



## Inside Babiš's Cabinet: Key Ministers, Early Scandals and First Months in Power

On 15 December 2025, Czech President Petr Pavel swore in 15 ministers of Andrej Babiš's (ANO) third cabinet, formally launching a new government. In the months since, the cabinet has been shaped by who took which ministry, how power is divided inside the coalition, early foreign policy moves and a number of controversies. [PAGE 2](#)



## Businessman, Teacher, or a Doctor? An Interview with Mr. Stanislav Gálík

"You can achieve anything you want." Unfortunately, some people take this statement very literally. The truth is: "No, you cannot just take Greenland, Mr. Trump." Ambition needs to be balanced with realism, otherwise it becomes dangerous rather than empowering. [PAGE 5](#)



## Under the Streets

The dark streets of London looked as if someone had taken the light out of them. The city seemed to be sleeping, covered by a blanket called Night. The moon was shining brightly above the park, but it wasn't the only light disturbing the peaceful darkness. There was a light coming from the window of the room. [PAGE 7](#)



## Should You Trust Medical Studies and Meta-analyses?

Have you ever heard of Mr. Safer? In the 1990s, he wanted to understand how the French could eat more high-fat foods yet have lower rates of heart disease than Americans. He argued that having one glass of wine with a meal a day could help a person have better health, as that was what he claimed the French were doing. [PAGE 10](#)

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Two brilliant minds of the 1920's were ready to commit, what they considered the "perfect crime", instead it was remembered as the crime of the century. [PAGE 5](#)

## Time is But a Construct: How We're All Losing Our Minds (On Schedule)

No matter how much I do, it never feels like enough and I always feel like I could have done more. [PAGE 6](#)

## I Who Have Never Known Men: The Book With No Answers

"I was forced to acknowledge too late, much too late, that I too had loved, that I was capable of suffering, and that I was human after all." [PAGE 8](#)

## Editors' Note

Dear Readers,

With Edition 2 of the OG Chronicle for 2025–2026, we once again bring you a collection of articles that reflect the questions, challenges, and contradictions of the world around us. From international affairs and politics to science, culture, and the everyday realities shaping our lives, this edition aims to offer not just information, but perspective.

In World News & Current Affairs, you will find pieces engaging with ongoing political developments and global issues that continue to shape public discourse. Our Social Commentary section takes a closer look at the systems and habits we often accept without question, while Culture offers space for reflection, creativity, and the stories that sit slightly outside the headlines, but still matter.

As always, this edition is the result of many discussions, drafts, edits, and the collective effort of students who care about words, context, and getting things right (most of the time). We hope these pages encourage you to think critically, read curiously, and maybe even question one or two things you thought were settled. Happy reading!

The OG Journalism Club

# Inside Babiš's Cabinet: Key Ministers, Early Scandals and First Months in Power

On 15 December 2025, Czech President Petr Pavel swore in 15 ministers of Andrej Babiš's (ANO) third cabinet, formally launching a new government. In the months since, the cabinet has been shaped by who took which ministry, how power is divided inside the coalition, early foreign policy moves and a number of controversies.

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Alongside ANO, the government is joined by two smaller parties -far-right Freedom and Direct Democracy party (SPD), and Eurosceptic, anti-environmentalist Motorists for Themselves (AUTO) party. Both of their parliamentary groups are smaller, as SPD has 15 MPs, and Motorists just 13.

Inside the new government, we can find a total of 15 ministries, as well as the position of Prime Minister, which is occupied by a well-known political figure, Andrej Babiš (ANO). His party has taken a total of nine portfolios, including Babiš's own, the most out of all coalition parties. These portfolios include the Ministries of Finance, Trade and Industry, Labour and Social Affairs and several others. ANO also has two out of four Deputy Prime Ministers, namely Karel Havlíček (ANO) and Alena Schillerová (ANO).

Even though they are the smallest coalition party, Motorists for Themselves have been appointed with four ministries, one more than SPD. Petr Macinka (AUTO) is now not only the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but also the acting Minister of Environment. This is due to the ongoing scandal of Filip Turek (Indep.), who was rejected as minister by President Pavel over a lack of respect for the law, following several of his scandals. Other portfolios for the Motorists are the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry for Sport, Prevention and Health.

SPD has decided not to nominate their own politicians for the ministries, but rather 'experts' in the respective fields. The right-wing party received three portfolios – the Ministries of Defense, Transportation and Agriculture. The party's leader, Tomio Okamura (SPD), opted to become the President of the Chamber of Deputies, likely due to the various benefits this position offers.

For Andrej Babiš, some ministers are surely more important than others, since they not only lead the most crucial ministries, but they also serve

as coalition guarantees or political agenda enforcers. The most important of them all is Karel Havlíček (ANO), First Deputy PM, Minister of Trade and Industry, and so-called 'second man of ANO'. Havlíček is an important mediator between Babiš and other coalition partners. If one day, Andrej Babiš decides to leave politics, we will likely see this man take over the ANO movement.

Another important figure of the new government is the already mentioned Minister of Finance, Alena Schillerová (ANO). Being in charge of the budget, she is tasked with funding ANO's election pledges, some of which are quite economically irresponsible. Schillerová is also important in communication with the party's MPs, since she was the chair of ANO's parliamentary group during the previous electoral term. Being Babiš's close ally, as well as the most

▼ 9.12.2025 PRAGUE CASTLE:

Joint photo at the appointment of the government by the president.



Source: René Volfík/Seznam zprávy.

important woman of the party, gives her significant power.

The cabinet also consists of ministers, who are more 'moderate' than others. These include Minister of Education Robert Plaga (ANO) or Minister of Health Adam Vojtěch (ANO). Both these ministers served in the same position during Babiš's first and second cabinets. Plaga has repeatedly criticized his coalition partner SPD for their statements towards the Ukrainian minority in Czechia. Vojtěch is also well known, as he ruled the health sector during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, often being criticized for chaos.

Important ministers in the new Czech government are not only from the ANO movement. The second largest coalition party, SPD, has appointed Jaromír Zůna (Indep.), a retired army general, as Minister of Defense and Deputy PM. Just a few days after being sworn in, Zůna surprisingly stated that 'Support of Ukraine will continue. We stand on Kyiv's side; it's just defending itself. Russia is the aggressor'.

These words resonated both positively and negatively. MPs from

opposition parties such as ODS or STAN supported Zůna, thanking him for the continuing support of Ukraine. However, SPD, a party known for its critical stance towards Ukraine, and at the same time the party that appointed him to be minister, started criticizing him for his words. This led to his 'silencing', as the government agreed that from now on, Zůna should only speak about defense matters, not foreign policy.

Another controversial persona of Babiš's cabinet is Martin Šebestýán (Indep.). Even though the Minister of Agriculture was nominated by SPD, he has close ties to Babiš and his conglomerate, Agrofert. Šebestýán used to be a lobbyist of the group, in which the agriculture business accounts for approx. 40% of sales. Thus, there are concerns that Šebestýán might take steps in favor of Agrofert, completely turning around the strategy of the

eventually name Macinka the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but since Pavel insisted on keeping Turek out of government, the Motorists' chairman was also named the acting Minister of Environment, till the party finds a different candidate.

In early January, Petr Pavel sent out a letter to PM Babiš, in which he stated that Turek 'repeatedly demonstrated a lack of respect for the fundamental value of the rule of law: the willingness to comply with the legal order of our state.' A few days after this statement, Turek was named Government Commissioner for Green Deal and Climate Policy. This means he can officially attend the government council meetings but cannot directly decide on any matter regarding the agenda of the Ministry of Environment.

A close ally of Turek's, who has constantly supported him through all his scandals, is Boris Šťastný (AUTO), the Minister of Sport, Prevention and Health. He is the only minister of the cabinet without a portfolio, which means he has no specific responsibility as head of a government department. However, his role inside the government is important, being the main negotiator of Motorists due to his relations with the PM.

*'Support of Ukraine will continue. We stand on Kyiv's side; it's just defending itself. Russia is the aggressor.'*

During its first months, the government made several controversial decisions. Babiš has also shifted the Czech foreign policy more towards the ideals of Donald Trump, mainly when it comes to the support of Ukraine.

Since the government has received support from the Chamber of Deputies, whose members approved the cabinet with 108 votes in favor, it is now clear that the cabinet can continue in the steps it has started to take. Will Babiš face serious problems in the coming years, or will his third cabinet be successful and beneficial for Czechia?



Source: Tomáš Fongus

Matěj Diviš

## Fighting for Every Drop: The Rise of Water Wars

Water once seen as an unlimited natural resource is becoming a growing cause of conflict around the world.

So called “Water wars“ refer to disagreements, ranging from political disputes to armed clashes, over the control or management of shared or scarce water resources like rivers, lakes or even groundwater. This term describes the tension between countries, states, or communities competing for vital freshwater for drinking, energy, and agriculture.

The main cause of these conflicts is, of course, resource scarcity. But how did it emerge? Climate change and the increase in temperatures leads to altering rainfall, melting glaciers, increasing evaporation, causing extreme weather like droughts and floods. Which results in water supplies being unpredictable, often more polluted, and undrinkable. Drastically worsening pollution, and therefore contamination of freshwater resources, reduces the supply even more. At the same time, population growth also directly affects water availability by the increase in overall demand for drinking, sanitation, and especially food production.

All these factors affect and exhaust water accessibility and therefore put countries and other communities under stress to sustain their agricultural sector and provide vital resources. But it does not exclude the want for political power and management, economic interest or territorial control over this necessary supply. Environmental issues are not the only triggers for these disputes. Transboundary issues create cross border disagreements and uncertainty of what belongs to whom. In contrary these problems can be further caused by internal conflicts, where the distribution can be unequal or mismanaged.

A great example of a transboundary disagreement is *the Indus Water Dispute*, which occurred from 1947 to 1960 between India and Pakistan. When these two countries became two separate countries in the year 1947, the Indus River system was split. This major river network in Asia originates in Tibet and flows through India and Pakistan into the Arabian Sea.

Most of the water resources were located in India, but Pakistan also depended heavily on them, particularly for agriculture. The position of the water infrastructure meant that India gained control of upstream barrages, which regulated the flow of water into Pakistan. Tension arose immediately. India was soon accused of blocking water for irrigation and thereby threatening Pakistan’s food supply. But India reasoned that it had the right to develop projects within its own territory. Despite all this arguing, after approximately thirteen years, the two countries were able to agree on a treaty known as the *Indus Water Treaty* (1960)

This document decided who would own what. Pakistan gained control over the western rivers called Indus, Jhelum, Chenab. While those on the eastern side called Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, were allocated to India. It also sets rules for building dams, canals, etc. This agreement has largely prevented full-scale conflict over water and is considered a successful example of so-called water history.

*A recent UN report, posted on January 20th this year, declared that the world is entering an era called the “global water bankruptcy“, with 75% of people living in water-insecure nations.*

Another prominent case of this disagreement is the ongoing Tigris and Euphrates water conflict, which escalated significantly in the 1960s and 1970s. The Tigris-Euphrates is a large river system in West Asia that flows into the Persian Gulf. Some of the first civilizations emerged from the confluence of these two rivers. This vital system is shared between Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Kuwait. This water conflict has its roots in the Turkey’s upstream dam projects, which control water flows vital for Syria and Iraq downstream, leading to conflicts over fair water allocation, irrigation needs and sovereignty. Tension only increases, as management becomes more crucial due to drastic climate change, increasing temperatures, and escalating demand for vital water sources. Turkey views the river as Turkish water and prioritizes irrigation and hydropower granted by its dam projects, therefore controlling a significant flow of this water system. On the other side, Syria and Iraq face this issue differently. Because they heavily depend on the river flows for agriculture and survival, they feel disadvantaged by Turkey’s upstream projects. The only solution left for them is actively seeking water shares under international law. These issues impact the affected countries in several ways. Agricultural decline, poor water quality, and reduced flows damaged farming and even forced the migration of some citizens. Diminishing water quality also threatens livelihoods, sanitation, and stability of any region and whole country. Efforts to manage and resolve this issue stopped, but many believe that future cooperation is essential to combat this problem and end this unrest.

► **A SHEPHERD DRINKS WATER** on the dry bed of Manjara Dam, which supplies water to Latur and nearby villages in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

Another example of a different type of water dispute is the Cochabamba water war, which took place between the year 1990 and 2000. It was a series of massive, often violent, protests in the city Cochabamba in Bolivia, against the privatization of the area’s water system by a foreign association called Aguas del Tunari consortium. Which led to huge price increases and sparked a national movement for water to be seen as a human right. This movement and the protests were led by residents, farmers, and groups like Coordinator in Defense of Water and Life. They blocked the city and ultimately forced the government to cancel the contract with the private company and return control to public management again.

As controlling water becomes a tactic of conflict, many people flee their homes to migrate somewhere safe. Water wars and scarcity of this resource also heavily affect local economies. Shortages make water more expensive, and the scarce supply limits the ability of crops to grow in dry regions. Therefore, the agricultural and food sector is severely affected by reducing overall production. However, these are not the only problems; resource insufficiency also impacts people as individuals. Due to horrible conditions that they are forced to live in, such as inadequate sanitation or drinking water supply, many people, including children, are afflicted by many deadly waterborne illnesses like cholera and typhoid. Not to mention starvation, dehydration, and many mental health diseases caused by feelings of insecurity and inadequate safety.

There are several organizations and initiatives working on preventing water wars in the world. Their main goal is to

promote cooperation and address the instability of this vital resource. One of these institutions is UN-Water, a system designed to support countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, which targets clean water and sanitation for all. Pacific Institute & World Resources Institute conducts research and promotes strategies for ending water conflicts and emphasizes sustainable resource management. There are also many NGOs involved, such as Water.org, Water for People, or Charity: Water. All these organizations focus on providing secure access to safe water and needed sanitation and therefore aim to reduce scarcity and the risk of conflict.

Overall, the global percentage of available freshwater for human use is only about 0,5% with most of it being locked in soil, ice caps, glaciers, or deep underground. Major aquifers are depleting, 70% of them show long-term decline, and many large lakes are shrinking. Around 2 to 3 billion people already face water scarcity. A recent UN report, posted on January 20th this year, declared that the world is entering an era called the “global water bankruptcy“, with 75% of people living in water-insecure nations. Many statistics talk about 700 million people being potentially displaced by scarcity by 2030, due to these environmental and economic issues. On the other hand, numerous sources state that the Earth isn’t expected to totally run out of fresh water. But we, as humanity, need to realize that the problem isn’t about the actual amount of water, but about the accessibility of this vital source, and we need to help those who are not so fortunate to have easy access.

Eliška Bastařová



Source: Manish Swarup, AP/National Geographic

Source: Lindsay Dunbar/ABC News



▲ A BURNED ELECTION BILLBOARD of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas on July 31, 2024.

## Hope to Exile: Venezuela's Stolen Election and the 2026 Surprise

Before the highly anticipated 2024 presidential elections, the Venezuelan political scene was full of a rare sense of optimism. For the first time in a decade, the broken opposition united behind a single candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia, a silent diplomat who stepped in after the popular leader María Corina Machado was banned from running in the elections. The atmosphere was tense, and the polls were predicting an easy victory for the opposition and an end to the 25-year rule of Chavismo.

Both before and during the election on July 28, 2024, the regime of Nicolás Maduro sent mixed signals. While they allowed the vote to proceed, the events after it were a chaotic show of democratic norms. The opposition received a document from the official Vote Counting Committee, which stated that González received nearly 70% of the votes (when the voting was calculated from 80%). Nevertheless, the regime controlled National Electoral Council (CNE) declared Maduro the winner, with 51% of the votes, without providing a single supporting document. This unbelievable act, described by independent observers as "the most visible election fraud in modern Latin American history" triggered immediate global rejection.

Even more surprising were the events that followed. UN investigators from the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission reported that the state machinery was weaponized to "silence, discourage, and quash" opposition. Over 2000 people were detained in post-election protests, including minors, which the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights described as a "climate of fear." If this

conflict was a Gaussian function, it would have reached its peak in September 2024, when an arrest warrant was issued for the president elect, Edmundo González, which forced him to flee to Spain. The image of the 75-year-old diplomat boarding a Spanish Air Force plane marked a low point for Venezuelan democracy, the terror which caused nearly 8 million Venezuelans to leave the country since 2014.

However, the silence that settled over Venezuela in 2025 was misleading. While the international community's attention initially drifted (distracted by conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East), the diplomatic pressure continued behind closed doors. The United Nations Human Rights Council repeatedly condemned the "gross human rights violations," and the International Criminal Court (ICC) signaled that the post-election repression could constitute crimes against humanity.

*The Venezuelan crisis shows a strategic maneuver by authoritarian regimes to use elections not as a tool for democracy, but as a mechanism to identify and purge dissidents.*

Another crucial moment in this electoral term was the sudden shift in January 2026. Just as the regime appeared to have successfully maintained its power through repression and exile, the situation changed overnight. Reports emerged in early January regarding a targeted U.S. operation that resulted in the detention

of Nicolás Maduro reaching a dead end. This "January Surprise" has thrown the region into uncertainty. Much like the delays seen in other geopolitical crises, international bodies were slow to react at first. It took the UN Secretary General several days to issue a statement, he expressed both optimism for the potential of democratic restoration alongside grave concerns about the legal consequence of foreign intervention.

As a result of this shock and the sudden power vacuum, the Chavista ruling party is currently splitting the polls and the opinions of the public. While in late 2025 the regime maintained a state of absolute control, the latest monitoring from regional think tanks suggests a rapid decline in loyalty among the military and lower-ranking officials. However, the opposition, still largely in exile or operating from the shadows, faces the biggest task of rebuilding institutions in a country where the economy has decreased by nearly 80% over the last decade.

The Venezuelan crisis shows a strategic maneuver by authoritarian regimes to use elections not as a tool for democracy, but as a mechanism to identify and purge dissidents. However, the delayed but crucial international response, culminating in the events of early 2026, supports the claim that the era of immunity of politicians may be reaching its limit. Balancing the restoration of order with the urgent need for humanitarian aid will be an important test for the transitional authorities, which may even result in a surprise outcome for the future of Latin American democracy.

Tom Zerzánec

## Is Lebron James Slowly Retiring?

Lebron Raymone James is a 41-year-old basketball player, playing in the number 1 ranked league - NBA. He is playing for the LA Lakers, here in Los Angeles, he has been taking part since 2018, having previously played for Miami Heat and Cleveland Cavaliers, where he was drafted in 2003. Lebron is also known for treating his body like a temple by spending thousands of dollars on various therapies or generally things that can help him prolong his career. This made him an example for young athletes and a walking symbol of longevity.

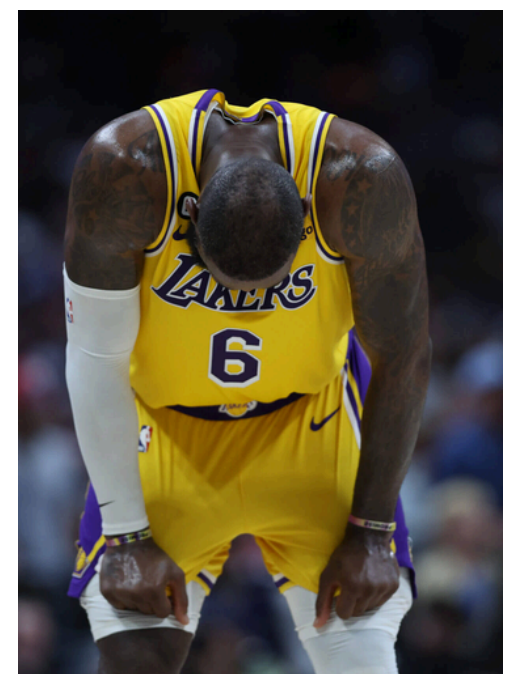
James is globally viewed as perhaps one of the best basketball players of all time, but being 41 years of age naturally comes with a sport phenomenon called "Father time" which essentially describes a sportsman's decline when turning a certain age (mostly 30-35). However, Lebron has been proving everybody that said, "Father time is catching up to him" wrong by being the most consistent performer since the NBA was founded, with 21 years of pure domination.

However, this season was a breaking point for LBJ, losing several of his records/streaks such as double-digit points per game streak, dating back to 2007, which stood for nearly 19 years, first time not an all-star since 2004 and many others that he is close to losing this season. Even though he lost all these records and streaks, he remains a well-respected and feared player on the court.

In conclusion, Lebron is not "washed up", instead he switched his playing style from a hungry, young talent that likes scoring and having the spotlight, to a mature and helpful player that wants the best for the new talented and hungry players.

Danny Smíšek

▼ MAY 2023: LEBRON JAMES bends over in exhaustion after the Lakers' loss to Denver.



Source: Matthew Stockman / Getty Images

# The Perfect Crime That Failed: Leopold and Loeb

Two brilliant minds of the 1920's were ready to commit, what they considered the "perfect crime", instead it was remembered as the crime of the century. Nathan Freudenthal Leopold Jr. and Richard Albert Loeb, born in 1904 and 1905, were seen as promising young men, coming from influential families and attending a prestigious school- The University of Chicago. Their case got so much attention since it challenged the public belief about intelligence and wealth being automatically connected to moral responsibility.

Leopold and Loeb did not act impulsively. Months before the crime they carefully considered all possible outcomes and planned the "perfect crime". Their goal was not to gain money or get revenge on someone; it was about proving how their intellectual abilities and wealth got them above everyone else, and that the law did not apply to them. Both men created fake identities, prepared alibis and created a day plan to mislead the police. Their preparation is one of the most impactful parts of the case as it highlights how their confidence was transformed into the killing arrogance.

They believed that by planning every detail in advance, they could eliminate any chance of failure, treating the crime as a carefully controlled intellectual experiment rather than a real human tragedy.

They selected the victim based on his heritage, just to fit into their pre-prepared scheme, making this tragedy look more like some sort of experiment for the two killers. On May 21st, 1924, Leopold and Loeb were driving in a rented car around the wealthy part of Chicago, when they spotted a 14 year old Robert "Bobby" Franks, the son of wealthy Chicago watch manufacturer Jacob Franks, who was walking home from school. Richard knew him personally, and because of that, the young boy entered the car without any hesitation. As soon as he sat down, the killers struck him multiple times, resulting in deadly injuries. Afterwards Leopold and Loeb tried to make the situation look like a kidnapping to throw the police off their tracks.

Nathan and Richard started to send notes to the family of Bobby requesting tens of thousands of dollars for them to get their son back. They assumed that their plan would work without any

problems; however, the investigators quickly found the body, and the only evidence they had was a pair of eyeglasses. Due to the unique prescriptions and design of the glasses, the police tracked the glasses directly to Nathan Leopold, immediately placing him at the scene and exposing a critical flaw in what was supposed to be a flawless plan. Their alibi also began to collapse when Leopold claimed he was driving his own car with Loeb at the time of the murder, yet the car was proven to be in the garage for repairs that day, leaving them without a credible explanation for their whereabouts.

As the evidence started to add up, both killers confessed. In addition to the glasses and the failed alibi, investigators uncovered a wider chain of evidence, including the letter, which was typed on Leopold's family typewriter, further confirming their involvement. They quickly went from the two "mastermind killers" to the biggest talk of the country, as it quickly spread in the newspaper. The reaction of the public was intense. Americans were fascinated about the fact that two young men with every possible

Source: The History Reader



▲ NATHAN LEOPOLD



▲ RICHARD LOEB

advantage decided to commit such an awful crime. Many schools and universities debated whether intelligence was an excuse for immoral behavior, or if it increased responsibility. To some extent it even caused the rapid change of social values that was visible in the United States in the 1920's.

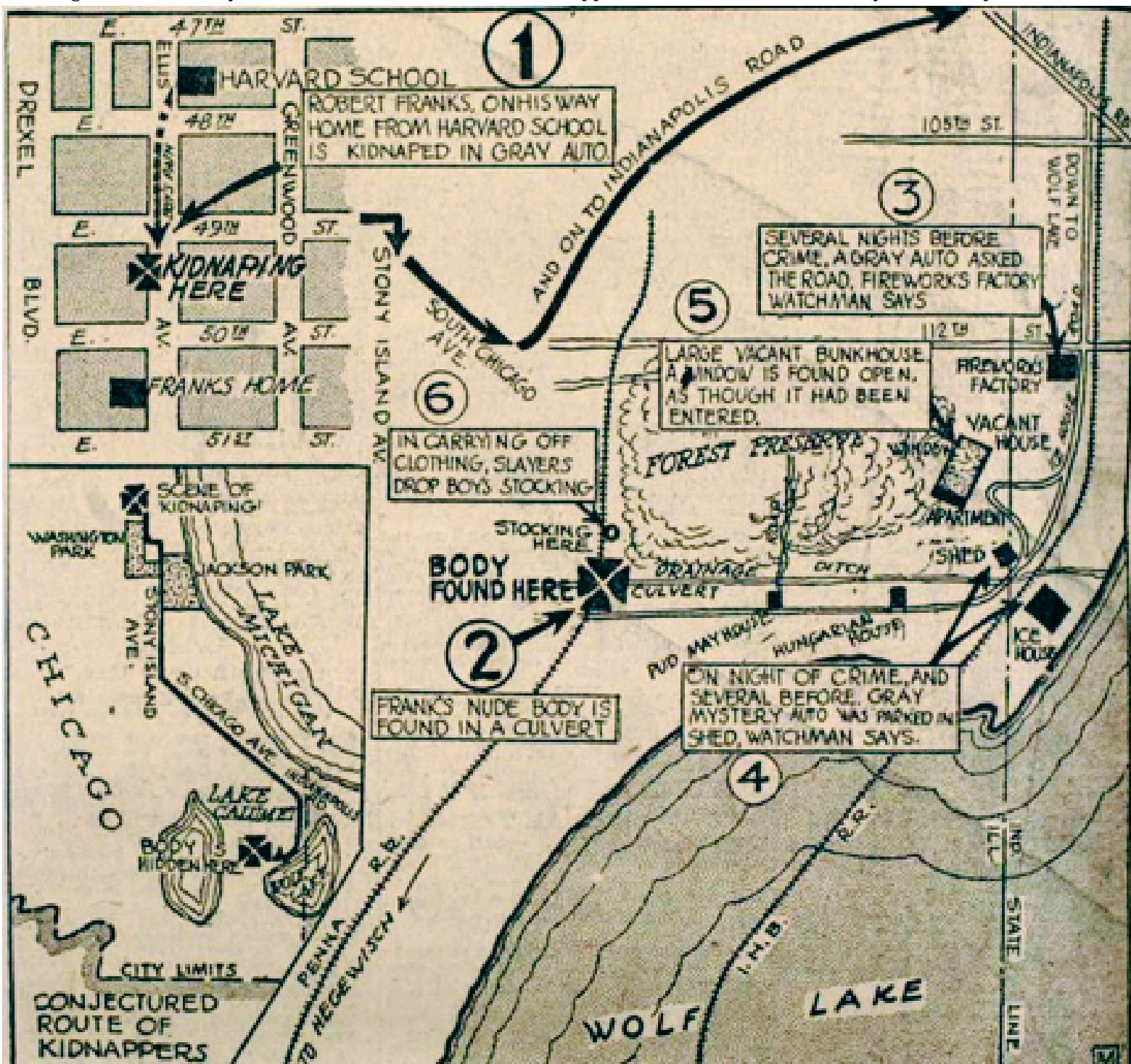
The trial alone is significant. The families hired one of the best lawyers of that time, Clarence Darrow, who argued against the death penalty and used the psychological and social factors in their defense. By pleading guilty, Darrow avoided the whole jury trial and moved directly into the sentencing. The judge ultimately sentenced both killers to prison for life as well as additional years for the kidnapping, instead of an execution. Which resulted in Darrow's job being a success, mostly due to his final speech that lasted two hours: "They killed him as they might kill a spider or a fly, for the experience." (Darrow, 1924).

*"They killed him as they might kill a spider or a fly, for the experience." (Darrow, 1924).*

In the following years, the pair of Leopold and Loeb still drew attention to themselves. Richard was murdered by an inmate in prison, by James Day due to the claims of sexual assaults caused by Loeb, on the other hand, Nathan earned parole and after decades was able to live a quiet life in Puerto Rico. Today this case is not looked at the violence, but more at the psychological side of the killers and how it reveals the true side of human ambition and the consequence of never dealing with consequences.

Gabriela Salata

▼ **THE SCENE OF FRANKS' CRIME:** Region of the culvert beneath which the body of Robert Franks was found, and the vacant boarding house which may have been the rendezvous of the kidnapers and shed where the car may have been parked.



Source: Hyde Park Herald

# Businessman, Teacher, or a Doctor? An Interview with Mr. Stanislav Gálik

**To start simply – how would you introduce yourself to someone who has never heard your name before?**

I enjoy introducing myself as a happily married, proud father of two boys. The reason is simple: professionally, I've worked across such a wide range of industries that trying to introduce myself in job-related terms often just confuses people. I still remember the look on my pre-school-aged son's face when someone at a university building addressed me as "doctor." He turned to me completely puzzled and said, "Dad... are you a businessman, a teacher, or a doctor?"

**You work across psychology, business, and education. Why did Open Gate appeal to you as a place to teach and work?**

Open Gate is a school like no other. The values of the school are very closely aligned with my own, the environment is inspiring, and the students are exceptionally talented. That combination is basically a dream scenario for any teacher. It makes teaching feel truly meaningful.

*That combination is basically a dream scenario for any teacher.*

*It makes teaching feel truly meaningful.*

**What keeps you coming back to OG every day?**

It's not really every day—it's Mondays and Thursdays, and that actually matters a lot. I have always been deeply passionate about teaching, but I'm genuinely happy that it is a part-time role rather than a full-time job. I have enormous respect for teachers who come to work every single day with energy and a positive mindset,

because teaching is psychologically very demanding work. For me, Open Gate is almost a place where I come to rest from my business responsibilities and switch my mental focus on. That's also why I like doing diverse things in life—it makes me feel like I'm really living life to the fullest.

**On a scale of "I overthink everything" to "I hitchhiked on a plane" how impulsive are you really?**

That's a great psychological question. I would say I am quite impulsive—but only because I know myself very well and I'm disciplined. That combination allows me to live a passionate and energetic life without making reckless or foolish decisions, which impulsivity often leads to when it's not well regulated.

**What was the hardest part of getting to where you are now? Is there something people usually wouldn't assume about you when they meet you?**

People who know me well would probably say that I'm extremely goal-oriented. Whether it's sport, school, or work, I approach everything very conscientiously and with full commitment. For me, discipline has never felt like a limitation; it's actually what gives me freedom to pursue all my dreams.

**What is the worst psychological statement you keep hearing, that people keep believing?**

"You can achieve anything you want." Unfortunately, some people take this statement very literally. The truth is: "No, you cannot just take Greenland, Mr. Trump." Ambition needs to be balanced with realism, otherwise it becomes dangerous rather than empowering.



**Is persuasion closer to manipulation or ethics? Where would you as a psychologist draw a line?**

Persuasion sits exactly on the boundary between the two. In the wrong hands, it becomes pure manipulation. In good hands, it's a powerful tool for helping people and improving the world around us. Persuasion can lead to healthier behavior, better parenting, protecting others, or even protecting the environment. The main problem is that about 99% of people don't really know where that ethical line is - or how to recognise when they've crossed it.

**Have you ever made a business decision that was psychologically correct but financially wrong?**

Absolutely, many times. I value my sanity more than profit. Maintaining a low level of stress is extremely important to me in decision-making. In simple terms, I don't do business that would keep me awake at night. That means I deliberately avoid conflict-driven or legally questionable business opportunities, even if they look profitable. I genuinely love living a calm, and balanced life.

**Looking back at your career so far, what moment felt like the real turning point? The one where you realized, "This is what I'm meant to do"?**

I've always felt comfortable in every role I've ever had. I see my professional life as a path full of interesting adventures, where each one is meant to teach you something for the next stage. So rather than a single turning point, I think in terms of milestones. Whether it's publishing a book, selling a business, running a corporation, or teaching at Open Gate.

**And lastly, if you had to diagnose modern society with one psychological problem, what would it be?**

Social Comparison Pathology - constant exposure to curated online lives fuels upward social comparison, contributing to dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and distorted self-perception. Let's remember, that our lives are awesome and those videos on your screen are not a reflection of reality.

**Julie Hoffmanová  
Rozálie Slámová**



Source: Albartrosmedia.cz

## Is Procrastination Just Laziness?



Source: Association for Psychological Science

"I'll do it later". Most people have said this at least once - often knowing it will only create more stress in the end. Whether it involves delaying schoolwork, putting off studying, or avoiding a task until the last possible moment, procrastination is usually brushed off as laziness, a lack of discipline, or bad habits. But is that really the case? As deadlines approach and pressure builds, procrastination shows repeatedly, suggesting it may be more than just poor time management. By examining the psychology behind procrastination, this article untangles common assumptions and explores why we delay tasks even when we know better.

One major reason people procrastinate is psychological rather than simple laziness. Studies suggest that fear of failure, anxiety, and low self-confidence can play a crucial role in making even simple tasks feel overwhelming, leading people to often delay them. According to Pier Steel, leading researcher on procrastination, an estimated 15-20% of adults struggle with chronic procrastination, often due to underlying emotional factors rather than poor time management. Similarly, research by Sirois and Pychyl highlights that procrastination can function as a short-term way to manage negative feelings, offering temporary relief from stress but increasing pressure in the long term. For students, this can look like delaying writing an essay until the night before it's due or avoiding studying for a test as the fear of failure feels too intense. Even though putting off the task feels easier at the moment, in the long run it often worsens the anxiety and reduces overall productivity, creating a cycle that is difficult to break. Experts warn that without addressing the emotional triggers, this habit might carry over into adult life, affecting work, relationships, and performance.

Procrastination can also be understood as an emotional coping mechanism in everyday situations. When facing a challenging task, putting it off may provide a temporary relief from anxiety, frustration, or self-doubt, even though it does not solve the underlying problem. Sirois and Pychyl describe this as a "short-term mood repair", where delaying a task helps protect an individual's emotional state

in the moment. In practice this may involve behaviours such as scrolling on social media instead of starting a large project or even cleaning one's room to avoid tackling homework. Although these strategies may feel helpful at first, in the long run they often backfire as pressure builds, the task remains unfinished, and stress only increases. Viewing procrastination as an emotional coping mechanism shows that it is not merely a matter of laziness, but rather a response to how individuals manage difficult feelings in daily life.

While psychology and emotions explain much of procrastination, our daily life habits and external distractions also play a huge role. Poor time management, constant digital interruptions, and uncertain priorities can make it easier to delay tasks, especially in an environment where distractions are always accessible. Social media, phones, and streaming platforms offer immediate gratification, which often feels more appealing than long-term goals such as academic success. Over time, repeatedly choosing short-term comfort over responsibility can turn procrastination into a habit, rather than a one-time response to stress. This suggests that procrastination is not caused by a single factor, but rather a combination of multiple underlying influences like emotional, behavioural and psychological factors. Recognising these patterns is an important step towards breaking the cycle and developing a healthier approach to work and handling responsibilities.

In conclusion, procrastination cannot be simply labelled as laziness or a lack of discipline. As researchers suggest, it is often the result of underlying emotional, psychological and everyday habits working all together. Understanding why we procrastinate allows us to view it with more awareness rather than self-criticism. Instead of labelling procrastination as a personal flaw, recognising its hidden causes helps individuals develop better strategies for dealing with tasks and deadlines. Ultimately, questioning the cause of procrastination may be the first small step towards changing how we work with ourselves.

Sofie Karafiátová

## Time Is but a Construct: How We're All Losing Our Minds (On Schedule)

Twenty-four hours. 1,440 minutes. 86,400 seconds. All different ways to describe a single day. Yet for many of us, that still isn't enough.

From early mornings to late nights, I often catch myself thinking, well, I did nothing today. Which is baffling, considering that people around me insist on the opposite. They tell me I'm always studying, always busy with schoolwork, volunteering, extracurriculars, responsibilities all stacked neatly on top of each other. And yet procrastination still feels like my closest companion. No matter how much I do, it never feels like enough and I always feel like I could have done more.

So, like everyone else, I try to adapt to this nonsensical rule of twenty-four hours. For example: to be a functional member of society, you're meant to wake up early (say, seven in the morning) and go to bed at a reasonable hour (say, ten in the evening). Sounds logical and efficient, doesn't it?

Yet a question remains: why am I still awake at three a.m.?

As a matter of fact, why are we all lying in bed, mentally replaying everything we didn't do? All the things we could have finished. Or started. Or even perfected. The emails we didn't send. The ideas we didn't write down. The version of ourselves that somehow managed time better than we did today. Maybe the problem isn't that time is limited. Maybe the problem is that we've turned it into something to be conquered, measured, and constantly failed. A schedule we're always slightly behind, even when we never stop moving.

We chase productivity like oxygen and treat rest like a crime. We confuse being busy with being fulfilled and then wonder why we're exhausted and empty by nightfall. Worse, we compare. Someone else always seems to be doing more, doing better, managing their 24 hours like a wizard while we're over here losing arguments with our snooze button. We scroll through curated schedules and color-coded calendars and feel like maybe our time is broken.

Maybe we are.

But what if we stopped treating time like a race to win? What if rest counted? What if thought, joy, boredom, even nothingness was worth something? What if the goal wasn't to do more, but to do enough, and to recognize when we already have?

It took me a long time, but I realized that 24 hours is enough to accomplish what needs to be done in a day. We just need to find our own way to accepting it. And no, that doesn't mean tricking ourselves into becoming some hyper-efficient productivity machine. It means redefining what it means to "accomplish" something in the first place. Because maybe the reason time always feels like it's slipping through

our fingers isn't that we're lazy, but that our expectations are just completely unreasonable. We're trying to jam a week's worth of academic excellence, career advancement, social connection, and self-care into one conveniently labeled 24-hour unit. And when it doesn't all fit? We blame ourselves, not the absurdity of the system we're trying to follow.

To stop spiraling into that constant state of "I should have done more," it helps to get clear on what actually matters each day. That means pausing long enough to ask: what's really necessary today, and what am I only doing because I feel guilty for not doing it? Guilt is not a planner. Guilt doesn't deserve a time slot.

Start with one or two things. Just one or two. If you do those, your day is a win. Everything else is a bonus. And no, you don't need to wake up at 5 a.m. and drink kale smoothies to be a person of value. Sleep in if you need to. Take breaks without explaining them to anyone. Rest isn't just a reset button for work. It's part of life.

If procrastination keeps knocking at your door, don't treat it like an enemy. Get curious. Ask what you're avoiding and why. Sometimes, procrastination is a warning light, telling you that something is too much, too vague, or just not right for you. Instead of brute-forcing your way through, break things down into smaller tasks that feel doable. A 10-minute commitment is less terrifying than an entire essay. A page is less overwhelming than a novel. Time starts to feel more manageable when we stop demanding it to do everything at once.

Also, please stop believing that everyone else has it figured out. They don't. Most people are flailing just as much as you are; they're just better at posting aesthetic planners and filtered smiles. Comparing your behind-the-scenes to someone else's highlight reel will always make you feel behind, even when you're not.

And if you ever catch yourself lying awake at night, mentally scrolling through all the things you didn't do... try to flip the script. Instead of counting what you missed, name what you did. Even if it wasn't what you planned, even if it wasn't impressive.

Time isn't your enemy. It isn't your boss. It's just a framework. A vague, stretchy one at that. You're allowed to move through it like a human being, not a machine.

And yes, 24 hours is enough. But only once we stop measuring ourselves by what we didn't finish, and start noticing what we actually did. That's when time starts feeling like something we can live with, not just race against.

Now, go to sleep. It's 3 a.m. Again.

Rozálie Slámová

## Under the Streets

The dark streets of London looked as if someone had taken the light out of them. The city seemed to be sleeping, covered by a blanket called Night. The moon was shining brightly above the park, but it wasn't the only light disturbing the peaceful darkness. There was a light coming from the window of the room. A room that resembled a home for one curious reporter. Lily sat at her desk, skimming through notes, typing quickly and trying to gather all the information she could. Paper covered the table and if you walked into the room, you wouldn't be able to tell what color the table was. She was searching, or, as she liked to call it, investigating. All she knew were rumors and lies, and she had to know the truth. Luxury Red had been haunting her for weeks. She had a strange feeling about the bar; there was something undiscovered beneath it. Everybody in the city avoided that place and there was nothing good about it. Yet she was pulled there like by a magnet. Why, she didn't know. She just knew that there was more of a story behind the locked rooms. She rubbed her eyes, and with a tired yawn decided that tomorrow is another day. Without sleep, she couldn't function. Tomorrow, she will try again.

*It was obvious that he knew exactly who the man was.*

Across the city, Leo wrapped tape around his bruised knuckles. He was no longer afraid of pain, he didn't feel it. The locker room smelled of sweat, metal, and blood. It was his routine and he was used to the smell. He loved the adrenaline in the air, the excitement he felt every time he entered the ring. The precious victory and the pride that came with it. He knew it wasn't right. He knew that if his sister knew about it, she would be angry. But that couldn't stop him. He had to fight. As he started to get lost in his thoughts, a voice suddenly brought him back. : 'Where's Mark at? Does he not know how much I hate it when someone's late?' Nobody answered. Mark was like a family to everyone. He was the brother you always wished you had. Yet that night, nobody had seen him. Leo started to worry, Mark was the only familiar figure here. Leo was new to this business, and here, you couldn't trust anybody. Showing dependence on someone was considered a weakness, and this place isn't for the weak ones. When Leo began to drift off into his thoughts again, he was interrupted by a loud scream. One of the guys had found a body slumped against the lockers, blood contrasting sharply with the concrete floor. Mark's eyes were open, but his expression was blank. He was staring at nothing. This wasn't part of the deal. You fight, you win, you heal. Murder was never a part of the plan.

Leo backed away, his heart pounding so loudly he couldn't think clearly anymore. He knew this wasn't an accident. In this kind of business, accidents never happen. Someone had planned it. Someone had chosen violence. And if they took Mark, who would be next? Would it be him?

Hours later, Leo nervously stood before a black door. In front of the apartment whose lights had been on the whole night. His hands were shaking as he rang the bell. When the door opened, a small brunette with a calm expression stood there. 'Leo! What happened?' He was too exhausted and scared to talk. He just looked into her eyes and waited for her next move. He didn't know what to expect, he just wanted to be with his sister, in his home. 'There's something I didn't tell you,' he said as he walked inside. 'And you're not going to like it.' Once Lily brought back tea, they sat across from each other and talked. Words tumbled across the room, mixed with moments of heavy silence. Lily didn't even notice she had been holding her breath the whole time. The fights. The club. The money. And the body. It was everything she had wanted and everything she had feared. She had to tell him. She feared his reaction. What if he felt betrayed? 'Leo, I have to tell you something too. The club, Luxury Red, I've been investigating it for the past few weeks. It kept me awake all those nights.' He froze, not knowing what to say. 'What?' 'I didn't know you worked there. We both kept our secrets, and what happened, happened. But what now? I don't want you to go back there.' For a while, there was silence, interrupted only by the sound of rain. 'They killed him,' Leo trembled. 'And what if I'm next or worse, what about you? What will they do to us?' Lily knew she had to be strong. And even though she was horrified by what her brother had been doing, she moved closer, sitting right next to him, comforting him. Yet there was a hint of curiosity in her eyes. She knew that even though she was shocked, this was the missing piece of her puzzle. She needed to dig deeper. Now everything made sense. 'We need to get away. What if they attack me or you?' Leo started to panic, trying to sound protective, yet the fear in his eyes betrayed him. 'Running was never an option,' Lily said calmly. 'We need to face our fears. In this family, we don't give up. We fight back.' Leo nodded, thinking about the situation he was in. 'I know the place. I know the rules. And most importantly, I know the people. If we combine our minds, we can find who did this.' Lily tightened her grip. 'Good. Because we're going to need every advantage we can get.' They had no idea what dark miseries were waiting to be uncovered, and turning back was no longer an option. After this decision, they decided to call it a night. Leo headed for the sofa while Lily

curled up comfortably in her bed. Accompanied by the soothing sound of rain, they eventually drifted off to sleep.

When Lily woke up, she quietly slipped into the living room and began making breakfast, careful not to wake her brother. But as soon as she opened the fridge and found only a single yogurt, and the harsh reality of student life hit her. As she tried to figure out how she could feed them both, despite it seeming impossible, she remembered exactly how *polite* her brother is when hungry and she wasn't ready to face that. Before she could even start thinking about alternatives, she heard Leo waking up. 'Please tell me you have more than the yogurt,' he mumbled sleepily. 'We really need to work on your eating habits.' 'You can always pretend this is a nightmare,' Lily replied jokingly, 'and when you wake up, the breakfast of champions will be waiting for you.' But she knew she couldn't let things go on like this. 'Grab your shoes. We're going to the store. I'm paying.' The mention of actual food made Leo's eyes light up, and he hurried toward the door. Lily smiled at the sight, relieved that this childish side of her brother was still there. It broke her heart to see everything he had to deal with, and even though she was the younger one, she was determined to protect him no matter what.

Their conversation grew more serious once they started walking. The destination was the grocery store, but they deliberately chose the longer route through the park to finally talk things through. Neither wanted to be the one to talk first, yet it was obvious they couldn't keep delaying it. 'We need to talk,' Leo said at last. Lily nodded. They had to. She laid everything out, every piece of evidence she had

gathered, every photo, every media article, everything. Leo filled in the gaps, explaining how the system worked, the rules, and how fighters were paid based on rankings. He talked about power and how those with money decided what would happen and who would fight. With every story he told, Lily's appetite faded. Food no longer mattered. All she could think about was her brother and the weight he carried. Her emotions were on a roller coaster, and she was so lost in thought that she accidentally bumped into someone. The impact snapped her back into reality. She looked up at the man and immediately began apologizing. Even Leo stopped walking, sensing that something was wrong. The tension in the air thickened. The man looked familiar, too familiar. Lily was sure she had seen him before. Her mind raced through all the photos she had studied. 'Don't mind it. ', the man said curtly before quickly walking away. The encounter left Lily unsettled. She turned back to Leo, only to find him frozen in place, his face drained of color. It was obvious that he knew exactly who the man was.

Viktorie Tampierová

Interested in knowing more?

Check out the next part of *Under the Streets* in Edition 3 of the OG Chronicle!

Source: Pinterest.com



# *I Who Have Never Known Men: The Book With No Answers*

Cover design: Anna Morrison, Source: Knihy Dobrovský

Humanity is an elastic word. We could define it in countless ways in terms of moral quality, our biological condition or social constructs. In *I Who Have Never Known Men* from 1995, Jacqueline Harpman refuses to even try to provide a clear definition of humanity. Instead, she places it under extreme conditions and examines its development. Through this post-apocalyptic dystopian novel, she poses the question: What remains of humanity, when all its social context is stripped away? To answer this question, everything in the novel is filtered through the mind of a single narrator.

*"I was forced to acknowledge too late, much too late, that I too had loved, that I was capable of suffering, and that I was human after all."*

This young woman finds herself lost, without an accessible past, yet in a world that is dependent on it. She was born as the "sterile offspring", abandoned by the people who created the circumstances of her suffering. As she comes of age, she turns to her inner self, because that is the only place she can find clarity in her situation.

*"...you shouldn't look for the meaning of a book anywhere but within the book itself, not in the author's life or in the writings of critics and other commentators."*

She grows up without the reference to human touch, culture, dignity, men or desire. Her interpretations, judgments, and secrets form independently of society's oversight. She is the only empty page left in a book from which all others have been torn. So what is left of her humanity when all that once defined it has slipped beyond time? As she observes, "Perhaps you never have time when you are alone? You only acquire it by watching it go by in others."

The novel exists in a space that is timeless, beyond time, in the absence of time altogether. There is no indication of this human-made concept within the novel, no calendars, history or progress. Nothing that could satisfy the reader's conventional desire to find an answer to all the questions. The protagonist could be thousands of years from the future, or she could as well be wandering across the endless plains of a deserted planet right at this moment. The time within this book is relative only to her heartbeat and the slight changes of her surroundings, no more no less. The distance the absence of time creates is balanced by the excruciating realism. Despite the disorientation, the emotional effect of the intimacy of the text is what connects us with the story. Timelessness does not act as a barrier on the protagonist's journey; it starts to

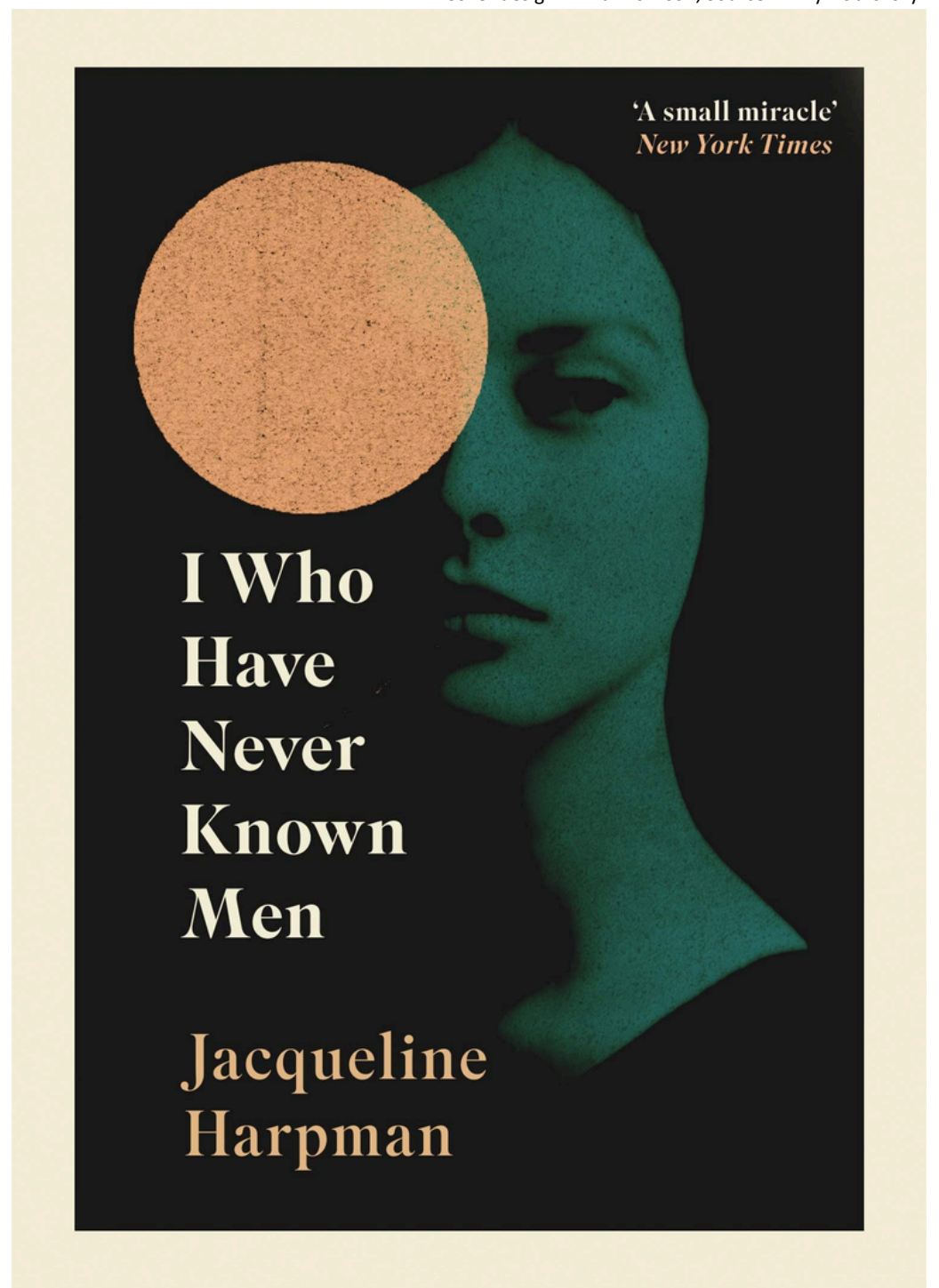
mirror her endurance as she is able to find rhythm within her own mind.

Jacqueline Harpman was born in Belgium in 1929. After the start of World War II, she moved to Casablanca with her close family to avoid prosecution by the Nazis. While most of her paternal family was being killed in Auschwitz, Harpman faced oppression due to her Jewish origins in Morocco. She returned home after the war and after studying French literature and abandoning her medical studies, she turned to writing in 1954.

It is tempting to read *I Who Have Never Known Men* through the lens of the twentieth-century atrocities, given the novel's themes of dehumanization, confinement and injustice. Yet Harpman herself proposes the contrary. In her later novel *Orlanda*, the character Aline, a professor of literature, suggests that "you shouldn't look for the meaning of a book anywhere but within the book itself, not in the author's life or in the writings of critics and other commentators." While the biography inevitably shapes the perspective of the author, reducing the novel to a historical allegory risks oversimplifying both the text and the real-world events it might evoke.

Praised and criticized for its ambiguity and the lack of resolution, *I Who Have Never Known Men* strips humanity of its history, time and commentary. It is left abandoned in the desert, not to carry purpose, progress, or even hope, but to endure in silence and solitude, waiting, only to witness "an old woman sitting upright, a knife in her heart, looking peaceful."

Julie Hoffmanová



▲ DEEP UNDERGROUND, thirty-nine women live imprisoned in a cage.

## Conscience of God

As I say the truth, my tongue  
gets purple from the guilt  
But then my conscience wears thin  
like a shirt you wore for a week in a row  
You are never pure enough  
yet you are always full of sin.

I am a criminal hiding in heaven  
with all the victims I have killed  
I am the hungry bear  
on the side of the road  
And I am going to get you  
I am going to get under your skin  
Down your pearly white bones.

And when you think you are finally safe  
In your bed, dreaming about God  
You will breathe out for the last time  
And you won't even know.

You won't even know.

Andrea Kočová



Source: Pinterest.com

## The Effect of Phone Usage Before and Right After Sleeping

Doomscrolling before sleep and checking our phones first thing in the morning seem like innocent routines for most of us. However, sleep is essential for our well-being, and this small habit can disrupt its benefits. Whether it be affected sleep duration, circadian rhythm disruption, or increased anxiety, sleep dictates the quality of our lives, and we have to be careful about habits affecting it.

The most obvious effect has to be a disruption of sleep quality and duration. Many studies have shown interest in the relationship between phone use before sleep and the quality of sleep, and all have shown a significant link between them. This is caused by us staying up longer because of scrolling on our phones. Our brains keep chasing the dopamine hit that phones give us, which makes it harder for us to stop and go to sleep. However, even when we decide that it is time to go to sleep and put our phones away, our brain is disrupted and finds it hard to fall asleep. The constant scrolling keeps our brains alert and convinces us that it is daytime. All these factors combined lead to a disruption of sleep quality and duration, which has an adverse effect on our everyday lives.

Phone usage not only disturbs sleep quality and duration, but it also affects our circadian rhythms. Blue light from our phones confuses our brains and confuses our circadian rhythm, an

internal 24-hour cycle governing our appetite, body temperature, and, in this case, most importantly, hormone release. Imagine that you fall asleep at 10 PM every day. Your circadian rhythm causes your body to release melatonin, a hormone produced in response to darkness that helps with timing sleep, at 10 PM. As your body is preparing to go to sleep, you pull out your phone and flash a blue light directly into your face. This action sends out signals to your brain to stop sending out melatonin. Adolescents are particularly sensitive to blue light before sleep, which can cause a lot of damage to overall sleep quality and make it harder to fall asleep. Long term effects on sleep quality can have a big impact on us, such as cognitive decline, depression or in extreme cases, heart disease.

*When you go to bed tonight, try to read a book or journal rather than flashing a blue light into your eyes, confusing your brain.*

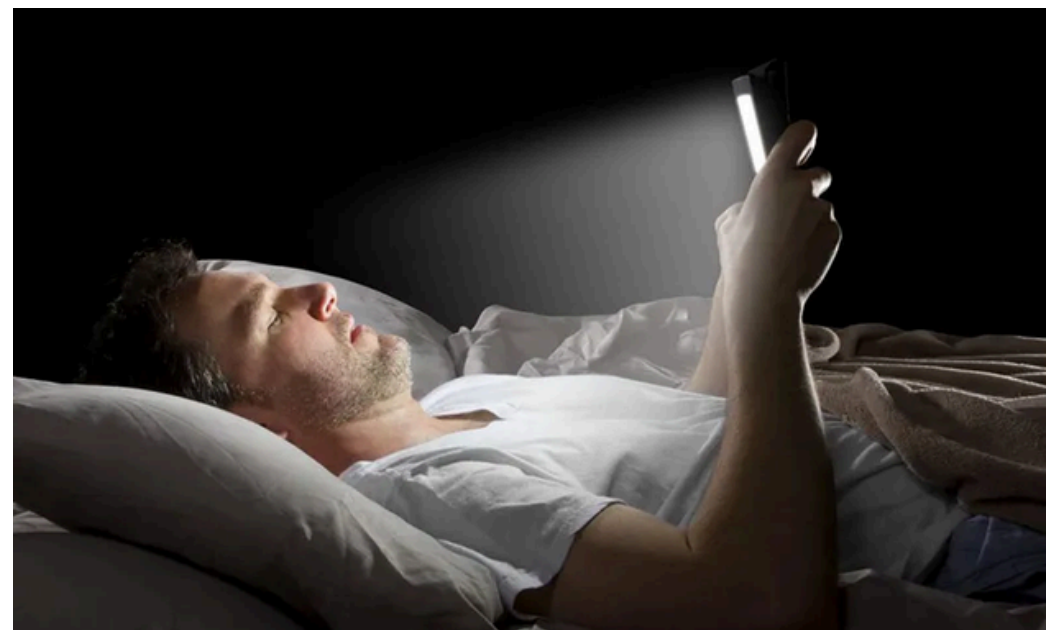
Although research is more limited to the effects of phone usage after waking up, there is evidence showing that early screen engagement can impact stress and our mental state. When you transition from sleep to wake, your brain goes through different brainwave

states. These states are delta waves (deep sleep), theta waves (light sleep) and alpha waves (quiet wakefulness). Your brain exhibits theta waves when you first wake up. Those are associated with relaxation and gently stimulate creativity. However, when you reach for your phone, overloading your brain with stimulating content, you move into beta waves (focused attention). Beta waves are amazing throughout the day when you need to stay focused while doing school work or other challenging tasks, but experiencing them too early on in the day can cause stress and prime your brain for distraction during the day. That is because having them too early and abruptly, especially while interrupting theta waves, causes a fight-or-flight response and a panic response

in your body. Beta waves are amazing when they are moderate, but an overload causes a “high-beta” state that is associated with panic, high anxiety and mental fatigue. Our bodies are not built for the modernised world we live in right now, surrounded by technology, and we should be aware of that.

Whilst phone usage can have benefits and make our lives easier, when sleep is involved, it is better to be cautious. An innocent-looking habit, such as watching TikTok videos before sleeping, can have a huge impact on your overall well-being.

Andrea Grossová



Source: Harvard Health Publishing

## How Digital Life Has Slowly Changed the Way We Feel and Create

There was a time when art felt sacred—not because it was perfect, but because it connected people. Music was played from beginning to end, often in silence. Books were held, reread, and passed between hands. Art asked for time, and people were willing to give it. It was not just creation; it was connection, carrying emotion, memory, and meaning - a reflection of our inner lives and of one another. Yet now, something feels different.

But perhaps this is not new. Societies have always evolved. Every generation has feared change, every era has mourned what it was losing while

celebrating what it was gaining. And yet, the question remains: when does progress begin to cost more than it gives?

As an artist, I once valued creation with reverent devotion. Each brushstroke, each note, each line of poetry held weight. Yet now, something feels different. Technology allows us to create endlessly and instantly - music streamed in seconds, images copied with a click, words typed and erased without consequence. Art is no longer widely seen as the work of “genius”, but as an ordinary product, endlessly repeatable. In this abundance, the

shared experience that once tied us to one another has begun to fade.

This hollowing extends beyond art. We sit together while our attention lives elsewhere, our eyes lowered to glowing screens. Conversations shrink into fragments. Moments that once unfolded slowly are now rushed, recorded, and forgotten. Presence has become rare, even when we are physically close, and the consequences of our distraction often go unnoticed.

Even memory itself has shifted. The eyes, once vessels of experience and connection, now witness a filtered, flattened world. We try to recreate the past - the perfect note, the right line - but something almost unapparent has changed. The song survives, but we inhabit it differently now; our attention, values, and the depth of our experience have quietly moved elsewhere.

We still perhaps to play the same instruments as before, but not with the same strings. A voice that once sounded perfect in our memory still seems familiar, yet no matter how carefully we search for the right notes, or how precisely we tune the sound to match our recollection, the music never fully returns. This is not just about songs or instruments, but about the way we once approached life itself: our

art, our passions, our relationships, and even how we moved through the world. What endures now is the faint echo of that devotion, the memory of care and attention, but the fullness of feeling, the intensity with which we once approached people and experiences, has changed.

Digital life has not stolen our creativity or capacity to feel. It has reshaped them. We create faster, communicate more, and connect less. We are surrounded, yet isolated. Society can come to call this progress, yet it secretly prioritizes speed over presence, quantity over depth, ease over reflection.

And so, the question that still hangs around us: In a world that changes endlessly, how do we know when it has gone too far? When progress begins to silence feeling, replace presence, and flatten meaning - will we notice? And most importantly, will we choose to remember what it once meant to feel deeply, create slowly, and truly see one another?

The danger isn't that the world goes too far, but that it does so quietly, while we're distracted - and by the time we notice, we may no longer remember what we were meant to protect.

Kristýna Kotalová



Source: Condé Nast Traveller

## Should You Trust Medical Studies and Meta-Analyses?

Have you ever heard of Mr. Safer? In the 1990s, he wanted to understand how the French could eat more high-fat foods yet have lower rates of heart disease than Americans. He argued that having one glass of wine with a meal a day could help a person have better health, as that was what he claimed the French were doing. In a study from 1997, they found that those who had at least one alcoholic beverage a day were 30-40% less likely to die from heart disease. However, what the study did not acknowledge is that people who could afford that glass of wine could also afford better healthcare. Therefore, this study did not provide clear evidence on how healthy it is to drink wine. This indicates that studies related to human health are often unreliable, because they face many issues that question their validity, stemming from confounding variables, untruthful participants, or publication bias.

The first issue with any study is confounding variables. To conclude a valid answer, researchers must not only focus on the independent and dependent variables, but they also must take into account the different conditions and characteristics of the study's participants. There are many important health-related factors that need to be considered, such as personal wealth, habitat (e.g. city/countryside), eating habits, age, physical activity, occupation, sex, previous health issues, family history etc. Another issue is that individuals are untrustworthy. People tend to lie to appear better or to avoid judgment,

specifically with sensitive topics. A review article published by Tourangeau and Yan (2007), that compares and analyses different studies on sensitive topics such as substance abuse, sexual behaviours, voting and income, showed that in some studies about these topics, up to 50% of people lied about their answers. Undoubtedly, there were many studies that showed little to no incorrect data (lies), yet just the fact that there were some studies on which people lied, shows that results around sensitive topics can be quite untrustworthy. The last issue is publication bias. Essentially, researchers are more likely to not publish a study if the results they got are uninteresting or negate their hypothesis i.e. prove them wrong. The non-publication of these studies, the

mistaken exclusion of some factors and the false results from untruthful participants all skew the results of individual studies, which is what creates the illusion that a certain result of many studies is correct. Given these limitations, can health studies even be reliable?

Yes and no. While these issues are very real and apparent in many studies, they can also be addressed and are being addressed. By making studies very specific and/or including some of the previously mentioned confounding variables, the studies' value grows. Instead of trying to link very general problems to some general common factor for all humans everywhere, studies should be more focused. It's important to remember, that correlation doesn't always mean causation. If a

researcher wants to conclude a relationship between two variables, they must first thoroughly examine and specify it. Furthermore, it is easier to get truthful answers from participants, if they feel safe, not judged or not pressured to answer a certain way or by using tactics and methods, such as the three-card method or using forgiving wording, to get those truthful results from the participants. Ultimately, people want to have better quality of research, so they try to combat these issues. The Declaration of Helsinki, an internationally created document full of ethical guidelines regarding medical research on human participants, states that researchers have an ethical duty to make the results of their studies publicly available, no matter if they are positive, null or negative, while ensuring participant anonymity. The document itself is not legally binding, but many countries require their researchers to comply with the ethical guidelines set by it.

In conclusion, not all health-related studies are inherently wrong. There are many studies that are able to eliminate as much of the previously mentioned errors as possible, which makes them reliable and valid. It is just important to know that these issues exist, and therefore to not treat every published health-related study or meta-analysis as the truth, as the results could be incorrect.



Source: Western Open Books

Lucie Višková

## Digital Immortality: What Happens to Your Data After You Die?

Imagine attending your own funeral via a screen. In 2022 a British educator appeared as a lifelike video avatar and answered questions at her memorial. Our online lives are now so extensive that death no longer automatically erases them; instead, data linger across social media profiles, cloud backups, search histories and even internet-of-things devices. As ethicist Jessica Heesen warns, these digital shadows can blur the boundaries of grief.

Even if you rarely post on social media, your phone logs movements and conversations, your smart doorbell records video and your search history reveals private thoughts. A 2019 survey in the UK found that one in four people wanted all of their data removed from the internet when they die, yet no legal or technical mechanism currently exists to ensure such a digital purge. Scholars at the Oxford Internet Institute estimate that by 2100 there could be up to 4.9 billion deceased users on Facebook.

What actually happens to your social-media accounts when you die? Policies vary. Facebook allows users over 18 to appoint a legacy contact who can manage a memorialised profile — changing profile pictures, pinning posts or requesting deletion.

Instagram offers similar options: an account can be memorialized or removed. TikTok does not provide legacy features; inactive accounts simply have their username reset after 180 days.

*Until laws catch up, the responsibility falls on us to shape how, and whether, we remain online after death.*

Cloud storage and email services also have procedures. Google's Inactive Account Manager can send data to a trusted contact or delete it after a period of inactivity, but the company will not provide login credentials to family members. Microsoft deletes accounts after two years of inactivity and requires a court order before releasing information. Estate planners warn that executors often struggle to identify digital assets, and even when they know about them, service-provider terms can block access. Executors may not know what digital assets existed and often cannot access them, and providers rarely give account contents to family members without a court order.

Legally, you do not own most online

profiles. Science Focus notes that social-media accounts are governed by licences and are non-transferable: one account, one user. You cannot leave your Instagram or Kindle library to someone else, because you only purchased a licence for your lifetime. Data-protection laws apply only to living, identifiable persons, so in many jurisdictions privacy rights end at death. Without specific instructions, companies decide what happens to digital remains. That's why experts urge people to take inventory of their accounts, decide which ones should be deleted and use tools like Facebook's Legacy Contact or Google's Inactive Account Manager to document their wishes. Backing up photos and documents outside cloud services can prevent them from being lost when an account is closed.

Our data clearly outlive us. Virtual imprints on Facebook, Instagram, X and other platforms can persist indefinitely if family members don't act, and digital death does not equal physical death. Emerging AI systems promise to turn these footprints into interactive avatars, deadbots or chatbots trained on a person's digital footprint, raising profound questions about identity, consent and the grieving process. In

this legal and cultural vacuum, the best we can do is plan. Decide whether you want your accounts deleted or memorialized, back up the digital content you value and appoint someone you trust to manage your online presence. At the same time, society must grapple with the idea that a digital ghost can never fully capture a person. Cambridge researchers warn that we need to think now about how to mitigate the social and psychological risks of digital immortality. Until laws catch up, the responsibility falls on us to shape how, and whether, we remain online after death.

Source: Netflix



▲ **BE RIGHT BACK** is a *Black Mirror* episode depicting the return of a lost loved one through artificial-intelligence

Rozálie Slámová



WORDS HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD,  
SO WE'VE BEEN CHOOSING THEM CAREFULLY FOR 18 YEARS.

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