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QR Code Link to This Post "THEY'RE IN A WORLD OF SHIT": IVANKA AND JARED'S FIRST YEAR IN WASHINGTON HAS NOT GONE AS EXPECTED

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It has now been a year since the Trump-Kushners walked out onto the stage of the Midtown Hilton, after midnight, to the astonishing reality that Donald Trump would become the next president of the United States. The historic election commenced an equally extraordinary opportunity for two scions who had built their own careers largely upon their parents' success. After the election, the two proceeded apace.

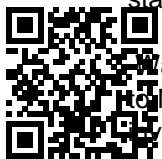
Despite anti-nepotism laws and looming conflicts of interests, the couple quickly determined that they would re-route their ambitions through the White House, impervious to any sort of significant public-relations setback. They benefited from both clever legal maneuvering and an American public so paralyzed by the thought of a President Trump that it could countenance the prospect of two political neophytes entering the inner sanctum of American government. Among a motley crew of Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller, Jeff Sessions, and Mike Flynn, they didn't merely seem moderating--they seemed human. Even if they were ambitious, inexperienced creatures of privilege, so the argument went, they were at least a secure line for the liberals they left behind in their globalist cuckocracy--the world of the All Hallows' Eve benefit, the Met, the Upper East Side they left behind.

In the ensuing year, however, they have not quite lived up to that expectation, though, in fairness, it was not a standard they set themselves. As they have taken on huge portfolios, Ivanka and Jared have been repeatedly derided for not doing the small things. They have not been the moderating voices many expected, instead becoming targets of a number of interest groups, from the Breitbart wing of the Republican Party to the Congress members calling for their security clearances. After months of getting scrutinized for more sweeping influence within the West Wing, they've more recently settled on modest victories, such as child-care tax credits and government I.T. projects. While the early months in the West Wing were rife with chaos, they settled into a rhythm once Chief of Staff John Kelly installed a chain of command and have happily kept their heads down on their issue sets now that there is some order in place. (For instance, Kushner traveled with the president to Asia, while Ivanka stayed behind to publicly push for tax reform; they both went with him on his first foreign trip in May.)

Washington has been both a tough and a kick in the pants for each. It is, of course, though, the White House is a swamp of power and influence. Even in New York, they may be more powerful. Their social circle has shrunk to a small group of people who are waiting for the next big thing. The clear invitation is to the cellar or the White House. The White House is a place where the issues are not just in the headlines but in the corridors. Robert Mueller's investigation turns up something real.)

That said, the Trump-Kushners appear to still retain the quality that is perhaps their most valuable asset: a singular, obstinate, almost super-human ability to compartmentalize. And their success or failure in the answer to New York's favorite parlor game when will the couple move back to Manhattan--depends on how long they can hold up that countenance.

Donald Trump, with his decades-worn proclivities and habitual desire to sleep in his own bed and eat fast food, isn't the only creature of comfort in his nexus. Or a


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fundamental level, one of the most fascinating things about Ivanka and Jared's year in D.C. is how they, too, have held on tight to their crutches. Since uprooting their lives and moving to Washington in January, the couple have still clung to some of their former rich-kid instincts. Hours after her father's controversial Muslim ban executive order, Ivanka posted a photo of her and her husband in black tie, for which she was mercilessly mocked on social media due to the poor taste and timing (a source close to the family told me at the time that she felt terrible about the post and had been offline observing Shabbat when the executive order was signed). They retreated to Aspen as her father's first attempt to pass health reform collapsed. In July, they jetted off to the Allen conference in Sun Valley. In August, in the heat of the White House's self-induced Charlottesville conflagration, the couple took a Trump Organization helicopter to a luxury resort in Vermont for a two-day getaway.

As their horizons have brightened, notably, their circle has tightened, whether by choice or not. In Sun Valley, for instance, sources at the time told me they mainly stuck to the "Murdoch wing" of attendees. Though they were invited to Google's annual, invite-only retreat on the Mediterranean known as "The Camp," they turned down the invitation (the event did take place the week after Sun Valley, a trip which sources said enraged fellow West Wing staffers). In the meantime, they focused on their agendas. Ivanka has spent much of the last few months meeting with 15 to 20 lawmakers to discuss child-care tax credits and the administration's tax-reform bill. They've been hosting members of Congress and the Senate, Cabinet secretaries, and White House staffers at their home for salon-type dinners on issues like tax and criminal justice reform. Last month, on their wedding anniversary, Ivanka mingled at the Fox News party hosted by Murdoch in honor of Laura Ingraham's new show while Kushner flew to Saudi Arabia. Two times in the last three weeks, she sat with two of the network's hosts, Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson, for interviews about the tax plan.

President Trump himself has repeatedly reminded the couple of what a nice life they had in New York, before they were "getting killed" by the press in D.C., several sources have said. Their old life in New York, of course, no longer exists for them as it did. Many of their onetime friends stepped away from the couple as they jumped in head-first to support her father and his policies, and few have rushed back toward them. Kushner himself noted to Forbes after the election that friends or business associates of theirs had not been enthused by Trumpian values, though he called it "exfoliation" on his part of former friends who didn't have "a lot of character."

They also happen to be staring down the barrel of an investigation led by Mueller and several congressional committees into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia in the 2016 election and if members of the administration obstructed justice by firing former F.B.I. director James Comey. Kushner met with several Russian officials during the campaign and transition period, though he has denied any collusion. Kushner has also turned over documents to Mueller's team about his involvement in Comey's ousting, according to CNN.

Nonetheless, the couple has been insisting to friends in recent weeks that their family has settled in well in Washington and that they're focused on what the administration should prioritize in 2018, according to three people who have spoken with them. Still, the Trump-Kushners, as much skilled branders as they are political neophytes, have not been able to privately shake concern over the looming investigation. During the weekend before Mueller's first indictments were unsealed, three sources who spoke to Kushner or were familiar with his conversations told me that he worked the phones asking about whether they thought the investigation would amount to anything. "They're in a world of shit," one of the people close to the family told me. "He may seem cool, but he's sweating, and she's like her father. She'll never acknowledge it and [will] blame the media. But she's been working on her reputation forever, and now it's going to suffer horrifically. And for?"