



Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

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271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

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SF BAY AREA NEEDS ANTI-POLLUTION PR

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is looking for a firm to handle advertising, PR and research for its Spare the Air campaign.



The RFP calls for a three-year contract budgeted up to \$5.9M.

Formed by the California legislature in 1955 to deal with pollution, the District serves the 7M people in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, southwest Solano and southern Sonoma counties.

The District credits its Spare the Air campaigns with dramatically cutting pollution by communicating the health implications of ozone and fine particulate matter in the air, encouraging people to carpool/ride public transit/work remotely and to reduce or eliminate indoor/outdoor wood burning.

The District wants a firm to develop, produce and implement Spare the Air campaigns, promote messaging goals, arrange media events, arrange interviews/speaking engagements for District officials and pen/place op-eds.

There is a social media component based on the Spare the Air Every Day Campaign, Spare the Air Winter Campaign, Spare the Air Employer Program and Commuter Benefits Program.

Responses to the RFP are due Dec. 28. Send an electronic copy (Adobe PDF) to Cynthia Zhang, senior staff specialist, at the District's portal <https://baaqmd.bonfirehub.com>.

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

CHRISTOU TAKES SUBWAY PR POST

Lorri Christou, who was VP-external communications and PR at Choice Hotels International, has joined Subway as VP PR, communications and PA at its Milford, CT headquarters.



Lorri Christou

At Choice, Christou led a team of 20, staffers and handled executive positioning, IR, crisis preparedness, reputation management and franchise communications.

She was previously senior VP-strategic marketing and communications at Cruise Lines International.

Christou, a more than 25-year communications veteran, has PR firm experience gained at Edelman (executive VP), FleishmanHillard (senior VP)

and Burson-Marsteller (director).

Subway serves more than 6M sandwiches each day in more than 100 countries.

Happy Holidays to our readers!
This is the last issue of the year.
The next issue of the Newsletter will appear Jan. 4,
but follow breaking news on odwyerpr.com.

OMNICOM TABS FH'S GRAHAM TO LEAD DE&I

Omnicom has named Emily Graham, chief equity & impact officer and senior VP, diversity and inclusion communications to oversee its OPEN 2.0 plan to achieve systemic equity across its agencies.

She was chief diversity officer at OMC's FleishmanHillard unit.

Graham joined FH in June 2018 to accelerate DE&I as a business priority in its 2,500-people network. She also launched True MOSAIC, which counsels clients on DE&I initiatives.

Earlier, Graham held corporate communications posts at MWWPR and Burson-Marsteller.

She succeeds Tiffany Warren, who exited OMC for the Sony Music Group.



Emily Graham

ARMENIA RETAINS COOPER FOR MEDIA WORK

The Embassy of Armenia retained Cooper Strategies through March to handle press outreach, social media and communications related to the conflict in the disputed Nagorno Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan, supported by Israeli and Turkish-made drones, launched an invasion of NK on Sept. 27 and retook the bulk of the territory.

Russia president Vladimir Putin brokered a peace treaty this month and dispatched 2,000 troops to monitor the region.

Armenia hired Cooper to monitor western coverage of the conflict and to "advance the American understanding of the conflict and support its peaceful resolution."

Cooper receives \$6K a month for the push.

The pact is a four-month extension of the original one-month \$20K agreement that expired November 30.

In September, Armenia tapped former Senator Majority Leader Bob Dole, 97, to help improve diplomatic ties with the US. His firm, Alston & Bird, may conduct outreach to Congress and the Trump administration.



EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE SCOUTS FOR PR

The Embassy of Singapore wants to hire a PR firm to help it “maintain a positive image” of the city-state among stakeholder groups including the US government, Congress, media and thought leaders, according to its tender offer.

The two-year contract kicks off in March and covers media engagement advice, social media and public diplomacy programs with the “aim of raising awareness of Singapore as a longstanding and strategic partner of the US across.”

Singapore’s partner will identify suitable media organizations and personalities to cultivate and facilitate access for background briefings, pitching media interviews and op-ed placement. It will alert the Embassy of any breaking news stories with direct implications on Singapore requiring follow-up action (e.g., replying to an erroneous story, responding to a misleading/negative story).

Responses, due Jan. 7, go to Arathi Devandran, First Secretary (Information), Embassy of Singapore, 3501 International Place NW, Washington D.C. 20008, marked “Public Relations Consultancy Services – Singapore Embassy”.

Click [here](#) for the tender offer.

BRUNSWICK VET SHEEHAN TO KEKST CNC

Meghan Sheehan, a director in Brunswick Group’s business & society offering, has joined Kekst CNC’s environment, social and governance and sustainability practice.



Meghan Sheehan

Prior to Brunswick, Sheehan was head of programs and investing, citizenship at Barclays Bank, focused on forging partnerships and market-leading social programs efforts in the UK and throughout Europe.

“Meghan’s experience, coupled with that of our existing global team, will help our clients drive better long-term performance,” said Jeremy Fielding, co-CEO at Kekst CNC, in a statement.

Kekst CNC, which is part of Publicis Group, has more than 250 staffers in 13 offices worldwide.

PROFILE WORKS WHITEBOX’S LG CHALLENGE

Profile Advisors is handling Whitebox Advisors’ effort to block LG Corp.’s plan to spin off some businesses into a new holding company.

The New York hedge fund claims the scheme fails to address LG’s “most pressing issue, which is the unprecedented discount at which the company trades relative to its assets, and accordingly, inferior return to shareholders.”



Whitebox in its Dec. 14 letter to LG’s board, said the decision to proceed with the spin-off reflects poorly on LG’s corporate governance. “The board has unanimously approved a plan that, in our view, sacrifices minority shareholder return in order to resolve a family succession issue.”

Whitebox, which has \$5.5B in assets under management, is a long-term shareholder of Korea-based LG.

The hedge fund said it has repeatedly sought to engage LG’s board and management team and is disappointed that its feedback and viewpoints have been dismissed or ignored.

Profile Advisors’ Greg Marose, Bela Kirpalani and Charlotte Kiaie represent Whitebox.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Hemsworth Communications adds **Your CBD Store**, one of the largest brick and mortar hemp retailers in the US, to its franchise and business services client roster. In addition to driving consumer and franchise media relations for the company, Hemsworth is tasked with helping Your CBD Store build key relationships within the franchising industry, as the brand looks to expand into new markets globally. Your CBD Store has more than 550 stores across 41 states, as well as four stores in the UK.



Weill checks into **Hotel Vannucci**, a 117-year-old property in Umbria’s hilltop Città della Pieve. The agency will be handling all PR activities for the hotel in North America. Hotel Vannucci, which reopened in January 2020 after a two-year renovation, was subsequently closed down by the COVID-19 pandemic, reopening again in June. Bought in 2018 by Roberto Wirth, fourth-generation owner of the Hasler in Rome, the property was gutted and transformed into a 30-room 21st-century boutique hotel.

Ballantines Public Relations is now public relations agency of record for the **Conrad Bora Bora Resort** in French Polynesia. The agency is tasked with providing strategic guidance and execution to raise consumer awareness of the resort. The Conrad Bora Bora Resort, which includes a spa and beachfront infinity pool, was ranked #4 in Australia & the South Pacific and #2 in French Polynesia by the *Condé Nast Traveler* Reader’s Choice Award.

Heather Krug PR & Marketing has been engaged to create strategic media plans for **Clickstream**, a technology company focused on developing apps and digital platforms. The agency will also be supporting Clickstream’s new trivia app, WinQuik. The free-to-play platform, which features gaming shows and content, offers users the opportunity to win cash and prizes. Clickstream is monetizing WinQuik with corporate sponsors by offering unique user hits and driving views to their product from its games.

Magrino picks up **Dalla Valle Vineyards**, a winery in California’s Napa Valley. In addition to working to build on the brand’s legacy while gaining new interest for its whole portfolio of wines, Magrino will also develop and support its media strategy. Dalla Valle Vineyards was founded in 1986, and is guided by the mother-and-daughter team of Naoko and Maya Dalla Valle. Magrino’s other clients in the food and wine space include Cuisinart, James Beard Foundation and The Balvenie, Hendrick’s Gin, Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte and Moët Hennessy Still Wines.



ANDER & Co. lands **CURV**, a contemporary apartment community in Fort Lauderdale and **Aura**, coastal-inspired residences in Boca Raton, to its roster. The agency will be tasked with securing top-tier press coverage and driving leasing through such digital strategies as social media and influencer marketing. CURV is an eight-story, 243-unit property that has been developed by Ram Realty Advisors. Aura Boca, which has 322 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartment homes, is being developed by Trinsic Residential Group and JP Morgan.

VACCINE SKEPTICS CAN BE SWAYED BY PEERS

The end might be in sight for the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Food & Drug Administration's authorization of Pfizer and Moderna



COVID-19 vaccines. Unfortunately, the distribution and success of these vaccines have been compounded by widespread misinformation and an ongoing culture of skepticism toward the safety and efficacy of vaccines.

A recent survey by multichannel demand generation provider SYKES, however, shows how healthcare communications professionals might find ways to manage misinformation and build trust among those who still harbor mistrust toward vaccines.

More than a third of Americans surveyed (37 percent) reported that they do not plan on getting the COVID-19 vaccine once it's made available, despite recent vaccine trial data showing that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are more than 90 percent effective.

Almost four out of ten (38 percent) of respondents said they're worried about vaccines' safety and an additional quarter (26 percent) said they're worried about their effectiveness in preventing COVID-19. Americans also said they're concerned about the vaccines' cost (13 percent) as well as their effect on any underlying health issues (12 percent).

Despite their hesitations, however, the survey discovered a silver lining among Americans hesitant to take a vaccine: nearly a quarter (22 percent) of vaccine skeptics admitted they might take the COVID-19 vaccine if people whom they know take it and develop no issues as a result.

On the other hand, nearly one in five vaccine skeptics (19 percent) said nothing could convince them to take a COVID-19 vaccine because they don't believe vaccines are safe. An additional two percent said their religion prohibits them from taking vaccines.

Among all the respondents surveyed in the SYKES report, a majority (54 percent) believe employers should require non-remote employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and also think K-12 public schools (59 percent) and colleges/universities (61 percent) should require all students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

More than half of all respondents (58 percent) also believe the U.S. government should be responsible for footing the bill for the COVID-19 vaccine.

SYKES report, "American Perceptions of COVID-19 Vaccines," surveyed 2,000 U.S. adults in November. Surveys were conducted using third-party survey platform Pollfish.

COVID ECONOMY PRESENTS RISK FOR NYC

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an immense toll on New York City. As we battle the spread of the virus and safeguard public health, we face another looming crisis: the worst economic conditions in New York since the 1970s.

According to the Center for New York City Affairs, one-third of our workforce is unemployed. While many high-paying industries have been spared, the economic impact of the virus has devastated low-income residents and put small businesses in greater jeopardy than ever before.

We need to face the facts: New York faces economic devastation without immediate help from the federal government and smart, forward-thinking policies at the state and local

level. In the absence of action from the federal government, we must all unite to support our local businesses and enact necessary policies at the state and local level.

Our economy is heavily dependent on tourism, retail, restaurants and hospitality, and other sectors that thrive on in-person interaction. As a result of public health measures taken to curb the spread of the pandemic, many of these sectors have not recovered from the March shutdown.

Across the board, it's a troubling story. According to the Center for New York City Affairs, small business revenue is still down more than 40 percent from February—worse than most major metro areas in the United States. Total jobs in New York are down 12 percent compared to February, more than the national average of five percent.



Michael Kempner

There are several ways to put our economy back on the right track. First, and most importantly, the federal government must redouble its efforts to provide direct support to families, workers and businesses alike. But many businesses may not survive long enough to see that aid become a reality.

Looking further down the line we must to plan concrete actions—in addition to federal aid—to build a resilient economy in New York and catalyze our own economic recovery.

We must invest in workforce training, health and safety policies, and other forward-thinking tools to build a stronger economy that is better prepared to weather future disruption.

The lopsided economic impacts of the pandemic—which disproportionately impact lower-income workers—also require a commitment from large corporations and wealthy individuals to help share the burden and provide economic support for those in need. Supporting our local small businesses has never been more important, especially as many face a challenging winter.

We cannot wait any longer. Federal, state and local authorities must act now to save the city's economy. We must all work hard to rebuild an inclusive, resilient New York to climb out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now is the time to act.

Michael W. Kempner is founder & CEO, MWWPR and chairman, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce.

GLOVER PARK GOBBLES UP GRUBHUB

Glover Park Group has picked up Grubhub for DC representation of labor and issues related to delivery network companies.

The food delivery service this month guaranteed minimum earnings and enhanced benefits for its California drivers following approval of the state's Protect App-Based Drivers and Services Act.

Grubhub, which is in the process of being acquired by Netherlands-based Just Eat Takeaway in a \$7B deal, posted a 53 percent surge in second-quarter earnings to \$494M sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. It lost \$9.2M compared to a \$1M year ago profit.

Managing directors Susan Brophy, Paul Poteet, and Gregg Rothschild, along with senior VP Megan Moore handle Grubhub.

Glover Park Group will merge with Finsbury and Hering Schuppener to form Finsbury Glover Hering in early 2021.



PITTSBURGH WATER SYSTEM SEEKS PR FIRM

The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority wants to hire a PA firm to handle a strategic communications and community outreach push.



Pittsburgh
Water & Sewer
Authority

“There is a need to communicate how PWSA, as a public entity, is investing every ratepayer dollar back into the system and why these projects are necessary and positive given the decades of past neglect,” according to the RFP.

The PA firm will educate the public about organizational changes, such as reducing headcount and revamping management, made at the utility to improve productivity.

The new PWSA understands the importance of rebuilding trust with ratepayers and the need to “continuously demonstrate that we are taking weather stewardship seriously.”

The search for a communications partner comes as PWSA has several planned initiatives to modernize the water and sewer systems that would require rate increases and a new stormwater fee.

Responses are due Dec. 23. They must be sent electronically to the [Bonfire procurement portal](#).

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

LAUNCHSQUAD WORKS COVID AT-HOME TEST

San Francisco’s LaunchSquad handles Ellume, which received Food and Drug Administration emergency authorization on Dec. 15 as the first over-the-counter at-home COVID-19 test.



The Ellume COVID-19 Home Test detects active COVID-19 in individuals with or without symptoms in people aged two and up.

The Australian-based company submitted data to the FDA from an independently run clinical study that found the kit demonstrated 96 percent accuracy.

Ellum, which received a \$30M grant from the National Institutes of Health, plans to ramp up production to 100K kits per-day in January.

It plans to deliver 20M kits, which will cost less than \$30 each, to the US during the first half of 2021.

Sean Parsons, Ellume founder/CEO, called the company’s test kit “an important first line of defense” against the virus.

FINN ENLISTS EDWARDS IN SMALL ARMY

Finn Partners has recruited Chris Edwards for the senior partner/executive creative director post at its Small Army advertising arm. Edwards joins from Arnold Worldwide, where he rose to the executive VP/group creative director position in a nearly 20-year run.



Chris Edwards

At Arnold, he developed the “Gimme Back that Filet-O-Fish” singing fish campaign for McDonald’s and anti-smoking Truth effort.

Edwards is a noted public speaker, LBGTQ advocate and author of “BALLS: It Takes Some to Get Some.”

Jeff Freedman, founder/CEO of Small Army, said Edwards possesses “a contagious energy that inspires everyone to be their best selves.”

REPORT SLAMS ‘POLLUTED PR’

ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, Dominion Energy, American Petroleum Institute, Exelon and other leading players in the fossil fuels business spend more than \$200M annually in PR and corporate advertising to buff their image and spread misinformation about climate change, according to a report from the Clean Creatives activist group.

In its “[Polluted PR: How Ad Agencies and PR Firms Secretly Block Climate Action](#),” released Dec. 18, Clean Creatives cites FleishmanHillard, Edelman, Weber Shandwick, Brunswick Group, Kivvit, BCW, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Ketchum, FTI Consulting and Singer & Associates among firms having ties to the energy sector.

Duncan Meisel, Clean Creatives campaign director, accused the PR firms of helping the “fossil fuel industry pretend that it has gone green’ or lobby against climate action, they’re actively undermining our ability to confront the crisis.”



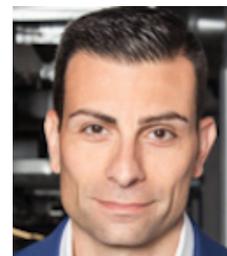
FANDUEL BETS ON JONES

FanDuel Group, online gaming company, has named Chris Jones VP-corporate communications.

He will promote the New York-headquartered firm’s retail brands within its Daily Fantasy Sports, Sportsbook and Casino business, expand brand/media partnerships and highlight the company’s commitment to responsible gambling, diversity and social justice.

Most recently, Jones served as CCO for IPG Mediabrands, Interpublic’s media/marketing/data group.

UK-based Flutter Entertainment, owner of the Paddy Power gambling shops in Britain and Ireland, is FanDuel’s parent company.



Chris Jones

MERCURY LANDS CHINA’S JINKOSOLAR

Mercury Public Affairs is negotiating a contract to provide PR services and media outreach for the US arm of China’s JinkoSolar Holding.

On Dec. 15, JinkoSolar Holding announced the immediate resignations of top management including CEO Kangping Chen, COO Jiun-Hua Allen Guo, chief marketing officer Gener Miao, chief technology officer Hao Jin, and human resources director Shaoguo Ji.

They will assume respective responsibilities at the company’s principal subsidiary, Jinko Solar Co. Ltd, which is being listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange’s STAR Market, according to the company’s statement.

JinkoSolar Holding chalked up \$3.7B in revenues for the first nine months of 2020 and earned \$102M.

The company says solar power is entering a “golden era,” spurred partly by the election of Joe Biden as US president. It expects US demand to double under the Biden administration.

Mercury got the assignment from Jinko after the company received a phone call from a reporter from the *New York Times* asking about its business practices.

The Omnicom unit expects to have an agreement that will cover PR related to its business operations and economic interests.

2020 WORST YEAR FOR AD SPENDING

Media owners worldwide experienced “the worst year on record for traditional advertising media” in 2020, with the on-line ad market failing to chart growth for the first time since the Dotcom crash twenty years ago, according to [a recent report](#) released by marketing research firm WARC.



WARC’s latest “Global Ad Trends” report, which focused on the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on the global ad market, found that media owners saw revenues in traditional advertising media—excluding political campaign spending—drop 11 percent worldwide in 2020, effectively slashing \$63 billion from the global advertising economy, which currently stands at a combined total of about \$552 billion.

In the United States, still the world’s top ad market (accounting for more than 26 percent of global ad spending), ad investment dipped more than four percent in 2020. Comparatively, the U.S. fared better than Europe (UK, Germany, France and Italy), Latin America (Brazil) and Asia (Japan and India), where ad spending was down by double digits.

The report called the 2020 ad recession “worse than the last in absolute terms,” and said that, after accounting for inflation and exchange rates, is “double that of 2009,” making this year the worst on record for traditional media spending.

Social media and online video were the only two advertising formats to chart growth in 2020, up 9.3 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively. The WARC report anticipates both of those formats to continue to lead growth in 2021.

The worst-hit advertising categories in 2020 included the automotive industry, which accounted for 17.4 percent of all global ad losses. That sector saw ad spends plummet by 21 percent (or about 11 billion) this year. The retail sector similarly lost 10.5 billion in ad revenues in 2020, followed by the travel and tourism industry. Ad spending in the government and non-profit sectors remained unscathed.

According to the report, global ad spending is forecast to rise 6.7 percent next year, and this rebound is expected to recoup an estimated 59 percent of 2020’s losses.

WARC’s report “Global Ad Trends: The State of the Industry 2020/21” drew on data aggregated from 100 markets worldwide and collaborated with Nielsen to measure net advertising investment data across 19 product categories.

CAPITAL METRO TRANSIT SCOUTS FOR PR

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which serves Austin and the surrounding Texas communities, is looking for a PR firm to advance its messaging.



Capital Metro operates buses, commuter and freight rail systems, ride-share programs and special transit services for the mobility impaired.

The selected firm also will provide Capital Metro with strategic advice on local and regional political matters and help it maintain constructive relationships with customers, employees and regional stakeholders.

Proposals are due Jan. 4. They must be submitted electronically to <https://www.planetbids.com/portal/portal.cfm?CompanyID=39494>.

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

WHITE HOUSE COMMS UNDER BIDEN

With the new White House staff announced and things beginning to move toward a new administration on January 20 (save the date, Donald), it is reasonable to wonder what communications will be like in the Biden White House.

In a few words: There will be some, as opposed to the nothingburgers served up by a succession of nothingburger-flippers—some of whom had the lifespan of a fruit fly—during the four years of the Trump Administration.

In another word: Boring. But, as a pundit gleefully proclaimed on CNN recently, “boring is the new thrilling!”

Under the watchful eye of seasoned pros like Ron Klain and Jen Psaki, communications are likely to be factual, detailed, consistent and frequent. But not at all in the campaign-rally style of the 45th president, because Joe Biden isn’t likely to be running for anything at age 81 (Oh Lord, please not).

Boring is okay. Boring is different. Boring means that government is working closer to where it should be, because government is supposed to be boring. No drama, no sudden reversals, no puerile character assassination, no firefights or trench digging resulting from a constant Twitter stream of lies and misstatements.

CNN and MSNBC executives are reported to be a bit uneasy about what life will be like after Trump blows town to conduct his shadow presidency at Mar-a-Lago, possibly taking Wormtongue Stephen Miller with him to serve as advisor and mouthpiece, but the rest of us should rejoice.

Yes, boring is thrilling. We may tire of Joe Biden in as little as 180 days, because after all he had eight years at the top of government, but he is the president, and we can all rest a little easier for that.

Bill Huey is founder and president of Strategic Communications, a corporate and marketing communication consultancy. He is the author of two novels and a new one-act play dealing with the #Me Too Movement, “The Tiger of the Flesh.”



Bill Huey

NEWS OF FIRMS

Avisa Partners has

launched an international disputes practice, which will support clients facing entrenched cross-border commercial, legal and regulatory challenges.

The new practice incorporates many of the firm’s consulting services verticals, including risk management, public affairs, global strategic communications, international affairs, digital advocacy, cybersecurity and anti-counterfeiting operations.

Notably, an integrated PR, digital marketing, and creative agency for high-growth companies, has been launched by former Warner Communications president and founder Carin Warner and her daughter Carly Martinetti, who was most recently a partner and managing director at California-based PressFriendly. The new agency is focusing on companies that want to scale quickly, raise serious capital, be acquired or go public.

**avisa
partners**

COMMENTARY

What does Russia have on Trump? He goes AWOL as Russia launches a cyber-Pearl Harbor attack on U.S. government agencies.

Computer networks at the Energy Department and National Nuclear Security Administration, which keep the U.S. nuclear weapon stockpile, have been compromised.

Instead, Trump whines about a stolen election, though the Dept. of Homeland Security considered it the most secure election ever, and pushes the fantasy that the results will be overturned. He also claims to be a victim of the investigation of Russia meddling in the 2016 election. Our poor president is the victim of the “Russian hoax.”

America is blessed to have a fully qualified Trump replacement waiting in the wings. President-elect Biden has expressed concern about “what appears to be a massive cybersecurity breach affecting potentially thousands of victims, including U.S. companies and federal government entities.”



The Democrat has warned there will be “substantial costs on those responsible for such malicious attacks.”

Biden is downright presidential. Jan. 20 cannot come soon enough.

The former VP is president-elect because during the race for the White House he “acted as a president in the absence of one,” Jen O’Malley Dillon, who was his campaign manager, told a Dec. 17 webinar sponsored by Precision Strategies. She sure got that right.

Biden held fast to this theme of battling for “the soul of the nation,” while president Trump pushed fear and divisiveness.

He showed great empathy to fellow Americans who lost their jobs or loved ones to COVID-19 and addressed the nation when the death toll hit the 100K mark, which was in sharp contrast to Trump’s strategy of downplaying the threat and belittling ways to stop the spread.

He called the murder of George Floyd a “wake-up call for our nation” and met with Black community leaders, while Trump urged governors to “dominate” protesters.

O’Malley Dillon, who had predicted the race would be a close one, said the campaign remained confident of victory though Election Day dragged on for days. The trick was to “minimize panic” among supporters and the media by educating them about how the vote would turn out once pro-Biden precincts finally reported results.

O’Malley Dillon, a co-founder of Precision Strategies, spoke at the webinar that was moderated by the firm’s other co-founders Stephanie Cutter and Teddy Goff.

She also addressed the controversy triggered by her interview with *Glamour*, in which she called Congressional Republicans a “bunch of fu----?”

There are “some words that I probably could have chosen better,” she said.

Happy days are almost here again for WPP. CEO Mark Read told investors on Dec. 17 to fasten their seat belts be-

cause the biggest ad/PR combine is ready to take off in 2021 in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

His optimism comes after he tidied up the sprawling and somewhat unwieldy enterprise that was put together by Martin Sorrell, who is now busy creating the son of WPP.

Read promises double-digit headline EPS growth over the next year and three to four percent annual revenue growth from 2023. He anticipates an acquisition blitz of \$250M to \$500M annually in high growth areas of commerce, experience and technology. Read wants those sectors to grow from 25 percent of today’s total to 40 percent by 2025.

The ebullient CEO may have gotten ahead of himself.

Citi analyst Thomas Singlehurst told the *Financial Times* that Read served up a “Christmas feast” and “there seem to be no areas where they seem to be particularly Scrooge-like.”

Merry Christmas, Mark. WPP shareholders wish you all the best in 2021.

Robinhood Financial is a star of the COVID-19 pandemic as stuck-at-home and bored amateur investors spend much of their days using its commission-free platform.

Those punters may be a bit unnerved by the Dec. 17 announcement from the Securities and Exchange Commission charging Robinhood with misleading customers about how it made money from 2015 to late 2018.

Robinhood, which did not admit or deny the charges, agreed to pay a \$65M civil penalty.

Chief legal officer Dan Gallagher said the fine stems from historical practices that do not reflect the company of today, one that is “fully transparent in our communications with customers about current revenue streams.”

Massachusetts filed a lawsuit against Robinhood on Dec. 16, charging it with using “gaming strategies to manipulate customers.” The Commonwealth claims Robinhood has turned the serious business of investing into a “game.”

Robinhood denies that charge and says it is studious in serving the needs of customers. It could turn out to be the shooting star of the pandemic.

Still-at-home for the holidays... Nearly seven-in-ten (69 percent) of Americans won’t be traveling for Christmas, according to a survey commissioned by the American Hotel & Lodging Assn.

The Centers for Disease & Prevention has advised people to stay at home to prevent a surge of COVID-19. About three-in-four of those intrepid travelers plan to stay with their family or friends, which is terrible news for the AH&LA.

When it comes to hitting the road, Americans have followed the CDC’s counsel. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, only 32 percent of the survey respondents took an overnight vacation or leisure trip.

Things aren’t looking much rosier for the travel business in 2021, as only 44 percent of respondents plan to take a business or leisure trip.

Widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines can’t come soon enough for the battered hotel industry.

—Kevin McCauley