

The year started with Los Angeles burning, the first “soft” landing of a spacecraft on the moon by a private company, and Joe Biden pardoning his family for crimes they may have committed over the past 10 years.

Greenpeace Inc. [faces bankruptcy](#) after losing a lawsuit that established hidden associations between the corporation and radical protestors who sowed violence across the country. The suit required Greenpeace to pay damages of \$667 million, later reduced to \$345 million.

RealID for domestic travel went into effect. The law requiring federal security standards for state issued identification was prompted by the Muslim terrorist attacks in 2001 and passed 21 years ago. The rollout reveals how inept and almost useless the state and federal bureaucracies are.

A flash flood killed 135 in Texas after the [Guadalupe River](#) rose 30 feet in 45 minutes.

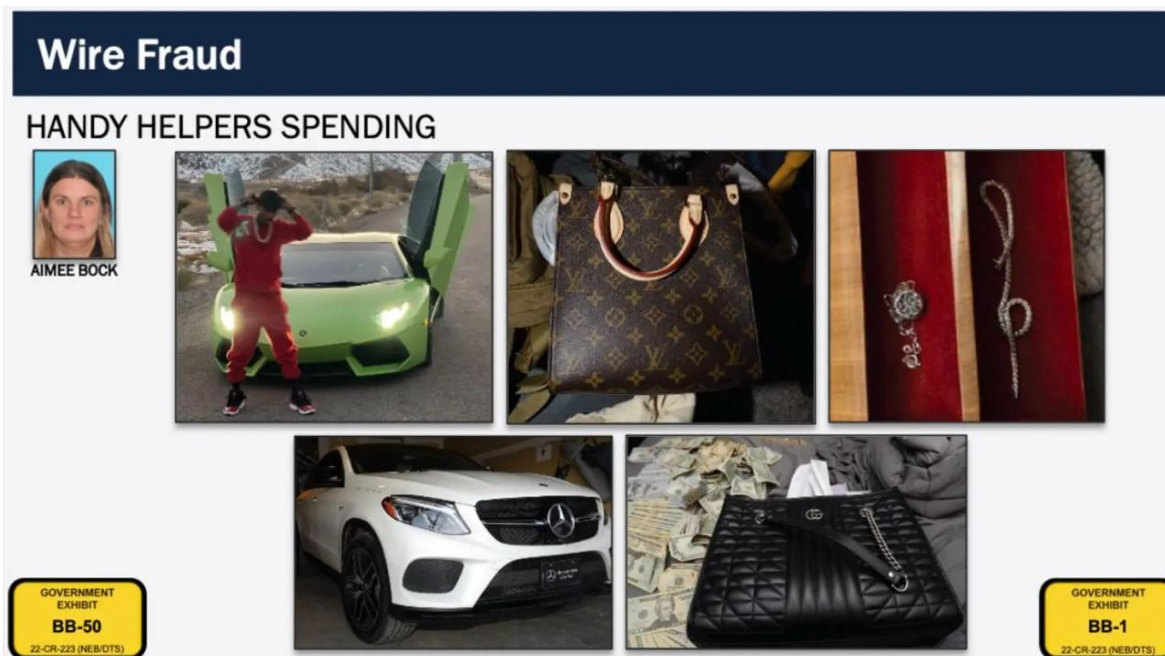
After ruling Syria for 50 years, the Assad regime was deposed. The king’s overthrow was a consequence of his long-term ally and financier, Russia, being stretched thin in the Ukraine war.

ICE arrested an [illegal alien earning over \\$300,000 a year](#) as the superintendent of the largest school district in Iowa. You cannot make up this stuff.

15,000 multimillion-dollar homes burned to the ground and 31 people were killed in California during the [Eaton and Palisades Fires](#). Fire hydrants ran dry because the state and county neglected to fill a nearby reservoir.

The FBI caught six middle eastern immigrants who plotted a [jihad type massacre](#) on Halloween, a young Jewish couple was shot dead while attending an embassy function in Washington D.C., and a Muslim man attacked Jews with a flame thrower in Boulder, Colorado. Terrorism germinates when we allow immigrants into our compassionate country without compelling assimilation into our great American culture.

A recent investigation found that the Minnesota Department of Human Services allowed over \$1B of federal funds earmarked for needy children to be spent by non-government organizations on luxury houses, exotic cars, jewelry, tropical vacations, and funded a designated terrorist group, Al Shabab, in Somalia.



Nancy Pelosi announced her retirement from congress. She was first elected in 1987 with a net worth of \$3 million and about \$800k in stocks; today she’s got [\\$130 million in stocks](#) and a [net worth of \\$280 million](#). Her insider trading is so overtly corrupt that the [NANC](#) mutual fund was named after her and simply mirror’s her stock trades.

In Charlotte, North Carolina Decarlos Brown casually killed 23 year-old Iryna Zarutska on a subway car. She had survived the Ukraine War and immigrated to what she thought was the safety of America. Brown was a 14-time felon out on cashless bail, released by a liberal judge, Teresa Stokes, who has a history of treating criminals as victims and freeing them to prey on unsuspecting citizens.



California has the 4th largest economy in the world, the best climate, and incredible topography. It also has the highest taxes and unemployment in the country with the most expensive gas, water, and electricity. The states' 18% poverty rate is worse than [Russia](#). A voter-approved multibillion-dollar water construction bond was not used to build a single reservoir as mandated, but rather to remove four existing dams. Meanwhile, the high-speed train project that was supposed to be completed 2020 has made no progress even though its budget has grown from \$33 billion to \$128 billion. [Governor Gavin Newsom](#) and the Democrat Party monopoly in the state have [driven out world class companies](#) that were born and headquartered in California: Disney, Tesla, Oracle, Chevron, Hewlett Packard, and In-n-Out Burger to name a few.

The result is that Californian's who experience the economic and natural paradise of the state pack up and leave in disgust. Newsom is currently the favored democratic front runner for president in 2028. Despite the destruction Gavin has inflicted on the Golden State, no doubt he'll get tens of millions of votes from those who are either naïve or bent on blindly voting for the candidate with the "D" next to their name. The devastation of a Newsom administration on our nation would make what he's done to California seem amateurish.

Birthright citizenship is being argued at the Supreme Court. About [250,000 babies were born to illegal immigrants](#) in 2023. Illegal births outnumbered total births in all but two states and more children were born to illegal aliens than to legal immigrants. Birthright citizenship is the result of a twisted application of the 14th Amendment that was intended to allow the children of slaves freed after the Civil War to become citizens. The result of birthright citizenship is that it degrades and dilutes citizenship by encouraging illegal immigrants to obtain citizenship for their children through breaking the law. It's often used to impede the removal of the illegal-alien parents. And, it creates a powerful incentive for illegal migrants to jump in front of noncitizens who follow immigration rules and wait in line. The ludicrous mandate drives the shadowy business of birth tourism where women 8+ months pregnant travel to America simply to give birth on our soil before returning to their home country where their new child's American passport will be mailed to them.

Trump was sworn in to office. Shortly after two assassination attempts, already term limited, and after numerous lawsuits orchestrated to bankrupt and imprison him, he immediately reversed most of Biden's destructive policies. He closed the border to illegal immigrants, eliminated DEI from the federal government, opened [exploration of rare earth minerals and energy](#), kicked boys out of girls' sports, and withdrew from the agreement that allowed Iran to obtain nuclear weapons. He pardoned January 6th protestors, and ordered that for every new government regulation, 10 had to be cut.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute released its annual ["10,000 Commandments" report](#) which tracks the regulatory leviathan that is the federal government. The estimated cost of complying with federal regulations is [\\$2.155 trillion](#) every year. That's nearly four times what corporations pay in federal income taxes and a hidden tax of \$16,000 on American households. There are about [300,000 rules and regulations](#) that govern us; nobody knows for sure. Simply cutting regulations would increase American competitiveness and unleash economic growth for years.



Congress passed a substantial tax cut, the administration hammered out a peace deal between Hamas and Israel, and the nation embarked on the "Golden Dome" project to shield our vulnerable homeland from hypersonic missiles. Our armed forces took out dozens of narcotic drug smugglers on the high seas and destroyed their contraband that kills 100,000 American's each year (that's more than the losses we suffered in Vietnam and the Korean War combined).

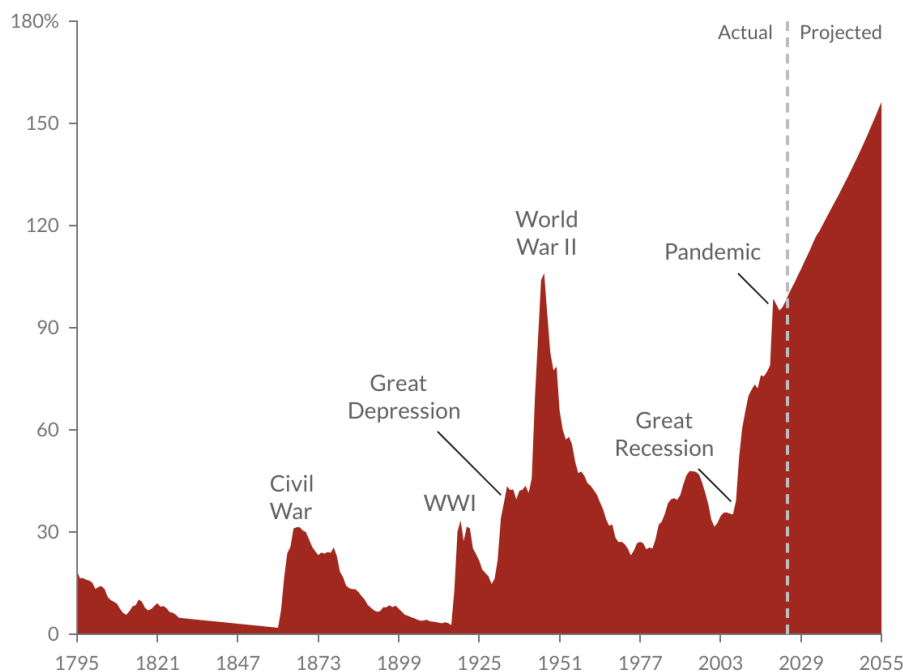
The President levied tariffs on goods from nations that are hostile to the U.S. or have lopsided trade agreements with us. Antagonist predictions of high inflation, a depression, plummeting GDP growth, and an international trade war failed to materialize. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that tariffs will reduce the national debt by [\\$4 trillion over the next 10 years](#). Did you know that prior to the [Sixteenth Amendment](#), which levied the income tax and passed in 1909, the federal government was funded exclusively by tariffs on foreign goods?

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was born to root out the rampant waste and fraud so prevalent in the U.S. government – it drove democrats nuts. DOGE laid bare the magnitude of federal spending and offered a glimpse of the mind-boggling waste that's driven our national debt to \$38 trillion (that's [\\$330,000 per taxpayer](#)).

- The USAid Agency used a \$50B budget to promote DEI in Serbia, advertise [tourism in Egypt](#), and [fund the Wuhan virology lab](#) that unleashed COVID on the world and killed one million Americans
- The Department of Labor had 27 chief information officers (the largest corporations only have one CIO)
- The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) had a 9-story building in Washington D.C for 60 employees (many of whom worked from home – since before COVID)
- One FMCS director flew [first class to Switzerland](#), Italy, Tunisia, and an island in the Black Sea to conduct business meetings over video chat. She even billed the agency for mileage when she traveled to her vacation house in Maine.
- Another FMCS director making \$191,000 a year listed his duty station as Iowa so that he could have all his rent, living expenses, and meals paid for. On paper he was technically on a six year long “business trip” even though he really lived in Washington D.C.
- FMCS employees “unblocked” their government credit cards so that they could use them to lease flashy cars, pay for family cellphone plans, and expense cable TV bills.
- The federal employee retirement system is run out of a [limestone cave in rural Pennsylvania](#) with 26,000 filing cabinets and an army of federal workers toiling 250 feet underground with pen and paper.

Federal debt is on an unsustainable path

Debt Held by the Public (% of GDP)



Source: Congressional Budget Office

Note: Data includes the long-term projections and other previous projections.



Source: <https://www.pgpf.org/our-national-debt/>

Motivated democrats won the NYC Mayor's race with a [devout socialist](#) and Virginian's elected an Attorney General who openly pined for a [political opponent to be shot](#) in the head. Still, significant cracks are showing with the party that supports criminals over public safety, killing the economy with iron-fisted regulations, massive cost of living increases, eliminating domestic energy production, men in women's sports, and open borders the kind that gave us 12 million mostly poor, uneducated people to support. The democratic party has become the domain of overeducated, snobby, wealthy, bi-coastal liberals who look down on anyone who doesn't share their 'enlightened' worldview.

<http://www.cottrel.com/xmas/xmas25.pdf>

The New York Times reported that “of the 30 states that track voter registration by political party, Democrats lost ground to Republicans in every single one between the 2020 and 2024”. The net result is that registered [democrat voters have declined by 2.1 million while republicans have increased by 2.4 million](#). I believe democrats have not left the party as much as the party has abandoned the average American democrat.

Tragically, Charlie Kirk was assassinated. Kirk recognized that when civil discourse stops, a civil war starts. His murder affirms that a civil dialog is only helpful to a point. You cannot debate with people who want to criminalize opposing arguments or would rather kill you than consider what you have to say. The assassination of Charlie was a direct result of the liberal policies that justify and encourage Antifa riots, BLM burning down cities, attacks on ICE agents, defunding police, torching Tesla's, and vandalizing historical monuments. About [50% of left leaning](#) Americans believe killing Donald Trump or Elon Musk is justified. It feels like the democrat party, mainstream media, and liberal academia have dragged our nation into a one-sided [cold civil war](#). Everyone knows if you wear a MAGA hat in a blue city that you will be screamed at or spit on and risk being assaulted or killed. In sharp contrast, those with a Harris/Waltz shirt in a red city are met with nothing more than some eye rolls.

We attacked Iran. Israel ran Operation Red Wedding and Operation Narnia to clear out surface-to-air missiles and radars followed by the Americans with Operation Midnight Hammer. The stealth bombing attack on underground facilities in the Persian desert set Iran's nuclear weapons program back by a decade. With its economy failing and power decimated in Lebanon (with Hezbollah), the Gaza Strip (with Hamas), and Yemen (with the Houthi's), Iran is weak and ripe for a revolution. For the first time since I fled the country 50 years ago the theocratic dictators and designated terrorists who have ruled through torture, fear, & persecution and have spread terrorism all over the Middle East will likely fall soon.

NASA launched two satellites to Mars on [Blue Origin's New Glenn](#) reusable rocket (Jeff Bezos' company). The [spacecraft](#) will arrive in 2026. Scientists at the University of Science and Technology in China invented [night vision contact lenses](#) that allow people to see in the dark. Engineers at MIT developed a [sodium metal fuel cell](#) with three times as much energy per pound as today's best lithium-ion batteries used on electric cars. And, the third ever [interstellar asteroid](#) passed through our solar system.

Stocks were up 20% this year bolstering the value of 401k's. There are over 23 million millionaires in the U.S. today, 89% of them are self-made. The opportunity we have in the United States is unmatched anywhere on Earth and throughout all of human history.

As for us, Monica & Mark continue to live and work in the Silicon Valley. Andrew is an engineer at Samsung and living in Sacramento. Liam is employed as an aerospace engineer in the Bay Area. We're planning a trip to Spain in 2026 to witness a total eclipse of the Sun. If you want to join us, please let us know.



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
from the Cottrell Family*

The future doesn't belong to the faint hearted; it belongs to the brave.

- Ronald Reagan