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 The New York Times

 The New York Times

Friday, March 17, 2017

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The 2016 election was both an electoral and existential crisis for the Democratic Party — one that left the party internally divided, unclear on where it stood with the American people and stripped of power at every level of federal authority. Surveying the wreckage, Democrats realized that the only lever they would have to exert any influence at all on Donald Trump’s plans for the country was the narrow minority the party still possessed in the Senate — a caucus under the leadership of Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, a lawmaker who was better known as a deal maker than as a fire-breathing partisan.

In this week’s [cover story](#), Charles Homans tells the story of how the party struggled to find its footing in the early days of the Trump presidency, and how it has begun to wrestle with the central dilemma it woke up to on Nov. 9: “The Democrats, who spent Obama’s presidency railing against Republican obstructionism, would soon be facing a president who was all but inviting them to try the same,” Homans writes. “Whether this was in Schumer’s DNA was one question. Whether it was in the party’s was another.”

Elsewhere in the magazine, Joshua Hammer reports on how Egypt’s democracy activists, six years after the Arab Spring, became [“generation jail.”](#) Jonah Weiner writes about [Derek DelGaudio](#), a magician who wants to break magic. John Herrman asks, if everything can be [“weaponized,”](#) what should we fear? And Sam Anderson introduces [New Sentences](#), a column analyzing notable lines from recent books, movies, songs and more.

Happy reading,

Jake Silverstein

Editor in Chief

 Elizabeth Warren, who has made her reputation in Washington as the Democrats' conscience.

Elizabeth Warren, who has made her reputation in Washington as the Democrats' conscience. Photo illustration by James Victore

FEATURE

The New Party of No

By CHARLES HOMANS

How a president and a protest movement transformed the Democrats.

 Derek DelGaudio



Emily Shur for The New York Times

 Tora Prison, on the outskirts of Cairo.



Rena Effendi for The New York Times

FEATURE

The Magician Who Wants to Break Magic

By JONAH WEINER

Derek DelGaudio takes illusionism to new conceptual heights.

FEATURE

How Egypt's Activists Became 'Generation Jail'

By JOSHUA HAMMER

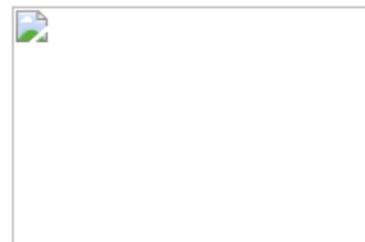
Six years after the Arab Spring, the country's democracy activists live under constant threat of prison — or worse.

EAT

The Secret That Brings These Pancakes to Life

By TEJAL RAO

A fruit-filled pancake as thick and even as a layer of birthday cake.

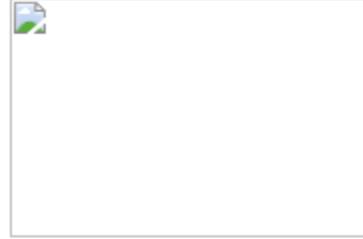


LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Letter of Recommendation: Stump the Bookseller

By ALICE GREGORY

A blog about children's books demonstrates the universal pain of mostly forgotten memories.



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Illustration by Derek Brahney

FIRST WORDS

If Everything Can Be 'Weaponized,' What Should We Fear?

By JOHN HERRMAN

We risk obscuring real sources of violence when a tweet can be considered a tool of war.

 "The Cotton Pickers, Ferguson Unit, Texas."



Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos

Illustration by Melinda Josie

ON PHOTOGRAPHY

A Photograph Never Stands Alone

By TEJU COLE

Danny Lyon's photograph of prisoners toiling in a cotton field can be better understood alongside other images of labor.

LIVES

Putting a Faithful Friend to the Test

As told to DMITRIY FROLOVSKIY

The religion of a companion causes a sectarian split.

TALK

Brianna Wu Wants to Change the Democrats' Playbook

Interview by ANA MARIE COX

The congressional candidate on what the Republican Party is doing right and how being a Gamergate target prepared her to run for office.



NEW SENTENCES

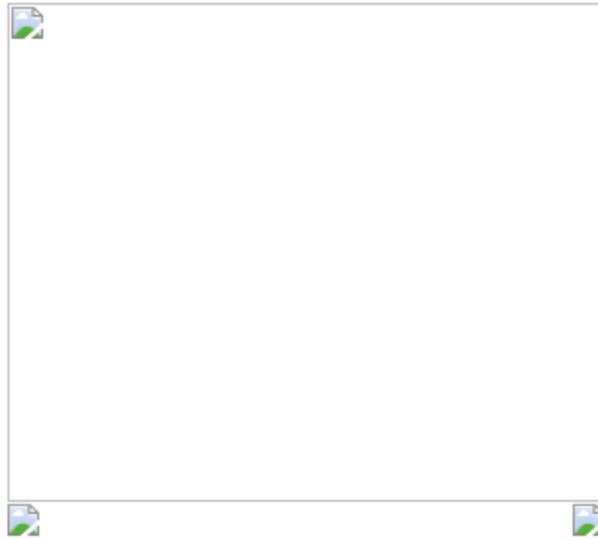
New Sentences: From 'Serious Sweet' by A.L. Kennedy

By SAM ANDERSON

In 27 words, the Scottish novelist gives character to the little disruptors that live in our pockets.



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