

Trump To #MeToo - Major Book Titles Of 2018

By Hillel Italie

NEW YORK: The publishing world made headlines in 2018, and not always by design.

A wave of bestsellers offered damaging accounts of Donald Trump's White House, a million-selling memoir by Michelle Obama had readers longing for the previous administration and a political thriller by former President Bill Clinton had some taking a closer look at a White House scandal from the 1990s.

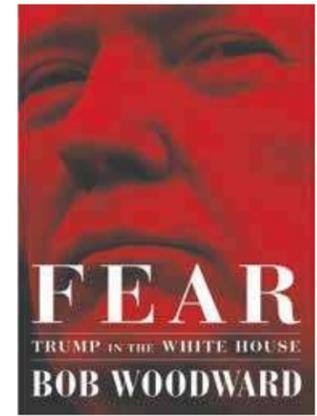
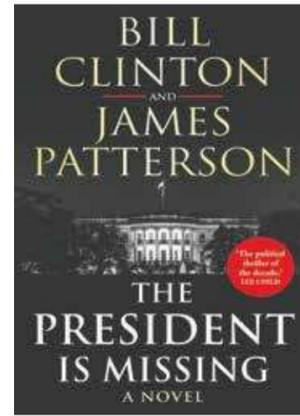
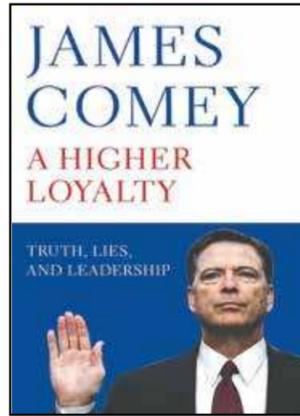
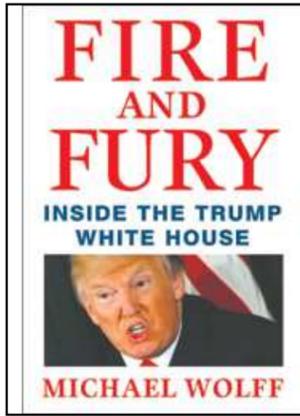
Meanwhile, some of the country's top writers were called out for sexual harassment and a Dystopian novel written in the 1980s seemed ever more timely.

Here are some highlights:

FIRE AND FURY: It landed in early January and quickly had the country talking and Trump threatening to sue (a way to boost sales that ranks with an Oprah Winfrey endorsement).

Michael Wolff's tale of backbiting and chaos in the Trump administration wasn't so much a revelation, as a confirmation of what millions had suspected. Reporters questioned some of his facts but the book had at least one real consequence: Former senior advisor Steve Bannon, who didn't deny speaking with the author and criticizing both the president and Donald Trump Jr., was forced out as executive chairman of the far-right Breitbart News. His old boss called him "Sloppy Steve."

#METOO: It began in January with a comments thread on the website of School Library Journal: Stories of widespread harassment by some prominent writers for children and young adults, with the alleged harassers first unnamed, then named. With-



in weeks "Maze Runner" author James Dashner had been dropped by his publisher and "13 Reasons Why" novelist Jay Asher by his agent.

Sherman Alexie, whom the American Library Association had just awarded a Carnegie Medal for his memoir "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me," declined the prize. And Daniel Handler of "Lemony Snicket" fame withdrew as commencement speaker at Wesleyan University.

His replacement was well known to the #MeToo movement: Anita Hill, the woman who testified in 1991 that Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had repeatedly harassed her. "Speaking out, despite the hardship," Hill told the students, "can be self-liberating and can empower others."

A HIGHER LOYALTY: In a spirit of anger, admiration and curiosity, readers wanted to know why James Comey re-opened the FBI investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails less than two weeks before Election Day and what he and Trump had said to each other before Trump fired him in May 2017, just four

months into his administration.

"This president," Comey wrote, "is unethical, and untheoretical to truth and institutional values." Only in the Trump era could a memoir by a former FBI director, one little known to the general public before 2016, sell hundreds of thousands of copies. And only in the Trump era would a sitting president refer to a former FBI director as an "untruthful slimeball."

PASSAGES: Within eight days last spring, two of the country's most celebrated writers died, Tom Wolfe and Philip Roth. But 2018 also was a year for welcoming new voices.

Tara Westover's "Educated," a memoir about growing up in an isolated Mormon home, was a bestseller admired by everyone from book critics to former President Barack Obama. Tommy Orange's novel "There There" was widely acclaimed and the rare work of literary fiction over the past year to succeed commercially.

Other notable debuts included Jamel Brinkley's story collection "A Lucky Man" and Lisa Halliday's novel "Asymmetry," which

included a character based on a real-life former lover - Philip Roth.

THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING: The million-selling collaboration between Clinton and James Patterson was the novel of the summer, and launched a very different conversation from what the authors had intended.

"The President is Missing," a near-apocalyptic thriller, is a cautionary tale about preventing cyberattacks. But the book also included a chapter about a president facing impeachment - an experience Clinton is uniquely qualified to draw upon - and Clinton responded defensively to questions about his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"This was litigated 20 years ago," Clinton told NBC's Craig Melvin. The most notable thing about his answers, wrote New York magazine's Rebecca Traister, was that "Clinton seemed to be shocked that he would be asked about his behaviour in light of #MeToo."

FEAR: Bob Woodward, a brand name for inside White House politics, seemed to withdraw during the Obama years. His two works on Obama, "The Price of Politics" and "The Last of the President's Men," made little impact compared to such early blockbusters as the Watergate-era "All the President's Men."

And his only book during Obama's second term was a return to the Nixon years: "The Last of the President's Men," about Alexander Butterfield, the White House aide who revealed to the world that Nixon had a taping system in the Oval Office.

But Trump is a singular muse for political writers and with

"Fear: Inside the Trump White House," Woodward was fully back in the present. "Fear," Woodward's hottest seller in years, read like a more sober version of "Fire and Fury," another tale of an uncontrollable chief executive and a staff that tries both to contain and encourage him. Trump's verdict: "The Woodward book is a Joke."

BECOMING: The initial headlines were about Trump, whom Michelle Obama vowed she would never forgive for promoting the "birther" lie that her husband was born in Kenya. But Obama's book quickly became among the bestselling political memoirs ever.

Reviewers cited the qualities which millions had admired her for - the warmth and humour of her courtship with the future president, her candour in describing their marital struggles and efforts to have children and the care and insight into how Michelle LaVaughn Robinson - a self-described "girl of the South Side" of Chicago - adapted to being the country's first black first lady.

MARGARET ATWOOD: The Canadian author didn't need to publish any new fiction to make news in 2018. "The Handmaid's Tale," released more than 30 years ago and dramatized in an acclaimed Hulu series, continued to rank with George Orwell's "1984" as a defining dystopian text for the current time.

Questions from readers about the imagined country of Gilead, a brutal patriarchy that didn't seem very fictional, were so persistent that Atwood finally changed her mind about writing a sequel and announced that "The Testaments" would come out in 2019.

- The Associated Press

Lottery Agencies Turn To High-Tech To Lure Buyers

WINNIPEG: Like many millennials, Sarah Rogalsky doesn't go out of her way to buy lottery tickets. The 32-year-old is part of an office pool and chips in \$2 a week at her Winnipeg workplace, primarily for the social aspect of playing with others. "I've never bought a lottery ticket on my own."

She is part of a nationwide trend that lottery agencies are trying to reverse. By upgrading technology and making gambling more readily available, they are hoping to attract and retain more young adults - a generation that has grown up with seemingly infinite entertainment options available at the click of a mouse.

There are many ways to be entertained, Rogalsky said, and the long odds of scoring big in a lottery are not enticing. "My parents would buy tickets because they thought there was a chance they would win, whereas I know how low those chances literally are."

In 2014, the Interprovincial Lottery Corp., which represents all provincial and territorial lottery agencies, issued a request for proposals for a new lottery game that would be similar to Lotto 6-49 and appeal to adults under 35. The number of young adults buying national lottery tickets was declining at "historic" levels, the document said.

The Western Canada Lottery Corp., which represents the prairie provinces and three northern territories, reported a \$150-million drop in lottery rev-

enues in 2017 from the previous year. The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. cited a "diminishing core player base" in its most recent annual report.

In recent years, lottery agencies have moved to make gambling more tech-friendly and easier for people to gain access. More provinces have opened online gambling sites, on which players can engage in casino-style games or buy lottery tickets. Lottery terminals at corner stores are going high-tech and interactive.

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. has introduced a new instant lottery ticket that combines the traditional scratch requirement with an animated spinning wheel that appears on the lottery terminal display screen.

The corporation is "improving the customer experience and ensuring it is responsive to changing customer expectations by investing in digital technology and product solutions," spokesman Tony Bitonti wrote in an email.

It's a tough battle to attract younger adults, said Prof. Kelley Main, head of the marketing department at the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba. From immersive video games at home to fast-action apps on mobile devices, millennials are used to having their senses fully engaged, she said.

"The traditional paper format (of lottery tickets) doesn't engage our sense the same way as technology could allow some of the other options."

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