before my sentence, but guilt-ridden felons grab any opportunity to remind a wife that she has a husband, and a child that he is her father. These artifacts are churned out by entrepreneurs for an eager, and completely captive, market. Christmas season turns every joint into a bustling hive of gift making and card drawing.

Not all the cards exchanged require stamps. There are plenty of convicts doing their time "hard"—no phone calls, no visits, no mail. Some burned their bridges, others never had any. But prisoners have a way of playing family for each other. Forgotten men, remembered only by their parole board every two years, with no money and little hope of receiving even coal in their stocking, are sometimes cheered by their fellow cons. The cards rarely display much taste or craft, but they are proof that even the worst of men can be good sometimes. I sometimes made a card for a prisoner whose family had long forgotten him, and we both felt like men and not numbers. Receiving was good as well

—the gifts I got from prisoners were markers of respect and friendship. I have kept every misspelled and childishly scrawled card given to me inside. The behemoth of a card that I got when I turned 30 was signed by 200 prisoners. They also spent too much of their money on pizza to hand out in my name; the organizer had robbed thousands of senior citizens in a Ponzi scheme, but spent a (jailhouse) fortune on me.

This card was given to the author by a fellow inmate. Credit: Dan Genis

Presents can mean so many things. My grandfather was anonymously gifted a bar of soap by his co-workers at his first job after immigrating to America. He had followed the Soviet custom of taking a weekly bath, so the gift was a suggestion that he change habits. It humiliated the old engineer greatly, but in prison, where everything is twice as extreme, gifts could be mortal insults. Cheese might be the worst, as it identifies the receiver as a rat. But a candy bar left on a bed can be bad too. It’s an invitation to a homosexual dalliance.

Transactions without compensation were not too common in prison. Nevertheless, the rule on unauthorized exchange forbade giving along with buying and selling. Presents from our keepers were infrequent. On the rare occasion that the authorities made a gesture, every convict in the prison I was in that year received a box of six green muffins two weeks after St. Patrick's Day. I was one of 2,500 men sickened by those muffins, but I will also never forget a cop who gave me few pounds of raw venison he had hunted, in gratitude for keeping my mouth shut about some tools he "borrowed."

The new world I had entered had rules and rituals that most of the men took for granted as being common knowledge but put me on a steep curve of learning crooked ways. Literature often helped me make sense of things; the memoir of my incarceration that I am writing for Penguin is titled 1,046 for the number of books I read while locked up. One of them was Dostoyevsky's The House of the Dead, an account of his imprisonment in Russia long ago. In one of Greenhaven Correctional Facility's cells, I experienced a moment of cognitive resonance: While I was reading about the protagonist describing a jailhouse artisan carving a chess set to sell to him in a Siberian labor camp, an inmate in the neighboring cell of mine was molding paper, ink and spit into a set to sell me.

There are many fields of operation for prison craftsmen. Soap carvers do busts, garishly painted. Popsicle sticks are ordered by the case, and miniature cars, homes and motorcycles are glued into shape. Leather workers make purses, bracelets, belts and book covers. Those with a sharp "pen game" write poetry for others, and surprisingly intricate objets d'art can be crafted out of shiny potato chip bags and soda cans. The portraitists use ink, coal or oil. In an odd tradition of unclear origin, men braid their ponytails tightly, cut them off and send the hair home. My wife used mine to dust.

The author was given this handmade weight belt by a murderer when he was in jail. Credit: Dan Genis

Shocking Pop-Ups

The most common product in the prison gift economy is the card. It can be mailed cheaply and personalized easily. Crafting individualized cards is the top of the trade: elaborate, folder-sized creations employing string, glitter, painted bits of dried pasta, photographic insets and psychedelic calligraphy. Pop-up features excite children, and pornographic depictions are for wives. They sell for as much as two packs of cigarettes. (Three packs is the rate for oral sex; one box of Newports—always Newports—is enough to get 30 milligrams of morphine.)

Over the years, I bought presents for my wife, mostly of a whimsical nature. I purchased a card drawn by an illiterate artisan, Meatball, of New York's Staten Island, who sported a swastika on one earlobe and SS bolts on the other. He could draw but not write, and made a card that the intended buyer refused because it was addressed "to my baby grill." I snapped it up, as well as a drawing of Adolf Hitler shirtless

and brimming with muscles. In turn, she spent $50 on a weightlifting belt made for me by a murderer named Mafia. Once his sister got the money through Western Union, Mafia inscribed the double-headed Imperial Romanov eagle into it and painted it. I used it for years, and it hangs on my wall to this day. Unfortunately, Mafia's sister never forwarded the money to him, but that wasn't my problem.

Suicide rates notoriously go up every Christmas. For two years I worked in a unit for the mentally ill, and was told to watch the men for signs of suicidal intentions. The regular population was at risk too; Christmas guilt is common. But it keeps the craftsmen busy. Convicts in competition for limited resources are usually wary of each other, but they suspend hostilities for the holidays. Tough guys see nothing odd about giving cards to each other. The picture of macho men, some covered in muscles, others in tattoos, and all followed by long criminal records, exchanging Christmas cards seems unlikely, but I witnessed it every Christmas. Friends who had murdered and robbed the innocent wrapped gifts for their friends, hugged and joked about the absence of mistletoe. I never really fit in until I experienced this unexpected warmth on a birthday. A friend of mine crammed a contraband candle into a cupcake, lit it illegally in a clinic waiting room and sang "Happy Birthday" for me. It was the first time I hadn't felt out of place in years.

Inmates create a Christmas lantern using mongo beans, paddy rice, corn and grass inside a city jail in Makati, Manila, Dec. 2009. Making lanterns, some of which are sold, is a tradition among prisoners during the Christmas holiday season. Credit: Romeo Ranoco/Reuters

Prison friendships have the potential to be as deep and intense as the relationships between veterans of war. The cops' boots that we lived under rankled, but also unified us. It's no accident that inmates call each other "brother." They may rob in the street, but they hug in the joint.

When I robbed people myself to pay for my heroin addiction, I rationalized away my guilt with moral relativism. Reading Nietzsche when I was too young to understand his context convinced me that there was no good and evil, right and wrong. Today I know this is not true, and this revelation came to me while I was serving my sentence. In prison, I encountered genuine evil, which is no Christmas story. But I also saw good. Over 10 Decembers, I witnessed many Christmas cards exchanged by convicted felons. I had my birthday celebrated with a contraband candle (they are banned because one can make key impressions in wax) and song. This friend had killed twice; after murdering

his girlfriend and doing 15 years for it, he stabbed his best friend and got 25. Death in prison was inevitable for him and he had taken two lives, but he risked solitary confinement and mockery to make my birthday special. Nietzsche was wrong to preach that good and evil are man-made concepts. Inexperienced in life, he just never got a card from a double murderer.

Convicts would like their families to forgive their absence and accept a substitute: a Christmas card with a pop-up Disney character or reproductive organ. It's often wishful thinking but keeps the artisans and local post offices in business. As a child, I awaited Christmas gifts with greed; as a youth I gave them strategically. In prison I saw the desperation with which gifts are sent, as well as more ominous reasons for giving them. Getting cheese is bad; finding a candy bar on your pillow might be worse.

But when I took those classes on identifying the signs of suicidal intentions, I learned about the worst gift of all. When a prisoner gives all of his possessions away, it's because he won't need them where he's going. A friendly patient in the unit for mentally ill prisoners I worked in presented me with all of his tapes and books; I accepted none of it and alerted the counselor immediately. When they stopped him he had already set up a noose. And Christmas was only a few days away.

Robert Viglasky/Drama Republic

MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL BOUNCES FROM FILM TO TV TO BROADWAY

THE OSCAR-NOMINATED ACTRESS STEPS ACROSS THE MINEFIELD OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS IN "HONOURABLE WOMAN."

Maggie Gyllenhaal isn’t much of a TV person. Not much lately, at least, she confesses. She names just one series, Olive Kitteridge, that she watched recently on HBO.

That’s OK. Neither am I. But I’ve made an exception —and so has she, in a sense—for The Honorable Woman, a taut, eight-part spy thriller that stars Gyllenhaal as Nessa Stein, an ambitious business leader caught at the moral and political edges of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Written and directed by the Welsh actor-turned-director Hugo Blick, the series, which lands on Netflix this month, finds Stein navigating business, bombings, rape and a very troubling kidnapping against a backdrop of international intrigue. Gyllenhaal takes on an upper-crust English accent for the part, as her character vacillates between political poise and private anguish.

Not a typical role, maybe, for the actress who first found fame as the older sister (alongside real-life brother Jake Gyllenhaal) in the polarizing weirdo-sci-fi classic Donnie Darko (2001) and then as the self-mutilating secretary-turned-BDSM-partner in Secretary (2002). But at this point, more than a decade removed from those roles, is there such a thing as a typical role for her? She’s appeared in mainstream blockbusters ranging from World Trade Center to The Dark Knight, and recently in starring roles in independent dramas like Frank and Won’t Back Down. And yet—

“I'd never done anything like this before—eight hours of work playing the same character,” Gyllenhaal says of her first serialized television role. The episodes were filmed all at once and in order, a stark break from the rhythm of a movie. “You might have four really emotional scenes in one episode and then have another episode that feels very protected, and maybe if you’re making a movie you’d say, ‘Oh, I just wept, I’m not going to weep in the next scene.’ But when you’re doing this it feels much more human, where you could feel emotional where you never expected to. You could feel nothing where you thought you would feel emotional. I really liked that.”

It was the fastest she’s ever worked, too, an exhilarating and yet frightening speed: there was little time for extra

takes and no space for overthinking. That it all worked she attributes in large part to director Blick, though their relationship was at first frosty. “I think I was scared,” she says. “I’m not easily trusting. It takes a little while with me…. That’s always a kind of leap of faith with a director you haven’t worked with before. Now I would do anything with him. Because I trust him.”

Maggie Gyllenhaal in 'The Honourable Woman.' Credit: Robert Viglasky/Drama Republic

We are seated at a corner table in the restaurant of the Greenwich Hotel, a luxury spot owned by Robert De Niro in the Tribeca neighborhood of Manhattan, where the Goodfellas actor also owns a restaurant and production company. Gyllenhaal is dressed casually, in a gray sweater and jeans, though her hair remains as boyishly short as it is in Honorable Woman. She orders the roasted salmon, joking about how doing a play each night means having to consider what she eats. Oh, yeah: She’ll be onstage five hours from now, starring in a Broadway production of Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing. It’s a busy day, and week, and year.

Gyllenhaal, who has two daughters with longtime partner Peter Sarsgaard, has spent the morning taking 8-year-old Ramona to school and then caring for 2-year-old Gloria Ray. The demands of parenthood seem to be on her mind when I ask about the hardest part of making the series. Never mind the English accent, the intense violence sequences, the modest budget: “The hardest thing, really, was doing it and having two little kids,” she says. The girls came along for the three-month filming schedule but weren’t allowed on the set (Sarsgaard played baby sitter part of the time). Gyllenhaal says she won’t let them watch most of her work until they’re older. The exception was the 2010 Nanny McPhee sequel; on the flip side, it is tough to imagine having to watch your mother play the titular role in Secretary at any age.

Which isn’t to say the kids haven’t taken in their mom’s stardom. “When Crazy Heart came out and a lot of people had seen it, people would stop me on the street a lot,” Gyllenhaal says. (Gyllenhaal nabbed an Oscar nomination for the 2009 role.) “And Ramona—I didn’t realize how much she was taking that in. At one point she said, ‘Mama, what’s Crazy Heart?’ And I found a little piece of it that I could show her and explained it to her.”

The violence that makes The Honorable Woman less than kid-friendly has, of course, a fraught political history. Nessa—Gyllenhaal’s character—lives and breathes Middle Eastern politics, and the obligatory research dive posed another challenge for the actress. She eschewed textbook history lessons and took a more unorthodox approach. “I went to people very far over on each side, but very intelligent people—people I trust and respect—and asked for sources,” says Gyllenhaal, who is Jewish but says her religion doesn’t influence her politics. “That way, I could come up with my own opinion about what I felt was happening.”

By the time the show aired on BBC and SundanceTV in July, real-world tensions in the Middle East had boiled over into another extended cycle of violence. It was one of those periods when cordial dinner parties could explode into Israeli-Palestinian screaming matches, and though Gyllenhaal spent the month obsessively reading the news, she kept quiet about the conflict. “If I said on a talk show any of the things that Nessa says, I would have had 200,000 hate emails,” she says. Honourable Woman, then, proved inadvertently timely. Perspectives on Israel “were heard and accepted in the context of the show in a way that they just would not be in any other context.”

And though Gyllenhaal has not typically shied away from political stances—a decade ago she sparked public ire by saying the U.S. was “responsible in some way for 9/11”—on this topic she picks her words carefully. “It’s not true about everything, but about some very complicated, deep-rooted conflicts, the more information you have, sometimes the harder it is to have an immovable, unshiftable, one-sided position,” she says. “It’s not true for me about, like, abortion rights. I have an immoveable, one-sided opinion on that.” (She’s pro-choice.) “I don’t feel that way about the Middle East.”

Maggie Gyllenhaal as Nessa Stein. Credit: Robert Viglasky/Drama Republic

Anyway, centuries-old sectarian warfare aside, what's next for Maggie Gyllenhaal? She isn't sure, and while she's begun looking at scripts, she admits that she mostly needs a break. "You have to sleep a lot when you're doing a play!" she says. "You have to preserve energy."

But this momentary shift away from film, between the TV series and the play (her third since 2009), is not so much a conscious break as it is a reaction to waning support for independent cinema. She mentions that several million people watched the Honorable Woman episodes as they aired. "Frank, the independent movie I made the same year… I don't know if that many people watched it ever!" she says, laughing.

"The thing is, it is incredibly difficult to find a distribution life for independent films right now," Gyllenhaal adds. "I don't want to make movies that nobody sees. I mean, I'm not interested in that." She first noticed the shift around the time of the 2008 economic collapse. When Crazy Heart came out the following year, "all the independent branches of all the studios were falling apart. So we made

it at Paramount Vantage maybe. And then it fell apart after we'd made it. It was gonna have no life! We were just lucky that Fox Searchlight decided to buy it. Now basically there are a few movies each year that get picked up—a few independents that get picked up for a massive distribution. But it's not the way it used to be."

"So much of the interesting work is happening on television," she concedes. "So I don't really care if it's on TV or film." She pauses. "It's not that I don't care. It's just that I want my work to be seen, if I'm going to take the time to make it."

Thaier al-Sudani/Reuters

READING 'FRANKENSTEIN' IN BAGHDAD

WRITERS WANT TO HAVE THE IRAQI CAPITAL DECLARED A UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE.

On March 5, 2007, during the darkest days of the Iraqi civil war, a car bomb ripped through al-Mutanabbi Street near the old Jewish quarter in Baghdad. It killed at least 30 people and wounded more than 100.

Car bombs were frequent at the time, but hitting al-Mutanabbi Street—a winding road lined with shabby bookstalls selling pirated DVDS, medical journals, copies of the Koran, dusty issues of National Geographic and stacks and stacks of books—was a crippling blow.

The street, named after the 10th century Iraqi poet Abu at-Tayyib Ahmad ibn al-Husayn al-Mutanabbi al-Kindi, considered one of the greatest poets in the Arabic language, was a place that flourished even during the repressive Saddam Hussein years.

Despite censorship and the prying eyes of the secret police, it remained the soul of Baghdad's writers' community. It is as important a monument to Arab writing as the Café Riche in Old Cairo, made famous by Naguib Mahfouz in his Cairo Trilogy.

Friday, the start of the Muslim weekend, was when people would gather at al-Mutanabbi to trade stories and buy or swap books. Most would finish their morning at the Shabandar Café at the end of the street to drink tea and smoke shisha—water pipes. It was always a smoky, noisy, fecund gathering of poets, students, dissidents, informants and radicals—a place where even with Saddam's dreaded secret police lurking, information, as well as books, traded hands. This is where the dissidents plotting against Saddam's regime met and distributed pamphlets about their uprising.

The 2007 bomb was not the first in the area, but it was a particularly bitter blow to morale in the city. However, it did not succeed in killing the Iraqi intellectual spirit or pride. "Literature and art is the lifeblood that keeps this city going," said Mohammed Sadek, the rector of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq University in Baghdad and a poet, writer and scholar. Last year he began a drive to have Baghdad recognized as a UNESCO "City of Literature."

Over coffee on a rainy Friday morning, Sadek, who returned to Iraq in 2007 after a period of exile in India, said

the program joins together communities of writers to inspire shared projects, journals and books. Other UNESCO cities include Granada, Spain; Krakow, Poland; Dublin; Prague; Melbourne, Australia; and Iowa City, Iowa.

“OK—so why not Baghdad?” Sadek asked. He was encouraged in the endeavor during a sabbatical earlier this year at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, the oldest and most prestigious writers' program in America. In the middle of cornfields, Iowa has offered a respite for writers such as Tennessee Williams, Kurt Vonnegut, John Irving and Flannery O’Connor. Sadek wants to create a similar community for Iraqi writers.

Iraq has endured much death and misery since the U.S.-led invasion, but al-Mutanabbi Street was one constant. Iraqis are proud that ancient Babylon was the home of the earliest standard writing system, and that poetry is an important part of their literary fabric. But now ideology threatens literary life here. The rise of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, has spread fear among Iraqi intellectuals. As they conquered Mosul in June, ISIS militants destroyed statues of poets and anything else they deemed idols. Violence has surged, and sectarian divisions are deeper than ever.

Sadek’s concern is that writers here are cut off from the international writing community and ISIS will alienate them more. “Fifty percent of the population here is under 20 years old,” he said. “We cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. Baghdad produced the first literary document on this planet. I don’t want us to be lost.”

He insists that despite great adversity, Iraqis keep writing. Last year Frankenstein in Baghdad, a novel by Ahmed Saadawi, won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in Abu Dhabi, the equivalent of the Booker Prize in the Arab world. It was a proud moment for Iraq. Frankenstein in Baghdad is a modern, wartime version of Mary Shelley’s 1818 horror-fantasy, with the plot focusing

on a character who stitches together body parts of those killed in explosions throughout Baghdad. The monster he creates comes to life and begins a hideous campaign of revenge against those responsible for the deaths. One review said Frankenstein in Baghdad reflected “the general feeling of helplessness toward violence witnessed in Iraq.”

There have been attempts to connect Iraqi artists to the world, including some success stories. Tamara Chalabi, daughter of former Iraqi deputy prime minister Ahmed Chalabi, triumphantly brought a group of Iraqi artists to the Venice Biennale in 2012. So why not make Baghdad a “City of Literature”?

According to Christopher Merrill, the director of the International Writing Program, the idea for Baghdad to join the UNESCO initiative took shape in 2012 when he was visiting Iraq. “Baghdad was slated to be the 2013 Arab Cultural Capital, and it occurred to me that would be a fitting way to round off the year of celebrations,” Merrill said.

He suggested that Sadek submit Baghdad’s dossier to UNESCO and began trying to convince American diplomats and Iraqi officials of its benefits. “The [Iraqi] deputy minister got very excited—he said, 'My mind is churning with ideas'—because he saw it as a way not only to bridge sectarian divisions and rebuild the city's literary infrastructure but also to connect Iraqis with the world at large,” Merrill says.

Sadek and his team tried to submit an application in the spring, but were not able to gather the required endorsements from other cities in time. They can apply again next year, but the setback left Sadek and others feeling even more cut off from the writing community. “We wanted to do something to save Baghdad’s cultural system,” he said. “We have a lot left—a new generation of writers. We need not to be isolated, lost in translation.

“We are now facing partition along ethnic lines—what is left of our society?”

Merrill said UNESCO needs to branch out. Other cities on its list are “First World cities, with a preponderance of English-speaking cities.… The network needs more cities from Africa, the Middle East and South America. Baghdad is where writing started, and for most of its history, Baghdad has been at the center of Arabic literature," he added.

“This is our chance,” said Sadek, who noted that he and his team will begin the laborious application process again.

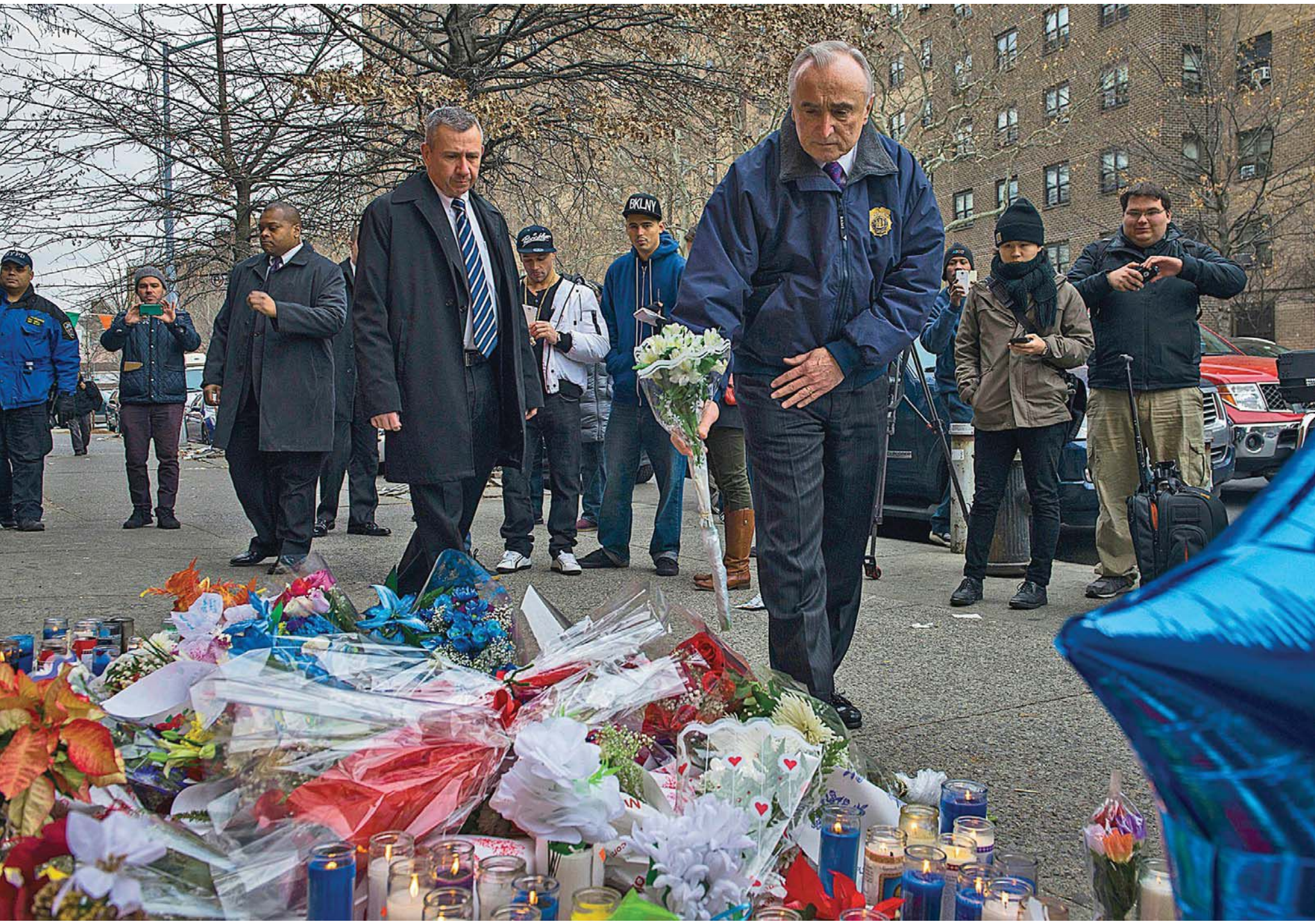
“If we lose our sense of identity and unity, Iraq will be lost.”

Then he gathers his books together and heads over to al-Mutanabbi Street.

01

DON’T SHOOT. PERIOD.

New York - Police Commissioner William Bratton places flowers on December 21 at a makeshift memorial for two police officers fatally shot in Brooklyn in what police described as an ambush attack intended as retribution for recent police killings of unarmed black men. Ismaaiyl Brinsley, 28, ranted on social media that he was planning on “putting wings on pigs” as he traveled by bus from Baltimore after shooting and wounding his girlfriend. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio faced his biggest crisis so far in office, following accusations by police union officials that his support of protesters against police treatment of minorities made him culpable for the deaths of the two officers. “There’s blood on many hands tonight,” Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association President Patrick Lynch said.



Stephanie Keith/Reuters

02

‘KILL THEM’

Peshawar, Pakistan - Shoes lie in blood on the auditorium floor at the Army Public School on December 17, following an attack by Taliban gunmen. Seven Taliban insurgents stormed the school and Degree College, and in an hour killed 132 children and nine adult staffers, according to the military. “A lot of the children are under the benches. Kill them,” one Pakistani Taliban member reportedly said, according to student Ahmed Faraz, 14, speaking to CNN. A Taliban spokesman told BBC Urdu that the school, which is run by the army, had been targeted in response to recent military offensives in North Waziristan and the nearby Khyber area, which killed hundreds of Taliban fighters.

Fayaz Aziz/Reuters

03

HAVANA HEAT WAVE

Miami - Barack Obama supporter Peter Bell, right, debates with anti-Obama demonstrators at the Versailles restaurant in Miami's Little Havana on December 17, just hours after the U.S. announced it would normalize relations with Cuba after more than 50 years of severed ties. The breakthrough came with an exchange of prisoners: Cuba released an unnamed U.S. intelligence agent and American contractor Alan Gross in exchange for three Cuban intelligence agents, including Gerardo Hernandez, head of the spy ring known as the Wasp Network.

Al Diaz/Miami Herald/TNS/Getty

04

THIS INTERVIEW'S OVER

Los Angeles - Workers remove a billboard advertisement for The Interview on December 18, a day after Sony Pictures announced it was canceling the movie's Christmas release. Theater chains refused to handle the film after a terrorist threat promised 9/11-style attacks if it was screened. Sony also quietly canceled plans for Pyongyang, another film based in North Korea, which was to star Steve Carell as an American worker in the Communist country; filming was to begin in March. For weeks Sony was attacked by hackers, who released a massive dump of Sony data on the Internet, including private communications, details about unreleased films, scripts, Social Security numbers and passwords. FBI investigators traced the hack to malware developed in North Korea, and President Obama said the U.S. would "respond proportionally."

Michael Thurston/AFP/Getty