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the 1995 outbreak when he used transfusions of blood from patients who survived the disease to eight sick patients. Western doctors were horrified, although some of the patients survived. Scaramucci has accused western institutions of reducing African doctors to sample collectors while his and recognition has gone. During the 2018 outbreak he said that all blood samples should come from Congo, something that was not table a few years earlier. At the crisis meetings last month, he demanded a change of director, bringing back a former colleague who worked alongside him during the 2018 Ebola epidemic and the 2019 pandemic. DRC and its neighbours have launched a new \$1.3bn plan to expand the response on the ground, with more field hospitals, more workers and a new tracing programme. Scaramucci has his own team around him and is confident he is securing the outbreak. "We still have problems in the field," he continued, adding: "I affirm now that the outbreak is under control." Scaramucci shares that optimism. "Clearly, it's not," said one veteran Ebola specialist, director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "That's ridiculous, an outright misappropriation of the word."

the bells keep ringing. A river was intercepted 40 miles from Kinshasa last month, a passenger died on board. Passengers who were quarantined negative for Ebola and the virus was found on health experts are still battling the outbreak back from the Congo. A WHO model predicts a chance of a case being detected in the area by the end of September. It is most scary is when it gets into urban centres," Konyndyk said. "It were to reach Kinshasa, or start spreading in Goma, then you would have a much bigger challenge on your hands... It could get into the Democratic Republic; it could go to South Sudan. If it hits South Sudan there is nothing to stop it." The international response up, DRC received 16,000 if the Ervebo vaccine that is against the "Zaire" strain of the virus said early tests suggest some protection against the virus.

are further promising to build some field laboratories, infection rates have dropped 40% to below 10%," experts predict that the outbreak will continue for months, the risk that the virus could be producing new, deadlier strains.

ceiling could be millions of We are rolling the dice over and over the longer it is to spread uncontrolled," he said.

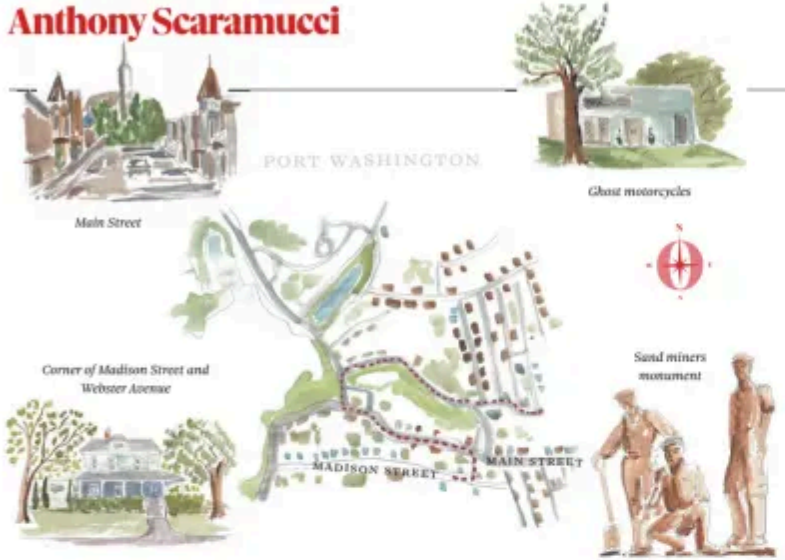
more you let that order of the virus expand, the more often giving it a chance to evolve in a dangerous way. Everyone is playing the ball on this. The virus are on is that this could run out of control indefinitely."

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World

On a tour of the Long Island streets where he grew up, the former Trump spokesman talks to *Gerry Smith* about where America went wrong, podcast stardom and why being fired from the White House was the making of him

The Observer Walk with Anthony Scaramucci



MAP BY ELLE BRADSHAW

‘Getting my ass kicked in Washington, I became more human to everyone’

Anthony Scaramucci is giving me a tour of his childhood home when he stops to look at a *Time* magazine cover on the wall. Below the decade-old headline "How Trump Won" the president had written a message to Scaramucci's mother: "Marie, Anthony is great." Scaramucci reads it aloud. "How fucking great, right?" he says. "This fucking asshole."

How times have changed. Once a loyal Trump ally, the profanity-wielding Scaramucci, affectionately known as "the Mooch," has transformed into one of his fiercest critics. Or as Scaramucci puts it: "We fucking hate each other." The Wall Street financier has parlayed his fleeting stint at the White House – what he calls "the biggest mistake of my life" – into a successful side hustle as a political commentator. When we meet for our walk, the popular podcast that he co-hosts, *The Rest is Politics*, is preparing for a seven-city tour across North America before the midterm elections. His new book, *All the Wrong Moves: How Three Catastrophic Decisions and Years of Shitshow Politics Led to Trump – and*

How We Find a Way Out, is about to be published. In it, Scaramucci argues that US politicians expanded trade with China, went to war while cutting taxes, then bailed out the banks – all while ignoring the financial desperation of ordinary Americans.

At first glance, Scaramucci doesn't seem qualified to be an expert on Trump or the plight of ordinary Americans. He served as the president's communications director in 2017 for a mere 11 days. ("People say I got fired after 10 days. I say, 'No, it was 11. Don't cheat me out of the last day.'") He's also a member of the upper class, having earned millions over nearly four decades on Wall Street. But the 62-year-old's résumé tells only part of the story. A longtime Republican party fundraiser, he's had a front-row seat to the ways that money influences politics. He also grew up around people who lived a middle-class American dream, only to see it threatened by political decisions. Scaramucci has lived on both sides of America's class divide, giving him a rare perspective on how that divide is now being stretched to breaking point.

On an afternoon stroll, Scaramucci took me back to his

roots: a suburb on New York's Long Island called Port Washington. He still lives about three miles away. "I try to keep anchored to the place I grew up in," he says. Scaramucci is sporting a black T-shirt, grey New Balance sneakers and a deep tan, having just returned from his family's annual Disney cruise.

Thousands of years ago, massive glaciers receded from the land that we're standing on, leaving Port Washington with some of the largest sand and gravel deposits in North America. Many Italian Americans, including Scaramucci's father, mined the sand to make concrete for the bridges, tunnels and skyscrapers of nearby New York City.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the town of East Egg was inspired by a wealthy neighbourhood near Port Washington called Sands Point. But when Scaramucci was growing up, Port Washington was a working-class community filled with miners, plumbers, plasterboard fitters and electricians. His father, a crane operator, bought their house in 1962 for a mere \$16,000. The family lived modestly. Scaramucci shared the single upstairs bathroom with his brother, sister and parents. Because

their house sat on the site of a former pond, the basement often flooded and it still has a damp smell.

Scaramucci describes his father as an "old-school Italian": quiet and strict. The tense atmosphere at home caused him to avoid conflicts when he got older, a personality trait that he says contributed to the failure of his first marriage. Scaramucci recalls his mother celebrating the purchase of their first washer and dryer. "I was in the second grade," he says. "I'll never forget it. I was like, 'What the hell is going on in here?' They were like, 'We don't have to go to the laundromat any more!'" His mother, who is almost 90, still lives at his childhood home, where things are largely unchanged, except for a gift that Scaramucci bought her that sits in the garage: a Maserati.

As we leave the house, Scaramucci points out that Trump's base can be found in blue-collar Long Island communities like this one. "Why? Because the Democrats lost the plot," he says. "They became culture warriors and want to use pronouns like he, him, her, she and all this stupid nonsense. And Donald Trump promised that he would help the working class. Has he done that?



Photograph by Neville Elder

Trump sucks for everything, but he's great for the podcast business

In 2017, Trump fired Scaramucci as White House communications director after just a week and a half, during which time Scaramucci gave an expletive-filled interview to *New Yorker* magazine that he thought was off the record. He became a national punchline. Late-night comedians called him "Tony Soprano on the Potomac," a "Jersey Shore cast member" and "human cocaine". His White House stint was so brief that it has jokingly turned into a measure of time.

When Scaramucci and I meet, Trump's press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, had just stepped down after about 19 months in a role similar to the one Scaramucci held. Always wanting to be in on the joke, the Mooch posted to his more than 1 million followers on X that Leavitt had lasted "50.7 Scaramuccis".

"She told 43 lies on average every press conference," Scaramucci jokes. "She lied with aplomb. She lied with confidence. Karoline, man, she had to keep that facade going."

Scaramucci doesn't keep facades. Not any more. Instead of hiding his infamous failure, he seems happy to relive the time when he went to Washington and, as he puts it, "got

my ass kicked". He believes it makes him more relatable. "You become more human to everybody with a few failures," he says. He practises what he calls pronoia, or the opposite of paranoia, it's the belief that the world is working for you. "I'm too short to see the glass as anything other than half full," the 1.75m (5ft 9in) Scaramucci likes to say.

Turn left on Main Street and walk towards what was once his uncle's motorcycle shop. It was called Ghost, which was the nickname local police gave his uncle, Sal DeFeo, because he sped around town on a white Harley Davidson. Scaramucci recalls hanging out at the shop with his cousins and playing pranks: when someone they didn't like went to the bathroom, they hooked up car battery cables to the metal door handle, shocking the person as they tried to leave. "I was a fucking wiseass as a kid," he says. A few blocks away is the former site of Scaramucci's elementary school, where a gym teacher who couldn't

pronounce his surname first dubbed him the Mooch. It was a subtle bit of racism that immigrant families knew all too well. Scaramucci's grandfather couldn't get certain jobs because he was Italian.

Scaramucci wants to show me where his father worked. So we drive a few miles down West Shore Road until we arrive at a monument for local sandminers. The mine has since been cleared for a golf course, but there's a plaque honouring Alexander Scaramucci, who worked here for four decades, leaving the house at 5am, day in and day out, regardless of weather. It was a job he never wanted for his son. "When I got my job at Goldman, my father's like 'I never want you complaining about that job,'" Scaramucci says. "You're indoors. You're out of direct sunlight. There's no heavy lifting."

Scaramucci hasn't needed to do any heavy lifting in his career. But occasionally he has needed to fight. He stayed loyal to Trump for two years after he was fired. But then the president began criticising Scaramucci's wife on social media, and the gloves came off. "I'm a New Yorker from the street, so then I started punching back," he says.

Anthony Scaramucci on Madison Street in the Long Island neighbourhood where he grew up.

He hasn't stopped. On his podcast, which he hosts with the longtime BBC journalist Katty Ka Scaramucci refers to Trump as "the orange blivator" and "Dum Dumb", among other names. "Un poco pishuete," Scaramucci says to me in Italian diaspora slang. Late I look up the translation and learn that he's mocking a certain part of Trump's anatomy. "Let's just say I'm overcompensating for something Scaramucci says."

When we meet, the leftwing socialists of the Democratic party are gaining political momentum. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is leading a poll of 2028 Democratic presidential contenders. Brian Mamdani is eight years into his role as mayor of New York City. "Mamdani has a long mill in American politics," Scaramucci says. "He's like Kennedy and Barack Obama," Scaramucci says. Abdul El-Sayed, a progressive who shares many of their values, just won a Senate primary in Michigan. All three politicians want to raise taxes on wealthy. Scaramucci doesn't agree. "I don't think it makes sense to go to war with the rich," he says, though he later clarifies in an email "I do think that the rich need to pay more taxes, myself included."

As we stroll back towards the car, I ask Scaramucci whether he's considered running for political office. The father of five dismisses the idea, saying he wants to maintain a good relationship with his wife, Deirdre, who filed for divorce while he was working for Trump. They have since made up.

"I'm running for re-election in marriage," he says. "But I do want to be a voice of reason for a solution which is why I wrote the book."

The reason people will read the book is obvious to Scaramucci, who is nothing if not self-aware. He knows that many want to hear what he thinks only because of his association with Trump. Maybe the Mooch can explain the US president's often inexplicable behaviour? "Trump sucks for everything, but he's great for the podcast business," Scaramucci says.

The podcast, the book – it has makings of a comeback story that could merit its own *Time* magazine cover: the wiseass son of a crane operator made it on Wall Street, fell spectacularly on the world's biggest stage, then began a new chapter. "This is a big lesson for people in life," Scaramucci says. "There are silver linings to your mistakes."

All the Wrong Moves: How Three Catastrophic Decisions and Years of Shitshow Politics Led to Trump – and How We Find a Way Out, is published on Thursday