



Stellar Op-Eds:
A Few of Our Favorite Openings
(and links to the full texts)

Puerto Rico Needs More Than Bandages

Mekela Panditharatne

The New York Times

Four months after Puerto Rico was battered by Hurricane Maria, Congress last week approved more badly needed emergency assistance, including \$2 billion to repair the island's severely damaged power grid. An additional \$9 billion will be directed to recovery and restoration projects in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The expectation is that this aid will help provide relief not only to the hundreds of thousands of utility customers in Puerto Rico who are still without power but also to the more than three million islanders as a whole, who are still being warned to boil water before drinking it. But the money from Washington falls far short of the island's requirements.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

An American Kidnapping

Ta-Nehisi Coates

The Atlantic

I took some time this weekend to re-read Jennifer Gonnerman's piece on the odyssey of Kalief Browder. I wanted to understand how, precisely, it happened that a boy was snatched off the streets of New York, repeatedly beaten, and subjected

to the torture of solitary confinement, and yet no one was held accountable. To understand this question is to journey into a world of legal-speak and phraseology all of which, in the case of Browder, allows what we would normally label thuggery to mask itself under the banner of law. Browder was supposed to be held no longer than six months. But as Gonnerman explains, poor people and the courts do not use the same clocks. To understand race in the U.S. today, it's Kalief Browder's story, not Rachel Dolezal's, that really matters.

[The last line appears as the subtitle of the published version. We've put it at the end of the paragraph to demonstrate how well it works as a thesis statement!]

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

A Spy's Guide to Climate Change

Justin Gillis

The New York Times

The Trump administration is seeking to withdraw the United States from the international accord reached in Paris in 2015 to fight climate change. It is trying to rescind regulations on the issue. It has even scrubbed mentions of global warming from government websites. Yet its attempt to suppress the facts has not entirely succeeded, with federal agencies continuing to issue warnings, including in a major climate report published last year.

The latest climate alarm came this week in a Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

Helping gifted children is all very well – but what about the rest?

Dawn Foster

The Guardian

What do you want to be when you grow up? In the BBC's new series Generation Gifted, six children are followed from the age of 13 until their GCSE year, and are asked the question by their teachers and parents, and the documentary team. The children are all exceptionally bright, achieving marks far above the national average, but all are from starkly disadvantaged backgrounds. This fact colours their

answers: Liam's aptitude for science, especially biology, is remarkable, yet he aims to become a chef "who uses science", only becoming convinced of the possibility of a scientific career after intensive prodding by his biology teacher. Shakira is a promising artist, yet limits her hopes to becoming a tattoo artist and admits she thinks it unlikely she'll leave Tamworth, her home town.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

We're entitled to eat safe meat. Why has that become such a lottery?

Felicity Lawrence

The Guardian

Here we go again: all the signs of another scandal involving meat and food safety. The first stirrings were in January, and while the authorities seem to have kept the lid on it for the moment, it has the feel of previous crises over food supply that have erupted after initial rumblings. There is confusion about what's actually happened, and arguments over whether rules have been broken. The food watchdog has been accused once again of being too heavy-handed as steaks have disappeared from high street menus. It's a fairly safe bet that there is more to come. The difference this time is that the structures that were set up to protect the public after previous crises are crumbling.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

These Are Children, Not Bad Hombres

Sonia Nazario

The New York Times

Last year 7-year-old Kendra Cruz Garcia and her 10-year-old-brother, Roberto Guardado Cruz, crossed the Rio Grande alone. When their tiny boat reached the shore, they started walking into Texas.

The Border Patrol agents who soon caught the Salvadoran siblings deemed them "unaccompanied" because no parent was with them. Children with this designation are granted special, well-deserved protections.

They aren't subject to quick deportation and are entitled to a full hearing before an immigration judge. They can't be held for long periods in immigration jails... In other words, they are treated with kindness and decency by our government because they are innocent children.

But President Trump has decided to get tough on many of the 60,000 Central American children who arrive at our border each year begging for safety after fleeing some of the most dangerous places on earth.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

This is how people can truly take back control: from the bottom up

George Monbiot

The Guardian

Without community, politics is dead. But communities have been scattered like dust in the wind. At work, at home, both practically and imaginatively, we are atomised.

As a result, politics is experienced by many people as an external force: dull and irrelevant at best, oppressive and frightening at worst. It is handed down from above rather than developed from below. There are exceptions – the Sanders and Corbyn campaigns, for instance – but even they seemed shallowly rooted in comparison with the deep foundations of solidarity movements grew from in the past, and may disperse as quickly as they gather.

It is in the powder of shattered communities that anti-politics swirls, raising towering dust-devils of demagoguery and extremism. These tornadoes threaten to tear down whatever social structures still stand.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

Lifting families out of poverty: Focus on the children

Toh Yong Chuan

The Straits Times

When I was in Primary 1, a teacher corrected me when I wrote in an English test that I slept under the bed. On the bed, not under the bed, she said, despite my protest that I was telling the truth.

I was born in a one-room Housing Board rental flat in Stirling Road and lived there for nine years with my parents, an older sister and two younger brothers. The mattress I slept on was partially tucked under my parents' bed.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

The Zika virus foreshadows our dystopian climate future

Bill McKibben

The Guardian

I've spent much of my life chronicling the ongoing tragedies stemming from global warming: the floods and droughts and storms, the failed harvests and forced migrations. But no single item on the list seems any more horrible than the emerging news from South America about the newly prominent Zika disease.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

Let's Draft Our Kids

Thomas E. Ricks

The New York Times

In late June, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the former commander of international forces in Afghanistan, called for reinstating the draft. "I think if a nation goes to war, every town, every city needs to be at risk," he said at the Aspen Ideas Festival. "You make that decision and everybody has skin in the game." This was the first time in recent years that a high-profile officer has broken ranks to argue that the all-volunteer force is not necessarily good for the country or the military. Unlike Europeans, Americans still seem determined to maintain a serious military force, so we need to think about how to pay for it and staff it by creating a draft that is better and more equitable than the Vietnam-era conscription system.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).