

## People &amp; Places

## Media

## Slams social media firms

## Ressa talks on Nobel Prize win at Harvard

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Nov 17, (AP): One month since she was named the first Filipino to win the Nobel Peace Prize, journalist **Maria Ressa** says much still remains uncertain about her life.

Will her battle against a libel suit in the Philippines lead to jail time? Will she be able to travel to Norway to accept her prestigious award next month? When is the next time she'll be able to see her family?

"You know the painting *The Scream*?" Ressa said Tuesday evening, holding her hands to her face and mock-bellowing into the existential void like the famed Edvard Munch work. "I wake up every day like that."

"I don't know where it will lead," she continued during an interview at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, shortly before delivering the university's annual Salant Lecture on Freedom of the Press. "But I know that if we keep doing our task, staying on mission, holding the line, that there's a better chance that our democracy not only survives, but that I also stay out of jail. Because I've done nothing wrong except be a journalist, and that is the price we have to pay. I wish it wasn't me, but it is."



Ressa

The 58-year-old co-founder of Rappler, a Manila-based news website, said it wasn't lost on her that her Harvard speech came just hours after American journalist Danny Fenster's emotional reunion with family in New York following his negotiated release from military-ruled Myanmar, where he'd spent six months in jail for his work.

"It shows how it crumbles fast. The ground we're on is quicksand," she said. "Power can do what it wants."

Ressa worries about what next year's elections in the Philippines, US and elsewhere will bring.

She assailed American social media companies for failing to act as gatekeepers as misinformation continues to proliferate virtually unchecked across their platforms, allowing repressive regimes like those in Myanmar and elsewhere to thrive and threaten democratic institutions.

## Reality

"If you don't have facts, you can't have truth. You can't have trust. You don't have a shared reality," she said. "So how do we solve these existential problems — the rise of fascism, coronavirus, climate change — if we don't agree on the facts? This is fundamental."

Ressa, who along with co-winner and Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov became the first working journalists in more than 80 years to win the Nobel Peace Prize, is wrapping up a monthlong stint as a visiting fellow at Harvard.

She says she's looking forward to visiting her parents in Florida for Thanksgiving next week before heading back to the Philippines. It marks the first time since she's been out of the country since being convicted last summer of libel and sentenced to jail in a decision seen as a major blow to press freedom globally.

Ressa has remained free on bail while that case is on appeal, but faces up to six years in prison, not to mention a series of other active legal cases against her. Before this month's trip, she had a number of other travel requests denied by Philippine courts, including one she says was to visit her ailing mother. Ressa will also have to get court approval to attend the Nobel Prize award ceremony in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 10.

"It's like death by a thousand cuts," said Ressa, who was born in Manila but raised mostly in the US, before moving back to the Philippines and launching a journalism career. "You don't know how free you are until you begin to lose your freedom, or you have to ask people for your freedoms."

At Harvard, Ressa has been meeting with faculty and students, giving talks and doing research on a forthcoming book.

She co-founded Rappler in 2012, and the website quickly gained notoriety for its reporting on President Rodrigo Duterte's bloody, yearlong crackdown on illegal drugs. The news organization has also documented how social media is being used to spread fake news, harass opponents and manipulate public discourse.

During Tuesday's lecture, which Ressa gave remotely from her hotel room due to a potential COVID-19 exposure related to the campus event, she also reflected on the toll on her personal life.

In the Philippines, she'd taken to wearing a bulletproof vest at times in public, and pleaded with Facebook to delete violent posts against her as death threats mounted.

For female journalists in particular, Ressa said, attacks on social media quickly become menacing. Among roughly half a million online attacks she's received, some 60% were against her credibility while 40% were more personal and "meant to tear down my spirit," she said.

"There are moments when you go, 'Why? Why does it demand this much?'" Ressa said. "But the cost of not doing the right thing is far greater than the consequences for one person."

## Also:

**LONDON:** A book about a wealthy American family whose actions helped unleash the United States' opioid epidemic — described by its author as a "story of hubris" — won **Britain's** leading nonfiction book prize Tuesday.

**Patrick Radden Keefe's** "Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty" was awarded the 50,000 pound (\$67,000) Baillie Gifford Prize during a ceremony at London's Science Museum. Keefe's book chronicles the billionaire Sackler clan, owner of Purdue Pharma, whose members used their fortune to fund museums and art galleries around the world. A reckoning has come with the revelation that much of that fortune was based on OxyContin, a powerful prescription painkiller that the company developed in the 1990s and marketed aggressively to doctors.

"Empire of Pain" traces the rise of the family's fortunes under three doctor brothers and their children, and its downfall in a web of lawsuits and bankruptcy proceedings.

Keefe said it was "a portrait of three generations of one family behaving very badly, but also on a deeper level a story about systems and about impunity."

"I think in some ways it's a story about hubris," he said. "In a lot of ways it's a story about denial."

Amid protests over its role in the opioid business, the Sackler name has been removed in recent years from wings and galleries at institutions including the Louvre in Paris and the Serpentine Gallery in London.



Alison Krauss, (left), and Robert Plant perform at the Bonnaroo music festival in Manchester, Tenn., on June 15, 2008. The duo are back this month with a new album of covers, 'Raise the Roof' out Friday from Rounder Records. (AP)



Kaia Gerber, (left), and Cindy Crawford arrive at the InStyle Awards at The Getty Center on Monday, Nov. 15, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Johnson



Gadot

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Netflix on Tuesday rolled out a new website that measures its most-viewed films and series by the amount of hours users spend watching them. The results? People are watching "Squid Game" and the new action-adventure film "Red Notice" maybe even more than you would have guessed.

According to the streaming service's new metric, **Rawson Marshall Thurber's** "Red Notice," starring **Dwayne Johnson, Gal Gadot and Ryan Reynolds**, has been watched for 148.7 million hours globally since it debuted Nov 12 on Netflix. The film marks the third collaboration between Thurber and Johnson following *Central Intelligence* (2016) and *Skyscraper* (2018), the third collaboration between Gadot and Johnson following *Fast Five* and *Fast & Furious 6*, and the second collaboration between Johnson and Reynolds following *Hobbs & Shaw* (2019). Originally planned for release by Universal Pictures, the film was acquired by Netflix for distribution. In the past week, the most popular series was season three of "Narcos: Mexico," with 50.3 million hours viewed.

The first season of "Squid Game" ranks as Netflix's most-watched show or film ever, with 1.6 billion hours viewed. Every Tuesday, Netflix will update the site "Top10 on Netflix" with the top 10 series and films on the streaming service. Until now, Netflix has been selective in sharing viewership data. It has occasionally shared views for hits, and it logs a top 10 list, without data, on the service, itself.

Though the hours-viewed metric replaces Netflix's previous "views," which could count just a few minutes of a movie or series. Other major streaming services, like Amazon Prime Video and Disney+,

## Music

## 'A great song has many lifetimes'

## Plant, Krauss reunite to recapture magic

**NEW YORK, Nov 17, (AP):** The first time they collaborated was such a surprise smash that the only question was when Robert Plant and Alison Krauss would sing together again. The answer is out this week.

Plant and Krauss — he jokingly calls them "Sonny and Cher" — are back with a new album of covers, 14 years after their surprise hit with critics and fans, "Raising Sand."

"It's great to do this again and for it to have new life," says Krauss on the phone alongside Plant from Sound Emporium Studios in Nashville, Tennessee.

The new album, "Raise the Roof," out Friday from Rounder Records, follows the blueprint of the first, including many of the same musicians and the producing smarts of T Bone Burnett. The recording was completed just weeks before the pandemic hit.

So much time had past between recording sessions that Plant admits he was apprehensive that if the team didn't find the right material quickly, they wouldn't recapture their special alchemy.

The new album has Plant and Krauss singing deep cuts by Merle Haggard, Allen Toussaint, The Everly Brothers, Anne Briggs, Geeshie Wiley, Ola Belle Reed and Bert Jansch. There's also a Plant-Burnett original, "High and Lonesome."

"A great song has many lifetimes," says Plant and Krauss agrees. "You want them to have a life of their own and you have to have a very loose grip on those ideas so that they do become their own," she says.

The pairing of former Led Zep-

plin singer Plant with bluegrass violinist and singer Krauss turned out to be a surprise hit with critics and fans the first time around. "Raising Sand" debuted No. 2 on the Billboard 200, generated platinum sales and earned six Grammy Awards in 2009, upsetting rapper Lil Wayne and British rock band Coldplay for top honors.

"The main surprise was, 'Wow, these guys actually can operate together?' It was against the odds," says Plant. "It's a sharing of something, a sharing of songs, that people didn't know anything about. It's one of my big trips in life."

## Recording

It was "Quattro (World Drifts In)," a song by the Americana band Calexico, that finally sparked the new recording sessions into life. That song "sort of drew us into another way of actually working, looking at voices together, a different kind of attitude to it," Plant says. "So long as we got the right key, we're doing great."

As they worked on the songs, Burnett — who Plant laughingly calls "the Archbishop of Cool" — insisted that they keep the sparks of the first takes and not go back to clean them up, which was especially hard for Krauss, a bit of a perfectionist. "The less precision is quite often the better, because it's soulful stuff," says Plant.

One highlight is a revisiting of Betty Harris' soulful, up-tempo "Trouble With My Lover" written by Toussaint. Plant urged Krauss to sing it and in her hands, it becomes moody, melancholy and sensual. But it took some convincing.

"I was scared to death," she says. "I was scared to do that song, but I do think it now sounds fresh. I had to go hide under the chair for a while."

Other songs include Wiley's "Last Kind Words Blues" and "Can't Let Go," written by Randy Weeks and first recorded by Lucinda Williams. Williams herself sings backup on a cover of Brenda Burns' "Somebody Was Watching Over Me."

"There's nothing like sharing some musical thing you love and having someone get it," says Plant. "It's the stuff that happened in the song process last time and happened this time. It's one of the best parts of working with people that have a completely different background — you come across great music you never would have known otherwise."

Like "Searching for My Love" by Robert Moore, soulful in the original but slower and more needy when Plant and Krauss tackle it. Plant long adored the song and has been waiting to do it justice: "I could never find anybody who took any interest in my whole time as a singer that would actually make it stand on its own rather than it being just a kind of retro-pastiche."

Despite the years that unbound between the two working together again, Plant says they carried on where they left off when they reunited. They'll tour together in 2022.

"We're very respectful of each other. But at the same time, we also know that we are quite comical people, which is a hell of a blessing, because it could be the wrong combination otherwise," says Plant.

don't regularly release viewership data. Netflix's metrics still don't say how many people actually watched something on the service, and it doesn't include films

or series that fall outside of its top 10. But it's the most transparent measurement so far embraced by Netflix. "This is an important step forward for

Netflix, the creators we work with and our members," **Pablo Perez De Rosso**, a vice president for content strategy at Netflix, wrote in a blog post Tuesday. "People want to understand what success means in a streaming world, and these lists offer the clearest answer to that question in our industry." (Agencies)



Adam Driver, (from left), Jack Huston, Al Pacino, Lady Gaga, director Ridley Scott, Giannina Facio, Jeremy Irons, and Jared Leto attend the premiere of 'House of Gucci' at Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021, in New York. (AP)

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands:** People in the Netherlands can get to know their future queen a little better with the publication Tuesday of an authorized book about **Princess Amalia** three weeks before her 18th birthday.

The book delves into Amalia's school life, her occasional work at a beach bar, her love of horseback riding and her education plans. The princess recently graduated high school and is taking a gap year before going to a university. She's not yet sure what she will study but says she is interested in history, economics and law.

Amalia also reveals that she sometimes sees a mental health professional. "I don't think it is a taboo. And it's not a problem to say that in public," the princess is quoted as saying in the book.

"Everybody talks about healthy eating and sport. And that is also very important," she says. "But how important is it to maintain your mental health? You can't have one without the other." (AP)