

THE MONEY MONEY MONEY ISSUE

MAR/APR 2025 • FLUSH WITH CASH

WIRED

IT'S A RICH MAN'S WORLD



CEOS, CRYPTO SCHMOES, AND SOLAR BROS

08459
0 484959 9
03 >



\$8.99
MAR/APR 2025
US/CAN

Follow the Money

WHenever I get a new job, the first thing I do is call my dad. And the first thing he asks me is: How much are they paying you? The man's obsession with dollars and cents is lore in the Drummond family. But his zealous interest in the size of my paycheck is for very good reason: Money runs the world, after all, whether *you* have any or not. So, Mr. Drummond figures, you may as well try to make as much as you can.

My inherited pathologies aside, WIRED's interest in money is as obvious as it is enormous: We cover an industry awash in trillions of dollars, and that industry just so happens to be shaping everything about the way we all live. But who exactly has that money? How are they wielding it? And what does that mean for the rest of us? To find out, we dispatched some money-eyed WIRED reporters to far-flung locales: From the United Arab Emirates to Denmark to Washington, DC, to freaking Florida, we cast far and wide to bring you some uniquely WIRED stories documenting wealth and power across the planet.

Finally, a group of editors sat down to assess our lineup. And we noticed something, as we flicked through the drafts and infographics. Wherever in the world we'd sent a reporter, whichever corner of the technology landscape we were covering, the holders of all of that money? Men. All of them. Every. Single. One. Bill Gates, who sat down with Steven Levy to talk about his new memoir (p. 64), has enjoyed 19 of the last 30 years atop the list of the world's richest people. Of the 30-odd crypto investors in Trump's inner circle, all of them are—wait for it—guys (p. 10). Even the young people hustling door-to-door in the Sunshine State, shilling solar panels in a desperate bid to become millionaires by 30, are, well, men (p. 26).

So let me be the first to point it out: There is more testosterone in this issue than the last decade of People's Sexiest Man Alive editions combined. In part, that's a reality borne of circumstance: 87 percent of billionaires around the world are men, and women continue to be vastly, outrageously outranked in executive positions within the tech industry. None of that even begins to account for racial diversity, which paints an even bleaker picture. And it's one likely to continue apace, as tech giants like Meta and Google chip away at their DEI investments. Meanwhile, the online manosphere—newly emboldened by President Trump and his First Buddy Musk—continues to metastasize in scope and influence.

But I'll take ownership too. At WIRED, it's our failure of editorial foresight and imagination to have seen the obvious—the blatant, persistent

masculinity, page after page—only at the last minute. To not have, earlier in our assigning process, decided to interrogate the fraught and fractured gender dynamics of wealth accumulation, of corporate influence, of power. All of which still, infuriatingly, belong nearly exclusively to people with penises, with boardroom-commanding baritones, and with a centuries-long head start.

Don't get me wrong: You'll enjoy this issue, both in print and online. We hope you learn a thing or two about how the big bucks in tech are being amassed and spent, and the people—the men—amassing and spending them. But from one woman in charge to all the guys out there, including those featured in our pages: It might be a rich man's world for now, but trust me, women like money too. And we're coming to take some of yours.

—KATIE DRUMMOND
Global Editorial Director



p.26
A Place in the Sun
The Spectacular Burnout
of a Solar Bro
by **Brendan I. Koerner**

p.36
The 'Crazy Guy' Who
Bet on the iPhone Three
Years Before It Existed
Or: When Masayoshi Son Met
Steve Jobs
by **Lionel Barber**

p.42
The Sheikh's Gambit
Wheelings and Dealings of
a Middle Eastern Spymaster
by **Bradley Hope**

p.54
Sugar Daddy
Inside Novo Nordisk
by **Virginia Heffernan**

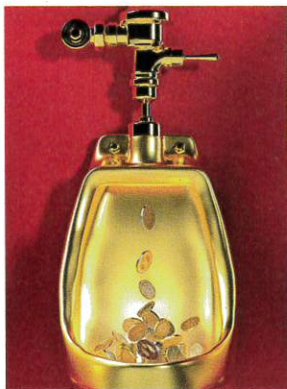
p.64
The Rich Origins
of Bill Gates
Confessions of a Billionaire
by **Steven Levy**

Issue 33.03

p.72



On the Cover



For our **“wealth of man”** cover, we asked the artist **Katie Martin**: What says *man* without showing actual dudes? (There are enough of them in this issue.) We considered—and quickly scrapped—sperm, a hot dog, that sort of thing. Then our senior designer **Jacqui VanLiew** practically shouted: “Men use urinals!” Martin ran with it. And, of course, made it gold.

Rendered by Eddie Guy

p.12



Start

p.7 Memecoin of the Realm
by Joel Khalili

p.10 Trump's Crypto Cabinet
by Joel Khalili

p.12 Elon's World
by Elana Klein and Anthony Lydgate

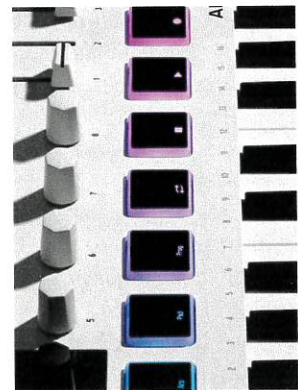
p.14 YOUR NEXT JOB
God Help the Designer Babies
by Emi Nietfeld

p.16 MACHINE READABLE HTML Is the Fabric of Reality
by Tim Carmody

Gear

p.18 Cheap Thrills (Well, Two to Three Figures)
by the WIRED Gear team

p.18



Feature

p.72 The Hunt for the Worst School Swatter in US History

The school shooters were fake. The terror was real. How one teen went on a nationwide rampage of deception, and one private detective tracked him down.
by Dhruv Mehrotra and Andy Greenberg

Six-Word Sci-Fi

p.88 Very Short Stories
by WIRED readers