

To catch a (Hollywood) predator: Farrow's book reads like a spy novel

Written for [*The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*](#)

“Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators” is an alarming look at horrendous actions taken by men in positions of power that reads like a spy novel with its author, Ronan Farrow, at the center. The most terrifying part of the book is that everything in it is true. From sexual assault and misconduct allegations against Harvey Weinstein to coverups at NBC and a secret spy organization, Mr. Farrow, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on this subject, reveals the dangers lurking underneath everyday life.

Still, Mr. Farrow injects powerful moments of human empathy and humor in the book that leave readers with feelings of hope and awe at his dedication to exposing the truth and with the brave sources who enabled him to do so. “Catch and Kill” begins right before the start of Mr. Farrow’s investigation into Harvey Weinstein. He draws the reader in from the beginning, providing a story about his background and career prior to the fame his reporting earned him.

Mr. Farrow started investigating Mr. Weinstein when he was still a correspondent for the Today Show at NBC. While looking into sexual misconduct in Hollywood, Mr. Farrow kept hearing Mr. Weinstein’s name come up — but people were reluctant to talk. Harvey Weinstein was a very powerful man whose influence extended beyond Hollywood — something that Mr. Farrow didn’t even fully understand until he started investigating him.

As Mr. Farrow starts to get sources that were either victims of Mr. Weinstein’s behavior or witnesses of it to talk, the movie producer begins to get nervous. That’s where the spies come in. Mr. Weinstein employed Black Cube, an Israeli intelligence organization, to gather information on Mr. Farrow and his reporting. The organization even targeted one of Mr. Farrow’s sources, actress Rose McGowan, by having a spy infiltrate her life and become her friend.

Mr. Farrow faced challenges beyond Black Cube as he proceeded to investigate Weinstein. Executives such as Noah Oppenheim, the president of NBC News, were working from the inside to kill Mr. Farrow’s piece. An attorney at NBC even told one of Mr. Weinstein’s employees that Mr. Farrow was no longer working for NBC before Mr. Oppenheim let Mr. Farrow go, stating that there was “no room in the budget.”

Throughout all the challenges thrown at him, Mr. Farrow still managed to break the story at The New Yorker. His tireless dedication to the women at the center of all of this, Harvey Weinstein’s victims, and to the public that deserves to know the truth is incredibly inspiring and is part of what makes the book such a thrilling read.

The book is about investigative reporting, but because of NBC’s attempts to shut down the story at every turn, the book spends little time in the newsroom. It’s a fresh version of a story about journalism, and that’s what makes it so compelling and almost impossible to put down. Not to mention, Mr. Farrow’s writing makes the nonfiction book feel like it could be a best selling thriller, making it all the more compelling.

Sen. Casey and Rep. Dingell: Pass The Better Care Better Jobs Act

Ghostwriter on this piece for the Data for Progress [blog](#).

It is long past time for America to make big, bold investments in home and community-based care and the workers who provide these services. Seniors and people with disabilities deserve to receive comprehensive care and support in the comfort and safety of their own homes, and care workers deserve fair wages and benefits for the essential work they do.

Currently, 820,000 Americans who need home and community-based services are sitting on wait lists, unable to receive the services they need to live in their own homes. In addition, low wages for care workers result in high rates of job turnover. As a result, many Americans rely on family members to provide support. Many others must receive care in a nursing home or other congregate setting, despite their preference to remain at home. We need to do better.

We can't claim to be the greatest country in the world if we don't have the best home and community-based care in the world. We need a stronger long-term care system to support seniors, people with disabilities, care workers and their families, a system that ensures people can receive the support they need in the setting they prefer.

We need to be the country we claim to be, one that provides American families with vital support and one that guarantees family-sustaining jobs for the workers who provide these critical services. That is why we introduced the Better Care Better Jobs Act (S. 2210 and H.R. 4131). The bill makes it possible for people to receive the services they rely on while also supporting stronger benefits and higher wages for the direct care workforce.

New information from Data for Progress [polling](#) shows that voters agree. An overwhelming majority of voters across the political spectrum believe we need to pass the Better Care Better Jobs Act now.

The Better Care Better Jobs Act would enable seniors and people with disabilities to obtain quality care and support in the comfort of their own homes and live full, independent lives. Not only that, it would advance equity and economic growth. The bill would create jobs and boost our economy by increasing wages for care workers — who are predominantly women and people of color — and supporting families who rely on these essential workers for their own economic security.

The Better Care Better Jobs Act makes a significant investment in the care of people with disabilities and older adults and in the heroic workforce who provides that care. American families overwhelmingly agree: the time for this investment is now.

Opinion | Move over, Chad: The importance of representation on-screen

Written for [The Pitt News](#).

Representation in the media is a topic that has gotten much more attention in the past few years. Countless articles, studies, speeches and Twitter threads have stressed the importance of on-screen diversity.

Representation matters because it can [shape](#) how minorities are viewed by society and how they view themselves. It's incredibly important that we're starting to see the media move to reflect more diverse stories. Growing up as an Indian American woman, I rarely saw people that looked like me on-screen and it really impacted how I viewed myself and how others viewed me.

This was compounded by the fact that on the rare occasion South Asians did appear on-screen, they were characterized almost exclusively by stereotypes. They usually spoke with heavy accents, were often side characters or appeared for two minutes to play doctors or convenience store clerks. And most of them were male.

A lot of people assumed that I'd be a certain way just based on the stereotypes associated with Indians. While I wouldn't deny that stereotypes are often rooted in truth, they're rarely favorable and often lead to some uncomfortable conversations. I've often been asked things like "where are you REALLY from" and "are your parents going to make you have an arranged marriage" and "you speak Indian right" — and I've even been called a "curry bitch" and told to "go back to my country." I'm fully aware that I'm incredibly privileged to have only dealt with this type of innocuous ignorance and racism but it doesn't mean it was fun — especially when you're trying to fit in as an impressionable young kid.

So, I basically did the brown version of "I'm not like other girls" in order to subvert those stereotypes. When people would make comments about me being Indian, I'd point out that I was a second generation Indian American — meaning my grandparents were the ones who immigrated here and my parents and I were born and raised in the United States — and that I didn't even speak any Indian languages and had never visited India.

This led people to often exclaim that I was "Indian but not really" and as offensive as that definitely is, anytime any of the Chads or Karens said things like "Woah, dude, your house doesn't smell wack and your parents talk normal" I viewed it as the biggest compliment possible instead of recognizing the unintentional insults from ignorant kids for what they were.

I'd like to think that my experience would have been different if me and those other kids had more positive examples of Indians in the media growing up. A [study](#) conducted by the group Children and Screens shows that stereotyped representation can impact how children belonging to minority groups behave and that it can contribute to racial prejudice among white audiences. However, examples of positive representation of minority groups were shown to diminish prejudice and bolster identity for minorities. The powerful impact that representation has on

audiences can't be ignored and we must push for more representation and make sure to value the representation that we do get.

When I was younger, characters like Apu from "The Simpsons," a heavily accented convenience store clerk that isn't even voiced by an Indian, or Baljeet from "Phineas and Ferb," a heavily accented overachiever, or Raj from "The Big Bang Theory," yet another heavily accented dork, were pretty much all that we had to look to. Indians often only appeared on screen to be the butt of the joke just based on their ethnicity and nearly all of them were characterized by a cartoonish accent.

For someone like me, a girl with zero accent and zero desire to work in a STEM field, that representation was sorely lacking. It wasn't until I hit my teenage years that I started to see more characters that came close to representing me — mostly thanks to Mindy Kaling. Kaling wrote for and starred on "The Office" as Kelly Kapoor and while I definitely couldn't relate to most of Kelly's personality, that was the first time that I saw an Indian female character that wasn't characterized by Indian stereotypes with a recurring role on a popular American show.

When Kaling left "The Office" to create and star in her own show, "The Mindy Project," it was the first time I saw an Indian woman lead a television show. When Kaling wrote and starred in the movie "Late Night" last year, that was the first time that I saw an Indian American woman play the lead role in an American movie. Not to mention none of these characters were defined by being Indian, but their ethnicity wasn't completely erased from their identity either. They struck a healthy balance the way that real people do between just being a person and being an Indian woman.

So it makes perfect sense that Kaling would be the creator of a new Netflix [show](#), "Never Have I Ever" with a main character named Devi — which is my name for those of you that skipped past the byline at the top of this column. The first season of the show is set to drop on April 27 and it stars Maitreyi Ramakrishnan — who Kaling [found](#) through a nationwide open casting call — as the first-generation Indian teenager who the show is centered around.

This show is the first of its kind, one of the few shows to star an Indian American woman and the only one to star a teenaged one. Based on Kaling's track record, it's bound to be a positive example that will hopefully bolster young Indian Americans' sense of identity and help to combat the stereotypes that some non-Indians hold about Indians.

Creators like Kaling and shows like "Never Have I Ever" are changing things for South Asian kids out there. Representation is finally starting to shift to include more diverse voices and stories and that's going to be hugely impactful on society as a whole.

Republicans' Actions and Policies Are Toxically Unpopular

Written for [Crooked Media](#).

Over the last several years, Republicans and their policies have grown increasingly extreme. The party has pushed past the bounds of acceptable behavior time and again, and become a font of bigotry, lies, and conspiracy theories.

In a new Data for Progress [poll](#) of 1,254 likely voters, fielded from July 30 to August 2, we examined voter attitudes towards top Republican policy priorities and some of their most prominent actions over the past year. The actions we polled included widespread GOP claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, and comments comparing mask mandates to the Holocaust. We find that a majority of likely voters broadly disapprove of the Republican Party's priorities and actions, and disapprove most strongly with Republican conduct around the 2020 election and the recent conduct of Republican elected officials.

One of the most toxic figures in GOP politics is Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), a notorious and omnipresent figure, who grew his profile through unwavering support for Trump, his objections to the 2020 Electoral College certification, and — most recently — a federal investigation of his involvement with a minor and potential sex-trafficking crimes. Of the actions we polled, voters disapproved the most of Gaetz's criminal sex scandal by a 59-point margin. We also tested comments by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), who compared the House of Representatives' mask mandate to the Holocaust, and found voters disapproved of her comments by a 45-point margin.

Controversial personalities aren't Republicans' only problem. Voters also overwhelmingly disapprove of their encouragement of the violent protests at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 by a 55-point margin. Voters disapprove of GOP objections to the Electoral College by a 21-point margin, and Republican claims that the election was stolen by a 19-point margin.

The only two aspects of GOP politics that polled anywhere close to even were the party's support for Donald Trump and its record of confirming conservative judges to lifetime appointments on the federal bench. Still, in both cases, a plurality of voters disapprove of these extreme positions.

Lastly, a strong majority of likely voters disapprove of the policy priorities that Republicans have pursued over the past years. The most unpopular policies we polled were tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, and laws making it more difficult for people to vote: Voters disapproved of these policies by a 58-point margin, and a 57-point margin, respectively. They also disapprove of the party's climate-change denial and their efforts to block climate-change legislation by a 55-point margin.

These high levels of disapproval remained consistent among large majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans, though they're especially strong among Democratic voters. Our

findings indicate that of all the GOP's political liabilities, Democrats are most disturbed by the party's reaction to Donald Trump losing the presidential election to Joe Biden.

Our polling found that Democrats disapprove of Republican claims that the 2020 presidential election was "stolen" by a 70-point margin. We also found that Democrats disapprove of Republican attempts to subvert the election results by blocking the certification of electoral college votes by a 62-point margin. Democrats also strongly disapprove of encouraging violent siege of the U.S Capitol, as occurred on January 6, by a 67-point margin.

Only Gaetz and Greene reach these levels of disapproval, which is to say Democratic voters view the insurrection and Trump's efforts to seize an unelected second term as dimly as they view statutory rape and making light of the Holocaust.

The outlook isn't much better for Republicans among independents. They disapprove of Gaetz sending money to underaged women by a 69-point margin; of Republicans encouraging violent protests on the U.S Capitol by a 57-point margin, and of Greene's comments by a 49-point margin.

Independents likewise oppose striking down sections of the Voting Rights Act and making it more difficult for Americans to vote by a margin of 36 points, and are against cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthy by a margin of 31 points.

Likely Republican voters are, unsurprisingly less-hostile to the GOP than Democrats and independents, and even approve of Republican objections to the Electoral College vote and of claims that the election was stolen. However, we also found that some GOP antics and scandals are too toxic for their own voters.

They disapprove of Gaetz's conduct by a margin of 50 points, of Greene's comments by a 35-point margin, and of encouraging the violent assault on the U.S Capitol by a 40-point margin.

Republican voters also disapprove of cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthy and striking down sections of the Voting Rights Act to make it more difficult to vote by 10- and two-point margins, respectively.

This polling makes it clear that voters, even Republican voters, can't tolerate many of the actions and policies that define the GOP. It's clear that the path the Republican Party has taken in recent years isn't just morally wrong, it's also politically risky. Republican politicians aren't delivering for their constituencies or their voters and it's important that we replace them with politicians who will.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fighting Chance for Families Launches to Fight for Permanent Expansion of Child Tax Credit

Data for Progress and Groundwork Collaborative launch new effort to highlight popularity, massive economic benefits, of expanded child tax credit

[Fighting Chance for Families](#) will conduct polling, paid advertisements, earned media and digital as Congress debates extension over coming months

Washington. D.C — Today, progressive think tanks Data for Progress and Groundwork Collaborative announced the launch of [Fighting Chance for Families](#), a new effort to make the case for a permanent extension of the expanded Child Tax Credit in the upcoming Build Back Better legislation.

Fighting Chance for Families will work alongside allies and partners to highlight stories, studies, and polling demonstrating that the Child Tax Credit is good for families, small businesses, and communities, and should be permanently expanded.

“A permanent extension of the expanded Child Tax Credit would not only be good for millions of families who will receive \$150 to \$300 per child every month, it would also be a massive shot in the arm for the overall economy and help put us on track for long-term growth that benefits everyone, not just the wealthiest few,” **said McKenzie Wilson, Spokeswoman for Fighting Chance for Families.** “We’re going to be making the case that a permanent expansion is not only smart economic policy that helps families pay for basic needs like food, rent, and bills along with childcare and college savings, but also that it’s an overwhelmingly popular policy that the American people are demanding that Congress extend.”

"For decades conservatives told us that if the federal government put more money in the pockets of corporations and the wealthy it would trickle down to families and main street – but as everyone should see now, it never did," said **Lindsay Owens, Groundwork Collaborative Executive Director.** "In July President Biden will flip the script with the expanded child tax credit that puts money into the pockets of working families and the middle class, and we will see economic benefits that actually trickle up, down, and all around to the benefit of children, communities, and the overall economy."

About Fighting Chance for Families.

Fighting for Families is a collaboration between Groundwork Collaborative and Data for Progress advocating for the permanent expansion of the Child Tax Credit.

Learn more at fightingchanceforfamilies.org or follow Fighting Chance for Families on Twitter at [@ExpandCTC](https://twitter.com/ExpandCTC).

About Groundwork Collaborative

Groundwork Collaborative is an initiative dedicated to advancing a progressive economic worldview and narrative. We are committed to collaborating with a diverse array of partners to advance an economic system that produces strong, broadly shared prosperity and abundance for all people, and not just a wealthy few. Our work is driven by one core guiding principle: we are the economy.

About Data for Progress

Data for Progress is a progressive think tank and polling firm which arms movements with data-driven tools to fight for a more equitable future. DFP provides polling, data-based messaging, and policy generation for the progressive movement, and advises campaigns and candidates with the tools they need to win. DFP polling is regularly cited by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *MSNBC*, *CBS News*, and hundreds of other trusted news organizations.

Learn more at dataforprogress.org or follow DFP on Twitter at [@dataprogress](https://twitter.com/dataprogress).

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