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10 Years

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MIA
PEARL
HARBOR
FAMILIES URGE USING
NEW DNA TECHNOLOGY

POLICE
ROBOTIC
DOGS
USEFUL HOUNDS OR
DEHUMANIZING MACHINES

2nm Race

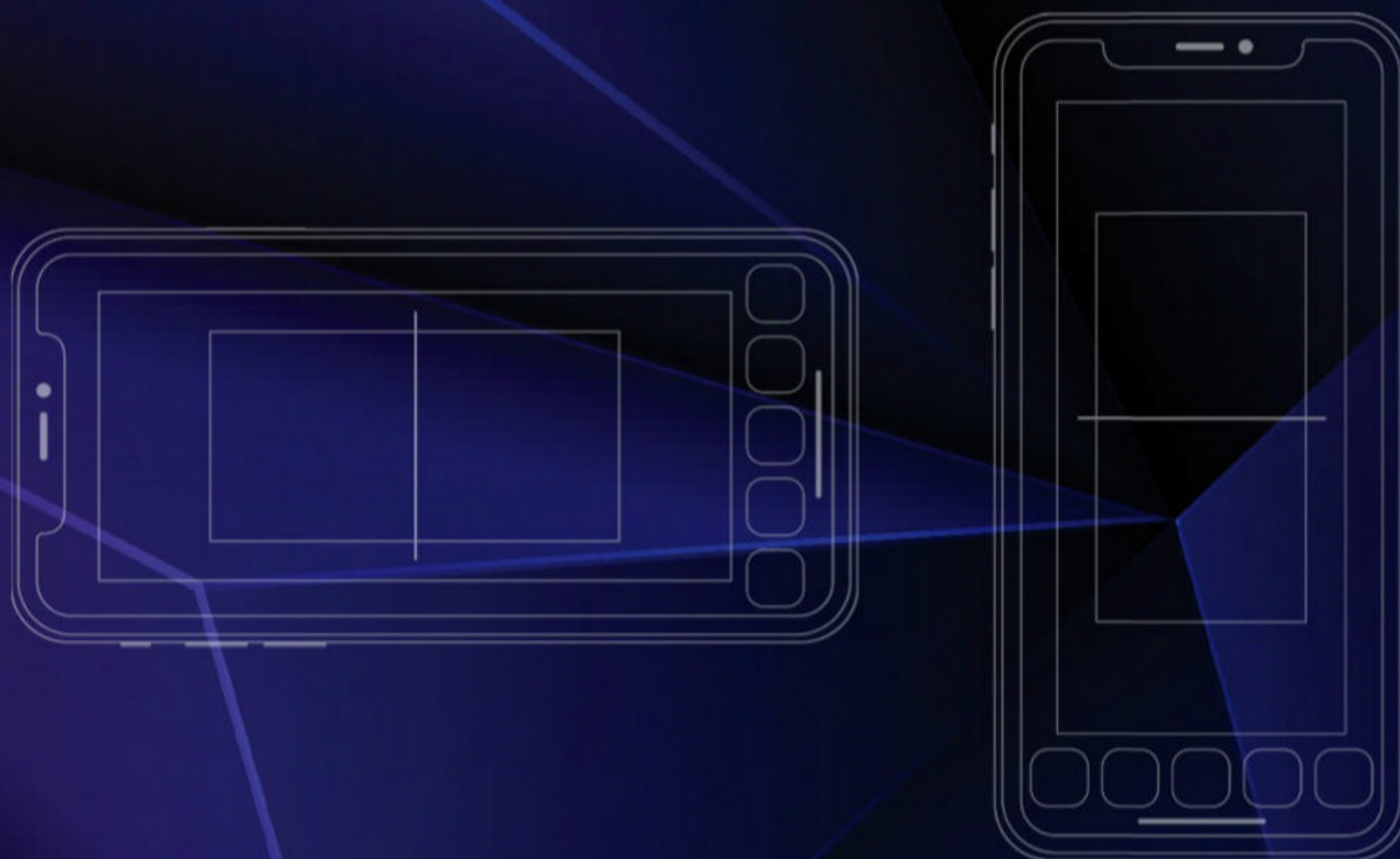
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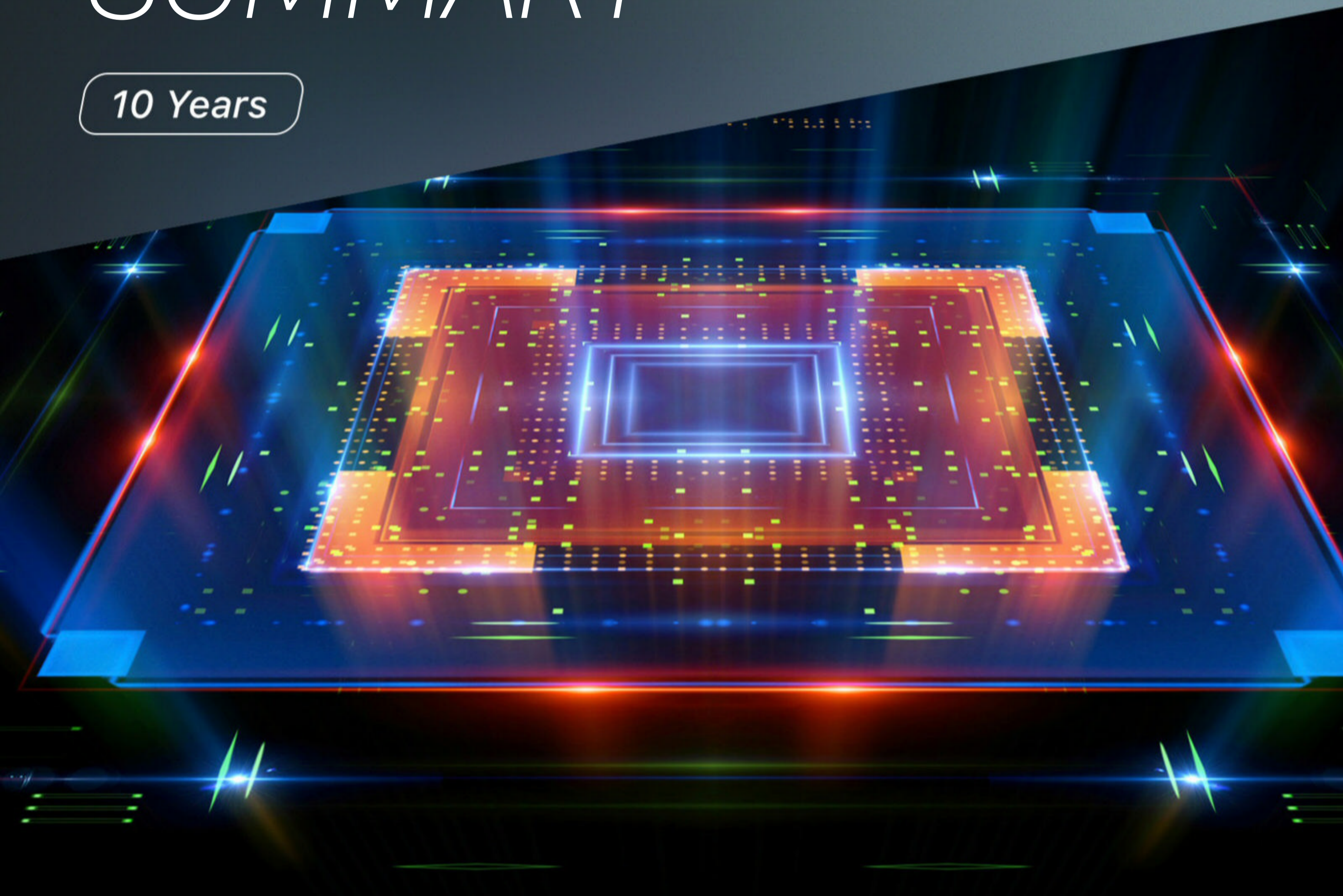
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10 Years



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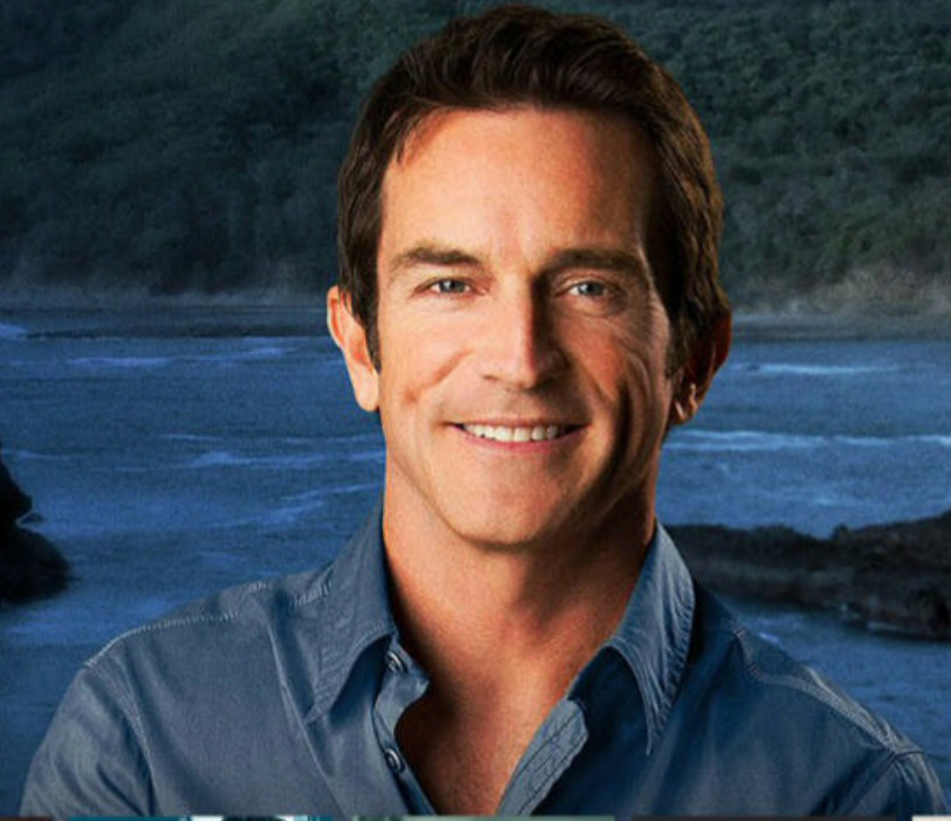
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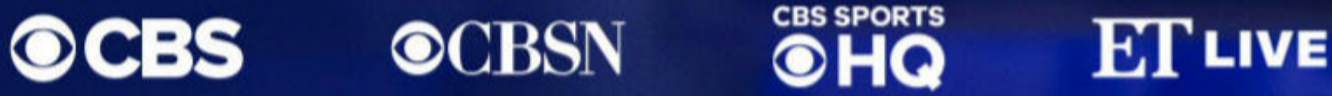
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FAMILIES URGE USING NEW DNA TECH TO ID PEARL HARBOR UNKNOWNNS

William Edward Mann enlisted in the Navy after graduating from high school in rural Washington state. A guitar player, he picked up the ukulele while stationed in Hawaii.

He's been presumed dead since Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor and set off a massive explosion that sank his battleship, the USS Arizona, launching the U.S. into World War II.

Now, his niece is among some families of crew members who are demanding the U.S. military take advantage of advances in DNA technology to identify 85 sailors and Marines from the Arizona who were buried as unknowns. They say the military has disinterred and identified remains from other Pearl Harbor battleships and should do the same for their loved ones.

"These men matter and they served. They gave their lives for our country. And they deserve the





same honor and respect as any other service member past, present and future," Teri Mann Whyatt said.

The Arizona suffered more loss of life than any other ship at Pearl Harbor, with 1,177 dead. More than 900 went down with the ship and have remained entombed there ever since.

As with remains on other sunken ships, the Navy considers those aboard the Arizona to be in their final resting place. The families are not advocating for them to be removed and identified.

The issue is what to do with the 85 Arizona unknowns buried in a Hawaii cemetery. It emerged in February when the director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which is tasked with finding and identifying the remains of U.S. service members from past conflicts, was asked during a Facebook Live meeting when the agency would disinter them.

Kelly McKeague said his agency had spoken to the Navy about exhuming the Arizona unknowns and moving them to the ship without identifying them first. McKeague said it didn't make "pragmatic sense" to identify them.

That outraged some families who feared the 85 remains would be placed on the sunken battleship without ever being identified.

The agency has since said it doesn't plan to move the cemetery remains onto the ship. Rear Adm. Darius Banaji, the agency's deputy director, said that was just a possibility discussed informally a few years ago.

Banaji also said the agency doesn't plan to disinter the remains and try to identify them because it lacks sufficient documentation.





William Edward Mann
William Edward Mann, GM 3/c
USS Arizona



Image: Elaine Thompson



The military has files on just half of those missing from the Arizona, he said. Of those, it has medical records — listing age, height and other information — for just half. It has dental records for only 130 men. Some documents are believed to have been destroyed with the battleship. Others may have been lost in a 1973 fire at a military personnel records office.

And the military only has DNA samples from relatives of just 1% of the missing Arizona crew members.

McKeague told The Associated Press that what he said about identifications not being pragmatic referred to the lack of documentation, not the cost.

“We must apply our limited resources in a manner that is equitable to all families and to do so as efficiently and effectively as possible,” he said in a statement.

The agency, which aims to find more than 80,000 service members missing from World War II and on, has successfully identified unknowns from the USS Oklahoma, another battleship that capsized during the Pearl Harbor bombing.

In 2015, the agency dug up the remains of 388 Oklahoma sailors and Marines from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the same graveyard where the Arizona unknowns are buried.

It acted after the military drafted a new policy allowing the disinterment of groups of unknown servicemen if it expected to identify at least 60% of the group.

The agency had dental records, age and height information for the vast majority of the

Oklahoma unknowns. The military also had family DNA samples for more than 80%.

The agency predicted it would identify 80% of the Oklahoma remains, which were buried comingled in 61 caskets. As of this month, it has identified 344, or 88%, and anticipates naming more.

A group of families led by Randy Stratton, whose father, Donald Stratton, suffered severe burns as a sailor on the Arizona but lived to be 97, has drafted a petition demanding that the agency identify the 85 Arizona unknowns.

He's vowed to help families submit DNA samples. He's also been pushing for the agency to use genetic genealogy techniques like those used by law enforcement to solve cold cases.

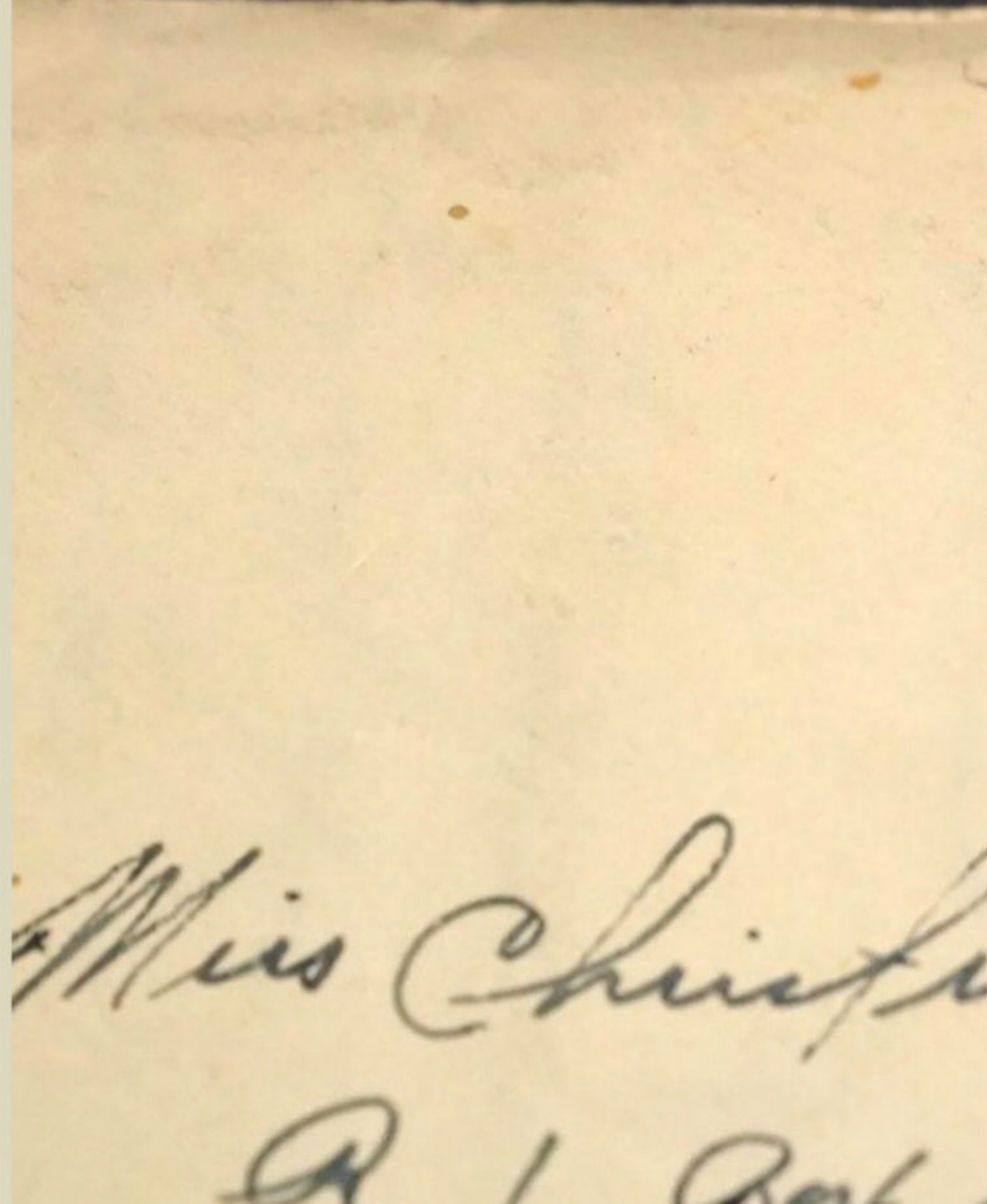
Stratton said about 30 to 40 families of Arizona unknowns have joined him.

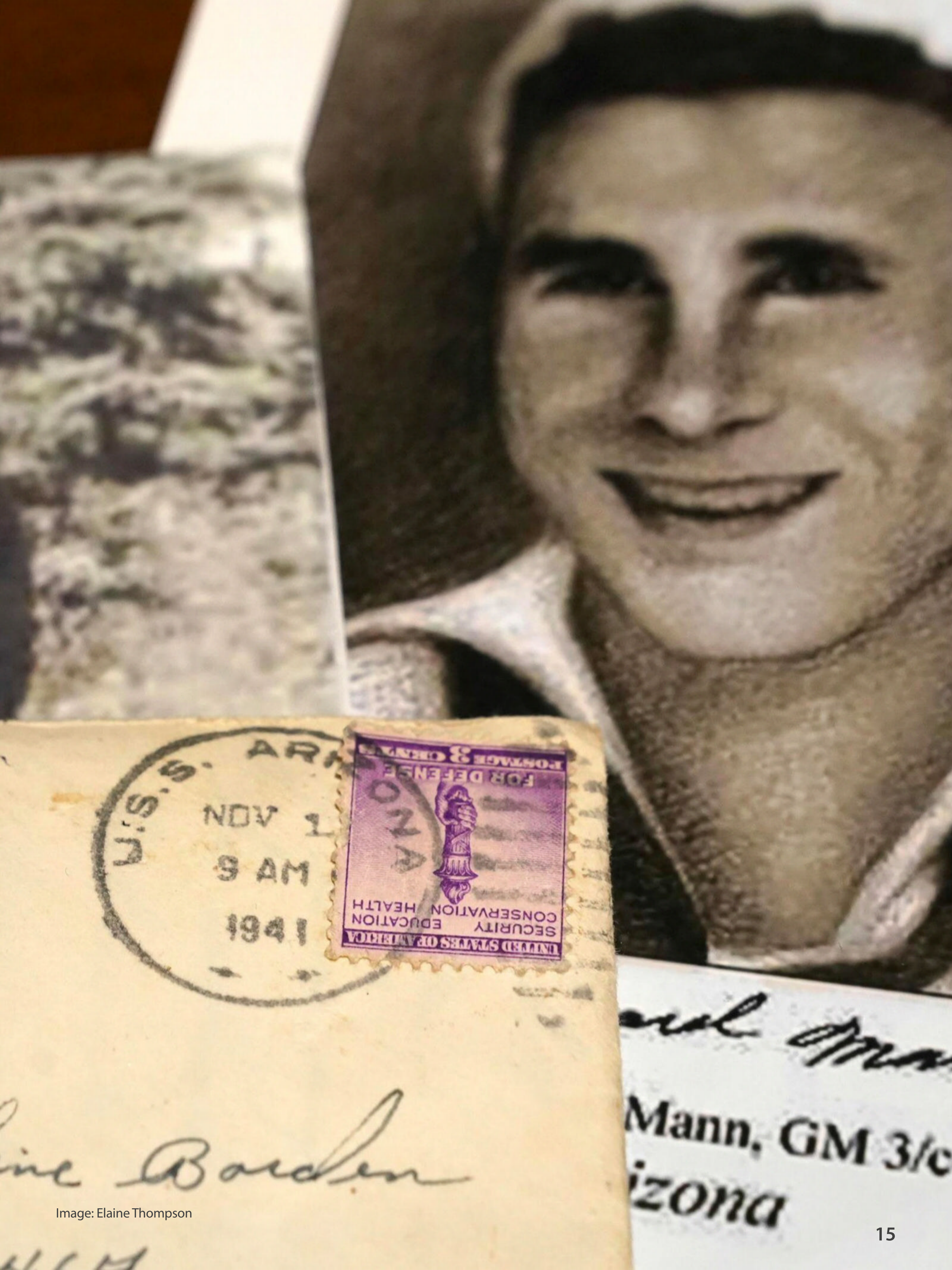
From a scientific perspective, there isn't much stopping the military from identifying the Arizona remains, said Michael Coble, associate director of the Center for Human Identification at the University of North Texas.

"It's definitely going to be a huge undertaking. But I think the technology has evolved that this kind of work could be done," said Coble, who was chief of research at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory from 2006 to 2010.

The lab, which dates to 1991, has long used DNA to identify remains for the military.

One newer method uses so-called SNPs, which are unique to an individual — except for identical twins — and provide a kind of fingerprint. The lab hasn't been able to make much use of this technique because it's been unable to obtain adequate SNP profiles from





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Arizona

Image: Elaine Thompson

degraded remains. Last month, however, it completed a project to get those samples.

This technique would help the lab distinguish between individuals even when it's only able to extract tiny fragments of DNA. SNPs are the same type of DNA sample that services like Ancestry.com and 23andMe use to help match people with long-lost relatives or learn their propensity for certain diseases.

DNA profiles from this technique could theoretically be used for the kind of investigative genetic genealogy work that Stratton advocates.

Tim McMahon, head of DNA operations for the Defense Department, said researchers could take samples that failed to find matches in the lab's in-house database and upload those to publicly available, private-sector DNA databases to look for potential cousins or other relatives. Genealogists could then study marriage licenses, birth records and other documents to make closer potential matches, which would then have to be confirmed with additional DNA tests.

Using such databases raises privacy concerns because relatives of the missing may not want their family's genetic information shared. The military would need to develop policies to protect privacy — for example, by potentially allowing researchers to upload an anonymous DNA profile of an unidentified serviceman.

But first, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency would have to decide that it wants to identify the Arizona unknowns.

For Stratton, it would be worth it.

"Why wouldn't you want to find out who these guys are?" Stratton said.



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THE FIVE BEST HYBRID SUVS YOU CAN BUY

Buying a hybrid vehicle is typically a smart way to help save money on gas and reduce your carbon footprint compared to a conventional gasoline-only vehicle. Not long ago your shopping choices were largely limited to hybrid hatchbacks and sedans, but the hybrid SUV market has expanded considerably the past few years. The latest hybrid SUVs can get impressive fuel economy while providing plenty of cargo space, a higher ride height, available all-wheel drive and cutting-edge technology features.

Media experts have picked five of the best new hybrid SUVs on sale today. They are presented in alphabetical order, and all prices include the destination charge.

2021 FORD ESCAPE HYBRID

Base price: \$29,920

Fuel economy: 40-41 mpg combined

The recently redesigned Ford Escape is a fine crossover SUV, but it's the Escape Hybrid that stands out in Ford's lineup. It's also current top-

ranked hybrid SUV. Available with front- or all-wheel drive, the roomy and comfortable Escape Hybrid offers excellent fuel economy without sacrificing much in terms of performance. We also like the Ford's available in-car tech and driver aids as well as the generally smooth ride quality. As with some rivals, Ford also offers a plug-in hybrid variant with an estimated 37 miles of electric-only range. The biggest drawback is the Escape's cargo space, which is slightly less than what some rival small SUVs offer.

Standard features on the base Escape Hybrid SE include dual-zone automatic climate control, an 8-inch touchscreen, and Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone integration. Driver aids include blind-spot monitoring and lane departure mitigation.

2021 HONDA CR-V HYBRID

Base price: \$31,785

Fuel economy: 38 mpg combined

The Honda CR-V is one of the favorite small SUVs, and the fuel-efficient hybrid model is no different. While it's a bit more expensive than some of its competitors, the CR-V Hybrid comes well equipped with lots of standard tech and safety features. All-wheel drive — optional on most rivals — is standard here too. Experts found the CR-V Hybrid comfortable and spacious, with many clever storage bins in the cabin for your phone, drinks and other small items.

Notable standard features on the base CR-V Hybrid EX include LED lighting, remote start, keyless entry and ignition, and driver aids such as adaptive cruise control and blind-spot monitoring.





*Buying a hybrid
no longer means
sacrificing utility and
space for the sake
of fuel efficiency*





2022 HYUNDAI TUCSON HYBRID

Base price: \$30,235

Fuel economy: 37-38 mpg combined

The Hyundai Tucson Hybrid is one of the latest hybrid SUVs to hit the market, and it immediately impressed with a comfortable ride, a spacious interior and loads of standard tech. An excellent warranty and a relatively low base price make it all the more compelling. The Tucson Hybrid's interior is handsome and well appointed, offering a slightly more premium feel than some rivals. All-wheel drive is available for drivers who need it, and Hyundai also offers a plug-in hybrid that allows for an estimated 32 miles of electric range. The biggest downside is slightly worse fuel economy than its rivals.

Standard features on the base Tucson's Blue Hybrid trim level include roof rails, tinted rear windows, LED lighting, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and driver aids such as blind-spot monitoring and adaptive cruise control.





2021 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER HYBRID

Base price: \$39,910

Fuel economy: 35-36 mpg combined

If you need more space than what these other hybrids offer, the three-row Toyota Highlander is well worth a look. There are larger three-row SUVs out there, but few can match the Highlander Hybrid's fuel economy. Like the Toyota RAV4, the Highlander Hybrid doesn't cost significantly more than the standard model, making it all the more appealing.

The Highlander Hybrid is comfortable and well equipped from the get-go with standard features including LED headlights, a power liftgate, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto as well as three-zone climate control. All-wheel drive is available as an option on all Highlander Hybrids.

2021 TOYOTA RAV4 HYBRID

Base price: \$29,975

Fuel economy: 40 mpg combined

The Toyota RAV4 is one of America's best-selling vehicles and, like the Escape, its hybrid version makes a better case for itself than the standard model. For only slightly more money than the standard model, the RAV4 Hybrid offers significantly better fuel economy and quicker acceleration. It's spacious and comfortable and comes standard with all-wheel drive. There's also the RAV4 Prime plug-in hybrid that offers 42 miles of all-electric range on a full battery.

Toyota also comes with standard driver aids such as adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning as well as features including LED headlights, dual-zone automatic climate control, and a 7-inch touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

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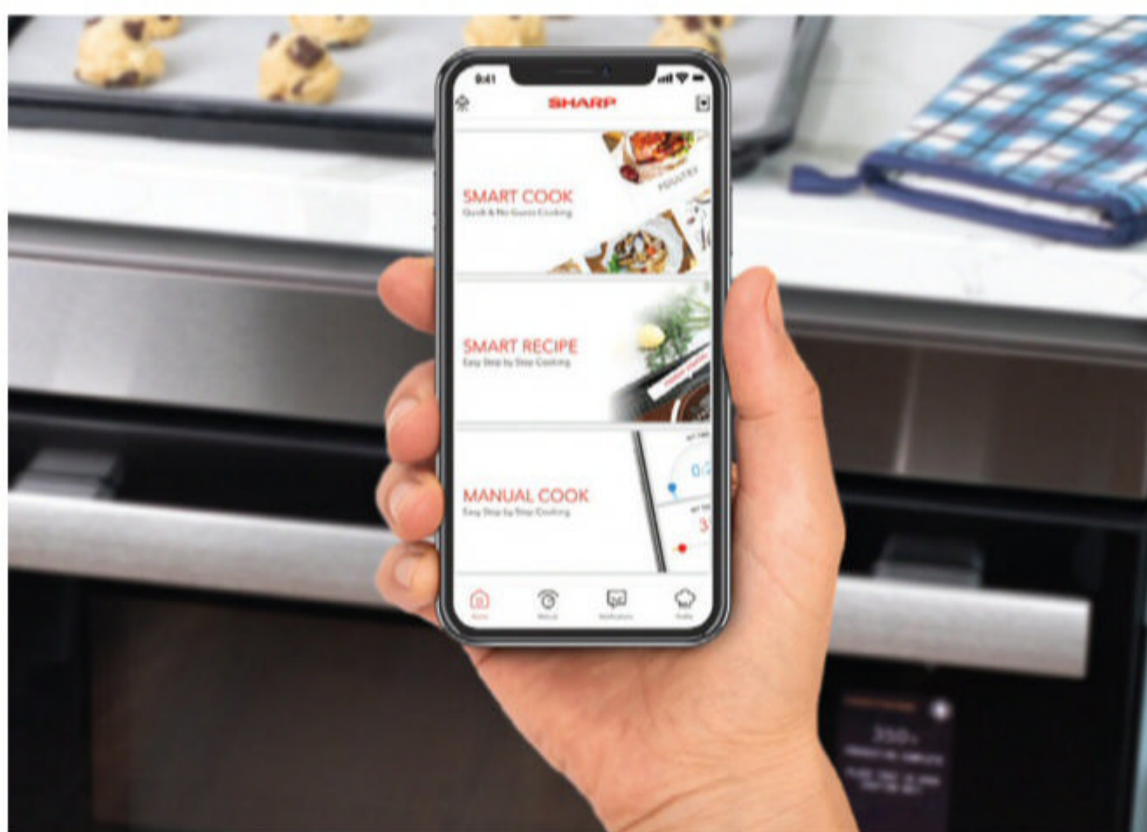
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SEC'S GENSLER SAYS CRYPTO INVESTORS NEED MORE PROTECTION

The chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission said that investors need more protection in the cryptocurrency market, which he said is “rife with fraud, scams and abuse.”

Gary Gensler, appointed by President Joe Biden to lead the body that regulates securities markets, listed several areas where crypto needed to be reigned in or regulated, particularly with regard to money laundering, sanctions, tax collection and extortion via ransomware.

“Right now, we just don’t have enough investor protection in crypto,” Gensler said in remarks to

the Aspen Institute's forum on security, "Frankly, at this time, it's more like the Wild West."

Digital currencies, like Bitcoin, have been left largely unregulated by major governments up to this point. In June, China ordered cryptocurrency mining operations shut down and banks started refusing to help customers with Bitcoin transactions. Although the SEC has brought and won dozens of cases against fraudsters, Gensler said the agency needs more authority from Congress — and more resources — to regulate the crypto markets.

Gensler has been viewed as receptive toward cryptocurrency and other new financial technologies after a stint as a professor at MIT, where he focused his research and teaching on public policy as well as digital currencies and blockchain, the global running ledgers of digital currency transactions.

Beyond the problems, Gensler said innovation in digital currencies "has been and could continue to be a catalyst for change in the fields of finance and money."

A Goldman Sachs employee for 20 years, Gensler surprised many with his toughness as a regulator at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission during the Obama administration.

Gensler opened his remarks by saying he was not speaking on behalf of the SEC or its staff, but that he personally believes that regulation of cryptocurrencies would fall under his agency's purview.

Currencies such as the dollar or euro fulfill several key functions, Gensler said; they are a store of value, a unit of account and medium of exchange. By contrast, Bitcoin and other





cryptocurrencies are for now mostly “highly speculative” investments.

When Congress defined what a security was in the 1930s, Gensler said, one of those definitions was as an investment contract — when “a person invests his money in a common enterprise and is led to expect profits solely from the efforts of the promoter or a third party.”

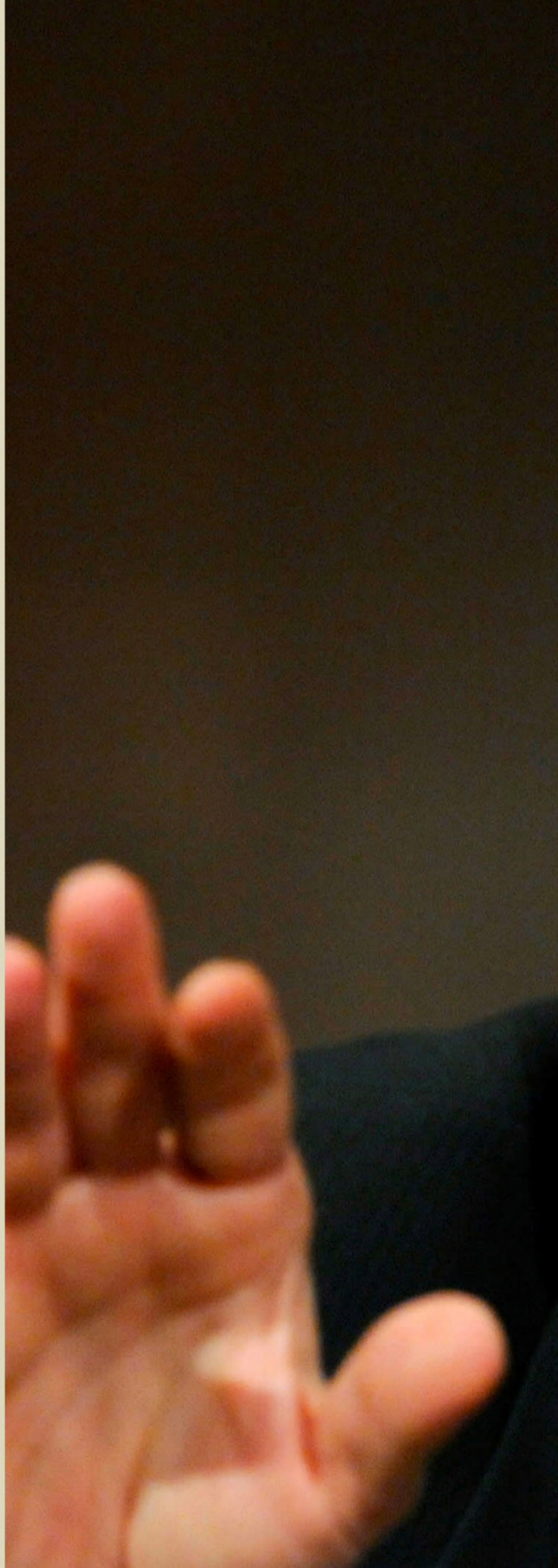
That definition, which Gensler says should apply to cryptocurrency, has been tested and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court. Gensler noted that his predecessor at the SEC, Jay Clayton, testified in 2018 that he believed ICOs, or initial coin offerings, were securities and that “we have jurisdiction, and our federal securities laws apply.”

Gensler said many crypto tokens are unregistered securities and don’t come with market oversight or proper disclosures to educate investors. That leaves prices open to manipulation and investors unprotected, he said.

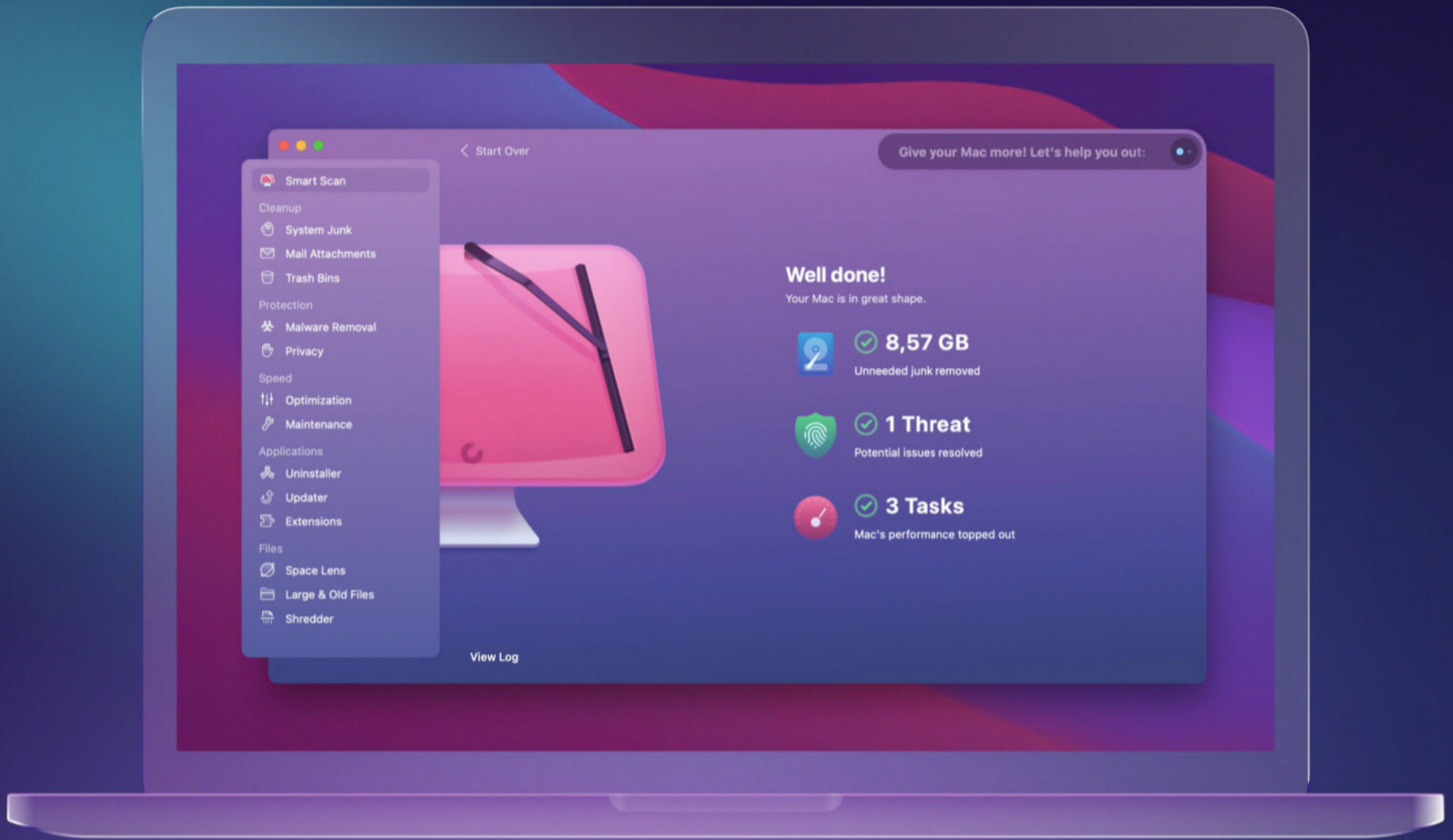
“These products are subject to the securities laws and must work within our securities regime,” Gensler said. “If we don’t address these issues, I worry a lot of people will be hurt.”

The combined market capitalization of all cryptocurrencies is currently more than \$1.5 trillion.

Tuesday’s event marked the first time the non-profit Aspen Institute included a discussion about cryptocurrency in the forum on national security.







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SONY'S PROFITS GAIN ON 'DEMON SLAYER,' DIGITAL CAMERA DEMAND





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Sony's April-June profit rose 9% to 211.8 billion yen (\$1.9 billion) as the Japanese electronics and video game maker continued to benefit from a sales perk from the hit "Demon Slayer" animation film.

Healthy results in its music streaming business and robust demand for digital cameras, image sensors and the PlayStation 5 video game console helped Tokyo-based Sony Corp.'s quarterly sales grow 15% to 2.26 trillion yen (\$20.7 billion), the company said this week.

Sony had posted a 193.6 billion yen quarterly profit the previous year. Sony raised its full year profit forecast to 700 billion yen (\$6.4 billion) from an earlier 660 billion yen (\$6 billion).

The higher projection is still a drop from the 1 trillion yen profit Sony had racked up the previous fiscal year, when its sales jumped as people stuck at home for the coronavirus pandemic turned to video games, including those from Sony.

The PlayStation 5 went on sale late last year ahead of the holiday shopping season, each machine costing about \$500. Production has not kept up with demand, and it's often sold out. Sony said 2.3 million PlayStation 5 consoles were sold during the April-June period.

Among Sony's top-selling music projects for the quarter were "Fine Line" by Harry Styles and "Singles: Sun Goes Down, Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" by Lil Nas X, while, in Japan, Nogizaka46 sold well.

In its movie division, "Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway," a 3D computer-animated comedy was a hit. The horror film "The Unholy" was also popular. Sony said some theatrical releases were delayed because of the pandemic.





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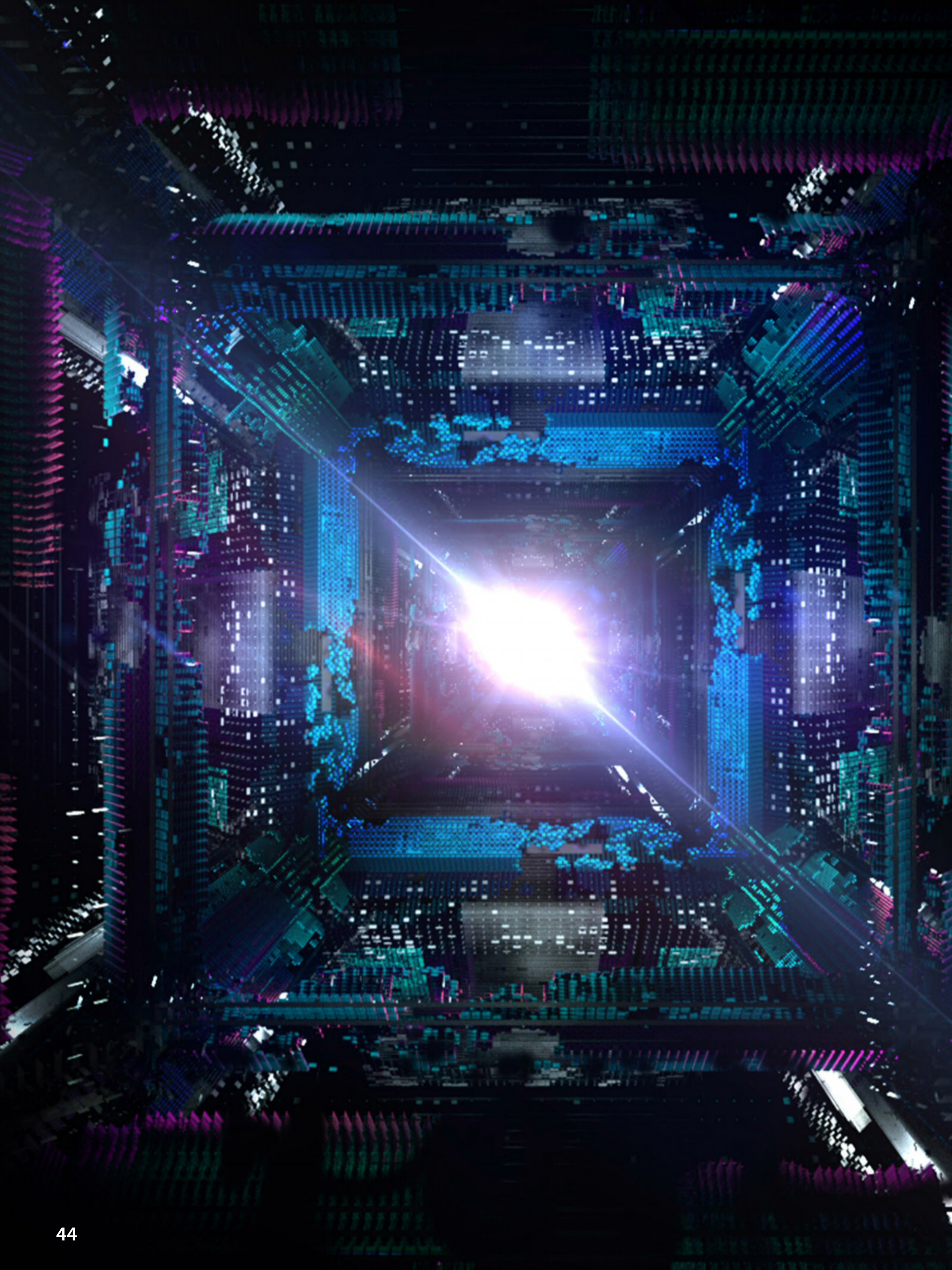
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2nm Race

**EXPLORING THE LIMITS OF THE
SILICON-BASED PROCESSOR**

Apple changed the game when it announced its M1 silicon processor, pushing the boundaries of what some thought was possible. Since then, big chipmakers are now bending the laws of physics to create nano transistors that can compete, and power the next generation of smartphones, desktops, televisions, and other devices. For consumers, it means huge innovations are just around the corner, alongside more powerful technologies.

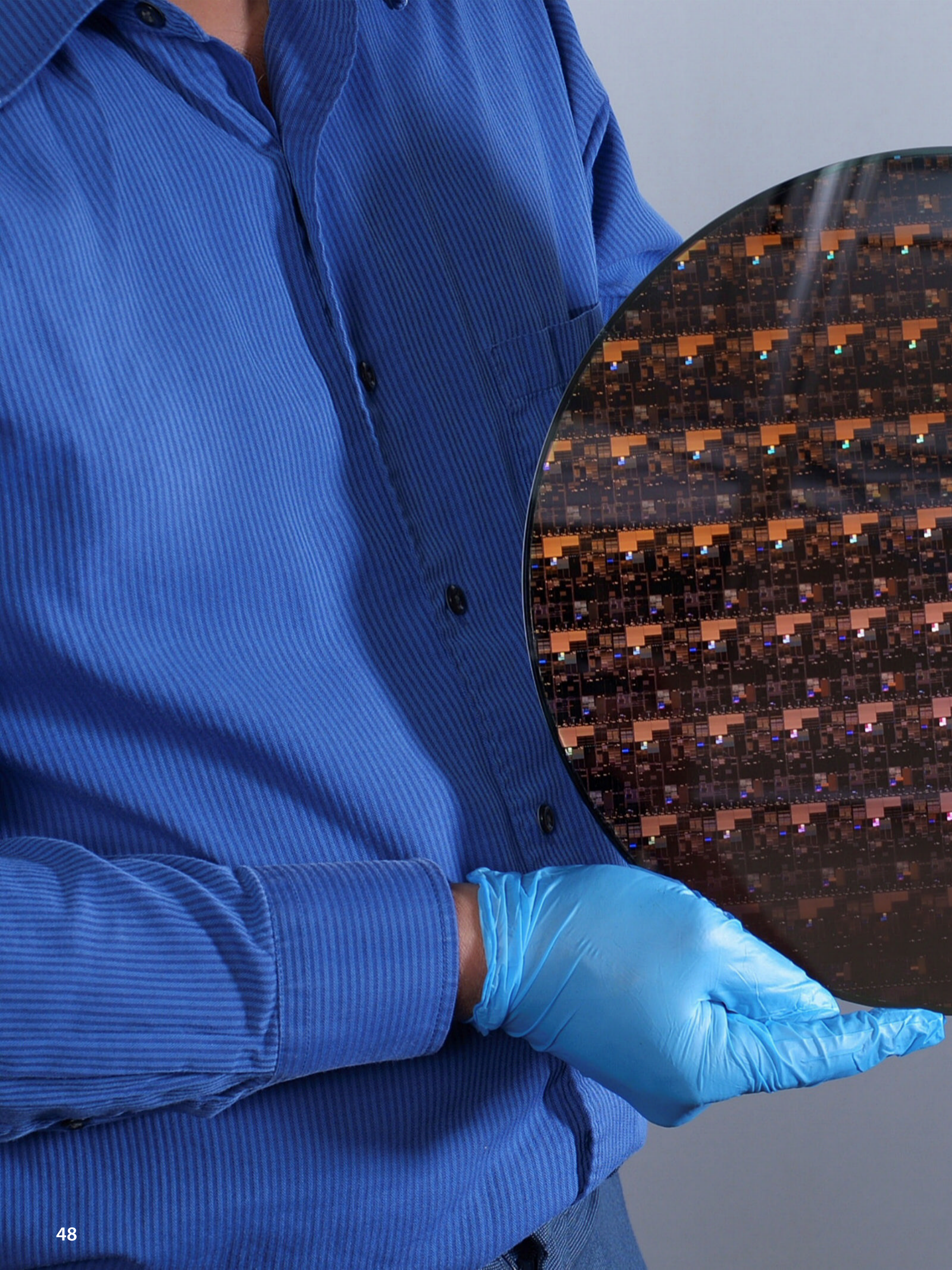
THE 2-NANOMETER RACE

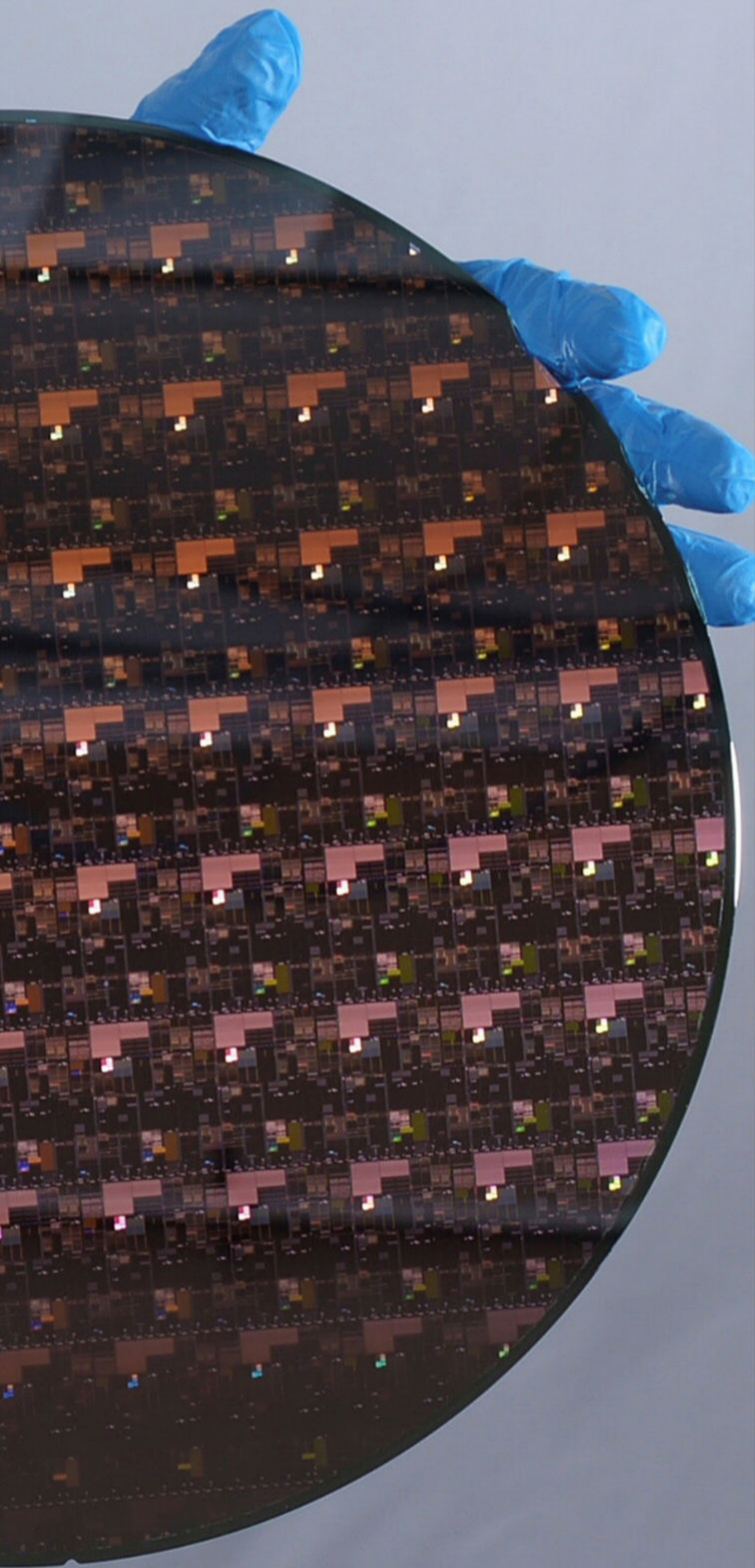
Though it would be unfair to give Apple all of the credit for innovations in the nano transistor industry, there's no denying that the Cupertino company had companies running scared. For the first time, Apple could develop and manufacture its industry-leading



phones, laptops, and accessories in-house, without relying on third parties like Intel and their schedule to push out new products. As a result, many technology companies brought forward announcements of their own cutting-edge chips, and in May, IBM announced its “breakthrough” semiconductor design, **developing a chip with 2-nanometre nanosheet technology for the first time.** The company boasted that the processor could improve performance by as much as 45%, using the same amount of power as its predecessors, or 75% less energy than its 7 nanometer-based chips. IBM’s test chip, a prototype of its future mass-produced version, can fit an eye-watering 50 billion transistors on the chip no bigger than a fingernail, and dependent on testing, the company hopes

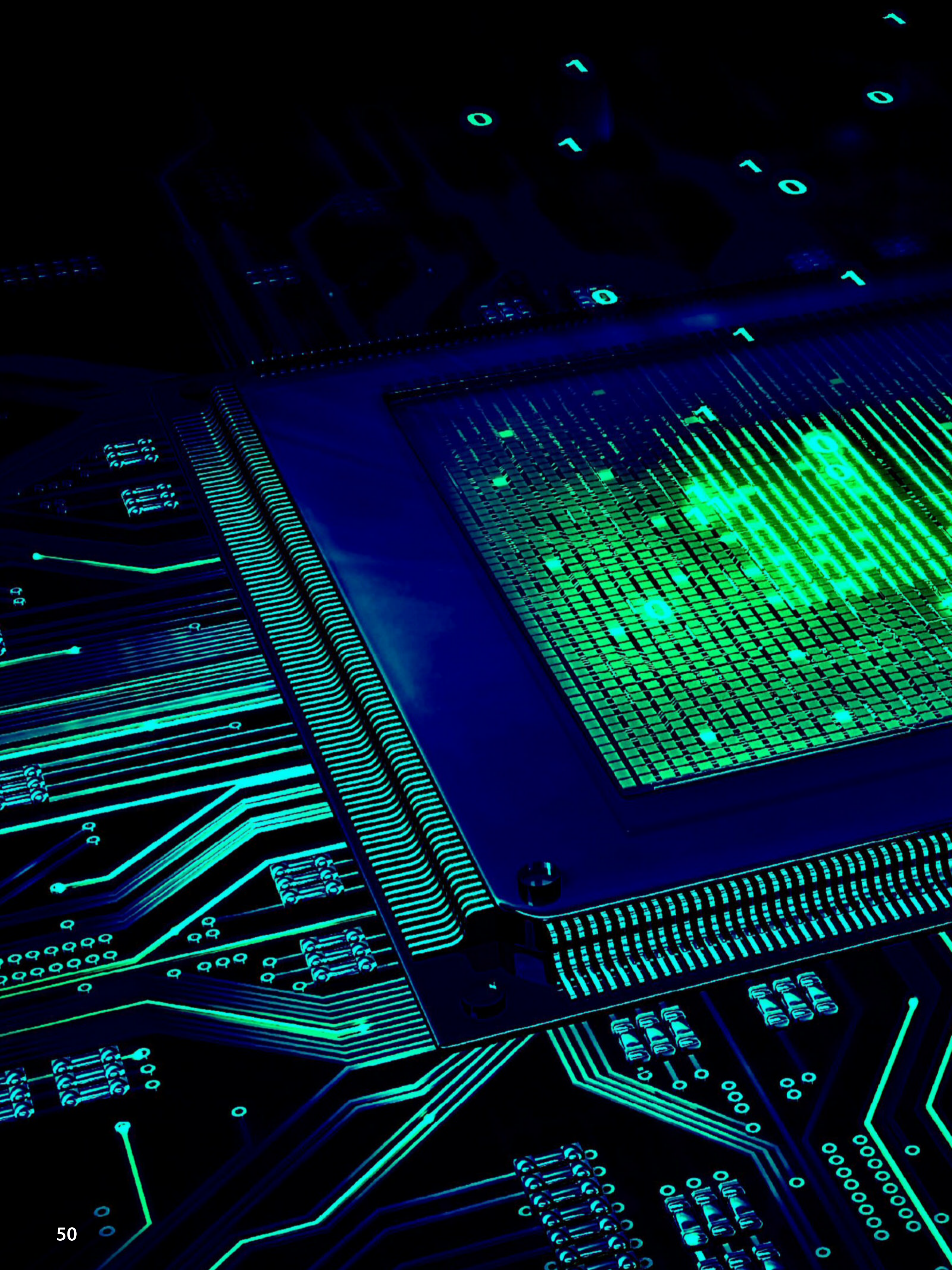


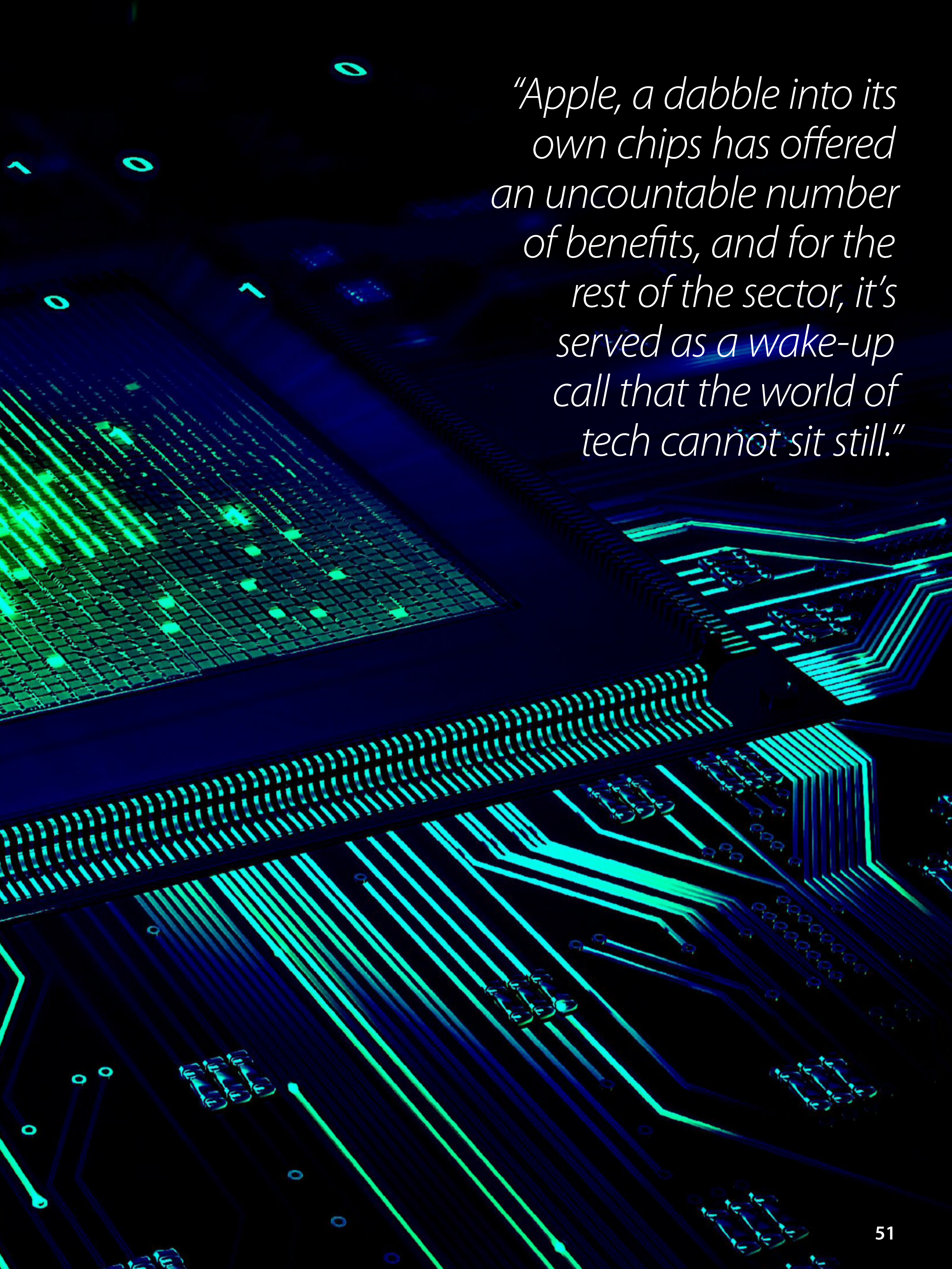




it can be sold to manufacturers for use in a whole host of devices from 2025 - just three short years away. Speaking of the new chip, IBM Research vice president Mukesh Khare said that “everything is built with atomic precision,” adding that “most advanced manufacturing in the world is in about 7nm and some are in 5nm, and we are here to show we could put together a 2nm transistor. That means this industry will keep going for the next decade, that’s what these results mean.”

Many have been quick to compare the performance of IBM’s new 2-nanometer chip with Apple’s new M1 chip, but Khare said it wouldn’t be fair to do. “It’s comparing apples and oranges in this case because the M1 chip is a product using existing technology, older technology,” he said, adding that IBM’s breakthrough technology would blow it out of the park. The news comes at a time when the world continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is continuing to cause **supply chain disruptions due to chip shortages**. Even Apple, who is no longer at the behest of some of these third-party chipmakers, warned investors in its latest earnings call that it could face disruptions in the coming months, **and those disruptions could impact iPhone 13 shipments**. IBM says that innovations like the 2-nanometer chip take years to develop and that it provides companies with the confidence they can continue to invest in such technologies. It also teased that the company was working on chips that were smaller than 2-nanometers, which could pave the way for even greater innovations and technological possibilities in the years and decades ahead.

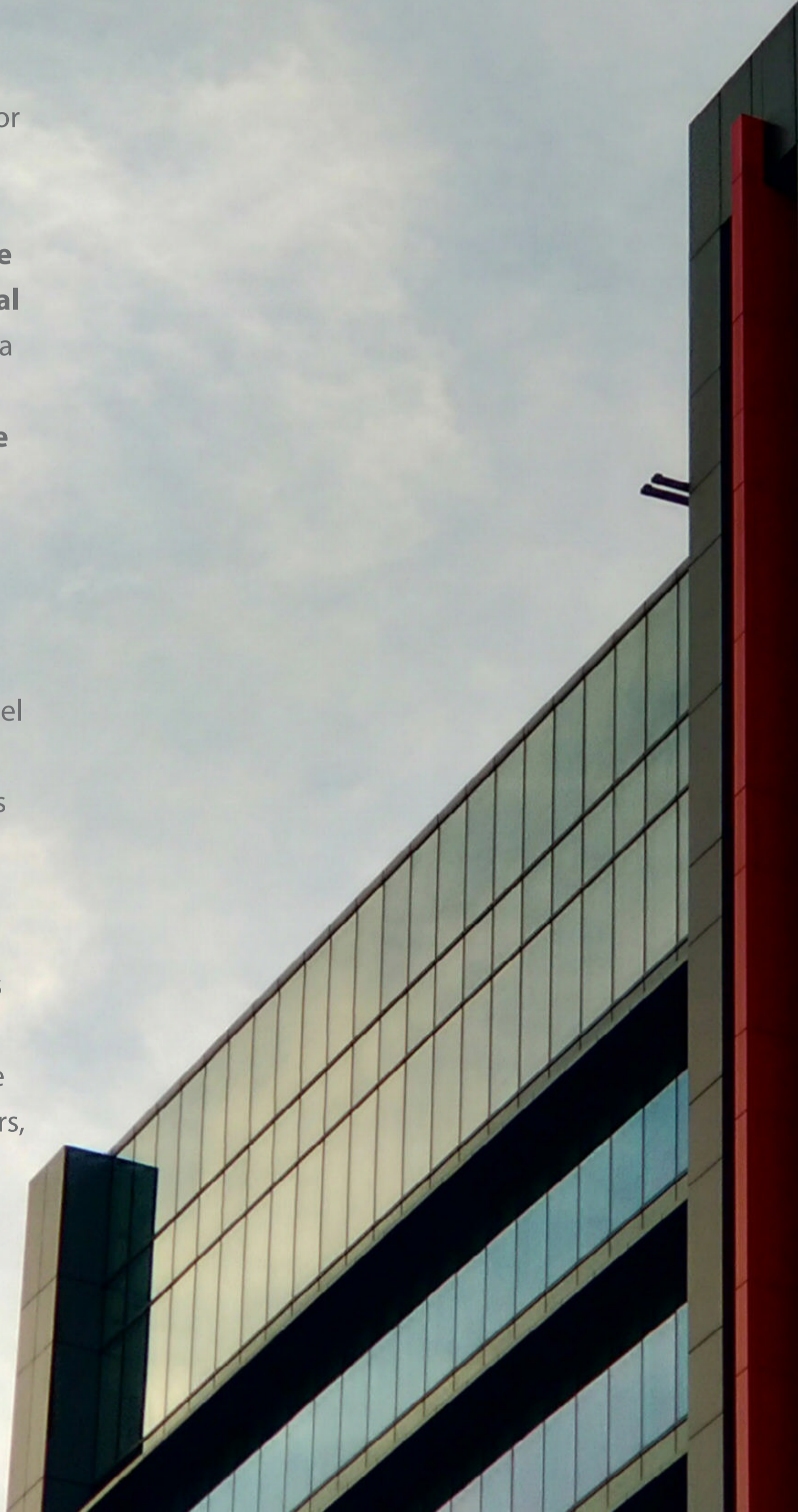




“Apple, a dabble into its own chips has offered an uncountable number of benefits, and for the rest of the sector, it’s served as a wake-up call that the world of tech cannot sit still.”

For now, though, 2-nanometer chips are in sight, and giants like Samsung, Tesla, and Apple will be figuring out how to utilize their power and performance.

It's important to note that it's not just IBM that has been working on 2-nanometer chips, and Apple supplier TSMC has also confirmed plans to begin production on the technology in the next couple of years. The Taiwanese government has now approved TSMC's plan for a 2nm process, according to Nikkei Asia, and production will begin in 2023, meaning they could be used in iPhones from 2024, **likely the iPhone 16 if the company follows traditional naming.** It's also reported that TSMC's Arizona plant will open in 2024 to produce Apple's A-series and M-series chips, **which is separate from their new 2-nanometer chips.** As we continue to look to the future of nanometer production, it's also worth noting that Intel has revealed its plans to work on tech **below 1-nanometer in what it calls the 'angstrom era of semiconductors'.** It's no secret that Intel has struggled in recent years, and its delays and challenges are one of the primary reasons why Apple decided to begin working on its own chips to reduce reliance on third parties, **despite buying the company's modem business for 5G.** However, now that Intel has fired the first shot towards a future beyond 2-nanometer processors, the company is once again attractive to manufacturers and investors, and with the right personnel and strategy, it could turn around its fortunes in time.









APPLE'S M-SERIES CHANGING THE GAME

When Apple announced its first M1-powered devices in late 2020, the company received an overwhelming amount of praise from technology fans and professionals. Tom's Guide said that the chip "was a computing revolution" **offering "remarkably fast performance" over its predecessor**, and TechRadar said, **"If Apple wanted to launch something revolutionary, it certainly managed that."** Early data from January 2021 found that the rise in work from home and the introduction of the M1 chip helped Apple ship 6.9 million Macs in the fourth quarter of last year, up from the 5.2 million it shipped in the same 2019 period, **with the M1 chip reportedly one of the biggest pulls.** And with Apple now slowly reworking its entire Mac range with new design language, **such as the 24-inch iMac announced earlier this year**, 2021 looks set to be a bumper year for the company's computing sales - all thanks to M1.

But what's perhaps even more interesting is the impact the M1 chip has had on the wider technology landscape, and how a more fragmented manufacturing environment could lead to even greater levels of innovation. Microsoft, for example, reacted to the launch of the M1 chip by **confirming plans to work on its own Surface ARM chips to compete with Apple**, and several others, **including Google, have confirmed their own ARM intentions.** Things really start to get interesting, though, when you look ahead to the future and the launch of the M1X or M2 chip, **which has reportedly entered production ahead of**

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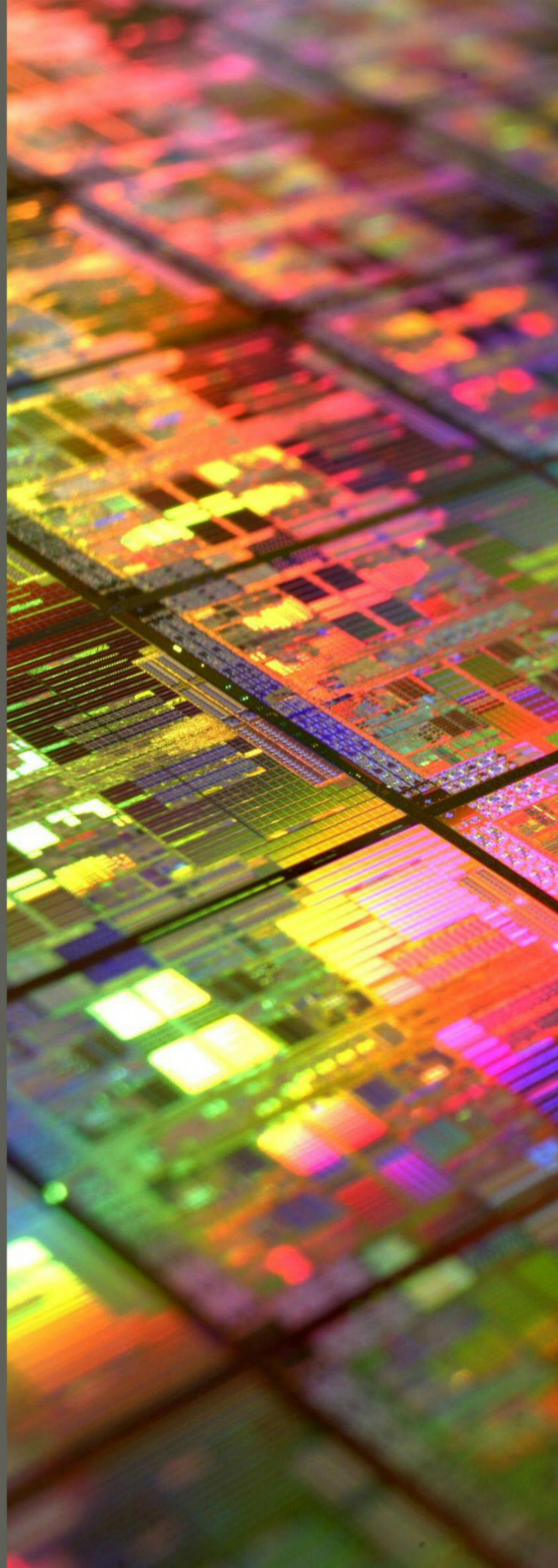
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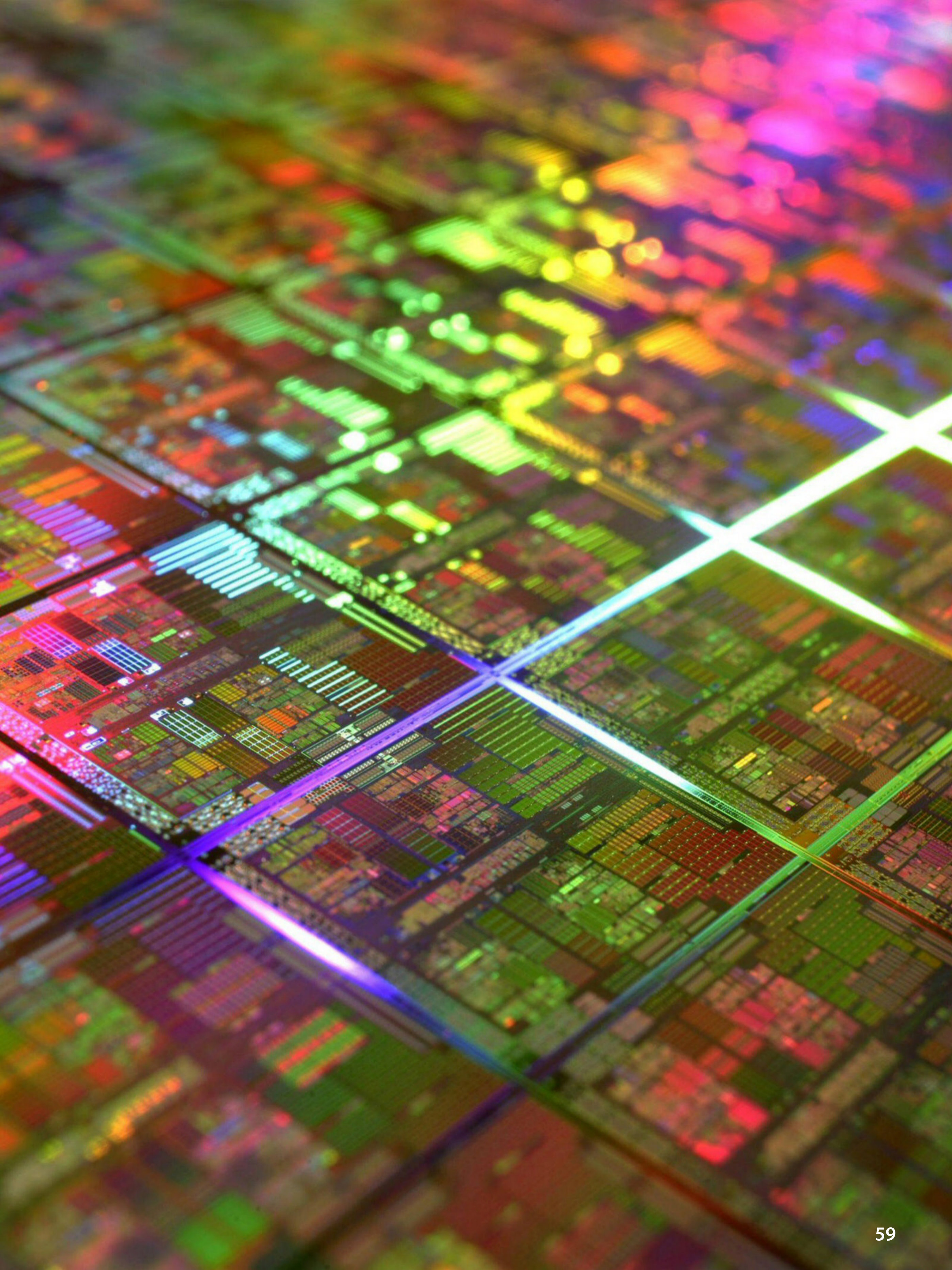
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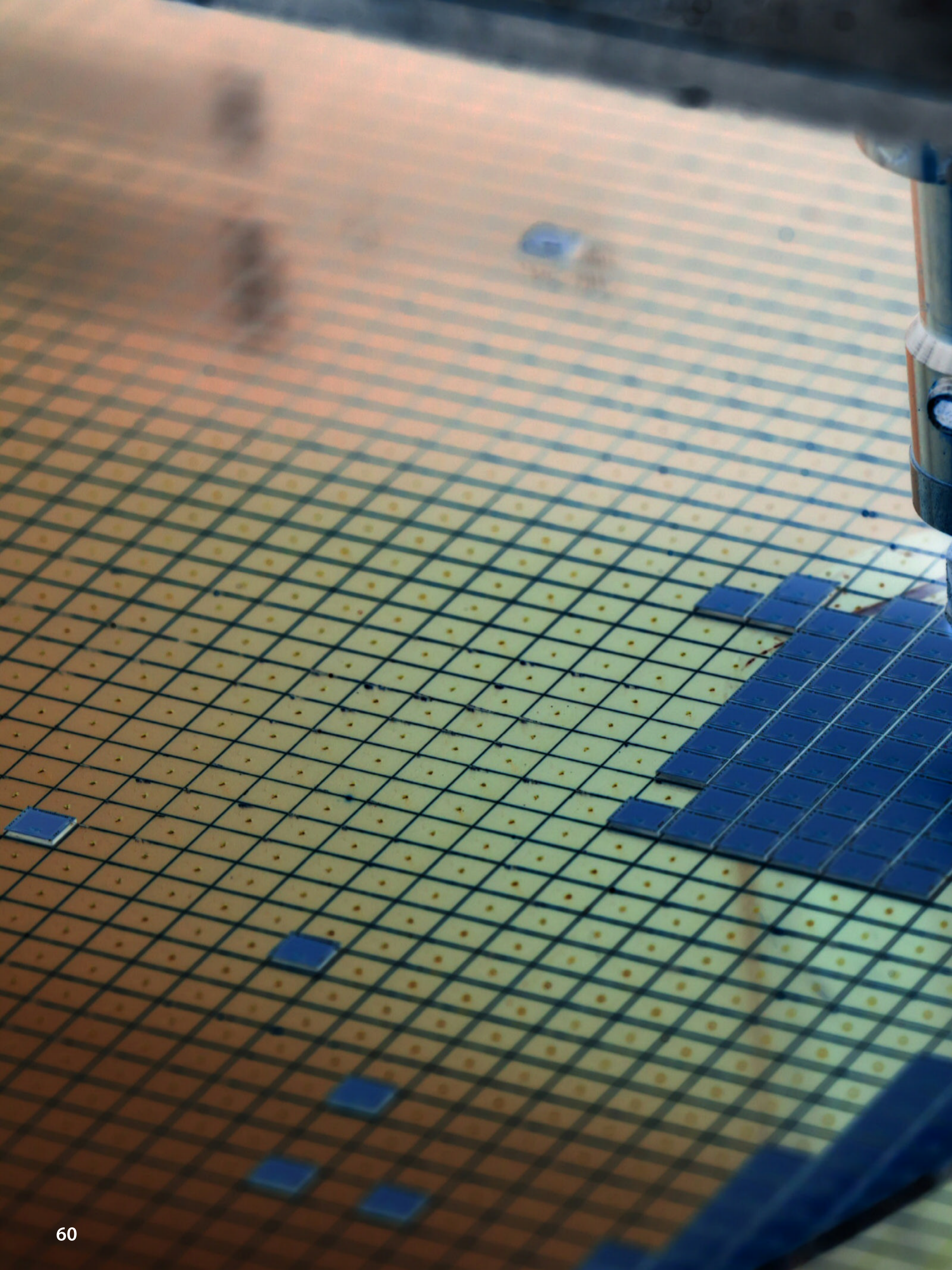
a new MacBook Pro release. Production began in April, reportedly to give Apple time to manufacture enough chips to meet the demand of the MacBook Pro, which is set for a fall or winter release. A report from Nikkei suggests that the M2 will continue to integrate CPU, GPU, and the Neural Engine on the same chip, but it does not go into any of the specifics of the new chip. Some reports suggest Apple is working on chips **that could offer 64 and 128-cores, perhaps for the Mac Pro,** and it's likely to be suped-up compared to the current entry-level M1 chip, which is also used in the new iPad Pro refresh. Whether we'll see a significant leap forward from the first to the second generation remains to be seen, but it's clear that all eyes are on Apple for the future.

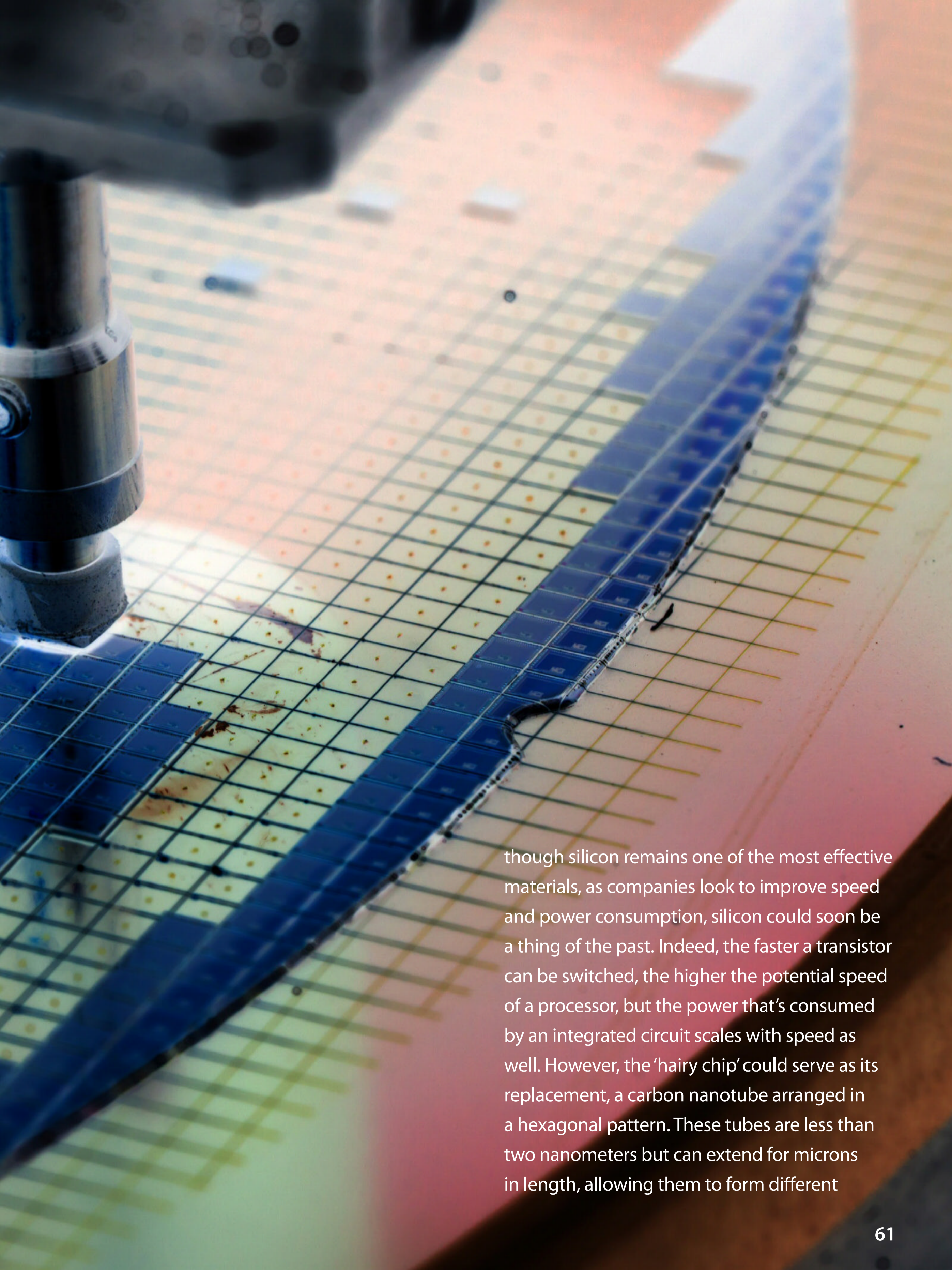
A POST-SILICON WORLD

Whilst tech giants rely on silicon every day for their integrated circuits, some argue that the end of silicon could be in sight. **IBM revealed its plans to move beyond silicon in the future,** thanks to a whole host of new materials and replacements that could succeed the current technology. What's more, the current semiconductor shortage has brought to light the reliance and dominance of silicon, and firms are naturally now looking for other options to help weather future storms and shortages. Some are even turning to gallium nitride (GaN), because it is **easier and faster to produce than silicon chips, among other benefits.** A quick cast back to the days before silicon: Germanium, for instance, is a great semiconductor, but it was eventually forced out of the semiconductor market as it was easier to obtain silicon. And





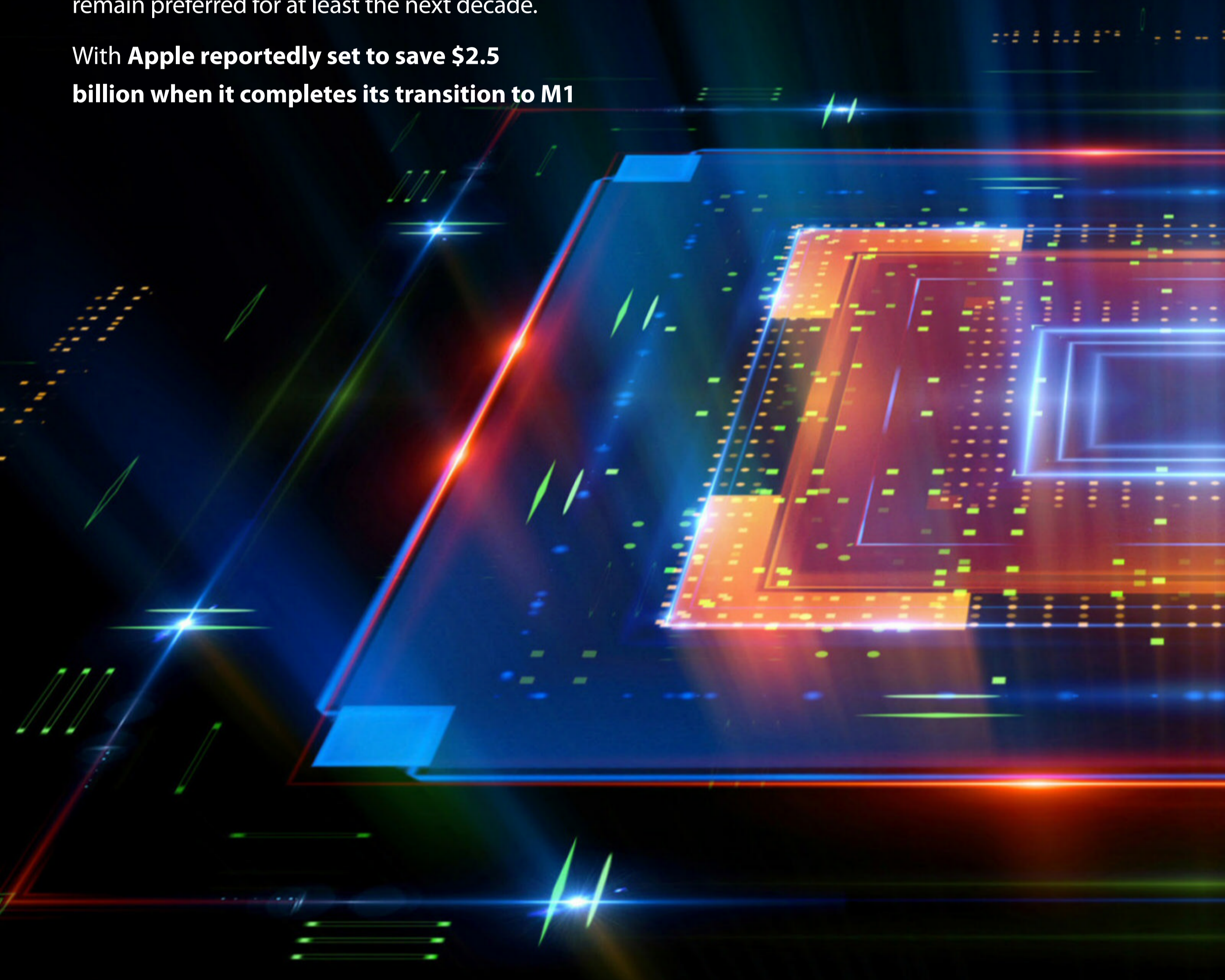




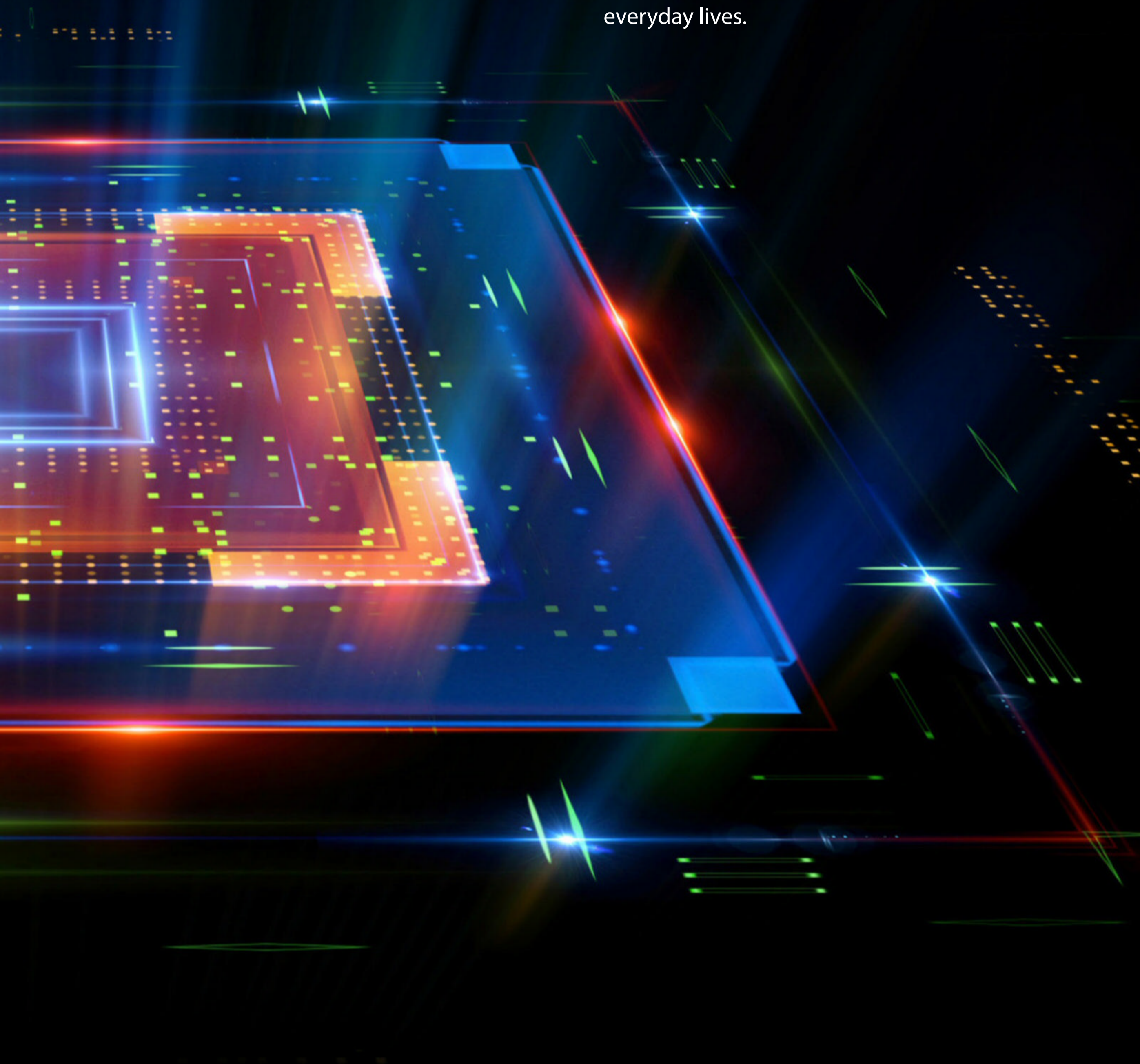
though silicon remains one of the most effective materials, as companies look to improve speed and power consumption, silicon could soon be a thing of the past. Indeed, the faster a transistor can be switched, the higher the potential speed of a processor, but the power that's consumed by an integrated circuit scales with speed as well. However, the 'hairy chip' could serve as its replacement, a carbon nanotube arranged in a hexagonal pattern. These tubes are less than two nanometers but can extend for microns in length, allowing them to form different

circuit elements and ultimately be shaped to meet the demands of a particular device. Two-dimensional carbon is another option, as graphene offers a single layer of carbon atoms and has the potential for higher transistor switching speeds. Molybdenum disulfide serves as another replacement, behaving more like silicon, but it's pricy, meaning silicon will likely remain preferred for at least the next decade.

With Apple reportedly set to save \$2.5 billion when it completes its transition to M1



chips, it's clear why more and more companies are making the move to their own custom products. However, a tumultuous year has proven that companies need to diversify and reduce their reliance on one source, and thus in the decades ahead, we'll likely see even greater variations and innovations that will allow for better-performing devices that power our everyday lives.





Gemini 2

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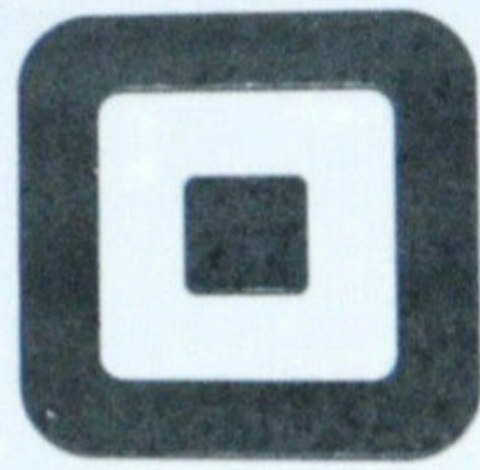
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SQUARE TO BUY INSTALLMENT PAYMENT FIRM AFTERPAY IN \$29B DEAL

are



Digital payments company Square Inc. says it has agreed to acquire Afterpay, which provides a “buy now, pay later” option for merchants, in an all-stock deal valued at about \$29 billion.

Square allows retailers to process credit card transactions using devices that plug into tablets or smartphones. The San Francisco-based company said it plans to integrate Afterpay into its services, enabling merchants to offer customers the option to pay for goods later without relying on a credit card. Afterpay users would be able to manage their installment payments directly in Square’s cash app.

“Square and Afterpay have a shared purpose,” Square CEO Jack Dorsey said in a statement.

Some 70 million people use Square’s cash app. As of June 30, Afterpay was serving more than 16 million users and nearly 100,000 merchants, including major retailers, the company said.

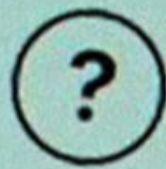
Installment plans are popular with retailers because they encourage customers to spend more money. And they enable customers with insufficient funds or credit at the time of purchase to walk out of a store with the item they want. Payments are made in multiple installments over time, without interest — unless customers are late, in which case additional fees or interest may kick in.

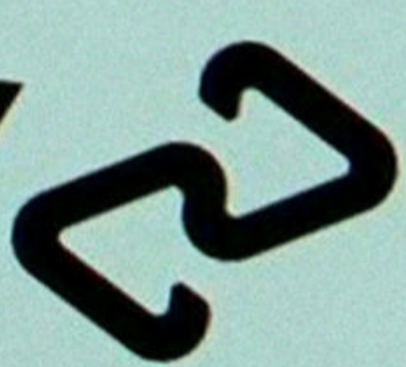
“Afterpay is deeply committed to helping people spend responsibly without incurring service fees for those who pay on time,” the companies said in a joint press release announcing the transaction.

Square said it agreed to buy all of the Australian company’s shares. Afterpay shareholders will get 0.375 shares of Square Class A common stock for each share of Afterpay, a 31% premium above its closing price last Friday.

The transaction is expected to close in early 2022.





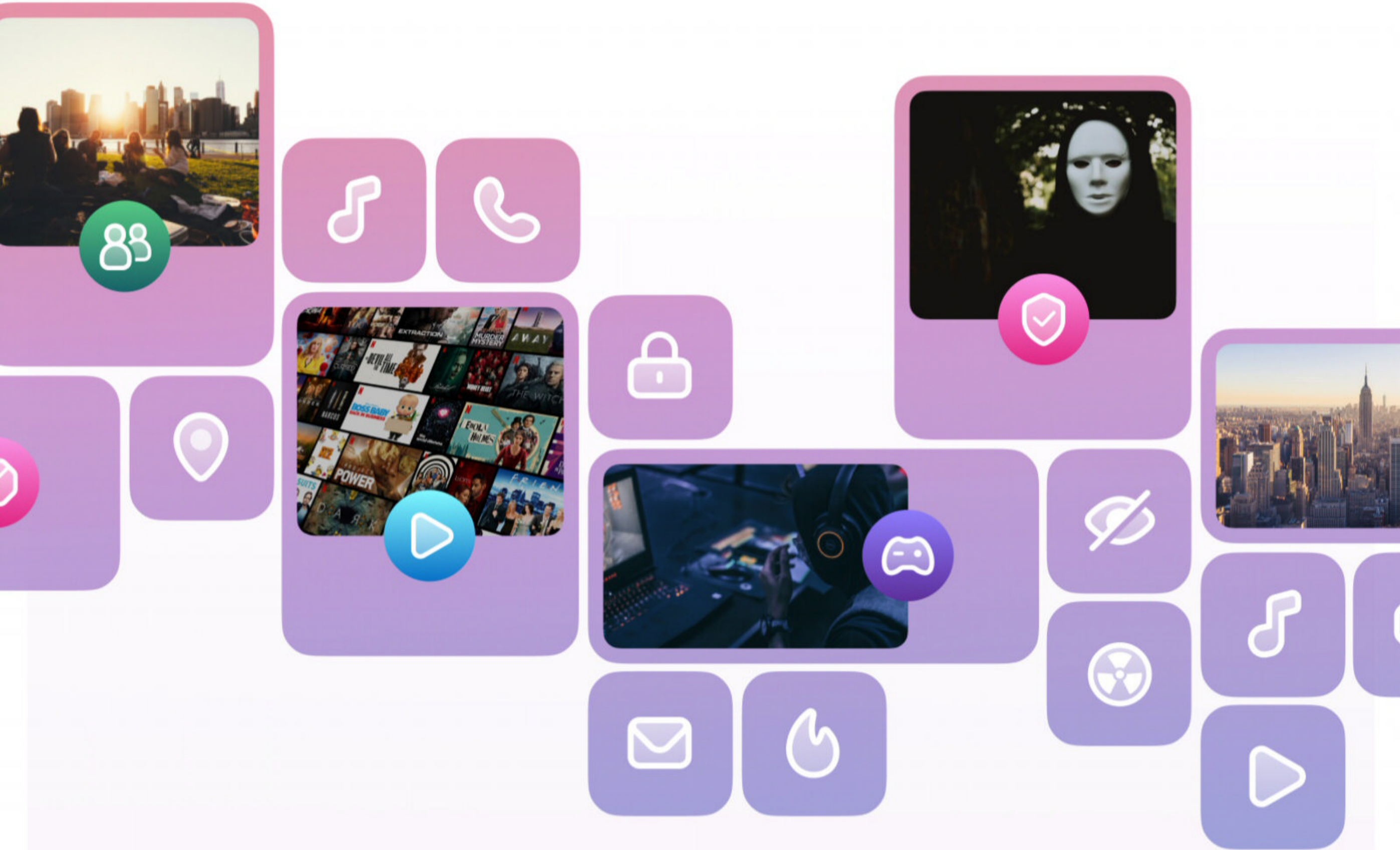
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ROBOTIC POLICE DOGS: USEFUL HOUNDS OR DEHUMANIZING MACHINES?

If you're homeless and looking for temporary shelter in Hawaii's capital, expect a visit from a robotic police dog that will scan your eye to make sure you don't have a fever.

That's just one of the ways public safety agencies are starting to use Spot, the best-known of a new commercial category of robots that trot around with animal-like agility.

The handful of police officials experimenting with the four-legged machines say they're just another tool, like existing drones and simple wheeled robots, to keep emergency responders out of harm's way as they scout for dangers.

But privacy watchdogs — the human kind — warn that police are secretly rushing to buy the robots without setting safeguards against aggressive, invasive or dehumanizing uses.

In Honolulu, the police department spent about \$150,000 in federal pandemic relief money to buy their Spot from robotics firm Boston Dynamics for use at a government-run tent city near the airport.

“Because these people are houseless it’s considered OK to do that,” said Jongwook Kim, legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii. “At some point it will come out again for some different use after the pandemic is over.”

Acting Lt. Joseph O’Neal of the Honolulu Police Department’s community outreach unit defended the robot’s use in a media demonstration earlier this year. He said it has protected officers, shelter staff and residents by scanning body temperatures between meal times at a shelter where homeless people could quarantine and get tested for COVID-19. The robot is also used to remotely interview individuals who have tested positive.

“We have not had a single person out there that said, ‘That’s scary, that’s worrisome,’” O’Neal said. “We don’t just walk around and arbitrarily scan people.”

Police use of such robots is still rare and largely untested — and hasn’t always gone over well with the public. Honolulu officials faced a backlash when a local news organization, Honolulu Civil Beat, revealed that the Spot purchase was made with federal relief money.













Late last year, the New York Police Department started using Spot after painting it blue and renaming it “Digidog.” It went mostly unnoticed until New Yorkers started spotting it in the wild and posting videos to social media. Spot quickly became a sensation, drawing a public outcry that led the police department to abruptly return Digidog to its maker.

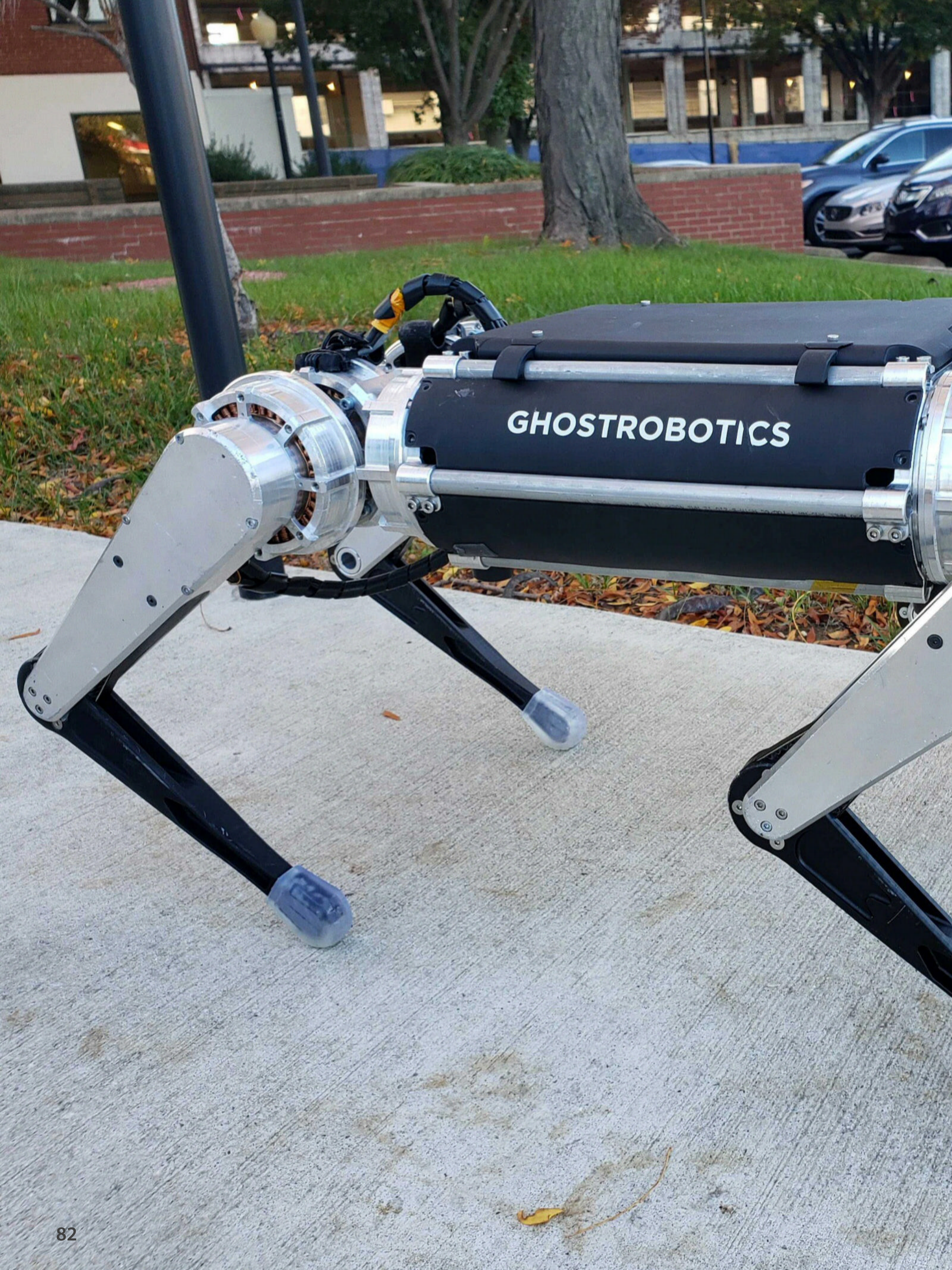
“This is some Robocop stuff, this is crazy,” was the reaction in April from Democratic U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman. He was one of several New York politicians to speak out after a widely shared video showed the robot strutting with police officers responding to a domestic-violence report at a high-rise public housing building in Manhattan.

Days later, after further scrutiny from elected city officials, the department said it was terminating its lease and returning the robot. The expensive machine arrived with little public notice or explanation, public officials said, and was deployed to already over-policed public housing. Use of the high-tech canine also clashed with Black Lives Matter calls to defund police operations and reinvest in other priorities.

The company that makes the robots, Boston Dynamics, says it’s learned from the New York fiasco and is trying to do a better job of explaining to the public — and its customers — what Spot can and cannot do. That’s become increasingly important as Boston Dynamics becomes part of South Korean carmaker Hyundai Motor Company, which in June closed an \$880 million deal for a controlling stake in the robotics firm.







GHOSTROBOTICS



“One of the big challenges is accurately describing the state of the technology to people who have never had personal experience with it,” Michael Perry, vice president of business development at Boston Dynamics, said in an interview. “Most people are applying notions from science fiction to what the robot’s doing.”

For one of its customers, the Dutch national police, explaining the technology includes emphasizing that Spot is a very good robot — well-behaved and not so smart after all.

“It doesn’t think for itself,” Marjolein Smit, director of the special operations unit of the Dutch national police, said of the remote-controlled robot. “If you tell it to go to the left, it will go to the left. If you tell it to stop, it will stop.”

Earlier this year, her police division sent its Spot into the site of a deadly drug lab explosion near the Belgian border to check for dangerous chemicals and other hazards.

Perry said the company’s acceptable use guidelines prohibit Spot’s weaponization or anything that would violate privacy or civil rights laws, which he said puts the Honolulu police in the clear. It’s all part of a year-long effort by Boston Dynamics, which for decades relied on military research grants, to make its robots seem friendlier and thus more palatable to local governments and consumer-oriented businesses.

By contrast, a lesser-known rival, Philadelphia-based Ghost Robotics, has no qualms about weaponization and supplies its dog-like robots to several branches of the U.S. military and its allies.

“It’s just plug and play, anything you want,” said Ghost Robotics CEO Jiren Parikh, who was critical of Boston Dynamics’ stated ethical





principles as “selective morality” because of the company’s past involvement with the military.

Parikh added that his company doesn’t market its four-legged robots to police departments, though he said it would make sense for police to use them. “It’s basically a camera on a mobile device,” he said.

There are roughly 500 Spot robots now in the wild. Perry said they’re commonly used by utility companies to inspect high-voltage zones and other hazardous areas. Spot is also used to monitor construction sites, mines and factories, equipped with whatever sensor is needed for the job.

It’s still mostly controlled by humans, though all they have to do is tell it which direction to go and it can intuitively climb stairs or cross over rough terrain. It can also operate autonomously, but only if it’s already memorized an assigned route and there aren’t too many surprise obstacles.

“The first value that most people see in the robot is taking a person out of a hazardous situation,” Perry said.

Kim, of the ACLU in Hawaii, acknowledged that there might be many legitimate uses for such machines, but said opening the door for police robots that interact with people is probably not a good idea. He pointed to how Dallas police in 2016 stuck explosives on a wheeled robot to kill a sniper, fueling an ongoing debate about “killer robots” in policing and warfighting.

“There’s the potential for these robots to increase the militarization of police departments and use it in ways that are unacceptable,” Kim said. “Maybe it’s not something we even want to let law enforcement have.”



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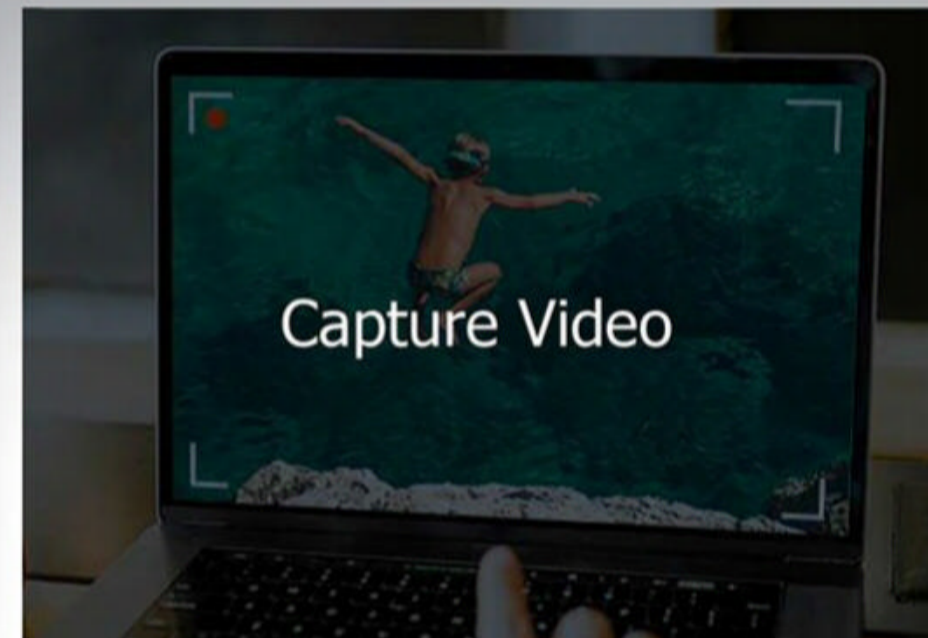
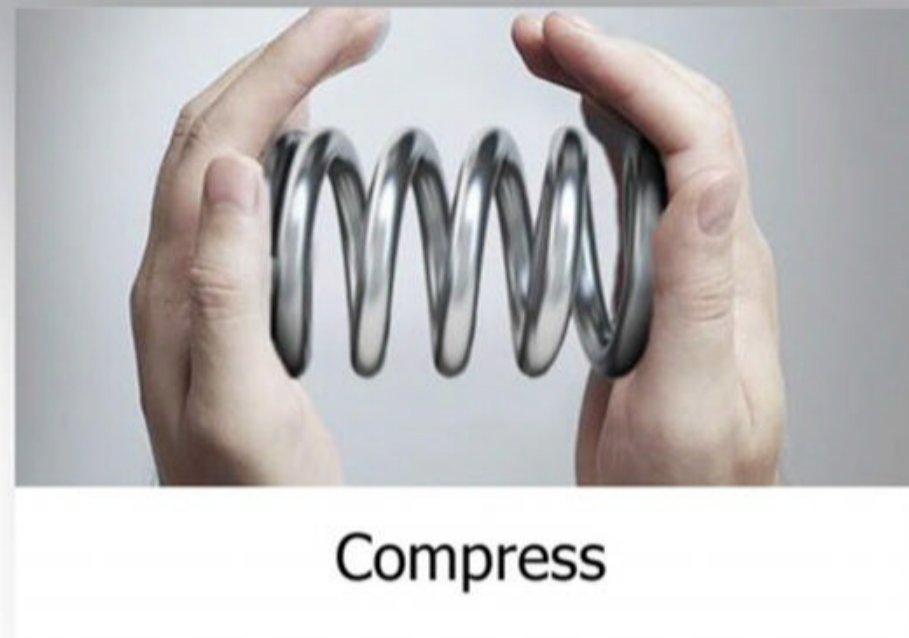
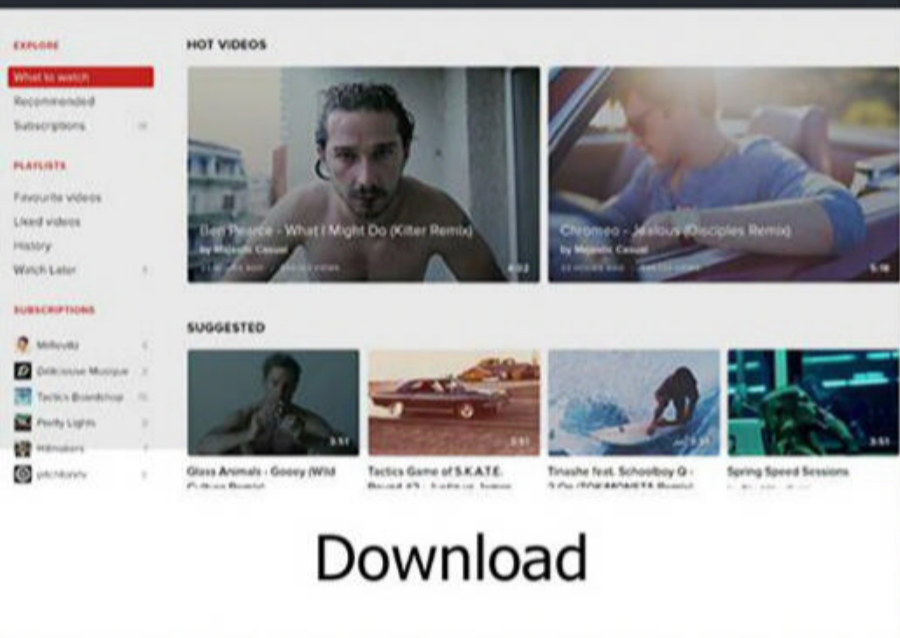
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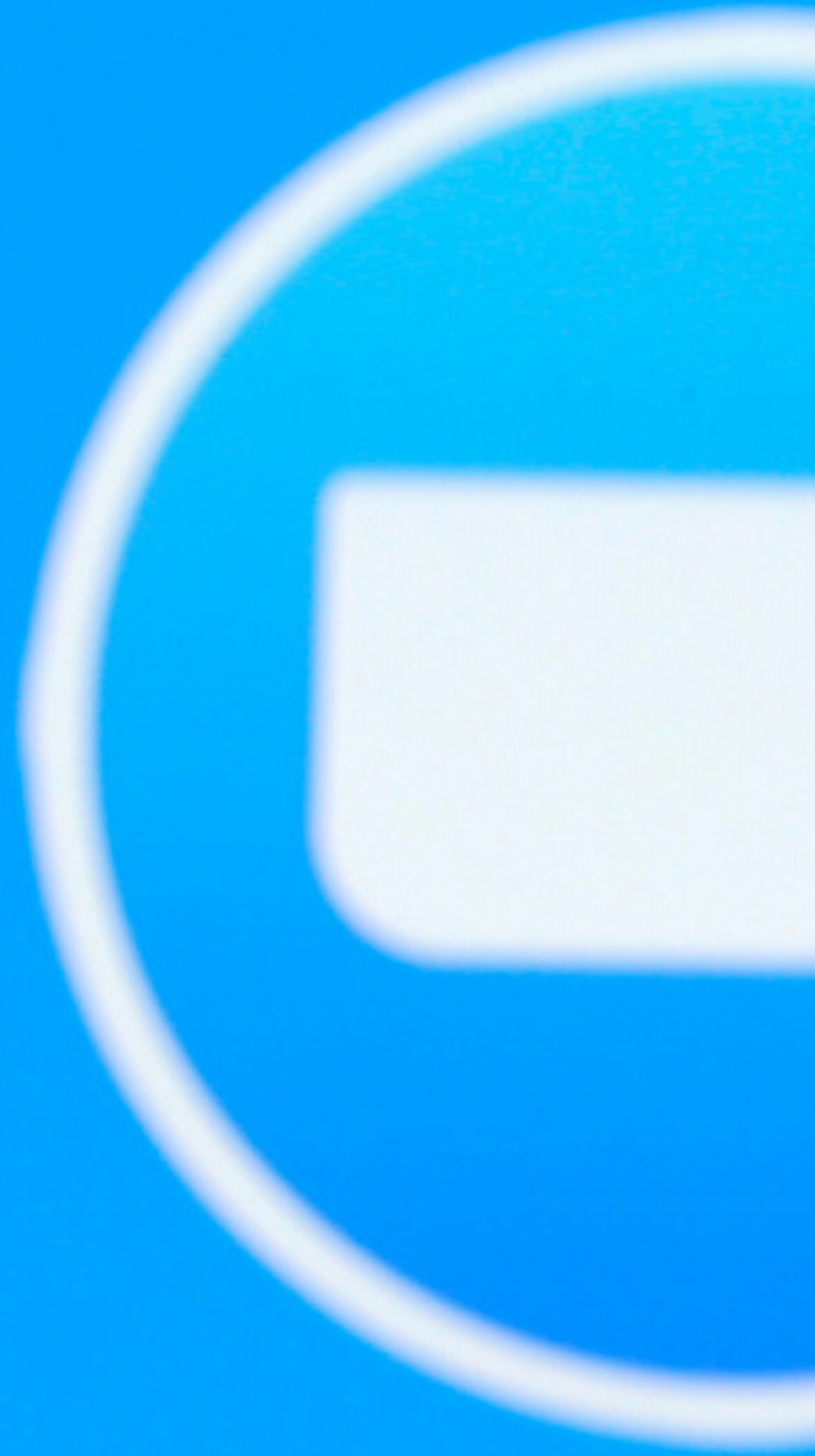
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ZOOM TO PAY \$85M FOR PRIVACY MISCUES AT START OF PANDEMIC



zoo





Zoom will pay \$85 million to settle a lawsuit alleging that weak privacy controls opened too many peepholes into the personal information of users and that it was too easy for outsiders to disrupt video meetings during the early stages of the pandemic.

The proposed agreement must still be approved by U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh. A hearing on the settlement is scheduled for Oct. 21 in San Jose, California.

Millions of people in the U.S. who have used Zoom since March 31, 2020 could be eligible for a slice of the settlement that was reached over the weekend. The payment amounts are expected to average \$34 or \$35 for those who subscribed to Zoom's paid version, and \$11 or \$12 for the overwhelming majority who used the free version, based on estimates in court documents.

Zoom was bedeviled by security issues early last year after stay-at-home orders transformed the company's videoconferencing service from a niche product into a cultural phenomenon.





Almost overnight it became the go-to venue for business meetings, schools, social gatherings and, in a deadly global pandemic, funerals.

The lawsuit alleged that the Silicon Valley company violated the trust of millions of people by sharing the personal information of users with platforms like Facebook, Google and Microsoft-owned LinkedIn. The case, which consolidated 14 different lawsuits filed since March 2020, also targeted the disruptive practice of “Zoombombing” — a term coined to describe hackers who broke into videoconferencing meetings being held by others.

The company in a prepared statement said that it acted quickly to tighten security after reports of Zoombombing began to surface.

“We are proud of the advancements we have made to our platform, and look forward to continuing to innovate with privacy and security at the forefront,” Zoom said. The company didn’t acknowledged any wrongdoing in the settlement.

Security concerns did not prevent Zoom from permeating the daily lives of millions during the pandemic.

The Zoom’s annual revenue quadrupled last year to nearly \$2.7 billion and it ended April with 497,000 customers that employed at least 10 workers and subscribed to the premium version of its service, up from 81,900 customers before the pandemic hit the U.S. Its stock price has tripled and traded close to \$380.

The lawyers that pursued the case are seeking \$21.25 million, or 25% of the \$85 million settlement fund.



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DATING CHANGED DURING THE PANDEMIC; APPS ARE FOLLOWING SUIT

Early in the coronavirus pandemic, Jennifer Sherlock went out with a few men she met through dating apps. The dates were “weird,” she said, and not just because they were masked, socially distanced and outdoors.

One one occasion, a date remained masked while they were out for a stroll, but soon after invited her back to his place, a move Sherlock saw as reckless. “It was so off putting, and awkward,” she said. “So we wouldn’t be safe outside without mask(s), but we would be safe back at his place maskless?”

She decided she needed a way to filter people, so she began arranging video chats before agreeing to meet anybody in person. Sherlock, 42, a PR consultant who lives in New Jersey, said it's a practice she'll continue post-pandemic.

Sherlock isn't alone in changing the way she used dating apps during the pandemic, prompting many to roll out new features. Despite the social distancing of the past 18 months, the use of dating apps in general has surged as people sought connections amid their isolation.

Tinder reported that 2020 was its busiest year yet; this year, its users have already set two records for usage between January and March. Hinge tripled its revenue from 2019 to 2020, and the company expects it to double from that this year.

In response to changing demands, Tinder announced new tools last month that will allow users to get to know people better online. People will now be able to add videos to their profile and can chat with others even before matching with them.

"Historically consumers were reluctant to connect via video because they didn't see the need for it," said Jess Carbino, an online dating expert and sociologist who has worked for Tinder and Bumble. Post-COVID, however, many people expect a higher degree of screening, she said. "Online dating apps like Tinder are leaning into that."

The dating apps say their research shows video chats are here to stay, even as life starts to return to normal in some parts of the world.





Almost half of Tinder users had a video chat with a match during the pandemic, with 40% of them intending to continue them post-pandemic.

Tinder says this is largely driven by Gen Z users in their late teens and early 20s, who now make up more than half of the app's users. And a majority of Hinge UK users, 69%, also say they'll continue with virtual dates after the pandemic.

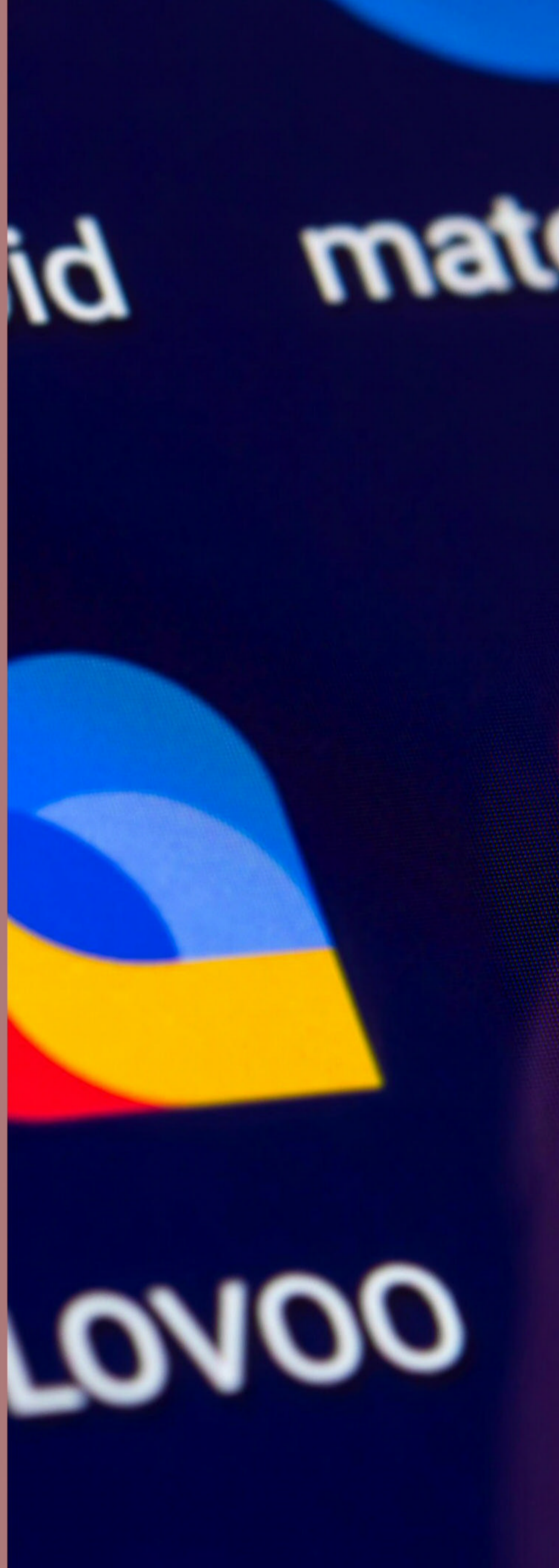
Tinder, alongside other popular apps including Hinge, OkCupid and Bumble, has in Britain and the U.S. partnered with the government to add a badge to profiles indicating that users have been vaccinated. (There's no verification process, though, so matches could be lying.)

Dating app users are also increasingly looking for deeper connections rather than casual encounters, Carbino said.

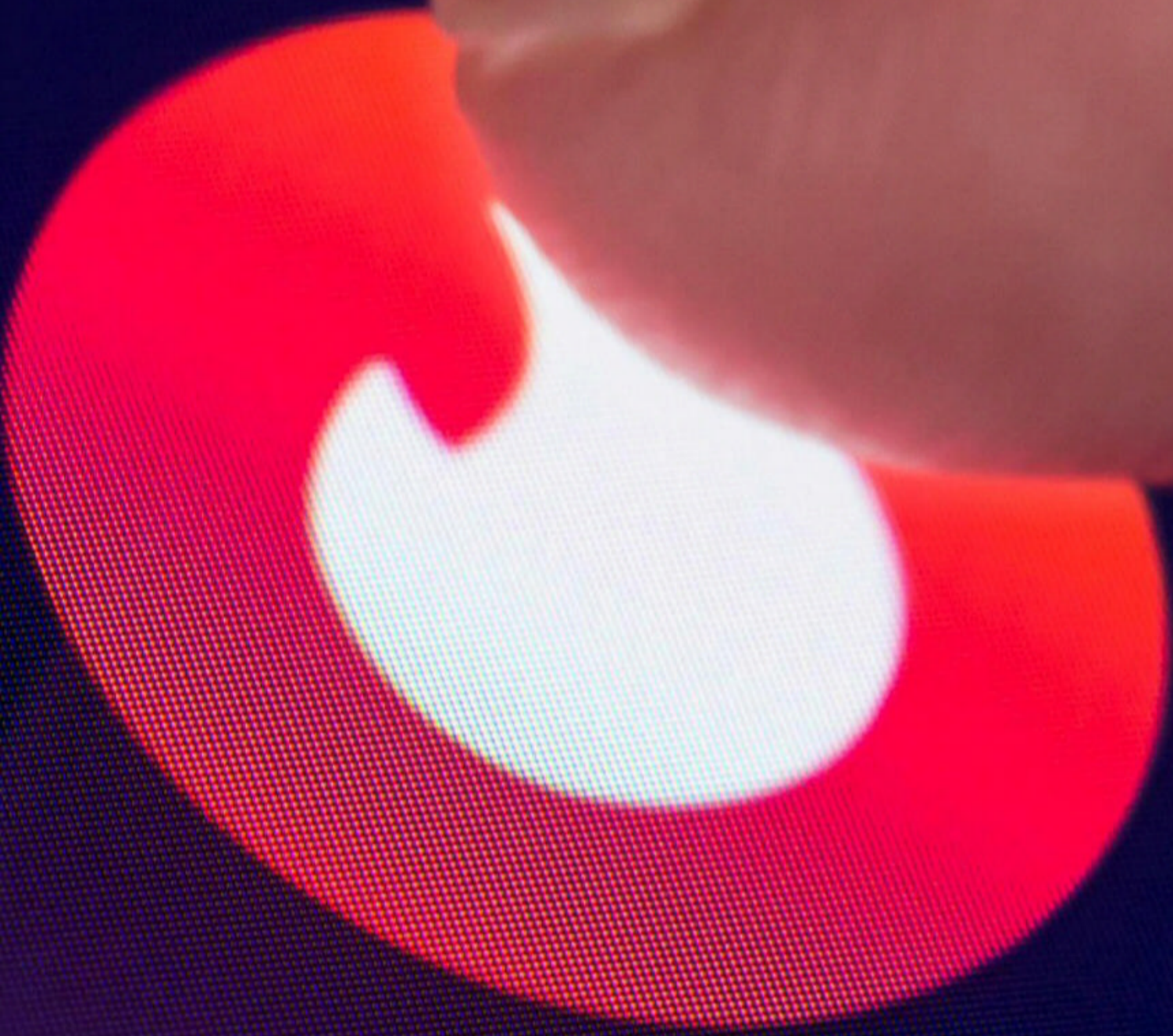
That's what happened to Maria del Mar, 29, an aerospace engineer, who wasn't expecting to end up in a relationship after she matched with someone on Tinder early in the pandemic last year.

She started chatting with her now-boyfriend through the app in April 2020 during a complete lockdown in Spain, where she lives. Having moved back to her parent's tiny town of León from Barcelona, del Mar was bored when she joined the app, but was surprised to find many things in common with her current partner.

After weeks of chatting, they finally met for a first date — a socially-distanced hike — after restrictions eased slightly in May 2020. Now the two have moved in together. "If it wasn't for the app, probably our paths wouldn't have crossed," she said.



ch.com



Tinder

Fac

Fernando Rosales, 32, was a frequent user of Grindr, an app popular with gay men looking for more casual encounters, in pre-pandemic times. He turned to Tinder for social connections when coronavirus restrictions prevented people from meeting others in London, where he lives.

“Grindr is like, ‘I like you, you like me, you’re within 100 meters of me, I’m going to come over,’” said Rosales, who works at the popular British coffee chain Pret.

“Tinder is something more social,” he added. Sometimes he uses the app just to meet others to play online video games or video chat.

Ocean, 26, a drag artist and photographer in Berlin, turned to the live video feature of a LGBTQ+ app called Taimi to make friends across the world during the pandemic. Having two-to-five minute video chats with strangers from places like the Philippines or parts of the U.S. was “amazing,” she said. Ocean’s given name is Kai Sistemich; she uses she/her pronouns when in drag.

She said she’ll continue using the feature post-pandemic, especially while she’s doing solo activities like cooking, or getting ready before going out to party.

Sherlock also expects some of her pandemic dating behaviors to carry into the post-pandemic world. She recently asked two men she was texting for Facetime chats before meeting in person, something she would not have done pre-pandemic.

“It’s a crazy dating world out there, so saving time is necessary,” she said.





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The word "amazon" is written in a large, white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A yellow arrow, the Amazon logo, is positioned below the letters 'a' and 'z', pointing from left to right.

amazon

A recommendation to nullify the election results of an Amazon union vote in Bessemer, Alabama is breathing new life into the labor movement.

The recommendation was issued Monday by a hearing officer for the National Labor Relations Board, who said that Amazon potentially interfered with the April election in which warehouse workers overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to unionize.

Labor experts say that it's rare for a hearing officer to call for a new election but in the case

of Amazon, there's a good chance it will happen since the NLRB regional director usually sticks with the hearing officer's guidance.

Moreover, the labor board's standards in determining a new election favors the union, not Amazon. The board needs to only figure out whether the company "reasonably tended to interfere with the employees' free and uncoerced choice in the election," not whether it in fact coerced employees, according to the preliminary 61-page opinion filed by the hearing officer, Kerstin Meyers.

"They are looking at whether there has been conduct that interferes with employees' free choice," said William Gould, a law professor at Stanford Law School and the former chairman of the NLRB from 1994 to 1998. "The board does not want the workers to believe that the employer is in control of the process. It's the government, the impartial third party, that is in control of the process, not the employer."

In its filing with the NLRB in April, the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union, which spearheaded the unionization campaign in Bessemer, said that Amazon threatened workers with layoffs and even closing the warehouse if they unionized. It also said Amazon fired a pro-union employee, but declined to name the person.

Many of the other allegations by the union revolve around a mailbox that Amazon installed in the parking lot of the Bessemer warehouse. It said the mailbox created the false appearance that Amazon was conducting the election, intimidating workers into voting against the union. Security cameras in the parking lot could have recorded workers going to the mailbox,





giving the impression that workers were being watched by the company and that their votes weren't private, according to the retail union.

In making her recommendation, Meyers wrote that the NLRB must consider several factors, including the number of incidents; the severity of the incidents and whether they were likely to cause fear among employees in the voting unit.

"The evidence demonstrates that the employer's conduct interfered with the laboratory conditions necessary to conduct a fair election," Meyers wrote.

Still, labor experts predict that any final outcome could take months, with lots of appeals from both sides. And many believe that even if there is a do-over, Amazon would still be victorious given the high turnover of workers at the company's warehouses, which makes it difficult for unionizing efforts to gain any steam.

"It would be a huge moral victory to throw out the election, especially with all the serious allegations," said Kent Wong, the director of the UCLA Labor Center. "But it still would be an uphill fight in securing a victory at the election."

Even if the union won, Amazon could appeal, says Alexander Colvin, professor of labor relations, law and history at Cornell University.

"They could argue that somehow the election was tainted," he said. "They have a lot of ability to drag it out procedurally and not engage in bargaining."

The process for any conclusion is expected to be lengthy.

Both Amazon and the RWDSU may file responses to the hearing officer's recommendation.



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UNION YES!**







Then, the NLRB regional director must review the recommendations and issue a decision on whether a new election will be ordered. A decision could take a few weeks, according to the labor board, and either party could appeal the decision to the full NLRB board in Washington.

So far, Amazon has indicated it is ready to fight, issuing a statement late Monday that its employees “voted overwhelmingly in favor of a direct connection with their managers and the company. Their voice should be heard above all else, and we plan to appeal to ensure that happens.”

The Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, which represents more than 600 major business organizations including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Restaurant Association, slammed the NLRB’s preliminary recommendations, which could overturn the will of Amazon’s workers.

“It’s disappointing that the NLRB is considering to side with Big Labor by setting aside the will of American workers,” said Kristen Swearingen, chairman of the coalition in a statement.

Stuart Applebaum, president of the RWDSU, said that he wasn’t surprised by the hearing officer’s recommendations and that if another election is held, the union will have a better chance of being victorious. He says labor organizers are still on the ground in Bessemer and he is seeing the pro-union movement grow more among the workers.

“Amazon may have won the first vote count, but they are losing the debate all over the world,” Applebaum said.

Movies & TV Shows



Rotten Tomatoes



59%



by Justin Lin
Genre: Action & Adventure
Released: 2021
Price: \$19.99



F9 - Official Trailer [HD]

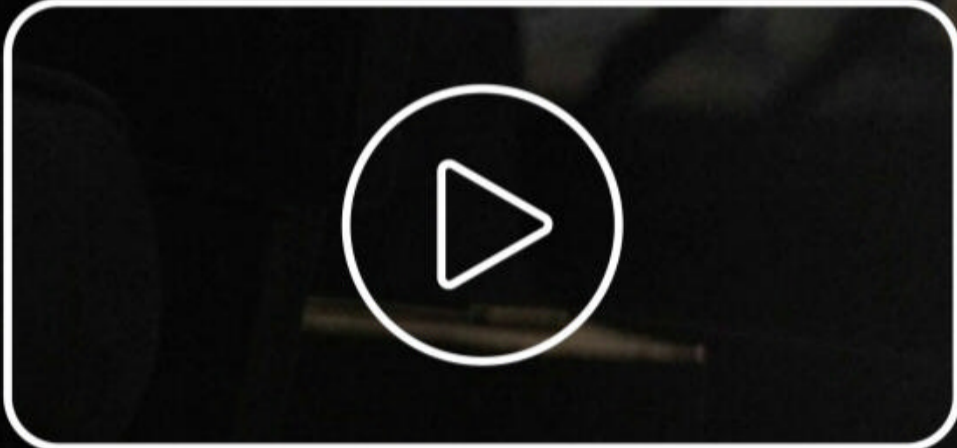
F9: The Fast Saga

Dom Toretto (Vin Diesel) has settled down for a quiet life with his wife Letty Ortiz (Michelle Rodriguez), but soon reemerges from retirement to confront his brother Jakob (John Cena), who is intent on a dangerous plot encouraged by cyberterrorist Cipher (Charlize Theron).

FIVE FACTS:

1. This is the first Fast & Furious film directed by Justin Lin since 2013's Fast & Furious 6.
2. F9 heavily features Red Digital Cinema's Hydrogen One smartphone, which was discontinued in November 2019 – after filming was completed but well before the movie was released.
3. Sportswriter and podcaster Bill Simmons cameos as a pit crew member.
4. The eight main Fast & Furious films and its 2019 spinoff, Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw, have **together grossed about \$5.7 billion.**
5. This has made the Fast & Furious film series Universal's highest-grossing – eclipsing even the Jurassic Park series, including the Jurassic World films.





Vin Diesel Gets Emotional About Working with His Son in F9 | The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

Ride The Eagle

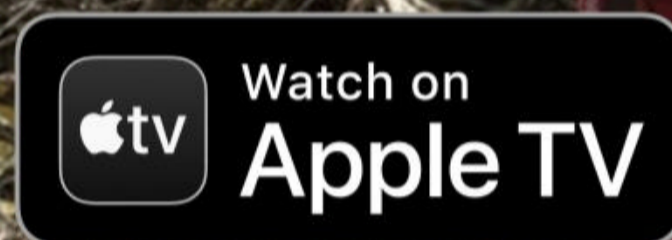
Leif (Jake Johnson) is left a “conditional inheritance” by his recently-deceased mother Honey (Susan Sarandon) – who, from beyond the grave, has given Leif an elaborate to-do list for him to complete before he is allowed to move into her picturesque Yosemite cabin.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Independent distributor Decal **obtained the global distribution rights to Ride the Eagle in May 2021** and set a release date of July 30, 2021.
2. The film’s director, Trent O’Donnell, co-wrote its script with Johnson.
3. “In the midst of the pandemic, while missing everyone, Trent O’Donnell and I wanted to make a movie about people coming together,” **Johnson claimed in a statement.**
4. “We are beyond thrilled to be part of the wild and wonderful world that is Ride the Eagle,” Decal’s Ayo Kepher-Maat and Sara Castillo enthused.
5. According to Sarandon, the film’s message is to **“stop taking yourself so seriously”**.



by Trent O’Donnell
Genre: Comedy
Released: 2021
Price: \$14.99



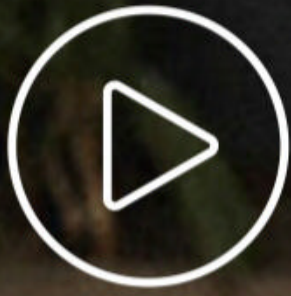
Rotten Tomatoes



74%



Ride The Eagle - Official Traile



Jake Johnson talks about his new movie "Ride The Eagle" and the possibility of a "New Girl" Reboot





Music





Genre: Alternative
Number of Songs: 8
Price: \$11.99



Billie Eilish - my future

Happier Than Ever

Billie Eilish

"It wasn't forced, it wasn't pressured, it wasn't scary," Billie Eilish revealed to Apple Music about making her second studio album – which, befitting its title, has a lighter feel than her debut studio album *WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?* from 2019.

FIVE FACTS:

1. "I feel like everything I've created before this, as much as I love it, was kind of a battle with myself," Eilish further revealed.
2. Eilish has had various associations with Apple over the years, including **being named Apple Music's Up Next artist in September 2017.**
3. The behind-the-scenes documentary *Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry* was released on Apple's video streaming service Apple TV+ in February 2021.
4. Eilish performed the song "my future" for the first time **at the Democratic National Convention in August 2020.**
5. Eilish posed in lingerie for the cover photograph **of the June 2021 issue of the British version of Vogue magazine.**





*Billie Eilish - Therefore I Am
(Official Music Video)*

The House Is Burning

Isaiah Rashad

“Hopefully this is the start of something new – no more five-year gaps,” Isaiah Rashad – a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee – told Apple Music, referring to how long his fans have had to wait for his third studio album since its predecessor, *The Sun’s Tirade*, arrived back in 2016.

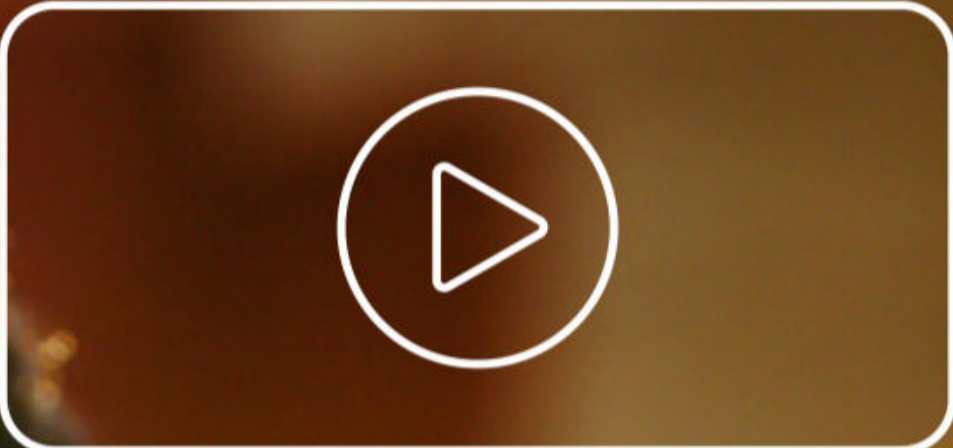
FIVE FACTS:

1. Rashad has cited **Outkast, No Limit, Fugees and Usher as examples of his musical influences.**
2. The first single released from the new album, “Lay Wit Ya” in May, features rapper Duke Deuce.
3. According to Rashad, “Lay Wit Ya” was made in about 10 minutes.
4. For the album’s second single, “Headshots (4r Da Locals)”, Rashad was – as he explained to Apple Music – “doing an Anthony Hamilton impression more than anything else.”
5. Meanwhile, Rashad described the track “Score” as “probably one of my favorite songs out the whole album”, simply due to how “different” it sounds to him.



Genre: Hip-Hop/Rap
Number of Songs: 16
Price: \$9.99





Isaiah Rashad - Lay Wit Ya ft. Duke Deuce (Official Music Video)





*Isaiah Rashad - Headshots (4r Da Locals)
[Official Music Video]*





EMILY BLUNT TRANSCENDS OVERSTUFFED 'JUNGLE CRUISE'

Remember lighthearted throwback adventure movies? "The Mummy"? "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"? "Pirates of the Caribbean"? The first one, at least? How about the classic romantic banter of a handsome but wholly mismatched pair in "Romancing the Stone" or "The African Queen"?

"Jungle Cruise" certainly does and isn't about to let you forget it, either. This is a film whose sole purpose is to remind you of at least a dozen other movies that you remember fondly and coast from there. And it almost gets away with it thanks entirely to its charismatic and entirely game stars Emily Blunt and Dwayne Johnson, who mostly make you forget that you're watching a movie based on a theme park ride that seems to have been made-to-order at the nostalgia factory. Wearing inspirations on your sleeve isn't a cinematic crime, but "Jungle Cruise,"

directed by Jaume Collet-Serra and written by Glenn Ficarra, John Requa and Michael Green, often does so at its own detriment.

The set-up is forgivably contrived involving Spanish conquistadors, a maniacal German prince (a brilliantly over-the-top Jesse Plemons) and an earnest English woman, Blunt's Lily Houghton, who have all devoted their lives to finding a mythical cure-all called "Tears of the Moon." After a truly terrific introduction to Lily involving a solitary heist in a museum's archives, she and her dandy brother MacGregor (a scene-stealing Jack Whitehall) travel to the Amazon jungle where they enlist a struggling riverboat captain, Frank (Johnson), to lead them down the river in search of this flower.

"Jungle Cruise" is knowingly and enjoyably cartoonish from its production design to its costumes (although some of the CGI animals are distractingly artificial for a production of this size). But it gets bogged down its own overexplained mythology when it could have simply sailed on the simple quest for a magical MacGuffin.

Johnson's Frank is fun, though. The screenwriters have given him a boatload of cheesy puns as a nod to the theme park ride, and Johnson sells it like he always does. He continues to be very watchable and light, and he and Blunt are clearly having a blast together. Their energy is infectious.

Blunt, meanwhile, is wholly wonderful and operating on another level. She is completely and effortlessly at home as Lily, and it would be delightful to see this character again on the big screen.





Disney's Jungle Cruise
Official Trailer



Jungle Cruise | Official Trailer 2



But there's also a big problem: "Jungle Cruise" does not work as the romance that it wants to be. Blunt and Johnson have terrific chemistry and banter, just not the romantic kind. It's more of a platonic buddy cop partnership, which is perfectly fine, but the script tries to force it to be something else and it just feels false, especially as more and more of the plot hinges on Lily and Frank's relationship.

Also, despite herculean efforts, Blunt and Johnson can only do so much with a script that too often falls back on milquetoast zingers about Lily's pants, Frank's guitar and MacGregor's material obsessions. There's also some curious choices when it comes to how they frame the sexism and misogyny of the time: Is it believable that a group of male scientists who very recently lived under Queen Victoria would find it laughable to suggest that a woman could lead an Amazonian tribe?

Perhaps my expectations got a little too high over the course of the past year and all of my summer movie hopes started to rest on "Jungle Cruise." It is a fine adventure with two genuine movie stars that may very well become a rewatchable staple like the films it references. But on first watch, it mostly comes across as an earnest and safe homage.

"Jungle Cruise," a Walt Disney Pictures release in theaters and available to rent on Disney+, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "adventure violence." Running time: 127 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.





REVIEW

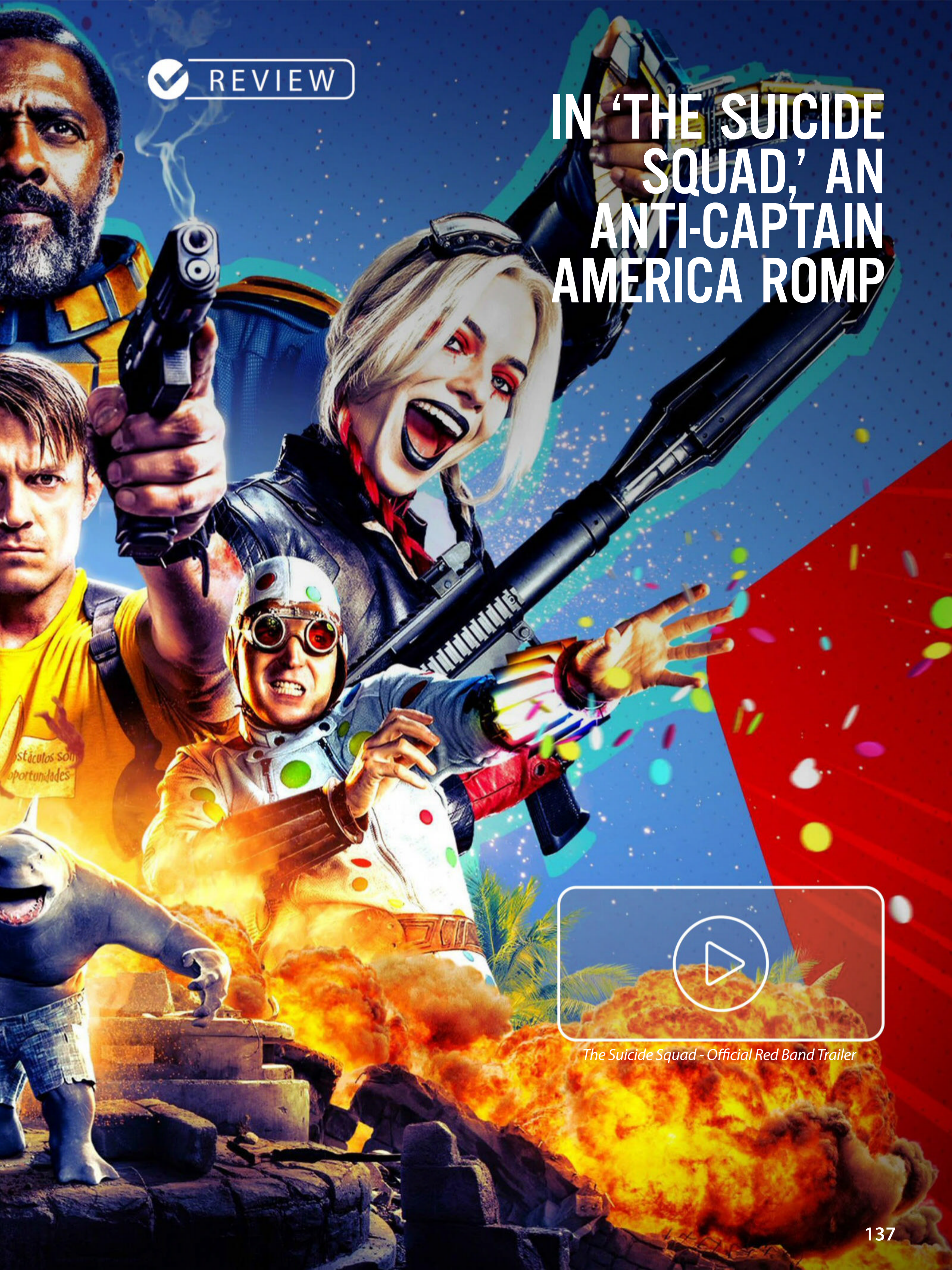


*Secret Skipper | Disney's Jungle Cruise
Experience It Now*



 REVIEW

IN 'THE SUICIDE SQUAD,' AN ANTI-CAPTAIN AMERICA ROMP



The Suicide Squad - Official Red Band Trailer





One little article separates James Gunn's "The Suicide Squad" from David Ayer's "Suicide Squad." But, oh, what a difference a word makes.

Just five years after the trainwreck that prompted Warner Bros. to retool its DC Comics universe, James Gunn's nearly wholesale re-do exists in an entirely different movie galaxy. "The Suicide Squad" may go down as one of the greatest, and quickest, do-overs in blockbusterdom.

Like Gunn's two "Guardians of the Galaxy" movies, "The Suicide Squad" is a chaotic, freewheeling inversion of much of what's expected in a comic book movie. Here, heroes die (a lot of them). Most aren't really heroes, either. Some aren't even human. But they've been sprung from prison for a kamikaze mission on behalf of the U.S. government. In this motliest of crews, no one has anything like a sleek shield or a clean caped suit.

Gunn came to "The Suicide Squad" (which opens Aug. 5 in theaters and on HBO Max) in a brief window opened by social-media scandal. Disney fired him from Marvel for some old, dug-up tweets, only to, after the protests of his "Guardians" cast, be rehired to direct "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3". But in the interim, Warner and D.C. poached the writer-director, one of the few filmmakers in the genre with the nerve and talent to not exactly buck the system but deconstruct it, and turn superhero myth into slapstick farce.

Gunn has said he was initially offered the chance to direct a Superman movie, but it's telling that he turned down the crown jewel of DC for the likes of Polka-Dot Man, Ratcatcher 2 (who communicates with rodents) and Nanaue, a cartoonish walking shark in jams.

SPQRMA





But if most mainline superhero movies ultimately exalt American ideals like justice, individualism and might, Gunn goes exactly the other way. "The Suicide Squad" is the anti-Superman, a madcap rejoinder to Captain America. In Gunn's hands, the America superhero is grotesque, brutal and ridiculous. Like Gunn's previous movies, "The Suicide Squad" boasts wall-to-wall needle drops (the Pixies' "Hey," Louis Armstrong's "I Ain't Got Nobody"), yet leaves out maybe the most fitting song, Childish Gambino's "This Is America."

Early on in "The Suicide Squad" we get a sense that the mission is dubious. Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) summons a bunch of prisoners for Task Force X program. Exactly who are to be our main characters and who's head is about to be sliced like a melon takes some sorting out. But in a clown-car of a superhero movie the most central protagonist is Idris Elba's Bloodsport, a mercenary only coaxed into joining the team when Waller threatens prison time or worse for his teenage daughter (Storm Reid, very good).

With him are Ratcatcher 2 (Daniela Melchior, a standout), a laconic, warm-hearted Millennial with a very polite pet rat named Sebastian on her shoulder. The skills of Polka-Dot Man (David Dastmalchian) are initially hard to decipher, but the shy, stunted Abner proves surprisingly capable, even if he, himself, sheepishly apologizes for having such a "flamboyant" power.

There is also John Cena's Peacemaker, easily the most jingoist of the bunch, a kind of Captain America knockoff. Just what each squad member feels about their home country and its

THE SUICIDE SQUAD – Official
"Rain" Trailer

role in international backwaters is prominently in play in "The Suicide Squad." The gang is sent to a dictator-controlled South American island in the midst of a populist uprising to keep safe a secret, locked-away alien species housed in a concrete tower. This is the sinister unseen side to American glory; a monstrous extraterrestrial starfish picked up on a seemingly triumphant space mission. Unclear is whether the task force is there to prevent an apocalyptic threat or shroud a dubious offshore U.S. experiment.

But there are others, too. Nanaue (voiced with monosyllabic perfection by Sylvester Stallone) is a worthy heir to Groot from "Guardians of the Galaxy" and a man-eating reminder to how very close to cartoon Gunn's movie is. The group's more serious, highly trained field leader, Joel Kinnaman as Rick Flag, is a kind of straight man to the antic gang in the same way that dramatic, ballad-singing actors starred alongside the Marx brothers.

Also in the mix is Margot Robbie's Harley Quinn. It's her third film in that character but the best yet in capturing Quinn's chipper mania. A brief romantic interest tells her he adores her for symbolizing anti-American fervor. Within minutes, he's lying dead on the floor.

Does "The Suicide Squad" overdo it? Of course. It's a little absurd to even ask that about a movie with a talking shark that rips bodies in half and interstitial debates about, for instance, whether the phrase "tighty whities" is racist. Gunn throws so much into his superhero collider that he sometimes sacrifices depth (backstories are poignant but thin) for wit and idiosyncrasy.





But as over-the-top and thoroughly R-rated as “The Suicide Squad” is, it’s not nihilistic. That’s maybe a questionable argument to make for a film that includes an inside-the-body close-up of a dagger piercing a beating heart. But as much as Gunn steers his movies into chaos, they have a surprising amount of heart and thoughtfulness to them.

Within “The Suicide Squad” is not only a negotiation with American power, and its depiction in comic-book movies, but a heartfelt if extreme gallery of damaged souls. It’s a kind of genuinely tender freak show. The upside of selecting DC characters from the Z-list is that Gunn has free reign in molding and shaping them as he likes. And, as in “Guardians,” his heroes all derive their strange powers from emotional trauma. They are outcasts, weirdos, laughing stocks and whatever you call Nanaue. That makes “The Suicide Squad” — as ridiculous as it is to say about a movie that renders a bloody rampage with gushes of animated daisies and birdies — kind of beautiful. Plus, the shark in jams is funny.

“Suicide Squad,” a Warner Bros. release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong violence and gore, language throughout, some sexual references, drug use and brief graphic nudity. Running time: 132 minutes. Three stars out of four.

MPAA definition of R: Restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.









THE SUICIDE SQUAD - Rebellion Trailer

BOBBY TARAN



NTINO 

TOP 10 ALBUMS



HAPPIER THAN EVER
BILLIE EILISH

WELCOME 2 AMERICA
PRINCE

INTO THE MYSTERY
NEEDTOBREATHE

BOBBY TARANTINO III
LOGIC

SWITCH ON
ASTRO

SOUR
OLIVIA RODRIGO

GOLD CHAIN COWBOY
PARKER MCCOLLUM

THE HOUSE IS BURNING
ISAIAH RASHAD

GREATEST HITS
ZZ TOP

SOB ROCK
JOHN MAYER





TOP 10 MUSIC VIDEOS

THE KILLERS ON PRESSURE MACHINE
THE KILLERS

THE WRITING ON THE WALL
IRON MAIDEN

SOLAR POWER
LORDE

SKATE
BRUNO MARS, ANDERSON .PAAK, & SILK SONIC

STOP DRAGGIN' YOUR BOOTS
DANIELLE BRADBERRY

SCARS IN HEAVEN (OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO)
CASTING CROWS

INDUSTRY BABY
LIL NAS X & JACK HARLOW

BTS (방탄소년단) 'PERMISSION TO DANCE'
BTS

JIREH (FEAT. CHANDLER MOORE &...)
ELEVATION WORSHIP & MAVERICK CITY MUSIC

FANCY LIKE
WALKER HAYES





TOP 10 TV SHOWS

GOTRON JERRYSIS RICKVANGELION

RICK AND MORTY, SEASON 5 (UNCENSORED)

GOING HAM AT THE PAJAMMY JAM

THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF POTOMAC, SEASON 6

SHAH-NANIGANS

SHAHS OF SUNSET, SEASON 9

RICK & MORTY'S THANKSPLOITATION...

RICK AND MORTY, SEASON 5 (UNCENSORED)

SHE'S A SNAKE IN THE GRASS

90 DAY FIANCE: HAPPILY EVER AFTER?, SEASON 6

POWER

ANIMAL KINGDOM, SEASON 5

WE CAN ALL USE A LITTLE EMPATHY

SIESTA KEY, SEASON 4

AMORTYCAN GRICKFITTI

RICK AND MORTY, SEASON 5 (UNCENSORED)

AFFAIRS AND ACCIDENTS

THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS, SEASON 11

BABY IT'S COLD INSIDE

THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF NEW YORK CITY, SEASON 13

STEPH KIN

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...wrong
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...I went over to Ca
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...ne Driv

SU

WINTER
SING

TOP 10 BOOKS

BILLY SUMMERS

STEPHEN KING

CLASS ACT

STUART WOODS

BLIND TIGER

SANDRA BROWN

SINGE

CHELLE BLISS

WINNING WITH HIM

LAUREN BLAKELY

THE LAST THING HE TOLD ME

LAURA DAVE

WE WERE NEVER HERE

ANDREA BARTZ

BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE

LAYLA HAGEN

MERCY

DAVID BALDACCI

BLACK ICE

BRAD THOR

WINTER
SING
SUMMER

THE KID LAROI

STAY

JUSTIN BIEBER

TOP 10 SONGS

BAD HABITS

ED SHEERAN

FANCY LIKE

WALKER HAYES

VOLVÍ

AVENTURA & BAD BUNNY

STAY

THE KID LAROI & JUSTIN BIEBER

SKATE

BRUNO MARS, ANDERSON .PAAK & SILK SONIC

IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU

JASON ALDEAN & CARRIE UNDERWOOD

LEVITATING

DUA LIPA

LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN

BRUNO MARS, ANDERSON .PAAK & SILK SONIC

LIL BIT

NELLY & FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

BEST FRIEND

SAWEETIE

W

REESE WITHERSPOON SELLS HELLO SUNSHINE, JOINS NEW COMPANY

It's a perfect day for Reese Witherspoon as the actress and producer is selling the media company she founded to a newly formed company backed by private equity firm Blackstone Group.

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed but The Wall Street Journal reported that the deal was worth about \$900 million.

Witherspoon, known for her roles in films such as "Legally Blonde" and "Walk the Line," created Hello Sunshine in 2016. She will continue to oversee its day-to-day operations along with members of Hello Sunshine's existing senior management team, including CEO Sarah






Harden. Witherspoon and Harden will also serve as board members for the new media company run by entertainment executives Kevin Mayer and Tom Staggs.

Hello Sunshine, which focuses on putting women at the center of its stories, creates scripted and unscripted television, feature films, animated series, podcasts, audio storytelling, and digital series – including “Big Little Lies,” “The Morning Show,” and “Little Fires Everywhere.” It is also houses Reese’s Book Club, with many of the club’s picks turned into movies or limited series.









TYSON FOODS, MICROSOFT TO REQUIRE VACCINATION FOR US WORKERS

Tyson Foods will require all of its U.S. employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19, becoming one of the first major employers of front-line workers to do so amid a resurgence of the virus.

Microsoft also announced this week that it will require proof of vaccination for all employees, vendors and visitors to its U.S. offices starting in September, following similar actions recently taken by Google and Facebook. Microsoft also postponed its planned return to the workplace from September to no earlier than Oct. 4, although it will allow flexibility for some employees to continue working from home, including parents of children who are not eligible for vaccines.

While vaccination mandates have gained traction among employers, many of the companies adopting them have workforces that can transition to remote locations easily.

Many companies that rely on large low-income workforces have far largely declined to mandate vaccines for their front-line workers, making Tyson's announcement significant.

One of the world's largest food companies, Tyson said that members of its leadership team must be vaccinated by Sept. 24 and the rest of its office workers by Oct. 1. Its front-line workers must be vaccinated by Nov. 1, although the company said the specifics were being negotiated with unions.

Just under half of its U.S. workforce — about 56,000 employees — have been vaccinated after the company staged more than 100 vaccination events since February, it said.

The Springfield, Arkansas, company plans to continue with those events and offer a \$200 bonus for all front-line workers who receive a vaccine.

The United Food and Commercial Workers, which represents Tyson workers, criticized the company for imposing the requirement while the vaccines still have only emergency approval from the Food and Drug Administration. UFCW International President Marc Perrone said the union would be meeting with the company over the next weeks to “ensure that the rights of these workers are protected, and this policy is fairly implemented.”

“While we support and encourage workers getting vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, and have actively encouraged our members to do so, it is concerning that Tyson is implementing this mandate before the FDA has fully approved the vaccine,” Perrone said in a prepared statement.

In a memo to employees, Tyson CEO Donnie King expressed alarm over the rise of the delta variant and made clear the vaccine requirement was needed to overcome persistent hesitancy to get the shots.





Grilled & Ready

FULLY COOKED

SOUTHWESTERN
CHICKEN
BREAST STRIPS
STYLE

SKINLESS WITH RIB MEAT
SMOKE FLAVOR ADDED

made with
White Meat

USE BY





“We did not take this decision lightly. We have spent months encouraging our team members to get vaccinated – today, under half of our team members are,” King wrote.

Tyson, whose brands include Jimmy Dean and Hillshire Farm, has grappled with deadly outbreaks of the virus at its plants and faced lawsuits from the families of some workers. Tyson said the number of infections at its plant are currently low after the company spent \$700 million to better safeguard workers.

Other companies, including Amazon, Walmart and major grocery chains, have so far declined to mandate vaccines for their front-line workers, in part to avoid fueling a labor crunch and persistent worker turnover. The companies are instead continuing with information campaigns, bonuses, time off and other incentives.

Many unions also are firmly opposed to vaccine mandates for their workers.

The spread of the delta variant is also prompting some companies to reimpose mask mandates for workers — even those who are vaccinated — in keeping with new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Unionized auto workers at three companies — General Motors, Ford and Stellantis — will have to go back to wearing masks regardless of their vaccination status, according to a decision announced this week by a task force of representatives from the companies and the United Auto Workers. The move comes just under a month after vaccinated union workers were allowed to shed their masks.



Warm Notice:
Only Used For Daily Protection, Kitchen
Protection, Isolation, Please Remove
The Outer Protective Film Before Using
Please Away From Fire.



The task force encourages all workers to get vaccinations so mask requirements can eventually be relaxed.

However, Brian Rothenberg, spokesman for the 397,000-member United Auto Workers, said the union is against vaccine requirements because some people have religious or health concerns about vaccinations.

Still, tougher vaccine rules are gaining traction among restaurants, bars and some big entertainment companies, both for workers and customers. Some employers, including the federal government and some state and local authorities, are requiring that unvaccinated workers put up with weekly testing, stopping short of an outright mandate.

In Las Vegas, MGM Resorts International announced that unvaccinated employees would have to pay \$15 to get tested for the virus onsite, or obtain a test offsite and bring in the results. The company also said that unvaccinated employees would not be paid for time off to quarantine if they test positive for the virus.

MGM Resorts has conducted several vaccination clinics and offered incentives including drawings for employees to win prizes such hotel stays and cash. But President and CEO Bill Hornbuckle expressed frustration at the region's low vaccination rate in a letter to employees imploring them to get the shots.

"Our region's low vaccination rate is putting us back on the path to overrun hospitals, unnecessary deaths, fewer tourists, and possible furloughs and layoffs," Hornbuckle wrote. "None of us want that."





MASK GUIDANCE DIVIDES PARENTS HEADING INTO NEW SCHOOL YEAR

With U.S. health officials recommending that children mask up in school this fall, parents and policy makers across the nation have been plunged anew into a debate over whether face coverings should be optional or a mandate.

The delta variant of the coronavirus now threatens to upend normal instruction for a third consecutive school year. Some states have indicated they will probably heed the federal government's guidance and require masks. Others will leave the decision up to parents.

The controversy is unfolding at a time when many Americans are at their wits' end with pandemic restrictions and others fear their children will be put at risk by those who don't take the virus seriously enough. In a handful of Republican-led states, lawmakers made it illegal for schools to require masks.

In Connecticut, anti-mask rallies have happened outside Gov. Ned Lamont's official residence in Hartford, and lawn signs and bumper stickers call on him to "unmask our kids." The Democrat has said that he's likely to follow the latest advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC recommended indoor masks for all teachers, staff, students and visitors at schools nationwide, regardless of vaccination status. The agency cited the risk of spread of the highly contagious delta variant, even among vaccinated people.

Alima Bryant, 33, a mother of four who organizes anti-mask parents in Branford, Connecticut, said she's not a conspiracy theorist, but she believes scientists have overstated the dangers of COVID-19, especially for children. She said she will take her children out of school rather than subject them to wearing masks, which she believes are more likely to make them ill than the virus.

"Especially with little kids, I can imagine how often they're touching dirty things, then touching the mask," she said. "Also, in kindergarten, you have to learn social cues, and even with speech and everything, it's so important to not be wearing a mask."

But parents such as Ryan Zuimmerman, of Lenexa, Kansas, fear that approach will prolong the pandemic.

In Johnson County, Kansas, the state's most populous county, five districts recommend but do not require masks. A sixth district has not yet decided.





Zimmerman, speaking at a recent meeting of country commissioners, said that if masks are only recommended and not required, “95% of kids won’t be wearing them.”

“This isn’t about comfort or control or obedience or your rights. It is not conspiracy or child abuse. It is about doing unto others as you want them to do unto you,” he said.

“I ask you this: If it was your kid who was high risk, what if you had to send that kid you had spent your whole life protecting to school in this environment?”

Another public meeting, this one in Broward County, Florida, had to be postponed for a day this week after roughly two dozen mask opponents waged screaming matches with school board members and burned masks outside the building.

When the discussion resumed, it was limited to 10 public speakers, and all but one spoke vehemently against masks, saying their personal rights were being eroded.

Vivian Hug, a Navy veteran, brought her twins with her as she addressed board members, saying she was tired of the “fear mongering” and giving up “freedoms in the name of safety.”

“Please stop the insanity. You have already done damage to these kids having to wear masks,” she said before putting her daughter up to the microphone, where the little girl complained that masks make it hard for her to breathe and give her headaches.

But Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Delaware Division of Public Health, said there is no credible evidence masks are unsafe for children.





She said the science is clear that face coverings have prevented the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

“If we want to have kids in school this fall, and as many kids as we possibly can get into school, masks are a key component,” she said.

Amid the debate, there is also a push to get more older kids vaccinated. President Joe Biden has asked schools to host vaccine clinics for the those 12 and older, and states are also beginning to discuss whether to mandate that school employees either be vaccinated or undergo frequent testing for the coronavirus.

“To me that seems very reasonable,” said Dr. Joseph Kanter, the state health officer of the Louisiana Department of Health. “You achieve the goal of providing a safe environment. You maintain some choice in there. And clearly most people are going to look at that and say it make sense for them to get vaccinated, given that context.”

The push to vaccinate children varies by country. Half of 12- to 17-year-olds in Estonia’s second-largest city of Tartu have received their first vaccine shot, and local health officials are working to push the number to 70% before the school year begins. Countries such as Denmark and France also are actively encouraging vaccination of children, while others such Sweden and the United Kingdom have yet to begin mass vaccinations for those under 18.

The Pfizer shot is currently the only U.S. vaccine authorized for children 12 years and up. Moderna expects the Food and Drug Administration to rule soon on its application for children in the same age group.









Moderna said that it expects to have enough data to apply for FDA authorization for younger children by late this year or early 2022. Pfizer has said it expects to apply in September for children ages 5 through 11.

But some parents, such as Bryant, say they will not get their children vaccinated, even after the kids are eligible, until they know more about potential side effects. Bryant said she knows people who have had severe reactions and others who believe it has affected their menstrual cycles.

Kanter urges families to vaccinate all eligible children. He said the argument that they rarely get severely ill from COVID-19 is becoming outdated.

“As an absolute number, we are seeing younger individuals and kids get sicker in higher numbers and get more severe numbers with delta than they have before,” he said.

Young people themselves have been wrestling with misinformation and vaccine hesitancy among parents and peers.

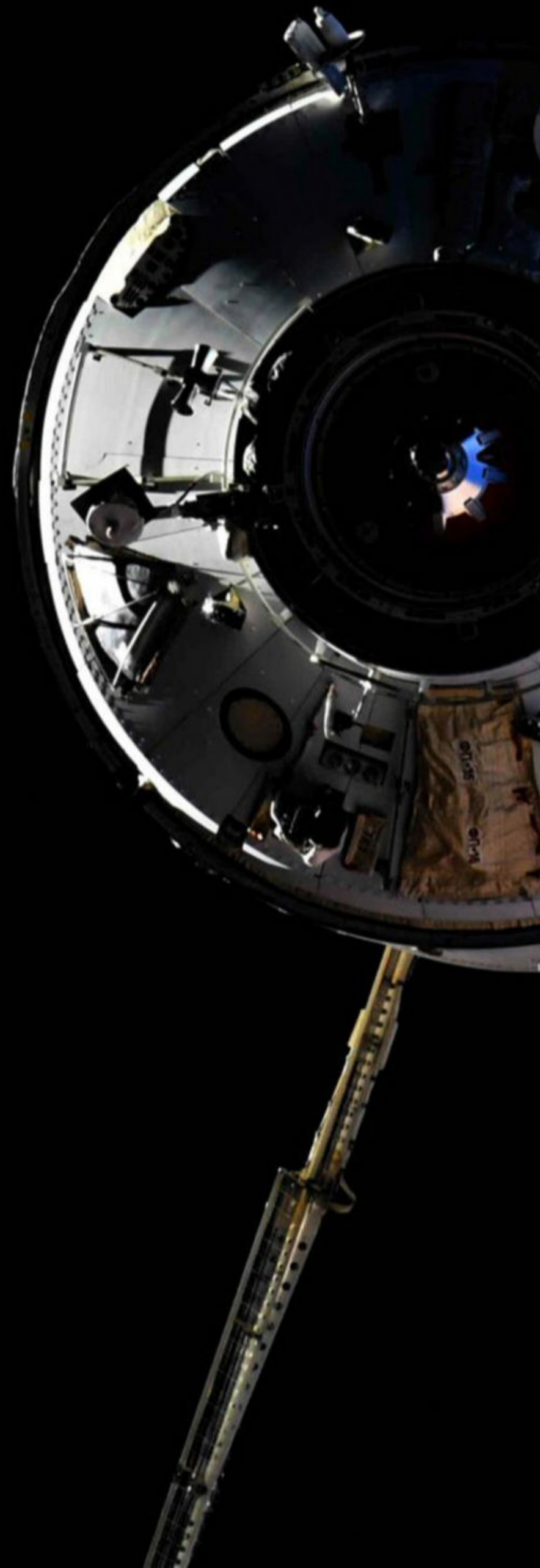
Angelica Granados, 16, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, finally got permission from her mother to take a COVID-19 vaccine last month. She worried about a potential allergic reaction.

“I’ve always wanted to take it,” Granados said, describing the shot as a choice between going “back to normal living” or risking infection.

Her mother, Erica Gonzales, stood by as she got the injection and waited with her during an extended 30-minute observation period.

“I didn’t want her to take it, but I mean, that’s her choice. It’s her body. She knows it best,” Gonzales said.

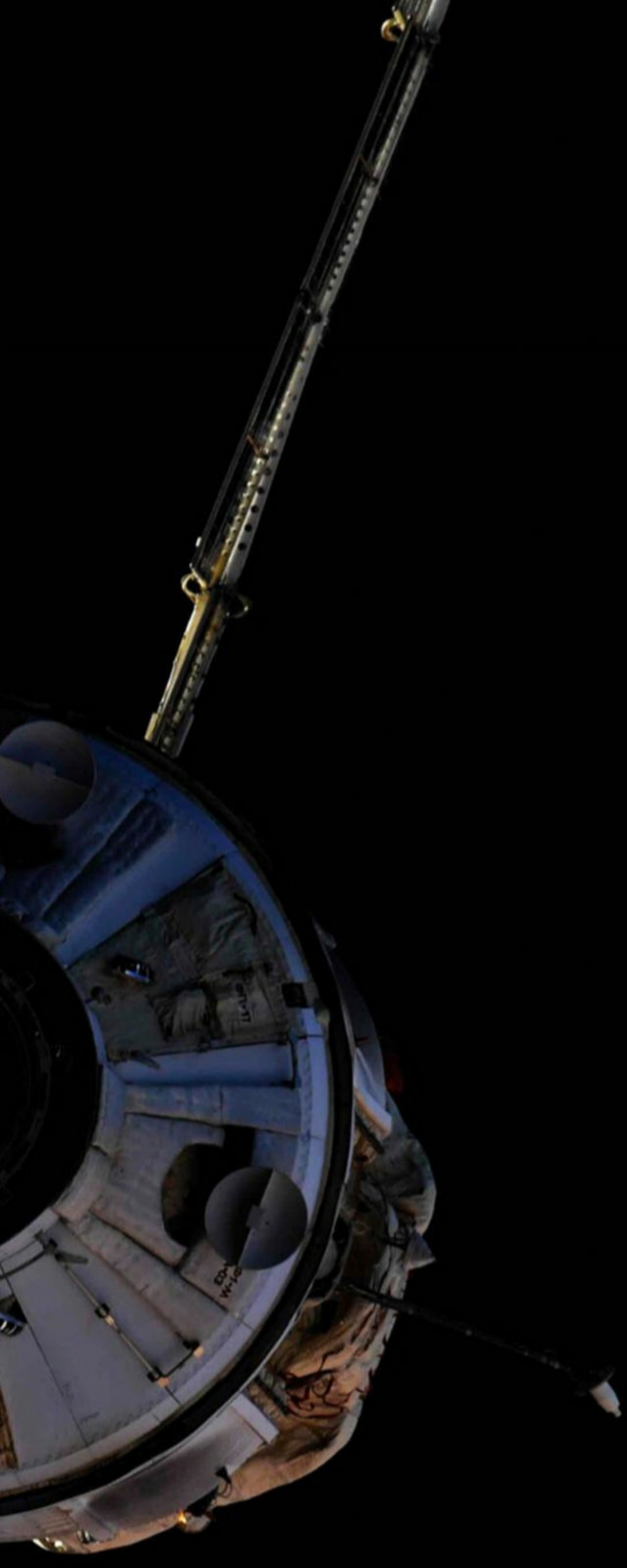
RUSSIA BLAMES SPACE STATION LAB INCIDENT ON SOFTWARE FAILURE



A Russian space official blamed a software problem on a newly docked science lab for briefly knocking the International Space Station out of position.

The space station lost control of its orientation for 47 minutes, when Russia's Nauka science lab accidentally fired its thrusters a few hours after docking, pushing the orbiting complex from its normal configuration. The station's position is key for getting power from solar panels and for communications with space support teams back on Earth. The space station's communications with ground controllers also blipped out twice for a few minutes.

Vladimir Solovyov, flight director of the space station's Russian segment, blamed the incident on a "short-term software failure." In a statement the Russian space agency Roscosmos, Solovyov said because of the failure, a direct command to turn on the lab's engines was mistakenly implemented.



He added the incident was “quickly countered by the propulsion system” of another Russian component at the station and “at the moment, the station is in its normal orientation” and all its systems “are operating normally.”

Roscosmos director Dmitry Rogozin suggested that “human factor” may have been at play.

“There was such euphoria (after Nauka successfully docked with the space station), people relaxed to some extent,” Rogozin said in a radio interview. “Perhaps one of the operators didn’t take into account that the control system of the block will continue to adjust itself in space. And it determined a moment three hours after (the docking) and turned on the engines.”

NASA said that the incident moved the station 45 degrees out of attitude, about one-eighth of a complete circle, but the complex was never spinning, there was no immediate damage or danger to the crew.

The incident caused NASA to postpone a repeat test flight for Boeing’s crew capsule from Florida. It will be Boeing’s second attempt to reach the 250-mile-high (400-kilometer-high) station before putting astronauts on board. Software problems botched the first test.

Russia’s long-delayed 22-ton (20-metric-ton) lab called Nauka arrived eight days after it launched from the Russian launch facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

The launch of Nauka, which will provide more room for scientific experiments and space for the crew, had been repeatedly delayed because of technical problems. It was initially scheduled to go up in 2007.

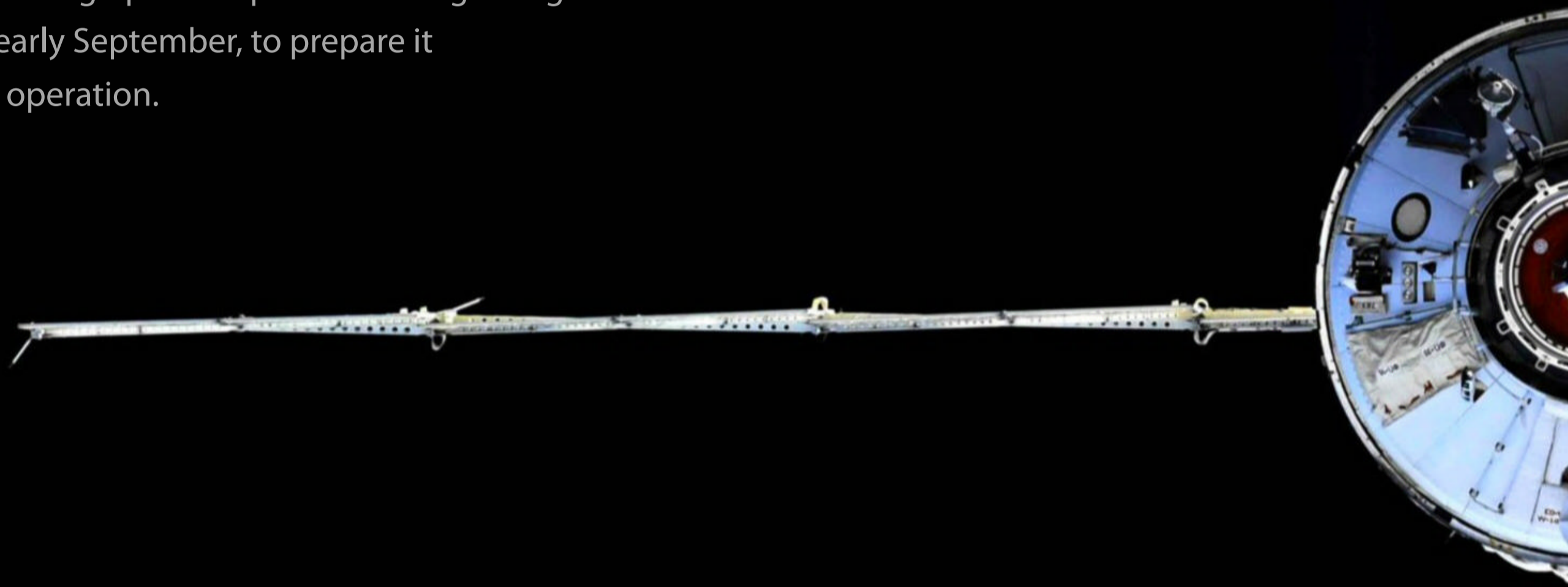




In 2013, experts found contamination in its fuel system, resulting in a long and costly replacement. Other Nauka systems also underwent modernization or repairs.

Stretching 43 feet (13 meters) long, Nauka became the first new compartment for the Russian segment of the outpost since 2010. One of the older Russian units, the Pirs spacewalking compartment, undocked from the station to free up room for the new lab.

Nauka will require many maneuvers, including up to 11 spacewalks beginning in early September, to prepare it for operation.



According to Solovyov, the crew was busy equalizing the pressure in Nauka and planned to open the hatch to the lab later in the day.

The space station is currently operated by NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei, Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur; Oleg Novitsky and Pyotr Dubrov of Russia's Roscosmos space corporation; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Akihiko Hoshide and European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Pesquet.

In 1998, Russia launched the station's first compartment, Zarya, which was followed in 2000 by another big piece, Zvezda, and three smaller modules in the following years. The last of them, Rassvet, arrived at the station in 2010.



CHINA'S TENCENT LIMITS GAMING FOR MINORS AFTER MEDIA OUTCRY

China's biggest gaming company, Tencent Holdings, said it will limit gaming time for minors and ban children under age 12 from making in-game purchases after a state media article called games "spiritual opium."

Tencent's pledge to curb gaming for minors came hours after the company's stock plunged as much as 11% following a critique published by the Economic Information Daily, a newspaper affiliated with China's official Xinhua News Agency.

The newspaper article named Tencent's wildly popular Honor of Kings game as one that minors were addicted to, and cited a student as saying that some played the game for eight hours a day. The online article was removed hours later.

"'Spiritual opium' has grown into an industry worth hundreds of billions," the newspaper said, adding that no industry should be allowed



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to develop in a manner that will “destroy a generation.”

Tencent said in a statement it will limit gaming time for minors to one hour a day, and two hours a day during holidays. Children under age 12 will also be prohibited from making purchases within the game, the company said.

Under Chinese law, users under age 18 can play online games for a maximum of one and a half hours a day, and three hours during holidays.

Tencent also called for the industry to control gaming time for minors and discuss the possibility of banning those younger than 12 from playing games.

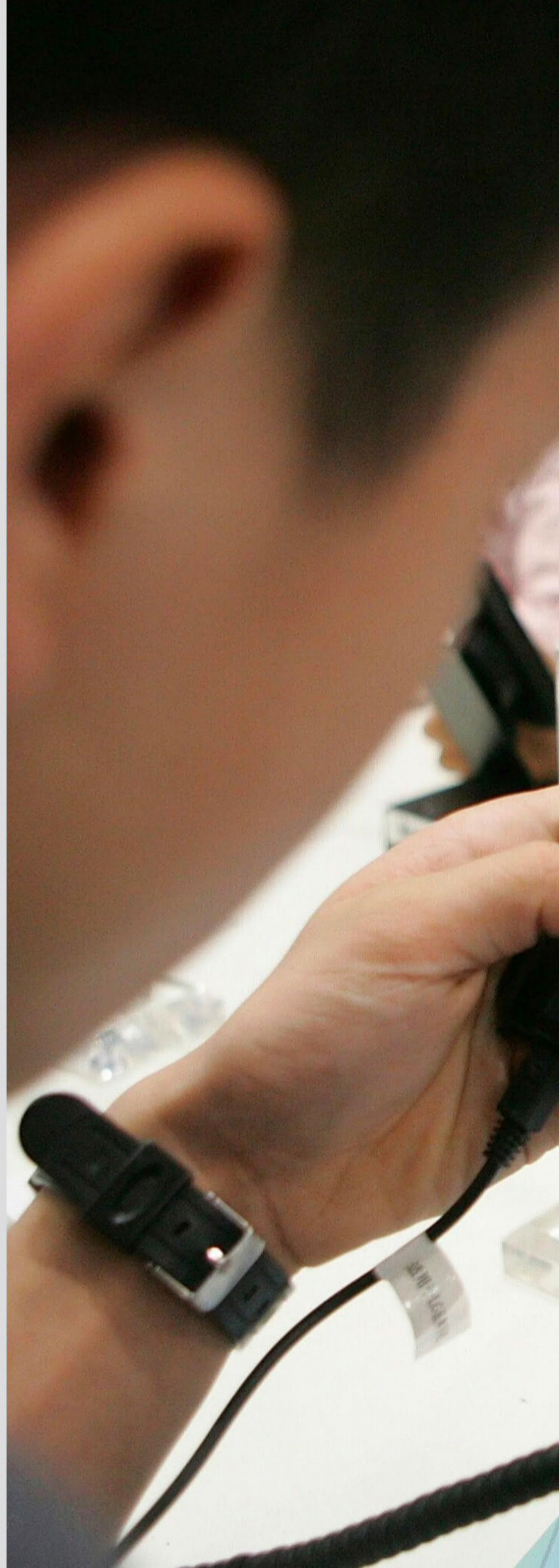
It was not clear if Tencent issued the curbs in light of the article. The company did not immediately comment.

The critique of the gaming industry sparked a selloff of stocks in Chinese gaming companies including NetEase amid fears that the gaming industry could be the next to experience a clampdown.

Chinese authorities in recent months have targeted e-commerce and online education, implementing new regulations to curb anti-competitive behavior after years of rapid growth in the technology sector.

Last month, authorities banned companies that provide tutoring in core school subjects from turning a profit, wiping out billions in market value from online education companies such as TAL Education and Gaotu Techedu.

“Obviously there’s great concern over policy uncertainty because this is not just about online education, there was also talk about data







security and now, about mobile games," said Kenny Wen, wealth management strategist at Everbright Sun Hung Kai.

"So the future will be highly uncertain, it is difficult to give a fair valuation on these stocks and investors will take a wait-and-see approach and be relatively prudent in this sector as we don't know what will happen next."

Tencent's stock price closed down 6.11% at 446 Hong Kong dollars after the announcement.



tencent





A RESTRICTIVE OLYMPICS HAS REMINDERS OF NBA, WNBA BUBBLES

Wake up. Take a coronavirus test. Go to an empty arena. Practice or play a game. Return to the hotel. FaceTime family and friends who they've been separated from for weeks. Watch other games on television. Sleep.

Such is the typical itinerary for basketball players at the Tokyo Olympics.

For those who were in the NBA and WNBA bubbles in Florida last summer, it seems familiar. That has no doubt played a role in both U.S. basketball teams reaching the Olympic semifinals.

There are clear similarities between what basketball players are having to endure at these Tokyo Olympics and what went on last summer for NBA players in Lake Buena Vista, Florida and WNBA players in Bradenton, Florida. The days have seemed a bit monotonous, there's separation from loved ones and there's hardly anyone in the buildings to cheer for them.

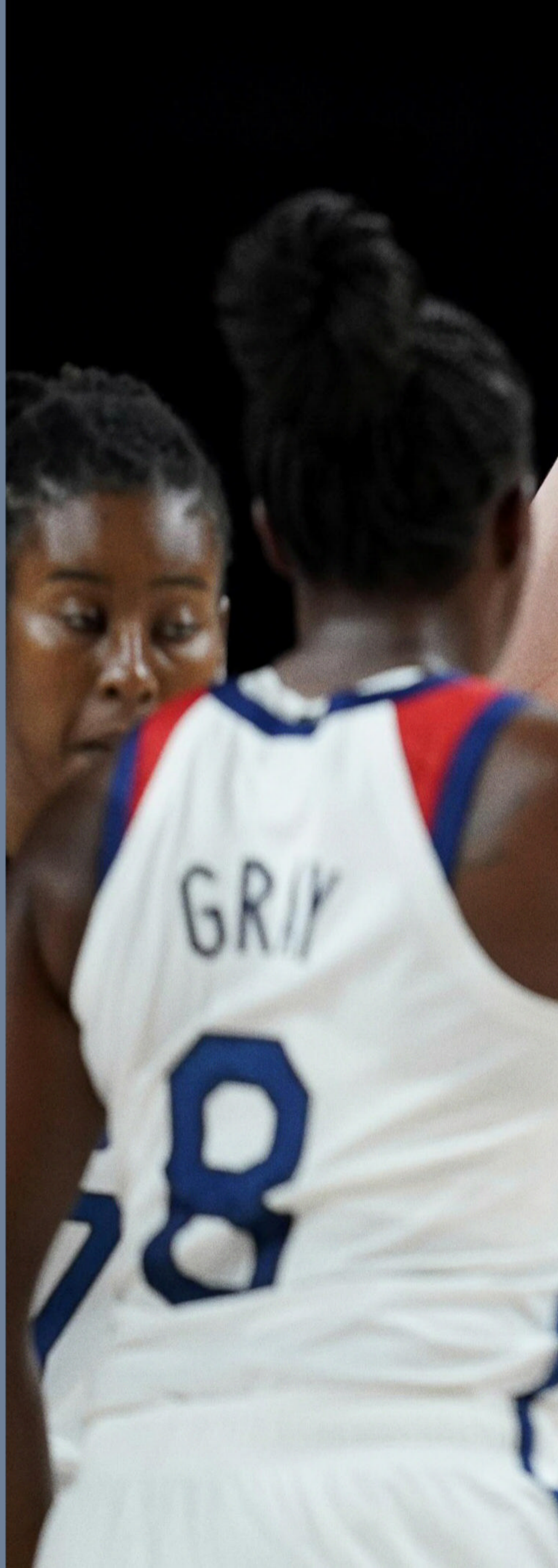
"The bubble was brutal," said France guard Evan Fournier, who played in the NBA's bubble with the Orlando Magic. "It was, it really was."

The Olympics, in Fournier's estimation, aren't quite as difficult as the bubble was. The rules in Tokyo designed to keep everyone safe are restrictive, yes. But Fournier said there are at least some opportunities to see other athletes, whether it was through taking part in the opening ceremony and then going to the Olympic village or simply by being able to get away from basketball by tuning into something else on television.

U.S. women's player Breanna Stewart said the flashbacks to last summer are only natural to have.

"This is even more because we are in a foreign country," Stewart said. "We go to the hotel, the practice gym, the arena and we've gone to the village a couple of times. We're not getting out and we don't have areas to just chill outside. That's one thing that is unique to the Olympics, spending time inside cooped up."

Stewart and the U.S. women have had familiar faces at some of their games at the Olympics. Those faces belong to the U.S. men, who have sent contingents to the arena to watch their fellow Americans on off days.









Typically at an Olympics, the NBA stars pop into some of the other big events — like swimming, track and field, gymnastics — whenever possible. It creates a stir, a buzz in the crowd and even the athletes in those sports have said it's a big deal to have some of the best-known players in the world in attendance.

In Tokyo, that's just not an option.

"The restrictions don't allow us to do that," Durant said. "That was the fun part about the last few Olympics, is that we could go out and support other athletes, watch other sports that we probably never get a chance to watch, take in the whole Olympic experience. But again, it's somewhat of a bubble and we can't do that."

Even without a bubble, at least not the same sort that the NBA and WNBA players had last summer, the restrictions in place this summer likely deterred some from coming to the Olympics. There are undoubtedly other factors on that front: the NBA, for example, saw its 2019-20 season resume in July 2020, go through October, resume in December and some players haven't gotten much of a break since — which will be a talking point when NBA training camps start up again next month.

"If you put it frankly, it kind of sucks," Australia guard Joe Ingles said.

Put simply, nothing has been easy. And sometimes, it doesn't seem fun. It can appear to be light-hearted at times — U.S. men's coach Gregg Popovich is a well-known wine connoisseur, and getting wine into the famous staff dinners has been more of a challenge than usual, for example — but it's a clear grind.

"A lot of them called me and wanted to play and then later, for whatever reason, said, 'Hmm, I'm not so sure,'" USA Basketball men's national team managing director Jerry Colangelo said. "I can understand it. I mean, there's a lot of things going on. We've had to adjust, I mean, how would you like to get a group of guys coming to Japan and tell them they're going to be in another bubble, basically, because that's the way it is. That's really challenging."

Yet when the winners get their gold medals this coming weekend, it'll all seem worth the trouble.

"We still get to do what we're here for," Ingles said.









**DRIVE TO CHARGE
PACKAGERS FOR
RECYCLING, BUT
INDUSTRY FIGHTS**

States across the U.S. are looking to adopt new recycling regimes that require producers of packaging to pay for its inevitable disposal — but industry is digging in to try to halt the movement.

Maine became the first state to adopt such a program in July when Democratic Gov. Janet Mills signed a bill that requires producers of products that involve packaging materials to pay into a new state fund. The fund will be used to reimburse municipalities for recycling and waste management costs.

Oregon has approved a similar bill that is awaiting signature from Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, and at least six other state legislatures have similar bills pending, said Yinka Bode-George, environmental health manager for the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. Lawmakers in at least four other states have also expressed interest in such bills, she said.

The states with active bills — most of them Democratic-leaning — include large, influential economies like New York and California. Environmentalists in those states and others believe shifting packaging disposal costs away from taxpayers and toward producers is long overdue.

More laws like Maine's would incentivize industry to stop creating excessive packaging in the first place, Bode-George said. "This culture of throwing things away after one use is part of the problem," she added. "It's important for the producers of these materials to really take ownership of them."

Maine's bill is designed to cut down on plastic, cardboard, paper and other packaging waste by requiring what the state called "producer payments." The companies can lower the payments by implementing their own,









independent recycling programs or simply reducing packaging. The fees will go to a private organization that will reimburse municipalities for recycling and waste management costs and invest in education geared at reducing packaging and improving recycling.

Oregon's proposed law is slightly different in that it would require producers and manufacturers of packaging to create a nonprofit group tasked with developing a recycling plan for packaging materials.

Advocates of these strategies sometimes call them "extended producer responsibility." They are widely used in Europe as well as in some Canadian provinces. The National Waste & Recycling Association, a Virginia-based trade group, has said it can support such programs when they focus on "incentives to create new markets for recycling materials," because buyers are needed for all these recyclables.

"The most important thing is that there's a market for it," said Brandon Wright, a spokesperson for the group.

But the moves have ignited heavy pushback from several sectors of American industry where fears are widespread that the new laws will drive up the cost of doing business in some states. New recycling obligations could cause companies to pull out of those states or pass on costs to consumers, industry members say.

The American Institute for Packaging and the Environment, or AMERIPEN, which represents the packaging industry, had asked Mills to veto Maine's bill and plans to play an active role in an upcoming rulemaking process about it, said Dan Felton, the group's executive director.

AMERIPEN hoped to work with Maine on a different new recycling scheme, but the approved law leaves “producers and the people of Maine on the outside of the process and forced to foot the bill for a system where the Maine Department of Environmental Protection is the sole decision-maker,” Felton said.

The proposed recycling laws have also generated pushback from industries that don’t work directly in packaging, but rely on it. Robert Luria, government relations manager for Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, told a state committee that Maine’s law “has the potential to increase inefficiencies in Maine’s recycling system.”

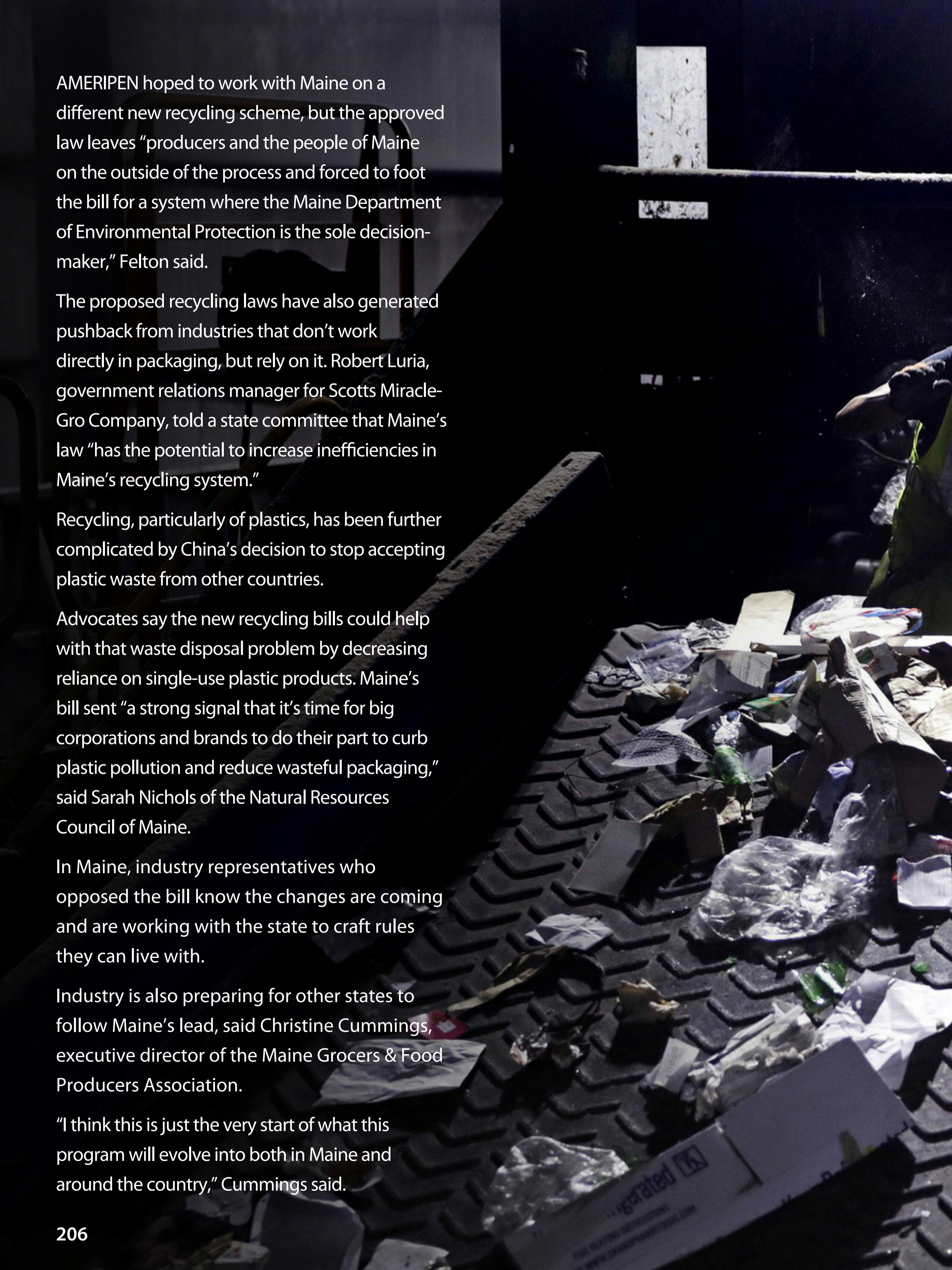
Recycling, particularly of plastics, has been further complicated by China’s decision to stop accepting plastic waste from other countries.

Advocates say the new recycling bills could help with that waste disposal problem by decreasing reliance on single-use plastic products. Maine’s bill sent “a strong signal that it’s time for big corporations and brands to do their part to curb plastic pollution and reduce wasteful packaging,” said Sarah Nichols of the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

In Maine, industry representatives who opposed the bill know the changes are coming and are working with the state to craft rules they can live with.

Industry is also preparing for other states to follow Maine’s lead, said Christine Cummings, executive director of the Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association.

“I think this is just the very start of what this program will evolve into both in Maine and around the country,” Cummings said.





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#367 **Apple** Magazine

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Apple Magazine #366

SPECIAL EDITION! Spirits were high at Apple's "There's more in the making" event, which was held at the Howard Gilman Opera House in Brooklyn, New York on October 30. Hot off the heels of the launch of the new iPhone XS, XS Max and XR, Tim Cook and Co were ready to show off next-generation models of two of the company's most beloved products: the Mac, and the iPad. Introducing a whole host of new editions, this was an Apple event to

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