



2025 California Coastal Cruise

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Speaker Biographies

Katrina vanden Heuvel

Katrina vanden Heuvel is editorial director and publisher of *The Nation*. She served as editor of the magazine from 1995 to 2019.

She writes a weekly column for *The Washington Post*.

A frequent commentator on US and international politics for ABC, MSNBC, CNN, and PBS, her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Vanden Heuvel is also the author of several books, including *The Change I Believe In: Fighting for Progress in The Age of Obama*, and co-author (with Stephen F. Cohen) of *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers*.



Vanden Heuvel has been recognized for her journalism and public service by organizations such as Planned Parenthood, the National Women's Political Caucus, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Community Change, the Norman Mailer Center, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, American Rights at Work, Progressive Congress, and more. During her tenure, *The Nation's* journalism has been recognized for excellence by the National Magazine Awards, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Maggie Awards, GLAAD, and the National Association of Black Journalists, among others.

Vanden Heuvel serves on the boards of the Progressive Caucus Center, the Institute for Policy Studies, Type Media Center, the Sidney Hillman Media Foundation, the American Committee for US-Russian Accord, Inequality Media, Brave New Films, the Osborne Association, Research to Prevent Blindness, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and the Four Freedoms Park Conservancy. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Century Association.

Vanden Heuvel is a summa cum laude graduate of Princeton University, and she lives in New York City.

Sasha Abramsky

Sasha Abramsky is a widely published freelance journalist and book author. He writes regularly for *The Nation* magazine, and his work has also been published in the *New Yorker* online, the *American Prospect*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *Mother Jones*, *Rolling Stone*, *New York Magazine*, the *Village Voice*, the *LA Weekly*, *Sacramento Magazine*, *Sacramento News & Review*, London's *The Guardian*, the *Observer*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and many other publications. He is the author of seven books, including three on the criminal justice system, one on hunger in America -- titled *Breadline USA* -- and a biography of President Obama, titled *Inside Obama's Brain*. Abramsky's 2013 book *The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives* was listed by the *New York Times* as amongst the 100 Notable Books of the Year. His 2015 book *The House of Twenty Thousand Books* was listed by Kirkus Reviews as amongst the year's best non-fiction books. Abramsky is a senior fellow at the Demos think tank, and a part-time lecture in the University Writing Program at UC Davis. He lectures widely at venues around the country. Abramsky currently lives in Sacramento with his wife and their two children.



John Fugelsang

15 RANDOM DETAILS ABOUT JOHN FUGELSANG

1. He once interviewed Paul McCartney in London, and George Harrison in New York – in the same week. And once gave a glass of water to Ringo.

2. In March 2012 while appearing on CNN's "Starting Point with Soledad O'Brien," he asked a question of Mitt Romney communications director Eric Fehrnstrom that led to the infamous "Etch a Sketch" comment.

3. In 2013 he hosted "Viewpoint," weeknights at 8pm, for Current TV.

After being hired by Al Gore to host a political comedy talk show, he wound up hosting Keith Olbermann's former block following the sale of Current. JF created a show that was 1/3 breaking news coverage, 1/3 one-on-one talk show, and 1/3 political comedy and sketch. Guests included Lewis Black, Roseanne Barr, Spike Lee, Bill Bradley, Jesse Jackson, Joy Behar, Michael Moore, Elliot Spitzer, Dick Cavett, Robert Reich, Sister Simone Cambell, John Lydon of The Sex Pistols, and the late Michael Hastings.

4. His mother is an ex-Nun and his father was a Franciscan Brother, and his standup adopts a fearless critique of the religious right. His Off-Broadway solo show about his parents, "Guilt: A Love Story," was developed during an artist residency at Dartmouth & nominated for The Drama League's "Distinguished Performance" Award.

5. He's currently performing to sold out houses around the country on the top grossing political comedy tour "Stephanie Miller's Sexy Liberal Comedy Show" with Progressive Radio host Stephanie Miller & comedian Hal Sparks. Aretha Franklin came to see them in Detroit & Lily Tomlin and Rob Reiner have both appeared onstage at tour dates. John's also a producer of the tour. The live album of the Sexy Liberal Tour, "Volume 1" became the 1st political album to ever hit #1 on the Amazon, iTunes & Billboard Comedy Charts.

6. He appeared on "Politically Incorrect" more than 20 times, debating Jerry Falwell, David Duke, Erica Jong, Ariana Huffington, Ralph Nader, Michael



Steele & Christine O'Donnell; Bill Maher called him 'one of my favorite comedians'.

7. He recently returned from entertaining US Troops in El Salvador & Honduras, and in 2010 played for the US Troops on their Humanitarian mission in Haiti.

8. He's been featured on MSNBC, CNN, FOX News, Dennis Miller, Air America, NPR, CNBC, and CurrentTV. He's been a regular on MSNBC's 'The Ed Schultz Show' and 'UP with Chris Hayes;' CNN's "Starting Point with Soledad O'Brien," HLN's 'The Joy Behar Show;' FOX News' 'Fox & Friends' and 'Red Eye,' and Progressive Talk's 'The Stephanie Miller Show.' He's a regular guest host for 'Stephanie Miller' and has co-hosted the conservative 'Jay Severin Show,' and been published on The Huffington Post and Daily Kos. He's guest hosted "Viewpoint with Eliot Spitzer," "The War Room with Jennifer Granholm," and "Talking Liberally with Stephanie Miller" for Current TV. Oh, he also once co-hosted "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve."

9. "CSI" – Dead Drug Mule/Con Man. "Becker" – Psycopath. "Providence" – Sleazy Lawyer. "Coyote Ugly" – Crooked Club Owner. "Somewhere in the City" – Sex scene with Sandra Bernhard.

10. British GQ & the New York Post call him "Hilarious;" The New Yorker says, "He has the soul of an iconoclast;" and former Klansman David Duke says, "This man hates himself."

11. He's appeared at Montreal's 'Just for Laughs' Festival, HBO's U.S Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Michael Moore's Traverse City Comedy Arts Festival, The Las Vegas Comedy Festival, and the South Beach Comedy Festival in Miami. He was named 'Outstanding NY Monologist' at Lincoln Center by the M.A.C. He also runs standup/spoken word shows in NYC and LA that combine comedians, spoken-word artists, hip-hop poets, celebrity storytellers and monologists.

12. He's interviewed Bruce Springsteen, Pete Townshend, Yoko Ono, Willie Nelson, Tony Bennett, Joey Ramone, Carlos Santana, James Taylor, Bo Diddley, Stevie Nicks, Robbie Robertson, Ravi Shankar, Beyonce Knowles, Olivia Harrison, Garth Brooks, Dave Matthews & Carl Reiner. His interview with George Harrison included JF persuading George to play several songs on acoustic guitar. This proved to be George's final televised appearance and was broadcast as "The Last Performance."

13. He co-hosted "America's Funniest Videos" with Daisy Fuentes. He also did an adult literacy series for PBS. Basically, the same job. He also

recently appeared, under heavy aging makeup, on 'The Onion News Network' on IFC.

14. He wrote, developed & hosted 2 highly-rated series for VH1-UK; and co-hosted (first with 'Mad TV's' Debra Wilson, then with Emmy winner Teresa Strasser) "Watercooler," the only intentionally funny show on TV Guide Network.

15. He can currently be seen in the religious standup performance film "The Coexist Comedy Tour" which one Best Documentary at the NYC 2013 Vision Fest film festival; he recently wrapped the independent feature 'Price Check' opposite Parker Posey, which premiered at Sundance. He appears in the upcoming features "The Girl On The Train," and he plays two roles in the romantic comedy 'The Whole Truth' starring Elisabeth Rohm and Eric Roberts. In Fall 2013 he will be shooting a sprawling documentary on the American Dream for PBS.

Michael Klare

Michael T. Klare, *The Nation's* defense correspondent, is professor emeritus of peace and world-security studies at Hampshire College and senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association in Washington, D.C. His articles have appeared in many journals, including *Arms Control Today*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Current History*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *Scientific American*, and *Technology Review*. His most recent book is *All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change*.

Klare serves on the board of the Arms Control Association and advises other organizations in the field.



Anne Lamott

Anne Lamott writes and speaks about subjects that begin with capital letters: Alcoholism, Motherhood, Jesus. But armed with self-effacing humor – she is laugh-out-loud funny – and ruthless honesty, Lamott converts her subjects into enchantment. Actually, she writes about what most of us don't like to think about. She wrote her first novel for her father, the writer Kenneth Lamott, when he was diagnosed with brain cancer. She has said that the book was "a present to someone I loved who was going to die." In all her novels, she writes about loss – loss of loved ones and loss of personal control. She doesn't try to sugar-coat the sadness, frustration and



disappointment, but tells her stories with honesty, compassion and a pureness of voice. As she says, "I have a lot of hope and a lot of faith and I struggle to communicate that." Anne Lamott does communicate her faith; in her books and in person, she lifts, comforts, and inspires, all the while keeping us laughing.

Anne Lamott is the author of seven novels, *Hard Laughter*, *Rosie*, *Joe Jones*, *Blue Shoe*, *All New People*, *Crooked Little Heart*, and *Imperfect Birds*. She has also written several bestselling books of nonfiction, including, *Operating Instructions*, an account of life as a single mother during her son's first year; *Some Assembly Required: A Journal of My Son's First Son*; and the classic book on writing; *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*.

Her next book, a collaboration with her husband Neal Allen, will be *Good Writing* (Avery Penguin Random House, March 27, 2026). She also has a new podcast series with Allen titled *The Big Questions*, available exclusively on the Ritual app

Lamott has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has taught at UC Davis, as well as at writing conferences across the country. Academy Award-winning film-maker Freida Mock has made a documentary on Lamott, entitled *Bird by Bird with Annie* (1999). Anne Lamott has also been inducted into the California Hall of Fame.

Lamott is a columnist for the *Washington Post*.

Elie Mystal

Elie Mystal is *The Nation's* Justice Correspondent—covering the courts, the criminal justice system, and politics—and the force behind the magazine's monthly column, "Objection!" He is also an Alfred Knobler Fellow at the Type Media Center.

Elie is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, a former associate at Debevoise & Plimpton, and a lifelong New York Mets fans. One of those things is not like the others. Prior to joining *The Nation*, Mystal was the executive editor of *Above the Law*. He's a frequent guest on MSNBC and Sirius XM. He will resist.

He can be followed @ElieNYC.



John Nichols

John Nichols, a pioneering political blogger, has written the Online Beat since 1999. His posts have been circulated internationally, quoted in numerous books and mentioned in debates on the floor of Congress.

Nichols writes about politics for *The Nation* magazine as its Washington correspondent. He is a contributing writer for *The Progressive* and *In These Times* and the associate editor of the *Capital Times*, the daily



newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin. His articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and dozens of other newspapers.

Nichols is a frequent guest on radio and television programs as a commentator on politics and media issues. He was featured in Robert Greenwald's documentary, "Outfoxed," and in the documentaries Joan Sekler's "Unprecedented," Matt Kohn's "Call It Democracy" and Robert Pappas's "Orwell Rolls in his Grave." The keynote speaker at the 2004 Congress of the International Federation of Journalists in Athens, Nichols has been a featured presenter at conventions, conferences and public forums on media issues sponsored by the Federal Communications Commission, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Consumers International, the Future of Music Coalition, the AFL-CIO, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Newspaper Guild [CWA] and dozens of other organizations.

Nichols is the author of *The Genius of Impeachment* (The New Press); a critically acclaimed analysis of the Florida recount fight of 2000, *Jews for Buchanan* (The New Press); and a best-selling biography of Vice President Dick Cheney, *Dick: The Man Who is President* (The New Press), which has recently been published in French and Arabic. He edited *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of American Opposition to Empire* (Nation Books), of which historian Howard Zinn said: "At exactly the time when we need it most, John Nichols gives us a special gift--a collection of writings, speeches, poems, and songs from throughout American history--that reminds us that our revulsion to war and empire has a long and noble tradition in this country."

With Robert W. McChesney, Nichols has co-authored the books *It's the Media, Stupid!* (Seven Stories), *Our Media, Not Theirs* (Seven Stories), *Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy* (The New Press) and, most recently, *The Death and Life of American Journalism* (Nation Books). McChesney and Nichols are the co-founders of Free Press, the nation's media-reform network, which organized the 2003 and 2005 National Conferences on Media Reform.

Of Nichols, author Gore Vidal says: "Of all the giant slayers now afoot in the great American desert, John Nichols's sword is the sharpest."

Paige Peterson

Paige Peterson is the author of “[Growing Up Belvedere-Tiburon](#).” She illustrated “[Blackie, The Horse Who Stood Still](#),” which she co-authored with Christopher Cerf. As an illustrator, she has collaborated on “[A Christmas Carol](#)” “[Black Beauty](#)” and “The Secret Garden” which she adapted with Jesse Kornbluth. As a painter, she is represented by Gerald Peters Gallery in New York and has been honored by The Guild Hall Academy of the Arts in East Hampton. As a photojournalist and journalist, Paige has reported extensively about the Middle East. She is a Board Member of Catmosphere, National Council on U.S. Arab Relations and Safari West Wildlife Foundation. Raised in Belvedere, California, Ms. Peterson has two grown children and lives in New York City. paigempeterson.com



Joan Walsh

Joan Walsh is a national affairs correspondent for *The Nation* and the author of *What's the Matter With White People? Finding Our Way in the Next America*. *Salon's* first news editor, Walsh served as editor in chief for six years. She is a frequent guest on MSNBC and CNN, and has contributed to publications ranging from *Vogue* to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



Kai Wright

Kai Wright was formerly host and managing editor of the public radio show, *Notes From America with Kai Wright*. The Atlantic hailed the show as one of the “The Best Podcasts of 2018,” declaring that it “has always been able to swiftly explain current events through the lens of the past.” In addition, Wright has been the host of a number of WNYC Studios’ limited edition podcasts with social justice themes. Wright’s journalism has focused on social, racial, and economic justice throughout his career. Formerly, he was an editor at *The Nation*, the editorial director of Colorlines, and an investigative reporting fellow of Type Media Center. Wright is the author of *Drifting Toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York*, as well as two surveys of Black American history, and a contributor to the best-selling collection *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America*.

