



ILLUSTRATION: COLD WAR STEVE; GETTY IMAGES

STEVEN LEVY THE BIG STORY SEP 22, 2025 6:00 AM

# I Thought I Knew Silicon Valley. I Was Wrong

Tech got what it wanted by electing Trump. A year later, it looks more like a suicide pact.



SAVE THIS STORY

**FOR DECADES,** MARK Lemley's life as an intellectual property lawyer was orderly enough. He's a professor at Stanford University and has consulted for [Amazon](#), [Google](#), and [Meta](#). "I always enjoyed that the area I practice in has largely been apolitical," Lemley tells me. What's more, his democratic

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But in January, Lemley made a radical move. “I have struggled with how to respond to [Mark Zuckerberg](#) and Facebook’s descent into toxic [masculinity](#) and Neo-Nazi madness,” he posted on LinkedIn. “I have fired Meta as a client.”

This is the Silicon Valley of 2025. Zuckerberg, now 41, had turned into a MAGA-friendly mixed martial arts fan who didn’t worry so much about hate speech on his platforms and complained that corporate America wasn’t masculine enough. He stopped fact-checking and started hanging out at Mar-a-Lago. And it wasn’t only Zuckerberg. A whole cohort of billionaires seemed to place their companies’ fortunes over the well-being of society.

When I meet Lemley at his office at Stanford this July, he is looking vacation-ready in a Hawaiian shirt. In the half year since he fired Meta, very few powerful people have followed his lead. Privately, they tell him, you go! Publicly, they’re gone. Lemley has even considered how he might be gone if things get bad for anti-Trumpers. “Everybody I’ve talked to has a potential exit strategy,” he says. “Could I get citizenship here or there?”

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## The Politics Issue

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THE POLITICS ISSUE

NOV/DEC 2025 • DEMOCRACY DIES IN DARKNESS

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# TECH WENT ALL IN.

## NOW WHAT?

CREATE: CONNECT: CONDE NAST

For our politics issue, WIRED examines the state of tech’s influence on governmental power—and the people who will change everything in the future.

It should be the best of times for the tech world, supercharged by a boom in artificial intelligence. But a shadow has fallen over Silicon Valley. The community still overwhelmingly leans left. But with few exceptions, its

Trump's second inauguration, where a decisive quorum of tech's elite, after dutifully kicking in million-dollar checks, occupied front-row seats.

"Everyone in the business world fears repercussions, because this administration is vindictive," says venture capitalist David Hornik, one of the few outspoken voices of resistance. So Silicon Valley's elite are engaged in a dangerous dance with a capricious administration—or as Michael Moritz, one of the Valley's iconic VCs, put it to me, "They're doing their best to avoid being held up in a protection racket."

Just ask Tim Cook. In May, Apple's CEO took a pass on an 8,000-mile journey to join a presidential entourage in the Middle East. Trump noticed. In Qatar, the president said he had "a little problem" with Cook and the following day threatened a 25 percent tariff on iPhones.

Not surprisingly, when I offered some of the Valley's top executives the opportunity to vent this summer, few took the bait. Vacations seemed unusually long. Calendars were so packed that not a single slot was available for the next three weeks, four weeks, six weeks ... *when did you say your deadline was?* One CEO notorious for logorrheic gabbing to reporters told me he was trying to "decompress" on politics. "But any time you want to talk AI or AI agents, please let me know!" he said.

It used to be that when tech's leaders fell short of their lofty values, employees kept them honest. Google workers famously pressured their executives to fight for diversity and avoid military contracts. Implicit was the threat that the activists could easily find jobs elsewhere.

Then Elon Musk came along and fired 80 percent of X's employees, and the app didn't collapse. Across the industry, diversity efforts are down and military contracts are up. In an April 2024 note to Google employees, CEO Sundar Pichai told employees not to "use the company as a personal platform, or to fight over disruptive issues or debate politics." Free expression is also out of favor inside Meta, where an employee says the

job so you get paid,” they tell me. “Good luck finding a company that isn’t like that now.”

What’s happened to Silicon Valley? Why did the Ayn Rand–loving heroes of tech become Donald Trump’s bootlickers? How did one of the supposedly smartest VCs wind up posting a manifesto that declared war on “trust and safety,” “tech ethics,” and “social responsibility”? What was the point of Jeff Bezos buying The Washington Post for civic benefit, as he claimed, and then right before the 2024 election, killing its Kamala Harris endorsement and changing its opinion section to editorials on “personal liberties and free markets”? And speaking of Cook, how is it that the most effective political tactic for the head of a \$3.4 trillion company is to march into the Oval Office and solemnly present to Trump a glass-and-gold tchotchke?

This is Apple! Who knows what Cook—a man who has more in common with Martians than MAGA—was thinking as he stood before Trump and unboxed the most dubious, most obsequious product in the company’s near-half-century. Would Steve Jobs have done that? My guess: He’d have told his team to send over a gold-plated iPod. Collect on Delivery.

Ever since Jobs began selling the first sleek Apple II’s, digital technology has been touted as America’s pride and future. In its own geeky way, tech spoke truth to power. But now, says Stanford professor of social ethics of science and technology Rob Reich, “an extraordinarily tiny number of billionaires who control the information ecosystem have made allyship with the most consequential and fearsome political power in the world. There’s never been a time in history when those things have been combined.”

In a perverse sense this is good news for me—I cover that ecosystem and its oligarchs, so how great is it to be reporting on history? But in every other sense it’s wildly disturbing. Obviously, my stories evolved with the industry. But here’s something that took me by surprise: how quickly and decisively the visionaries I chronicled aligned themselves with Trump, a man whose

era seems suddenly unfamiliar—to find out.



ILLUSTRATION: COLD WAR STEVE; GETTY IMAGES

**FOR THE FIRST** 30 years of my life, I did not touch a computer. I viewed those machines—for much of that time, mainframes clacking in rooms I never saw—as a dehumanizing force. I associated them with the war machine in Vietnam and the monotony of corporate life. That all changed in the early 1980s when I took an assignment to write about hackers for *Rolling Stone*.

To my shock and delight, I learned that the burgeoning PC industry was a nerdy successor to the political and cultural activism of the late 1960s. Some of the first computer startups sprang from the Homebrew Computer Club, organized by an antiwar activist. The club's moderator had led the technology wing of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Even Bill Gates

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Steve Wozniak had barely grown out of their shaggy-haired days selling the “blue boxes” that allowed people to make illegal calls. Screw the Phone Company!

But even venture capitalists seemed to vibe with the feeling of revolution—as if the Weathermen switched from making bombs to doing IPO road shows.

I began a love affair with Silicon Valley. The wizards I met were changing the world with tools designed to uplift us—to give the common person the power of an expert. The electronic spreadsheet was sold as a business tool, but it was ultimately an antiestablishment weapon, because anyone with a low-cost PC could challenge the calculations of the executive suite. When Mitch Kapor, a former teacher of transcendental meditation, founded Lotus Development Corporation, which popularized the spreadsheet in the 1980s, he told his money guy that he valued people more than profits, and wanted to invest in his employees. “I was prepared for him to say no,” says Kapor. Fortunately for Kapor, the guy said yes.

In the famous “1984” Apple commercial for the Macintosh, an athlete flings a hammer at a Big Brother figure—she was out to pulverize authority. The headline of my Rolling Stone story about the Mac said it all: “The Whiz Kids Meet Darth Vader.” (Meaning IBM. Haha.) This was a righteous battle!

Of course, Silicon Valley was never all flowers and psychedelics. “For all that it might flatter itself with counterculture roots, making money and accumulating power has always been in the mainstream,” says Kapor. And of course, the Valley’s politics always accommodated a strong libertarian strain.

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Independence of Cyberspace,” my friend John Perry Barlow argued that the internet transcended earthbound laws and borders. “Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us,” he wrote.

Oh my God, did we post our hopes on the internet. When I first met them, Larry Page and Sergey Brin were wide-eyed idealists. Jeff Bezos came on like a buddy, eager to point out that Amazon employees, himself included, set up their computers on repurposed wooden doors instead of pricey desks. After my first conversation with Zuckerberg, he went home to a tiny apartment with no furniture.

And then the giants of the internet scaled up their companies to impose their own concepts of expression, identity, and context. Those once humble leaders reaped unimaginable rewards. Now they can’t flaunt their riches enough—multiple homes, yachts, planes.

On a typically pleasant July day, I met up with Russell Hancock, who runs a think tank called Joint Venture Silicon Valley, in the living room of his Palo Alto home. He nabbed it during the 2000 tech crash; now you can’t buy a shack in Paly without near-generational wealth. Page and Zuckerberg, unsatisfied with a single homestead, have scooped up nearby properties, transforming once idyllic streets into supervillain compounds.

“The people that are doing fabulously well, they’re really having a terrific time,” Hancock says. For everyone else in Silicon Valley, the wealth gap is getting more punishing, more absurd. When Apple had its IPO in 1980, Steve Jobs’ net worth topped an almost-unheard-of \$100 million. Now Zuckerberg is reportedly offering AI researchers that much moolah for a single year’s labor. Hancock brings up the Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality that’s popular among the World Bank crowd. Since the ’90s, “we went from 30 on the Gini to 83,” he says. “Those are the conditions for the French Revolution.”

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Lehane, a former Bill Clinton staffer who has worked for companies like Airbnb and OpenAI, software “was almost like a fourth dimension.” Tech leaders could afford to stay out west and avoid politics. But then software products started to break down entire sectors of business. “These products were physically manifesting themselves in taxis, short-term rentals, and food delivery,” Lehane says, “bumping up against existing political systems, beliefs, laws.” Sometimes people died from that incursion. Old, beloved businesses closed. Local politicians got mad. To game the system, Silicon Valley jumped to the swamp. As one technologist in the current administration tells me, “The Valley now realizes it can’t ignore politics, because politics won’t ignore you.”

No wonder the public took a jaundiced view of the apps they couldn’t stop using. By the mid-2010s, people were attacking the big buses that transported tech workers to and from San Francisco, Mountain View, and Menlo Park, where employees pulled lattes in micro-kitchens, enjoyed midday massages, and discussed provocative left-wing politics.

Perhaps the wizards of the PC and internet age were *too* successful. “We overdid it,” says Andy Hertzfeld, a programming legend who helped build the original Macintosh. “We were so idealistic in thinking everyone should use a computer and that we should make them lovable and fun.” The result, he laments, is a dystopia of phone-addicted teens and even the death of the homework essay.

Essentially, the big tech companies became The Phone Company—pernicious behemoths who enshittify their products to extract more profits. You can’t even get a human customer-service person on the phone. In a 2024 survey of Silicon Valley residents, three-quarters of respondents felt tech companies have too much power; nearly as many believe they have lost their moral compass.

That’s why, even before Citizen Trump entered the White House in 2017, I found that the narrative in my stories had changed. I used to draw on the

Trump.



ILLUSTRATION: COLD WAR STEVE; GETTY IMAGES

**HISTORY MIGHT REMEMBER** Joseph R. Biden as the doddering figure in his last presidential debate. But a shockingly wide range of people in Silicon Valley view him as a progress-hating despot. I was taken aback at the fervor of their antipathy toward Uncle Joe.

Lehane, the former Clinton spokesperson, says that the administration and its agencies neither understood tech nor took much interest in it, “other than potentially trying to stop the technology from being developed.” Chief villains of the Biden era included Federal Trade Commission chair Lina Khan and Department of Justice antitrust head Jonathan Kanter. They methodically filed suits against Google, Amazon, Apple, and Meta. Khan blocked even modest mergers, threatening the entire ecosystem of smaller

Biden's people make reasonable defenses—those companies do seem to have monopolies, after all. And look what happened to the design company Figma after Khan's FTC scrutinized its potential merger with Adobe. Two years later it had a spectacular IPO.

But one of Biden's biggest, most avoidable errors may have been his failure to invite Elon Musk to a 2021 event for electric vehicle manufacturers. The apparent reason was to keep the United Auto Workers happy, though the White House later claimed it was a fight over electric vehicle provisions that cost him his seat at the table. Even Reid Hoffman, one of the few tech billionaires who's speaking out against Trump, thinks that was crazy. "You should invite the electric vehicle leader to the electric vehicle summit!" he says. "That was part of the radicalization of Elon."

By daring to challenge the tech industry, Biden threatened the moguls' business plans. Even worse, *he hurt their feelings.*

Or, at least, part of the public narrative about why Musk, who had previously donated to Democratic candidates, went full MAGA. Other theories include radicalization during Covid, after the government stopped work at his California plant; radicalization by way of Twitter and too many sycophantic posts; or just that he was nuts. In any event, he got busy boosting right-wing content on X (especially his own posts), loudly supporting Trump, and of course donating almost \$300 million to the Trump campaign. It used to be that "if you were Republican, or you said you were anti-tax, you had to go into hiding," says Ryan Petersen, CEO of the logistics company Flexport. "Elon made it safe for everyone."

Another Biden blunder, in the eyes of the tech elite, was his administration's hostility to crypto. According to one top crypto executive I spoke with, the trouble started when one of the Dems' biggest funders, crypto billionaire Samuel Bankman-Fried, was exposed as a massive fraudster. "It was an enormous embarrassment for the Democrats," the

Before the scandal, companies had engaged in a constructive debate over regulation. But the SBF affair fortified the hard line that the head of the SEC, Gary Gensler, decided to take. (Gensler declined to be interviewed, though he did urge me to “keep up the good work at WIRED!”) Crypto people also blame Senator Elizabeth Warren, who many saw as Gensler’s supporter.

The crypto industry funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to Trump’s campaign. “We were always focused exclusively on what is good for crypto,” says Coinbase’s general counsel and former federal judge Paul Grewal. By midsummer 2024, Trump, who had earlier called cryptocurrencies a fraud, was appearing at a Bitcoin conference, promising to fire Gensler and make the US “the crypto capital of the planet.”

Even Biden’s AI policy turned out to be radicalizing. The field’s key figures had seemed happy enough as they too debated regulation. But then AI went red-hot, and those companies needed massive investments in infrastructure—and a less restrictive set of rules. Guess who was ready to deliver. “In terms of him as a human being or a visionary, nobody’s a big Trump fan,” says Peter Leyden, an author (and former WIRED editor) writing a book on “the Great Progression” of technology. “But then AI hits—it’s game time. So they decided, ‘Fuck it, we’re gonna hook our tree to this crazy-ass Trump.’”

In his podcasts, the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen complained bitterly about Biden’s policies on antitrust, AI, and diversity, and he expressed outrage that Biden would not meet with him personally. In his view, Biden—and indeed the general public—had not kept its part in what Andreessen called The Deal.

Here’s how he described it to New York Times columnist Ross Douthat: An entrepreneur starts a company, makes a lot of money, and the world benefits from the new technology. “Then in your obituary, it talks about

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gay rights, you're pro-abortion, you're pro all the fashionable and appropriate social causes of the time ... This is the Deal."

By daring to challenge the tech industry, Biden threatened the moguls' business plans. Even worse, *he hurt their feelings*. "It's impossible to exaggerate how offended they were," says Nick Clegg, who was Meta's president of global affairs until early this year. In July 2024, Andreessen and his partner Ben Horowitz announced that they would be donating their dollars to Trump.

Some of Andreessen's gripes were over the top—no Marc, not all young employees lean Marxist—but he wasn't the only one raging over diversity programs and political correctness. Across the Valley, it seemed, the Deal was off. "There's a general sense in tech, even in the center left, that identity politics have gone too far," says Leyden. Trae Stephens, the Founders Fund VC and Anduril cofounder, has seen it too. "My friends who are Democrats are not switching parties," he tells me. "They're just really tired of the Democrats." Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, had been happily affiliated with the left. Earlier this year, he said on social media that politically he's "homeless." Though he seems to spend a lot of time with Trump.

And then there's Zuckerberg. I interviewed him frequently during Trump's first term and was convinced he had genuine compassion for immigrants. I can't recall him saying a nice thing about Trump. Sometime in the past year or so, positive words began spilling out. When Trump literally dodged a bullet on the campaign trail last summer and pumped his fist in the air, Zuckerberg called him a "badass." Then came visits to the Joe Rogan podcast, where he griped that corporations were insufficiently manly, and Mar-a-Lago, where he reportedly blamed his former COO Sheryl Sandberg—the company's champion of diversity—for all that unnecessary policing of toxic content and misinformation (a criticism he later denied). Now, Zuckerberg is not so much about immigrants. He and his wife, Priscilla, had

“I see Mark as a political shape-shifter whose number one goal is the survival and thriving of the company,” a Meta executive tells me. “Trump is so transactional that you can fight him and get fucked, or you can try to work with him and get a percentage of what you want.”

To tech’s power elite, Trump’s tit-for-tat nature is not a bug but a feature. “A lot of these guys find Trump very familiar,” says Clegg. “You go down to Mar-a-Lago, and he goes, ‘Let’s do a deal.’ That charm of Trump is incredibly intoxicating to Silicon Valley tech bros.”

Was Biden *really* so bad for tech? Democrats I spoke to who were in the White House or in Congress in those years say they were simply holding an overreaching industry to account—for its own good. “I don’t think we screwed up on policy,” says Tim Wu, who was Biden’s special assistant for tech and competition. “Our goal was to keep the tech industry healthy by forcing it to continue to innovate.”

The strategy doesn’t seem to have worked. In the first months of 2025, the Trump administration lifted regulations that irritated the tech industry. “America’s AI Action Plan” focuses on establishing US dominance. So long, regulation! The crypto bros saw not only the departure of the hated SEC chair Gensler but the passage of a bill that legitimized their industry. And Trump appointees recently overruled the Justice Department’s antitrust division to allow a major tech merger to go through.

Trump’s tariffs, of course, present big problems for business. But it turns out that you can run pretty well on a bended knee. Take Jensen Huang, who heads Nvidia. The administration was expected to take a hard line on selling chips to China. Huang unleashed a full-throttled lobbying effort that took him from Mar-a-Lago to Saudi Arabia. He pledged \$500 billion in US investments. He bad-mouthed Biden to a congressional committee. By the time Huang was done, Trump was calling him a friend and easing export controls on his chips. When Trump spoke at an AI Summit in July, Huang

no other country could possibly have,” he said, “is President Trump.”

Later, Huang learned that the administration would help itself to a 15 percent cut of gross sales to China. Not long afterward, Trump grabbed 10 percent of Intel. It seems that America’s “unique advantage” is relentless in grabbing power for himself, even from those who debase themselves before him. In the long run, these deluded CEOs may realize this isn’t realpolitik. It’s a suicide pact.



ILLUSTRATION: COLD WAR STEVE; GETTY IMAGES

**BRADLEY TUSK IS** a political consultant for tech companies. Uber and FanDuel have enjoyed his services as they rewrote the rules of their industries, and he’s used to political rough and tumble. As he sees it,

When we talk, Tusk rattles off what he views as the components of US tech exceptionalism— independent markets and institutions, freedom of speech, intellectual property protections, strong educational institutions, decent immigration policy. Then his voice gets hard. “Trump is doing the opposite of every single one of those things,” he says. “There is definitely potential that he will destroy everything that makes the US economy unique and successful.”

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Start with immigration. Perhaps no group of techies has ridden Trump’s coattails more than the four chatty investor-bros who host the *All In* podcast. Three of the “besties,” as they call themselves, were born overseas. During the election season, two besties, venture capitalists Chamath Palihapitiya and David Sacks, threw a fundraiser at Sacks’ house with tickets as high as \$300,000. Soon after, Trump rewarded them by going on their podcast. (Sacks is now Trump’s AI and crypto czar.) Some of the questions were big fat softballs like, “I never understood why the [border] wall was controversial.” But even they couldn’t get behind his immigration policy. Didn’t Trump recognize that the tech world thrives on foreign-born wizards?

To their astonishment, he not only agreed but promised that in his administration, any foreign student who completes a degree would get a green card. The besties were giddy.

It was too good to be true. Hours later, the MAGA base aflame, the Trump campaign issued a statement negating what he’d said. Now that he’s back in the White House, he and his vice president have remained two-faced— assuring tech audiences that they want the best foreign students while

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university. That hasn't happened yet, but this summer the Department of Homeland Security proposed a new regulation that limits foreign student visas to four years—not enough to get a PhD or, for many, even an undergraduate degree. The number of students coming from overseas has tanked.

“We’re definitely seeing the chilling effect,” says Harj Taggar, a managing partner at Y Combinator. While YC’s international founders have so far managed to enter the country, applicants with student visas are more reluctant to leave school to join the program. He’s seeing foreign students consider going to London to work or start companies. “They feel it’s maybe not as safe to be here,” he says. “That makes me really sad.”

I’ve got a few more reasons for Taggar to feel really sad: the mass cancellation of science and research funding, for one. Goodbye, next generation of engineers and computer scientists. “In the name of punishing woke-ism, we’re going to absolutely hobble the innovation engine that has created the economic gains of the last 50 years,” says Hornik, the venture capitalist.

Then there’s the mounting effect of Trump’s favor-collecting and favoritism—buying that chunk of Intel, claiming that slice of Nvidia’s sales. In corruption-riddled countries, winners aren’t chosen by merit but by apparatchiks and strongmen. Those nations are doomed to second- or third-tier status. In his preelection appearance on the Joe Rogan podcast, Zuckerberg said as much himself. “At least the US has the rule of law,” he remarked. “If other governments decide that they’re going to go after you, you don’t always get a clear shake at defending yourself on the rules.” Guess what—now we’re like those other governments! Zuckerberg, no dummy, has probably figured this out, but now he’s locked into Trumpland, outplayed in a real-life game of Risk.

Many of the people I spoke with for this story are centrist liberals. They are a disheartened bunch, and talking to them was hazardous to my own heart.

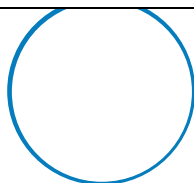
vague. The midterm election? An economic collapse? One Silicon Valley figure suggested, “It could be as simple as 10 Republican senators discovering they actually have backbones.”

Or 10 big-time CEOs, I might add. They can unbend their knees and perhaps revive some of the Valley’s soul. Or at least stop ripping it apart. And while they’re at it, stop making it so easy for the government to usher in an AI-powered surveillance state.

Maybe that’s the thing I got most wrong about Silicon Valley. Those Davids I wrote about seemed fearless and full of verve as they challenged what was possible and rode the power of the chip and the net. I mistook this for character. They may believe, as Moritz told me, that submitting to Trump’s protection racket protects their shareholders. But tech giants are certainly capable of standing up for the long-term viability of their industry. And for democracy. So far they are doing the opposite. “I think they have made a bad deal,” says Tim Wu. “Everyone who thought they could work some deal with Trump ends up getting burned, if not imprisoned.”

There will probably be no reckoning. Tech leaders, like all rich people, always have alternatives to life in a declining country. Reid Hoffman has his, as he put it, “contingency plans.” Another source for this story let drop that he’s getting Portuguese citizenship. Lovely country. But it’s hard to imagine myself as a young reporter, roaming the streets of Lisbon and finding the excitement and promise I discovered in California. It’s even harder to imagine a young reporter finding that spirit in the industry as it stands today. The way I now feel in Silicon Valley is how Sam Altman described himself politically: homeless.

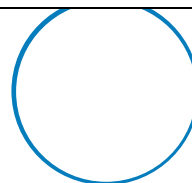
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ALL HAIL THE  
TECHNOCRACY



2025 POLITICAL  
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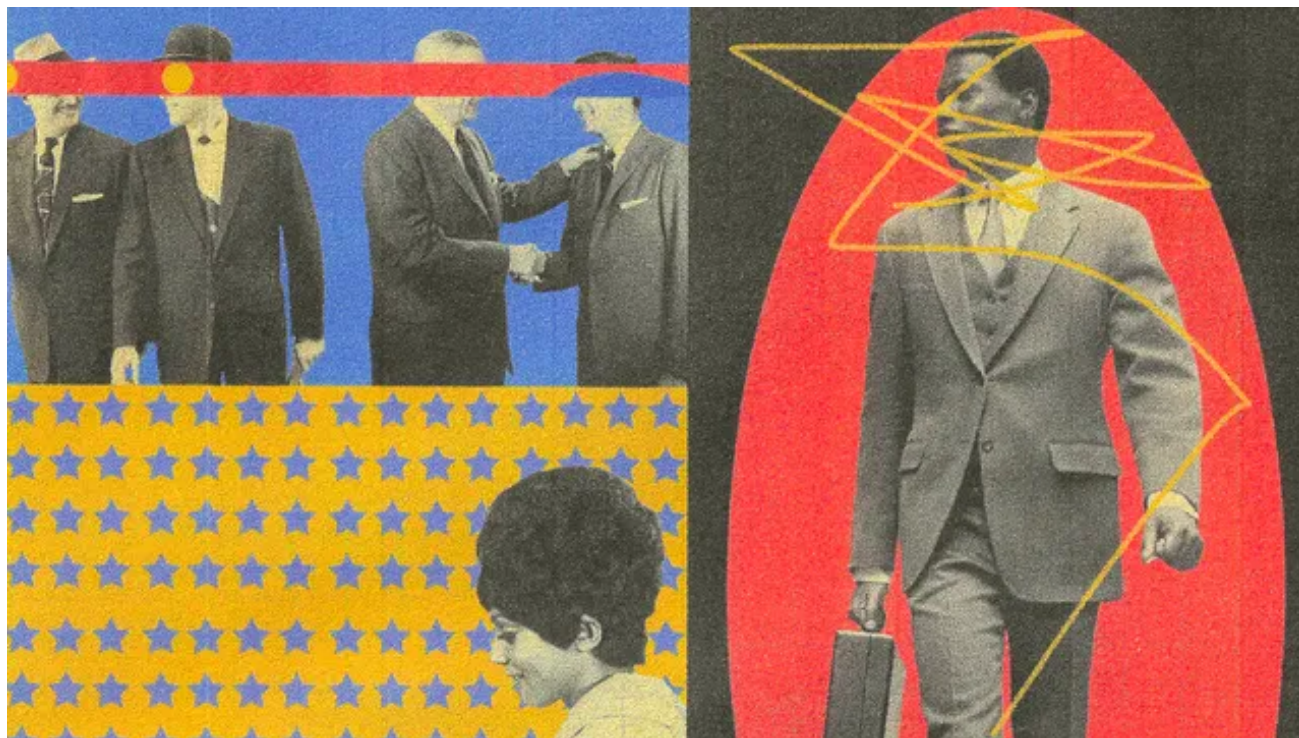


Steven Levy covers the gamut of tech subjects for WIRED, in print and online, and has been contributing to the magazine since its inception. His weekly column, Plaintext, is exclusive to subscribers online but the newsletter version is open to all—[\*\*sign up here\*\*](#). He has been writing about technology for ... [Read More](#)

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### DEI Died This Year. Maybe It Was Supposed To

I'm a Black staffer at WIRED. My position feels more precarious than ever. There's a reason for that.

JASON PARHAM



## Into AI Advocacy

Four sources close to the situation claim OpenAI has become hesitant to publish research on the negative impact of AI. The company says it has only expanded the economic research team's scope.

MAXWELL ZEFF



## The Environmental and Human Rights Costs of China's Clean Energy Investments Abroad

Chinese companies have pledged hundreds of billions of dollars in clean energy manufacturing investments overseas, but the projects are having significant social, environmental, and human rights impacts.

NICHOLAS KUSNETZ

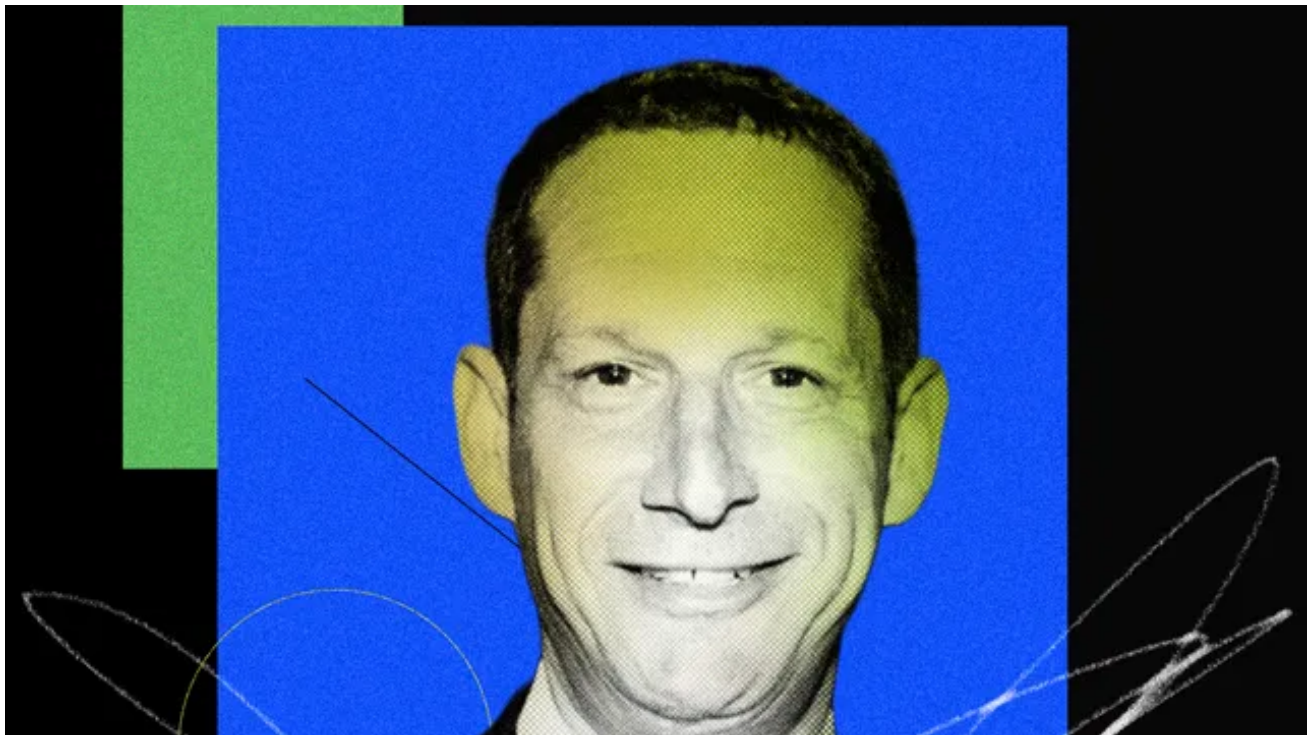




## What Happens When Your Coworkers Are AI Agents

In this episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we talk to writer Evan Ratliff about how he created a small startup made entirely of AI employees—and what his findings reveal about the reality of an agentic future.

MICHAEL CALORE



## San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie: 'We Are a City on the Rise'

Since taking office, San Francisco's mayor has been on a quest to revitalize the city and increase public safety. He's also kept the National Guard out—with a little help from some very powerful friends.

KATIE DRUMMOND

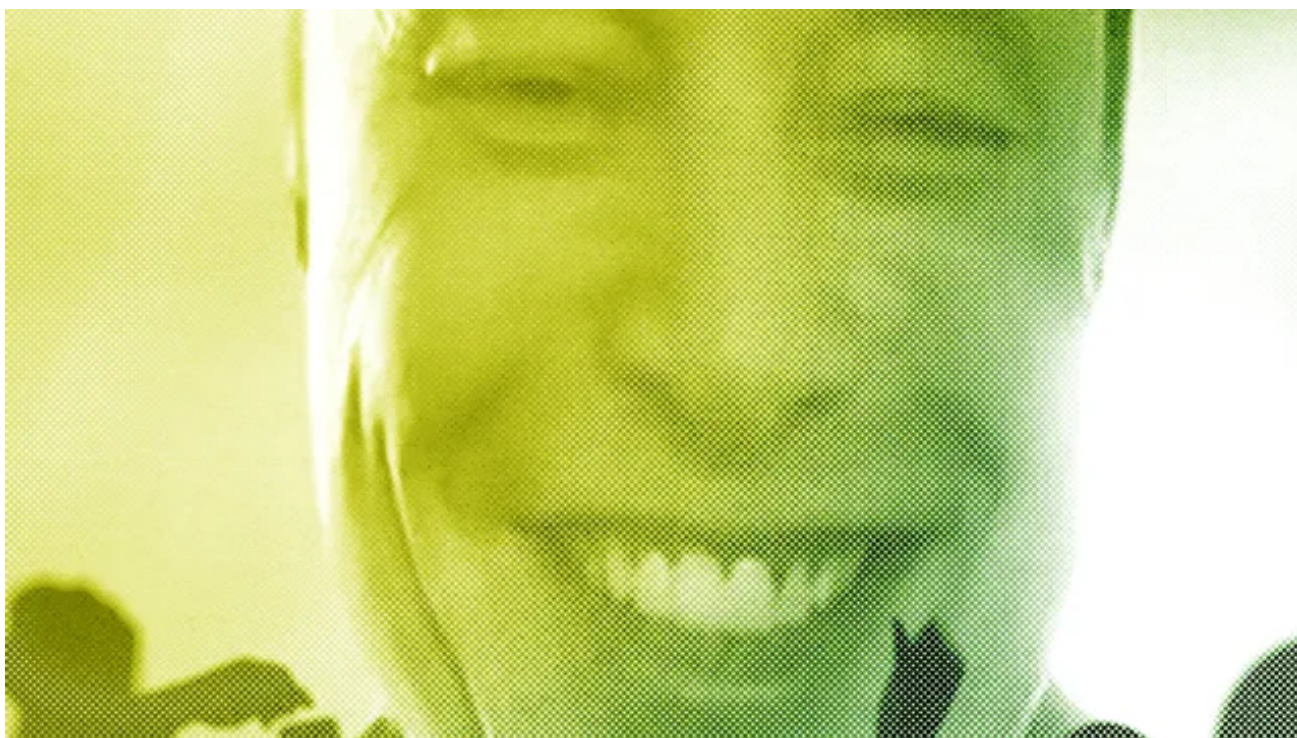




## Big Balls Was Just the Beginning

DOGE dominated the news this year as Elon Musk's operatives shook up several US government agencies. It's far from over.

VITTORIA ELLIOTT



## WIRED Roundup: The 5 Tech and Politics Trends That Shaped 2025

In today's episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we dive into five stories—from AI to DOGE—that encapsulate the year and give us clues as to what might unfold in 2026.

BRIAN BARRETT





## The Most Dangerous People on the Internet in 2025

From Donald Trump to DOGE to Chinese hackers, this year the internet's chaos caused outside real-world harm.

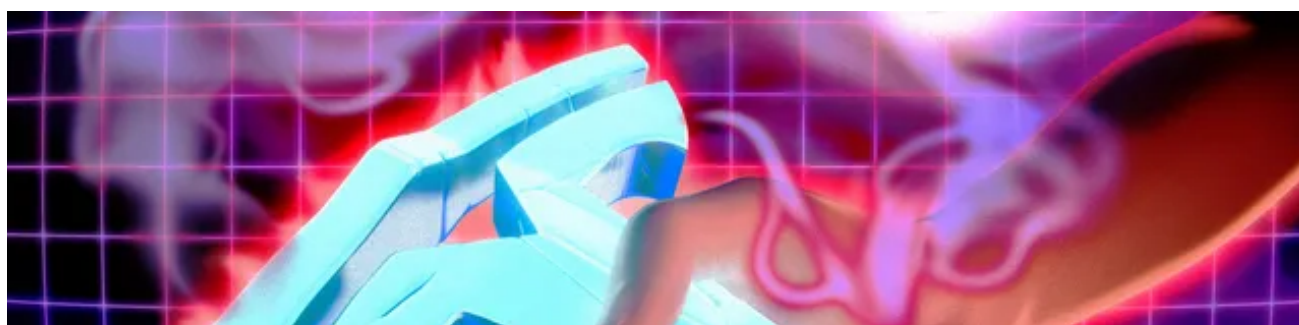
WIRED STAFF



## WIRED Roundup: DOGE Isn't Dead, Facebook Dating Is Real, and Amazon's AI Ambitions

In this episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we bring you the news of the week, then dive into how some DOGE operatives are still at work in the federal government—despite reports claiming otherwise.

LEAH FEIGER





## How Elon Musk Won His No Good, Very Bad Year

The billionaire's involvement with the Trump administration and DOGE had deep impacts on Tesla's bottom line. But Elon Musk was still able to turn his attention to SpaceX.

AARIAN MARSHALL



## How the Next Big Thing in Carbon Removal Sank Without a Trace

With support from Microsoft, Stripe, and Shopify, Running Tide billed itself as on the cutting edge of carbon removal. In the end, it resorted to dumping thousands of tons of wood chips in the sea.

ALEXANDRA TALTY





## It's Time to Save Silicon Valley From Itself

Big Tech has lost its way. At WIRED's Big Interview event, Techdirt editor Mike Masnick and Common Tools CEO Alex Komoroske announced a manifesto designed to help the industry get back on track.

STEVEN LEVY

YOUR PRIVACY CHOICES