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by Harper's Magazine

Fifty years and one day after the start of the Yom Kippur War, Palestinian militants from Gaza—where, under a 16-year Israeli occupation, only 10 percent of residents have direct access to clean water—attacked Israel in the bloodiest day for Jewish civilians since the end of the Holocaust.^{1 2} The fighters, who easily crossed a \$1.1 billion border that is monitored above- and belowground 24/7, fired between 2,000 and 5,000 rockets and entered Israeli towns by speedboat, tractor, pickup truck, and makeshift hang glider, killing at least 900 Israelis, wounding 2,500, and kidnapping more than 150 from border villages, kibbutzim, and a trance music festival.^{3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10} “Everyone who has a gun should take it out. The time has come,” said Hamas’s military leader, decrying Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, police raids on the Aqsa Mosque, which included holidays, and the incarceration of thousands of Palestinians.¹¹ “We are at war. Not an ‘operation,’ not a ‘round,’ but at war,” said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who canceled reservations at a resort in the Golan Heights because of anticipated anti-judicial overhaul protests and allegedly ignored an Egyptian intelligence report warning of an attack.^{12 13 14 15} Netanyahu called up 300,000 military reservists, and some who had resigned over his plan to disempower the Supreme Court announced that they would return.¹⁶ The Israeli defense minister announced “a complete siege” of the Gaza Strip, with “no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel.” “We are fighting human animals and we act accordingly,” he said.¹⁷ Israeli air strikes hit targets claimed to be linked to Hamas, including a hospital, several mosques, and a market, killing at least 1,000 Palestinians, injuring around 4,000, and displacing 123,538; Hamas threatened to execute a civilian hostage every time Gazans were hit by an air strike without warning, and the streets emptied in both the occupied territory and Tel Aviv.^{18 19 20 21} World leaders rushed to condemn Hamas, and protests in support of Palestine surged in Sydney, New York, London, and other metropolises.^{22 23} “We definitely need to take a look at our foreign policy moving forward!!!” Washington Wizards power forward Kyle Kuzma tweeted.²⁴

After the government agreed to fund itself, Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy was voted out of that position by his Republican colleagues, the first time a speaker had been ousted that way in U.S. history.^{25 26} “My job is not to put pool noodles around hard corners for Republicans,” said New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, after no Democrats voted to help McCarthy.²⁷ Among the first acts of Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry was to kick former Speaker Nancy Pelosi out of her honorary office at the Capitol, and contenders for the speakership emerged, including Louisiana Representative Steve Scalise, who has reportedly described himself as “like David Duke without the baggage,” and Ohio Representative Jim Jordan, who has denied knowledge of rampant sexual misconduct by a student-health doctor while he was a college wrestling coach.^{28 29 30 31} President Joe Biden, who said on Thursday that a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border would not work, sought one day later to waive environmental regulations to construct 20 miles of wall in Texas, and his dog, Commander, was removed from the White House after an 11th biting incident.^{32 33} In a Judiciary Committee hearing, Texas Senator Ted Cruz accused a Biden judicial nominee of being a Marxist on the basis of a poem he had written in law school entitled “Sensualized Property Theory.”³⁴ “Amorphous and wonderful, time-stretching, space-curving, exquisitely explosive eros, and yet, I timidly tremble every time,” the senator read. “Don’t be discouraged,” Committee Chairman Dick Durbin told the nominee. “Poetry is still very important.”

In Great Britain, a man who, believing that he was a Sith Lord, declared his intention to kill Queen Elizabeth II with a crossbow, was sentenced to nine years’ imprisonment.³⁵ In Wisconsin, a man armed with a handgun who was looking for Governor Tony Edwards was arrested, posted bail, and came back with an AK-47-style rifle, whereupon he was rearrested.³⁶ In Pennsylvania, a man who was stopped for driving a tractor under the influence was arrested again 17 minutes later for the same offense, and in Louisiana, a woman injured in a hit-and-run incident was killed when the responding police officer ran her over.^{37 38} Arizona police strangled an escaped pet emu that they were trying to put into their squad car, and 961 birds died after striking a single building in Chicago in one night.^{39 40} Minneapolis customs agents seized a box of giraffe feces that a traveler returning from a safari planned to use to create a necklace, and biologists found that homosexual behavior in animals may have evolved to reduce social conflicts.^{41 42} Hundreds of plaster vaginas spilled onto a road in Russia, and it was reported that the Worcestershire Council had announced trimming to be done on Minge Lane.^{43 44} It was revealed that a Canadian town was planning to rename Harry Dick Road owing to the repeated theft of street signs.⁴⁵ Several Amish people were reported shunned after the U.S. government’s Wireless Emergency Alert test revealed that they had phones.⁴⁶ “We really do live in the stupidest future imaginable,” wrote an artist who used Facebook’s AI sticker feature to generate images of a naked Justin Trudeau, of Karl Marx with large breasts, and of the Muppet Elmo wielding a knife.^{47 48} —*Jon Edelman*

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