

Newsweek

INTERNATIONAL

Eye on the Prize

How JD Vance is positioning himself for life after Trump

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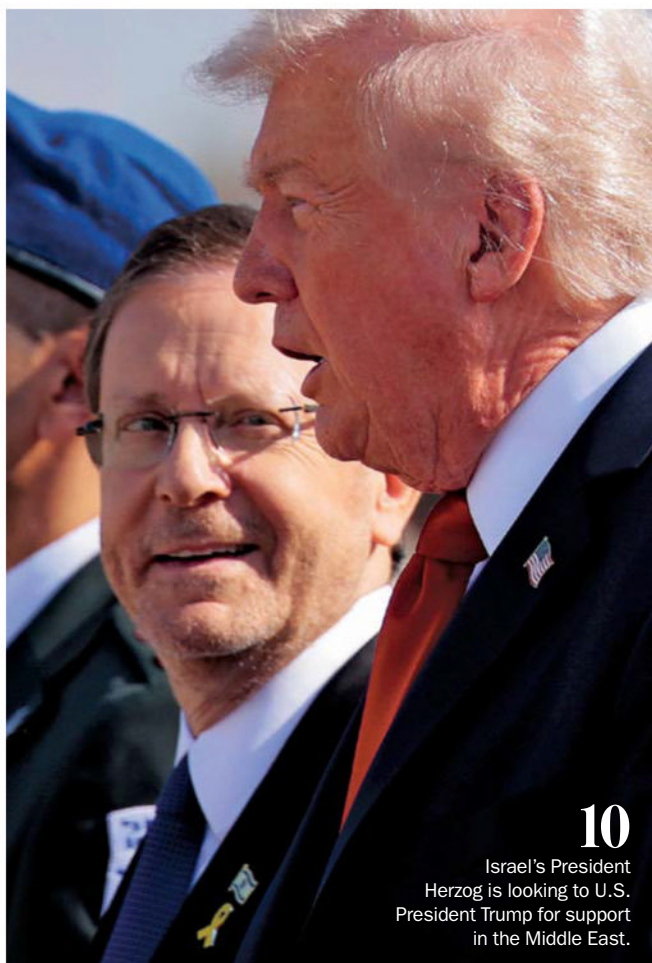
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by Daniel Bush

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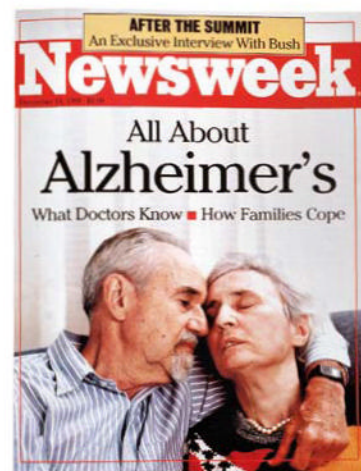
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THE ARCHIVES



1968

“For all its advantages, will half a nation be enough?” *Newsweek* asked, as negotiators sought to end the Vietnam War after America’s bloodiest year of combat yet. U.S. attempts to build a “stable and self-sufficient non-Communist regime in South Vietnam” ultimately failed, and Vietnam remains under one-party Communist rule to this day. Still, relations have warmed considerably since the conflict ended in 1975. The two nations have close economic ties and consider each other strategic partners in countering Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.



1989

“The mind-killing condition remains a great medical mystery,” *Newsweek* said of Alzheimer’s disease. In October, an international group of scientists reported a “striking” reversal of the neurological disorder in lab mice using new drugs, offering early hope for human treatment.



2010

“Covert operations that target Iran’s nuclear program suddenly came to light with explosive violence,” *Newsweek* wrote after scientists were assassinated and Tehran said centrifuges had been sabotaged. Israel and the United States were suspected; a distrust that flared when the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear sites in June 2025.



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HAT YAI, THAILAND

Storm Toll

A resident sits in the aftermath of severe flooding on November 29 in southern Thailand, one of several countries hit by South and Southeast Asia's most extreme weather in years. Since mid-November, climate-fueled storms have devastated the region, killing over 1,600 people and displacing hundreds of thousands. Nearly 11 million have been affected by the extreme rainfall across Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam.

📷 SIRACHAI ARUNRUGSTICHAI

GETTY







ABOVE

MIAMI

A Novel Spin

The exhibition “Library of Us” by British artist Es Devlin is displayed during Art Basel Miami Beach on December 2. The rotating triangular bookshelf is 20-feet tall and contains 2,500 books that influenced the artist’s life. It is meant to provide a meditative reading space to serve as a counterpoint to Art Basel’s busy atmosphere. After the installation ended on December 7, books were donated to local public schools and libraries.

📷 CHANDAN KHANNA/AFP



RIGHT

NEW DELHI

Power Duo

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi depart Palam Air Base after Putin’s arrival in India on December 4. During the two-day state visit, the leaders agreed on a plan to expand their nations’ economic ties, with \$100 billion in trade agreements expected by 2030. The deal comes as the West is trying to use economic sanctions to pressure Moscow to halt its invasion of Ukraine.

📷 GRIGORY SYSOYEV/POOL/AFP

GETTY (3)



ABOVE

LONDON

Cracking Records

An art handler presents the Imperial Winter Egg by Fabergé at Christie's London on November 27. Commissioned by Emperor Nicholas II in 1913 as an Easter gift for his mother, Dowager Empress Maria-Feodorovna, the masterpiece sold December 2 for \$30.2 million, a world auction record. The 4-inch egg beat its own record following its previous sales of around \$5.6 million in 1994 and \$9.6 million in 2002.

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PERISCOPE

NEWS, OPINION + ANALYSIS

THE
Newsweek
INTERVIEW

THE DREAM OF PEACE

In an exclusive interview at his home, Israel's President Isaac Herzog tells *Newsweek's* editor-in-chief how he hopes to normalize his country's relations with Saudi Arabia... with the help of Donald Trump

BY
JENNIFER H. CUNNINGHAM

IN JERUSALEM
AND
TOM O'CONNOR

BRIDGING DIVIDES

The Israeli president acknowledges there is a "lot to do" but says the future of the region "is a dialogue between Jew and Muslim."

AS A CEASEFIRE OVERSEEN BY U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump in the Gaza Strip offers the prospect of a broader end to violence in the Middle East, Israeli President Isaac Herzog told *Newsweek* that he dreams of celebrating peace with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Speaking at his residence in Jerusalem, the Israeli head of state spoke of the opportunity he saw after two years of conflict during which the country—under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—has been engaged not only in its bloodiest combat with Hamas and other Palestinian factions, but has also launched strikes against Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Yemeni Houthis and other forces in Syria.

“It would be my dream to be able to celebrate peace, for example, with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia,” Herzog said. “Because I think that the cradle of Islam and the cradle of the monotheistic religion and the cradle of Judaism together will change the world.”

“That would be a great moment for me, personally, and for the region,” he said, adding that there is “still a lot to do.”

‘A Generational Issue’

It is no secret that peace with Riyadh is the crown jewel of Israel’s efforts to normalize its position in the region.

The ask is tall, as Saudi Arabia has emphasized such a step can only be taken in response to an Israeli road map toward Palestinian statehood, an issue on which Herzog declines to weigh in directly given his position as head of state.

Israeli attitudes on the prospect of once again going down the path of negotiating toward Palestinian independence have been deeply impacted by the war, bringing a sense of mistrust and trauma also felt by Palestinians as a result of the conflict, which continues to claim lives despite the ceasefire. But the benefits of unlocking a historic arrangement with Saudi Arabia are considerable.

The kingdom holds a unique place in the Arab and Islamic worlds as the birthplace of Islam and custodian of its two holiest cities—Mecca and Medina (the third holiest is Jerusalem, the same location as Judaism’s holiest site). Saudi Arabia’s influence is only compounded in recent years by its fast-growing economy, increasing geopolitical weight and ongoing transformation led by de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed, known widely by his initials, MBS.



STRENGTHENING TIES

Crown Prince Mohammed is greeted by President Trump at the White House on November 18 ahead of talks that solidified their countries’ economic and defense partnership. Right: Herzog at an event on September 10 in London.

A normalization agreement would thus have the potential to reshape Israel's position in a region where it has been locked in a series of conflicts since its establishment in 1948.

And yet, through that first war fought against a coalition of neighboring Arab nations that attacked Israel at its birth, and in several more wars to follow, Herzog said opportunities for peace have often emerged from the ashes of conflict.

"In 1948, when we were surrounded and attacked by seven nations, we were all alone," Herzog said. "There was no one around us that had any relations with us.

"In 1967, when we won a war after the enemies declared that they were throwing us to the sea within a couple of days, this was another step. In 1973, there was another war, which was a

painful war, but led then to the first peace agreement with Egypt. And after that cornerstone of the peace agreement with Egypt, we had another war also, in Lebanon. Slowly but surely, it led to Oslo peace accords, then peace with Jordan, then negotiations, of course, with our neighbors, efforts, ongoing efforts, and an evolution at the end, which today enables Israel to have relations with many Muslim countries around us."

With each successive conflict and the unstoppable passage of time, he said those across the Middle East have come to realize Israel's permanence even in the face of constant threats, albeit gradually and at great cost.

"Israel is here to stay forever," Herzog said. "They have to realize it. It takes time. It's a generational issue. They realize it more and more, they are interested, the Arabs around us, all the millions and hundreds of millions.

"They read about us, they learn about us. They're interested in us. We're intertwined with our neighbors. I think the future of this region is a dialogue between Jew and Muslim. I see [an] incredible phenomenon of Muslim leaders and Muslim activists coming from all over the world to meet us and pray with us and talk to us."

A New 'Master of the Game'

Among the most notable developments in the quest for Israeli normalization was the advent of the Abraham Accords in 2020, a series of agreements led by Trump in which the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco became the first four Arab nations to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel since the past deals with Egypt and Jordan.

At the time, a deal with Saudi Arabia appeared within reach. Yet progress slowed in 2021 amid a change of administration in Washington and tough demands from Riyadh that included U.S. defense guarantees, nuclear cooperation and, most complex of

**"Israel is
here to stay
forever....
They have
to realize it."**





MAKING HISTORY Prime Minister of Israel Netanyahu, U.S. President Trump, Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan after the signing ceremony of the Abraham Accords in September 2020.

all, a concrete pathway to Palestinian statehood. Talks would persist for the next two years, often in quiet, until the event that would shatter all notions of complacency toward the Israeli-Palestinian status quo. Hamas' sudden attack on October 7, 2023, marked the deadliest day in Israeli history, sparking a war that has enflamed regional tempers and set off a regional conflict involving Iran and its allies operating on seven fronts.

About 1,200 Israelis were killed in the initial attack, with another 251 abducted by Hamas, according to Israeli officials. Hundreds more Israeli civilians and soldiers have been killed in the ensuing war. The Hamas-led Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza estimates that about 70,000 Palestinians have been killed throughout the conflict, with thousands more reported dead from Israeli strikes in other fronts, including the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iran.

It would take another two years and Trump's return to office before new frameworks for the region could be seriously considered. Herzog describes Trump as a new "master of the game"—referencing Martin Indyk's 2021 book of the same name on former

“What I really am impressed by [is] the fact that President Trump insists on changing the equation, not just standing and waiting.”



Secretary of State Henry Kissinger—in leading an “outstanding effort” to reshape the Middle East in the postwar era.

And it's not just Saudi Arabia. Herzog sees an opportunity to strike a new deal with Syria that goes beyond the post-1973 ceasefire agreement with then-President Hafez al-Assad.

With Assad's son, Bashar, ousted a year ago, thus ending a half-century of Baathist rule in the neighboring nation, Islamist militant chief-turned-interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa has emerged as an unlikely partner for Trump and candidate for the Abraham Accords.

Herzog, like many Israeli officials, continues to view Sharaa with caution, particularly given his jihadi past and ongoing reports of the targeting of minorities, such as the Druze, of which Israel also has a substantial population. But he also sees the potential for coming to an agreement that he said would prove “an incredible moment for the region.”

“We realize the internal tension in Syria between the factions,” Herzog said. “We’ve seen what happened in Sweida [Syria], and we have certain prerequisites, for example, an open corridor, so



DEAL DONE President Trump is applauded at the Knesset, Israel's parliament, on October 13, 2025, hours after Israeli hostages were released by Hamas as part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal aimed at ending the two-year war in Gaza. Herzog described the U.S. leader as a new "master of the game."

that we can help our brothers and sisters, the Druze, if necessary. But on the other hand, I think it's also a huge opportunity to change the regional map and draw a new equilibrium.

"And I think if we can reach an agreement with Syria, I would not say yet a peace agreement, but an agreement with Syria, which will follow the agreement which took place in 1973 following the war, but now a new agreement which gives more relations and contact, it would be fantastic."

'Think Toward the Future'

In Lebanon, too, Herzog sees potential to avoid another conflict, though he believes doing so would require the Lebanese government, particularly President Joseph Aoun, to be more assertive in ensuring Hezbollah's disarmament, a task with no guarantee of success, even with the White House's pressure.

And it remains to be seen whether peace will prevail on any front. As the precarious ceasefire gradually proceeds to its next stages, Hamas remains active and operational despite considerable losses and has rejected repeated international calls for disarmament.

But even in the midst of the uncertainty that surrounds these tumultuous moments in the Middle East, Herzog believes many

Arab leaders share the desire to work together toward mutual stability. "I maintain very strong relations with many Arab leaders, with many important leaders in the region," Herzog told *Newsweek*. "And when you talk to each other, you understand that there's a common vision here, despite the threats, there are enormous threats."

After all, Herzog said, "we are all children of Abraham," and now, "there is a movement" in support of dialogue, even in the face of those who wish to suppress it.

"With all the threats that we have, we've overcome each and every one of them in this war," Herzog said. "We were brave and heroic and doing good for the world, despite the enormous, enormous hate and attacks on us, mostly fake news or terrible blasphemy that was intended to destroy us.

"And now is an opportunity, and I think that what I really am impressed by [is] the fact that President Trump insists on changing the equation, not just standing and waiting. I know it's not easy. I know it's difficult. There are many worries, but we should think big and think toward the future." 

Jennifer H. Cunningham is editor-in-chief and **Tom O'Connor** is deputy editor, national security & foreign policy at *Newsweek*.

SOCIETY

IS THE SURROGACY BOOM ABOUT TO BURST?

Activists and lawmakers are joining forces to challenge paid pregnancy

BY
JESUS MESA

CONSERVATIVE POLICY GROUPS AND FEMINIST advocates rarely agree on what women should be allowed to do with their bodies. One side tends to defend traditional roles; the other insists on self-determination and autonomy. But on the thorny question of surrogacy, they've come to the same conclusion: it should end.

This unlikely alignment sharpened into public view in October, when Reem Alsalem, the United Nations special rapporteur on violence against women and girls, delivered a stark proposal to the U.N. General Assembly: that all forms of surrogacy—paid or unpaid, domestic or international—should be abolished outright.

She argued that the practice inflicted “multiple forms of violence” on women, reducing pregnancy to contract labor and their bodies to delivery systems for those with greater wealth and power. She likened surrogacy to prostitution and human trafficking, saying that even though women must consent to carry another person's child, the practice still commodifies them.

“I did not speak of a ban,” Alsalem said in an exclusive interview with *Newsweek*. “I spoke of abolishing it.” The distinction, she emphasized, was deliberate. “‘Ban’ is something narrow and legalistic—it’s an action that can change. ‘Abolishing’ means eliminating or ending a system entirely, dismantling it at its very core, with broad structural and societal implications.”

Her report to the U.N. laid out a five-part legal framework modeled on the abolitionist approach to prostitution: criminalize those who commission surrogacy, prohibit third-party profit, ban advertising, invest in public awareness campaigns and offer support—not penalties—for the women who carry the pregnancies.

“Surrogacy contracts often strip women of control over their own bodies, pregnancies and health.” Many women, Alsalem said, sign those contracts under economic duress, often without legal counsel or access to redress if something goes wrong. “Once they become surrogate mothers, their health and survival are deprioritized.”

Among those who are harmed the most by surrogacy, she argued, are the babies themselves. “They have absolutely no say in the process,” Alsalem said. “No one asks for their consent or considers their welfare.”

“This is like saying there are horrible cases involving sex workers around the world, so let’s ban sex. Who...would think that’s a good idea?”

The proposal quickly drew criticism from surrogacy advocates, LGBTQ+ family groups and reproductive rights lawyers, who accused Alsalem of ignoring evidence about ethical frameworks and erasing the voices of surrogates who describe their experiences as empowering.

Other critics, including nonprofit leaders and academics, described the report as ideologically motivated and disconnected from the realities of modern surrogacy practices in countries like Canada, the United States and Mexico.

“This is like saying there are horrible cases involving sex workers around the world, so let’s ban sex. Who in their right mind would think that’s a good idea?” Ron Poole-Day, executive director of Men Having Babies—one of the largest international organizations supporting ethical surrogacy for LGBTQ+ families—told *Newsweek*.

Poole-Day, who became a father through surrogacy in 2001, believes Alsalem’s framing is ideologically motivated and disconnected from lived realities. He points to strict ethical standards in countries with comprehensive surrogacy laws, including required medical screenings, psychological evaluations and the key provision that compensation is never conditional on a live birth.

“In ethical frameworks, compensation for surrogates is independent of the outcome—it’s for the discomfort, disruption



\$200,000 or more, depending on legal fees, medical care, agency commissions and surrogate compensation. Canada has long been a more affordable surrogacy option, with in vitro fertilization and surrogacy costs ranging from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

But what sets the United States, Canada and a handful of jurisdictions apart, surrogacy advocates say, is not just the economic scale—but the regulatory infrastructure designed to prevent abuse. In many U.S. programs, prospective surrogates undergo extensive health screenings and psychological evaluations. Contracts are drafted to guarantee the surrogate's payment regardless of whether the pregnancy results in a live birth, and both parties are typically represented by independent legal counsel.

"These regulations and standards are what ensure good outcomes," Poole-Dayán said. "The majority of women who apply to be surrogates are screened out. It's not something you can just sign up for overnight."

One woman familiar with those steps is Claire, a five-time gestational carrier who says the structured system was central to why she felt respected and protected throughout the process.

"I came into this very aware of what's involved and with the full understanding that I am not a parent to a child that I carry," she told *Newsweek*. "I am helping someone else."

and risk of the process," Poole-Dayán said. "If a baby isn't born alive, the surrogate still receives the same or even greater compensation. That's what separates ethical surrogacy from baby buying."

A Billion Dollar Industry

Surrogacy has grown from a niche practice into a booming global industry. Although exact numbers are hard to track, estimates show surrogates generate

billions in revenue each year from domestic and international clients. The research firm Global Market Insights valued the global surrogacy market at over \$22 billion in 2024 and projects it will exceed \$201 billion in 2034, with 5,000 to 20,000 babies born through surrogacy each year.

In the United States, where surrogacy laws are governed at the state level, the average cost of a single surrogacy arrangement can range from \$100,000 to

In the United States, regulations and standards differ by state, meaning there are no uniform requirements such as home visits or background checks like those mandated in the adoption process. Yet Claire credits the safeguards in the programs she worked with—independent legal counsel, medical screenings and psychological evaluations—with ensuring both surrogates and intended parents know exactly what to expect.

“When people go into this the right way, with all the information and they follow recommendations, I think it’s a very safe choice for everyone involved,” she said. “The cases you see publicized where things go wrong are where people have cut corners.”

For other surrogates, the financial aspect plays an important—though still secondary—role. K.B., a three-time gestational carrier from Arkansas who carried for gay dads, including one pregnancy for an HIV-positive couple, said the money helped stabilize her family at a crucial time.

“I did my journeys on the lower end of compensation because for me, there was so much more to surrogacy than getting the compensation,” she said. “But as a single mother at the time, it did allow me to build generational wealth for my children.”

Both women told *Newsweek* the experience was transformative. Claire called it “the most rewarding thing I’ve done besides having my own child,” while K.B. described her three journeys as “by far the most rewarding experience of my life” and said the bonds formed were so strong that she is even traveling to France for the 5th birthday of one of the children she carried.

Claire and K.B. requested modified names to protect their privacy, which *Newsweek* granted.

‘Reproductive Tourism’

Critics of surrogacy say that even well-intentioned federal laws would not erase the underlying power imbalance. High costs, extensive paperwork and 10- to 18-month wait times have led many

prospective parents to seek commercial surrogacy in Eastern Europe or Latin America, where costs are typically below \$80,000 and rules are even less defined.

Nigel Cantwell, founder of Defence for Children International and one of the architects of modern inter-country adoption standards, supports a full ban on any surrogacy arrangement that involves payment or reward in exchange for transferring a child from one person to another.

“That falls under the definition of sale,” Cantwell told *Newsweek*. “It includes the vast majority of current commercial surrogacy arrangements, as well as certain ones that are still labeled ‘altruistic.’”

The ethical tension, Cantwell said, often lies in how surrogacy is framed. Too often, he said, conversations start and end with the desires of adults—those who want children and have the means to pursue them. “Scant attention is paid to considerations such as the commodification of children through their being ‘ordered’ via a third party, the child’s sense of identity and the regulation of the industry,” he said. “The real conversation to be had must be child-focused, not adult-centered.”

In Europe, the backlash against surrogacy has already begun to solidify into law. In 2025, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning surrogacy and calling for an end to the practice, describing it as “an exploitation...of women’s bodies for financial or other gain.” Italy, Germany and Spain have taken the lead in advancing or enforcing prohibitions.

Italy’s government, led by conservative Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni,

extended a ban on surrogacy last year, with legislation imposing criminal penalties on citizens who pursue surrogacy abroad—raising fears of prosecution for parents who already have children born through the practice.

In the United States, regulation has emerged piecemeal at the state level, creating a legal patchwork that varies dramatically depending on jurisdiction. Roughly half of the states—around 20 to 25—have explicit statutes that permit and regulate gestational surrogacy contracts.

California, for example, permits and enforces commercial surrogacy contracts under a well-established body of case law. But in Michigan, until recently, compensated surrogacy was a felony—a law that remained on the books from 1988 until the Michigan Family Protection Act passed in 2024.

The push has created a legal thicket across state lines. A child born via surrogacy in California or Kyiv may be denied legal recognition back in Rome or Berlin. With no binding international framework to reconcile these gaps, many intended parents and their children are forced into years of legal uncertainty, often with no guaranteed path to citizenship or parentage.

In Colombia, now a rising destination for international surrogacy, watchdog groups have reported cases of women from impoverished neighborhoods recruited with little medical oversight or legal support. Surrogates are sometimes unaware of the full risks or of their limited rights in the event of complications or contractual disputes.

“This has created a market of ‘reproductive tourism,’ where thousands of Europeans come to Latin America to take children abroad. The legal issue now is serious,” Maria Cristina Hurtado, attorney and one of the most vocal critics of surrogacy in Colombia, told *Newsweek*.

In the absence of a dedicated law or regulatory body, at least 45 fertility clinics in Colombia offer surrogacy services, often relying on intermediaries who recruit women through Facebook and WhatsApp ads portraying surrogacy as a



“Scant attention is paid to considerations such as the commodification of children through their being ‘ordered’ via a third party.”



DEBATE The surrogacy market is worth \$22 billion, though there are calls for it to be “abolished.”

job opportunity. An investigation by the Spanish outlet *La Marea* uncovered contracts that restricted women’s movements during pregnancy, including clauses prohibiting travel abroad or aborting the fetus. Compensation—typically around \$10,800—can amount to nearly three times the national minimum wage.

“Opposing this practice is not conservative, moralistic or a defense of the traditional, heteronormative family; on the contrary, it is grounded in the ethics of equality, diversity and human rights,” Hurtado said.

Colombia tried to pass a law regulating surrogacy in 2023, but the bill failed in the legislature. Critics, however, say regulation misses the point. In one recent case, a European man hired a Colombian woman to carry his child but refused to include her name on the birth record. Colombian officials then denied the baby a passport. When the man returned to his country, where surrogacy is illegal, the child was also denied citizenship and ended up stateless.

“These arrangements are particularly prone to creating exploitative situations and major problems concerning the status and identity of the child,” said Cantwell, who is calling for a complete ban on cross-border surrogacy.

Abolition or Regulation

Strikingly, opposition to surrogacy now draws from across the ideological spectrum. The Heritage Foundation, which leads the conservative Project 2025 agenda, has called surrogacy a threat to family integrity. Pope Francis condemned it as “deplorable” and demanded a global ban before his death. And radical feminists have long opposed the practice as exploitative.

Still, pro-surrogacy advocates argue that global regulation is the more ethical response. “The only countries that currently have the right conditions for ethical surrogacy are Canada, most of the United States and Mexico City,” said Poole-Dayana of Men Having Babies. “In these places, surrogates are well screened, well informed and protected.”

Poole-Dayana said he is not blind to the abuses and exploitation that have occurred elsewhere. But he believes the answer is to build stronger ethical frameworks, not eliminate the practice of surrogacy entirely. “Our goal is not to defend all surrogacy,” he said. “It’s to make it as ethical as possible.”

His organization has published detailed ethical guidelines and offers financial assistance only to families working with surrogates who meet those

standards. In the U.S. programs he supports, prospective parents are required to provide full disclosure and respect the surrogate’s autonomy.

Poole-Dayana also challenges the notion that ethical surrogacy cannot exist. “The people making these arguments have never sat down with a surrogate mother who did this proudly, or a child who was born through it and is thriving,” he said. “These are not theoretical for us—these are our families.”

Surrogates themselves say the conversation often ignores their voices. Claire, who has delivered five children for three families, described witnessing intended parents meet their baby for the first time as incomparable. “Nothing can truly describe the feeling that washes over you when you see these intended parents lay eyes on their children for the first time,” she said. “It’s the most breathtaking experience I’ve ever been through.”

K.B. echoed that sentiment, saying the public debate rarely reflects what she has seen in her own experience. “A lot of bad things can happen in every aspect of life, every job, every situation,” she said. “It’s just very disheartening that people are taking these statistically few instances and generalizing an entire situation as being bad.”

Both women said they worry the abolition of surrogacy would erase an option they chose intentionally and without regret.

“Surrogacy is such a beautiful way for families to be built,” K.B. said. “And the beautiful part about the United States is that we have the freedom to do that.”

But to abolitionists, no amount of regulation can undo what they see as the fundamental harm: turning gestation into a contract and the womb into a space to be rented.

The disagreement is not just about oversight, it is about the very definition of life and family. **N**

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The Next Chapter

In Trump's shadow, JD Vance is quietly developing a

BY DANIEL BUSH

CENTER STAGE

In his short time as vice president, JD Vance has become one of the administration's most visible figures.



BRAD VEST/GETTY

plan to inherit the MAGA movement in 2028 and beyond



A

FTER DONALD TRUMP WON the 2024 election, JD Vance and his close advisers came up with a guiding principle

for his vice presidency and new, unofficial role as heir apparent to the Make America Great Again movement.

There would be no specific policy portfolio, according to three people with knowledge of the informal strategy sessions that took place during the transition, details of which have not previously been reported.

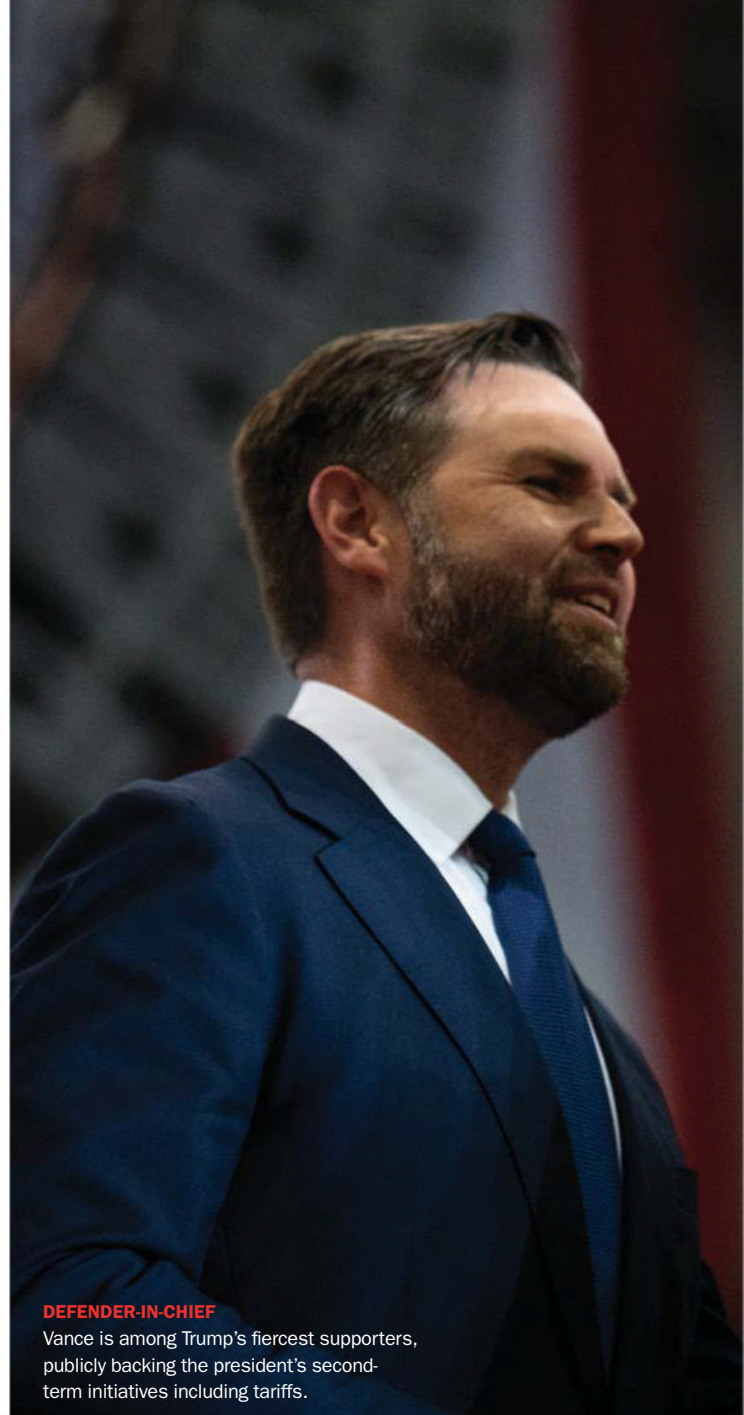
Democrat Kamala Harris' tenure as vice president was viewed by Vance's team as a cautionary tale. Joe Biden had tasked her with tackling the "root causes" of migration to the United States, among other goals, and the immigration assignment in particular backfired. Republicans dubbed Harris the "border czar" and Donald Trump used the fight over immigration during the Biden years to attack her on the campaign trail.

Vance did not want to be "the Kamala Harris VP, where you have this portfolio of things. That was [seen as] pigeonholing him," said a person familiar with Vance's thinking.

Instead, Vance entered office determined to serve as a political Swiss Army Knife and stalwart defender of Trump's agenda, all while keeping the focus on a possible 2028 White House run at bay for as long as possible. Twelve months into Trump's second term, the strategy appears to be working. Vance has emerged as one of the president's fiercest supporters on television and social media; an influential voice on domestic policy inside the administration; and a trusted messenger of Trump's America First vision abroad.

When praising Vance to allies in private, Trump is fond of referencing a quote about putting the best athletes on the field, which he attributes to the legendary football coach Vince Lombardi.

"JD is an athlete," Trump has said on several occasions since returning to power, according to two sources who have heard



DEFENDER-IN-CHIEF

Vance is among Trump's fiercest supporters, publicly backing the president's second-term initiatives including tariffs.

the comment firsthand. "The skill that's most prized by the president is the ability to go out and defend and advocate for him and his agenda. Nobody has shown more dexterity in going into the toughest venues than JD," said a Vance confidant. Whether it's "sending him out on TV, to a debate, to a foreign country, with JD you don't have to worry about, 'Is it going to go well?' He's just good. He's talented, and Trump trusts him."

The president and vice president "definitely trust each other," White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles told *Newsweek* in an interview. "They definitely have a friendship, and have a common view of most if not everything."

Vance's ascension to the vice presidency represents the culmination of an unusual decade-long transformation from bestselling



“With JD you don’t have to worry about, ‘Is it going to go well?’ He’s just good. He’s talented, and Trump trusts him.”



author and vocal Trump critic into the leading candidate to take over the Republican Party once the president leaves office. Now, Vance will find out if his all-in bet on Trump can elevate him to the presidency or torpedo his political career.

This account is based on interviews with 13 current and former White House advisers and other people in Vance’s inner circle, Republicans in Congress, former Trump campaign officials, GOP donors and other party operatives. Many spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations with the vice president.

A Delicate Balancing Act

REPUBLICANS IN WASHINGTON ARE ALREADY BUZZING ABOUT A likely Vance presidential run in 2028, even though the election is

still three years away. “There are a lot of us around here that are focused on JD being the next president,” Senator Jim Banks of Indiana told *Newsweek* in a recent interview in his office.

There is also growing support in private among Vance allies for him to pick Secretary of State Marco Rubio as his running mate—chatter that spilled out into the open when Trump recently called a potential Vance-Rubio ticket “unstoppable.”

The mounting interest in Vance’s White House aspirations highlights the predicament he faces as Republicans begin, however quietly, to consider the GOP’s future post-Trump.

This is the first time the country has had a 41-year-old vice president serving alongside a 79-year-old president who routinely deflects attention from his lame-duck status by signaling



ALLEGIANCE From left: Vance speaks at the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona in August 2024, calling out the Biden administration's immigration policies; the vice president reacts as Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (left) meet at the Oval Office in February 2025.

his interest in serving an unconstitutional third term in office. Vance's unconditional embrace of Trump and his second-term record is also a double-edged sword, many Republicans acknowledge in private. They concede it will turn off most Democrats and some independent voters.

And while his unwavering loyalty to Trump may secure the 2028 Republican presidential nomination, it's an open question if Vance can turn out MAGA voters—and carry Trumpism forward—without Trump on the ballot. That concern was reinforced last month, when Republicans lost several high-profile races and Democrats nationwide were energized by Zohran Mamdani's win in the New York City mayoral election.

Additionally, Trump's yearslong, ironclad grip on the GOP has shown signs of cracking in his second term. Republicans backed a bill in November ordering the administration to release files on convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, forcing Trump to reverse course and sign the measure.

The rare revolt by Republicans raised questions about Trump's long-term sway over the MAGA movement—another potential problem for Vance down the line.

"For the time being, Vance is in a very, very good position," said Robert Blizzard, a top Republican pollster. "But at some point, it's going to get very complicated."

A former Trump campaign official offered a more blunt assessment. "It feels like he's locking up the nomination today. It is the right strategy, but it does put him in a difficult spot in a general election because it won't allow Vance to be his own man," the

person said. In 2028, "if Trump is popular, which for him is mid-40s [approval rating], and the economy is strong, then Vance is in great shape," the source added. "But if people say no more, like they did when he lost in 2020, Vance is screwed."

'In the Room for Everything'

AS A VICE PRESIDENT WITHOUT A FORMAL POLICY PORTFOLIO, Vance has worked on an eclectic array of issues that defy easy categorization. The approach has allowed Vance to champion the Trump administration without getting tied to any single policy that could come back to haunt him in the future.

"Vice presidents in the modern era have often taken on a portfolio. The problem and the challenge with having a portfolio is that it can constrain you," said Herbie Ziskend, a former adviser to both Biden and Harris when each served as vice president.

"If your portfolio is small business and the news of the day is a war in Iran, and you have a meeting with a bunch of small businesses, you're not where the action is," added Ziskend, who also served as the Biden White House's principle deputy communications director. Vance has "made the calculation that it's better to be out there ubiquitously defending Trump and whatever the issue of the day is."

Vance, who worked as a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley before winning his U.S. Senate seat in Ohio, was instrumental behind the scenes in helping negotiate an agreement that transferred ownership of the social media giant TikTok from China to American investors. Trump cited Vance's tech expertise in



“For the time being, Vance is in a very, very good position. But at some point, it’s going to get very complicated.”



tapping him to be part of the negotiations, three sources familiar with the matter said. The vice president played a role in securing Republican support for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Trump’s centerpiece domestic legislation aimed at cutting taxes and spending. (Vance also cast the tiebreaking vote for the bill, which was signed into law in July.)

Vance has been dispatched around the country to promote Trump’s economic policies, and to the U.S.-Mexico border to highlight the administration’s immigration crackdown.

In October, Vance traveled to Israel to push the Israeli government and Hamas to uphold their fragile ceasefire deal. Earlier this year, Vance delivered a searing rebuke to European allies over issues of free speech and immigration at the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

The speech in Munich underscored his ability to channel the president’s anti-globalist rhetoric. But it also reflected Vance’s own worldview and experience growing up in the Rust Belt and serving in the Iraq War, according to people who have known and worked with him for years.

“He represents that post-9/11 generation that loves our country but knows that we had weak leadership from both parties, Republican and Democrat, who mismanaged wars, mismanaged our country,” Banks said.

“It’s a totally different flavor from the old-school Republican Party,” added Banks, a 46-year-old first-term senator who served in Afghanistan in 2014 and 2015. Vance is “the most articulate Republican today who can explain America First.”

In Washington, Vance regularly appears at Trump’s side for key meetings and events. The vice president is part of a small circle of senior administration officials who Trump turns to for advice on major decisions, according to several sources with knowledge of the inner workings of the West Wing. In addition to Vance, the group includes Wiles and Rubio; Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff for policy; and James Blair, the deputy chief of staff for legislative affairs.

“JD’s in the room for everything,” another Vance ally said.

Publicly, Vance has backed Trump’s second-term initiatives, including controversial tariffs that sparked a trade war with China and other countries, the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, the deployment of National Guard troops to major U.S. cities and the prosecution of the president’s perceived political enemies.

The vice president’s office declined to comment on the record for this story.

Another White House source close to Vance said that his strong relationship with Trump was based on aligned policy goals and a team that was fully integrated with the president’s staff.

Vance and Trump’s teams work closely together, according to multiple sources with knowledge of the dynamic. Wiles and Vance’s chief of staff, Jacob Reses, speak daily and attend a regular staff meeting together. Vance himself has developed a good relationship with Wiles and is close with Miller.

In many cases, the relationships predate last year’s campaign. Vance courted Donald Trump Jr. and other figures in the

president's inner circle in the lead-up to his 2022 Senate race in Ohio. The effort paid off in the form of a Trump endorsement; Vance later returned the favor by endorsing Trump's 2024 reelection bid early on, at a time when Trump faced mounting legal problems and uncertainty over his political comeback.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that Trump seeks Vance's input on a wide range of issues.

"President Trump has an incredible relationship with Vice President Vance, who he has trusted to represent our country everywhere from manufacturing plants in Wisconsin to the Civilian-Military Coordination Center in Israel," Leavitt told *Newsweek* in a statement.

"The President takes the Vice President's counsel frequently on a variety of policy matters, and he has been the perfect complement to the Commander-in-Chief."

The unlikely Trump-Vance partnership has become something of a political Rorschach test. To supporters on the right, Vance's loyalty to Trump is viewed as a testament to his character and an emblem of his shrewd political instincts. On the left, critics see Vance as the Machiavellian defender-in-chief of a dangerous president who is using his second term to undermine democracy and the rule of law.

"Vance is an intelligent guy and presents himself well. In the [2024 vice-presidential] debate he clearly got the best of Tim Walz," said David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party.

Nevertheless, "there are few people I've ever witnessed in politics who are more frustrating and disturbing to watch," Pepper said. Vance is "clearly someone who will say and do whatever he needs to do to get ahead. At this point, getting ahead means [defending] whatever terrible thing Trump has just done. And he has no shame in doing it."

The strong ties between Trump and Vance's teams and relative lack of drama in the White House stand in marked contrast to the infighting that consumed Trump's first term with then-Vice President Mike Pence.

Pence angered top Trump aides when he signaled his interest in eventually running for president by taking the unprecedented step of launching his own political action committee in early 2017,



MISSION

Trump sent his vice president to Israel in October to help stabilize the Gaza ceasefire.

only four months after taking office. Trump's team came to view Pence's senior staff with suspicion, several sources said.

For their part, Trump and Pence—a conservative former Indiana governor who was popular with the Evangelical Christian right—never developed a close personal bond. The relationship fell apart when Pence refused to bow to pressure from Trump to block Congress from certifying Biden's 2020 election victory and a mob of Trump supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. A spokesperson for Pence declined to comment on this story.

Even before January 6, Pence didn't have "the rapport the president enjoys with Vice President Vance today," said another

“[Vance] will say and do whatever he needs to do to get ahead.... Getting ahead means [defending] whatever terrible thing Trump has just done. And he has no shame in doing it.”

source with deep ties to the White House. A Republican strategist who has worked with Trump in the past said the fallout should serve as a warning to Vance.

“Mike Pence was a supplicant for all but the last month of Trump’s first term, and he’s now a pariah among Republicans,” said the source. “Ninety-nine percent loyalty is insufficient to Trump.”

A Digital Native VP

THE VANCE TEAM’S AGGRESSIVE DIGITAL MEDIA OPERATION ALSO represents a break from the model followed by Pence and other vice presidents in the years since online fundraising and

social media transformed the political landscape. Vance is the third-youngest U.S. vice president in history, and the only major party presidential or vice-presidential nominee in the 21st century who was born in the 1980s or later. As such, he’s the closest thing yet to a digital native in one of the top two positions in American government.

Vance is a prominent voice in the right-wing media ecosystem, where he amplifies Trump’s message to MAGA supporters. The vice president often spars with critics on X. He hosted *The Charlie Kirk Show* after the conservative activist was assassinated in September, and has appeared on numerous other podcasts, including *Pod Force One*, the *Ruthless Podcast* and *The Katie Miller Podcast*.

“JD’s brand is that he’s President Trump’s absolute attack dog,” Republican Senator Bernie Moreno of Ohio said in an interview.

Vance also appears frequently on mainstream broadcast television networks. The interviews are tracked by Trump, who has long been known to keep a close eye on his aides when they defend him on TV.

“He watches everybody, it’s not just JD,” said Wiles, the White House chief of staff. “But he’s very happy whenever he sees JD on television.”

Yet even those interviews aren’t geared toward winning over the audiences—which skew older and more moderate—who still watch live TV news, according to several sources who described Vance’s communications strategy. Vance’s contentious interview in October with ABC’s *This Week* host George Stephanopoulos underscored the approach. Vance’s performance was panned by Democrats, but it went viral on social media and won widespread praise from conservatives.

“The one million people who are watching a Sunday show are not the constituency he’s seeking to win over,” said one longtime Republican operative who has known Vance for years. “It’s the 40 million who consume a clip from that interview online through many different mediums, who see him putting up a fight against Democratic talking points and the media they’ve grown to distrust. It’s brilliant.”

The person added: “One of Trump’s great revelations was [understanding] the theater of politics. I think JD has picked that up and run with it to the next generation.”

But Vance’s willingness to wage battles online has also stirred up controversy at times.

In an appearance on *The Charlie Kirk Show* in October, Vance dismissed a news report that revealed a trove of racist and antisemitic text messages between young Republican staffers, downplaying the group chats as “edgy, offensive jokes.”

Vance also defended an AI deepfake video Trump posted on Truth Social in late September that depicted House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who is Black, wearing a sombrero and false mustache as mariachi music played. Jeffries called the video

racist. Vance told reporters at a White House press briefing that he thought the video was “funny.” “The president’s joking, and we’re having a good time,” Vance said, adding it was just “poking a little bit of fun.”

‘A True Believer’

LAST YEAR, WHEN HE WAS BEING VETTED TO BE TRUMP’S RUNNING mate, Vance voiced concerns about the impact that serving as vice president would have on his young family, according to two sources familiar with the matter. Vance and his wife, second lady Usha Vance, have three children under the age of 10.

Vance has stopped mentioning the issue since taking office, the sources said. In Vance’s orbit it’s expected that he will run for president in 2028. But several sources cautioned that it’s still far too early to speculate about things like voter outreach, battleground state strategy and other details surrounding a hypothetical Vance campaign.

At political events, Vance is often approached by donors asking how they can help him run for president. He quickly shuts down the 2028 talk and urges supporters to help Republicans hold the House and Senate in next year’s midterm elections, according to sources who have witnessed the conversations on multiple occasions.

Still, as time goes on, it will become increasingly harder for

Vance to sidestep the 2028 speculation. If he chooses to run, Vance will likely face competition for the nomination. Two sources in Vance’s orbit said they don’t expect that the vice president would clear the primary field. Several other Republicans are reportedly already considering running for president in 2028, including Senators Ted Cruz and Rand Paul and outgoing Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin.

“Right now, it’s an open field,” said John Catsimatidis, a Republican billionaire donor who backed Vance’s Senate campaign. “I’m sure there’s other people who want that job too.”

Vance would start out with significant built-in advantages. Much like an incumbent president running for reelection, Vance could use his bully pulpit to command attention on the campaign trail. He could tap into his coalition of supporters from Congress to Silicon Valley, in addition to Trump’s vast fundraising operation. He would also have his pick of GOP stars to serve as his vice-presidential nominee, though the prospect of a Vance-Rubio ticket has so far generated the most enthusiasm in Republican circles.

Vance and Rubio have formed a genuine friendship, said one source close to the vice president who downplayed the notion that the two men are rivals. “He and Marco are actually friends. There isn’t this subtext of tension,” the source said.

A State Department spokesperson said in response to a request for comment that Rubio and Vance enjoy a strong

PRESSURE From left: Vance at the Munich Security Conference in Germany in February, where he delivered a searing rebuke to European allies over free speech and immigration; supported by his wife, Usha Vance, he became the third-youngest U.S. vice president on January 20.



personal and professional relationship. “Vice President Vance and Secretary Rubio have an incredible relationship, both personally and professionally. The Secretary is honored to be part of Trump’s administration and fight for American workers, strong families, and putting America first,” Tommy Pigott, the principal deputy spokesperson for the State Department, said in a statement to *Newsweek*.

But outside of Vance World, some die-hard MAGA supporters remain wary of the vice president.

Even if Vance received Trump’s endorsement, Republicans who spoke to *Newsweek* voiced doubts that Vance could win over Trump voters who have never gotten over his past criticisms of the president.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Vance was a self-described “Never Trump guy” who publicly criticized Trump and wondered in a private message if Trump could be “America’s Hitler.” Vance said later that he was wrong and came to support Trump after he took office.

“Vance called Trump Hitler and said he was a terrible person,” said another former Trump campaign official. “That was just a bridge too far. That wasn’t an assessment of style. I just don’t know that you can change your mind on something like that.”

Pepper, the former Ohio Democratic Party chairman, said that nine years after Vance burst onto the national scene with the

publication of his memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, “I don’t know who the real JD Vance is.”

“Is it that guy [who once criticized Trump], or the figure who now apologizes for every Trump law violation?” Pepper said. “That’s a person you can trust the least. I don’t want that person anywhere near power.”

Still, Democrats said Vance could be a formidable 2028 opponent.

“Whenever a vice president runs for president, the judgment of that individual is going to be [based on] the success or failure of the president. Vance intuitively understands that,” said Ziskend, the former Biden administration official.

Vance allies said his onetime reservations about Trump will be a distant memory for most voters by the time the next election rolls around. After serving alongside Trump for four years, Vance’s MAGA credentials will be unimpeachable, they said. “JD is a true believer,” said Moreno, the Ohio Republican.

Vance is aware that his fate is tied to Trump, one close adviser said.

“The more committed and devoted to Trump’s agenda JD is, the greater opportunity he has to succeed him in the end, and I think he’s cognizant of that,” the person said. “He’s focused on being the best advocate for Trump. He’s betting that if he does that, the rest will work out.” 



“Vance called Trump Hitler and said he was a terrible person. That was just a bridge too far.... I just don’t know that you can change your mind on something like that.”



AMERICA'S MOST RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES 2026





GETTY

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OR SOME CONSUMERS, what's important isn't just what a company offers but how they manufacture or provide those products or services. For businesses, committing to sustainability initiatives, helping those in the community or offering robust benefits to workers isn't only an ethical choice: When consumers and investors know that a company is socially conscious, they are more likely to align themselves with it.

According to a study by The Roundup, 84 percent of customers say that they are deterred from companies with poor environmental practices, and 62 percent "always or often" specifically look for products that are sustainable.

That is why *Newsweek* is proud to partner with Statista for the seventh time to present America's Most Responsible Companies 2026, highlighting 600 companies that are taking action each day to uphold their social responsibility.

This ranking is built on an evaluation of company CSR/ESG or sustainability reports, financial reports, history of lawsuits and 2024 top polluter indexes from the Political Economy Research Institute. Additionally, over 30 KPIs were researched from the three areas of ESG—environmental, social and governance performance. Companies in this ranking include NVIDIA, Mastercard, Palo Alto Networks, Ecolab and T-Mobile. We hope this list helps you find companies that you feel good about supporting.

—Jennifer H. Cunningham,
Editor-in-Chief

Methodology

In an era of growing environmental and social challenges, recognizing and rewarding corporate responsibility has never been more essential. America's Most Responsible Companies 2026 ranking, created in collaboration between *Newsweek* and Statista for the seventh consecutive year, celebrates U.S. companies that demonstrate exemplary commitment to corporate social responsibility through strong performance in environmental, social and governance practices. This ranking not only honors companies leading the way in responsible business, but also promotes transparency and accountability across the corporate sector, encouraging others to embed sustainability and ethics into their core strategies.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The ranking is built on the principle that corporate responsibility must extend beyond profits to include a company's impact on the planet, its people and its governance structures. By acknowledging the top performers in ESG, *Newsweek* and Statista aim to create a benchmark that drives improvement and fosters a culture of sustainability and integrity among American corporations.

A total of 600 companies were recognized as America's Most Responsible Companies 2026. The evaluation process followed a comprehensive and data-driven methodology to ensure fairness, reliability and transparency.

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The analysis behind the ranking was grounded in two main parts:

- 1. Quantitative KPI Research:** More than 30 key performance indicators were assessed across the three ESG dimensions. These indicators were derived from company reports and other public data sources, providing measurable insights into each company's actual performance.
- 2. CSR Reputation Survey:** A large-scale survey was conducted among U.S.

residents to gauge public perception of corporate social responsibility. This qualitative input ensured that companies were also evaluated on their reputation and perceived commitment to responsible practices.

SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCESS

The process began with the creation of a longlist consisting of the top 2,000 public companies by revenue headquartered in the United States. These companies then underwent a strict screening phase based on several eligibility criteria:

- The company must have published a CSR/ESG or Sustainability Report for 2023 or 2024, as well as relevant environmental data as of June 30, 2025.
- It must also have released a 10-K report for the same year.
- Any company involved in major CSR-related scandals or lawsuits was disqualified to maintain the integrity of the ranking.
- The company was not featured on two or more top 100 polluters indexes from the Political Economy Research Institute.

Only companies that passed this screening moved on to the detailed analysis phase.

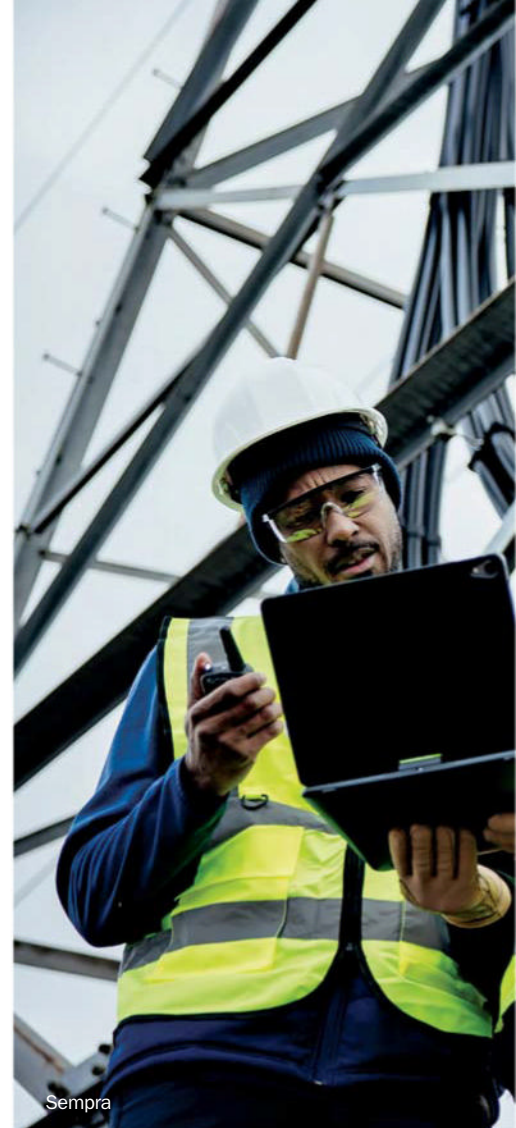
DATA COLLECTION AND KPI RESEARCH

Statista's research team conducted an extensive data collection effort, combining information from CSR/ESG reports, annual financial disclosures and other publicly available sources. Before research began, Statista distributed a registration survey, allowing companies to directly submit their sustainability and CSR reports.

The data collected was purely quantitative, including numerical values and binary statements. Companies that failed to report specific KPIs received a score of zero, even if the metric was less relevant to their industry—ensuring a consistent and comparable assessment across all participants.

ESG DIMENSIONS AND KPIS

The KPIs were categorized into three major ESG areas:



Sempre

- **Environmental:** Emissions, energy use, waste management and water consumption
- **Social:** Board diversity, equality initiatives, employee treatment, philanthropy and community engagement
- **Governance:** Economic performance, disclosure and transparency practices

SCORING

For each ESG dimension, a composite score was generated based on key performance indicators and survey responses. Each dimension was weighted equally, comprising one-third of the final ESG score. The 600 companies with the highest scores were awarded.

The full rankings and methodology are available online.

Top 100 Polluters Indexes, identifying the environmental performance and environmental-justice performance of top corporate air and water polluters and top greenhouse gas emitters using the most recent data available from the U.S. EPA, was created by the University of Massachusetts Amherst.



★★★★★
**AMERICA'S
MOST
RESPONSIBLE
COMPANIES**
2026

Newsweek

statista

- 1 NVIDIA**
TECHNOLOGY
- 2 Mastercard**
FINANCIAL
- 3 Palo Alto Networks**
TECHNOLOGY
- 4 Ecolab**
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
- 5 T-Mobile**
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- 6 Qualcomm**
TECHNOLOGY
- 7 Merck**
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
- 8 HP**
TECHNOLOGY
- 9 Public Service Enterprise Group**
ENERGY & UTILITIES
- 10 Nasdaq**
FINANCIAL

- 11 Lam Research**
TECHNOLOGY
- 12 Tapestry**
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
- 13 Keysight**
TECHNOLOGY
- 14 Illumina**
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
- 15 MetLife**
FINANCIAL
- 16 Visa**
FINANCIAL
- 17 Thermo Fisher Scientific**
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
- 18 General Mills**
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
- 19 IFF**
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- 20 BorgWarner**
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- 21 Teradata**
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- 22 Ingersoll Rand**
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- 23 Analog Devices**
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- 24 Applied Materials**
TECHNOLOGY
- 25 Humana**
FINANCIAL
- 26 Advanced Micro Devices**
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- 27 PayPal**
FINANCIAL
- 28 Morningstar**
FINANCIAL
- 29 American Tower**
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- 30 Adobe**
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- 31 Agilent**
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- 32 Salesforce**
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- 33 S&P Global**
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- 34 Dolby**
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- 35 Emerson**
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- 36 Hewlett Packard Enterprise**
TECHNOLOGY
- 37 Otis**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 38 UnitedHealth Group**
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
- 39 Grainger**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 40 CBRE**
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
- 41 Xerox**
TECHNOLOGY
- 42 Avery Dennison**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 43 Dell Technologies**
TECHNOLOGY
- 44 Micron**
TECHNOLOGY
- 45 Zurn Elkay Water Solutions**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 46 DXC Technology**
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- 47 Regeneron**
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- 48 IBM**
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- 49 Ciena**
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- 50 Motorola Solutions**
TECHNOLOGY
- 51 Fluor**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 52 Hologic**
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
- 53 Workday**
TECHNOLOGY
- 54 HubSpot**
SOFTWARE
- 55 General Motors**
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS
- 56 AptarGroup**
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
- 57 Colgate-Palmolive**
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
- 58 Comfort Systems USA**
CAPITAL GOODS



59 Lear
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

60 The Hartford
FINANCIAL

61 Kimberly-Clark
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

62 Moody's
FINANCIAL

63 Xylem
CAPITAL GOODS

64 Danaher
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES
& PHARMACEUTICALS

65 Las Vegas Sands
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

66 Ralph Lauren
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

67 Avient
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

68 Cisco Systems
TECHNOLOGY

69 Principal Financial Group
FINANCIAL

70 Baker Hughes
ENERGY & UTILITIES

71 Gartner
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

72 Autodesk
SOFTWARE

73 Apple
TECHNOLOGY

74 Gap
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

75 Fortinet
TECHNOLOGY

76 Molson Coors
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

77 Armstrong World Industries
CAPITAL GOODS

78 Avnet
TECHNOLOGY

79 Pfizer
HEALTH CARE,
LIFE SCIENCES
& PHARMACEUTICALS

80 Intel
TECHNOLOGY

81 Vontier
CAPITAL GOODS

82 Dayforce
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



Range Resources

83 Labcorp
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

84 Bank of New York Mellon
FINANCIAL

85 Steelcase
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

86 Unum Group
FINANCIAL

87 Organon
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

88 Target
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

89 Lumentum
TECHNOLOGY

90 Estée Lauder
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

91 Etsy
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

92 Mattel
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

93 Howmet Aerospace
CAPITAL GOODS

94 Interface
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

95 Kraft Heinz
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

96 AMN Healthcare
HEALTH CARE,
LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

97 Bunge
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

98 Sensata Technologies
TECHNOLOGY

99 ServiceNow
SOFTWARE

100 Iron Mountain
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**101 Bath &
Body Works**
RETAIL &
CONSUMER GOODS

102 Cognizant
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

103 ManpowerGroup
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

104 Bread Financial
FINANCIAL

105 Honeywell
CAPITAL GOODS

106 Synopsys
SOFTWARE

107 Upwork
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

108 State Street
FINANCIAL

109 M&T Bank
FINANCIAL

110 Foot Locker
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

111 EXL
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

112 Sherwin-Williams
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

113 American Express
FINANCIAL

114 Ormat Technologies
ENERGY & UTILITIES

115 SBA Communications
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

116 Baxter
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

117 The Clorox Company
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

118 Moderna
HEALTH CARE,
LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

119 Intuit
SOFTWARE

120 FMC
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

121 Ribbon Communications
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

122 Illinois Tool Works
CAPITAL GOODS

123 Albemarle
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

124 Electronic Arts
SOFTWARE

125 Host Hotels & Resorts
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

126 PVH
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

127 Fifth Third Bank
FINANCIAL

128 Keurig Dr Pepper
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

129 Enphase
ENERGY & UTILITIES

130 AvalonBay Communities
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

131 Verizon Communications
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

132 KLA
TECHNOLOGY

133 Owens Corning
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

134 Coherent
TECHNOLOGY

135 Cintas
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

136 Equinix
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

137 Best Buy
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

138 GoDaddy
TECHNOLOGY

139 Portland General Electric
ENERGY & UTILITIES

140 Kosmos Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

141 Mondelēz
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

142 Church & Dwight
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

143 Weatherford
ENERGY & UTILITIES

144 Burlington
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

145 Edgewell Personal Care
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

146 FactSet
TECHNOLOGY

147 Parker-Hannifin
CAPITAL GOODS

148 Alnylam
HEALTH CARE,
LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

149 Dana
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

150 Voya Financial
FINANCIAL

151 Carrier
CAPITAL GOODS

152 Prologis
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

153 Edwards Lifesciences
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

154 Regency Centers
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

155 J.M. Smucker
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

156 Itron
TECHNOLOGY

157 Brixmor Property Group
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

158 Watts
CAPITAL GOODS

159 The Walt Disney Company
MEDIA &
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

160 Waste Management
ENERGY & UTILITIES

161 Crown Holdings
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

162 Realty Income
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

163 Deere
CAPITAL GOODS

164 Masco
CAPITAL GOODS

165 Cirrus Logic
TECHNOLOGY

166 Robert Half International
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

167 AGCO
CAPITAL GOODS

168 PTC
SOFTWARE

169 CSX
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

170 Essex Property Trust
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

**171 Air Products
and Chemicals**
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

**172 American Axle &
Manufacturing Holdings**
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

173 Union Pacific
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

174 Fortive
CAPITAL GOODS

175 Bank of America
FINANCIAL

176 Planet Fitness
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

177 American Water
ENERGY & UTILITIES

178 Texas Instruments
TECHNOLOGY

179 Mueller Water Products
CAPITAL GOODS

180 Paramount Group
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

181 Helix Energy Solutions
ENERGY & UTILITIES

182 Mettler-Toledo
CAPITAL GOODS

183 Oshkosh
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

184 Iridium Communications
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

185 Kimco Realty
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

186 Scotts Miracle-Gro
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

187 Welltower
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

188 GE HealthCare
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

189 Macy's
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

190 Kenvue
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

191 United Rentals
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

192 Lincoln Electric
CAPITAL GOODS

**193 Federal Realty Investment
Trust**
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

194 PNC Financial Services
FINANCIAL

195 Ball
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

196 McCormick & Company
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

197 Coty
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

198 Lowe's
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

199 Silicon Labs
TECHNOLOGY

200 Harley-Davidson
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

201 Avantor
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

202 Elevance Health
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203 Oracle	TECHNOLOGY
204 Alcoa	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
205 Wabtec	TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS
206 Gen Digital	MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS
207 Insulet	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
208 GE Vernova	ENERGY & UTILITIES
209 LPL Financial	FINANCIAL
210 Donaldson	CAPITAL GOODS
211 AAON	CAPITAL GOODS
212 Lincoln Financial	FINANCIAL
213 Douglas Dynamics	CAPITAL GOODS
214 Repligen	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
215 Microchip	TECHNOLOGY
216 Jabil	TECHNOLOGY
217 Zoetis	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
218 Littelfuse	TECHNOLOGY
219 Yum! Brands	HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE
220 Amphenol	TECHNOLOGY
221 Western Digital	TECHNOLOGY
222 Terex	CAPITAL GOODS
223 ITT	CAPITAL GOODS
224 Wesco	CAPITAL GOODS
225 Eversource Energy	ENERGY & UTILITIES

226 Amgen	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
227 Onsemi	TECHNOLOGY
228 Hilton	HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE
229 ABM Industries	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
230 Carter's	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
231 Digital Realty	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
232 Natera	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
233 California Water Service Group	ENERGY & UTILITIES
234 Fox Factory	AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS
235 Boston Properties	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
236 TransUnion	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
237 Comerica	FINANCIAL
238 USANA Health Sciences	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
239 Spire	ENERGY & UTILITIES
240 Corning	TECHNOLOGY
241 Sonoco Products	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
242 Cabot	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
243 Stanley Black & Decker	CAPITAL GOODS
244 Cboe Global Markets	FINANCIAL
245 Arista Networks	TECHNOLOGY
246 Post	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
247 Nordson	CAPITAL GOODS
248 Zillow	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
249 Advanced Drainage Systems	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

250 The Greenbrier Companies	TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS
251 Marriott International	HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE
252 American Airlines	TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS
253 ONEOK	ENERGY & UTILITIES
254 United Natural Foods	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
255 Quanta Services	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
256 Leslie's	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
257 Microsoft	SOFTWARE
258 Carlisle Companies	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
259 Herc Holdings	CAPITAL GOODS
260 Hasbro	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
261 Expedia Group	HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE
262 Kroger	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
263 Travel + Leisure	HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE
264 Charles River Laboratories	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
265 Qorvo	TECHNOLOGY
266 Coeur Mining	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
267 ResMed	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
268 Chart Industries	CAPITAL GOODS
269 Waters	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
270 The Home Depot	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
271 Axcelis	TECHNOLOGY
272 Whirlpool	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

273 Varex Imaging	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
274 Element Solutions	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
275 EnerSys	ENERGY & UTILITIES
276 Ducommun	CAPITAL GOODS
277 AdvanSix	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
278 Ryman Hospitality Properties	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
279 Select Water Solutions	ENERGY & UTILITIES
280 TPI Composites	CAPITAL GOODS
281 Exact Sciences	HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS
282 Toast	SOFTWARE
283 Sempra	ENERGY & UTILITIES
284 Fortune Brands	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
285 Ventas	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
286 Sunstone Hotel Investors	REAL ESTATE & HOUSING
287 Prudential	FINANCIAL
288 Kimball Electronics	CAPITAL GOODS
289 Greif	MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
290 California Resources	ENERGY & UTILITIES
291 La-Z-Boy	RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS
292 Kennametal	CAPITAL GOODS
293 NOV	ENERGY & UTILITIES
294 Array Technologies	ENERGY & UTILITIES
295 Invesco	FINANCIAL
296 THOR Industries	AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

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- 324 ICF**
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- 328 Alexandria Real Estate Equities**
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- 329 FIS**
TECHNOLOGY



- 330 Jones Lang LaSalle**
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- 331 Harmonic**
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- 332 Constellation Energy**
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- 335 Granite Construction**
CAPITAL GOODS
- 336 Talos Energy**
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- 337 JPMorgan Chase & Co.**
FINANCIAL
- 338 Koppers**
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS
- 339 Valvoline**
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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- 389 Hillenbrand**
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- 391 Marvell Technology**
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- 393 Sensient Technologies**
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- 399 Fiserv**
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- 400 Henry Schein**
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- 401 DiamondRock Hospitality**
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402 Carpenter Technology
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

403 Pebblebrook Hotel Trust
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

404 Rockwell Automation
TECHNOLOGY

405 Equity LifeStyle Properties
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

406 J.B. Hunt
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

407 Conagra Brands
RETAIL &
CONSUMER GOODS

408 Modine Manufacturing
CAPITAL GOODS

409 Clearwater Paper
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

410 Williams-Sonoma
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

411 Helen of Troy
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

412 Gates Industrial
CAPITAL GOODS

413 Alliant Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

414 IPG
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

415 Murphy Oil
ENERGY & UTILITIES

416 Textron
CAPITAL GOODS

417 T. Rowe Price
FINANCIAL

418 Citizens Financial
FINANCIAL

419 Tractor Supply Co.
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420 United Parcel Service
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

421 Alaska Air
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

422 Ionis Pharmaceuticals
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423 Spectrum Brands
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

424 Booz Allen Hamilton
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425 Winnebago Industries
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426 VF Corporation
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

427 Apple Hospitality
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

428 QuidelOrtho
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
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429 C.H. Robinson
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

430 Envista
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

431 CMC
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

432 Xcel Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

433 Omnicom Group
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

434 Expro
ENERGY & UTILITIES

435 Ecovyst
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

436 Dentsply Sirona
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LIFE SCIENCES &
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437 Kilroy Realty
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

438 Minerals Technologies
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

439 Tennant Company
CAPITAL GOODS

440 Levi Strauss & Co.
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

441 Omega Healthcare Investors
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

442 National Vision
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

443 Performance Food
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

444 COPT Defense Properties
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

445 Peabody Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

446 Kelly Services
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

447 Acuity Brands
CAPITAL GOODS

448 US Foods
RETAIL &
CONSUMER GOODS

449 Evergy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

450 Hubbell
CAPITAL GOODS

451 Allstate
FINANCIAL

452 Tyler Technologies
SOFTWARE

453 CenterPoint Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

454 RPM International
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

455 Quaker Houghton
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

456 Amkor Technology
TECHNOLOGY

457 AutoZone
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

458 Conduent
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

459 Green Plains
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

460 UDR
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

461 Medical Properties Trust
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

462 Balchem
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

463 Stepstone
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

464 Teradyne
TECHNOLOGY

465 Pitney Bowes
TECHNOLOGY

466 FedEx
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

467 ConocoPhillips
ENERGY & UTILITIES

468 Choice Hotels
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

469 ESAB Corporation
CAPITAL GOODS

470 Northwest Natural
ENERGY & UTILITIES

471 Skywork Solutions
TECHNOLOGY

472 Viasat
MEDIA &
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

473 Hecla Mining
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

474 Semtech
TECHNOLOGY

475 BellRing
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

476 Intuitive
HEALTH CARE,
LIFE SCIENCES &
PHARMACEUTICALS

477 Korn Ferry
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

478 The Cheesecake Factory
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

479 Diebold Nixdorf
TECHNOLOGY

480 JBG Smith
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

481 Vulcan Materials
CAPITAL GOODS

482 Pathward
FINANCIAL

483 Trimble
TECHNOLOGY

484 Vital Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

485 CF Industries Holdings
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

486 United Airlines
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

487 Clearway Energy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

488 YETI
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

489 Wiley
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

490 Compass Minerals
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

491 U.S. Bancorp
FINANCIAL

492 Atkore
CAPITAL GOODS

493 Domino's Pizza
HOTELS, DINING & LEISURE

494 TDS
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

495 AT&T
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

496 VICI Properties
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

497 Worthington Enterprises
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

498 ArcBest
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

499 MarketAxess
FINANCIAL

500 The Andersons
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

501 Regions Financial
FINANCIAL

502 Truist
FINANCIAL

503 Phibro Animal Health
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

504 Blackbaud
SOFTWARE

505 Paramount Skydance
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

506 Akamai
SOFTWARE

507 IPG Photonics
CAPITAL GOODS

508 IAC
MEDIA & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

509 Kadant
CAPITAL GOODS

510 Plexus
TECHNOLOGY

511 GXO
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

512 Flowers Foods
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

513 Entergy
ENERGY & UTILITIES

514 GlobalFoundries
TECHNOLOGY

515 ScanSource
TECHNOLOGY

516 Darling Ingredients
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

517 Century Communities
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

518 Wabash
CAPITAL GOODS

519 Petco
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520 Western Union
FINANCIAL

521 Omnicell
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

522 Horace Mann Educators
FINANCIAL

523 Allegiant Air
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

524 Brookfield Business
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525 Xenia Hotels & Resorts
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526 Black Hills
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527 Dexcom
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

528 Tronox
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529 LCI Industries
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530 Expeditors
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531 Polaris
AUTOMOTIVE & COMPONENTS

532 Genworth Financial
FINANCIAL

533 SpartanNash
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534 Integra
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

535 Ameriprise Financial
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536 Hanesbrands
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

537 Revvity
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

538 Simpson Manufacturing Company
CAPITAL GOODS

539 The Toro Company
CAPITAL GOODS

540 Alamo Group
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541 Fastenal
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542 Papa John's International
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543 AMH
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544 Boyd
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545 Timken
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546 Dorman Products
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547 Avanos Medical
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

548 Merit Medical Systems
HEALTH CARE, LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMACEUTICALS

549 SL Green
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

550 Jack Henry & Associates
FINANCIAL

551 Chegg
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

552 CNO
FINANCIAL

553 Allegro MicroSystems
TECHNOLOGY

554 The Children's Place
RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

555 Taylor Morrison
REAL ESTATE & HOUSING

556 Helmerich & Payne
ENERGY & UTILITIES

557 Allison Transmission
CAPITAL GOODS

558 Progress Software
SOFTWARE

559 Ameren
ENERGY & UTILITIES

560 Brunswick Corp
CAPITAL GOODS

561 Metallus
MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

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RETAIL & CONSUMER GOODS

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MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

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MATERIALS & CHEMICALS

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597 H2O America
ENERGY & UTILITIES

598 Veeco Instruments
TECHNOLOGY

599 Materion
TECHNOLOGY

600 PACCAR
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

CULTURE

HIGH, LOW + EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

FILM

‘YOUNG, DUMB AND FULL OF CHRIST’

Faith plays a starring role in Rian Johnson’s new *Knives Out* film, *Wake Up Dead Man*

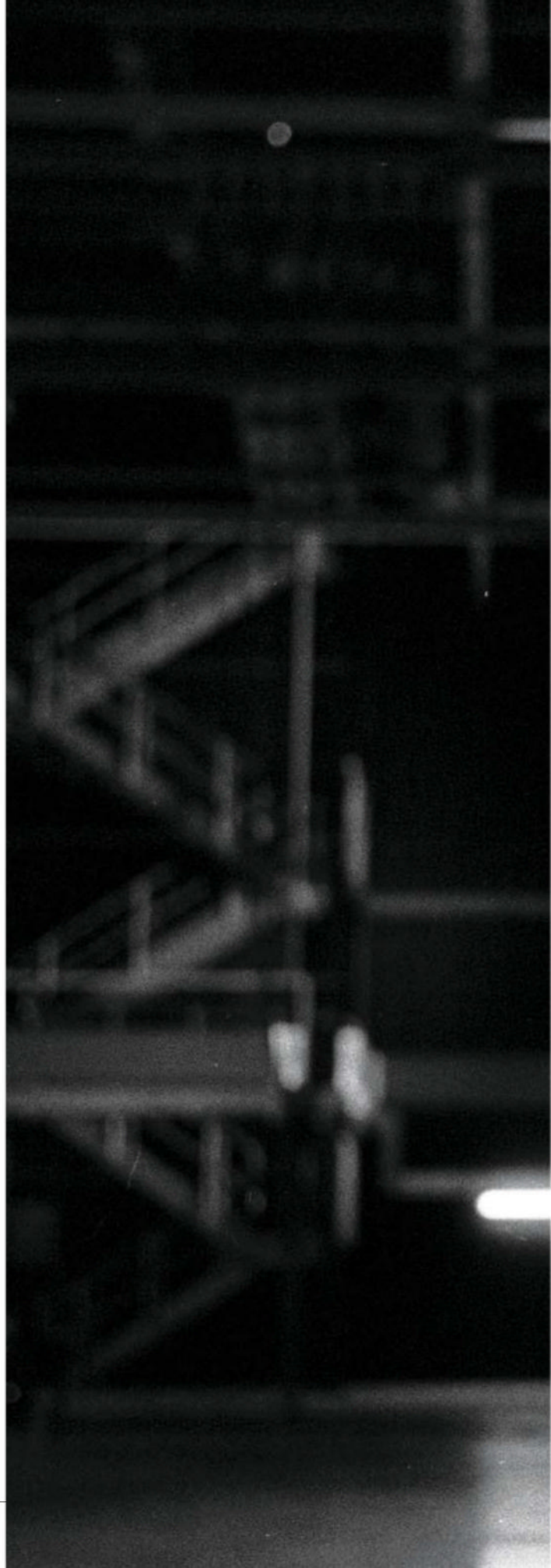
BY
H. ALAN SCOTT

THE *KNIVES OUT* FRANCHISE HAS BECOME SOMETHING OF AN ANOMALY in modern cinema. In an era defined by superheroes and CGI-enhanced storytelling, director/writer Rian Johnson has created a franchise that is surprisingly familiar and old-fashioned, crafting a retro, Hitchcockian-inspired murder mystery that somehow still satisfies modern audiences’ TikTok attention span. He’s bound to do it again with the release of *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*.

For this third installment in the series, released exclusively on Netflix, Johnson and his trusted private investigator, Benoit Blanc, played by Daniel Craig, faced a unique challenge. After tackling the class struggle of an old-money family in the first *Knives Out* and the toxic culture of the tech elite in *Glass Onion*, where could Blanc go next? The answer lay in a theme arguably more historically explosive than any blockbuster action flick: religion.

“Can we make a movie that talks about faith as opposed to talking at it or finger-wagging or feeling didactic?” Johnson asks *Newsweek* in an interview alongside Craig and co-stars Josh O’Connor and Glenn Close. “But at the same time, that doesn’t pull any punches in terms of the conversation about both faith and religion and society. And can we do it? This is the bigger challenge in the context of a Benoit Blanc mystery, which is a big, fun, entertaining murder mystery that welcomes audiences into the big tent to have a good time with their families. And that seemed like an interesting challenge.”

The film finds Blanc in a small community in upstate New York investigating the murder of Monsignor Jefferson Wicks (Josh Brolin). In one of Blanc’s most difficult “locked room” puzzles, Blanc finds himself teamed up with Father Jud Duplency (O’Connor)—a young priest caught between his vows and the truth—to





BACK TO BUSINESS

Craig as detective Benoit Blanc investigates the murder of a religious leader in the third installment of the *Knives Out* franchise.

navigate a group of church faithful whose spiritual devotion masks deadly secrets.

The challenge for this one was tonal as much as it was thematic. How do you introduce the weight of spirituality in a genre defined by humor, camp and wit? Therein lies the magic of Johnson's work, and it shows in every performance, particularly those of Craig, O'Connor and Close. But for Craig, this thematic dance is exactly what has appealed to fans of the franchise, and it's why they keep coming back.

"A lot of it is down to Rian's attitude toward filmmaking," Craig says. "He wants to give people the best time that they can have in a cinema. It's not that much more complicated than that. And thankfully he's picked this genre right now to do that."

And for Craig, who has inhabited the Southern sleuth for three films now, that theatrical experience the audience receives is paramount.

"You have to come together as a group, and you're putting on a show, and you should never really forget that, I don't think," he explains. "At the end of the day, it's like, how can we please people? How can we turn them on?"

For Johnson, that spark to turn on an audience rarely comes from the murder itself; the "how" of the murder is secondary to the "why." Settling on this story required Johnson to look past the puzzle he created and into his own personal story.

A Personal Compass

The pivot to faith wasn't some random narrative dart throw for Johnson. It was personal.

"Well, it came first of all from Daniel and I having an initial conversation about how it would be nice to ground the next one a little bit more," Johnson says. "And that led me to thinking, OK, so that means how do I make it personal? And that led me to making it about faith."

The story is populated by characters grappling with their own relationships to devotion. From Close's Martha Delacroix—the

Monsignor's most devoted worshipper and unofficial protector of the church—to the parade of church patrons who make up Johnson's quirky world, including Kerry Washington as Vera Draven, Andrew Scott as Lee Ross and Jeremy Renner as Dr. Nat Sharp, among others. While Johnson doesn't acknowledge this directly, it's fair to assume each character's own complicated relationship to the church mirrors his own relationship to faith.

"I didn't grow up Catholic, but I grew up very Christian," Johnson reveals. "I grew up a Protestant, kind of evangelical. And I'm not at all anymore, I'm not a believer anymore, but when I was growing up and into my early 20s, it was something that was a deeply personal, huge part of who I was and how I saw the world. So it's something I have really strong and very complicated feelings about."

The complicated feelings serve as the backbone of the plot, building the mystery around the uncertainty of belief itself.

"For me, it comes from setting the compass very early to the movie truly being about faith. And then once I start diving into the details of the script," Johnson says, "even down to the details of the mystery and the murder, all of those things, I'm formulating [them] in order to be oriented around this center of the movie."

But what does that mean for Blanc? For a character rooted in logic and reason, investigating a murder based on the uncertainty of faith proved to be a challenging opportunity to discover more about the detective.

"What I loved about this script was that we don't get to know a lot more about him," Craig says. "I like the mystery of him. But through his relationship with Father Jud

Duplicity, he has a revelation about the world. He has a mind-expanding moment, which, in any other person, it might be seen as a religious experience. He doesn't see it as a religious experience; he sees it as a wonderful lesson learned."



But, of course, it's a *Knives Out* mystery, so there's going to be humor.

"Young, dumb and full of Christ," Johnson laughs, quoting a favorite line from the film. "I think growing up, especially as a teenager in the church, you laugh a lot about it. It's not like a sacred cow, it's actually part of your life you're living with, and that means it's something you're laughing about also."

The Heart of the Mystery

Central to Blanc's "mind-expanding moment" is O'Connor's Father Jud. Blanc might be the brains of the operation, but Father Jud is certainly the soul. That depth of emotion made O'Connor the perfect choice for Johnson and Craig.

"We both hit upon Josh it felt like at the same time," Craig recalls. "His name came up, and it was like, 'that's the person we want.' And we're not used to not getting our own way. We're spoiled."

O'Connor, best known for his Emmy-winning performance of Prince



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interviews with
Newsweek



Charles in Netflix's *The Crown*, steps into the role of Father Jud with a surprising lightness. For O'Connor, the character offered him a chance to reframe what faith looks like on screen.

"I think that what Father Jud is exploring is this notion of uncertainty," O'Connor says. "It doesn't have to be fact or printed into stone. It's like faith is a question. Faith requires a belief in change and forgiveness."

What will be perhaps new to O'Connor fans is just how funny he is in *Wake Up*



"A big, fun, entertaining murder mystery that welcomes audiences into the big tent to have a good time with their families."



RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE The church is a lead character in itself in *Wake Up Dead Man*. From left to right: Andrew Scott, Mila Kunis, Daryl McCormack and Close react to a shocking revelation; Brodin as Monsignor Jefferson Wicks, who becomes the latest murder victim in the *Knives Out* franchise.

Dead Man. And for O'Connor, he jumped at the chance to use humor to show a greater depth of emotion, particularly because he long drew inspiration from actors like Gene Wilder and Pete Postlethwaite.

To O'Connor, humor is a trapdoor, a way to disarm the audience in order to deliver that emotional payload.

"It's so great being able to create something that's funny and humorous, and then also be able to dance that line between the humorous and the more profound or the more emotional," he says.

"Some of my favorite comic performances really dance with an audience, and they acknowledge once they've got you laughing, you're vulnerable and they can pull the rug from underneath you—and next thing you know, you're having your heart broken."

This ability to oscillate between the comedic and heartbreaking has earned O'Connor a comparison to a certain Hollywood legend from another Hollywood legend.

"I just think he's like Jimmy Stewart," Close says. "And what is it about Jimmy Stewart? You always feel that there's a human heart there. And there's somebody that you love. He's easy to love. And that's a beautiful quality to have, certainly in film. He's empathetic and he's

sympathetic and real and unassuming and lovely, and he's just a great guy."

"I love Glenn's comparison to Jimmy Stewart," Johnson says. "I also think that, like Jimmy Stewart, Josh can do anything. Like Jimmy Stewart, you look at him in an Anthony Mann Western and look at him in *It's a Wonderful Life* and there's just a massive gamut. I mean Josh, when I saw him in *Challengers*, I was like, 'Oh my God, who is this charismatic [person]?' He just jumps off the screen."

Craig agrees, noting the specific way O'Connor draws the viewer in. "He's a brilliant, brilliant, brilliant actor, everything he does is believable. He's also incredibly funny. I know he's played lots of serious roles, but he's just a lot of fun to have around."

The Icon

While O'Connor may provide the heart, Close provides the gravity. When asked about what she brings to the film, Johnson sums it up perfectly.

"Well, I mean, I guess the short answer is, she's Glenn motherf***** Close," Johnson says.

Close's Delacroix is shrouded in mystery. In order to find her character, the actor drew from a harrowing chapter of her own life.

"From 7 to 22, I was in a cult," Close says matter-of-factly, referring to her childhood spent in Rev. Frank Buchman's Moral Re-Armament, which believed war could be avoided through moral transformation by believers. "Not of my choice. I had no choice. And I think Martha is a woman who had no family life. She was the church, and the man who founded that church was her whole life. I can understand that mindset. So, I could totally commit to it."

Despite this intense devotion to character, Johnson was struck by the joy Close brought to the set.

"Every day when she showed up on set, she was there with the energy of someone who had just gotten their first job in the industry," Johnson recalls. "And by that I mean she loves making movies, and she

shows up with almost like a wide-eyed wonder of, 'We get to do this?'"

Craig found a kindred spirit in Close.

"We want the same things. We want to find the truth. We want to find the humanity in the people we're playing. We want to make people laugh. We want [to] make people clap. We're looking for love."

"Can we make a movie that talks about faith as opposed to talking at it or finger-wagging or feeling didactic?"



PERFECT CHOICE Craig and Johnson said of O'Connor (center), "that's the person we want" for the role.

One thing many fans of Close want for her is an Oscar and, based on the reception from critics of her performance in *Wake Up Dead Man*, that could be a very real possibility in the near future. While Close maintains that it's always about the work, not awards, she admits the validation would be nice.

"To be in this profession for 50 years and still be in the room, that's incredible," Close says, "because it's a brutal profession. But I'm now starting to say, it'd be nice. You know? It'd really be nice. Because I think it does change maybe how people within the business look at you. You want to get great parts. You want to get parts that give you a run for their money, your money."

Keeping the Mystery Alive

Wake Up Dead Man is a carefully constructed puzzle built by a team that is genuinely having fun. And it's that joyful team that is the real clue to the franchise's success.

"They talk about, 'Oh, we're such an ensemble.' And it's not usually the truth," Craig admits. "Genuinely on these movies, there's just this feeling of coming together, because of this man [Johnson], and because of the scripts, because of what he and his attitude and joy that he brings to the set, it's an incredibly creative process."

And with Johnson and Craig at the helm, Blanc will continue to pull the wool over our eyes. The future of the franchise isn't dictated by box office numbers, but rather the thrill of the unknown.

"Look, I feel like as long as we can keep figuring out new and slightly scary things to do," Johnson concludes—"scary meaning, we don't know if we can pull it off or not. 'Gee, can this genre do this? Let's find out.' And as long we're both enjoying it, as long [as] the audiences are into it, as long as this guy [Craig] wants to keep coming back, I'd be thrilled to keep making these for a long time to come." 

H. Alan Scott is a *Newsweek* senior editor and host of *The Parting Shot* podcast. Follow them everywhere @HAlanScott

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FROM CELEBRATION-WORTHY DRINKS TO CUTTING-EDGE TECH and timeless accessories, *Newsweek's* holiday gift guide offers a curated selection of aspirational items designed to delight even the most discerning recipients.



JURA Z10

For the At-Home Barista

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Swiss precision meets barista-level innovation in this dual-function coffee machine that brews both hot and true cold brew specialties. With 40 preprogrammed specialty coffees and 10 coffee strength levels, it features JURA's proprietary Product Recognizing Grinder, which auto-adjusts grind consistency for each drink—from espresso to flat white—at the touch of a button.

FOR HER



Patek Philippe Gondolo Serata 4962/200R-010

For the Discerning
Watch Collector

POA

A statement in rose gold, this Gondolo Serata has a zebra-pattern sapphire crystal dial and 94 brilliant-cut spessartites (2.02 carats) flowing in color from cognac to tangerine in a double gradient. The waisted silhouette and engraved Breguet numerals elevate this as both timepiece and heirloom that can be passed down through generations.

CurrentBody LED Red Light Therapy Face Mask: Series 2

For the Science-
Backed Beauty Devotee

\$469.99

This LED mask uses red, near-infrared and deep near-infrared LED light to target skin tone, elasticity and aging—bringing spa-level treatment into the home. Known to be trusted and loved by A-listers from Lily Collins to Cillian Murphy, it's the kind of present they'll keep thanking you for.



Lunya Silk Striped Jacquard Pajamas

For the Luxury Lounger

\$298

Part of the Washable Silk Collection, this emerald-hued set in Dusky Cypress Jacquard pairs a relaxed, collared top with high-rise, wide-leg pants in 100 percent machine-washable silk. The striped finish adds subtle texture for elevated downtime.



Jo Malone Orange Bitters Scented Candle

For the Interiors
Enthusiast

\$220 (600g)

Celebrate the season with this zesty winter blend of sweet orange, bitter orange and warm sandalwood. Poured in the British countryside and dressed in a festive design, it's a luxurious scent that lingers long after the guests have gone home with Tupperware full of dessert.



OURA Ring 4

For the Wellness
Junkie

\$499

Disguised as sleek ceramic-titanium smart ring tracks heart rate, body temperature, SpO₂ and activity 24/7—delivering science-backed insights through a robust mobile app. Water-resistant to 100 meters and lasting up to eight days per charge, it pairs health precision with understated style.



FOR HIM

Brunello Cucinelli Pour Homme

For the Scent Aficionado
\$210 (100ml)

Evoking the golden stillness of the Umbrian countryside in Italy, this fragrance, presented in a refined, contemporary bottle, opens with sunlit bursts of Calabrian bergamot and Madagascan black pepper. Mid-notes of cypress, clary sage and juniper lend an herbaceous earthiness, while Ambrox Super and Clearwood create a warm, creamy finish rooted in quiet elegance.

WANDRD PRVKE 41L Backpack (V4)

For the Amateur Photographer on the Go
From \$274

Trusted by travelers and photographers alike, the PRVKE V4 features a sleek roll top and upgraded weather-resistant YKK zippers. With smart storage—including an AirTag sleeve, foam-lined laptop compartment and breathable back panel—this bag adapts to both everyday life and far-flung adventures.

Wingback Steel Mechanical Pen

For Those Who Appreciate Good Handwriting

\$204

Made from 303 stainless steel and containing a pressurized ink cartridge, this mechanical pen is precision-engineered to last a lifetime. Add an inscription for an extra personal touch.

OMEGA Speedmaster Dark Side of the Moon Watch

For the Time-piece Connoisseur

From \$16,100

Crafted in polished-brushed black ceramic, this 44.25 mm chronograph pays homage to OMEGA's space legacy. A ceramic dial sandblasted by laser sits beneath the front sapphire crystal, and the hour and minute hands are filled with black Super-LumiNova. The rubber strap features a lunar surface pattern on the underside.

Ami Paris Grey Alpaca Scarf

For the Parisian-at-Heart

\$415

This oversized Italian-made scarf blends alpaca, wool and polyamide for plush warmth and texture. Finished with off-white Ami de Coeur jacquard and 5-inch fringe on each end, it's a unisex accessory that wraps the season in subtle luxury after being featured in several high-profile films and television series.



Ingenuity Guides Japan's Next Industrial Chapter

Japan's manufacturers are reshaping essential systems, from mobility and materials to food and recycling, through precision, ingenuity and adaptation, revealing how a resource-strained nation builds resilience into everyday life. *By Daniel de Bomford*

Japan's factories are being asked to do more with less carbon, less waste and fewer people. After pledging carbon neutrality by 2050, the country's green transformation agenda has turned decarbonization and circularity into industrial policy rather than public relations. Within this pressure-cooker, manufacturers are redesigning materials, kitchens, mobility and steel itself, proving that a mature economy can cut emissions and resource use while still building the infrastructure of modern life.

Mobility and Infrastructure for a Changing World

Bike O sees opportunity in a shifting domestic market. Demand for premium used motorcycles remains steady, and the company pairs nationwide reach with a customer-centric approach. As CEO Atsushi Sawa notes, "There remains ample room for growth in the used motorcycle market." His strategy blends digital streamlining, lifecycle services, and early steps toward overseas expansion.

Aero Lab fills a unique role in Japan's strict aviation environment. President Kenzo Colon says, "We know how to import, how to fly, how to maintain, and how to register," noting that few in Japan understand the full chain of small-

aircraft operations. The company works directly with regulators to modernize outdated rules and is expanding its model abroad. "Every day, we are talking to the JCAB and pushing them," he says.

Maruichi Steel Tube blends *monozukuri* with global competitiveness. President Hiroyuki Suzuki argues that Japan's strength lies in "creating systems and solutions that only Japanese manufacturers can provide." The company's investments in semiconductor-grade tubing, including bright annealing in the U.S., position it for future demand cycles. Suzuki emphasizes teamwork across cultures: "Building a cooperative, team-oriented culture is central to how we do business globally."

Fuji Glove's craft-centered approach reflects the discipline at the heart of Japan's manufacturing ethos. President Hiroyuki Fukumoto says their mission is to "provide safety and reliability" through continuous improvement in quality and durability. Its four-layer CBK-273 glove demonstrates how user insight guides design, featuring flexible leather, aramid fibers, and a waterproof film built for demanding environments. "We listen carefully to their specific requirements and develop solutions accordingly," he says.

Circularity as Strategy, Not Slogan

Hashimoto Cloth tackles waste by reinventing disposable protection. Working with the University of Tokyo and Stanford, it created a mask that is 99 percent plant-derived and is now developing a "rechargeable" model. CEO Tatsuki Hashimoto says, "Masks could be washed, recharged, and reused, significantly reducing both environmental impact and costs," turning stockpiles into long-life assets for hospitals, municipalities, and global partners.

Nakanishi is turning kitchen engineering into a sustainability tool. Its systems recycle and reuse steam to cut energy consumption, while low-oxygen cooking environments extend shelf life and reduce food loss. President Kazuma Nakanishi says, "Sustainability is indeed one of the key directions shaping our industry. Our machines are designed to recycle and reuse steam, which reduces overall energy consumption." The result is cleaner, longer-lasting food with lower operating costs for schools and factories.

REFINVERSE challenges Japan's legacy waste-disposal model by treating discarded materials as assets. President Akira Ochi says, "Recycling must operate based on market principles," arguing that

profitability accelerates change. The company converts fishing nets, airbags, and plastics into new materials while pursuing international licensing. "Tokyo is an oil field," Ochi says, describing dense, well-managed waste streams as an untapped resource for a new circular economy.

Terabo brings more than a century of plastics expertise to Japan's circular-materials frontier. Its recycled nylon program recovers PA6 and PA66 from film, airbags, and discarded fishing nets, transforming them into tailored engineering compounds. The company also develops Caracle, a biomass plastic made with finely processed eggshells. President Norio Fukawa says, "Japanese companies have developed a deep understanding of quality," a principle reflected in Terabo's pursuit of sustainable, high-performance materials.

Taken together, these companies hint at how Japan's sustainability drive will actually unfold: not in a single breakthrough, but in thousands of precise adjustments to how we move, eat, build and reuse. In a world short of both resources and time, Japan's experiment matters. If it can align *monozukuri* with net-zero goals, its green transformation may offer a workable blueprint for other aging, industrial economies.

Reusable Mask Technology Moves Forward

Hashimoto Cloth Corporation advances biodegradable mask technology through university partnerships, aiming to reduce waste and improve long-term protective performance worldwide. *By Daniel de Bomford and Kyann Edouard*

Hashimoto Cloth Corporation, a Shiga-based producer of non-woven materials, is advancing biodegradable filter technology through ongoing work with researchers at the University of Tokyo and Stanford. Two years ago, the company launched a mask made of 99% plant-derived materials using a PLA filter and expects to release a new "rechargeable mask" at the end of next year.

The initiative centers on a mask made almost entirely from plant-derived materials, designed to ease storage constraints and reduce long-term waste. Currently, masks can only be stored for five to seven years before being discarded, resulting in significant waste.

Engineers are developing a method to restore the electrostatic charge that allows filters to trap airborne particles. The Mask Charger would enable masks to be washed, recharged, and reused, helping hospitals and

local governments reduce disposal volumes and lower procurement costs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, critical facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes faced a severe shortage of masks, posing a serious threat to human lives. The Mask Charger ensures that masks can be stored and safely reused.

The company is now testing its third prototype with support from NEDO, Japan's national R&D agency and plans to move into production once final evaluations are complete.



Tatsuki Hashimoto,
CEO, Hashimoto
Cloth Corporation



www.hashimoto-cloth.com



Prototype of the
mask charger



99% naturally derived
sustainable mask



Hashimoto Cloth Vietnam Factory

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Osaka Healthcare Pavilion roof

Shaping Tomorrow with Precision Steel Solutions

Maruichi Steel Tube is shaping global manufacturing by uniting Japanese craftsmanship, advanced steel technologies and a forward-looking international strategy to support fast-growing industries and contribute meaningfully to landmark initiatives like EXPO 2025 Osaka-Kansai. *By Daniel de Bomford, Paul Mannion and Cian O'Neill*

Humanity's most extraordinary wonders are supported by a skeleton made of steel. From buildings touching the sky to machines fabricating delicate goods at a microscopic scale, bones made from steel give structure and purpose.



Steel tubes for structures

During Japan's construction and industrial boom, it was Maruichi Steel Tube that fashioned the invisible structures supporting many twentieth-century wonders that were built around and upon. The company is now a leading tube manufacturer with the largest market share in Japan. As the domestic market cooled, Maruichi Steel Tube looked outwards, evolving into a global group.

Chairman Hiroyuki Suzuki says one core principle is to source locally so as to provide the best possible products in each market. The chairman's vision for the future lies in value creation, reliability and customer centricity, rather than cost competition, which is the essence of Japanese manufacturing.

Maruichi Steel Tube manufactures a diverse range of steel tubes for a wide variety of industries. Its carbon steel tubes support the housing, construction, agriculture and automotive industries. High-frequency welded, they are integral to structural frames, piping, and agricultural products.

Maruichi's surface-treated steel sheet business delivers high-performance materials engineered for

durability, aesthetics and versatility. Pickled, cold-rolled, and hot-dip galvanized, the steel sheets produced by the company provide outstanding corrosion resistance and a clean, premium finish. Its AL-Z55 hot-dip 55 percent aluminum-zinc alloy coated sheets offer even greater protective strength, ensuring long-lasting performance in demanding environments.

Many modern, advanced sectors and high-purity industrial applications require quality and corrosion resistance, which is where the company's stainless steel tubes excel. These tubes are vital for transporting everything from gases used in semiconductor manufacturing to future fuels like hydrogen or ammonia. Precision and quality are non-negotiable, as Suzuki explains, "Even slight turbulence can disrupt the process or affect device performance."



Stainless steel precision tubes X(Texas)



Globally minded, Texas is where the company has set its latest aspirations. The state is a burgeoning semiconductor hub in the United States, and Suzuki sees this growing market as a natural opportunity. It



Surface-treated steel sheet

has already invested \$80 million stateside and emphasizes the company's long-term view. "We are confident semiconductor demand will grow steadily," he says.

With the 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo, Maruichi Steel Tube saw an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution by supplying essential building materials for key structures. From lightning poles, fences and frameworks to the grand ring foundations and the Osaka Healthcare Pavilion, the company significantly shaped the international event.

But it wasn't just construction; the company leveraged the expo as a platform for global engagement and brought together around 700 employees from its worldwide group companies. Together, they explored DE&I initiatives and deepened their understanding of the Maruichi 2030 vision, strengthening cross-cultural communication.

Maruichi Steel Tube continues to strengthen its global presence by combining its advanced manufacturing capabilities with its customer-centric, collaborative approach. As the company looks toward 2030, its world-class products, global talent development and forward-looking investments position it to play a vital role in shaping the future.

"We take a long-term view; we don't make decisions based on short-term market fluctuations."

Hiroyuki Suzuki, Chairman,
Maruichi Steel Tube



www.maruichikokan.co.jp

youtube



NAKANISHI Leads the Future of Kitchen Automation

As Japan grapples with a shrinking workforce, NAKANISHI's vision for automated, sustainable kitchen technologies guarantees that it preserves wholesome, nourishing food for generations to come. *By Daniel de Bomford and Arthur Menkes*



"We plan to roll out practical automation systems that can be adopted by schools, restaurants and food factories."

Kazuma Nakanishi, President,
NAKANISHI MFG. CO., LTD.

Food has long been the backbone of human socialization. A lunch break is more than just a time to eat; during our school days, it's where we solidify the bonds that can last a lifetime. It's a moment of nourishment, both physically and spiritually, shared by millions of children around the world. Here is where habits are formed, tastes are acquired, and a sense of care is passed between the community and the child.

In Japan, behind the seemingly mundane, is an intricate choreography of hygiene, precision and warmth. For decades, NAKANISHI MFG has been one of the unseen conductors guid-

ing that choreography with its systems and technologies, which allow food to be prepared safely, beautifully and at scale. The company's work begins long before the rice is washed and continues long after the final tray is served.

For over 80 years, the company has played a foundational role in food preparation in Japan, supporting both local kitchens and global brands to the highest standards of safety, hygiene and quality. The company provides integrated kitchen systems that span architectural facility planning, equipment manufacturing, installation and maintenance, ensuring reliable and consistent food production environments. President Kazuma Nakanishi says that Japan's strength lies in its holistic approach, which is responsible for the country's reputation for safe, hygienic and consistently high-quality food.

Today, the company is advancing a new mission: developing kitchens in a future challenged by labor shortages, rising quality expectations and a rising demand for sustainability. "As labor shortages intensify, automation supported by robotics and AI is not an option but a necessity," the president says.

Japan's renowned school lunch system illustrates the challenges ahead perfectly, with hygiene and operational standards among the world's highest. "It is not just about rules—it is an entire system of design, equipment, work-

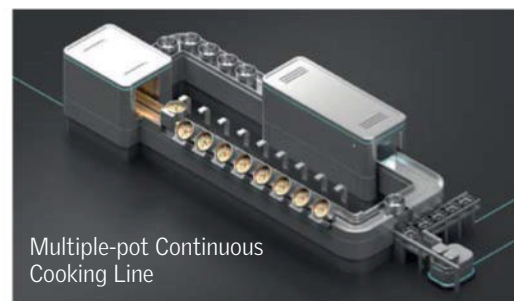
flow and even maintenance," President Nakanishi says.

As Japan faces severe labor shortages, NAKANISHI has identified automation as essential to sustaining high-quality kitchens. "Imagine a system where ingredients are delivered, processed, cooked and served entirely without human intervention—robots handling every stage, with AI ensuring consistency and quality," he says.

However, to get there, the company is rolling out practical automation systems that can be adopted by schools, central kitchens and factories that will serve as stepping stones for the kitchens of the future.

One of the company's flagship automation-forward technologies is the SV Roaster, a continuous conveyor-type oven that uses "SuperHeated Steam" to cook food evenly and efficiently. The roaster creates an ultra-low-oxygen environment, reducing oxygen levels to below 0.1 percent, creating an atmosphere that prevents oxidation and preserves freshness and flavor. With high heat transfer and shorter cooking time, the SV Roaster improves yields and offers scalability for kitchens while requiring less labor than traditional machinery.

For rice, Japan's cultural foundation, NAKANISHI's rice-cooking solutions solve the pressing challenges of cost, labor and sustainability. The company's



Multiple-pot Continuous Cooking Line

energy-saving continuous rice-cooking system reduces gas consumption by approximately 23 percent, supporting lower running costs and creating a cooler, safer working environment where heat and stress are minimized.



Tokyo Head Office

Meanwhile, its water-saving continuous rice washer reduces water usage by up to 60 percent, lowering both utility expenses and the environmental load of wastewater treatment. The result is a system that honors the texture and character of properly prepared food while meeting the growing call for sustainability.

NAKANISHI will be exhibiting at Food and Hospitality Asia 2026 in Singapore and will be found at booth number 2D2-01 to showcase its food service and hospitality equipment.

NAKANISHI's vision is to ensure that the next generation of Japanese school lunches maintains its high quality, while being safe and sustainable, in an environment with fewer hands to prepare them.



Energy-Save Rice Cooking system



Gas-Semi-Automated Rice-Cooking System



SV Roaster



Induction Rice Cooker

Make the future "ITADAKIMASU"
NAKANISHI

www.nakanishi.co.jp

BIKE O


www.8190.co.jp/en/support/partner.html

WHERE MOTORCYCLE PASSION DRIVES INNOVATION

BIKE O RESHAPES RIDING CULTURE WITH A BOLD STRATEGIC VISION. *By Daniel de Bomford*

In a shifting global landscape, one segment in Japan is accelerating ahead: the premium used motorcycle market. And no company is tearing down the track quite as confidently as Bike O, the nation's leading pre-owned motorcycle retailer. CEO Atsushi Sawa says the appeal of freedom on two wheels has never been stronger: "Anyone who has ridden before remembers that exhilarating feeling. Our business strategy is built on the conviction that there is still significant potential for growth in the motorcycle market."

While new bike dealerships in Japan have continued to improve their service, the used space has lagged. Bike O saw the gap and turned it into its greatest opportunity. With a nationwide scale, specialist-driven operations, and an incredible brand recognition of 95 percent among enthusiasts, the company has changed the community's perception of pre-owned. It's about the experience.

As Japan approaches a demographic turning point, Sawa steers the company with digital transformation at its core, streamlining operations while expanding domestic market share. But the company's ambitions aren't confined to Japan. Bike O is already exporting to Eastern Europe and Dubai. "I'm interested in markets that still represent a 'blue ocean' — places where motorcycle culture and mobility are still developing."

While traditional dealerships focus on specific models, having sold over two million units, Bike O isn't constrained by any brand and concentrates instead on riders by providing comprehensive services. "We are evolving into a full-spectrum mobility partner," Sawa says.

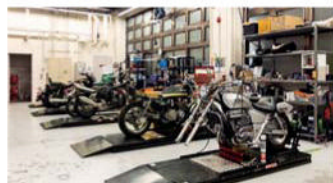
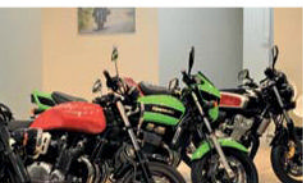
The finish line for Sawa may not be around the bend, but it is clear: to transform Bike O from a founder-led success story to a multigenerational institution.



"Every motorcycle has its own character, its own story."

Atsushi Sawa

CEO, BIKE O



Aero Lab Guides Japan's Skies

Armed with unmatched industry expertise, the company is pushing Japan into a new era of aviation. *By Daniel de Bomford and Paul Mannion*



Aircraft exposition



Expertise in all aircraft



Around the clock maintenance

As private and business aviation grow across Asia, Japan is facing a unique set of challenges. While demand for aircraft ownership is increasing, the regulatory and operational environment remains exceptionally complex. However, Aero Lab International, an Osaka-based aviation services firm, is working to change that reality.

When Aero Lab was founded in 2014, a significant knowledge and skill gap existed for importing, maintaining, and managing aircraft in Japan. The company specializes in importing, exporting, maintaining and managing aircraft for private and commercial clients. It provides

the expert navigation required to bring aircraft safely and legally into service in Japan, something few companies have been equipped to handle.

Aero Lab's advantage lies in its unique expertise in working directly with the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB). Over the years, the company has not only learned how to navigate complex procedures but has also played a visible role in improving them. This ability to guide clients through registration, compliance and ongoing operational requirements sets the firm apart in a market where knowledge is often fragmented and experience uneven.

Beyond regulatory fluency, the company's technicians and engineers maintain expertise in the evolving sector. They are capable of handling everything from routine maintenance to structural work, avionics integration, paint-



"We know how to import, how to fly, how to maintain, and how to register."

Kenzo Colon, President,
Aero Lab International Inc.

ing and performance analysis. Aero Lab's philosophy emphasizes real-world mastery built through hands-on experience.

President Kenzo Colon says that he is looking at new technology daily. The company strives to remain on the cutting edge of technology and works with companies, such as Garmin, to build expertise on industry-standard components.

Looking ahead, Aero Lab is expanding its presence across neighboring Asian markets while continuing to advocate for smarter, more modern aviation frameworks. For aircraft owners seeking clarity, confidence and craftsmanship, Aero Lab International sets the standard in Japanese aviation support.



<https://aerolab.jp>



TERABO'S RECYCLED PLASTIC FUTURE

TERABO OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY MATERIALS, FROM RECYCLED PLASTICS TO BIOMASS MATERIALS ENHANCED WITH EGGSHELLS. *By Bernard Thompson*

Founded in 1912, Terabo Co., Ltd. is a 113-year-old plastics manufacturer based in Osaka, Japan. For the past five decades, it has produced an array of engineering plastics, with a recent focus on environmentally friendly materials for industries such as the automotive sector.

One of Terabo's core efforts is its recycled nylon business, built around polyamide 6 (PA6) and polyamide 66 (PA66). The company recovers a wide range of scrap, including PA6 film, PA66 airbags, and even discarded fishing nets retrieved from the ocean, and transforms them into high-quality materials.

By tailoring each blend to meet specific strength and sustainability goals, Terabo delivers custom compounds reinforced or mixed with virgin polymers as needed. These materials find their way into everything from household items to auto parts. Within the automotive sector, Terabo plays a key role in sustainability projects now underway.

The second standout product is Caracle, a biomass plastic blended with eggshell powder—an innovation that's recently drawn national media attention in Japan. Terabo creates this material by finely cleaning, processing, and micronizing eggshells, then compounding them into various plastics tailored to customer needs.

Eggshells, a familiar and easily recognizable waste material, offer a compelling example of circular design: the more that's added, the more eco-friendly the product becomes. Rich in calcium carbonate, they bond well with many plastics, allowing for a wide range of custom formulations. Caracle is already in use across industries, from consumer goods to automotive parts.

Plastic often sits at the center of environmental debates, yet it remains essential to modern life. Terabo is committed to developing plastics that reduce environmental impact—materials designed to meet today's needs without compromising the future.



"Japanese companies have developed a deep understanding of quality."

Norio Fukawa

President, Terabo Co., Ltd.



www.terabo.co.jp



REFINVERSE Powers Circular Future

REFINVERSE Group innovates to recycle industrial waste into new materials with greater value, using economic incentives to usher in a new age of sustainability. *By Daniel de Bomford and Bernard Thompson*

As industries worldwide confront the growing urgency of sustainability, Japan's recycling innovators are rethinking how waste can fuel economic growth. Among them, REFINVERSE Group stands out as a leader in transforming industrial waste into valuable resources.

For more than 20 years, the company has carried out horizontal recycling of carpet tiles. Over the past seven years, it has expanded that work to include recycling discarded fishing nets and airbags made from nylon and polyamide while developing its regenerated material, REAMIDE.

President Akira Ochi believes recycling must evolve beyond outdated waste management systems rooted in disposal and pollution control. He says the company's mission is to prove that recycling can generate both environmental and economic value.

"When we process waste, recycling it into new materials creates greater economic value," he says. "That's the foundation of our company's philosophy."

The company is focused on developing technology that maximizes economic returns and building its business around those innovations.

REFINVERSE Group is expanding internationally by licensing its technology, with its airbag recycling licensed to Toyota Tsusho in Vietnam. Ochi cites profitability and confidence as to why the company's technology is so attractive. "But what sets us apart is the simplicity of our process," he says, "We're able to maintain high material quality without large-scale investment, making our recycling model both economically and operationally efficient."

It is ReFEZER, a keratin-rich bioplastic created from upcycled chicken feathers, which biodegrades naturally in water and soil. The long-term goal of ReFEZER is to help restore ecosystems, with the nitrogen-rich keratin functioning as a natural fertilizer for seaweed and marine plants.

In the automotive sector, the company is in the final stages of R&D for a world-first system to recycle interior materials, called REOCA. According to REFINVERSE's Group's own research, Japan produces approximately 16,000 tons, over 10 percent, of material scraps during automotive manufac-



Refinverse Innovation Center (RIVIC)

turing. REOCA is an asphalt modifier made from these scrap materials, which improves asphalt durability and significantly reduces CO2 emissions generated by processing the materials.

REFINVERSE Group's focus on creating economic incentives sets it apart in the recycling space and is creating a better world for future generations.

"Profitability is the engine that drives true societal change."

Akira Ochi, President,
REFINVERSE Group Inc.



<https://r-inverse.com>



REAMIDE recycled from fishing nets



WALKER SCOBELL



WALKER SCOBELL IS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE ANTICIPATION SURROUNDING the second season of Disney+'s *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (December 10). "I'm really excited, but I'm nervous." That's because he's aging faster than the character in the show based on the popular book series. "I feel like I look very different between seasons one and two...[since] like two years have passed for us in real life." But Scobell needn't worry, because fans are along for the ride. And Scobell was one of those fans, long before he got the pivotal role. He describes the moment he got the part "like, 'Oh, now the weight of this is on my shoulders...'" But it's also like, it doesn't feel that heavy when it's something you love so much." And he's managing the fame by staying close to home. "The second that you start to believe that you're great, that becomes you. I don't want that to be me." —*H. Alan Scott*

WALKER SPEAKS ABOUT...

Season two

"It's a lot bigger. This season...we actually had to do everything practical—actually having something there. Like, besides CGI, [where] they just add it in afterwards, like if somebody's on fire, they'll just add it in later. But this season, when people are on fire, we just light them on fire."

Relating to Percy Jackson

"I feel like, in a way, the guy I am today is sculpted by him. I started reading those books when I was so young, and then I just took pieces of my personality from that. And so it's not that difficult to get into it because it's just the guy I decided I wanted to be when I was, like, 9. But sometimes it's difficult because I'm aging faster than Percy is. He's 13 [in the books] and I'm 16."

Interesting fan encounters

"There was this dude there [at McDonald's], and he was like, 'Oh my God, Percy Jackson.' He took his backpack off [and] there's one thing in the backpack, and it was a Funko Pop of me! At the McDonald's! I didn't even know how to feel about that. He had no idea I was gonna be there. But he just had that on him, ready to go. It was strange, but it was really nice." 

"The benefits of being the age I am and the job that I'm in is that I can act like a kid and I can have fun."

KOREA HOLDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO REINFORCE U.S. AND EUROPEAN SUPPLY-CHAIN RESILIENCE

MID-SIZED INNOVATORS FROM KOREA ARE BECOMING THE TRUSTED BACKBONE OF A MORE DIVERSIFIED AND RESILIENT GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN. *By Daniel de Bomford, Quentin Lange*

The world has entered the second phase of supply-chain realignment, one defined not by isolation, but by curation. After years of political momentum behind reshoring and “local production only,” the data now offers a sobering reality check. According to the OECD’s new Supply Chain Resilience Review, aggressive reshoring and localisation could shrink global trade by nearly 18%.

Yet geopolitical pressures have made dependence on single-country production hubs untenable. China’s tightening of rare-earth export controls only sharpens the point: concentrated dependencies have become geopolitical levers. The West cannot remain heavily reliant on China, but nor can it realistically rebuild entire value chains at home. It needs a coalition of credible, capable, politically aligned partners.

That is where South Korea steps in, not as a fallback, but as a linchpin.

Korea as a Strategic Ally in the Materials Sector

South Korea is a textbook example of “ally-based resilience”: globally integrated, technologically sophisticated, aligned with U.S. and EU economic-security priorities, and competitively positioned to make diversification achievable.

**Korean companies’
“strength is precision
customization at
speed.”**

Dr. Seunghun Lee, CEO of YC Chem

Few companies embody this better than Korea Zinc, one of the world’s most advanced custom smelters. Chairman Yun B. Choi describes the new landscape succinctly: global tariffs and policy shifts are “accelerating the re-routing of supply chains toward friendly countries,” while economies like the U.S. now have a “clear need for diversified processing facilities.”

Korea Zinc does not own mines; instead, it sources concentrates globally and competes in metals where a handful of countries, often dominated by China, control more than half of global output. Its model of processing flexibility, operational excellence, and open-market sourcing is precisely what allied nations require as they reduce exposure to single-country refining.

**18% possible decline
in global trade if
supply chains are
relocalised.**

Source: OECD Supply Chain
Resilience Review

This capability extends across the full spectrum of industrial materials. The smaller supplier of high-spec structural and line pipes, Hanjin Steel Pipe, sources globally across solar infrastructure, construction, and industrial plants. A trusted supplier of critical steel components becomes a strategic risk mitigator.

Together, Korea Zinc and Hanjin illustrate what “ally-based resilience” looks like in practice: globalisation redesigned through trusted ecosystems.

Semiconductors: Korean SMEs as the “Second Layer” of Chip Resilience

In the most scrutinised strategic industry of the century, the rush to build fabs in the U.S. and Europe obscures a simple truth: you can relocate facilities, but you cannot instantly recreate supply chains.

This is why Korean semiconductor SMEs have become the “second layer” of global chip resilience. They bridge the gap between what Western governments want, secure, diversified semiconductor capacity, and what is technically achievable in the near term. They offer not just components or services, but an operational logic shaped by decades of localisation and performance demands from Korea’s world-leading chip makers.

Korea’s equipment makers, Viatron, S.E.A., SEMICS, and its materials specia-

lists such as YC Chem sit at the heart of this shift. They provide technologies that are increasingly strategic in the AI-chip race, where thermal management, advanced packaging and high-throughput testing matter as much as transistor scaling itself.

Across this ecosystem, one common thread stands out, well expressed by Dr. Seunghun Lee, President of YC Chem: “our strength is precision customization at speed.” YC Chem has been central to building resilience in South Korea’s semiconductor chemical supply chain, localising critical materials such as photoresist rinses previously sourced abroad.

Meanwhile, infrastructure specialists like Shinsung E&G provide the invisible architecture behind the fabs themselves. With more than 50 years of experience designing cleanrooms, dry rooms, HVAC systems and utility lines for Korea’s top semiconductor and battery makers, Shinsung now engineers smart, energy-efficient fab environments.

A Broader Look at the Peninsula’s Technological Prowess

South Korea’s essential technological contributions do not stop at metals or semiconductors.

Samhyun has evolved into a global motion-systems specialist for electric vehicles, industrial robots and advanced air mobility. “Our strength lies in integrating motors, reducers and controllers to create complete motion systems,” says President Ki Won Park.

Similarly, Wooriro is a photonics solutions leader whose chips sit at the heart of 5G networks, AI data centers and the emerging quantum communication. Holding roughly 60 percent of the global SPAD sensor market, its ambition, as President Eugene Park states, is “to become a total solutions provider in the quantum technology sector.”

By 2026, the defining metric of global economic strategy will not be how much production countries have reshored, but how effectively they have built and integrated allied ecosystems. In this emerging architecture, South Korea stands out as both a technological anchor and a strategic amplifier.

THE INDISPENSABLE LINCHPIN FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

KOREA ZINC'S ROLE IN BUILDING A DIVERSIFIED CRITICAL MINERALS SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE U.S.. *By Quentin Lange*

Resilience isn't a slogan, it's a design principle. Korea Zinc began in 1974 as a 50,000-ton zinc smelter and has grown into a diversified, global operator that intentionally avoided the mine-to-metal model.



As a custom smelter, it buys feedstock on the open market and wins through metallurgical skill, speed of decision, and a hedged product mix. That agility mattered this year: while zinc treatment charges hit historic lows, secondary and minor metals such as antimony, bismuth, and indium surged on geopolitical dislocations, helping deliver one of the company's strongest performances. Korea Zinc's operating philosophy, to optimize across zinc, lead, copper and a basket of precious and critical minerals, provides a natural shock absorber when single-metal cycles turn.

That agility also manifested in the company's decision to develop its own renewable energy projects. In Australia, its subsidiary Ark Energy demonstrated that clean energy is a competitive advantage, not merely a climate commitment. In Townsville, Yun and his team built a 125 MW solar farm

and deepened their bet with a 30% stake in the McIntyre Wind Farm, set to be the Southern Hemisphere's largest, alongside a grid-scale battery project that recently reached financial close. This year, Korea Zinc is commissioning a green-hydrogen pilot in Townsville to fuel on-site trucks and harden operational know-how. The initiative readies the company for the moment hydrogen and green ammonia graduate from promise to commodity, creating optionality to support Korean refining with low-carbon molecules when market conditions align. "You don't choose to be nimble; you become nimble because survival demands it," Chairman Yun B Choi says.

That same playbook, build capability before the market peaks, underpins Korea Zinc's U.S. strategy. Through PedalPoint, its North American circular-resources platform, the company now controls the messy middle of recycling: transforming fragmented streams from data centers, corporates, end-of-life batteries, and retired solar panels into refinery-ready feed. PedalPoint's materials flow to Onsan, where Korea Zinc already produces around 35,000 tons of 100% recycled copper annually and targets 150,000 tons within five years. Solar-panel recycling has emerged as a standout, profitable both in sourcing and in smelting yields, while U.S. recycling operations are on track to return to profitability this year or deliver meaningful growth by next.

The Korea Zinc Troika Drive strategy, built on three pillars—renewable energy & hydrogen, secondary batteries, and resource recycling—now shifts from concept to capacity. In Korea, the All-in-One Nickel Refinery is slated for commissioning in 2027. Designed for volatility, it can digest MHP, matte,



"Recycling has become central to our overall strategy. It links directly to many of our initiatives."

Yun B Choi

Chairman, Korea Zinc
www.koreazinc.co.kr



KOREA ZINC

concentrates, powders, and even battery "black mass." That flexibility is increasingly strategic as the U.S. and its allies look to de-risk supply chains from China's dominance across critical minerals. Yun openly acknowledges the costs and complexity of building in America. Yet, he's evaluating opportunities in nickel, copper, germanium, gallium, and antimony, areas where the company has proven, China-independent know-how. With appropriate policy support, Korea Zinc could become one of Washington's most reliable private-sector allies.

Korea Zinc intends to be standing exactly where the world needs it, converting waste into critical metals, electrons into molecules, and strategy into resilient, profitable growth.



Viatron Technologies Diversifies Beyond Displays: Powering the Next Generation of 3D Semiconductors with Epitaxial-CVD Innovation

Viatron Technologies is pioneering next-generation semiconductor equipment, driving innovation in 3D chip design and positioning South Korea at the forefront of global technology advancement. *By Daniel de Bomford*

As the world shores up supply chains for critical technologies amid geopolitical tension, semiconductors are emerging as a key sector, powering everything from AI to self-driving cars. Viatron Technologies, which began by supplying OLED equipment to leading global display manufacturers, now leverages its expertise in precise manufacturing to provide highly specialized semiconductor equipment.

Since its founding in 2001, Viatron Technologies has built a strong track record as one of South Korea's most successful equipment suppliers in the display industry. The company's breakthrough came when Samsung Display launched its OLED displays in 2007, opening the door for Viatron to co-develop critical process equipment with both Samsung and LG. Over the following decade, Viatron became deeply embedded in the Korean supply chain and later expanded to serve global display makers, including BOE, CSOT, Tianma, Visionox, and AUO.

This long-standing collaboration helped Viatron capture more than 70 percent of the global display heat-treatment equipment market, including a dominant 100 percent share in in-line rapid thermal annealing systems. Building on that success, the company is now leveraging its expertise in high-precision heat treatment and process control to enter the semiconductor equipment sector, with a focus on advanced epitaxial CVD and hybrid bonding systems for next-generation 3D architectures.

According to Hyoung-June Kim, CEO, Viatron Technologies, a handful of key players dominate the semiconductor industry, with domestic South Korean companies holding only 20 percent of the market share of Wafer Fab Equipment (WFE). Entering the industry is difficult, but it is at critical juncture marked

by the development of new technologies and production techniques.

As the technology undergoes fundamental changes, from planar 2D structures to advanced 3D architectures, it demands fundamentally new equipment approaches, creating space for niche manufacturers like Viatron. "Rather than competing head-on across every step of the production process, our strategy is to focus on highly specialized, innovative and segmented areas where unique solutions can be developed," Kim explains.

Viatron's core strategy is to focus on specialized technologies that enable the next generation of 3D semiconductor architectures. These include advanced logic devices, such as Gate-All-Around (GAA) transistors, and emerging memory structures, including 3D DRAM. Both technologies demand exceptional precision and temperature control, areas where Viatron's expertise provides a clear advantage.

As chips become smaller and more powerful, demand for faster and more energy-efficient processing is rising across every segment, from AI servers and data centers to smartphones, autonomous vehicles, and personal computers. These applications are driving record investments in advanced chip manufacturing and reshaping the equipment market. Within this shift, epitaxy—the process of growing thin, crystalline layers of silicon and silicon-germanium—has emerged as one of the fastest-growing fields.

Epitaxial layers are fundamental to building transistor channels and stacked memory cells in next-generation chips. As devices move



"By working hand-in-hand with global players, Viatron can ensure that our innovations find their place in the most advanced fabs around the world."

Hyoung-June Kim,
CEO, Viatron Technologies

below the 2-nanometer node and memory structures scale past hundreds of layers, achieving defect-free films and perfect thickness control has become critical.

To meet these demands, Viatron has developed a new generation of Epitaxial Chemical Vapor Deposition (Epi-CVD) tools based on its proprietary laser heating and precision thermal control technology. Compared to conventional lamp-based systems used by the majority of its competitors, Viatron's approach enables faster temperature ramping, greater uniformity and shorter process times, which achieves outstanding throughput while maintaining excellent epitaxial crystal quality. Working closely with leading global memory and logic manufacturers, the company positions itself as a key supplier for the coming era of high-performance, three-dimensional semiconductors.

However, Viatron is also developing hybrid bonders and laser-assisted bonders for backend processes. Kim highlights that future 3D architectures will inevitably require complementary backend innovations: "Viatron's goal is to build a key equipment portfolio that meets the needs of these emerging semiconductor architectures." The company develops its hybrid and laser-assisted bonders used for advanced packaging in its Packaging Business Division.

With constant breakthroughs in technology requiring semiconductors like generative AI, Viatron took the initiative and designated semiconductors as a new strategic pillar five years ago. Now, the company is ready to capitalize on the next technological revolution, carving a niche as a supplier of critical equipment for the world's most advanced technology.



Epitaxial-CVD



<http://home.viatrontech.com/kr>

SEMICS BUILDS NEXT-GENERATION SEMICONDUCTOR TESTING EMPIRE

A SHIFTING SEMICONDUCTOR LANDSCAPE DEMANDS NEW IDEAS. SEMICS RISES TO THAT CHALLENGE WITH TECHNOLOGY BUILT FOR TIGHTER SPACES, HOTTER CHIPS AND HEAVIER FORCES, OFFERING A FRESH VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF ADVANCED TEST. *By Daniel de Bomford, Quentin Lange*

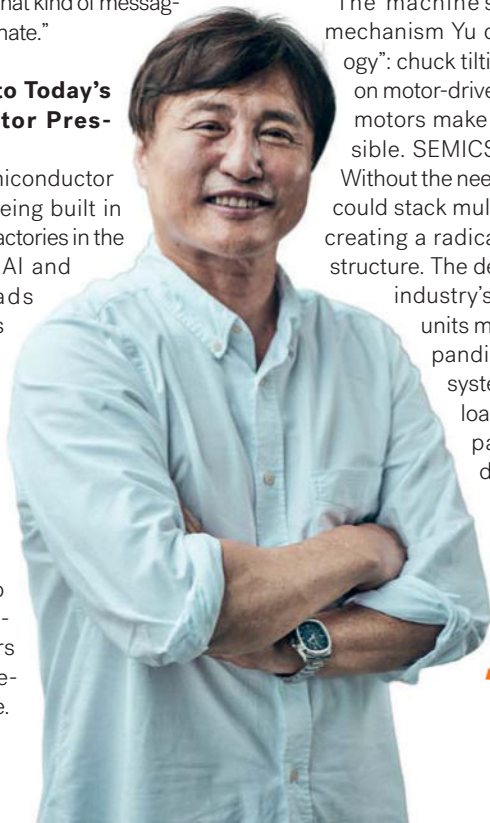
A semiconductor test floor can feel like a city built on pressure, with crowded blocks of machinery, tight corridors of time and heat rising in every direction. In that busy landscape, SEMICS wants to be the architect of a new skyline. Its vision is far beyond keeping pace with the industry's shifting demand, as it seeks to design structures that will define the industry's future.

From the beginning, SEMICS took a path that set it apart from its peers. While many Korean suppliers relied on domestic demand before venturing abroad, SEMICS moved in the opposite direction. "We began our journey internationally," says Shoun Yu, Ph.D., president and founder. "We're more welcomed abroad, and the scale we operate at overseas is significantly larger."

That unconventional starting point shaped a company culture built around originality, rather than imitation. Yu explains that many local firms attempted to mirror established foreign machines and compete on price. "That's not a strong marketing strategy," he says. "We've been training in B2B marketing for over 20 years, and we understand that kind of messaging doesn't resonate."

Responding to Today's Semiconductor Pressures

The global semiconductor landscape is being built in real time. New factories in the West, surging AI and HPC workloads and process technologies approaching 2nm have reshaped the demands placed on wafer testing. These changes push test systems into territory that traditional probers were never designed to handle.



Yu describes three forces reshaping the field. First, space: "Testing setups require enormous physical space, which is increasingly difficult to accommodate," he says. Some experts even suggest that test floors could outgrow the wafer labs themselves.

Second, mechanical force: modern chips require probe cards that can withstand extreme loads. "Current setups must endure forces like 350kg, with precision tolerances of 150 microns. That's not sustainable," Yu says.

Third, heat: AI and HPC devices generate intense thermal loads during testing, and efficient dissipation has become the defining challenge.

These constraints became SEMICS' blueprint for a different direction. "We tackled all three of these issues head-on," Yu says. "Our technology in thermal dissipation is now the best in the industry."

OPERA: The Machine That Redefined Probing

SEMICS' answer to these pressures came in 2021 with the debut of OPERA, the company's flagship group prober and a centerpiece of its "Greatest Test Empire" vision.

The machine's breakthrough lies in a mechanism Yu calls "the mother technology": chuck tilting. Traditional probers rely on motor-driven tilting systems, and those motors make compact stacking impossible. SEMICS removed that limitation. Without the need for bulky motors, SEMICS could stack multiple probe units vertically, creating a radically more compact testing structure. The design solves all three of the industry's core challenges. Stacked units multiply capacity without expanding the floor footprint. The system supports heavy probing loads and integrates the company's advanced thermal-dissipation technology.

Long before OPERA reached the market,



SEMICS' Group Prober: OPERA

SEMICS introduced the concept at an industry conference in California. Yu recalls giving the presentation despite his concerns about his English fluency. "Despite my imperfect English, I won the Most Inspirational Presentation Award," he says.

Innovation in Maintenance: The Modular Cell Concept

As OPERA grew more complex, SEMICS focused on making the machine easier to maintain. The company's CTO developed a cell-based modular system that allows the maintenance teams to slide out individual units like drawers. Yu sees this simplicity as transformative. "I often say it's the biggest invention in our company's history, even more important than the wheel," he says.

Building the Great Test Empire

SEMICS is shaping a testing ecosystem that reaches beyond probers, Yu's "Great Test Empire." The strategy is built on unified technologies, such as testers, probe cards and laser dicing. OPERA 2 extends that approach to logic and HPC, where flexible compact systems are essential. The company also sees die-level testing as the next frontier, driven by thermal demands and hybrid bonding requirements. Its acquisition of advanced dicing technology supports that shift.

With new bases in Germany, Japan and the United States, SEMICS is reinforcing its global reach. Yu believes adoption of group probing is inevitable and expects the company's full vision to take shape soon. "By 2030, I believe GTE, the Greatest Test Empire, will no longer be just a vision," he says. "It will be a reality."

"Innovation must always be balanced with quality."

Shoun Yu, President, SEMICS
www.semics.com/kr/index.php



S.E.A.'s Advanced Equipment Solutions Revolutionizing Glass Substrates for Semiconductor Packaging

S.E.A. stands at the forefront of glass substrates for semiconductor packaging, solar cell and FPD production with its comprehensive cutting-edge R&D center and global subsidiaries. *By Konsuela Alatalo*



SEALine Semicon
PKG Batch Platform

S.E.A. Group has become a powerhouse in Korea's industrial equipment sector by combining wet process expertise with global expansion. Founded 17 years ago, the group leverages its extensive experience across industries, including PCB (printed circuit board), FPD (flat-panel display) and Solar Cell, along with its cutting-edge R&D center, to secure a leading position in the glass substrates for semiconductor packaging industry.

Its four Korean sites, an R&D center in Gumi, a production plant in Jeungpyeong, a sales office in Dongtan, and HQ in Anyang and a Malaysia facility, have cumulatively produced over 550 pieces of production equipment for

various markets from US to India. The company has recently completed its investment in a production infrastructure in Georgia to prepare for the expanding U.S. market.

The company supplies equipment for solar cell, glass substrate and FPD to global clients. In 2019, it developed equipment for patterning, cleaning and metallization processes. Through close collaboration with clients, it introduced mass-production equipment in 2023. The company is currently developing plating and sputtering equipment, with plans to expand its product portfolio in 2026. Simultaneously, the company is preparing its IPO on the KOSDAQ market. Through the IPO, the company aims to secure next-generation R&D and expand global business by strengthening production and service infrastructure.

S.E.A. has held a majority stake in FNS Electron, which has had experience producing TGV (Through Glass Via) Process since 2021. The TGV process is a core process in the glass substrate production process. The two companies are collaborating to develop equipment capable of mass-producing high-end TGV.



S.E.A. Co., Ltd. CEO Jaeho Shin tests the SEALine Semicon PKG Batch Platform

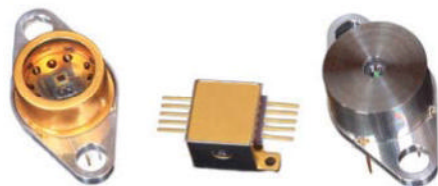
Last year's revenue of USD 80 million, with 89 percent generated in the U.S., and a USD 47 million backlog reflect strong market traction. With plans to achieve 30 percent growth by 2025 and double growth by 2028, S.E.A. aims to balance its semiconductor, solar and FPD businesses.

"Since 2019, with bold R&D investments in the glass substrate business and a strong global infrastructure, S.E.A. will grow into a global company that plays a key role in the upcoming glass substrate industry," Jaeho Shin, CEO, S.E.A. Co., Ltd. says.



WOORIRO advances quantum and LiDAR tech

Pioneering breakthroughs in photonics for defense, data and mobility. *By Daniel de Bomford*



InGaAs SPAD with TEC

For more than two decades, Wooriro has been helping shape a future where light itself carries the world's most secure information. As a pioneer in South Korea's photonics industry, the company is pushing the boundaries of quantum communication and developed ultra-sensitive sensors that enable data to move faster, safer and smarter across global networks.

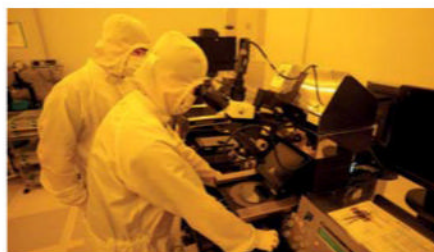
With technologies spanning quantum encryption, LiDAR, and advanced pho-

tonics for defense and mobility, Wooriro stands at the threshold of a new era where photons, not electrons, define the pace of innovation.

One of Wooriro's strengths lies in its mastery of Single Photon Avalanche Diode (SPAD) technology—ultra-sensitive sensors capable of detecting individual photons. These sensors form the backbone of quantum key distribution (QKD) systems, providing unrivaled security in next-generation communication. The company currently holds a leading share of the global SPAD market and is working closely with international partners to expand commercialization.

In autonomous driving, Wooriro's InGaAs/InP-based (indium gallium arsenide/indium phosphide) SPADs are enabling breakthroughs in LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). Operating at a wavelength of

1550 nm, these sensors deliver both long-range detection and eye safety, supporting safer and smarter vehicles. Collaborations with domestic automotive developers are paving the way for



Semiconductor Production

WOORIRO to become a key supplier in the mobility sector.

WOORIRO's vertically integrated infrastructure, from chip fabrication to module assembly, ensures speed, flexibility and resilience in global supply chains. "Our high-sensitivity sensor technology is more than a product," President Eugene Park says. "It is a platform for future innovation in communication, mobility and defense."

Looking forward, WOORIRO aims to expand its presence overseas, foster new partnerships, and continue investing in advanced emerging technologies. WOORIRO is poised to become a total solutions provider for the industries shaping tomorrow.



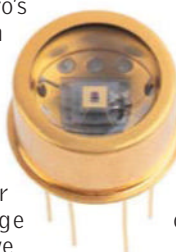
"Our core technologies and strategic partnerships will secure a vital foothold on the global stage."

Eugene Park, President, WOORIRO



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<https://wooriro.com/eng>



InGaAs Multi-Cell SPAD



"YC Chem already supplies top Korean memory makers, and we're expanding our scope to non-memory and to global customers."

Seunghun Lee,
President, YC Chem



Every breakthrough chip begins long before a circuit is drawn or a wafer is patterned. It begins with the subtle work of chemistry: rinses that leave no trace, resists that withstand impossible geometries and formulations tuned to conditions that only a handful of fabs in the world can replicate. YC Chem operates in this domain where possibility is beholden to precision.

As Korea's semiconductor strategy broadens from memory leadership to global competitiveness across the full semiconductor spectrum, it enters a new chapter. YC Chem is emerging as one of the few materials innovators able

YC Chem Powers Korea's Next Semiconductor Material Leap

YC Chem delivers precision chemistries, advanced packaging solutions and rapid customization for the world's most demanding semiconductor technologies. *By Daniel de Bomford*



4th Factory: Seongju Industrial Complex

to customize at speed, innovate without compromise and deliver materials ready for the most demanding process lines on earth.

At this pivotal transition, YC Chem serves as a high-performance innovator, whose chemistries underpin advanced packaging, High Bandwidth Memory (HBM) and next-generation lithography. In a market where speed and precision are paramount, the company stands out through its agility, tailored formulations and proven technical expertise.

Dr. Seunghun Lee, president of YC Chem, says the industry is at an inflection point as Korea seeks competitiveness in non-memory. "Korea is a recognized leader in memory, but globally about 70 percent of the semiconductor market is non-memory and 30 percent is memory," he says. The company already supplies major domestic memory makers, and it's expanding its scope to non-memory, global customers.

Its strength is fully realized in its ability to work closely with its customers, tuning its formulations

to their specific requirements. "The challenge isn't whether we can formulate a product; it's gaining consistent access to leading-edge process lines where we can tune to a customer's exact use conditions," Lee says.

This contrasts with the giants it competes with, who prioritize high-volume platforms. Many of YC Chem's products originated as customer-specific specifications that have been iterated and improved. "That 'tailor-then-scale' approach is where a focused, mid-sized specialist like us can outperform," Lee says.

Innovation has long been one of YC Chem's defining traits. Well before its breakthrough EUV rinse, the company has already established itself as a pioneer in ArF and KrF photo-process rinses, securing over 20 domestic and international patents.

Over the past 25 years, the company has grown in step with the semiconductor industry itself, developing a deep intuition for where technologies are headed and how best to support customers as their requirements evolve. That foresight has guided the company's expansions beyond lithography, into CMP, glass packaging and key backend processes. By strategically reallocating R&D resources, YC Chem has been able to enter new fields with confidence and respond quickly to the increasingly complex demands of advanced semiconductor manufacturing.

For decades, American, European and Japanese materials giants have held an advantage built on deep process integration inside the world's leading fabs. YC Chem recognizes that legacy, but has

shown it can close the gap rapidly when granted access to advanced production lines. The company's in-house "mini-fab" has become a powerful trust-builder with tier 1 customers and is capable of replicating full lithography and etch sequences from coating and baking to exposure, cleaning and defect inspection.

"Performance is necessary but not sufficient," Lee says. "Quality systems are decisive. Our manufacturing is entirely inside clean-rooms with environmental controls comparable to device fabs." As a result, the company manages metallic impurities to sub-parts-per-trillion levels. "When auditors visit, they don't just see a lab; they see a mini-line capable of reproducing key steps and of diagnosing issues quickly," Lee says.

YC Chem's recent momentum has been driven by strong demand for its photoresist and SoC-oriented materials, which continue to expand across both domestic and global programs. To stay ahead of customer expectations, the company is investing heavily in metrology tools such as ICP-MS, additional track equipment and enhanced process-replica capacity. Strategic pushes into CMP slurries, wet chemicals and glass-substrate materials position YC Chem squarely in the high-growth segments AI and HBM.

As the semiconductor landscape accelerates toward ever more advanced nodes, YC Chem aims to solidify its role as a globally trusted materials partner. Its blend of precision customization, uncompromising quality and sustained innovation has already proven its value on critical production lines. As Lee says, "Our strategy is straightforward: earn access with agility and credibility, then compound that access through disciplined execution."



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Hanjin Leads in Structural Steel Pipes

Hanjin Steel Pipe leads Korea's manufacturing evolution with unmatched flexibility, innovation and structural steel pipe expertise. *By Daniel de Bornford*



Main Factory of Hanjin Steel Pipe



11 Production Lines



Product Diversity

Amid global construction stagnation, rising protectionism and intensifying price competition, Korean manufacturers are adjusting their strategies and staying ahead of the changing tides.

Hanjin Steel Pipe, Korea's first structural steel pipe producer, founded in 1980, has emerged as one of the rare companies that turn these challenges into opportunities to strengthen its leadership at home while expanding its presence worldwide.

"Our production flexibility is key," Hyeong Seog Lee, President of Hanjin Steel Pipe says. "While most competitors operate three to five production lines, our 11-line system allows

us to efficiently switch between different product types and volumes."

The company produces of 20,000 tons monthly, specializing in pipe sizes and specifications that larger players often avoid due to inefficiency. This versatility allows Hanjin to respond quickly to Korea's unpredictable construction timelines and serve a diverse range of customer needs, contributing to its 20 to 25 percent share of the domestic structural steel pipe market.

Hanjin Steel Pipe has become a reliable supplier in the growing global solar market, producing torque beams and other components for tracker systems. Its flexible production and skill in high-precision structural pipes have helped EPC firms build durable solar projects. Even with pressure from low-cost competitors and broader economic challenges, the company continues to draw international interest.



"We're actively developing new products tailored for international markets, especially in high-growth areas such as solar infrastructure."

Hyeong Seog Lee, President,
Hanjin Steel Pipe

Furthering its long-term strategy to move beyond commodity products and strengthen its position in high-value materials, the company has made significant investment in new production lines dedicated to hollow rebar. "Hollow pipes and hollow rebars are designed for very specific use cases and offer superior performance in areas like soil stabilization and infrastructure," Lee says.

As it approaches its 50th anniversary, Hanjin Steel Pipe's ambition is clear: grow to 400 billion KRW in revenue and solidify its exports and production baseline. "We will continue to invest in systems, equipment and human capital to widen the gap between us and our competitors."



<http://hanjinpipe.co.kr/main/main.html>

Samhyun Accelerates Transition into Robotics and AAM Platform Company Powered by Its 3-in-1 Integrated Motion Solution

Expanding beyond automotive components into robotics and advanced air mobility (AAM), Samhyun is entering the most significant strategic turning point since its founding. *By Quentin Lange*

Founded in 1988, Samhyun has grown from a motor-technology specialist into one of Korea's leading motion-control companies. Its core competitive advantage lies in its "3-in-1 Integrated Solution," which combines motors, controllers, and reducers into a single system, a foundational technology enabling

the company's expansion into high-value industries such as robotics and AAM (Advanced Air Mobility).

As global industries rapidly shift toward electrification, unmanned systems, and intelligent automation, this year marks a structural turning point for Samhyun. The company is no longer simply a manufacturer of individual components; it is transforming into a developer and supplier of integrated modules and platform technologies, creating synergy across its entire business portfolio.

To strengthen technological self-reliance, Samhyun has expanded its R&D workforce to over 40% of total employees and acquired CASELAB, an AI and robotics software company, enhancing its software capabilities on top of its hardware foundation. Leveraging these combined strengths, the company is developing next-generation robotic modules — including heavy-duty autonomous mobile

robots (HAMR) and humanoid robot joint modules — entirely with in-house technology.

In particular, HAMR has emerged as a next-generation industrial robot platform, capable of high-speed operation up to 20 km/h, transporting loads between 3 and 10 tons, and navigating both indoor and outdoor environments. Building on this momentum, Samhyun plans to showcase its robotic technologies — including HAMR — on the global stage at CES 2026.

In addition, Samhyun has launched "HOPLON," an open-architecture-based platform for robots and unmanned vehicles, expanding its business scope into industrial, disaster-response and logistics robotics.

In the AAM (Advanced Air Mobility) sector, the company is strengthening its next-generation electrification business by collaborating with global partners to develop electric propulsion units (EPU).



Heavy-duty Autonomous Mobile Robot

At the same time, Samhyun is advancing infrastructure investments to strengthen its global supply-chain capabilities, including establishing manufacturing bases in India and China and upgrading its smart-factory systems.

President Ki Won Park stated, "Samhyun will evolve into a global platform company built on our new strategic growth pillars: robotics and AAM."



www.samhyun.co.kr/main



"Our strength lies in integrating motors, reducers, and controllers into a complete motion-control system."

Ki Won Park,
President, Samhyun

WAGNER MOURA

The actor talks *The Secret Agent*, the Oscars buzz surrounding it and why “carrying Brazil with us” makes the moment so special

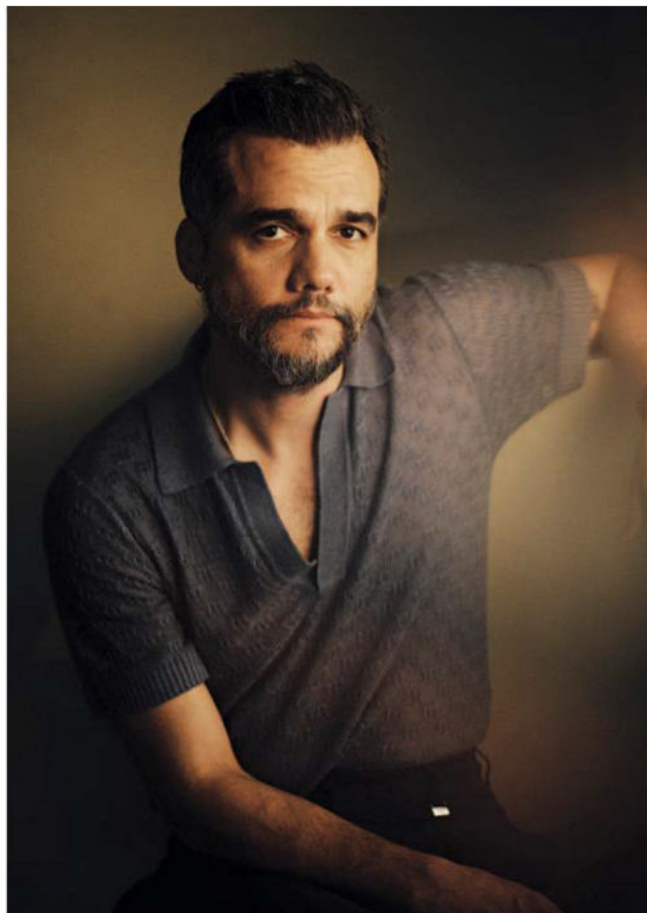
BY
H. ALAN SCOTT

How does it feel to have *The Secret Agent* chosen as Brazil's Oscar submission and generating this buzz?

It feels great. It feels especially good because of the fact that this is a Brazilian film. It's crazy, man. It was 12 years that I didn't work in Portuguese, speaking my native language. There are many reasons for that. One of them was, of course, the [President Jair] Bolsonaro years in Brazil, where they basically made it impossible for us to make films there. I always felt very connected to Brazil, so it's really rewarding for me to receive all that attention from a Brazilian film.

The film is set during the dictatorship of President General Ernesto Geisel in the '70s, but feels relevant to recent history. How did you and director Kleber Mendonça Filho approach that?

What really put us together was actually politics, because back in Bolsonaro time, we were both very vocal against that government. *The Secret Agent* is a film about someone who is not trying to overthrow the government, just a man who's trying to stick with his values when everything around him says the opposite. And that's exactly how Kleber and I felt. I think this film is a reflection of our



“I think this film is a reflection of our shared perplexity over what happened in Brazil under Bolsonaro.”

shared perplexity over what happened in Brazil under Bolsonaro.

Does the support from Brazil feel different than the acclaim you've received from other projects?

I feel that Kleber and I are here doing this campaign for the film, but I totally feel that we are not alone. That we are carrying millions proud of our country with us. Last year, I did the film that I really liked, which is *Civil War*. I think that film should have had more attention than it actually had. But I can't deny the fact that this is very special because it's a whole country.

With all the Oscar talk surrounding the film, how are you processing this moment?

I'm almost 50. I've been doing this since I was 15. Whatever happens in terms of nominations and things, don't get me wrong, we really want all those, I'm really eager to get nominations. Carrying Brazil with us, it's f***** cool, and I really want this. I think I've been living a life that's coherent with what I believe, with what I think is right. So, I receive it with happiness, but with a calmer approach. If it doesn't happen, it's all good. The journey has been [good], and it's still going to be great. 



THE PARTING SHOT

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