

The U.S. Electoral Campaign: Between hatred and optimism

DOMO

Ringier
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At the White House with
Barack Obama and Pete Souza

The President's Photographer

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«Pete, did you get it?»

Pete Souza has spent eight years following the U.S. President everywhere. As the official White House photographer he has been documenting Barack Obama's time in office. In January 2017 they will part ways. A conversation with the President's photographer about his job, his boss, and the fruits of his labor: two million photographs for eternity.

Interview: Bettina Bono Photos: Pete Souza





Washington D.C., Tuesday, 8.30 a.m. The Northwest Appointment Gate of the White House is busy. This is usually where limousines are admitted to the premises. Right now the gardener is bringing in his equipment. The Secret Service night shift is going home, and the media correspondents who work at the White House are arriving. At the X-ray scanner it becomes clear who has the routine down: They greet the personnel by their first name, put their take-out coffees down on the right-hand table, place their bags on the conveyor belt and pass the bar-

rier holding up their badges. «You'll get used to it,» a gentleman says in passing, giving me a friendly pat on the back. Under the watchful eyes of First Dog Bo I make my way straight to the West Wing of the White House, the Executive Office Building. This is where photographer Pete Souza, 61, has his office. His photographs line the walls of the hallways. In these pictures his «Boss» is omnipresent: Barack Obama, 54, with heads of state, Obama with his family, Obama with children. On the wall of Pete Souza's office, however, there is a huge mirror.

Mr. Souza, I'm wondering about your walladornment.

(laughs) Yeah. This particular office used to be the White House Barber Shop. There used to be a White House Barber until the early 90s. When the barber retired they didn't replace him. The one thing they left was the mirrors.

When you leave the White House you will leave behind some two million photographs.

That's what my staff tells me. It's about 250,000 a year when you do the math.

Why so many?

My job is to visually document the U.S. President's time in office for history. I take pictures that will still have validity 500 years from now and appear in history books.

It is true that none of the pictures you take may be deleted?

That's true. In this country we have the Presidential Records Act, which demands that any correspondence concerning the President and the Vice President of the U.S.A. be archived and preserved for posterity. Each photograph I take is considered

a presidential record - even the bad ones. The President doesn't pick his nose, but if he did, the picture would be preserved.

You began photographing Barack Obama during his first days as a senator in 2004, before he became President. How did he change as a photographic subject?

Apart from his gray hair the only thing that changed is that he had to get used to somebody photographing him all the time. I had been working for the Chicago Tribune and taken a documentary look at his first year as a senator. That's how I got to know

Pope Francis is about to enter unknown territory; Pete Souza is already there: In September 2015 the Pope paid his first visit to the U.S.A. He was welcomed by President Obama and his family on the runway of Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility near Washington D.C.

him. The first four or five months that he was President he was still getting used to the notion that I was going to be there all the time and photographing him. You can imagine what that would be like. But after five months it was just a given. He said, OK, this is a part of my life.

The President once said in an interview that you blend into the background so he sometimes doesn't even notice you. Is that a compliment?

I think it is. I'm just a part of the White House apparatus. I come and go and I try to do it in an unobtrusive way so he can go about his business without being distracted by me. That's my goal.

Talking about being discrete; have you ever been really overlooked?

Yes, I have. A meeting with a governor was supposed to happen after lunch. Instead they did it before lunch but I didn't know about it. So I came up after my lunch and the governor was walking out of the Oval Office. I started having some words with his secretary, saying - why didn't you tell me? The President walked out of the Oval Office asking what the problem was. I told him. He goes: «What are you talking about? You were in there during the meeting.»

Even if it is the President of the United States you have been accompanying so closely - for eight years you have been photographing the same face. How do you manage to stay curious?

The other day I was telling a friend I was looking forward to January 20, and she said: «There's nothing left for you to do at the White House, you've done all the pictures that you possibly can do.» But two days later, at the opening of the African American Museum in Washington, within 30 seconds I made two of my favorite pictures. One is of President Obama where former President Bush handed him a cellphone and said: Can you take a picture of me with this family? So here's a picture of the President with a smartphone taking a picture of another President with a family. It's rare for former Presidents to gather; usually it's the death of a head of state. They're like a unique club. There have only been 43. And 30 seconds later there's the Vice President kneeling down, talking to this 99-year-old African-American woman, who's the daughter of a slave. Just like that: Two unexpected ►



► moments happened. So you have to be always ready even though you are photographing the same guy every day. That's a challenge.

On May 1st 2011 you photographed Obama and his closest advisers watching the killing of Osama Bin Laden via video link. Did you know what was coming when you entered the Situation Room?

Yes, I knew what was coming. To me that was not an unexpected moment. That was a scene that was in front of me for 45 minutes. It was about trying to catch the essence of what was going on without disturbing what was going on, by trying to be very quiet.

Are there moments when you don't have access?

Once the President leaves the Residence, his living quarters, I pretty much am with him. There aren't really any restrictions. What I do with his family is something I discuss with the President and the First Lady, in terms of what family activities to cover. Unlike the Secret Service, who accompany the President everywhere, when it comes to the photographer the access is up to the President. Barack Obama could have told me: No. But when I took this job

On his way to the top: Senator Barack Obama mounting the Capitol steps in Washington. This photograph shot by Pete Souza in 2005 is on the cover of his coffee-table book «The Rise of Barack Obama».

I stated that I needed to have access to everything, and he agreed.

This job involves a lot of sacrifices. When do you miss having a regular life?

(Laughs) That's the one disadvantage of this job. It really does affect your personal life. That goes for anybody who works at the White House. Your personal life is kind of put on hold. I don't want that to come across as a complaint, as the job is a privilege. But if you asked my wife...

How often do you see her?

I'm actually home more nights now than when I worked at the Chicago Tribune. The longest I'm ever away with the President is about ten days. It's hard to make any plans. Even scheduling this interview. When did you first e-mail your request? Six months ago? This is a kind of 24/7 type job; I'm always on call.

Apparently you've only had three one-week vacations in eight years?

Yes, but I'm never too far. I stay in the country, I go to Michigan. But that makes me nervous too: even to be a two-hour flight away.

You don't often wear jeans and a shirt to the office, more like a suit?

I actually wear jeans when I come to work and I keep six or eight suits back there, and all my ties. They get all messed up. By the time I walk upstairs to see the President I'll have a tie on. I'm looking forward to doing a lot of campaign travel in October for Hillary, because then he doesn't usually wear a suit, no jacket, so it's «White House casual» for all of us.

As @petesouza you are active on Instagram, with great success. Will we ever get to see a selfie of you aboard Air Force One?

No. If you've looked at my account (over 1,800 pictures) I think maybe there's been one picture of myself. But you have to look real close. I don't understand why people who get to meet the President at an event turn around and try to take selfies. Why you wouldn't want to look him in the eye and shake his hand? And this is coming from a photographer!

When will your Instagram account become personal?

On January 21st, 2017. Our lawyers are trying to figure out how to do this so I can still keep my own name. The contents of the account itself will go to the National Archives.

Still, there's something personal about you that we can already see. You like Bo better than Sunny.

Yes! Bo is my bestie. But they had Bo for about a year or two before they got Sunny, so I got to know Bo. He's a little calmer, too, and easier to photograph.

Are you allowed to share something about your relationship with the President?

The President and I have what I'd call a professional relationship. He knows me so well that he teases me a lot.

What does he think of your photographs?

If he's walking through the halls of the West Wing there are two categories of pictures that he always stops in front of: One is photographs of him with kids (visiting kids and children of staff members). I've been able to capture some really fun moments and he loves seeing those. But also photographs with his family. I watched his girls grow up and photographed them. Looking at the pictures you can see Malia and Sasha growing up. Just think about walking down the halls of your house or your office and there are new photographs of you with your kids on the wall. Those are the pictures he gravitates to.

You said he teases you. What about?

(Laughs) He teases me about everything, to be honest, like the fact that I'm older than him. I tease him right back that my hair's not as gray as his. You have to take it more than you give it. He is the President of the United States. When we travel and we're with a group, and everyone turns around for a photo, the President is always, like: «Pete, did you get it? Did you get it?» And I'll probably go, like: «I got it on the first take.» But it does make my job a lot easier to do it with someone who understands what my role is.

Is that part of the reason why Barack Obama comes across so naturally in your photographs?

A lot of people are always checking out the camera, they're uncomfortable. Barack Obama is never uncomfortable. The camera doesn't affect him in any way. That was already the case before he became the President. We went to Moscow and he was walking around the Red Square, and people had no idea who he is. Never again will he be able to do ►



Washington, May 1st, 2011 (top). The President and his advisers are watching the killing of Osama Bin Laden via video link. A war photograph without a war, in which the most powerful people are reduced to mere spectators.



Washington, January 20th, 2009 (bottom). A candid shot from a freight elevator. This affectionate gesture of the first black Presidential couple on the evening of the inauguration captures our hearts. Everyone else discreetly looks away - except for Pete Souza.



1 The most popular entertainment at U.S. sports events, the «Kiss Cam», prompts the Presidential couple to kiss in 2012. They are happy to oblige.

2 A casual moment at the Oval Office: Obama sitting on his desk, legs dangling.

3 The President is a keen basketball player. Playing with congressmen on the court near the White House, he gives it everything he's got.



4 One of Obama's favorite pictures of 2012: On Halloween, this little Spiderman looks in on the big Spiderman fan at the Oval Office.

5 Following a meeting on healthcare Obama visits Kroger's supermarket in Bristol (Virginia), taking a big bite from a nectarine.

6 First dog «Bo», all of six months old, gamboling around on the White House lawn with his master Obama.



7 Well, you shouldn't have had those last two burgers, right, Marvin Nicholson? As the President's Trip Director steps up onto a scale in a changing room at the University of Texas, Obama surreptitiously weighs in.

8 Cool, but never wet: the President in 2012, giving a speech in a Virginia downpour. He begins by apologizing to the female members in the audience for destroying their hairdos.

9 Little Ella in her elephant costume is too sweet by half, even for the President - literally sweeping him off his feet. The daughter of a Deputy National Security Advisor, she managed to do this a second time - when she crawled around on the carpet in front of the Resolute Desk at the Oval Office, Obama joined her.



Alone and unrecognized – both of which are inconceivable for the President today. This picture shows Senator Obama in the streets of Moscow in 2005. A photograph shot by Pete Souza for the Chicago Tribune at the time.



«Touch it, dude!» That is an offer that five-year-old Jacob cannot refuse, so he runs his hand over the President's hair. This answers his question whether Barack Obama's hair feels like his own. Jacob is the son of a White House staffer.

► that. Barack Obama is probably the most photographed man in the world. People used to say that Muhammad Ali was the most recognized man in the world. Now I feel that maybe Barack Obama is the most recognized. And yet the camera doesn't bother him. A lot of my pictures tell the story of an accessible President.

Which leads to pictures like the one of the little boy touching the President's hair?
Exactly. He wanted to know: Is your

hair like mine? The picture is very simple and there's a lot of emotion behind it. But a lot of it has to do with the President. And I'm lucky to have been the person that gets to follow him around. If he hadn't allowed himself to be in that situation I wouldn't have gotten that picture. It tells you more about him than it does about me.

When is the light in the Oval Office most beautiful?
Definitely during the winter, because the sun is lower, there are no leaves



DOMO writer Bettina Bono on assignment at the White House to visit Pete Souza.

on the trees, so you get splashes of sunlight into the Oval Office. From November to January, throughout the day the light is always different. It's getting close. I have one more shot at it. I'm looking forward to those months.

Will you miss the White House? You even got married in the Rose Garden.
I will miss the people here. It's a family atmosphere in a lot of ways. But I will not miss having to come here every day. There's another life out there.

Do you have any thoughts on the future?
I don't know what I'm gonna do. I definitely want to continue to take photographs. There may be some teaching.

Looking at your photographs of the past eight years, what do the pictures say about you as a person and about your career as a photographer?
There's a guy that inspires me, and it's this guy (points at a photograph of Bruce Springsteen on the wall behind him). He's 67 years old and he still does four-hour rock concerts. I was in my fifties when I started this job. I think it shows that you can still be a good photographer, no matter your age. And I was a little concerned; this is a difficult job, and it takes stamina. I'm a more intelligent photographer than I was at 30. I have a keen sense of trying to combine some artistic flair with the word «documenting for history». Making an artistic document, that was my goal.

Are you going to push your career as a guitar player?
How do you know this? I've been playing guitar probably since I was six, and I'm not that much better than when I was six. I can play some chords, but I never got to the point where I was really any good.

So you'd rather be Bruce Springsteen's tour photographer than his guitarist?
I actually would not mind doing that for maybe ten shows. I wouldn't want to do it for a whole tour.

But the President is a talented singer. Maybe your paths will cross again on a stage?
(Laughs) If somebody were doing Al Green songs and had guest artists he could definitely do one. And I would take the pictures. 📷



«Hey, Dad, you've got something there,» Malia appears to be saying to her father as she wipes something from his face. An intimate moment at the Oval Office on an afternoon in February 2015, captured by Pete Souza.

Up close and personal

The US electoral campaign is this year's most exciting event. Ringier journalists get into the thick of it.

Text: Peter Hossli Photos: Stefan Falke

The photographer grabs my arm. He has slept badly and too little. He was kept awake by bedbugs at the overpriced but run-down hotel on the outskirts of Philadelphia. Now he is hot. There is no moving forward nor backward. Bullnecked bodyguards in sunglasses are in front of every entrance to the big hall. «No.» That's what they all say. No, nobody will get in there now.

«Listen,» says Stefan, the photographer stuck behind me; unable to take a single picture because he is surrounded by people he doesn't want to photograph. He is holding my arm. «Let's not ever do this again.» I look over my shoulder. «No, never again.» Journalistic work is impossible when bodyguards block the access to the events you are supposed to cover.

On stage at that moment is US President Barack Obama (54). Nothing must go wrong. The bodyguards know that. We need to go up to the stands.

The electoral campaign is raging in America, and it is like a military campaign - for the candidates as well as for the many reporters who chase them.

More than 15,000 journalists cram themselves into Philadelphia's Wells Fargo Arena, along with the same number of delegates, politicians and helpers - and said bodyguards. It is

late July and the Democrats are holding their National Convention here to nominate, to the sound of lush rock music and showered with balloons and confetti, Hillary Clinton (68) as their first female candidate for the highest office in the land.

A week before, in Cleveland, Ohio, the Republicans had chosen New York tycoon Donald Trump (70) to be their candidate - also to rock music, balloons and confetti, and with almost as many people attending.

These are the two loudest moments of a very loud and very expensive brouhaha that repeats itself every four years: the presidential electoral campaign of the United States of America. The Democrats and Republicans each spend a billion dollars on the campaign.

It begins with speculation about possible candidates. They, in turn, announce their candidacies, some more ostentatiously, some more scantily. They raise funds for the primaries, and they throw in the towel if their poll numbers are lousy or their pockets are empty. Eventually it boils down to two - and this year it is Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Trump.

Unfiltered reporting

The media keep tabs on these proceedings continuously from the beginning but never more intensely ▶



Mostly hate for Hillary Clinton: Impressions from the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. All photos were shot on an iPhone.

► than during the conventions. The trek to this landmark is a long one for reporters, and it begins in January. The Blick Group's video journalist, photographer and writer register in various places. The organizers assign them hotel rooms. Finally, each application is vetted by Secret Service officials, those federal officers who usually protect the President. Up until the week before the start of the first convention in Cleveland it remains uncertain whether the journalists will get accreditation. Then the decision comes in: approved. But

around the clock, listening to speeches in the evening and then writing about them. Stefan Falke takes pictures, Stephanie Seliner shoots videos. Every day begins early and ends long after midnight. In the mornings and the afternoons in Cleveland we meet bikers who want to protect Trump, gun nuts who want to throw Clinton in jail and protesters who demonize Trump. We hardly get any sleep, particularly since the bedbugs in Philadelphia bite.

We ask Republican delegates in

an interview with the likes of Watergate whistleblower Carl Bernstein (72) and Dutch right-wing populist Geert Wilders (52). Senator Carl Levin (82) tells you how he took down Switzerland's banking secrecy.

All work and no play is bad for you, so we shoot a video comparing the Hillary and Trump fan merchandise, the caps and t-shirts, the posters, the mugs and the key rings. We find that Trump offers his fans a flashier and wider selection. The Democrats, on the other hand, dress more discreetly and stylishly. One juicy detail: Many Trump souvenirs are made in Asia and Latin America, even though Trump promises to bring jobs back from China and Mexico to the United States.

The Republicans spend four days in Cleveland blowing their own horn and treating themselves to lobsters and cigars. The city earns around 300 million dollars from the convention. Ten minutes down the road from the arena we find East Cleveland, one of the USA's poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods, inhabited almost exclusively by blacks. The average annual income is 12,600 dollars. Houses are crumbling, cars are rusting away. A barber tells us that not a single penny the Republicans spend comes their way: a perfect story to illustrate what America is like outside the arena.

It is Thursday. We need another item for Sunday. An hour away from Cleveland lies Warren, the seat of the Ohio county with the highest share of Trump voters in the primaries. Four years ago Obama carried the election here - the perfect community for reporters to demonstrate why Trump is winning so many votes.

Late Night Snack

Thursday night in Philadelphia, or rather: early Friday morning. The last balloons are falling. Lush rock music is coming from the speakers. One last assessment on video, one last print item, and we begin the two-mile walk to our hotel. Our work is done and our appetites are up. We have scarcely found time to eat in the past fourteen days. Now it's 3 a.m. and we are sitting at Checkers having burgers and fries. Pervaded by the smell of bad frying oil the diner looks like an Edward Hopper painting. Yes, it was great to work so intensely, pigging out on unadulterated politics. And then somebody says: «Maybe we'll come back in four years. Maybe.» 🍷



they need to pick up their accreditations at a given time. Those who can't make it lose their access.

The journalistic approach is clear: The three of us are on-site, covering what we see, hear and experience, getting as close as possible, for unfiltered reporting.

We are there to supply four Blick channels, which is not easy with a time lag of six hours between the scene of the events and Switzerland. Especially since at these conventions the really exciting stuff usually happens way past the editorial deadline - the absurd performance of Trump's wife Melania (46), President Barack Obama's eloquent eulogy for his own term in office, Bill Clinton (70) declaring his love to Hillary. And yet, our daily paper is supposed to be up-to-date, profound, surprising - and to stand out from a sea of news. Just like SonntagsBlick, which is supposed to brighten Sundays with features that are at least latently topical.

There is only one way to achieve this: by producing pretty much

Cleveland what they think about Trump and learn one thing: They care more about stopping Clinton than they do about putting Trump into the White House.

We interview female Democrats in Philadelphia about how much it matters to them to get a woman nominated for the first time - and we learn that the older women in particular are proud of it, but their younger counterparts don't consider Hillary to be the right woman.

Perfect political shows

The conventions? They are perfect political shows. Presidents Clinton and Obama talk to the Democrats, a third, Jimmy Carter (91), checks in via video. The upbeat mood in the hall is palpable. The only places reserved for journalists are up on the stands. You need special authorization to get into the hall, which is valid for exactly one hour. If you don't bring it back in time you lose all access to the hall.

It is worth the effort. In the hall you can meet and have a brief chat or

Video journalist Stephanie Seliner films Peter Hossli giving an assessment.



More optimism than hate: Impressions from the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. Bottom right: Video journalist Stephanie Seliner, writer Peter Hossli and photographer Stefan Falke with their accreditation.



Call Schertz when it hurts!

When writing about celebrities don't mess with this man: Media lawyer Christian Schertz's last name may mean «joke» but he does not kid around. Sometimes maliciously dubbed «the Taliban of censorship» he fights for his clients' privacy and against untrue statements – not just in the tabloids.

Text: René Haenig Photos: Olaf Blecker

Mr. Schertz, what did your room look like when you were fourteen?

Christian Schertz: Like any other teenager's room - with a guitar, political posters like «Make Peace Not Weapons» and a poster of the Beatles.

From the youth magazine «Bravo»?
No. From the Beatles' «White Album».

But you did read «Bravo»?

Sure. I devoured anything about the Beatles. Which studio did they go to? Who wrote which song? What was it inspired by? As a teenager I wanted to see behind the scenes to know more about the stars.

Nowadays you prevent reporting on celebrities and you have the far from flattering reputation of being a «Taliban of censorship».

I only take action against untrue re-

ports about individuals and businesses. I neither forbid reporting on public figures nor do I exercise censorship. I merely fight to enforce what any individual is entitled to: protection from false reporting and from violations of privacy.

What makes someone a public figure?
There is a distinction between absolute persons from contemporary history and relative public figures -

individuals who arouse public interest as a result of some stroke of fate or other event. The first category consists of persons who stay in people's minds by virtue of an athletic or artistic achievement or a political function. Category celebrities, on whom the public interest is focused for a limited period of time, do not belong to that group. The group of individuals who are

relevant to contemporary history is limited.

Does this also apply to politicians?

Politicians have to put up with more than singers, TV hosts or athletes do. They manage the affairs of the people and have to acquiesce to tough questions and to more impingements on their right of personality than an «ordinary» celebrity would.

Christian Schertz reading a newspaper in his office. The Schertz law office situated on Kurfürstendamm in Berlin is one of Germany's top three media law offices.

Where is the limit when it comes to the public's rights to information?

It is a matter of weighing up the freedom of information and the freedom of the press against the individual's right of personality. Let me put it this way: The public has a right to get information about political activities, or even about the work of stars, but there are limits.

Where do you draw the line?

► When it comes to privacy, which is fundamentally protected, even where celebrities are concerned, there is no right to sensationalism nor to peeping through keyholes. Time and again the courts have made it clear that famous people have to tolerate reports on their appearance and their work or achievements but not about their family relations, or who lives with whom, where and why. Especially not, if they themselves did not make these things public.

Which some celebrities do.

First and foremost are the B and C celebrities, who often become famous by exploiting their own private lives. A celebrity who keeps the door to their private life shut and never does home interviews or the like, does not have to put up with violations of privacy. That goes for their house or property, and even when they go out for dinner - no matter in whose company - the only exception being when they walk a red carpet with that person.

Sometimes journalists hear from you before they have even begun to write. That's right! We have a tool we call the legal information notice to the press. It serves to inform certain media that a given report which has been published in a paper or on TV and is illegal, may not be used as a reference. It is an early-warning system with which we nip headlines in the bud before they break.

Do you like journalists at all?

I think the media are essential, and there is a need for investigative journalism. Still, I often wonder about journalists who devote their work to what other people are doing and basically only do so to criticize them. The tendency to disparage everything, as well as the belief that only a critical journalist is a good journalist, is a danger to social cohesion, as far as I'm concerned.

Do you believe that this will change for the better?

It already has. I no longer see the kinds of methods that «Bild» employed in the 1990s and at the beginning of this millennium, which violated rights of personality. The same goes for the weekly «Bunte», which under the leadership of Patricia Riekkel has begun to refrain from publishing humiliating exposés and practicing serious invasions of privacy.

Do you have an explanation for this?

It may have to do with the brutalization that occurs on the Internet and

the question that this entails for premium tabloid media, whether they should give in to that brutality by writing similar stories or whether they would rather write positive stories that do not humiliate celebrities.

Who seeks your advice as media lawyer, when and why?

Many come at the eleventh hour when there is a headline somewhere that constitutes a violation of the law. In many cases, however, we are employed in advance, because somebody has fallen ill or separated from their partner or been accused of something; events that might be made public and could lead to damages or the loss of a right.

Could you give us an example?

Yes, if a celebrity has a severe illness and the healing process requires rest from the media. If the tabloids are hot on their heels - as was the case after Michael Schumacher's skiing accident -, that is physically and psychologically counterproductive. In such cases we talk to the doctors and the hospital staff about how to respond when the media contact them. We often conduct so-called background talks with editors-in-chief.

Have you ever turned down famous clients?

Yes! I don't take cases where someone calls for a media lawyer after having spent years exploiting their private life, inviting all the media into their home and earning a living from it.

Are there situations where you could go nuts because a client does not follow your advice?

It's happened that on a weekend I would stop at a gas station and be faced with a headline where a client of mine - against my advice - had given an exclusive interview to the press.

Do you personally feel sympathy for the humiliation of your clients?

Some people come to me because fate has dealt them a terrible blow or because they are afraid of being publicly humiliated. There is no benefit in the lawyer weeping with them. His job is to help them and protect them. But there are cases that affect me emotionally, because they are tragic or I didn't manage to prevent the media from making them public.

As was the case with a female singer where you were unable to keep her HIV infection out of the media, because the district attorney's office de-



Personal

Christian Schertz has been acknowledged as one of Germany's foremost experts on media law for years. An honorary professor, he teaches at Technische Universität Dresden and frequently takes part in political talk shows. He co-founded his law office on Kurfürstendamm in Berlin eleven years ago with Simon Bergmann. Today they employ seven lawyers. Schertz is currently representing German satirist Jan Böhmermann in his legal battle against Turkish President Erdogan. On his own TV show «Neo Magazin Royale» Böhmermann makes fun of his own lawyer by having a man of small stature appear as «joke lawyer Dr. Christian Fun».



They rely on Schertz's legal advice (from left to right): Sweden's Prince Carl Philip and his wife Sofia, satirist Jan Böhmermann, Homeland star Claire Danes and Academy Award winner Christoph Waltz.

ware that they are thereby losing their legal protection and creating circumstances that are irreversible.

You appear to speak from experience. I have seen some very tragic cases where everything people had said online was later turned against them. In some instances this led to suicide. That is why I give lectures in which I warn teenagers and students not to reveal too many personal details online.

Do you yourself use social media like Facebook, Twitter, etc.?

I once signed up with Facebook to look at it and do research about it for a book. I have since deleted my account. I felt that it put incredible social pressure on me. Our law office has a Twitter account, but we use it very sparingly.

Do you read «Bild», «Bunte» or «Gala» only for professional reasons?

Sometimes I also read parts of them to see how a paper is publicly covering certain current affairs. That doesn't exactly count as professional reading, but it is material that I work with.

Is the claim to the «right to one's own image» still valid in an age of reader-reporters with cellphone cameras, Facebook and the Internet?

More than ever, precisely because of this development. Today anyone can secretly photograph or film anybody else and instantly distribute these images worldwide. And just because this has actually involved extreme numbers of violations of personal rights that doesn't mean you can assume that people simply have to put up with it.

Have you ever had to take action against media on your own behalf?

Many times - because people had spread untrue statements about me or violated my privacy.

Speaking of privacy: You are rumored to be in a relationship with ice-skating legend Katharina Witt.

You don't seriously believe that I would recommend to my clients not to talk about their personal lives, only to do it myself - regardless of whether the allegations in question are correct? So: Nice try!

One last question: You once said in an interview that you didn't always abide by the ten commandments. Which commandment is most difficult for you?

Probably the commandment «Thou shalt not bear false witness». Of course we have all lied at one time or other in our lives - for whatever reasons. ☺

Photos: Getty Images (3), Handout

«Suddenly you're in the cockpit»

The Blick Group presents its new virtual-reality app. Project manager Sebastian Pfotenhauer has no doubts about the success of this technology: «The first time you experience virtual reality is a real epiphany.»

Text: Alejandro Velert Photo: Geri Born

Sebastian Pfotenhauer, the tech industry has once again announced the «next big thing». This time it's virtual reality (VR). Isn't this just another instance of excessive hype?

This is much more than hype. As far as I'm concerned it is the video technology of the future. VR will completely change the way we consume moving images. Thanks to VR, the legendary «holodeck» from the Starship Enterprise will eventually become a reality. **Still, the TV series «Star Trek» is set in some distant future.**

Of course, the technology is still in its early stages, but it's evolving at a tremendous pace – and everyone who first puts on VR goggles expresses an almost childlike euphoria. Suddenly you're sitting in the cockpit of an airplane or standing in the Sistine Chapel! **What exactly is VR, how would you describe the technology?**

Basically it's nothing more than the 3D goggles we all used as kids. The secret lies in creating an image for each eye. Our brain merges the two into a composite image, generating a kind of three-dimensionality. In addition, Blick's VR videos – created by at least two cameras – offer a 360-degree panorama, so you can look into any direction. As if you were actually standing in that place.

What exactly are you and the Blick Group developing together?

With «Blick VR» we have developed two apps for Cardboard use, one version for the iPhone and one for Android devices. We will add a third app, customized for Samsung Gear VR. This headset provides an even more intense experience and costs just under a hundred dollars. We'll be offering 40 videos to start with and add a new clip every week.

By adopting this technology in its early stages Ringier is taking on a pioneering role in the Swiss media industry.

That is the right strategy. Digital business is growing more and more important for Ringier. That is why we need to offer a lot more stories and products in digital form – and

videos play a crucial part. At Blick, we have managed to more than triple our video views within a year. But our competition is not asleep at the wheel, so we always need to stay one step ahead, spot new trends early and try them out – as we have done with virtual reality.

How do you and your team go about developing something like this? There is no experience to fall back on.

Not quite. The subject of 360-degree viewing has been an issue for Blick for the past six years, first in the form of 360-degree photography, and for the past eighteen months in video as well. So there is experience – especially as embodied in Dominik Baumann, one of the internationally acknowledged experts in the field. However – and there you have a point – even Dominik and along with him our video team are learning new things every day like how best to tell stories in virtual reality.

Do you also collaborate with other companies?

Exchanging knowledge in this field, which is still very new to everybody, is crucial. Only by talking to other companies can we avoid mistakes and benefit from other people's experience. It's a matter of give and take. We are collaborating with the Los Angeles Times, for example, and indeed with YouTube, who liked our 360-degree videos so much that they were the ones to suggest a co-operation.

How do users react in your tests?

Nobody wants to take the headset off! You can write or say a lot about VR but you really need to experience it for yourself.

How will this affect the way journalists work?

From now on it is not only journalists but our users, too, who will be at the heart of events. This immediacy is a huge bonus, and it presents an equally great challenge, because consumers will demand proximity, emotionality and all the pertaining information. And all of that from every point of view, literally.

Could you report live from a disaster area? Does the technology permit that?

No. To produce good VR video we still need a bit of a lead-time. Live coverage on location will also fail for the time being because of the huge amounts of data that need to be transmitted.

What are your plans for the future?

«Blick VR» is the kick-off of our virtual adventure. We will report on our progress and closely follow this topic, for which we have recently added a dedicated section on Blick.ch. And by 2017 we'd like to broadcast concerts, for example, live in VR.

Will users have to pay for these kinds of services?

Everything will be free to start with. In the long run I can imagine that VR would be a way to establish paid content in the digital area. Let's take the Soccer World Cup finals: VR will permit viewers to experience the game in the stadium while sitting at home on their couch. Or they get to stand in the goal with Germany's keeper Manuel Neuer when Ronaldo gets a free kick. I firmly believe that a lot of fans would pay for that.

What are the next technological hurdles you need to overcome?

Whenever a user looks or runs into a particular direction the background noise and individual sounds need to change accordingly. That is something we'd also like to offer at Blick eventually. Another major hurdle is the amount of data that VR technology requires.

New technologies tend to raise fears. What if people wind up being unable to tell VR from reality? Or lose themselves in virtual reality because it is much more pleasant?

To fear anything new is only human, just as people used to be afraid of the first motorcars. People need to try out VR and decide for themselves whether they want to use it or not. My experience has been: The first time anyone puts on one of those headsets it's like an epiphany, and they want more. And this more is what we want to offer! 🌀



Sebastian Pfotenhauer, Head of Video Ringier AG, with the Samsung Gear VR. «Virtual Reality will change everything.»

Looking into the future

All aboard for virtual reality! Blick's new VR app lets you bring new worlds to your living room. Put on your Cardboard or GearVR headset and turn yourself into a pilot, a parachutist or a racecar driver.



How can I watch 360-degree videos with Cardboard goggles?

Just start the video in goggle mode, plug in your smartphone and off you go. You can look around as you would in reality, simply by turning your head. The spatial perception is created by two separate images projected at each of your eyes. Basic Cardboard goggles are available for around seven dollars. And there are plastic headsets that are more solid and feature enhancing optics.



Do the videos work without the goggles?

Definitely – although the experience is not quite as impressive. To look around you need to turn the smartphone in a circle or simply swipe the screen right and left or up and down with your finger.



Why isn't the image in the goggles as sharp as it looks on the display itself?

As the screen is split down the middle for use with Cardboard you only get half the resolution. The better your smartphone's display the better the 360-degree video will look in your goggles.



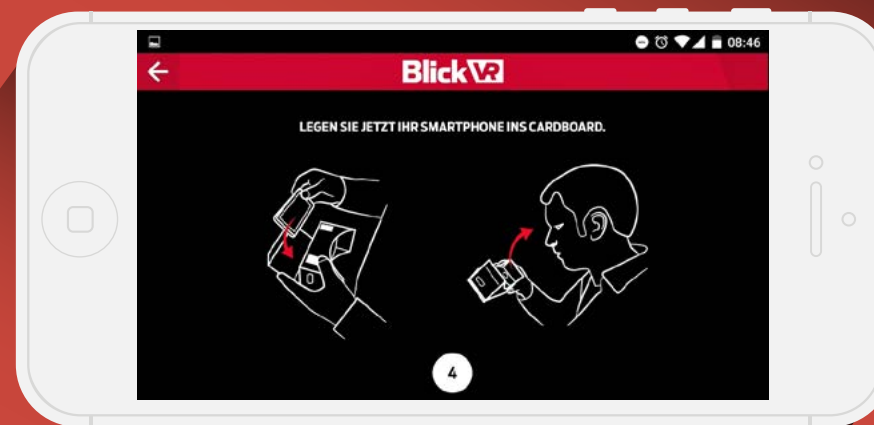
How high is the data usage?

Use the app in a WiFi zone if possible or if you have an unlimited data plan. The data usage is five to six times as high as with a normal video.

Gear VR

What is the purpose of the special app designed for the Samsung Gear VR?

This app may only be used in conjunction with the Samsung headset and provides an even more intense VR experience. The contents are the same as for the normal app. When you put on your headset you can see the menu directly within the 360-degree environment. The cursor moves in sync with your head and you can open a video or a menu item by clicking on the touchpad on the side of the headset.



Design:

Angelina Arquint (3rd-year trainee Ringier)
Leo Faccani (2nd-year trainee Ringier)

No butts about it

Men are often accused of only looking at women's behinds. DOMO writer René Haenig refrained. Which is why he did not realize whom he was flirting with in Los Angeles. But then, who would expect to be sitting next to Jennifer Lopez in a restaurant and to have the superstar winking at him to boot?

Text: René Haenig

For several minutes now I have been unable to shake the feeling that I know this woman - but how? Ever since she came into the restaurant laughing and goofing around with her girlfriends and took a seat at the next table she has been chatting to me. She's nice. She's sexy. Damn, she's sexy. I start to cast desperate glances at my hosts: «Help me, who is she?» Martin and his wife Solveig are highly amused at my lack of realization of who is sitting next to me.

To be honest, this story doesn't exactly enhance my reputation as a gossip writer. To reveal that I once sat next to Jennifer Lopez in Hollywood and engaged in small-talk without having a clue as to her stardom; clearly someone had to help me along.

But let me start at the beginning.

In Los Angeles in April 2007 I am on assignment for Schweizer Illustrierte to do a home story on film director Martin Campbell and his Swiss wife Solveig Romero. They are about to have their first child. Campbell is an A-list director in Tinseltown. Born in New Zealand, he made blockbusters like the James Bond movies «Golden Eye» and «Casino Royale», the mountain-climbing drama «Vertical Limit» as well as the swashbucklers «The Mask of Zorro» and «The Legend of Zorro».

The Campbells live in the Malibu hills in a prime location, where one millionaire's mansion adjoins another, all with a view of the Pacific. Martin and Solveig spend two days showing me what their life is like including a private beach, not some-

thing every millionaire can lay claim to. On the second day the couple take me to dinner. They have booked a table for 8 p.m. Solveig gives me the address: 8764 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood.

Celebrity concourse at the restaurant

Half an hour ahead of time I call a taxi. Once the driver has picked me up at the Hotel Le Méridien Delfina in Santa Monica and I have given him the address he explains to me that «Cecconi's» is the hippest celebrity restaurant in town. Having finagled that I have a dinner date with Bond-movie director Martin Campbell out of me he asks whether I'm an actor. Sorry for asking, he doesn't know me. «No problem!» I'm just a journalist, from Switzerland. The last bit, at least, appears to impress him a little bit.

Outside «Cecconi's» a short wait is in order. A chauffeur delivers an elderly couple from a stretch limo. I decide to follow the couple in - and spot Martin at the bar. We are waiting for Solveig. Meanwhile, Martin explains to me who is already here: Danny DeVito is laughing at one table, Al Pacino is sipping a glass of wine a few tables farther away. A film producer is there, too, but I have forgotten his name. Be that as it may: I have never seen such an overload of celebrities.

When Solveig joins us we go to our table. We are reviewing the last two days when the women I mentioned at the outset approach the next table. They are laughing - and as they take

their seats beside us one of them winks at me: «Hi, how are you?» I'm fine, I answer, and she immediately picks up on my (German) accent, realizing that I am not a native. «Where do you come from?» - «From Switzerland, Zurich.» - «Oh, maybe I'll come to Switzerland for a concert some time!»

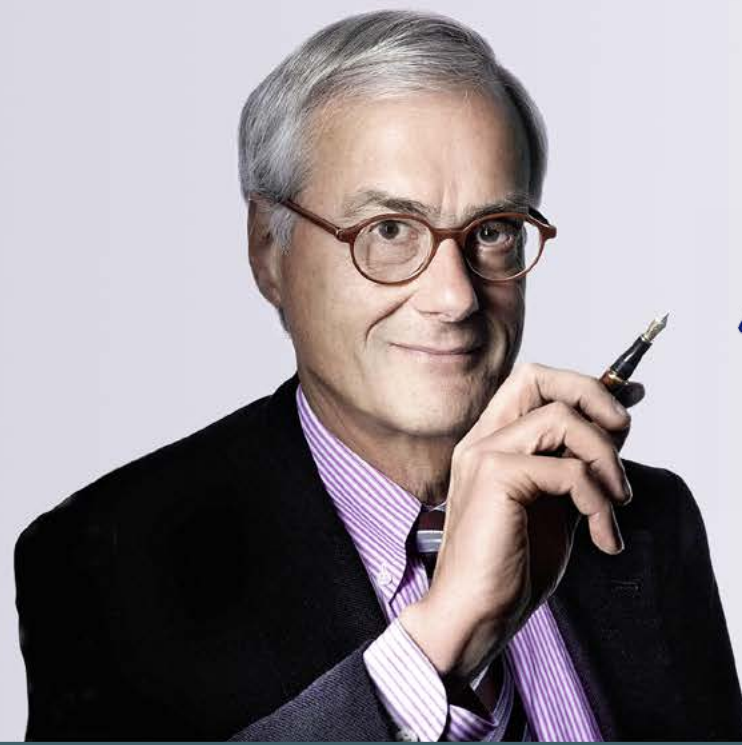
«The most famous...»

As she carries on asking me questions about Switzerland and Zurich I wonder why this woman seems so familiar. Her remark about the concert should have given me pause. But something has made me slow on the uptake. Martin and his wife are enjoying my desperate glances pleading for help. Eventually I manage to whisper to him: «Who is she? I know I've seen her before!» Seconds later, when no one is looking, he simply says: «The most famous...», outlining a woman's posterior with his hands. At last the penny drops. The most famous, luscious butt of the day can only belong to one woman: Jennifer Lopez, the U.S. singer with Puerto Rican roots. Famous for hits like «If You Had My Love», «Love Don't Cost a Thing» and «Jenny from the Block», not to mention a successful actress as well. But there it was: I hadn't looked at her behind. Wearing a ponytail and scant make-up Lopez looked quite different from the photos I knew.

And let's face it: Who would expect to go to a restaurant and wind up sitting next to «J.Lo» and having her flirt with you? Ok, in America anything is possible... 🌀



Photo: Alix/Alpix/Laif



*Lots of Trump and
a dash of Putin*

Ernst Tanner is one of Switzerland's most successful and celebrated executives. For more than 20 years he has led the chocolate manufacturers Lindt & Sprüngli from strength to strength. He has internationalized his company, catapulted turnover and profits to undreamed-of heights and thereby more than consolidated his power as chairman of the board and CEO. Ernst Tanner is pretty much the poster boy for the Swiss business world.

And yet he would vote for Trump. That, at least, is what he said in an interview with a Swiss Sunday paper in June. His reason: «Because he would practice more business-friendly politics.» It is quite understandable that Hillary Clinton's politics are too leftist for his taste. But is that reason enough to vote for Trump? The man is a notorious liar, a self-confessed sexist, a financial fraud who is happy to play the racist to win more votes. Someone who «personally comes across as a total asshole,» as the American writer Stewart O'Nan put it. Never in his life would Ernst Tanner, who is a friendly, economic-liberal and down-to-earth person, hire somebody like that for his company - not even to clean their toilets. And yet he would vote for his election as U.S. President.

The only explanation for this kind of behavior from an otherwise very moderate and socially fully integrated executive and entrepreneur is a kind of disregard - or even disdain - for politics. The more successful business leaders become, the greater the danger that they diverge from the overriding interests of society, having developed tunnel vision for nothing but their own goals. It was this attitude that led Swiss companies to carry on doing brisk trade with the apartheid regime in South Africa for years in spite of UN embargoes. It is the same political one-track-mind that, 15 years ago, prompted Swiss bankers to support right-wing populists, in the hope that these politicians would create a better environment for their tax-evasion marketing. And it is this same attitude towards politics that moves business leaders to say things like: A dash of Putin would do us good.

There is one thing that some of these business leaders don't really get: Getting elected by the people is far more arduous than being appointed by a board of directors. And sometimes it matters more.

Michael Ringier

Employee questions

Send your questions to:
domo@ringier.ch



Katia Murmann
Editor-in-chief adint.
SonntagsBlick

«We need to be a lot more daring. Journalism has never been more diverse and exciting than it is today.»



Marc Walder
CEO Ringier AG

«We have long-term plans with Christian Dorer, just as with Iris Mayer and Peter Röthlisberger at Blick.»



Ralph Büchi
Delegate of the Board of Directors Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz AG

«We're improving our competitiveness in the market and digitalizing our brands. We're on track!»



Jutta Schilke
Head Human Resources Ringier AG

«Almost all of our Swiss affiliates have already implemented timekeeping. Now Ringier Switzerland will follow suit.»

This summer you went to Silicon Valley to take part in an innovation program jointly launched by Ringier, Swiss Post and the insurance company Mobiliar. What were your experiences, and what did you learn?

«I totally caught the digital bug. I went to the Advanced Media Institute at UC Berkeley for an advanced course in multimedia storytelling, where I learned to program, visualize data and apply multimedia techniques to storytelling. I also went in search of new business models and types of content at New Media companies such as AJ+, Fusion, Ozy and Pop-Up Magazine.

The most important things I learned: to step up teamwork, and we need to do more experimenting. Users demand quality journalism in digital forms too. That's the good news. However, we are still thinking too much in terms of given formats. I mean to change that and to provide a space that will allow us to develop new types of content and apply them in our everyday work. In order to get there, we need to bring content and technology together and to be a lot more daring than we have been. If we achieve that we'll be on the right track: Journalism has never been more diverse and exciting than it is today.»

This August the Blick Group announced more major personnel changes, including the departure of the Group's managing director, Wolfgang Büchner. Will things finally calm down now?

«There have been many changes within the Blick Group throughout the past ten or 15 years. Each change has and had its own history. Top-level positions within a tabloid group, whether on the editorial level or in the publishing department, require enormous amounts of involvement, strength and expertise - that is surely one reason for fairly frequent changes. With Christian Dorer we have now hired one of our country's foremost editors-in-chief, and we have long-term plans with him, just as we do with Iris Mayer and Peter Röthlisberger at Blick. Wolfgang Büchner's job, in turn, was to develop the five channels Blick, SonntagsBlick, Blick am Abend, Blick.ch and blickamabend.ch further over the next few years. In the last twelve months Mr. Büchner has put many things on the right track in this respect. He has also launched the reorganization of our newsroom, strengthened our video content and social-media engagement as well as initiated the fundamental relaunch of the Blick Group's digital presence. All of this work will be carried on consistently after his departure.

How is Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz (RASCH) doing - and when will the joint venture move to its new offices in Zurich-Altstetten?

«We are on track, consistently pursuing our most important objectives: improving our competitiveness in the market and digitalizing our brands. For this purpose we have reframed our user market strategy, revised our service portfolio - Amiado with its youth-oriented online platforms is now part of Energy -, re-examined our product portfolio and carried out several relaunches. The wonderful special issues of Schweizer Illustrierte or the XXL issue of Le Temps prove how many opportunities print has to offer! Our successful launch of Guider, Beobachter magazine's online legal advice platform, was an innovative step in the digitalization of a powerful print brand. We really enjoyed the barbeque party we celebrated at the Medienpark in June with the staff of RASCH and Admeira: a nice foretaste of our future collaboration under our new roof! Our new offices are currently under interior construction; their completion is set for the end of March 2017, and we will move in as soon as they're ready. A detailed timeline for the move will be worked out in early 2017 with all the departments that are involved.»

By January 1st or April 1st at the latest Ringier Switzerland will introduce timekeeping for employees. What will change? And will this affect staff in other countries?

«Employees will henceforth have to clock in and clock out every day and register the duration of long breaks, as required by the new labor laws. If certain conditions apply, the legislators allow for a simplified timekeeping procedure - which is what Ringier's management agreed upon with Ringier staff representatives as well as the employee associations of the media industry in the last few months.

The extra effort caused by timekeeping will therefore not be excessive. Still, it is a departure from current practice. However, it will continue to require good leadership from superiors, who will have to engage more deeply with topics such as the working hours and absences of their employees.

Almost all of our Swiss affiliates have already implemented timekeeping, e. g. the printers, DeinDeal, Geschenkidee, Scout24 and Admeira (as of 2017). This change will only happen in Switzerland, other «Ringier countries» will not be affected.»

From the basement to the peaks

An internal-mail carrier at Ringier's Zurich headquarters, Heinz Eugster spent 18 years delivering letters, parcels and newspapers to our offices – always good-humored and ready to crack a joke. He also smuggled and distributed photos of the Dalai Lama. Recently retired, he now indulges his love of country life at LandLiebe, and his passion for the mountains. Photos: Geri Born, private

He has had some pretty interesting adventures: In Tibet Heinz Eugster, 64, smuggled forbidden photos of the Dalai Lama into the country; he played the euphonium at a concert in London's world-famous Royal Albert Hall; he shook hands with former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the basement office of Ringier's internal mail in Zurich – and for one day he even became the editor-in-chief of the celebrity magazine Schweizer Illustrierte. «I'm happy with my life,» says Eugster, who took early retirement in March.

When he was a boy he wanted to become a mailman. «The job intrigued me.» His parents were farmers in rural Appenzell. On the weekends his father would carry the boy piggyback, walking in the surrounding hills. The fact that he had a Tibetan classmate intensified the boy's love of the mountains. Young Eugster is not only fascinated by the peaks of Cho Oyu, Pumori and Ama Dablam, but also by the culture of the Himalayan populace. He is still on very cordial terms with his old Tibetan school buddy. Just two years ago the two went on a trekking tour to the source of the Ganges.

Although the long-term effects of polio prevent him from going on challenging climbs, he goes to the mountains as often as weather permits. «I love simply to observe nature,» he maintains. At his house on Lake Lützel he proves he has green thumbs – the town's most magnificent flowers bloom on Eugster's balcony.

He could have had a career as a musician. He studied at the conservatory in Geneva for three and a half years. His instrument of choice was the euphonium. He even taught budding young brass players. «Eventually it was all too much and I decided to go on working as a mailman.»

What about his smuggling «career»? That happened eight years ago, when travel through Tibet was only permitted in the company of a watchdog. Heinz absconded, sneaking away to stay with a local for three days. To thank the man for his hospitality, Eugster gave him a photograph of the Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader, which was strictly forbidden. «My host fell to his knees, tears in his eyes, and laid his forehead onto my feet to say thank you.» This was to become Heinz Eugster's life motto: A kind word is ample thanks. And that is exactly the impression one gets from his upbeat attitude. RH



He loves nature and has green thumbs: Heinz Eugster has been the «guiding spirit» of the LandLiebe editorial office. Passionate mountaineer: Heinz Eugster in front of the snow-covered peak of Cho Oyu in 2004 – and during his fitness training today. In his tiny internal mailroom in the basement of Ringier's headquarters he even got a visit from former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.



Editor's Choice

by Marc Walder

Are you familiar with this title? Marc Walder tells you which book he's reading and why it fascinates him.

Peter Thiel

ZERO TO ONE

He co-founded PayPal and made the first outside investment in Facebook: Peter Thiel. In his best-seller «Zero to One» the American argues that globalization may suggest technological progress but that these supposed innovations are merely copies of things that already exist. Thiel shows how we can get out of this technological dead end. His book is a radical appeal against stagnation. It's a plea for more courage and risk-taking and a roadmap for an innovative future because the future does not belong to the best among many but only to the successful innovator. And: True innovation does not evolve horizontally but by vertical leaps and bounds – from zero to one, that is.

Thiel embeds his personal experiences in economic, political and philosophical reflections. That is what makes his book stand out from the usual works of self-help literature.

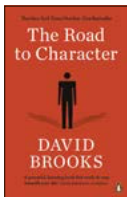
Publisher: Crown Business



David Brooks

THE ROAD TO CHARACTER

What makes us valuable personalities? It is neither calculation nor self-interest or the me-first culture that is supposed to make us competitive. Instead, we must relearn not to conquer the world but to pledge ourselves to it. «Most of us have clearer strategies for how to achieve career success than we do for how to develop a profound character,» says American writer David Brooks. He demonstrates that we can all win victories only if we internalize a simple truth: In order to fulfil yourself you must also forget yourself.



Publisher: Random House



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