

Peter Bardy, editor-in-chief aktuality.sk: «We have become tougher»

D M O

Ringier

In-house journal
December 2018



«Economist» cartoonist
Kevin Kallaugh

Pen
Power

AR
Ringier

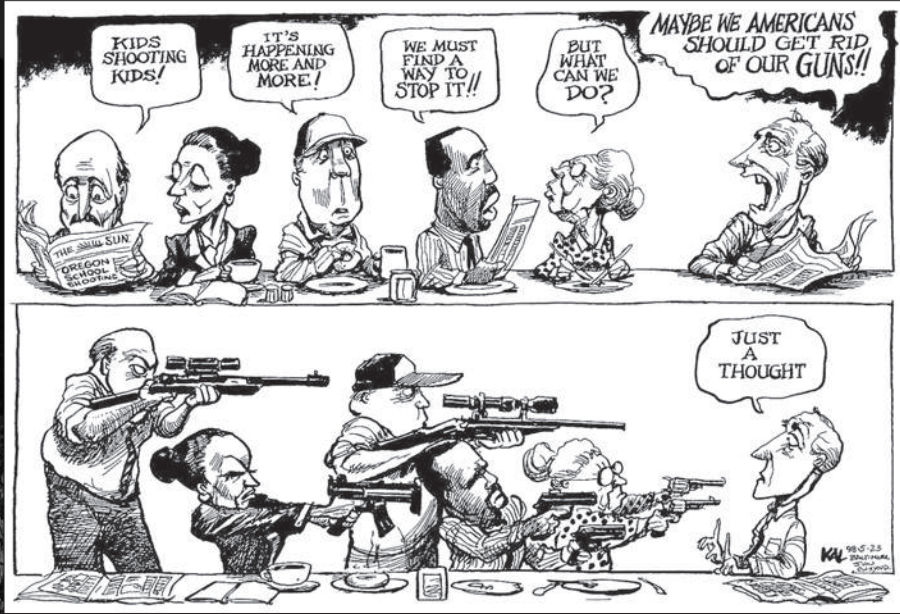
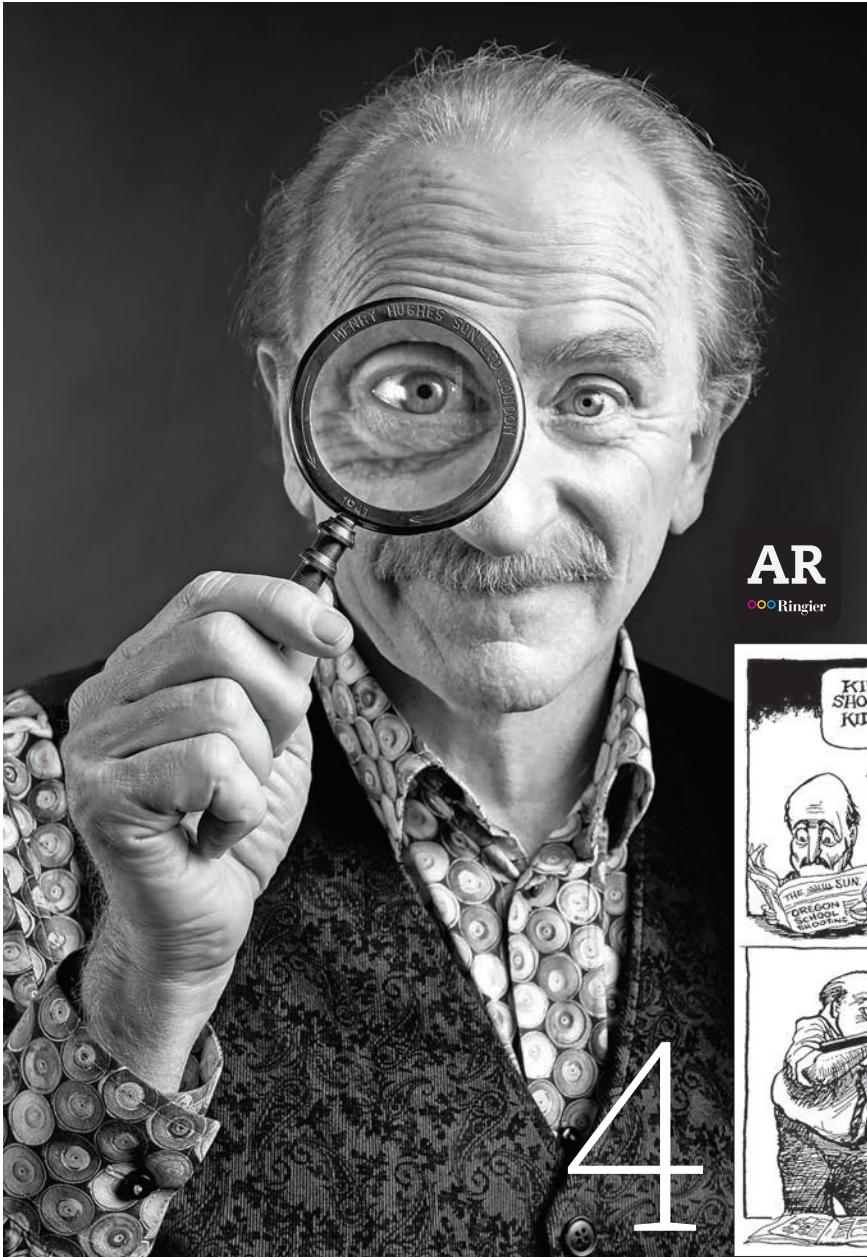
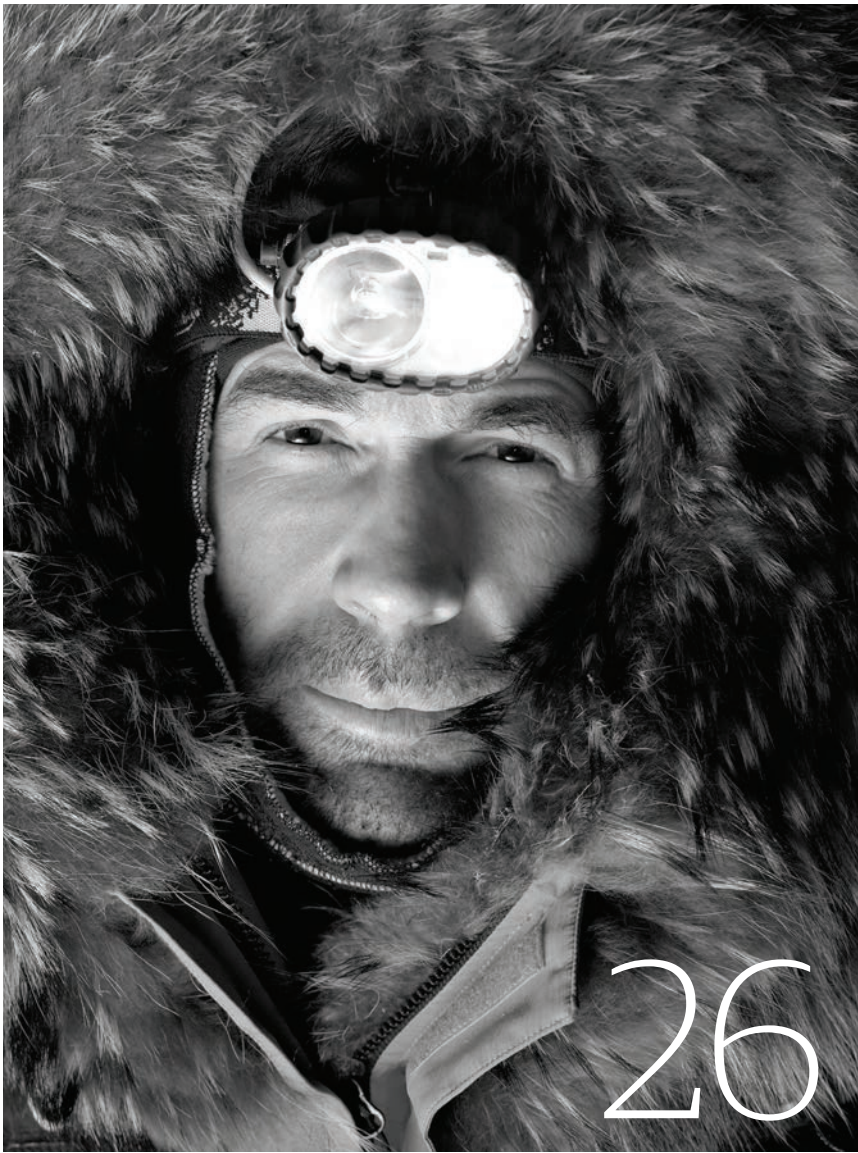
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New in DOMO: Augmented Reality

- 1 Download the free app «Ringier AR» for iOS + Android.
- 2 Open the «Scan» option in the main menu.
- 3 Hold the camera over the image marked AR and click «Scan».



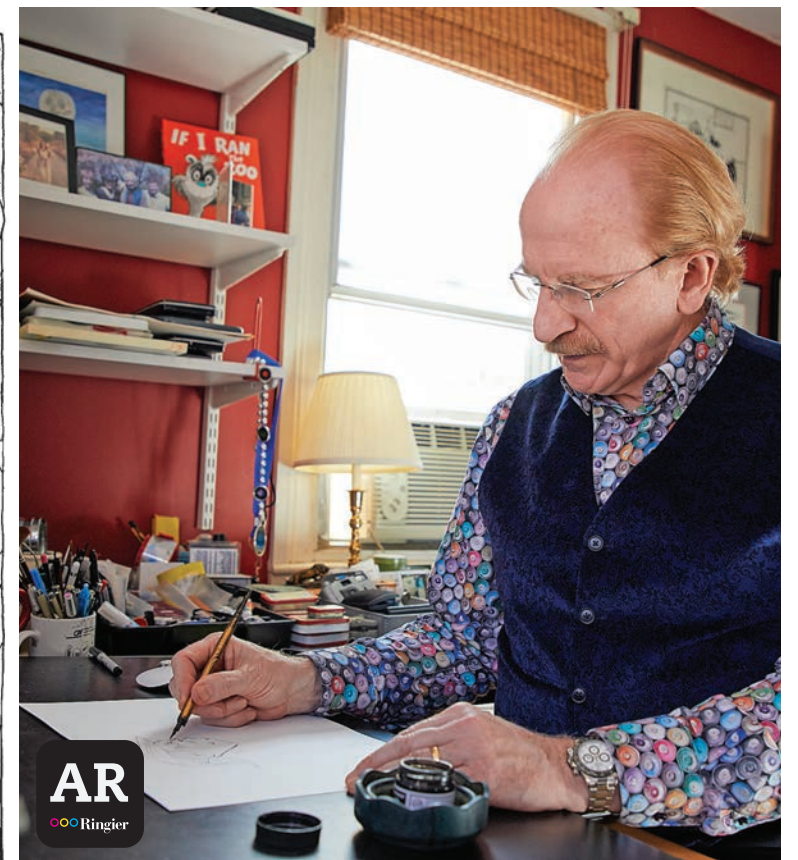
«I want to fire all cannons»

Cartoonist Kevin «KAL» Kallaugher has been drawing cartoons for the British magazine «The Economist» for 40 years. And for once, he has done it for DOMO, adding his characters to this issue's cover design. A conversation with the American artist on the power of cartoons, satire in times of Trump and his favorite politician's hairstyle.

Interview: Adrian Meyer Photos: Peter Lueders



One against all and all against one: Kevin Kallaugher (right) brandishing his pen against the characters he has created. In the first row, from left to right: Leonid Brezhnev, Vladimir Putin, Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush, Margaret Thatcher, Barack Obama, Deng Xiaoping, Alan Greenspan and Hosni Mubarak.



Kevin Kallaugh, 63, signs his cartoons KAL. During the video interview via Skype, he is sitting at his desk in his Baltimore home grinning broadly at the reporter. He's sporting a shirt printed with colorful bubbles (a tribute to the arcade video game «Puzzle Bobble») and - of course - his trademark mustache. KAL is bursting with energy and curiosity. At the end of the interview he surprises the interviewer by demonstrating another talent - ventriloquism: He suddenly pulls out a fuzzy green hand puppet and bows out of the conversation on a laugh.

Mr. Kallaugh, you once said you were like a six-year-old kid with a crayon. Is that still the case?

Kevin Kallaugh: Ha! In my cartoons, I always try to conjure up the playfulness with which a six-year-old masters everyday life. But all the things that happened in the past two years do make me feel very old.

Has it become harder to be playful?

Everyone thinks I'm having the time of my life as a cartoonist. But my work has become harder. Anyone can be a satirist today, thanks to social media. That's fantastic and healthy for a democracy. But for me as a professional it presents a challenge. I can't make simple jokes any more, they are easy pickings. Also, people are much more thin-skinned nowadays. As a cartoonist, I'm moving in a minefield of sensitivities.

We're drowning in news. How do you choose your weekly subject?

I try to take a step back from the noise. Especially with The Economist. I'm like a sniper that way - I

One of Kevin Kallaugh's more than 140 covers for «The Economist»: Sheikhs v shale, encapsulating the oil duel between Saudi Arabia and the U.S.A., who are on their way to becoming the world's largest oil-producing country thanks to fracking.

only get one shot per week. It has to hit the bullseye.

That's not easy.

I just want to do my best, because I feel very uneasy about the direction in which our society and democracy are moving. But that is the fire that drives me. I wake up every day ready to fight for our society.

What is making you uneasy?

Right now, we can see history being made before our eyes. There is a sea change happening in world politics. Being part of that debate as a satirist feels enormously important. My four decades as a cartoonist have prepared me very well for this moment. Now I want to fire all cannons.

What can cartoons still achieve nowadays?

A hundred years ago, cartoons were the central visual element of a newspaper. Today, they make up only a tiny part of our media consumption. As cartoonists, we are no longer the most important commentators in

a debate. Still, if a cartoon is really good, it can crystallize a debate in a nutshell. The Renaissance painter and inventor of the cartoon, Annibale Carracci, once said that a good caricature is more true to life than reality itself.

Why are cartoons so effective?

A cartoon can be consumed instantly and easily. It is incredibly direct. It can break down preconceptions by means of humor. If people can laugh at something, they're open to new ideas. Humor is the sugar coating that makes it easier to swallow a bitter pill.

Your job is to ridicule powerful people. Are you a malicious person?

I work using tough love. Cartoons are negatively connotated. So, I'm using a negatively connotated means to improve society. Satirists are society's sheepdogs. We drive the herd ahead of us in the direction we want. If necessary, we nip some of them in the butt.

What drives you?

I regard myself as a columnist. I know it's really hard for me to change my readers' minds. But I can make them think. I can challenge them and sometimes even trick them. I don't just want to moan about everything going down the drain anyhow. That's no help to anyone. I want to change society for the better.

What was your most important cartoon?

There is one cartoon that is timeless and that people still ask me to put on mugs or T-shirts on a weekly basis. It's actually quite harmless, a cartoon about the stock market I did in 1989. The cartoon with the greatest direct impact was one I did for the Baltimore Sun. The mayor once told me, years after his resignation, that one of my cartoons made him change his mind about a law.

Is there a cartoon you regret?

I'm sure I screwed up some of my 8,000 cartoons. One from 2006,

«Satirists are society's sheepdogs» says Kevin Kallaugh. He has been working for the British «Economist» without a contract for over 40 years. «They just call every week and ask for a drawing.»

in particular, was really stupid. At the time, a massive hurricane was threatening the city of Baltimore. So, I sketched the huge chaos and destruction. Only, the storm veered off one day before publication. Nothing happened. But the cartoon had already been printed. That was really embarrassing.

Where do you find your ideas?

I'm working all the time. Every minute. The radio is always on, so is the TV. I surf a lot and, of course, read the paper. I work like a journalist, asking a lot of questions. Any thought can become a cartoon. Even conversations with friends can turn into something.

How do you create your cartoons?

I sit at my desk, drawing sketch by sketch. My drawings are very detailed, like overloaded works of art. I make about ten sketches, developing ideas on paper. I think by drawing; it's a kind of conversation with myself on paper. I keep adding more detail. At some point, after ►



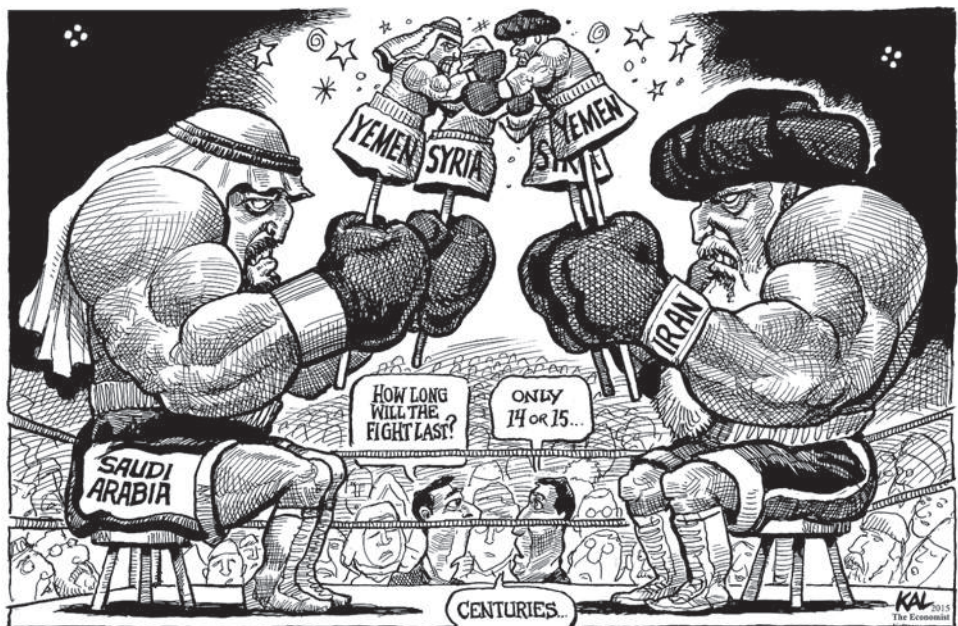
August 2017: KAL cartoon after US President Donald Trump defended right-wing extremists marching in Charlottesville.



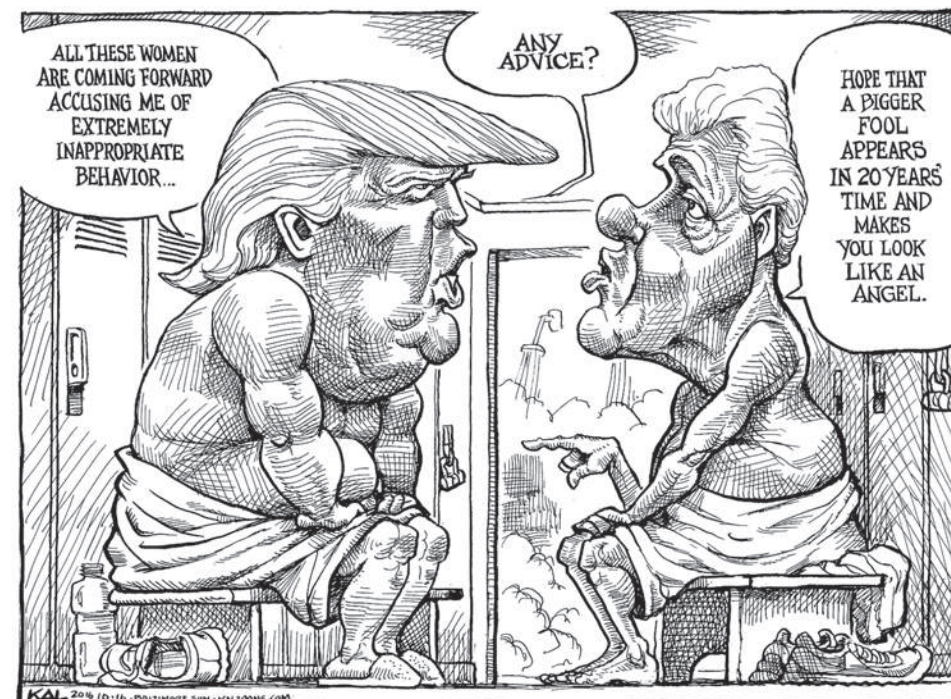
Struggling for a nuclear deal: Self-obsessed Barack Obama with newly elected Iranian President Hassan Rohani in 2013.



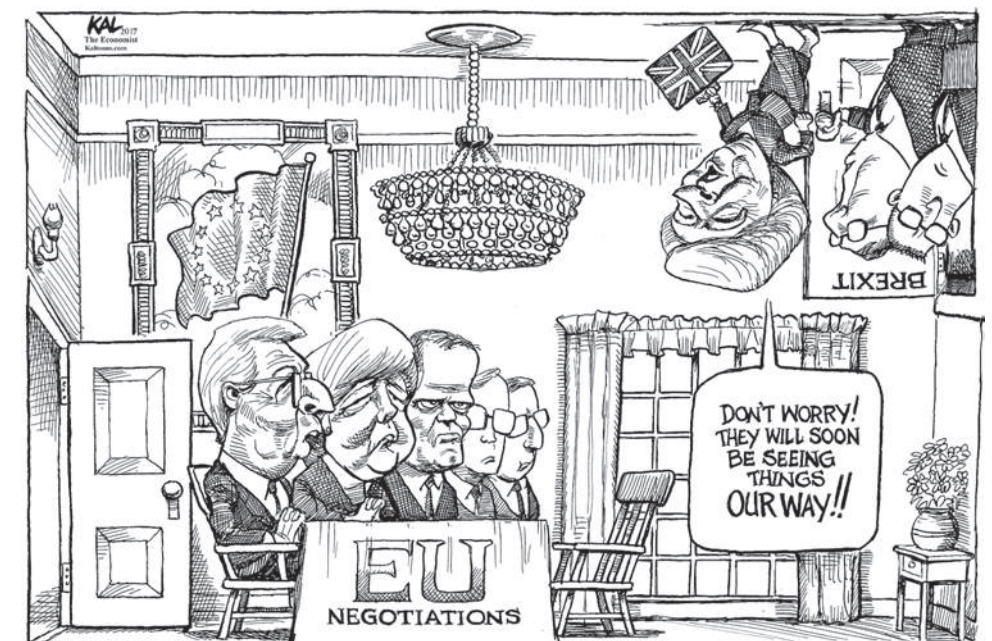
Famous: The Statue of Liberty and Uncle Sam jointly mourning after the attacks on New York on September 11, 2001.



A proxy war between Sunnis and Shiites: Saudi Arabia and Iran are not fighting each other directly, instead they're waging war in Syria and Yemen.



«Me too» of a different kind: Donald Trump asks ex-president Bill Clinton (of all people) for advice in dealing with women accusing him of sexual harassment.



British Prime Minister Theresa May optimistically leading her delegation to the Brexit negotiations with the EU in March 2017.



about four to six hours, I have a draft, which I paint in color. This I send to my editor. In 95 percent of the cases he likes all of it. In four percent of the cases he wants to change a few details. And in one percent of the cases he doesn't get the joke.

What is the hardest part of a cartoonist's job?

Consistently being better than average. That means a lot of hard work. Cartoons are like jazz. You distort a tune, improvise, you're immediate. But not everyone can play jazz. As a young cartoonist, I used to ask myself if I was good enough. Now I know I am. Nevertheless, I wonder whether my black-and-white drawings are gradually getting to be too old-fashioned for readers.

You haven't always been a cartoonist.

I always used to draw, in high school, in college. My senior thesis at Harvard University was a 13-minute animated cartoon.

After university, I toured the UK by bicycle for a few months, after which I was the first American to join the Brighton Basketball Club. I also worked as a street musician, ventriloquist and street cartoonist. I took my portfolio to all the newspapers in London at some point, and finally I went to The Economist. And they didn't have any pictures in the magazine at the time. I thought: Man, this is never gonna work.

How did you convince the people in charge?

I'd brought a few cartoons of Harvard professors. Funnily enough, someone on the team recognized them! And so, they invited me for a trial day. I had no idea of British politics. So, the night before the trial day, I watched the news show «Newsnight». They broadcast an interview with Denis Healey, a Labour politician. He was great to caricature, he had this tomato face. The next day at The Economist, they wanted me to draw Denis Hea-

The colorful world of Kevin Kallaugh, who usually calls himself KAL. «Cartoons are always on the verge of the unspeakable,» he says. No wonder he keeps getting angry e-mails. «There's always someone who's pissed off.»

ley. And they even paid me for it!

They hired you on the spot?

Well, they said they'd invite me back next week. It's been that way for forty years now - I never had a fixed contract. Every week, I wait for their call! Come to think of it - I haven't heard from them this week.

Let's talk about faces.

Drawing faces is a mystery. It is unbelievably fascinating. In my cartoons, I try to get at a person's true character, to grasp that certain something in their face. It takes a lot of hard work, even though it always looks so simple.

US President Donald Trump looks almost like a cartoon in real life. Does that make your job easier?

I've drawn him a thousand times. He would be easy to caricature quickly. But every time I study his face, I learn something new. The smallest detail can have so much impact. That's why I always try to say something more fundamental

about him. About his emptyheadedness. His relentless idiocy. His narcissism. I want to discover the details in his face that convey a piece of truth about Donald Trump.

Which politician's hairstyle is your favorite to draw?

Ronald Reagan's was always the most interesting. His hair was so special, everyone recognized it. Even if you had drawn it by itself on a rubber ball.

Is there a taboo you would never draw?

Cartoons are always on the front line of free speech. They are always on the verge of the unspeakable. How far can you go? I think that it's always a matter of tone. Religion is problematic, there are so many sensitivities on all sides. I do not criticize religion per se, only when it mixes with politics. I also try not to put the family members of politicians into play. It's not their fault that their dad is the US President. But many comedians don't care about that.

Have you ever been threatened?

Not the way many of my colleagues have. Of course, I get a lot of angry emails. There's always someone who's pissed off. That comes with the territory. I'm aware I can't please everyone. All it takes is one angry idiot with a gun to ruin your life. That's why I'm careful.

«Drawing faces is a mystery. It is unbelievably fascinating.»

Kevin Kallaugh

How did the attack on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo affect your work?

I'm afraid people have forgotten Charlie Hebdo. Just like the lessons we subsequently learned regarding the debate on freedom of expres-

Kevin Kallaugh in his favorite armchair at home in Baltimore. His work is displayed all over the house: drawings, paintings or small sculptures of the people he depicts.

sion. It seems that liberal democracy is on the retreat. And satire is always one of the first casualties when freedom of expression is curtailed. But you can't just erase something that's deep inside you. Namely, that we like to laugh at powerful people. That's why I'm optimistic.

Is this the most exciting time of your career?

No question. I always thought the 60s were an exciting time. But they are nothing compared to what's going on today. We are in the middle of a fundamental struggle for our future and for the future of civilized society. And I am ready to fight for our future, every day.

So you're not about to stop any time soon?

Oh, man, no way. I'll go on as long as I can hold a pen in my hand. Until I'm a hundred years old if need be. I'm only now getting to be at my best. 🌍

Frank A. Meyer in 75 keywords

In January, Frank A. Meyer (FAM) will celebrate his 75th birthday. Author and Ringier chronicler Karl Lüönd on the influence, the begrudgers and the impact of this company's most famous journalist. By Karl Lüönd

1 Self-esteem

«He has not met the new Swiss ambassador to Berlin. (I'll be delighted when he comes round to introduce himself,» says Frank A. Meyer» (Schweizer Illustrierte, September 22, 2018). Now we know who answers to whom.

2 Background

The father was a watchmaker. The son became a typesetter.

3 Hallmark

In the beginning was craftsmanship! Not bad!

4 Professional culture

Typographers have always been the «academics of the proletariat», often self-taught.

5 Self-taught

He teaches himself what matters to him. FAM has always been a tireless, avid reader.

6 Biel

The watchmakers' town on the border between French- and German-speaking Switzerland is a bit run down but cozy - and full of stories. All you have to do is tell them.

7 Beginnings

From 1968 to 1980, FAM was a partner in Mario Cortesi's press office. He worked for Basel's National-Zeitung and from 1972 for Schweizer Illustrierte as a parliamentary correspondent.

8 Standing out

His choice of topics, style and tone immediately stand out in Bern. A seasoned parliamentary correspondent warns FAM: «If you keep this up, you'll be gone within a year.»

9 Up close and personal

And yet, Federal Councilor Pierre Graber, otherwise aloof, shows off his holiday home in Schweizer Illustrierte, and Nello Celio, his colleague from Ticino, cooks risotto. Politicians are presented as ordinary people.

10 Lèse majesté

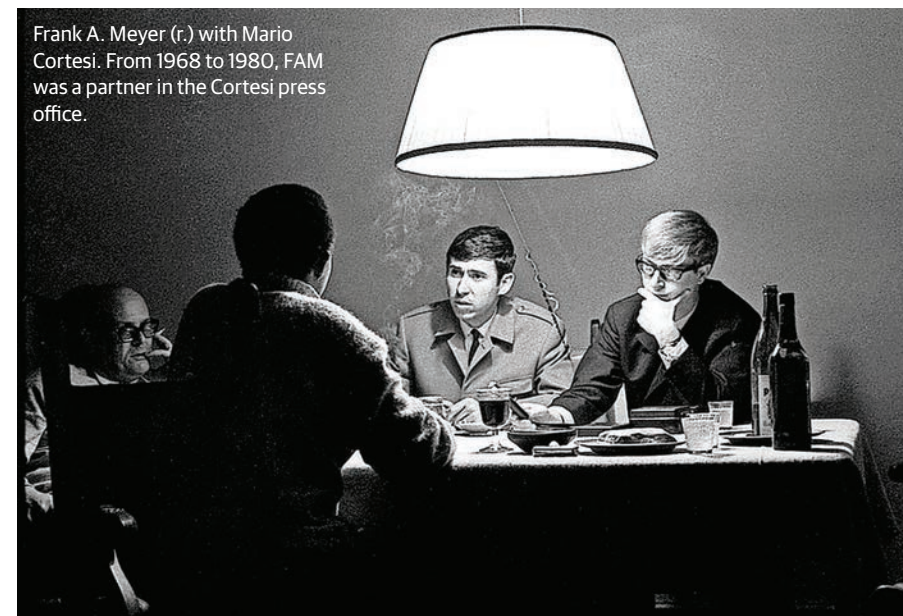
But when a magazine cover appears depicting Federal Councilor Kurt Furgler in crosshairs, Heinrich Oswald, President of the Ringier Group, is obliged to trek to Bern and apologize.

12 Local politics

Cortesi, Meyer, Hadorn et al. also found a party, the «Free Citizens of Biel». FAM is voted into the kindergarten commission - a good training ground for the Federal Parliament!

13 Ringier gets political

Spurred by Oswald, FAM realizes that the hitherto strictly apolitical «periodical factory» in Zofingen can turn into a political powerhouse, thanks to its broad circulation.



Frank A. Meyer (r.) with Mario Cortesi. From 1968 to 1980, FAM was a partner in the Cortesi press office.

11 Entrepreneur

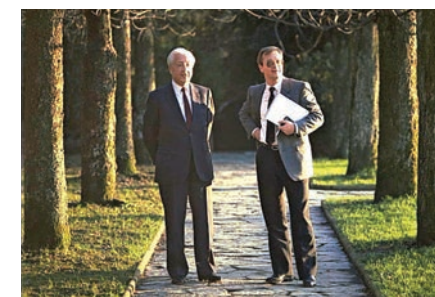
In 1978, the Cortesi crew found the (still successful) bilingual local newspaper Biel/Bienne. FAM is urged to take on an entrepreneurial role - a rare stroke of luck for a journalist!

14 Merger

The illustrated weeklies Schweizer Illustrierte and Sie & Er merge and look for new formats. Editor-in-Chief Fibo Deutsch chases his reporters around the globe. FAM plumbs the Federal Parliament in Bern. The magazine gains in respect and relevance.



Frank A. Meyer at home in Berlin. The portrait behind him is by artist Tania Jacobi.



Frank A. Meyer in 1984 with publisher Hans Ringier (left).

15 Ambassador

At the same time, FAM the journalist becomes Ringier's ambassador to the capital.

16 Lobbying

And he lobbies successfully, against foreign satellite-TV channels for example.

17 Friend and foe

It is sometimes said that FAM's writing can make or break a politician.

18 Examples

This seemed to work with Federal Councilors Adolf Ogi, Flavio Cotti and Willi Ritschard. Others, such as Otto Stich, were not impressed.

19 Dinners

Most representatives of the people, regardless of their politics, would accept FAM's invitations.

20 Motives

Whether they did so out of curiosity, joy, calculation or fear is moot.

21 Networking I

Be that as it may: FAM collected exciting people. Soon he was regarded as a master at networking.



Close relationship: 1987, in conversation with Flavio Cotti (right), Federal Councilor at the time.

22 Curiosity

In this, he was helped by the journalist's cardinal virtue: untiring curiosity.

23 Influence I

FAM's influence on staffing and business in the Federal Parliament has never been measured.

24 Influence II

But it must have been great. If only because everyone believed in it.

25 Warning

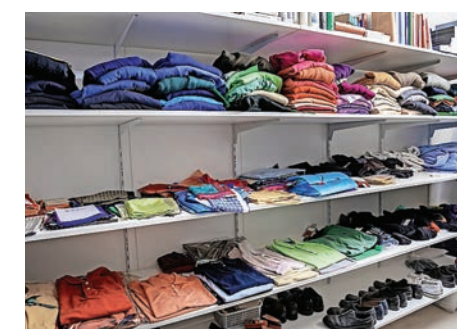
«Remember, be clever / Whatever's the matter / The photographer's never / a part of the picture.» (Erich Kästner)

26 Objection

FAM never minded being a part of the picture.

27 Lifestyle

Who is that cutting a figure in bland 1970s Bern? A young, long-haired man, always smartly dressed. Fancy cars, legendary parties on Lake Biel ...



Colorful selection. Frank A. Meyer's dressing room in Berlin.



«I've always wanted to have an impact.» Frank A. Meyer at home in 1985.

28 Begrudgers I

... and FAM, the ambassador, resides at the Bellevue Palace Hotel, as befits his rank. His colleagues grumble. FAM learns: Pity is free, envy is something you earn.

29 Michael

In 1985, Michael Ringier is appointed CEO at the age of 36. FAM is his friend and becomes his advisor.

30 Bullseye

They are a good match: the quiet thinker and strategist and the loud, sometimes ruthless fighter.

31 Advisor

The management of a media group requires not only a number of specialists but also a generalist.



«I'm just there.» Frank A. Meyer in front of the Ringier Pressehaus in Zurich, 1983.

32 Definition

A generalist is someone who does not need to understand much about the matter at hand as long as he asks the right questions.

33 Job requirements

A sense of the spirit of the times, a knack for spotting trends, connecting topics, warning of traps. And, most importantly:

34 Interfering

«I'm simply there,» FAM keeps saying, and that it's his job to interfere.

35 Popularity

That doesn't make him popular with everyone. But seriously: Can popularity be a goal?

36 Flops

The weekly Die Woche went belly-up; at least the weekly L'Hebdo hung on until 2017. Nor did Ringier score with political dailies. FAM directed, collaborated and suffered with their staff.

37 Experimental laboratory

Ringier knows from experience: In the media industry, the market itself is the experimental laboratory. Experiments are carried out one-to-one.

38 Memento

That always costs a fortune, especially if it goes wrong!

39 Experimental arrangement

Unlike in other industries, every flop becomes public knowledge. And the competition handles the PR for you.

40 Ups and downs

Are part of the business.

41 Error culture

Ringier had it before the term was coined. Ergo: Even those who erred could survive.

42 Begrudgers II

Again and again, the begrudgers were amazed: The bloodbath they anticipated never came, at least not at the top executive level.

43 Begrudgers III

Regardless of what they wrote or broadcast, FAM stayed.

44 Influence III

Mostly by influencing staffing decisions, he guided the tabloid Blick on its way to becoming a liberal newspaper.

45 Trial and error

Sometimes he was right, sometimes he was wrong. But he always came up with a justification.

46 Backstage noises

People would whisper in the hallways that he was setting the course and remote-controlling the editors-in-chief. Maybe so, but:

47 Objection

«If he's too strong, you're too weak!» (based loosely on the German slogan for «Fisherman's Friend».)

48 Golden rule I

In this business, you can only afford to be so self-confident and opinionated if you deliver.

49 Weekly evidence

As a columnist for «SonntagsBlick», FAM has been proving his journalistic mettle week by week for many years.

50 Edgy and feisty

Whether he attacks Islam or the Swiss right-wing party SVP, you don't have to agree with him. But he will never bore you.

51 Golden rule II

But the facts have to check out. Education and information are vital for survival. Anyone who, like FAM, likes to go way out on a limb will not be forgiven for getting things wrong.

52 The Borer Affair I

What hand did he really have in the sex scandal that brought down Swiss Ambassador Borer and badly harmed Ringier's reputation? It was only his enemies who wrote about it. FAM himself kept mum.

53 The Borer Affair II

Don't let's get into that!

54 School of Journalism I

A brief recollection of a class at the Ringier School of Journalism. I had the students watch FAM's talk show «Vis-à-vis» that evening to observe and judge his interview with Archduke Otto von Habsburg. They all looked forward to skewering the company's own star journalist.

55 School of Journalism II

The following morning, the silence was

deafening. Every student, without exception, was impressed. Drawing on deep knowledge, FAM had asked the right questions and quick-wittedly parried the replies. Thereby managing to get a brilliant interview from the famously difficult old nobleman.

56 Comment

«But the honor should not be restricted To the sage whose name is clearly writ. For the wise man's wisdom needs to be extracted. So the customs man deserves his bit. It was he who called for it.» (Bertolt Brecht: Legend of the origin of the book Tao Te Ching on Lao-Tzu's road into exile.)

57 Conclusion

You don't have to like FAM to acknowledge his excellent achievements in journalism in the past decades.

58 Journalism Award

When he turned 70, the Zurich Press Association finally got its act together and gave him a «Lifetime Achievement Award»...

59 Secret hope

... maybe in the secret hope he would finally pack it in (a popular method: castration by distinction).

60 Dashed hope

Thanks anyway, but FAM kept going.

61 Expansion

In 1989, Ringier pushed forward into Eastern Europe.

62 Berlin

FAM gradually also shifted the center of his life into greater Europe, to the hotspot Berlin.

63 Networking II

Just as he did in Bern, he builds up an excellent network. Former Chancellor Schröder, President Steinmeier et al. are his friends.



FAM (l) in 2006, with Michael Ringier and former Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (r).

64 Order

In Berlin, on September 17, 2018, they gave him the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Great honor: In 2018, Meyer is awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

65 Rationale

«For making an important contribution to a better understanding of the problems and challenges faced by neighboring countries as well as in the context of Europe as a whole.» (Official rationale given by the Federal Government)

66 Change

«I am no longer the same person I was in Bern back then. Now it's about my role in Germany.»

67 Horizon

«The move to Berlin broadened his horizons, he says. As with a Swiss soccer player who moves up to Germany's Bundesliga.»

Schweizer Illustrierte, September 22, 2018

68 Vis-à-vis

For 36 years, Meyer hosted the talk show «Vis-à-vis» produced by Swiss Television for the German public satellite channel 3sat.



69 Gentle questioning...

«He managed to get his interlocutor (Joe Ackermann, Deutsche Bank) to talk, which is the mark of a good interviewer.»

70... and its result

«Thanks to his unusually friendly approach we may have learned more than

if the banker had been aggressively «interrogated».» Rhetoric coach Marcus Knill, April 2006

71 Cicero

In Berlin, in 2004, he co-founded Cicero, the magazine for political culture. This publication also provided a stage for his skill as a columnist.

72 Honorary offices

Since 1997, Frank A. Meyer has been president of the Hans Ringier Foundation, which also operates the Ringier School of Journalism. On his initiative, the Foundation has been awarding the European Prize for Political Culture since 2006.



New home: Frank A. Meyer has been living in Berlin for almost 15 years.

73 Impact

«I've always wanted to have an impact,» he says of himself.

74 Confirmation

It rather looks as if he'd succeeded.

75 Addendum

Happy 75th birthday!

Ringier's best photos of the last quarter

The best pictures and their stories: Invisible people, nation-devouring dragons, helpless chimpanzees and fascinating forest dwellers.


ILLUSTRÉ
JEAN REVILLARD
JULIE BODY

Photographer
Editor

 Reaching a height of 460 feet, it towers 165 feet above the Statue of Liberty. And it is one of the most popular photo subjects in Switzerland: Geneva's Jet d'Eau fountain. This makes photographer Jean Revillard's job all the more demanding. The editors of **L'illustré** magazine asked for unprecedented pictures of western Switzerland's hotspots. The technology they wanted to use to that effect was soon determined: a drone. Art Director Julie Body: «It was still a huge undertaking. As these locations had never been photographed in this way before, every step was new.» In addition, there were numerous administrative hurdles to be overcome. «The communities have safety regulations that needed to be observed.» But in the end, Jean Revillard was successful. His picture from high above the Jet d'Eau offers exactly what was expected of him, a completely new and amazing perspective.

SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE
HERVÉ LE CUNFF
NICOLE SPIESS

Photographer
Editor

 The story of Yamari, the baby chimpanzee, already melted the hearts of **Schweizer Illustrierte** readers twice before. When Yamari was born in July, her mother simply let the baby drop from her womb. Yamari fell from the tree but she was lucky. Chicca, sitting on a branch further down, caught and adopted the baby. But Chicca did not produce enough milk and Yamari grew weaker and weaker. So, the managers of the Walter Zoo in Gossau decided to take the baby into human care. For weeks, the little chimpanzee was attended to around the clock, finally gaining weight again. Working with animals is as interesting as it is demanding, says photographer Hervé Le Cunff: «Animals don't follow instructions. You need a lot of patience and time,» he says. Now, the chimpanzee is back living with her fellow apes. Mommy still does not want anything to do with her, but Chicca is very caring: «Yamari has not only grown dear to our readers' hearts but to mine as well,» says Le Cunff. He is already looking forward to the next story with the chimpanzee.

BEOBACHTER
ANDREA KLAIBER & ANNE SEEGER

Illustration

 The Chinese are on a shopping spree in Switzerland. Western technologies and know-how are expected to increase prosperity in the Middle Kingdom. This topic made the cover of **Beobachter** magazine. The headline in Chinese script on a red background read: «We are coming.» Infographer Anne Seeger: «For the article, my colleague Andrea Klaiber and I wanted an illustration as an opening picture, one that would take up the look of the cover and get to the heart of the subject.» The idea of a Chinese dragon coiled around the Swiss cross was born quite quickly. Seeger: «Chinese dragons are not our field of expertise. We first had to do in-depth research and adopt the style with the help of photos and images.» They painted their first sketch by hand and then worked on it with Adobe Illustrator. It took them two days. «Each line, each dragon's scale, each shade of color was carefully thought out,» says Seeger.

SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE
ROLF NEESER
NICOLE SPIESS

Photographer
Editor

 Tzvetana Messerli is 74 years old. But when the native Bulgarian dons her fishnet pantyhose and slips into her snow-white tutu, she turns into a young ballerina. She becomes the dreamy dancer she never got to be in her youth. For several months, Rolf Neeser photographed the 74-year-old at various locations in Switzerland, one of them being the square in front of the Zurich Opera House. «This woman fascinated and moved me in a peculiar way.» However, the collaboration was not all that easy. Tzvetana Messerli never has time for a conversation, nor does she want to pose. Messerli performs several times a week, the music comes from the CD player she sets up. In some places, Tzvetana Messerli even has a small fan base. Other people smile when she tippy toes. Why does she do it? «When I dance, I feel free,» says Tzvetana Messerli. And spins away, undaunted.

LANDLIEBE
PETER VÁCLAVEK
DENISE ZURKIRCH

Photographer
Editor

 What did the little figurine see in the woods to make it look so scared? Or is it happy about the huge mushroom it has found? Petr Václavek knows the answer. He is the creator of these «Dubánci», as his figurines are called in the Czech Republic. In the Swiss country-life magazine **LandLiebe**, Václavek shows what wonderful figures and worlds he can create with things he finds in the woods. With loving attention to detail, Václavek even creates accessories for his figures: bicycles, tents, hang-gliders ... There are no limits to his imagination. The biggest challenge for him is working with cameras, because Václavek is not a trained photographer. Sometimes he lies on the ground for hours on end until his figurines pose the way he imagined. Only then does he release the shutter. Václavek's work has become popular enough for his creations to be found on calendars, postcards, pins, cups or even as puzzles.

LIBERTATEA
VLAD CHIREA
VLAD CHIREA

PHOTOGRAPHER
EDITOR

 Chameleon Wall is the name of one of the installations at the Bucharest Festival. If you don't look closely, you'll only see the wall. But you are missing the essential thing: the artist in her skintight costume with the same pattern as the wall behind her. Says photographer Vlad Chirea of **Libertatea**: «This wall was one of the main attractions at the festival, even if people started out watching the acrobats, the laser shows or the giant dolls.» It was fascinating to see how many people hadn't noticed the woman in the black and white costume, according to Vlad Chirea. He is convinced the artist is interested in more than just the visual effect. «The difficulty of seeing a person here can be a metaphor for the lack of empathy and communication modern people suffer from in the age of the Internet and digital technologies.»







Peter Bárdy, editor-in-chief of aktuality.sk: «I need answers that shine a light on all the people involved in the murder.»

Photos: Keystone

«We have become tougher»

Their death still haunts him. Nine months after the murder of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, the editor-in-chief of aktuality.sk, Peter Bárdy, publishes a book about them. «It's a symbol of how much we miss them.»

by Vinzenz Greiner

Peter Bárdy, what was your first reaction when you heard about the successful raid during which the police detained the suspects in the Kuciak murder case?

Until that moment I had been craving to know who had killed Ján and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová. So, at first, I was happy. But when I saw their names and their faces, I became terribly upset. I felt such great anger towards them. Now, there are mixed feelings: On the one hand, I am happy the police managed to track down the alleged perpetrators and the people who commissioned the murder. On the other hand, my original hope has now turned into anger against those people. That is not a good feeling.

How did the murder affect your editorial team?

Ján was probably the best data journalist in all of Slovakia. To this day, there is nobody who can compare to him. However, as a news platform we had to keep going. Our job is investigative journalism. So, we have employed



some new people to continue on our way. Before the murder, we had 27 people, now we have 32. Some of the new colleagues work in the investigative field and are therefore continuing Ján's work. We may have fewer journalists than some of our competitors, but we work efficiently.

The murder not only affected the way you organize your work but also the people working with you.

Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová were murdered on February 21, 2018. Kuciak had been working on aktuality.sk's investigative team since 2015.

Yes. We have definitely changed. Our staff began to regard the team more as a family, as a community – not just as a group of colleagues working in the same office. And we are maybe no longer as good-natured towards the people we write about as we used to be, especially those who side with the evil that struck our news platform and, all of Slovak society. We are still fair, but our attitude has definitely become tougher.

How does this toughness manifest itself?

We have become much clearer in terms of our language and our attitude. But also in our direct contact with the people we write about. We will no longer back down. They cannot intimidate us anymore. But of course, if I said that we're not afraid, I'd be lying. We're trying to eliminate risk as much as we can.

How do you do that?

We check and monitor our own activities much more closely. When we're dealing with a delicate

issue, we figure out whom it would concern and whether this person might pose a threat to our reporters in some way. If we go out to a crime scene or when we conduct interviews with sources, the reporters aren't always on their own. They have to report in to me regularly as to where they are and how they are doing.

Do these measures include police protection?

I cannot divulge whether someone is under police protection or not.

What did this murder change for you personally, in your professional and your private life?

The point at which I perceive something as a problem has shifted. I don't consider trivialities problems anymore. For example, when a computer server is suddenly down, or when we urgently have to resolve something in the office and they want my advice ... It's like: These things are so trifling they no longer matter to me the way they used to.

Was there a point where you just wanted to leave all of this behind you?

Yes. There was a moment when I thought about leaving the editorial team completely. But then I told myself: What use will I be if I do? How can I help Slovak society and my team? I realized how important my work, our work here is. So, I stayed.

A lot was happening all around you as well. Ringier Axel Springer sold all of its print products in Slovakia. And you set up an optional paywall. How did you handle this additional turmoil?

That increased the psychological pressure. People ask us: What's happening, will they sell you or will they keep you? Even people in the street have come up to us asking if we're not afraid. We got more and more attention.

Do you think the attention following the murder will turn into general support of actuality.sk? Including the financial side with respect to your paywall?

Definitely. People identify with us in the context of Ján Kuciak. People see that we have already achieved a lot together with Ján, and that, in a short time, we had already built a practice of investigative exclusives.



They also see that we have a lot ahead of us. Some people send us money, others tip us off to stories – we get a crazy number of tips for investigative pieces. People see us as working for them and not for ourselves. We are also really happy with how the paywall works.

After the murder, you said in an interview that you kept asking yourself if you had done enough to protect your team. Do you still ask yourself this question?

I still do. Every time I see a photo of Ján or I talk about him in public, I ask myself if I did enough to protect him. That drags me down and makes me sad. Which is why I try not to talk about Ján in public so often. I have to take care of the people who were left behind by Ján

Wave of indignation. After the murder of Ján Kuciak, hundreds of thousands of Slovaks took to the streets to protest against corruption and injustice.



and Martina – his and Martina's family. I need to look after them, so nothing like this happens again.

What do you want to achieve with your team in the future?

The Most important thing for me is: How can we get even better? How can we become really essential and useful to society? We shouldn't be in journalism just to publish interesting or funny articles or to be the first platform to get a scoop or whatever. We want to help our society and the whole country to improve through our articles and our research. Our work needs to be useful to the people.

After the murder, your competitors supported you. You worked together with them. What about now?

Photo: AFP

We no longer work together as closely as we did just after the murder but sometimes we still do.

You've mentioned the support for actuality.sk. Did the murder have an impact on your competitors, too?

I think that journalists now get more support from a broader part of society than before. People have started to connect more with media: Other media started to invest in investigative journalism. That is a good message. The numbers of subscriptions for other online news platforms and print newspapers have gone up as well.

Actuality.sk is going into print now, too. You decided to write a book about Ján Kuciak. Where did that idea come from?

We think that everyone who wants to should have the opportunity to discover Ján's life. To see who this young man that was murdered was. This book is about his legacy. It's a symbol of how much we miss him and of our gratitude to Ján, as well as his and Martina's family. That's why it's a collaborative work of eight people from our team.

What do you write about?

It is about the whole life of these two young murdered people, Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová. Each author has their own topic: One person writes about Ján's private life, another about his studies. There are also parts about Martina's life and about their life together.

«The point at which I perceive something as a problem has shifted.» Peter Bárdy

Why did you also invite foreign journalists to collaborate on the book?

Tim Röhn from Die Welt, Marcin Wyrwał from Onet.pl and myself from BLICK?

You are not foreign to us anymore. Since you spent time in the international newsroom, you have been a part of actuality.sk. That's why.

When will the book be published?

The title of the 350-page book is «Umlčani» («Silenced») and it will be published at the end of December. It will be in Slovak. If there is a demand, we will also publish it in German and English.

After the murder of Ján Kuciak you said Slovakia was a so-called Potemkin village: a lot of corruption behind nice façades. Now, three suspects have been indicted. How many of these façades are still standing, nine months after the murder?

Many. You can't just clean it up that easily. Admittedly, the Slovak government tries to show other countries that its foreign policy is oriented towards Europe, that it is fighting against corruption, that the country's economy is growing, that unemployment is declining. But a lot of this is just declarations. When you look closer you realize that the statistics don't really show

the Slovak reality. I don't want to paint a catastrophic picture, but the perception of Slovakia abroad has always been very different from the reality in the country, especially before Ján Kuciak's murder.

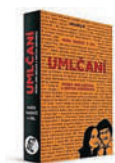
In the aftermath of the murder, politicians like Prime Minister Robert Fico and the minister of the interior along with high-ranking police officials have stepped down.

Sure, for Robert Fico it was a personal defeat, but his resignation was mere window dressing at the end of the day, because the new prime minister is completely loyal to Fico. And one still hears from inside his party, Smer-SD, that Kuciak's murder was planned just to bring down the government. We heard similar rhetoric from the party directly following the murder when they said that the opposition and our NGOs were just exploiting the murder to overthrow the government.

What about your questions regarding the murder? Will all of them ever be answered?

I don't care about getting a part of the truth every day. I can wait. I need answers that shine a light on all the people that were involved whose interests would be served by the murder. I need answers based on evidence. 🌐

The book about Ján Kuciak



«Umlčani» («Silenced») is the title of the 350-page book written by Peter Bárdy together with members of his team. It will be published at the end of December, only in Slovak for the time being.

Peter Bárdy studied journalism at the University of Banská Bystrica and worked for the Slovak tabloid Nový Čas and the magazine LIVE. At the beginning of his journalistic career, Bárdy wrote about crime and the mafia, later he focused on politics, especially those of the EU and its member states. Since 2008 he has been editor-in-chief of the news platform actuality.sk. In 2017, the 41-year-old and his colleagues jointly won the Slovak Press Publishers' Association's award for their reporting on the 25th anniversary of the Slovak Republic.

AR is coming – slowly

Augmented reality is penetrating more and more areas of life. In the media industry, however, AR is used only sporadically – a shame, as this technology could bridge the gap between analog and digital worlds.

Text: Alejandro Velert

Two years ago, the real world became a playing field. Millions of people caught Pokémon Go fever, chasing virtual monsters across the planet. These were revealed on people's mobile devices, embedded in the surroundings the phones' cameras had captured. For the first time, Augmented Reality had reached the masses.

The Pokémon hype has since subsided. Augmented Reality, on the other hand, is penetrating more and more areas of life. At the consumer level, the Ikea app, with which the user can place virtual furnishings in your home, is regarded as a successful AR application. The empty store windows at Zara in which models present their clothes when viewers look through their mobile phones, are also great. And so is the Magic Mirror, which projects the clothes onto your body and thus saves you having to try them on.

Nevertheless, this technology, which expands the real world through computer-generated information, has yet to breakthrough to our day-to-day lives, in spite of the fact that the range of possible applications is (almost) unlimited. From industry and medicine to education and entertainment: a lot of investing, experimenting and testing is going on in all of these fields. In Gartner's so-called hype cycle, which assesses the state of development of an emerging technology, AR has now passed the Peak of Inflated Expecta-

tions and is heading for the Plateau of Productivity. However, this is still a long way off: It will take another five to ten years for AR to get there.

The media industry has proven rather reticent when it comes to AR, although you'd think that in this area in particular, AR could bridge the gap between the analog and digital worlds. But that is precisely the question on which there is disagreement.

«2019 could be the year in which AR takes hold,» says Sebastian Pfotenhauer, Head of Video at Ringier. A lot of it comes down to the devices. «New smartphones are AR-capable per se, they no longer require an app.» That is why BLICK plans to focus more on AR. «Our first experiences were very promising.»

«Now is the time to create a business model.»

Michael Schnyder, AR agency Xtend interactive

On the other hand, the editors at Switzerland's most widely read publication, the supermarket weekly «Coopzeitung», are rather skeptical. Editor-in-chief Silvan Grütter says: «Given today's sensory overload, you don't need to provide even more in-

AR, successfully applied: In the ZARA fashion stores, virtual models present the clothes. If you like, you can buy the clothes right away with a click.

formation, but to make the information much better.» And this is precisely where AR's possibilities are still modest, says Grütter.

The «Entlebucher Anzeiger» has shown a lot of courage. This small local newspaper has been working consistently with AR content for over a year now. Their content management system is designed so that the editors themselves can insert the AR content in the newspaper, with astonishing success: On average, half the readers look at the AR elements!

But does that create revenue? Nathaly Tschanz, lecturer on Digital Business Management and AR/VR at the technical college HTW Chur, has her doubts: «You can upgrade your print product and generate an additional argument for the paid-content strategy. But I am rather doubtful as to whether this will lead to a significant increase in sales.» In addition, resources and staff would have to be allocated to producing high-quality AR content. «And management is often not on board with that.»

For Michael Schnyder at the Augmented Reality agency «Xtend interactive», the time for AR has definitely come: «The technology has already given us a new way of communicating. And the possibilities are fairly set to explode with 5G, the upcoming mobile communications standard.» He feels that this makes it all the more important to start operating with AR today. «That's why now is the time to create a business model.»

Photo: zara



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RINGIER AWARD

Outstanding!

An award in the name of Ringier Switzerland's employees: For the second time, the best projects were awarded at the Xmas party. The winning teams received awards in six categories. On top of that, there was a special award.



THE WINNING PROJECTS FOR 2018

THE CHANGEMAKER

Energy Switzerland:
Transformation through Content

Focusing entirely on social content, Energy has quickly become one of Switzerland's most wide-reaching digital publishers. As of now, the Energy Group's digital editorial team manages to achieve about 60 million contacts per month on social media.

THE MONEYMAKER

RASCH: The transformation of the Gault-Millau book into a gourmet and lifestyle platform

Successful transformation: the development and launch of an online/social media platform (GaultMillau Channel). The GaultMillau blogger in Zurich has already achieved cult status and GaultMillau events sell out at lightning speed despite stiff prices.

THE TEAMWORKER

Le Temps: Le Temps à San Francisco

16 journalists, videographers, photographers and graphic artists immersed themselves in Californian life for ten days to report on all the innovations developing in the region. Each day, 16 pages were produced and handed in from San Francisco.

THE INNOVATOR

Admeira: Successful interactive TV advertising

In August 2018, Admeira and its client Volvo jointly launched the first interactive TV advertising campaign in Switzerland. Consumers were able to directly interact with a TV ad and register for a test drive via their TV remote control.

THE STORYTELLER

BLICK GROUP:
Deadly springtime avalanches

The spring of 2018 brought more fatal avalanches than many a spring before it. The big Blick avalanche report focused on a current disaster while providing the most important facts on the subject of avalanches in a separate, detailed service section.

THE COLLEAGUE

Ringier AG:
Inside Personalrestaurant Team

The in-house cafeteria «Inside»'s team, led by Daniel Heyn, provides food for the culinary well-being of the staff at Dufourstrasse. The «Inside» team cooks up to 230 meals a day, prepares fresh Muesli and fruit salads and serves up fresh produce for its popular salad bar.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Special award for the Blick editorial team headed by editor-in-chief Christian Dorer for outstanding journalistic quality. Thanks to its scoops, exposed scandals, focus on key issues and new formats, Blick is the strongest media brand in Switzerland – now, more than ever.

AR
Ringier

Stay chill

If you want an interview with explorer and adventurer Mike Horn, you have to catch him first. But that's not exactly easy. Because the man is always on the move.

Text: Alejandro Velert Photo: Sebastian Devenish



RINGIER MEETS THE STARS

A journey to the North Pole, linked to a series of articles about an adventurer. Would I be interested in such a story asked my then boss at Schweizer Illustrierte in 2006. Would I! The story's protagonist is a certain Mike Horn, whom I don't know. That is about to change. And I will learn that working with him involves playing by a different set of rules.

Because Mike Horn is an explorer and adventurer in the extreme. The South-African born Swiss resident is a pioneer in every respect. In 1997, he was the first man to follow the Amazon from its source to its estuary. When he got hungry, he would kill monkeys or caimans. In 2000, he did a solo journey around the equator, and from 2004 to 2006 he traveled around the Arctic Circle by himself.

And now he wants to walk from Siberia to the North Pole with the Norwegian Børge Ousland - during the arctic winter, in total darkness. It is an endeavor that is considered unfeasible.

I'm supposed to report on the project from Zurich. In a preliminary story, we promised the readership that Mike would send us texts and photos using the most modern means of communication.

As it turned out it was not to be quite so simple.

Two weeks after the start of the expedition, an e-mail arrives with a completely pixelated image. Mike doesn't have much to say about anything else either. That's understandable. He and Ousland are walking ten hours a day, each pulling a 400-pound sled - and they are not making progress, because the ice - the North Pole is not a landmass - keeps driving them back. Moreover, at a temperature of minus 40 degrees in their tent, writing is not a cozy activity. We agree to talk on the phone next time.

I call him three weeks later. Just about all I can hear is a raging arctic storm. Mike has to scream through the noise. And he is feeling under the weather. His nose and fingertips are threatened by serious frostbite. Still: they've covered 140 miles. 450 miles lie ahead of them.

The next call makes my blood run cold: Horn and Ousland are being pursued by polar bears. «If we're careless, one of them will attack us.» And anyway, stopping is not an option during their journey because of the cold. That's why they stuff themselves with nuts and chocolate during the day. And in the evening, in the tent, the cooking pot also serves as a toilet. «We put a plastic bag in the pot and do our business.» Another 185 miles.

Our next conversation is cancelled. Only later do I learn why, from Børge Ousland: «Mike was seriously ill, bleeding from all his orifices, even from his ears and ass.» So Ousland calls a Norwegian doctor, who recommends immediate evacuation. When Ousland tells Mike, he says: «Børge, we don't call this doctor anymore.»

On March 23rd, they have accomplished their feat! Horn and Ousland reach the North Pole. I join Mike's wife Cathy and his daughters Annika and Jessica to pick up the adventurers there. At last I will be able to conduct a «normal» interview with my protagonist - or so I think.

«I'm doing this to live, not to die.»

Mike Horn

But at the North Pole itself - we land near the Russian drift-ice camp «Barneo» - a reasonable conversation proves impossible. In any case, we only get to stay for a few hours, as otherwise the plane could not take off anymore. During the return flight we don't talk much either; the champagne corks are popping. No problem, because sitting next to Mike is really no treat. He has not had a shower in over two months.

After our landing on Spitsbergen, Mike wants to be with his family. I

A crust of ice masks the face of explorer and adventurer Mike Horn. The South-African born Swiss resident received the Laureus Sports Award for Alternative Sportsperson of the Year in 2001. «Other people make music, paint or do heaven knows what. I'm an adventurer, that's all,» he says.

understand. In the evening, we have a big dinner planned. I need to get it done then.

At a restaurant in Longyearbyen, some fifteen of us are sitting around a huge round table. Only then do I notice that Mike has not yet completed his transformation into a civilized human being. He doesn't say much, preferring to stuff himself with food. When he's done, he prowls around the table like a predator. Whenever he spies someone no longer eating their food, he pounces on their plate. He snatches up French fries, hamburgers leftovers and partially gnawed spare ribs.

Well, let's at least take some nice pictures. The following day, photographer Devenish wants to photograph Mike's battered body - as displayed in the sauna. But Mike can't stand a second in there. The temperature difference to the North Pole is two hundred degrees. «Unbearable,» he shouts. So, we switch off the sauna and wait until it cools down.

As soon as we're done, he's on the phone. Like a man obsessed. Mike wants to get away from Spitsbergen as soon as possible and is looking for a plane. Now. Right away. The man just can't be nailed down, I think.

And just then, he walks towards me, hugs me and says: «You don't think I forgot about you, do you?» He slaps my back so hard the wind is knocked out of me, then we sit down.

At last we get to talk in peace and I quickly realize: No, this man is not a lunatic. Even if his adventures are crazy. «I'm doing this to live, not to die,» he says. He talks about his work with such enthusiasm it makes you want to plunge into an adventure with him. (No wonder Joachim Löw, head coach of Germany's national soccer team, invited him to the German World Cup camp in Brazil to help motivate his players in 2014.)

In the end, after a few initial difficulties and several hiccups, we have a powerful story with great pictures. And a freebie piece of worldly wisdom from Mike Horn: «Everyone has their own North Pole that they need to reach.» 🌍

What opens doors



Michael Ringier, Publisher

That was the longest 60 minutes of my life. The Prime Minister of this Eastern European country had the floor for an estimated 58 minutes, 55 of which he spent cursing journalists - journalists in general, of course, but ours in particular. The five shots he drank during our meeting in his parlor and the seven cigarettes he smoked on the side did not improve the situation. Smoking, drinking, cursing - the ministerial saloon bar tips its hat to journalists.

Nor did I get any more time to talk in the back of the BMW limousine that took the President of a European country and me to the airport. The two front headrests of the luxury limo sported screens playing a video featuring the President as a very folksy singer and stage actor. But there was not much time to listen to this presidential farce, because the freeway, closed to all other traffic, considerably abbreviated the journey from the presidential palace to the airport. Singing, dancing, racing: The reality show tips its hat to voters.

Why am I remembering these rather strange encounters right now? A short while ago, the Digital Summit took place in Zurich. The cream of the Swiss business world were in attendance. Global companies, Swiss market leaders or high-profile start-ups were represented by their founders, chairpersons or CEOs. They had come to listen to digital uberpundits like Alex Karp of Palantir, who hardly ever makes an appearance at this kind of event.

So, what do quaffing or crooning politicians, digital masterminds and decision-makers of the business world have to do with each other? Quite simply, we are only part of their world because we produce content, because we practice

journalism, because - at least allegedly - we have impact and take responsibility for it. However happy we are about our digital business models, the fact remains that no president will ever receive me for a tête-à-tête because of the amount of electronic tickets I sell. And no Silicon Valley icon will ever visit us because of a car-sales platform, no matter how often Marc Walder and I travel to California. And Jobs.ch may boast the greatest EBITDA - it doesn't change our status as a digital SME to whose events the major companies would only send second-tier executives. The thing that catapults us up to the highest levels of politics and the business world is the performance of our journalists. Only they can raise up an economic bonsai like us to equal footing with the big players and allow us to consider business opportunities that would otherwise be closed to us.

The example of Africa shows that this does not necessarily require paper. Of course, I admire and support our activities in the digital platform business with all my heart. But it is the almost 200 million monthly users of Pulse, a journalistic content offering, that get us into a social orbit that can open all doors for us.

The fact that the door to our headquarters at the Pressehaus can currently only be opened with a badge is evidence of our importance as a journalistic heavyweight in a way that I would prefer to do without. Because even the repeated threat of an attack relates exclusively to our content.

Michael Ringier

Photo: Maurice Haas



Povilas Kytra is CEO of CV Keskus (a Ringier Axel Springer Media AG company), the leading digital job market in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their websites are cvkeskus.ee, cvmarket.lv and cvmarket.lt



MONDAY

I get up at six o'clock every morning. Driving to work and back, I always listen to the BBC radio. It gives me insight into what goes on around the world. At 08.30 a.m. we start our weekly sales meeting. Our sales figures look promising. We are growing by 33% yearly! After the meeting, the day is packed with planning, meetings, reporting and analysis.



TUESDAY

Given that our company is present in three countries, we conduct many conference calls. Today, we are discussing a new development process. The conference call's participants can vote for projects, while others try to persuade them to make changes. It almost feels like the Eurovision Song Contest! In the evening, I attend a meeting of a community dealing with Artificial Intelligence with my wife Diana. She has just defended her doctoral thesis and explores AI in her field.



WEDNESDAY

Our company has won the prestigious award «Gaselli 2019»! We are one of the fastest growing companies in Estonia, having increased our turnover and profit by more than 50% in the last 3 years. Something completely different is planned for the evening. I'm trying to teach my daughter how to play the electric guitar.



THURSDAY

This is the day I am spending in our office in Tallinn, Estonia. I meet with our Country Manager, who is full of energy and ideas. Later, we interview four job applicants.



FRIDAY

We hold meetings to revise Key Performance Indicators. I am impressed with the team's winning spirit. In the evening I go to a restaurant with my team. We celebrate a new sales record for the month of October - bon appétit!



THE WEEKEND

My daughter wants to play Lego, draw and dance with me. I am not particularly good at the latter. I usually manage to go to the gym once or twice a week and love to read books, preferably print editions.

1,000 stories with 2 fingers

Journalist Thomas Kutschera works for Schweizer Illustrierte, but he is not a VIP hunter. His most important encounters: in professional terms, an interview with the world's most famous pirate; privately speaking, a meeting with an angel.

Photos: Geri Born, private

Writing the first paragraph of an article is always torture, says Thomas Kutschera. «Even after more than a thousand stories for Schweizer Illustrierte.» The 58-year-old journalist from Lenzburg in the canton of Aargau pounds his pieces loudly into the keyboard with just two fingers, a racket that is unmistakable to his workmates. He has been working as a reporter at SI for 23 years and at Ringier for 25. «I'd never have dreamed that I would stay with SI for so long,» says Kutschera. «But our country has so many fascinating people and stories to offer that I never run out of work.»

At SI, Kutschera, nicknamed «Kutsche» (coach), first earned himself a reputation as a «death knocker» and calamity expert. Any small accident report can lead to an incredible story, he says. Anyone familiar with him and his work knows that he despises sensationalism. Hardly anyone treats his protagonists as respectfully as he does. «I write about people's courage to face life, rather than about their suffering.» His favourite hunting grounds for stories: the Valais. An experience he would rather not repeat: «An interview with Roger Schawinski,» the famously self-important Swiss media mogul.

Kutschera always worked in the news department, but the highlight of his professional career was a conversation with a celebrity, or rather, an international star. Last summer, he interviewed actor Johnny Depp in Montreux: «Instead of the allotted 20 minutes, we ended up chatting for more than an hour. Johnny was totally open, a cool guy.»

On the other hand, his journalist's heart is still sore he missed the catastrophic autumn of 2001: the attacks in New York, the assault on politicians in Zug, the grounding of Swissair! While all this was going on, he and his family were spending extra-long holidays in Australia.

His marriage to his wife Christiane has lasted for almost as long as his liaison with SI. They have two sons, 21 and 16 years old. For the sake of his Angel, as he likes to call his wife, he gave up smoking, many years ago. Fortunately, Angel does not mind his other passions: journeys to the far north and music. Kutschera owns 6,000 (!) CDs, and his enthusiasm for Death Metal equals his love for German pop singer Helene Fischer. His personal tip: Omar Souleyman. AV



Work till the cows come home: Thomas Kutschera in a stable for a report on cow horns (above). His private passion is music; he owns 6,000 CDs (below left). His interview with Johnny Depp was «an absolute highlight». In the photo (below right), Kutschera is standing between Johnny Depp (right) and his guitarist Tommy.



Editor's Choice
by Marc Walder

Ringier CEO Marc Walder tells you which books he is reading and why they fascinate him.

Yuval Noah Harari

21 LESSONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



Israeli historian and author Yuval Noah Harari is doubtlessly one of the most exciting thinkers of our time. His

two books «Sapiens – A Brief History of Humankind» and «Homo Deus» were worldwide successes. They deal with the rise of Homo sapiens and the future of our species. Now, Harari, who lives with his husband near Jerusalem and is a staunch vegan, shifts his focus to the present moment. In these times of hysterical debates, he wants to offer some clarity, «thereby helping to level the global playing field», as he puts it. Harari asks (and answers) crucial questions: Why is liberal democracy in crisis? Can nationalism solve the problems of inequality and climate change? What should we teach our kids? And can we still understand the world we have created?

Harari makes a global analysis of the central factors shaping the societies of the world and impacting the future of the planet. He identifies climate change, nuclear wars and technological disruptions as the greatest threats to humanity. But while climate change and nuclear wars are avoidable, artificial intelligence and bio-engineering are heading towards a point where they will shake up the labor market and the global order, even our bodies, our minds and feelings in fundamental ways. That's why he says: «It's not artificial intelligence that poses the greatest threat to humanity, but natural stupidity.» Although Harari tends towards cultural pessimism, reading him is still an instructive pleasure, as he uses language in a way that makes even complex and difficult topics easily accessible.



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