



**Star Dem  
donor George  
says Biden  
too far gone  
to stay in race**

**DOESN'T  
HAVE A  
CLOONEY**



Could this be the straw that breaks the campaign's back? George Clooney, the Hollywood star who co-hosted a Biden fundraiser just a few weeks ago (pictured) says the president is not the same man he was and it's time for him to drop out.

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# Camille turns on the Fawcett!



Camille Kostek shows some serious blonde ambition on Instagram, with the Sports Illustrated mainstay, 32, striking the same red-swimsuit pose as Farrah Fawcett in the late “Charlie’s Angels” star’s iconic 1976 pinup poster. Nailing the details down to the beach-towel backdrop, Camille says simply, “channeling Farrah.”



Camille Kostek / Instagram

# A.I. TEXT TO TALK ‘DANGER’

## Pandora’s voice box

By ALEX MITCHELL

Experts are speechless. Researchers at Microsoft have developed an artificially intelligent text-to-speech program that is so realistic — and therefore so dangerous — they aren’t releasing it to the public.

VALL-E 2, as it is called, is the first AI vocal program of its kind in “achieving human parity,” Microsoft announced. In other words, it can’t be differentiated from a person’s speech.

Until now, more rudimentary developments can be detected as AI through small nuances in verbiage.

Notably, VALL-E 2 is said to be crystal clear “even for sentences that are traditionally challenging due to their complexity or repetitive phrases,” according to a paper on the software.

It can replicate a voice thoroughly after hearing as little as *three seconds* of audio.

The program “surpasses previous systems in speech robustness, naturalness, and speaker similarity,” researchers noted.

Its creators have good intentions for use both medically — as an aid for those with aphasia or similar pathological disabilities — and socially. Specifically, researchers boast

that VALL-E 2 “could be used for educational learning, entertainment, journalistic, self-authored content, accessibility features, interactive voice response systems, translation, chatbot, and so on.”

However, they are not ignorant of the potential misuse of such a high-powered tool.

“It may carry potential risks in the misuse of the model, such as spoofing voice identification or impersonating a specific speaker,” researchers wrote.

For this reason, there are “no plans to incorporate VALL-E 2 into a product or expand access to the public.”

Voice spoofing, creating a pretend voice for phone calls and other

long-distance interactions, is becoming a concerning issue due to easy accessibility of AI programs. Apple just listed it as a top concern amid an increase in phishing scams.

The elderly are typically targeted, but some mothers have received fake calls that their children were kidnapped for ransom — mistakenly believing it was their child on the other end.

Experts like Lisa Palmer, a strategist for consulting firm AI Leaders, recommend families and loved ones create tightly kept, verbal passwords to share on the phone in cases of doubt.

amitchell@nypost.com

# Oh snap: Lego theft ring busted

A massive Lego theft ring was busted by Oregon police — who took drone footage of mountains of the colorful toys packed neatly in their boxes from above.

More than 4,150 swiped sets of the plastic building blocks — valued at roughly \$200,000 — were seized from the Brick Builders shop in Eugene, Ore., the Springfield Police Department said Tuesday.

Ammon Henrikson, owner of the Lego-centric toy shop, is ac-

cused of knowingly buying the unopened sets from crooks who stole them from nearby chain stores such as Target, Fred Meyer and Walmart, according to cops.

Henrikson may have even been instructing the suspects to snatch specific Lego sets, a police source told news station KEZI.

Among the stolen items were high-end kits for building things like the souped-up DeLorean car from “Back to the Future,” the

custom ambulance from “Ghostbusters” — which goes for as much as \$230 — and the Millennium Falcon from “Star Wars.”

During the three-month investigation, cops saw thieves rob stores of high-priced Lego sets — then head straight to Brick Builders, police said. “We would watch people go into the store with Lego and come out with cash in hand,” Sgt. Kyle Potter told the station. *Natalie O’Neill*

# 3 weeks after gala, Dem darling Clooney

By ISABEL KEANE  
and DIANA GLEBOVA

Oscar-winning actor George Clooney called on President Biden to end his campaign for re-election Wednesday, saying the 81-year-old incumbent “cannot win.”

Clooney, 63, made the call for a new candidate in an op-ed published in *The New York Times* less than a month after he co-hosted a Biden fundraiser that raised some \$30 million.

However, the receipts were overshadowed by Biden freezing up during the event and having to be escorted offstage by former President Barack Obama.

Biden and Obama sat for an interview with ABC late-night host Jimmy Kimmel and as the men rose afterward, Biden’s gaze appeared fixed on the applauding crowd for a full 10 seconds until Obama took his wrist and guided him offstage.



**TRUE BLUE:** George Clooney gets a Kennedy Center honor from President Biden in 2022 (above) and raised millions for him just last month with Julia Roberts, in addition to years of work with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

## ‘Devastating to say’

Clooney added: “I love Joe Biden. As a senator. As a vice president and as president. I consider him a friend, and I believe in him. Believe in his character. Believe in his morals . . .

“But the one battle he cannot win is the fight against time,” Clooney went on. “None of us can.”

“It’s devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was not the Joe ‘big F-ing deal’ Biden of 2010,” he added. “He wasn’t even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate.”

The staunch Democrat also called out party leaders on Capitol Hill, who Clooney said “need to stop telling us that 51 million people didn’t see what we just saw” at the CNN debate June 27.

“We are not going to win in November with this president,” the “*Syriana*” star bluntly said.

“This isn’t only my opinion; this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor that I’ve spoken with in private. Every single one, irrespective of what he or she is saying publicly.”

However, Clooney insisted Wednesday, “the dam has broken. We can put our heads in the sand and pray for a miracle in November, or we can speak the truth.”

“It is disingenuous, at best, to argue that Democrats have already spoken with their vote and therefore the nomination is set-

tled and done, when we just received new and upsetting information,” the actor added in a clear response to Biden’s defiant Monday morning letter to Democrats insisting he would stay in the race.

“Top Democrats — Chuck Schumer, Hakeem Jeffries, Nancy Pelosi — and senators, representatives and other candidates who face losing in November need to ask this president to voluntarily step aside,” Clooney insisted.

As for the mechanism to replace Biden, Clooney endorsed a so-called “mini-primary” that would be settled at next month’s Democratic convention in Chicago.

“Let’s hear from [Maryland

Gov.] Wes Moore and [Vice President] Kamala Harris and [Michigan Gov.] Gretchen Whitmer and [California Gov.] Gavin Newsom and [Kentucky Gov.] Andy Beshear and [Illinois Gov.] J.B. Pritzker and others,” he wrote.

“Would it be messy? Yes. Democracy is messy.”

## Meathead bails, too

The *Times* reported Wednesday that the Biden campaign had found out about Clooney’s op-ed before it was published and tried to persuade him to change his mind.

According to the newspaper, Biden campaign co-chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg — the former



# JOE ‘CANNOT WIN’: GEORGE

head of Disney and DreamWorks — led the unsuccessful effort.

Clooney is not the only Hollywood bundler taking issue with Biden’s insistence on staying in the race.

Actor and director Rob Reiner joined Clooney’s disavowal of Biden later Wednesday, writing on X: “My friend George Clooney has clearly expressed what many of us have been saying. We love and respect Joe Biden. We acknowledge all he has done for our country. But Democracy is facing an existential threat. We need someone younger to fight back.”

“Joe Biden must step aside.”

Last week, Abigail Disney, the

64-year-old grand-niece of studio patriarch Walt Disney, told CNBC she would not give any more to Democrats as long as Biden remained on the ticket.

“This is realism, not disrespect,” Disney said at the time.

Biden’s re-election campaign has said it raised \$127 million last month, up from the \$85 million it pulled in this past May.

However, NBC News reported Wednesday that the Biden campaign was already seeing the effects of donors keeping their wallets shut in the wake of the debate, with one source saying that the money flow has “absolutely shut off” and another calling the situation “disastrous.”

# tells prez to quit



**N**OW you tell us, George. After fronting a splashy fundraiser with Julia Roberts, Barbra Streisand and Jimmy Kimmel in La-La Land three weeks ago, George Clooney penned a bombshell column for The New York Times Wednesday urging Biden to step down.

He's simply lost too many steps, said Clooney.

"It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was not the Joe 'big F—ing deal' Biden of 2010," wrote Clooney. "He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate."

He saw that Biden was a shell of his former self and yet still helped to raise \$30 million for a political lemon. Hey, the show must go on.

What took Clooney so long?

After all, this was not a rare case of rapid onset aging.

He and our Tinseltown betters told us this octogenarian career pol was the only guy for the job, spry at 81 and in fighting

shape to slay the MAGA boogeyman. That is, until the debate — when the showbiz myth of Biden collided with reality. There, Biden was free from teleprompters, protective handlers and press reps who vet every question. He was undeniably in a cognitive free fall.

Only now, Clooney admits that what we saw on TV, he saw in private. Everybody knows it. The jig is finally up.

Sadly, that's what this Biden

# So, it was all an act Phonies of Hollywood

candidacy has been all along: smoke and mirrors, which happens to be the specialty of Hollywood. Clooney is one of the few industry A-listers left. He oozes sex appeal, glamour and a cheekiness that makes him sparkle on the big screen.

He also oozes elitist bulls--t.

Clooney and his celebrity pals — led by movie mogul Jeffrey Katzenberg, who has been the executive producer of this Biden fantasy — put on a star-studded night despite their weak, confused-looking candidate.

But it was a summer blockbuster doomed to flop because the script was crap and none of the players believed in the project. They were just hoping hype would mask its obvious faults and it would deliver at the box office. Or in this case, at the ballot box. How cynical and arrogant. We all saw Biden

freeze up on stage. We saw him being gingerly led off by President Obama at the fundraiser (Where's that guy btw?).

## Insult to America

Clooney got the kill sign from the party base who want Biden put out to pasture because they know he can't win. The time arrived for a public and coordinated mass knifing in ol' Joe's back, so the actor obliged.

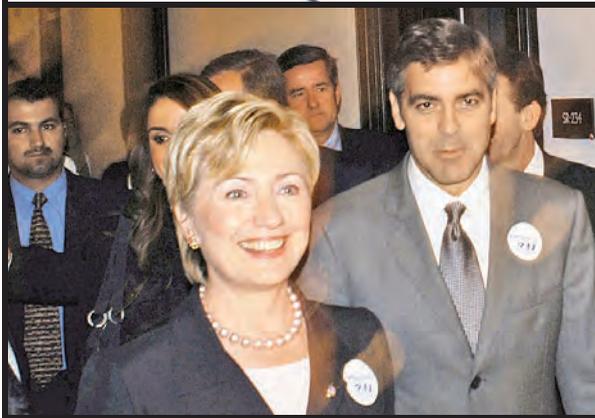
It's craven.

Like most Americans, I was and still am clamoring for youth and new ideas for this 2024 election. But this shameful unraveling only emboldens Donald Trump's insistence that we need to look for leadership outside of the establishment.

As Clooney said in his murderous Times piece, "democracy is messy." So is the truth. And the truth is Hollywood is full of hypocritical, out of touch blowhards, who think so little of the American public.



**KIRSTEN FLEMING**



Joe Biden/X  
Oliver Douliery/ABCAUSA.COM  
John Falsi/Getty Images

**WASHINGTON** — President Biden was seen by neurologist Kevin Cannard, who specializes in Parkinson's disease, at the White House on Jan. 17, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre admitted late Tuesday — hours after telling reporters the opposite at a briefing.

The clarification came just a day after Jean-Pierre scolded a journalist who pressed her for details on Cannard's visit and pointed out she gave misleading information about whether Biden, 81, was medically evaluated after his catastrophic June 27 debate performance.

"Because the date was not mentioned in the question, I want to be clear that

# WH: Doc saw Biden in Jan.

the Jan. 17 meeting between [presidential physician] Dr. [Kevin] O'Connor and Dr. Cannard was for the president's physical," Jean-Pierre told The Associated Press, whose reporter had asked Jean-Pierre about Cannard's meeting with O'Connor, which was first reported by The Post this past Saturday.

"It was one of the three times the president has seen Dr. Cannard, each time for his physical. The findings from each exam have been released to the public," Jean-Pierre said.

Earlier Tuesday, the AP's Seung Min Kim asked Jean-Pierre, "Can you say whether that one meeting [between Cannard and O'Connor] was

related to care for the president himself?"

Jean-Pierre replied, "I can say that it was not."

Cannard visited the White House eight times in as many months between July last year and March this year for what O'Connor suggested in a Monday night letter was treating military members, even though his visits were to the residence clinic in the White House basement, according to public visitor logs, rather than the adjacent Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Jean-Pierre's latest disclosure appears to push back the date for what the White House says was Biden's most recent neurological exam. Steven Nelson

# PREZ THE



## What, 'Mi' worry?

**CARELESS:** Michelle Obama lounges Wednesday with former Google CEO Eric Schmidt on Mallorca.

By RYAN KING

Former First Lady Michelle Obama looked like she didn't have a care in the world Wednesday, when she was spotted chilling out with Google's former CEO Eric Schmidt at a party on Mallorca.

The former first lady relaxed and sipped water as she chatted with fellow guests during the bash at the villa of James Costos, former President Barack Obama's onetime ambassador to Spain and Andorra.

Back on American shores, Democrats have plunged further into a panic over President Biden's chances of prevailing over former President Donald Trump in the Nov. 5 general election.

Eight House Democrats have publicly demanded Biden, 81, step aside, while their Senate counterparts have been more measured though still rattled.

"Donald Trump is on track, I think, to win this election. And maybe win

it by a landslide and take with it the Senate and the House," Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) vented to CNN Tuesday evening. "I think we could lose the whole thing and it's staggering to me."

Michelle, 60, has talked publicly about how she broke into "uncontrollable sobbing" during Trump's inauguration back in 2017. She's also warned against electing the presumptive Republican nominee to a second term.

### 'Not running'

Several polls have suggested that she would easily beat Trump in a hypothetical matchup. But the former first lady has ruled out the possibility.

"As former First Lady Michelle Obama has expressed several times over the years, she will not be running for president," her rep said in March.



President Biden attempts to win over skeptical party members by pantomiming vitality Wednesday as he hosts world leaders at the NATO summit in Washington. Biden, who is fighting growing calls from allies to drop out of the presidential race as fallout mounts from his inept debate performance last month, mugged with Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg (right), Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (top inset) and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (bottom inset).

# Slidin' Biden puts on 'show' of force

## GOP demands WH trio talk about addled mind

House Republicans issued subpoenas Wednesday to three of President Biden's closest aides, saying their testimony is needed to evaluate the president's cognitive fitness, with a subpoena of Biden's physician looming as a potential next step ahead of a Sunday deadline to comply with

a voluntary interview request.

House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) cited an Axios report that described White House Deputy Chief of Staff Annie Tomasini, First Lady Jill Biden's senior adviser Anthony Bernal and Deputy Director of Oval Office Opera-

tions Ashley Williams as forming "a protective bubble" around the president. Testimony from the three previously was requested by Comer as part of oversight of the Justice Department's investigation of Biden's mishandling of classified files, but that attempt was blocked by the White House.

"Key White House staff must come before our committee so we can provide the transparency and accountability that Americans deserve," said Comer.

A White House counsel's office spokesman ridiculed the subpoenas as a "political stunt."

Steven Nelson

## Aides eye potential Kamrades

# DECIDER: NANCY

## Says Joe must choose as sen. begs 'withdraw'

By JOSH CHRISTENSON  
and RYAN KING

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was noncommittal in a Wednesday interview about President Biden's re-election, saying that "time is running short" to find a replacement — as Vermont Sen. Peter Welch became the first Democratic member of the upper chamber to call on the president to drop out of the 2024 race.

"It's up to the president to decide if he is going to run," Pelosi (D-Calif.) told MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

"We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short," she added. "It's not for me to say, I'm not the head of the caucus anymore, but he's beloved, he is respected, and people want him to make that decision."

Biden, 81, sent a stern letter to lawmakers Monday morning that left no doubt he was "firmly committed" to staying in the 2024 race.

When co-host Jonathan Lemire pointed this out to Pelosi, the 84-year-old responded: "I want him to do whatever he decides to do."

"Let him deal with this NATO conference," she added. "This is a very big deal. Thirty heads of — over 30 heads of state are here. He is the host of it, and that means not just hosting, it means orchestrating the discussion and setting the agenda. And he's doing so magnificently."

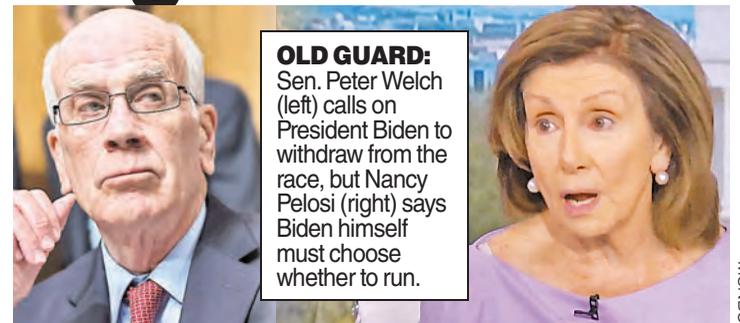
"And I've said to everyone, let's just hold off whatever you're thinking," Pelosi said. "Either tell somebody privately, but you don't have to put that out on the table until we see how we go this week."

### 'For good of the country'

Pelosi tried to walk back her remarks later, telling a CBS News reporter, "I think the president is great, and there are some misrepresentations of what I have said."

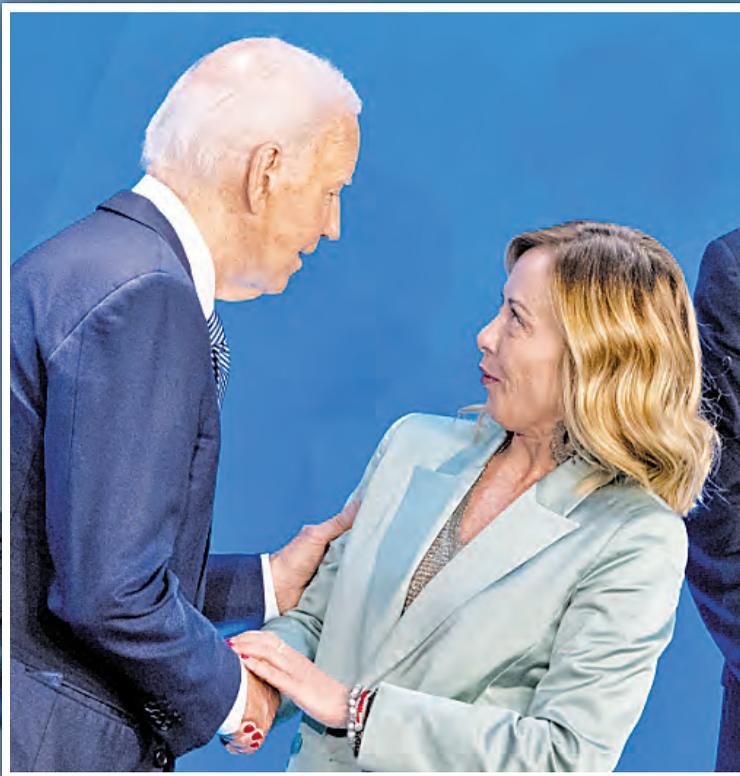
"I never said he should reconsider. The decision is the president's," Pelosi added. "I don't know what's happened in The New York Times that they make up news. But if that's why you're here it isn't true."

Welch made his argument for Biden to step aside in a Washington Post op-ed, writing that he "cannot unsee" the president's disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump.



**OLD GUARD:** Sen. Peter Welch (left) calls on President Biden to withdraw from the race, but Nancy Pelosi (right) says Biden himself must choose whether to run.

MSNBC



Getty Images



Reuters

Members of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign team have already picked out at least three Democrats who could serve as Harris' running mate should Biden drop out of the presidential race and Harris win the nomination.

As Biden continues to face pressure to end his re-election bid, people close to the effort revealed that a short list of potential Harris No. 2s is already being compiled, The New York Times reports.

At the top are Govs. Roy Cooper (NC), Andy Beshear (Ky.) and Josh Shapiro (Pa.), with Cooper the clear front-runner, according to the Times.

Ronny Reyes

# Deep-blue NY a 'battleground'



## Convention has a slot for Yeezy ex

Amber Rose, a former stripper who has fiercely criticized Donald Trump in the past but endorsed him and posted a picture of herself with him (above) in May, will be a speaker at the Republican National Convention in support of the 45th president.

The Philadelphia-born Rose, 40, gained fame in 2008, after she appeared in the music video for rapper Young Jeezy's single "Put On" and began dating Kanye West.

In 2013, Rose married another rapper, Wiz Khalifa, before filing for divorce a year later. She also founded the LA chapter of the SlutWalk feminist protest march.

Her presence on the GOP bill rubbed some the wrong way.

"I get you want to convey ... that this isn't your father's Republican Party," a source close to the Republican National Committee told The Post, "but isn't there someone better than an OnlyFans porn creator who runs something called SlutWalk?"

Diana Glebova, Wires

## Ron will have his say in Milwaukee

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former 2024 primary rival of Donald Trump, will be speaking at the Republican National Convention next week in Milwaukee, a source familiar with the matter confirmed to The Post.

DeSantis' presence on the bill was first reported by NBC News, which claimed that the speaking slot was created for DeSantis after a "change in schedule."

But a senior official in the DeSantis camp told The Post: "We've consistently been told we would have a speaking slot at the convention and have not been told differently."

Diana Glebova

## Jewish voters express fear

By CARL CAMPANILE

Nearly half of Jewish voters have felt at risk because of their religious identity while living in the Empire State, while more than a third said that New York is no longer a haven for their people, a poll reveals.

The survey conducted for the pro-Israel New York Solidarity Network between May 9 and 22 found that 44% of 1,200 Jewish voters in New York City and other counties said they have felt unsafe, as did 67% of identifiable Orthodox Jews.

More than a third, 35%, said they agreed with the statement: "New York is no longer a safe haven for Jewish life and the Jewish people." Nearly 40% said the US is no longer a safe place for Jews.

About 1.5 million Jews live in New York state, more than in any place outside of Israel, the poll takers said.

"That more than a third of registered New York Jewish voters believe New York is no longer a safe haven for Jews should be a five-alarm fire for state and local elected officials," Sara Forman, executive director of the New York Solidarity Network and Treasurer of Solidarity PAC, told The Post on Wednesday.

It comes as New York has been hit by a wave of antisemitic hate crimes since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.

The hate has spilled onto college campuses, where some Jewish students have been left in fear due to anti-Israel protests and antisemitic incidents — including at Cooper Union and at Columbia University, where vandals occupied an academic building.

Many of the masked protesters escaped prosecution, and a campaign is now underway to

**35%** agree with the statement "New York is no longer a safe haven for Jewish life and the Jewish people."

**44%** say they have felt unsafe as a Jewish NY resident.

**86%** said antisemitism is a serious problem in NY today. (Of which **51%** said "very serious.")

**51%** said they don't think NY colleges and universities will do enough to make sure Jewish students feel safe or welcome on campus.

urge Gov. Hochul and the Legislature to restore a mask ban at public protests to prevent harassers and bigots from hiding their identity.

Fifty-one percent of those surveyed said they don't believe New York's college campuses will do enough to make Jewish students feel safe in the upcoming fall semester, while 42% said they did.

Eighty-six percent of respondents said they believe that antisemitism is a serious problem, and 56% have witnessed anti-Jewish hatred on social media and online forums — including 72% of those under the age of 30.

Antisemitic hate crimes are up 45% in 2024, according to NYPD data obtained by The Post in April. The poll has a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

RIKKI SCHLOTT



**W**ITH the 2024 election almost upon us, Donald Trump is gaining a new cohort of voters: Jewish Americans who feel abandoned by the left.

According to exit polls, 77% of Jewish voters went for Joe Biden in 2020. But a recent poll from the Jewish Electoral Institute found the president has lost 10 points on his lead against his rival.

But some lifelong Jewish Democrats feel an explosion of left-wing antisemitism has pushed them to register as Republicans — and vote for Trump:

**Melissa Chapman: 'I've been kicked out of left-wing spaces'**

Chapman always considered herself a bleeding-heart liberal — but she left the Democratic Party after she claims it "betrayed" Jewish people.

Chapman, a mom of two, runs a blog where she champions progressive causes, from LGBT rights and animal rights to Black History Month. However, after the Hamas attacks which killed 1,200 and took another 250 hostage, prompting Israel's military to respond in Gaza, she found herself castigated online in the progressive social-media communities she'd long been a part of.

"Even on my vegan Facebook communities, all the recipes became about freeing Palestine, somehow," she said. "If you disagreed in any way, you either got bullied, shamed or just kicked out of the group."

"I was literally abandoned by every single community that I poured my heart into."

"I was told to go back to Poland," she recalled. "One person told me they hope that I burn in the ovens. If you support Israel, you're immediately considered someone who's supporting genocide, which is not, by definition, even true — but it doesn't matter because buzzwords are taking over like wildfire."

The experience of being squeezed out of progressive spaces caused Chapman to re-register as a Republican.

"It's a horrible time to support Israel and be a Democrat, and I just don't think there's any space



Danny Cohen



Melissa Chapman

for us anymore," she said. "As a Jew, you have to disown Israel in order to be accepted into the Democratic community."

The post-Oct. 7 reaction has caused Chapman to think often of her late father, who was a Holocaust survivor: "If he were alive today, I don't know what he would say. I don't know, but would he say this is like what happened in Germany before Hitler took over?"

**Danny Cohen: 'The Democratic Party has a cancer'**

After a lifetime as a Democrat, Cohen decided his party now "has a cancer" in the form of antisemitism.

"There's been a hijacking of the Democratic Party," Cohen, 56 of Brooklyn, told The Post. "Right now the Democratic Party has a cancer. It seems like all the antisemitism is just coming out of the woodwork."

In the wake of Oct. 7, Cohen changed his party registration to Republican.

"The response from the left really shook me to my core," said Cohen, who was raised in a Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn,

"I can't be part of that party anymore. I don't want to have

# thanks to Biden as Kat's deputy flips

# EMPIRE ON RED ALERT



Matt Witteyer

Sarah Sarkin

**FULL CIRCLE:** Sarah Sarkin was for “anybody but Trump” in 2016 (inset), but the formerly “Democrat as can be” Syracuse mom tells The Post she’s now backing the former president because of his commitment to Israel.

## Exodus '24: Jews nix Dems for Don

anything to do with these people. It's a corrupt party now. It's a hijacked party. This is not the party that I grew up with."

"I'm not saying that there isn't any hate in the Republican Party — we have the KKK, the Proud Boys, Charlottesville — but they can't even hold a candle to the scale of what's going on on the other side."

Accordingly, Cohen is planning to vote Republican for the first time.

"I'm passionate. I'm excited about it, actually," he said. "It's a fight against Jew hatred, and so now I'm excited about voting for Trump."

Cohen, who is gay, has also gotten pushback from his com-

munity: "A lot of my friends ask me, 'What about gay rights?' And I'm like, look, I have my gay stuff going on, but I'm a Jew first."

**Sarah Sarkin: 'Being a liberal was a huge part of my identity'**

Sarkin once took to the streets to protest Trump's election in 2016, waving an "Anybody but Trump" poster. Now she's voting for him in 2024.

"Being a mother and watching everything that happened in October made me make the switch," Sarkin, who is raising her infant son in Syracuse, said.

"Those images are still seared and tattooed into my memory, and it was just horrifying to see

some of the reactions on the left."

Although she considered herself "as Democrat as can be" until recently, Sarkin, 31, re-registered as a Republican.

"It was a lot of silence on the left, and that really speaks so loudly to how a party that I once thought was for equality and for protecting us is really not for equal rights," Sarkin told The Post.

As November nears, Sarkin plans to cast her ballot for Trump because she believes his commitment to Israel is more resounding.

"At least for me, I need someone who's a fighter and who knows where they stand," she said.

New York will be "a battleground" in the 2024 election, a top Manhattan Democrat warned Wednesday — as Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado broke with the governor in calling for President Biden to drop his re-election bid.

The shock move by Delgado (inset) — which one Democratic insider called "just weird" — marked an extremely rare public schism between Gov. Hochul and her No. 2.

Biden "can add to his legacy, showing his strength and grace, by ending his campaign and making room for a new leader," Delgado wrote in a statement released Wednesday afternoon.

"I believe we should move forward with a nominee capable of re-invigorating and re-energizing Americans who are determined to protect our democracy, and who want to do so with a candidate they believe can win."

Hochul has been a steadfast cheerleader for Biden, stumping for the president and lauding him at events in the weeks since a disastrous debate performance has sparked an intra-party panic.

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, meanwhile, said Biden's plummeting poll numbers show the deep-blue state could be up for grabs this year.

"We're still acting like this is a one-party state, which for pretty much 20, 25 years it has been," he told Politico. "I truly believe we're a battleground state now."

A Siena College poll released in

June — before Biden's disastrous CNN debate against former President Donald Trump, 78 — found the 81-year-old incumbent with only a single-digit lead over Trump in New York.

Biden's 8-point advantage (47% to 39%) is a far cry from his resounding 23-point margin of victory in New York four years ago.

Similarly, an Emerson College poll released in May found Trump only trailing Biden by 6 points in the Empire State and winning over independent voters by a 10-point margin, 43% to 33%.

### Down-ballot burden

Levine warned that Biden's waning popularity in New York could be devastating for down-ballot Democratic House candidates in the state's swing districts. "The implications for control of Congress are real enough that I think this needs more national attention," he said.

Rep. Pat Ryan (D-NY) on Wednesday became the eighth House Democrat to call for Biden to end his re-election bid, arguing that the commander in chief "is no longer the best candidate to defeat Trump."

Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, held a string of campaign events in the New York City area earlier this year, including a rally in the South Bronx that drew between 8,000 and 10,000 attendees. He also held a massive Wildwood, NJ, rally in May, which drew about 100,000 people.



# NYPD's 'fallen brother'

## Cadet's heat-linked death

By JOE MARINO,  
LARRY CELONA,  
AMANDA WOODS  
and STEVE JANOSKI

An NYPD recruit died Wednesday from a heat-related medical episode at the department's Bronx shooting range — just a week before he was set to graduate, cops and sources said.

Edgar Ordonez (inset), 33, died from what seemed to be heat exhaustion at the Rodman's Neck firing range around 11:30 a.m. on a sweltering summer day in the Big Apple, according to the NYPD and sources.



He was taken to Jacobi Medical Center, where he was initially listed in critical condition but could not be saved.

His class was slated to graduate on Monday, sources said.

Police Commissioner Edward Caban posted a tribute on X.

"Our hearts are heavy as we honor our fallen brother, Probationary Police Officer Edgar Ordonez," Caban said in the post.

"We tragically lost Edgar ear-

lier today, just a few days before he was set to graduate and join his fellow Finest protecting New York City," he added.

"As we continue to grieve this terrible loss, we will keep Edgar's family, friends, and fellow officers in our thoughts and prayers."

PBA president Patrick Hendry called Ordonez a "beacon of joy and positive energy for his fellow recruits."

"He had the drive and determination necessary to become a New York City police officer, and he was just days away from hitting the streets and making a difference in protect-

ing our city," Hendry said in a statement.

Police sources told The Post that city officials, the Bronx district attorney and the state attorney general should investigate the officer's death because cops are forced to wear heat-trapping helmets, long pants and heavy boots no matter how hot it gets.

"It's no surprise that incidents like this can take place," one source said.



Matthew McDermott

## Cops' CPR is flatlining

New York's Finest no longer will avow "Courtesy, Professionalism, Respect" — or at least their new patrol cars won't.

A new slogan — "Fighting Crime, Protecting The Public" — is emblazoned on the NYPD's revamped patrol cars (top), replacing the iconic three-word motto (inset) that graced cruisers for nearly three decades.

So far, decals featuring the new slogan have been slapped on 125 new patrol cars at a cost that's \$1,390 per vehicle more than the old adhesives that promised cops will act courteously,

professionally and respectfully toward the public — or nearly \$174,000 total, police said.

"As new vehicles are purchased by the NYPD they will be outfitted with the new decals before they are delivered to the NYPD," a Police Department spokesperson said in a statement Wednesday.

The NYPD started using "Courtesy, Professionalism, Respect" on patrol cars in 1997 as part of a push to repair relations between cops and communities. Police didn't answer The Post's questions as to who made the decision to drop the slogan and why.

Matt Troutman and Joe Marino

"The police officers are the public," the source continued. "They are people. They don't have superpowers. When we're issuing heat warnings to the public and having heat advisories, opening cooling centers — where is the relief for the police officers?"

On Wednesday, lines of cops

stood in silent salute as their fallen comrade's body was wheeled into an ambulance.

His weeping family looked on in tearful shock.

In a separate, possibly heat-related incident Wednesday at Fort Totten in Queens, an NYPD officer fainted and apparently struck their head, according to sources.

That officer's condition was unclear and the NYPD did not immediately have official information on the episode.

There was a heat advisory in effect in the city Wednesday, with highs of 86 and a heat index with humidity making it feel closer to 100 outside.

jmarino@nypost.com

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■ Midday Win-4 Wed.: 8724  
■ Midday Take 5 Wed.: 7, 28, 30, 35, 37  
■ Evening Nos. Wed.: 477  
■ Evening Win-4 Wed.: 6870  
■ Evening Take 5 Wed.: 14, 18, 19, 26, 31  
■ Pick 10 Wed.: 3, 5, 12, 13, 15, 23, 27, 34, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 50, 63, 67, 68, 72, 77  
■ Cash-4-Life Wed.: 10, 19, 38, 48, 59; Cash Ball: 4

■ Powerball Wed.: 7, 11, 12, 27, 46; Powerball: 26; Power Play: x3

#### NEW JERSEY

Pick-3 Wed.: 136; Fireball: 1  
Pick-4 Wed.: 9930; Fireball: 1  
Cash-5 Xtra Wed.: 9, 30, 39, 41, 45; Xtra: 3

#### CONNECTICUT

Play-3 Wed.: 055; Wild: 4  
Play-4 Wed.: 9529; Wild: 7  
Cash-5 Wed.: 2, 10, 11, 16, 21  
Lucky-4 Life Wed.: 2, 14, 19, 22, 36; Lucky Ball: 9

### POST CONTACTS

#### Editorial

Main Office ..... (212) 930-8000  
News Tips ..... (212) 930-8500  
Sports Desk ..... (212) 930-8700

#### Circulation and Home Delivery

Customer Service ..... (800) 552-7678

#### Mail subscription & back issues only:

Phone 1-888-208-4157 or contact  
New York Post, P.O. Box 1407,  
Bellmawr, NJ, 08099. Foreign and  
domestic mail subscription rates  
available upon request to the  
Publishers Information Center, Inc.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to The New York Post, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10036-8790.

Vol. 223 No. 239 Copyright 2024, NYP Holdings Inc. (USPS-383200)  
Published daily by NYP Holdings Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-8790.



Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional offices. The Post uses recycled paper.

# IN THE HOT DOGHOUSE

EPA-EFE/Shutterstock



By ANEETA BHOLE  
and CHRIS NESI

The brat thickens. A competitive eater in Nathan's Famous Hot Dog eating competition has crumbled under the weight of a cheating scandal and requested his score be revised to remove the controversial wieners, The Post can reveal exclusively. Nick Wehry, husband of women's division champion and pink mustard belt holder Miki Sudo, was accused of using sleight-of-hand trickery to beef up his tally at the July 4 competition and place himself among the sport's most elite competitors.

"I am distressed over the accusations of cheating that have surfaced, and I reiterate that I did not cheat in this event," Wehry said, acknowledging the controversy but denying wrongdoing.

"However, because I did touch another eater's plates and because this gives the appearance or possibility of impropriety, I have asked Major League Eating to adjust my score down to a count of 46.75 hot dogs and buns. I'm truly sorry for raising any questions over the results of the event."

On competition day at Coney Island, Wehry devoured a respectable 46.75 dogs in the 10-minutes allotted. But his official score was later increased to 51.75 on the official Major League Eating web tally.

A source closely involved with the competition told



The Post that eating 50 hot dogs is seen as a high-water mark separating everyday contenders from the top tier. Although the allegedly inflated score did not improve Wehry's standings, it bumped his score from 46.75 to 51.75, placing him among the sport's crème de la crème.

## Munch ado on video

The sources claim Wehry shifted empty plates around on the competition table after time was up in order to place more on his stack. Judges count five hot dogs per plate when conducting their official tally, so the addition of a single extra plate would be enough to bump up his score into the elite tier.

Videos posted to an online forum dedicated to competitive eating provided a series of time codes purporting to show Wehry touching the plates in a suspicious manner.

In an unprecedented move Wednesday, Wehry's official score was scaled down to 46.75 on the Major League Eating site, the same tally recorded on the day of the contest by ESPN and The Post.

On Tuesday, Major League Eating told The Post that it's "not our policy to overturn judges' decisions after the final results have been recorded."

However on Wednesday, the organization acknowledged it had adjusted the score at Wehry's behest.

"Wehry remains the 4th place finisher of the hot dog eating contest on July 4, 2024," organizers said.

A source close to the competition slammed the organization for its about-face.

"If this sets a precedent, it could discourage people from wanting to compete" the man said. "Or... it might encourage them to try to cheat. I think neither are good for the sport."

**WE ARE THE CHOMP-ANS:** After The Post's front-page story accusing him of cheating, Nick Wehry (above with wife and Nathan's women's belt holder Miki Sudo) had his July 4 Coney Island (inset) hot dog tally reduced to 46.75 from 51.75.

## Fast-food joints cut jobs over min. wage Alzheimer's monitor app

Wendy's and Jersey Mike's franchise owners in California have cut hours and slashed jobs to offset the spike in labor costs caused by the state's new \$20 minimum wage.

Lawrence Cheng, who op-

erates seven Wendy's franchises in Southern California with his family, has not only chopped hours but has also stepped in to fill shifts at his burger joints, he said.

"I schedule one less person, and then I come in for that

time that I didn't schedule and I work that hour," Cheng told the Associated Press.

At his Wendy's in Fountain Valley, located in Orange County, he has reduced staffing to seven workers for the afternoon shifts, compared

with around a dozen before the state raised the minimum wage to \$20 from \$16.

Cheng has also limited overtime pay but said he does not plan to lay off any of his 250 employees.

Jonah Elkowitz with Wires

Personalized prognoses for people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease soon may be only a click away.

Researchers at Amsterdam University Medical Center in the Netherlands developed a prototype app based on their model that

forecasts an Alzheimer's patient's projected mental decline over five years.

The model is inspired by details gathered from nearly 1,000 patients with Alzheimer's disease, which is the most common type of dementia. Reda Wigle

## INVASION

# F-16s winging it to Kyiv

## NATO nations finally send 78 needed US jets

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

WASHINGTON — Ukrainian pilots will take to the skies in American-made F-16 fighter jets in the coming weeks to deter Russian airstrikes, the leaders of the US, Denmark and the Netherlands announced Wednesday.

Kyiv is set to receive 78 F-16s from a consortium of NATO countries that got President Biden's permission last year to dispatch the American-made aircraft and train Ukrainian pilots.

"The transfer process for these F-16s is now underway, and Ukraine will be flying operational F-16s this summer," Biden, Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said in a joint statement.

### Belgium's aid

Denmark and the Netherlands previously announced that they would donate 42 of the 78 promised F-16s to Ukraine, while Belgium is sending another 30.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre also announced Wednesday that Oslo would donate six F-16s from its inventory.

While Biden approved training Ukrainian pilots on the aircraft and OK'd other countries donating the jets in May 2023, it has taken more than a year to deliver the systems to the battlefield, partly due to the amount of time it's taken to train the pilots, US officials have said.

While US defense experts have told The Post

that Kyiv likely will not use F-16s for "dogfighting" with Russia jets, Yuriy Sak, a former adviser to Ukraine's defense ministry, said their primary mission would be to deter Moscow's aerial assaults.

"The most important function of those F-16s will be its integration into our air defense system," said Sak, now an adviser to Kyiv's minister of strategic industries, Oleksandr Kamyshin.

### 'Flying air defense'

"Essentially, we look at F-16s first and foremost as a flying air defense system that is capable of simply decreasing the amount of attacks — aerial attacks, missiles, drones — that Russia is carrying out on Ukraine."

Currently, Ukraine relies on older aircraft, including the Soviet-made MiG29 and Russian Sukhoi jets, to counter Moscow's capabilities. F-16s, however, have newer technology and better targeting capabilities to track and strike down other jets in the air.

"At the moment, it's a free run for them, you know?" he added. "They just take off, launch these bombs and go have a cup of tea."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has pleaded since Russia began its invasion in February 2022 for NATO members to donate F-16s to his forces.

Biden had been hesitant to sign off on sending the jets, with the administration citing fears of "escalating tensions" with Russia.



**SPEAKING UP:** House Speaker Mike Johnson (right) gave his support to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday during his visit.

AFP via Getty Images

## Allies at summit: Ukraine's 'future' with us

Ukraine is on an "irreversible" path to NATO membership after Russia's war on Europe's largest country brought Kyiv and the security alliance closer than ever, member nations said in the 2024 NATO Summit's official declaration.

"Ukraine's future is in NATO. Ukraine has become increasingly interoperable and politically integrated with the alliance," the declaration said. "As Ukraine continues this vital work, we will continue to support it on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership."

The summit's official statement came out as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited congressional leaders on

Capitol Hill Wednesday.

Although Ukraine is not yet a NATO member, Zelensky made the trek to Washington for the event, which has largely revolved around helping Kyiv win.

### On lifting restrictions

After meeting with Zelensky, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) gave his support for the country, pushing for the Biden administration to lift its restrictions on where and when Ukraine can fire American weapons into Russia.

"I explained that the will of Congress was to allow them the flexibility to use the weapons and assistance that were sent to prosecute the war as they see fit," Johnson said. "So I'm a sup-

porter of that. I believe that's what Congress intended."

Currently, Ukraine does not have Biden's blessing to fire long-distance weapons such as ATACMS — which have a range of roughly 186 miles — deep into Russian territory.

Biden only sent the highly effective ballistic missile system this year, but it represented a significant advancement in Kyiv's capabilities.

The international alliance agreed at the summit that it would continue to help bringing Ukraine's defense forces up to NATO standards, as it has done through training Ukraine's forces and donations of NATO-grade military equipment, according to the declaration.

Caitlin Doornbos

# Triple digit heat



Sultry supermodels Candice Swanepoel (from left), Isabeli Fontana and Kate Upton grace V Magazine's Fall Preview 2024 issue (inset), which takes a new look at the meaning of the term "bombshell." "In the past," South African stunner Swanepoel told the magazine, "a bombshell was purely about how women looked . . . But today it refers to women who are strong, confident and successful."

Alvaro Beamud Cortes for V Magazine

# A 'HABITABLE' PLANET

By ALEX MITCHELL

The James Webb Space Telescope has detected what could be distinct signs of life on a "potentially habitable" world nearly 50 million light-years away.

Researchers from the universities of Michigan and Montreal analyzed late 2023 data sent from the high-powered JWST optical.

They flagged potential oceans and air sources on the exoplanet dubbed LHS 1140 b, situated within the constellation Cetus in our night sky.

Although the name isn't so moving, its potential is.

"Of all currently known temperate exoplanets, LHS 1140 b could well be our best bet to one day in-

## Telescope discovery. 50M light-years away.

directly confirm liquid water on the surface of an alien world beyond our solar system," said lead author Charles Cadieux.

"This would be a major milestone in the search for potentially habitable exoplanets."

NASA describes the planet as a "rocky world," 1.73 times the radius of Earth and 5.6 times its mass. In terms of color, its outer

appearance evokes a cross between Mars and Jupiter.

Fellow researcher Ryan MacDonald of NASA added that this "is the first time we have ever seen a hint of an atmosphere" on planets outside our solar system — it would take the Voyager probe 863,000 years to reach — with a rocky or icy texture.

Actually, if water is there, it is

likely beneath dense and frozen ground. The landscape is described as closer to the ice planet Hoth from the "Star Wars" universe.

MacDonald went on to say that LHS 1140 b (inset) is "one of the best small exoplanets" that can support a thick atmosphere.

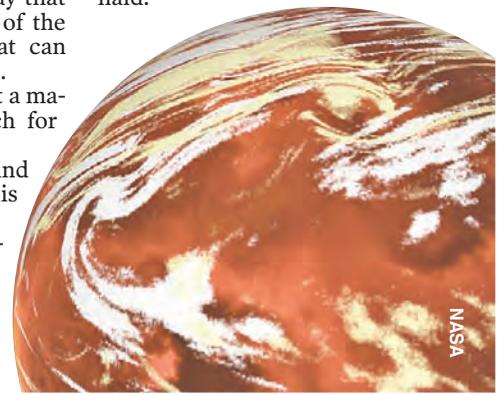
The new findings support a major milestone in the search for extraterrestrial life.

"We might just have found evidence of air on this world," MacDonald said.

There are also suggestions that the exoplanet's atmosphere may share similar traits to our own, such as the presence of nitrogen.

"Our initial reconnais-

sance of LHS 1140 b with JWST has revealed this to be perhaps the best habitable zone exoplanet currently known for atmospheric characterization," added MacDonald.



NASA

# Kin back Baldwin as 'Rust' testimony begins

By PRISCILLA DeGREGORY  
and STEVEN VAGO

SANTA FE, NM — Alec Baldwin appeared stone-faced in court Wednesday as jurors were shown dramatic body-camera footage depicting first responders attempting to save cinematographer Halyna Hutchins' life after the actor shot her by accident on set.

The footage came on the first day of testimony for Baldwin's involuntary manslaughter trial. The New York native, 66 — wearing a dark suit, light purple shirt and maroon tie — gave away little emotion, occasionally taking notes and at one point putting his hand on his brow and bowing his head slightly.

Emergency responders showed up at Bonanza Creek Ranch on Oct. 21, 2021, where Hutchins and director Joel Souza had been shot after Baldwin was mistakenly handed a gun with a live .45-caliber round during filming for the Western film "Rust."

The footage was taken from the body-worn camera of Santa Fe police officer Nicholas LeFleur, who walked the jurors through the mayhem that unfolded in the aftermath of the deadly shooting.

Hutchins and Souza could both be seen on the ground inside a small church where they'd been filming, surrounded by medics, first responders and medical equipment.

"Halyna, deep breaths, deep breaths," one unidentified woman could be heard repeating to Hutchins during footage.

In the background, a man groaned in apparent pain.

## Officer on the stand

Earlier, prosecutors said Baldwin "played make-believe with a real gun" on the set of "Rust" — and Hutchins died as a result.

Baldwin's lawyer, meanwhile, said he was merely an "actor acting" and the people who handed him a gun loaded with a live round are the ones responsible for the 42-year-old mother's death.

Baldwin arrived at court Wednesday with wife Hilaria and brother Stephen Baldwin for support. He did not answer questions from a gaggle of reporters.

The "30 Rock" actor and father of eight faces up to 18 months in prison if convicted.

LeFleur — who was seen in the video handing medical equipment to someone tending to Hutchins — testified that when he arrived at the scene his main concern was "priority of life" and he tried to "make sure whoever needs help gets help and that the threat is stopped."

LeFleur, who was a Santa Fe County sheriff's deputy at the



**DRAMA:** Brother Stephen and wife Hilaria (inset) are in Santa Fe, NM, on Wednesday for the start of testimony in the involuntary-manslaughter trial of Alec Baldwin for the 2021 fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the "Rust" film set.

# SUPPORTING ACTOR ALEC

time of the "Rust" shooting, said he called for a helicopter to lift Hutchins out because an ambulance could take roughly 20 minutes to get to a hospital. She later died.

A moment in the footage showed Baldwin smoking a cigarette as he was asked to stay apart from the other crew so that sher-

iff's deputies could secure the crime scene.

Baldwin lawyer Alex Spiro asked LeFleur during cross-examination about Baldwin's words to him.

"When you got to the scene, Mr. Baldwin walked up to you and said, 'I was holding the gun,'" Spiro said. "He blurted it

out, right?"

"Yes," LeFleur answered.

"And in fact, he was very shocked," Spiro said, before he started to ask whether it seemed like Baldwin had carried out the act accidentally.

"I don't know the individual's intentions, but his demeanor was sad, upset," LeFleur said.

# Prison for Lev Tahor cult bros

Three brothers who led a Jewish fundamentalist cult were sentenced to more than a decade behind bars for kidnapping two kids — including a child bride — then smuggling them into Mexico, prosecutors said.

Yakov Weingarten, 34, and Shmeil Weingarten, 28, were sentenced to 14 years in prison Tuesday by US District Judge Nelson Román in White Plains. Yoil Weingarten, 36, was sentenced to 12 years, the feds said.

The brothers, leaders of the extremist Lev Tahor sect, were convicted in March of masterminding a scheme to kidnap the girl, 14 — to return her to her adult "husband" — and the girl's brother, 12.

The Weingartens had snatched the children from their upstate New York home in 2018 after their mother fled Lev Tahor, a group of zealots who practice stomach-churning habits like child marriages, underage sex and family separations, US Attorney Damian Williams said on Wednesday.

The brothers — who live in Guatemala — used various disguises, aliases, drop phones, fake travel documents and encrypted apps to pull off the 3 a.m. kidnapping, the feds said.

Steve Janoski

# Ex-NBAer 'fess to fix

The ex-NBA player banned for life over sports betting admitted Wednesday to tipping off gamblers on games he'd rig — earning them \$1 million — in a bid to clear his gambling debt.

Former Toronto Raptors forward Jontay Porter, 24, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and will owe about \$456,000 in fines and restitution.

"I know what I did was wrong and unlawful, and I'm deeply sorry for my conduct," Porter told Brooklyn federal Judge James R. Cho.

He likely faces 41 to 51 months in prison at his Dec. 18 sentencing. *Kyle Schnitzer*



# Miranda Devine

mdevine@nypost.com

**Y**OU know that Joe Biden is beyond salvation by the infantilizing language used by the people around him.

“Big Boy press conference” is how White House press secretaries John Kirby and Karine Jean-Pierre have repeatedly described the president’s rendezvous with the restive media Thursday.

It’s hard to think of a phrase more condescending than “Big Boy” when referring to the 81-year-old commander in chief.

Despite their lies and coverup of Biden’s cognitive decline, those who know the president best are inadvertently signaling to us what bad shape he is in. They use the same language and tone of voice that carers use with elderly dementia patients.

It was a similar vibe when Jill Biden grabbed a microphone at the post-debate party and patronized her husband as if he were a potty-training toddler.

“Joe! You did such a good job!” she gushed at him in a loud sing-song voice. “You answered every question!”

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi adopted the same infantilizing language Wednesday when she appeared on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” to extravagantly praise the president for his “spectacular” performance at the NATO summit, knowing he would be watching his favorite TV show.

“I’m very proud of the president,” she said.

Really? He read a short speech off a teleprompter.

## It’s all ‘elderspeak’

It’s an insulting, demoralizing way to speak to an adult, but baby talk is an automatic human response when confronted by an elderly person in cognitive decline.

I worked in a nursing home one summer, and it was instinctive to treat the residents with dementia like babies, switching to simplistic vocabulary, speaking slowly or at a higher pitch.

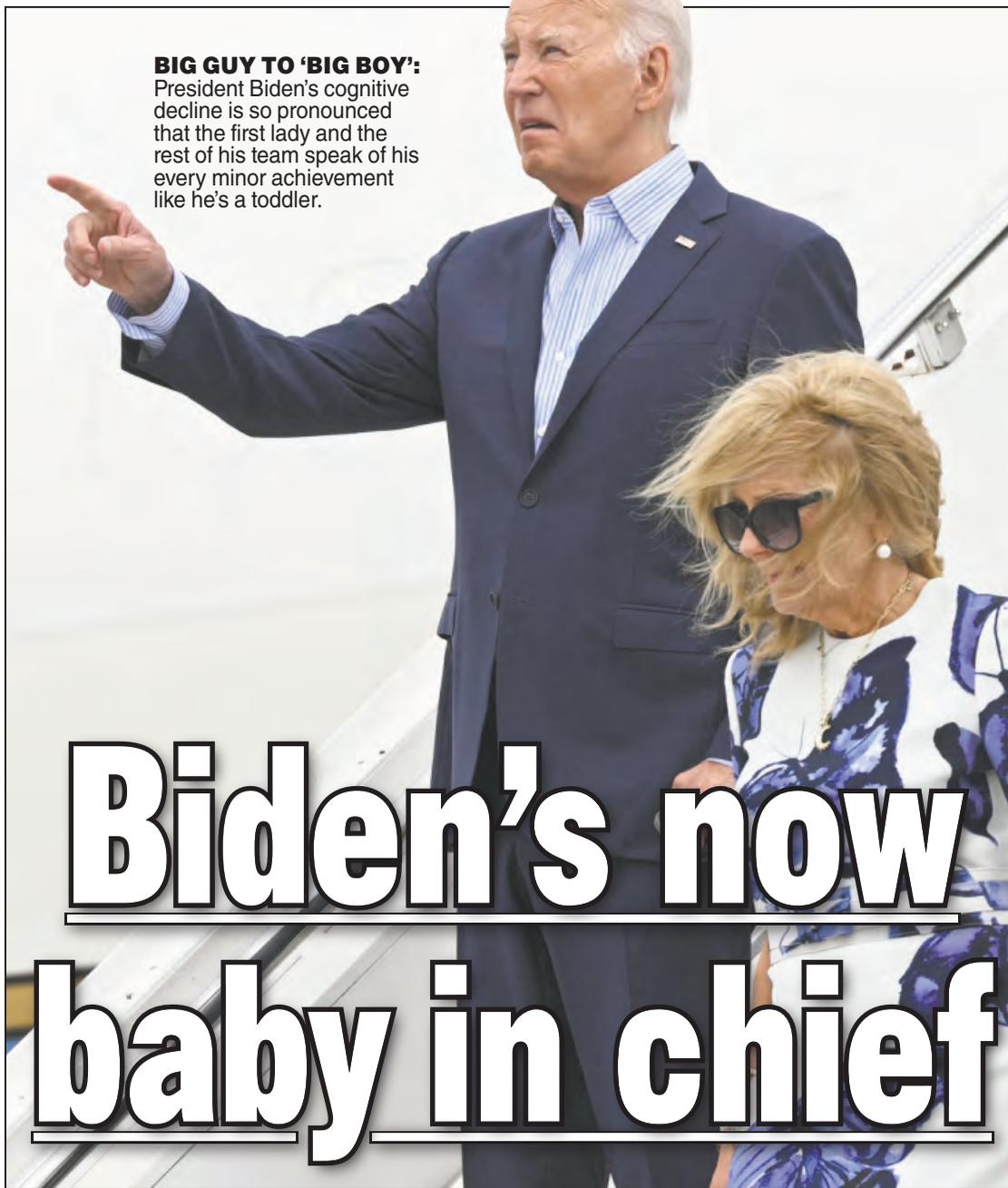
You were helping them with basic functions, like showering, toileting and feeding, and it felt kinder to speak patiently as if they were children.

The babying tone creeps into your voice without you realizing. It’s well-meaning but it also serves as a psychological distancing mechanism to help a carer deal with baffling and confronting behavior.

Dementia researchers call it “elderspeak” and some now regard it as abusive, because it is belittling and diminishes an older person’s self-confidence.

## BIG GUY TO ‘BIG BOY’:

President Biden’s cognitive decline is so pronounced that the first lady and the rest of his team speak of his every minor achievement like he’s a toddler.



# Biden’s now baby in chief

It has to be humiliating for the president to be patronized by his wife and staff in public, even if he is only dimly aware of it.

But now they can no longer deny their badly kept secret, all that Democrats seem to care about is that they might lose the November election. They don’t seem to care about the danger they have placed the country in with a gaga president in control of the nuclear codes who admits he’s no good after 8pm.

As they issue carefully coded statements to the media, while kvetching behind closed doors about the selfish old man who refuses to bow out gracefully, Democrats look like a rabble of incompetent fraudsters who have come

to the end of the dead-end road where duplicity inevitably leads.

## Clooney’s disgrace

Hollywood big shot George Clooney disgraced himself with an op-ed in The New York Times Wednesday admitting belatedly what the White House denied, that Biden was non compos mentis at the star-studded fundraiser he hosted in LA last month.

“It’s devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was . . . the same man we all witnessed at the debate.”

What a coward. Clooney was happy to saddle America with a cognitively impaired president for

another four years as long as nobody found out.

Old Obama hands now are reduced to issuing veiled threats to Joe on social media: Hey Joe, step down or we’ll tell America what you’re really like.

“Joe Biden can leave office as one of the greatest presidents in our lifetimes,” tweeted former Obama speechwriter Jon Lovett, “or he can leave [as] a stubborn old man who allowed hubris and insecurity to destroy his legacy.”

The old man hanging on to power was the “arrogant and small Joe Biden . . . bragging, defensive, angry, weak,” Lovett wrote, in a taste of the character assassination in store if the president didn’t do what he was told.

“The blowhard with a chip on his shoulder, stubborn, something to prove, his fellow senators rolling their eyes as the finger wags harder, and the stories get longer.”

MSNBC’s Chuck Todd also changed his tune, claiming in a podcast Wednesday that Biden’s refusal to withdraw from the presidential race has made him “rethink a lot of the Biden biography. I still can’t believe he ran for president in the first place, given that his family was in crisis in 2018 . . . I think the entire narrative on Joe Biden is gonna change, in that everything’s always been about his ambition and his ambition comes first.”

No kidding. Too bad for the former sycophants, but the American people have already wised up to who Biden is and always has been. The “empathetic, decent” Uncle Joe from Scranton was a fake, and the Obama people and media handmaidens always knew it. They just leveraged Biden’s personal mythology to fool voters and deny Donald Trump a second term, but now their lies have come home to roost.

For Republicans it’s popcorn time.

“What I’m worried about, Miranda, is whether I can die from an overdose of schadenfreude,” one confided this week.

## Eyes on November

Tempting as it is to revel in the Democrats getting a taste of their own medicine, there’s no guarantee of victory in November.

For one thing, Democrats are hellbent on cheating. We know this because they aggressively opposed a Republican bill that requires proof of citizenship to vote in federal elections. There was only one reason to oppose the Save Act, and that is that Dems want illegal aliens to vote in November, or at least register to vote so their ballots can be utilized.

The bill passed the House Wednesday afternoon 221-198, with all but five Democrats voting against it.

“Over the past four years, Joe Biden has welcomed millions upon millions of illegals into the country,” said House speaker Mike Johnson.

“We have long known this was an intentional effort to turn them into voters . . . House Democrats have now proven they believe that illegal aliens should vote in American elections.”

The White House has announced that Biden will veto the bill. There’s no hiding their wicked plan.

AFP via Getty Images

# Super pact: Dems to marry

## Page Six

### Ian Mohr

imohr@nypost.com

Oli Coleman  
ocolman@nypost.com  
Mara Siegler  
msiegler@nypost.com  
Carlos Greer  
cgreer@nypost.com

## European union

EVEN **Bill Belichick** is a Swiftie?! The ex-NFL coach was at **Taylor Swift's** Amsterdam gig alongside the singer's boyfriend, **Travis Kelce**, and his teammate **Patrick Mahomes**. On the Barstool Sports podcast "Fore Play," host **Sam Riggs Bozoian** shared of his night with the longtime New England Patriots head: "Coach Belichick had hit up Travis Kelce, he was over there. . . . At one point, we're just in this box at the Taylor Swift show" along with Mahomes. "They had a great interaction with Belichick," he said of the Kansas City Chiefs. "It was right when they walked in, they were like, 'Hey coach!' and they were like, daping up. Just a bunch of football guys shooting the s--t."



## 'Lotus' blossoms

"WHITE Lotus" star **Alexandra Daddario** is pregnant with her first child. The actress, 38, debuted her baby bump while speaking to Vogue about her "long" journey to motherhood, telling the mag, "I'm pregnant and it's all successful and everything's healthy." But that didn't come easy. "I had been pregnant," said Daddario (above), who's entering her third trimester. "It's long and complicated, so I don't want to be too specific. Those kinds of losses and trauma are very hard to explain unless you've been through them." She married producer **Andrew Form** in 2022.

**HUMA Abedin** and **Alex Soros** are engaged, Page Six has exclusively learned.

Sources tell us Soros popped the question six weeks ago, and the couple were spotted recently celebrating the happy news in Italy.

"The best way I can describe the relationship is effortless," a friend of Abedin's for over 15 years tells Page Six. "After a lot of tumultuous years for Huma, she's relaxed and happy and in love."

The former deputy chief of staff to **Hillary Clinton** and the son of billionaire donor **George Soros** were first linked earlier this year when the duo posted a cozy pic from a Paris restaurant for Valentine's Day.

The pair were next spotted at the Met Gala in May, where Abedin, 48, wore a green gown with butterfly appliques designed by Erdem. Soros, 38, went with a gray tux and added a gold bug pin to his bow. He cheekily captioned a shot from the gala, "A little buggy out" — referring to their matching insect accoutrements for the glam event, where the theme was "The Garden of Time."

One ex-Clinton aide previously told Page Six of the pair, "It's a classic Clinton World couple. Alex is the perfect match for Huma."

Abedin has long been considered a "second daughter" to Hillary, and Alex's dad — who made his money in hedge funds and is worth

\$6.7 billion, according to Forbes — was one of the Top 10 donors to Hillary's presidential run in 2016, contributing more than \$9.5 million.

After Page Six posted the engagement news, Soros and Abedin released a pic of the proposal on Instagram (below).

We hear the engaged couple — who met through a mutual friend — have been traveling, and sources told us that Abedin was appearing in the Balkans for a talk.

Abedin's ex, disgraced politician **Anthony Weiner**, tells Page Six he's "thrilled" for Abedin.

Weiner and Abedin share a son. They were married from 2010 to 2017.



Another political merger: **Huma Abedin** and **Alex Soros** got engaged six weeks ago while traveling, Page Six has learned. **Abedin** was spotted back in NYC with the rock on her hand as she headed to dinner with **Anna Wintour**.

Alex Soros/Instagram

## Altar-native facts

**OLIVIA Munn** and **John Mulaney** are married. The "X-Men: Apocalypse" beauty, 44, and the stand-up comedian, 41, secretly tied the knot over the weekend at a friend's home in New York state, People reported. The only guests were a witness and the couple's 2-year-old son, **Malcolm**. Mulaney prematurely sparked rumors he and Munn had wed when he posted a photo of himself on Father's Day wearing a silver band on his ring finger — but he quickly deleted the pic. Reps did not get back to us. In March, Munn shared she had been diagnosed with cancer and had a mastectomy and a hysterectomy. She and Mulaney have been together since 2021, when he split from his first wife, **Anna Marie Tendler**.



## Bonnie & abide

DESPITE Hollywood legend **Faye Dunaway's** iconic reputation for diva behavior, staff at one of NYC's chicest restaurants were still falling all over themselves to meet the star. The "Network" Oscar winner (above) had dinner this week with photographer **Steven Klein**, celeb fitness instructor **Isaac Boots** and interior designer **Nicole Fuller** at Polo Bar. A source tells us: "One of the maître d's did a double shift just so they could meet Faye. Everyone was so gracious to her." The "Bonnie and Clyde" star, 83, has been busy promoting her doc "Faye," which debuted at Cannes and chalks up her past peccadilloes to manic depression, bipolar disorder and alcohol.

## Was Abe the original log cabin Republican?

FOUR score and seven dudes ago! We hear tell that a new documentary on Abraham Lincoln posits that the 16th president was gay. Promo copy for the new project, "Lover of Men: The Untold History of Abraham Lincoln," reads: "As told by preeminent Lincoln scholars and never before seen photographs and letters, the film details Lincoln's romantic relationships with men." The movie delves "into the history of human sexual fluidity and focuses on the profound differences between sexual mores of the 19th century and those we hold today. The film fills

in an important missing piece of American history and challenges the audience to consider why we hold such a limited view of human sexuality." Directed by **Shaun Peterson**, the film explores Lincoln's deep ties with daring, dashing guys and includes interviews with historians from Harvard, Columbia, Brown, Wellesley and Rutgers. One expert sums it up: "Lincoln probably slept in the same bed with more men than he did with women."

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**BJORN LOMBORG**


**S**TARTING in the 1990s, at the end of the Cold War, climate change became a fixation for rich-country politicians and elites.

There was relative peace and trust across the world, broad economic growth and swift progress being made against poverty. In the capitals of Europe in particular, it felt like most of the planet's big problems were fixed, so climate change was the final frontier.

These proponents of climate action advocated with relish the goal of ending reliance on the very fossil fuels that had powered two centuries of astonishing growth.

Sure, this would cost hundreds of trillions of dollars, but there would always be more growth.

What a naïve, narrow-minded world view. Time has not been kind to the foolish idea that climate change was humanity's sole remaining problem — or that the planet would unite to solve it.

Geopolitics and economics mean a rapid global transition from fossil fuels is impossible.

As has long been clear for many, the majority of the world never shared this myopic focus on climate change. Despite immense progress, in some countries life remains a battle against poverty, hunger and disease.

## Jobs and growth

In many more countries, including India, the top priority is to create more jobs and life-changing growth and development. Outside the most advanced economies, climate change has understandably always been a relatively low voter priority.

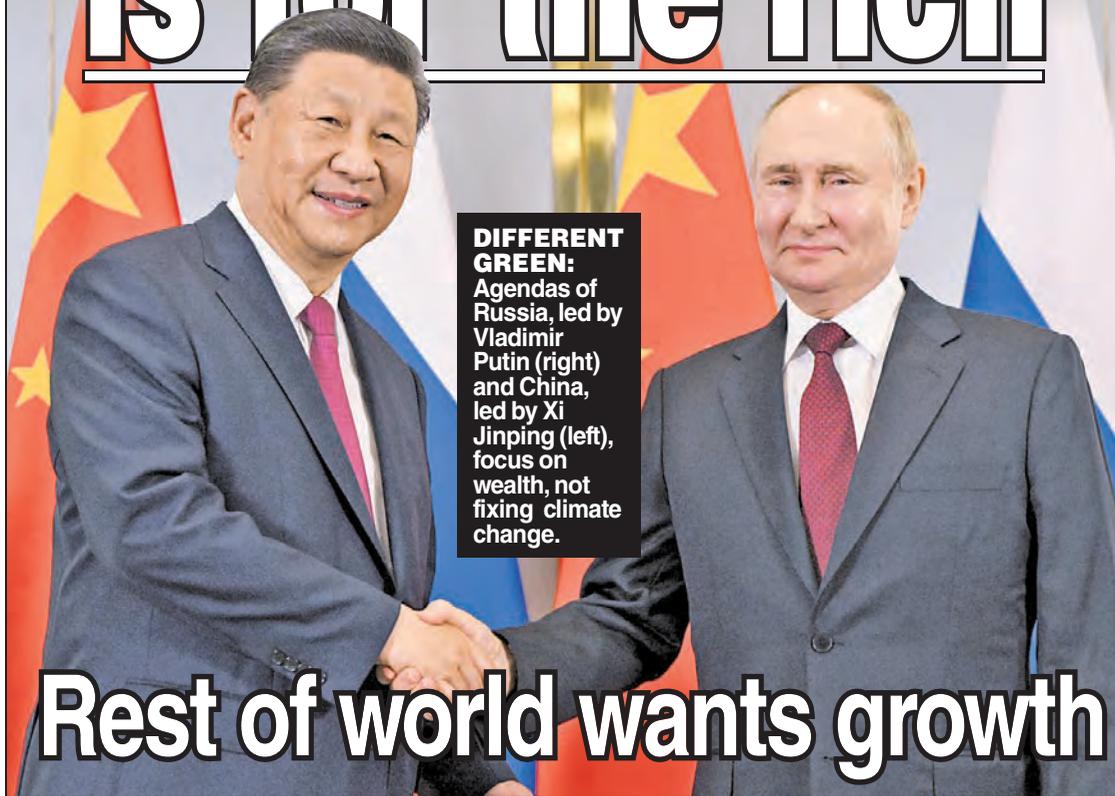
Leaders from Europe and the United States talk up “net zero” as though it has global support. But this unity is quickly revealed as a mirage. For one thing, the destabilizing axis of Russia, Iran and North Korea are not about to support western efforts to solve climate change.

Indeed, according to McKinsey, achieving the net-zero target would require Russian climate policies costing \$273 billion every year — around three times what Russia spent on its military last year. That won't happen.

The geopolitical challenges run even deeper. China's growth has relied on burning ever more coal. It is the world's preeminent greenhouse gas emitter, with the largest increase of any nation last year.

Renewable energy made 40% of China's primary energy in 1971, reducing to 7% by 2011 as it ramped up coal use. Since then, renewables have inched up to 10%. Strong climate action could cost China nearly a trillion dollars annually, hurting its journey toward becoming

# 'Climate policy' is for the rich



**DIFFERENT GREEN:** Agendas of Russia, led by Vladimir Putin (right) and China, led by Xi Jinping (left), focus on wealth, not fixing climate change.

## Rest of world wants growth

ing a rich nation.

The reality is that most of the world will continue to focus on becoming richer, often with fossil fuels. Russia and its ilk will ignore the fixation on climate change altogether.

And China will make money from selling the West solar panels and electric cars, while only modestly curbing its own emissions.

## Driving a wedge

As rich countries irresponsibly attempt to export the cost of climate policy to poor countries through carbon adjustment taxes, they will drive a further wedge into an already fractured world.

Meanwhile, despite all the hype, wealthy countries have ever less money left for the climate fight. Annual growth per person among rich countries declined from 4% in the 1960s to 2% in the 1990s. It now hovers just above 1%.

Many of these countries face pressure to spend more on defense, health care and infrastructure, as geopolitical pressures and changing demographics make their pathway to stability and growth far less certain.

Yet across Europe and North America, single-minded zealots

who were born of a world of relative calm of the 1990s continue to push for deindustrialization and immiseration to tackle climate change — including for the world's emerging economies.

This attempt is doomed to failure, not least because carbon reductions need to be sustained across decades and through shifting majorities.

The economics of strong climate action was always deficient — and today this is blatantly obvious.

More politicians are realizing what former UK energy and net-zero secretary Claire Coutinho acknowledged: “You cannot heap costs onto struggling families to meet climate targets.”

Already in Europe, voters are turning on politicians who have argued for less growth and prosperity in the name of climate change. Strong climate policies that could cost each American more than \$10,000 a year are doomed.

These policies will make it more likely that voters turn to populist, nationalist leaders that will entirely abandon expensive net zero targets. Then, climate policy will be in tatters.

The world needs a better way

forward. The best solution is not to push people to be worse off by forcing a premature transition from fossil fuels to inadequate green alternatives. Instead, we should ramp up investments in green innovation, eventually driving down the cost of clean energy to be cheaper than fossil fuels. This is much cheaper and will allow everyone, including India and other emerging economies, to want to make the shift.

## Green innovation

Rich countries need to wake up and stop hemorrhaging trillions in self-inflicted climate policies that will be followed by few, laughed at by many, and will mainly make China rich.

Spending a small fraction of the climate trillions on green innovation would fix climate change. This will allow us to focus the rest of our resources on education, defense, health care and the many other, important challenges in the 21st century.

*Bjorn Lomborg is president of the Copenhagen Consensus, visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and author of “False Alarm” and “Best Things First.”*

Pool/AFP via Getty Images

## Escort stab rap vs. daddy

A 22-year-old escort and her pal were charged with killing her “sugar daddy” and cutting off his thumb — which she used to buy booze and drugs, according to court records.

Tiffany Taylor Gray, who witnesses said was “involved in prostitution,” is accused of luring 53-year-old Fasil Teklemariam to his Washington, DC, apartment on April 1, where he was struck in the head and stabbed multiple times, according to a police affidavit reviewed by The Post.

A witness told police they saw Taylor “utilize the decedent's thumb to obtain money from the decedent's account,” the affidavit said. “Witness 5 also stated that ‘Taylor’ paid for Uber, bought weed and alcohol with use of the decedent's thumb.”

Gray and alleged cohort Audrey Miller, 19, are facing murder charges in the case.

The witness identified the dead man as Gray's “sugar daddy,” the document said.

Security camera photos released by DC Metro Police show Teklemariam entering his apartment with Miller on April 1. He left briefly and returned, and was not seen alive again.

Miller and Gray are charged with first-degree murder. *Jorge Fitz-Gibbon*

## Gun slay at Texas Sonic

A “caring” Sonic worker was gunned down in Texas, allegedly after an argument with two female customers at the store's drive-thru Sunday, just days before his 34th birthday, according to reports.

Daniel Shrewsbury was working at the San Antonio fast-food location when he confronted the customers at around 9:30 p.m., according to KSAT. The slain man's family told the station the dispute might have been over an effort to use counterfeit money.

One of the women is believed to have shot Shrewsbury, who died inside the restaurant. *Richard Pollina*

PEX  
EGOSAURUS



This 150-million-year-old fossil of a stegosaurus is expected to set auction records next week, selling for between \$4 million and \$6 million. Sotheby's, where it's on display (right), expects the 11-foot-tall, 27-foot-wide skeleton, dubbed Apex, to be one of the most expensive fossils ever sold.

Fossil  
to fetch  
stega  
millions

## \$2B guy gets lucky again

Edwin Castro, the \$2 billion Powerball jackpot winner, took a walk of no shame Wednesday morning when he was spotted getting flirty with a new gal pal after apparently sharing a night on the town in Los Angeles.

Castro, 31, was seen with 20-something Instagram model and freelance writer Payten Vincent, and both were wearing the same outfits they wore the night before for a date at hot celeb hangout Nobu.

The couple was spotted back at Nobu in the morning in Castro's Porsche, where they slipped the valet a tip so they could leave Vincent's car there before heading off for breakfast in Malibu.

Vincent sported a stylish off-the-shoulder black top and matching pants with white high heels, while Castro stepped out in flip-flops, sweatpants and a T-shirt. *Alex Oliveira*



# BURNING & SEETHING

## NJ man sues for 'hot coffee spill injuries'

By NATALIE O'NEILL

An elderly New Jersey man is taking Dunkin' to court over a cup of hot coffee that he says spilled on his lap and gave him second-degree burns — echoing a high-profile McDonald's case from the 1990s.

Cosimo Nistico, 74, of Toms River, said the lid on his black coffee popped off when a worker handed it to him at a drive-through window on April 27, causing burns to his inner left thigh, according to the lawsuit.

### 'Skin was coming off'

"I was scared as hell," he told The Post. "I went to wipe my leg and my skin was coming off."

"It almost burned my private parts," he added. "Not one person came out to help me. It was BS."

Nistico rushed to a hospital, where he was treated for "serious and severe injuries" that

caused him "great pain and suffering," says the lawsuit, filed in New Jersey Superior Court on June 6.

His injuries are similar to those of 79-year-old Stella Liebeck, who in 1994 sparked a media frenzy when she sued McDonald's over a coffee burn and won big bucks.

The New Mexico woman suffered third-degree burns over 16% of her body, including her inner thighs and genitals, said the American Museum of Tort Law.

A jury awarded her \$160,000 in compensatory damages and initially ordered McDonald's to pay her \$2.7 million in punitive damages. But the trial judge ultimately reduced that to \$480,000.

McDonald's had printed warnings on coffee cups, but her lawyer said they should say how hot the beverages were — between 180 and 190 degrees.

Dunkin' "should have had a bigger warning label because it's very hot," Nistico said. "Steam was

coming out of my [car] seat. That's how hot it was."

"They should figure out why this lid is popping off," he said. "I don't want it to happen again to someone else."

### Prior hot cider suit

Nistico said his burn wound has healed, but he was in pain for weeks.

"I was scared to open up the bandage — it was ugly," he said. "Every night I had to sleep with a pillow between my legs."

In 2014, New Jersey resident Jennifer Fragozo sued Dunkin' for burns she said were caused by hot apple cider — and won \$2.4 million.

A spokeswoman for the firm said at the time that Dunkin' hot drink cups display a warning that reads, "CAUTION: THIS BEVERAGE IS EXTREMELY HOT," according to ABC News.

Dunkin' didn't immediately return The Post's request for comment Wednesday.

# 41 cases of dengue in Jersey

Dozens of New Jersey residents have been sickened with dengue fever as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warned of a record-breaking number of cases in the Americas this summer.

At least 41 Garden Staters have come down with the potentially deadly mosquito-borne virus, according to the health agency.

All of those infected had recently traveled, but the CDC did not specify where. There has been no known person-to-person transmission locally in the state.

Cases of local transmission have been "limited" to "small outbreaks" in geographic regions like Texas, Florida and Hawaii, the CDC said.

Six US territories — including Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the US Virgin Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia — are considered by the agency to experience "frequent or continuous" dengue transmission.

Chris Nesi

# Fatal 'punchout' 'Slugger' released in hotel attack

By AMANDA WOODS

A cab dispatcher died days after an enraged driver slugged him outside a Midtown hotel last month — and the alleged attacker was cut loose thanks to a loophole, cops and sources said.

Efrain Patino Guerra, 53, was working at a cab stand at the Hotel Riu Plaza Manhattan Times Square on West 47th Street near Seventh Avenue at around 1:15 p.m. June 17 when Jaime Rosario, 54, flew into a rage, NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny said Tuesday.

As the dispatcher assigned cabs to hotel guests, he skipped a driver, who confronted him, Kenny said.

"He's very very much bigger than Mr. Patino,



and at some point, he sucker-punches him square in the face," Kenny said. "You can see from the video he's clearly knocked unconscious — while he's standing up, falls back and hits his head on the concrete."

Patino was unable to move until first responders rushed him to Bellevue Hospital, where he was in-

itially listed in critical condition and spent some time in a coma, according to Kenny and a complaint filed in Manhattan Criminal Court against Rosario.

He ultimately succumbed to his injuries on June 27. While at the hospital, Patino (inset) went into cardiac arrest and was "kind of dead for about seven minutes," before he was revived, the police official said.

Rosario was charged with second-degree assault, Kenny said.

The charge was downgraded in court to third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, because a felony rap requires intent to cause serious physical injury, police sources said.

"The law allows only for charges relating to the punch, and there is no way

to prove intent to cause his death or any other serious injury," a law-enforcement source told The Post of that case.

Neither of those conditions could be established, since Rosario allegedly dealt Patino a single blow to the face, according to the sources.

Rosario is next scheduled to appear in court on July 18, records show.

It remained unclear Wednesday whether Rosario could face upgraded charges as the investigation is ongoing.

In a similar Brooklyn case back in March, a tow-truck driver accused in a fatal attack on a 61-year-old man whose car he was impounding was cut loose because of the same loophole in so-called one-punch homicide cases.

# Dad & son busted in BBQ blast

A New Jersey father and son have been arrested for lighting a makeshift firework that sent shrapnel flying as far as a football field away, leaving a neighbor in critical condition with a stomach wound likened to "a wartime injury" caused by a "pipe bomb."

Security camera footage from a barbecue in Manville captured the moment the explosive was lit at the center of Cooper Street Park around 8:15 p.m. Saturday, NBC 4 reported.

A man could be seen running away after igniting the explosive, which goes up in smoke and sends shrapnel soaring across the neighborhood in all directions, hitting a 34-year-old man in the stomach.

"It wasn't a Fourth of July celebratory firework, it was a pipe bomb," neighbor Dayna Cammacho told the outlet. "It was like a wartime injury, it was horrible."

The victim was not publicly identified. *Ronny Reyes*



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# BOB CASE 'FOOL'S GOLD

## Not bribe evidence: defense

By BEN KOCHMAN

Federal prosecutors have tried to bamboozle Manhattan jurors by focusing on the gold bars and cash found in Sen. Bob Menendez's New Jersey home, defense attorneys claimed Wednesday near the end of the embattled pol's months-long trial.

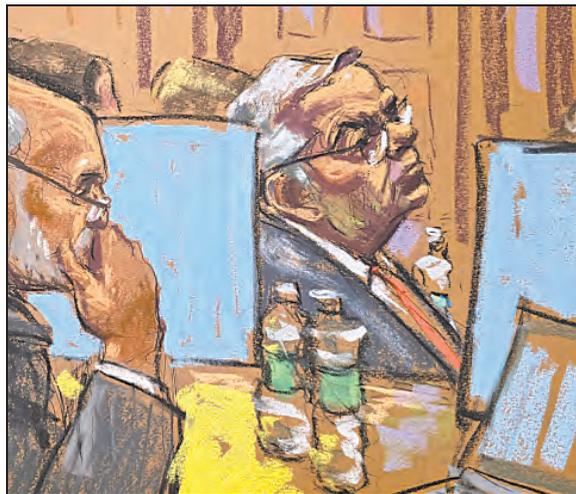
Adam Fee, a lawyer for the three-term Democrat, argued the feds were trying to distract the jury from "painfully thin" evidence in the case accusing Menendez, 70, of rewarding cronies with "official" favors in exchange for bribes.

"This case, it dies here today," Fee proclaimed during a nearly six-hour closing statement that stretched over two days in Manhattan federal court.

Prosecutors "have failed to prove that very high standard that Bob's actions were anything other than exactly what we want our elected officials to do," Fee added.

### Cash stash

Over the nine-week trial, jurors were shown a mountain of evidence allegedly tying hundreds of thousands of dollars of gold bullion and cash discovered in the senator's home — and the new Mercedes-Benz parked in his garage — to a disgraced insurance broker and two other New Jersey businessmen who dined with Menendez and tex-



**FINISH LINE:** In a courtroom sketch, Sen. Bob Menendez listens to closing arguments Wednesday in Manhattan during his months-long corruption trial.

ted with his wife, Nadine.

But Fee argued the government failed to prove that the cash the FBI found stuffed into envelopes, including inside the pockets of the senator's official congressional jacket, and the one-kilo gold bars recovered in his wife's safe were illegal bribes.

"The core of this case is hollow," Fee said, calling the prosecutors "overzealous" and adding that "the inferences that they are asking you to adopt are unreliable."

Jurors could begin deliberating as soon as Thursday over whether to convict Menendez.

He is also charged with illegally acting as a foreign agent of Egypt and Qatar and obstructing justice.

Among the allegations

is that Menendez leaned on an Agriculture Department official to protect his co-defendant Wael Hana's lucrative monopoly on approving halal meat exports to Egypt — which Hana had been given despite no prior experience with halal meat.

In exchange, Hana gave Nadine Menendez a no-show job worth \$120,000 per year, prosecutors said.

### All 'hard work'

But Hana's lawyer, Lawrence Lustberg, in his own closing statement on Wednesday afternoon, argued that Hana's halal monopoly was merely the result of "hard work, and good contacts" — while denying that anything Hana gave to the senator led to an "official" act.

## Joint commission eyes pot discounts

Get a buzz off these prices!

State cannabis regulators on Wednesday proposed scrapping a rule that barred its licensed pot stores from offering discounts on their marijuana products — which, they argued, put them at a disadvantage with illegal operators.

Discounted prices on cannabis gummies, oils and other items could be offered to seniors, students, and military veterans, sources said.

That could mean buying two 10-packs of pre-rolled joints for the price of one, among other sales.

Carl Campanile



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# Just relishing reopened Papaya

## It's the return of the King



### STEVE CUOZZO

**H**OT dog lovers rejoiced this week with the reopening of Papaya King at 206 E. 86 St., around the corner from where the original stood on Third Avenue for 89 years until it was demolished two years ago.

It's great to have it back in all its tacky glory.

Goofy signs again tout the benefits of its signature fruit drink, including "enhanced male fertility." Along with vintage photos, they make the new location feel like its predecessor despite its square footprint; the original was memorably long and narrow. The outdoor sign oddly lacks the word "King," but the man at the counter said it was only a printing goof that would be fixed shortly.

### On with the taste test

But what about the dog itself? As a longtime fan of Papaya King's simply grilled all-beef dog, I was eager to see how it's held up after two long years of closure.

It tastes exactly as I remember it, I'm happy to report. It's just as good, though pricier now at \$5.34 with tax. It went down too easily with a sugar-packed, zero-alcohol "banana daiquiri."

True, the meat still tastes generic with just a hint of butter and limited seasoning. But it's more about the great mouthfeel when heaped with mustard, sauerkraut and onions.

It's a satisfying, hunger-beating, protein fix that's ideal for gob-



**THE WIENER IS?** Steve Cuozzo compares the reopened Papaya King to Nathan's (below left) and Junior's (below right).



bling on the street. And it's instant! Unlike when you order a burger or gyro, they're ready when you want them — ideal for New Yorkers with zero tolerance for exhausting, five-minute waits.

In this summer of unprecedented hot-dog hysteria, the Papaya King redux begs comparing with the true king of Big Apple wieners — Nathan's Famous, which staged its annual July Fourth competitive-eating event last week without longtime champ

Joey Chestnut for the first time in 17 years. The new winner, Patrick Bertoletti, downed 58 franks in 10 minutes, or 55 more than I was able to consume of either brand in a day.

Nathan's says it uses the secret, "same original" 1919 recipe of founder Nathan Handwerker, a formula in which many fans detect a garlic undertone. I tried it at a truck on West 47th Street near Seventh Avenue, where service was a lot faster than the long lines

at the Coney Island location.

Nathan's \$8 hot dog had three more bucks of flavor than Papaya King's. But two of three casings were so cellophane-like, extracting the meat was like squeezing toothpaste from a tube.

Neither product could challenge what I regard as the gold standard — the much pricier, foot-long, half-pounders at Junior's Restaurant and Bakery at the Broadway and 49th Street location.

The \$21.95 gut-buster, served on a crunchy challah bun, comes with french fries, relish and sauerkraut. Junior's claims its dogs, which are sourced from Newark-based beef providers Best Provision, are cooked in real — not liquid — smoke on a charcoal grill. A secret mix of spices imparts a complex flavor. The frank is well scored and perfectly juicy.

Junior's giant is definitely not for on-the-street consumption. But, consumed at a table, it reminds you of how good a simple hot dog can taste — without the need for hype or nostalgia to boost the flavor.

## NYC out for mask payback

A "military and security consulting" firm that never delivered on its promise to ship COVID masks to New York at the peak of the pandemic is being sued by the city to pay back the flubbed \$15 million contract.

Former Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration inked a \$15 million contract with Siege International on April 3, 2020, for 5 million N95 respirator masks by May 1. Half of the contract — roughly \$7.5 million — was prepaid to expedite the supplies for medical workers.

Siege missed its first contractual deadline for the first 1 million. And then the next one for the full 5 million, too, the Manhattan Supreme Court lawsuit charges.

Only 800,000 masks made it to the Big Apple, leaving nearly 1.7 million masks paid for but missing in action, according to court documents.

After the city's Contract Dispute Resolution Board determined that Siege and president David Oskirko must refund the city, the company vanished.

Oskirko and Siege re-emerged days later as Canam Group, replete with a similar website. According to the city, this was a clear attempt at a "fraudulent transfer."

The Post reached out to Oskirko and Canam but did not hear back. *Peter Senzamici*

## 'Crossbow killer' bust

A man suspected of murdering his ex-girlfriend and two of her relatives with a crossbow in England was caught after an extensive manhunt, according to reports.

Kyle Clifford, 26, was arrested Wednesday at a north London cemetery, where police found him injured, the Daily Mail reported.

Clifford, a military veteran, is suspected of murdering his ex-girlfriend Louise Hunt, 25, her sister Hannah, 28, and her mother, Carol, 61. The women are the wife and daughters of well-known BBC radio host John Hunt. *Alex Oliveira*



**JUNOH KIM**

NYU student was in Uber.

## Paralyzed in carjack smashup

A New York University student and South Korea Marine Corps veteran was left paralyzed from the waist down after armed carjackers crashed into his Uber in South Philadelphia, his loved ones say.

Finance major Junoh Kim, 23, was less than a month into his summer analyst role at New York City-based M&A adviser Klema Capital when the carjackers rammed into his Uber while fleeing police June 23 near the University of Pennsylvania, according to a GoFundMe page.

"Junoh is currently paralyzed in his lower body from waist down and has limited use of his hands," the page reads. "The extent to his recovery is uncertain."

"This accident has opened my eyes to the outpouring of love and support from so many people," Kim said in a text message to The Post.

Three juveniles and a man, 30, are under arrest, cops said. *Nicole Rosenthal*

## GOP balks at NY suits

New York Republicans slammed race-based lawsuits trying to uproot up the voting process in several towns, calling the litigation an effort to bump conservatives from office.

Under the Empire State's John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, civil rights lawyers are suing Mount Pleasant, Newburgh and Cheektowaga, all with majority white populations, claiming they're blocking the elections of black and Hispanics by using "at-large" elections. *Carl Campanile*



**ScarJo's cosmic curves**

Scarlett Johansson rocks an appropriately galaxy-patterned dress as she cozies up to costar Channing Tatum before the German premiere Wednesday of their alternate-history rom-com, "Fly Me to the Moon" in Berlin.

# OFFICER 'SLAY' TWIST

## 4th juror: Not guilty

By ALEX OLIVEIRA

Karen Read's lawyers claim a fourth juror has come forward to say the jury unanimously acquitted her of murdering her Boston cop boyfriend, but that the mistrial was declared in a "very confusing moment."

"Juror D told me that he/she decided to reach out to me because he/she was 'uncomfortable' with how the trial ended," Read attorney Alan Jackson wrote in a court filing Wednesday, claiming the juror told him they had agreed to acquit on Count 1 for second-degree murder, and Count 3 for leaving the scene of a fatal crash.

"The disagreement was solely as to Count 2," Jackson continued, referring to the charge of manslaughter while operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor.

### Unsure what to do

"Juror D explained that the jury actually discussed telling the judge that they had agreed unanimously on NOT GUILTY verdicts for Counts 1 and 3, but that they were not sure if they were allowed to say so," the filing reads.

The latest claim directly contradicts the jury foreman's notes to Judge Beverly Cannone, including the final message July 1 that jurors were deadlocked as a result of "deeply held beliefs."

The foreman said, "The deep division is not due to a lack of effort or diligence, but rather a sincere adherence to our individual principles and moral codes" and asked that the judge not



**CASE IN LIMBO:** Karen Read after a mistrial was declared in her case July 1.

force jurors to attempt to compromise their beliefs.

Cannone then declared a mistrial. Previously, she had read the jurors a special set of instructions that are given if they can't reach agreement. The Norfolk County district attorney said July 1 that he would seek to re-try the case.

On Monday, Jackson submitted a court filing claiming three jurors had told him all 12 members of the jury agreed Read is not guilty of murder. Jackson asked that charge be thrown out.

"Is anyone going to know that we acquitted on Count 1 and 3? No one ever asked about those counts," Jackson said the fourth juror told him.

Jackson claimed the jurors who spoke out felt re-trying Read for murder and manslaughter would be "unjust" given the verdicts they reached but were not made known in court.

Read was accused of murdering her boyfriend John O'Keefe by running him down with her car while drunk on the night of January 29, 2022, and leaving him to die in a snowbank outside a cop friend's home.

# 'Veep' it in the family.

By PATRICK REILLY

Marla Maples, Donald Trump's ex-wife, revealed in a rare interview that she's willing to help the former president's 2024 campaign — and is even “open” to being his vice president.

“I’m ready. I am available if needed and I’m not sitting back anymore,” Maples, who just turned 60, told *The Evening Standard* in her first interview in eight years.

“I want to step out more, share more and not be afraid of positive or negative outcomes that come from speaking out,” she added.

Maples, who shares daughter Tiffany Trump with the former commander in chief, said her willingness to help Trump's second White House bid has not been affected by her ex-husband's legal troubles.

She was asked about the lawsuit filed against Trump by writer Jean E. Carroll, which resulted in the former president being found liable by a Manhattan federal jury of sex abuse and defamation.

Maples said she believes Trump is innocent.

“I do know my daughter's father well enough to know that he's never had to push himself on another person. He's always had women throw themselves on him instead,” she told the paper. “I don't believe there was a crime done.”

She was also dismissive about Trump's guilty verdict in May in his Manhattan hush-money trial, where he was convicted of covering up a \$130,000 payout to porn star Stormy Daniels to hide alleged details of a past sexual encounter before the 2016 presidential election. He has appealed the verdict.

“They love these little sexy stories. We have a country that is failing. Our cities are not protected,” she said. “How do we make people feel safe again?”

## ABC furor over Steph ‘bias’

A top ABC News executive was reportedly “furious” upon learning that George Stephanopoulos, a former Democratic operative, came off as biased against President Biden.

Stephanopoulos (right), 63, was told by the network's news division head, Debra O'Connell, that “he is a newsman who is expected to be objective,” according to Ra-

## Trump's ex is open to new ‘mate’



**STEPPING UP:** Marla Maples, former President Donald Trump's second wife, says she's ready to support him politically however she can — including as his vice presidential candidate.

That's more important than having these lawsuits that are not affecting any of us today.”

Sources told *The Evening Standard* that the actress and singer could see herself as Trump's vice president — which he is set to announce next week.

“Someone would have to ask my ex-husband about that,” she said, laughing, when asked if this is true.

“I'm open. I'm open to what-

dar Online, after video footage emerged of the former Bill Clinton adviser telling a Manhattan passerby, “I don't think [Biden] can serve four more years.”

The candid clip of Stephanopoulos, published by TMZ on Tuesday, reportedly sparked internal meetings at ABC, which resulted in O'Connell asking that the “Good Morning America” and “This



Getty Images for The Cambridge Union

ever way that I can serve. Right now everyone [in the Trump family] is just seeing how we can help,” she added.

The former couple's relationship had a controversial start because they met during a charity event in 1985, while the real-estate mogul was still married to his first wife, Ivana Trump.

Donald Trump and Maples wed in 1993, but their marriage fell apart by May 1997, and in

1999 the actress walked away with a \$2 million settlement.

They were seen being friendly and posing for pictures together at Tiffany Trump's rehearsal dinner in November 2022.

Tiffany married billionaire heir Michael Boulos at Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club resort.

The two met in 2018 while he was studying at City University of London and she was on vacation in Europe.



Week” host apologize for his remark — which he did.

“Earlier today I responded to a question from a passerby. I shouldn't have,” the anchor told Puck News in a statement hours after his comments went viral.

An ABC News spokesperson vehemently denied the Radar report. “This is absolutely not true,” they told *The Post*. *Victor Nava*

## Could it be Don ... and ‘Abe’?

Former President Donald Trump dished about his rumored running mates Wednesday — saying Sen. J.D. Vance's beard makes him look “like a young Abraham Lincoln” and saying North Dakota's abortion ban is a “bit of an issue” for Gov. Doug Burgum.

Fox News Radio host Brian Kilmeade pressed Trump on his shortlist of vice presidential hopefuls — including Vance's beard amid reports that the always clean-shaven 45th president doesn't like facial hair.

“No. I've never heard that one,” Trump told Kilmeade on Wednesday, adding that the Ohio senator's scruff “looks good.”

“He's like a young Abraham Lincoln,” Trump added.

Trump, 78, teased that over the “next week or so, I'll announce” his decision, adding that he'd “love to do it during the convention.”

Kilmeade asked Trump whether any other contenders should be added to his list of veep finalists, rattling off names like Vance, Burgum, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC).

But Trump didn't bite. “Well, you could,” he said. “I think I'm pretty well set in my own mind. But, you know, you got some good people. And I have changed a little bit.”

The 45th president also suggested that the firestorm over President Biden's cognitive abilities would not impact his thinking about a vice presidential decision.

*Ryan King*

## Pols OK citizen proof vote bill

The House approved a measure Wednesday to require proof of US citizenship when registering to vote, a measure strongly opposed by top Democrats and the White House despite proof of noncitizens casting ballots in federal elections.

A majority of 216 Republicans and five Democrats voted to pass the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, with swing-district Reps. Henry Cuellar (Texas), Vicente Gonzalez (Texas), Jared Golden (Maine), Don Davis (NC) and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (Wash.) crossing party lines. The bill was opposed by 198 Democrats.

It's illegal for noncitizens to vote in federal elections.

*Josh Christenson*

# BORDER CRISIS

## Loophole jams San Diego with migrants

By JENNIE TAER



**NISA MICKENS**  
Beaten to death in 2016.

### MS-13 admits 8 murders

The ruthless leader of a Long Island MS-13 crew admitted Wednesday that he was responsible for eight brutal murders, including the baseball bat beating deaths of two high school girls.

Alexi Saenz, 29, the reputed former head of the Sailors Locos Salvatruchas Westside group, admitted as part of a plea deal that he ordered or carried out slayings, which included the deaths of Nisa Mickens, 15, and her friend, Kayla Cuevas, 16, who were beaten and hacked to death in 2016.

"To say that Alexi Saenz's hands are drenched in blood does not begin to describe the multiple killings and extreme mayhem he personally directed and committed," US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York Breon Pearce said.

Saenz and his brother Jairo were among 13 members of the notorious gang indicted by the feds in 2017 on racketeering, conspiracy and murder charges.

Alexi Saenz, also known as "Blatsy" and "Plaky," admitted to the killings as part of a plea bargain on racketeering and weapons charges in federal court in Central Islip that could see him jailed for up to 70 years.

However, prosecutors said in court that they retain the right to withdraw the agreement before his sentencing if Jairo doesn't also agree to a plea deal.

Kevin Sheehan  
and Jorge Fitz-Gibbon

Migrants are continuing to overwhelm Border Patrol agents at the busiest border crossing in the US, and holding centers are still over capacity — despite the Biden administration's assertions that a "crack-down" on crossers is working.

Border Patrol facilities in the San Diego region were at 150% capacity with more than 1,500 migrants in custody as of Tuesday morning, according to internal agency data leaked to The Post.

The holding centers in the region were meant to house just 1,000 people.

The facilities were already above capacity before President Biden's June 4 executive order took effect. The order was designed to limit the ability of many migrants to claim asylum while border crossings remain high.

However, there are major loopholes and exemptions in the order that allow migrants to continue to stay in the US. And one of the biggest loopholes is in San Diego.

Even as crossings have fallen to the lowest levels of the Biden administration elsewhere, the San Diego-area migrant holding facilities are still overflowing, said Manny Bayon, National Border Patrol Council president for the San Diego sector.

### Flouting the law

That's because migrants who cross into the San Diego region have a better chance of skirting the rules and staying in the country due to an order, previously reported by The Post, that agents should release migrants from more than 100 countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Migrants from those countries are harder to deport because their home governments don't readily accept deportation flights.

Many of the migrants coming through the San Diego sector are from "all over the world," a border patrol agent in the region told The Post.

## No retrial for 'migrant-shooting' rancher

An Arizona rancher who allegedly shot and killed a Mexican migrant with an AK-47 as the man crossed his land cannot be retried for murder following his April mistrial.

Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Thomas Fink dismissed 75-year-old

George Alan Kelly's case with prejudice — meaning prosecutors can't bring the charges again — in part because of Kelly's advanced age, failing health and continuing "senility and memory loss," according to The Arizona Republic.

"A refiling of these char-



**WALL CLIMBERS:** Migrants scale the wall at the border in Tijuana, Mexico, to seek asylum in San Diego in June. An order gives them a better chance of skirting rules and staying in the US.

"China, India — there's a lot of Indians ... and Central Americans," the agent said.

The agent said that, in practice, anyone who is pregnant or injured is also being released with a future court date, despite Biden's crack-down order.

Across the southern border, migrants who arrive as unaccompa-

nied children, or those who come at a legal port of entry using the CBP One phone app are also exempt from the policy's restrictions.

Migrants who aren't exempt from the executive order also have the opportunity to stay if they claim to have a fear of returning to their home country.

Roughly 30,000 illegal border-

crossers were released into the country in June with upcoming court dates, according to leaked documents obtained by The Post.

Last month, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas claimed that the executive order was working "because of their tough response to illegal crossings."

ges at a future date would place the defense at a significant disadvantage," Fink wrote in his order, adding that too much time had passed for retrial anyway.

Kelly allegedly shot nine times at victim Gabriel Cuen-Buitimea and another man, Daniel Ramirez, as

they fled across his 170-acre property on Jan. 30, 2023, in an attempt to elude US Border Patrol agents, the newspaper said.

Defense attorneys denied this, saying the elderly rancher fired warning shots into the air after seeing what he believed to be five armed

men crossing his land.

State prosecutors — who charged Kelly with second-degree murder and another count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon — said authorities found no evidence there were more than two men, or that they were armed. Steve Janoski

# 3 slashed, 3 busted in Crossroads

Kevin C. Downs



**BLOOD FIGHT:** EMTs treat a bleeding woman after she got in a fight with another woman in Bryant Park early Wednesday.

## CRIMES SQUARE

By JOE MARINO, LARRY CELONA, AMANDA WOODS, CAITLIN McCORMICK and MATT TROUTMAN

Three people were slashed and another pepper-sprayed and bitten near Times Square overnight into Wednesday — both in the subway system and on the street, authorities said.

The spate of unrelated attacks ended with a 26-year-old man slashed on his right arm as he stood on the 7-train platform at the Times Square station at about 3:45 a.m., cops said.

The victim claimed the suspect had accosted him previously, and, once confronted, the stranger knifed him in return, according to police sources.

The wounded man showed cops a photo of his attacker, and the suspect, identified as Michael Hernandez, 25, of Brooklyn, was soon busted by police and charged with second-degree assault and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon, cops said. Officers found a switchblade in the left pocket of his shorts, sources said.

In an unrelated attack at around 1 a.m., Sara Flores, 19, was walking through Bryant Park, at West 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue, when she told Jennifer Tompkins, 30 — a complete stranger — that a group had just jumped her, cops said.

### Warned to go away

Tompkins warned Flores to leave her alone or she'd pepper-spray her — but Flores persisted, according to police.

Then an all-out brawl ensued between the women, with Tompkins allegedly pepper-spraying Flores and biting her on the lip and Flores stabbing Tompkins in the head and the ribs, cops said.

Both were charged with assault and menacing in the second degree, police said.

The earliest assault unfolded at around 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, when a 31-year-old man was slashed in the stomach after getting into an argument with another man on the southbound A, C and E platform in 42nd Street-Port Authority station, cops said.

The victim was taken to Belle-

vue, where he was listed in stable condition, police said.

The nature of the clash was unclear, and no arrests have been made.

The chaotic incidents began just a day after Mayor Adams touted how much the Crossroads of the World is thriving.

“Any time you don’t believe the city’s back, just go hit Times Square and you see just the people walking, just enjoying being in our city,” Hizzoner said at a Monday morning briefing.

Felony assaults are up about 13% so far this year in the confines of the Midtown South Precinct, which covers Times Square.

### Precinct crime down

From the beginning of the year through Sunday, 276 such crimes were reported, compared to 244 during the same period in 2023, the latest data show.

Overall felony crime, however, is down in the precinct’s confines so far this year, with 1,766 incidents reported compared to 2,022 last year.

Thomas Anderson, 49, said those crime statistics made him feel nervous before visiting the city from Vermont for the first time this week.

“The problem is that if people don’t have options, they commit crimes,” he said.

Sherri, a commuter from Suffolk County, is glad that she is strictly in the city until 5 p.m. every day. She blames crime on the legalization of weed and poor mental health.

“There’s a lot of mental health that comes into play and there’s just not enough help out there, so unfortunately other people are the victims of that,” she said.

Michael Hargwood, 36, and his father Warren Hargwood, 62, said they didn’t find crime to be as big an issue as it’s made out to be, especially on the subway.

“It’s not as bad as they say it is, it comes in spurts,” Michael said. “Earlier this year, you were inundated with incidents on the subway and now there’s none, I think after the National Guard came in the blink of an eye and now they’re not there.”

## Vic’s kin rip shield for driver

The self-proclaimed addict accused of plowing into 11 people in a Fourth of July crash is being held in protective custody, a decision that drew outrage from victims’ loved ones.

A grand jury has yet to hand down an indictment against Daniel Christopher Hyden, 44, who has been jailed without bail after his arrest in the deadly Lower East Side crash, prosecutors said Wednesday during a Manhattan court hearing.

While Hyden didn’t appear in court for the hearing, family friends of Herman and Lucille Pinkney, two of three people killed in the holiday horror, showed up and accused him of cowardice.

They exclaimed “wow” as a judge ordered Hyden placed in protective custody.

“You’re hiding in protective custody?” Kimberly Jackson, 58, said to her friend Lucille Pinkney’s accused killer. “You’re supposed to be a man. That’s not being a man. You’re a freaking coward.”

Hyden, a substance abuse counselor who wrote a book called “The Sober Addict,” is accused of killing three pedestrians when he drunkenly barreled a gray Ford F-150 through a Lower East Side intersection, over a sidewalk and into revelers celebrating the holiday in Corlears Hook Park.

Jack Morphet, Hannah Fierick and Matt Troutman

## Are you a billionaire?

Check your pockets!

The winner who purchased a \$1.13 billion Mega Millions ticket in New Jersey still has not claimed the state’s largest prize ever, according to lottery officials.

The ticket for March 26, which has a cash value of \$537.5 million, was purchased at a ShopRite Liquor store on Route 66 in Monmouth County.

The winning numbers were 7, 11, 22, 29, 38, and the gold Mega ball was 4.

The jackpot is the fifth largest in Mega Millions history. Patrick Reilly

# Call To Arms

## Speaker demands stand v. 'China-led Axis'

Excerpts from House Speaker Mike Johnson delivered speech at the Hudson Institute on Monday.

UNTIL recently, in the almost 40 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, thanks to America's policy of peace through strength, the sounds of war and interconnected global conflict have been mostly silent. But that is no longer the case.

Under the current path, the world is increasingly destabilized, and in this fateful moment, our actions here in America will continue to determine the path of the free world.

All of us here recognize that while democracy is not perfect, the burden of self-government is far lighter than the yoke of tyranny. But right now, absent American leadership, we're looking at a future that could well be defined by communism and tyranny, rather than liberty, opportunity, and security.

In Europe, Putin has made it clear that his plans do not stop with Ukraine. He has likened himself to Czar Peter the Great, and you can read his essay about



Allies: Johnson (r.) met with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky this week.

He doesn't treat China like an enemy. He's stopped supporting Israel and cozier up to Iran to revive the failed nuclear deal. And, in the most inexplicable policy imaginable, he's opened our borders wide to spies and terrorists, while reducing sanctions on the Latin dictators who wreak havoc in our backyard.

And now look where we are! Obama's weakness invited aggression, and Biden's weakness has fueled that aggression like nothing we've seen since World War II.

Things were different when I came to Congress during the first Trump administration in 2017. When I was elected chairman of the Republican Study Committee ... we published a report with 130 policy recommendations to counter China, deter Russia, and advance American interests in the Middle East.

And to the chagrin of the pundits who want to paint him as an "isolationist," President Trump established a solid security posture that advanced the same principles outlined in our report.

Remember how he threatened North Korea with fire and fury the likes of which the world has never seen? Remember how he took out Soleimani and al-Baghdadi? Remember how he was the first President to send Javelin missiles to Ukraine, and how he took steps to rebuild our military? ...

He called out the threat of China and took on their unfair trade practices, got our allies to pay their fair share, enforced Iran oil sanctions, and brokered the Abraham Accords, and the foreign policy establishment hated it.

But he did not retreat. He did

not apologize. He instilled fear in our enemies, and with his leadership, made clear that American strength is essential to a peaceful 21st century.

To be sure, the Republican Party is not one of "nation builders" and "careless interventionists." Nor are we idealists who think we can placate tyrants. We are realists. We don't seek out a fight, but we're always prepared to fight, and if we must fight, we fight with the gloves off. And today ... we need a new policy of peace through strength for the 21st century.

Even as the "America-last" bureaucrats regained power under Joe Biden, and invited aggression from our enemies, in the coming months, we have a chance to change course. ...

We can choose to lead, or we can choose to be a speedbump down the road to serfdom. Decline is always a choice.

At one point, the West was facing elimination by Fascists and Imperialists, and the Jews were facing genocide by the Nazis. At another point, we faced annihilation by the Soviets.

Today, we are threatened by Chinese communists, Russian oligarchs and Islamic terrorists. We can choose to ignore them. We can try to appease them. We can listen to the naysayers who say our values aren't worth defending or that there can be no victory.

Or we can respond again with all the fortitude and fight that once ran through every American vein.

Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) is the 56th speaker of the US House of Representatives.

# FAST TAKES

## Foreign desk: What Really Fueled Ukraine War

"Could it be the Ukraine war is about fighting for people?" asks Ivan Krastev at The Spectator World. Months before he invaded, Vladimir Putin lamented Russia's population decline, vowing to do everything possible to reverse it. By 2039, Russia's population is projected to fall to less than 140 million, smaller than Nigeria, Brazil, Pakistan or Ethiopia. And "Russia's war in Ukraine has involved the large-scale abduction of children, particularly orphans, who have been forcibly transported to Russia and adopted by Russian parents." Indeed: "These so-called 'new Russians' were central to the way Putin was defining the objectives of his 'special military operation.'" Yet Russia has lost 150,000 soldiers in the war, plus 600,000 Russians who've fled. A prolonged war will devastate Russia "economically and demographically." So those saying Putin could be ready to end the war next year "are probably not entirely wrong."

## Eye on DC: A Case Study in Enabling

In early June Sen. Patty Murray slammed the Wall Street Journal exposé on President Biden's rapid decline as a "hit piece," reports the Washington Examiner's Byron York. But "after the disastrous June 27 debate exposed Biden's infirmities for the world to see, Murray is singing a different tune," namely that "President Biden must do more to demonstrate he can campaign strong enough to beat Donald Trump." York sums up: Only once "Murray's voters could see for themselves what had shape the president was in" was she "ready to show Biden the door." "Multiply that many times over" to include other lawmakers plus "compliant reporters" and "Democratic politicians" who also "had plenty of reason to know the president is not up to the job."

## Physician: Jha's Mandate Gaslighting

White House COVID czar Ashish Jha just "admitted that although he supported vaccine mandates, they did harm as well," gripes Vinay Prasad at his Substack. Yet Jha is still "gaslighting" by claiming that "mandates saved a lot of lives." No: "Perhaps as little as 1-2% of US people got a dose of the vaccine due to the mandate," and both young people and those who'd already had COVID gained minimal added protection. Yet "vaccine mandates cost lives by pushing people out of the work force — a socio-economic death penalty. It also cost lives by breeding distrust." Jha is still "covering up for his own errors in judgment."

## Conservative: Extremism Won in France



Jean-Luc Melenchon

"Far-left socialist Jean-Luc Melenchon now leads the largest [bloc] in the French National Assembly," notes Commentary's Seth Mandel — yet he's an "authoritarian populist who wears his disgust for Jews on his sleeve." (For example, he "coolly asserted in an interview that the Jews killed Jesus.") So much for the "celebratory attitude" of "post-election discourse": "Extremists weren't thwarted. No, one extremist was thwarted through the elevation of a politician no less extreme." And "the extremist supported by all the 'moderate' commentators luxuriates in the kind of Jew-baiting that is practiced in the classrooms and the cafes and op-ed pages of mainstream publications." "The willingness of those in France to partner with Melenchon, and those in the West to advocate for such an alliance, was revelatory."

## From the right: Joe's Inflation Ignorance

"The price controls they enacted that decade failed miserably, leading to shortages and other market disruptions," groans City Journal's Allison Schrage of "how poorly policymakers understood" 1970s inflation. Yet President Biden's new "plan to bring down food prices" just "repeats these past mistakes." Recent "inflation was caused initially by a combination of pandemic-driven supply constraints and elevated demand from federal transfer payments," not greedy corporations. Biden's proposal ignores "basic economic realities," "proposes cracking down on corporations" and "doling out money to consumers," which could worsen inflation. Rather than pushing "price controls or pressure campaigns on grocers," Biden "should curb spending and let wages grow, allowing more Americans to weather the disastrous results of the past four years." — Compiled by The Post Editorial Board

### MIKE JOHNSON

restoring the Russian empire — an empire that would include our military partners in Vilnius, Helsinki, and Warsaw.

Xi Jinping has made abundantly clear he's interested in expanding his communist footholds, including in the South China Sea. In the Middle East, the Ayatollah wants to resurrect the caliphate and eliminate Israel ...

To be sure, these threats have been growing for some time — but under weak presidents, they've been allowed to metastasize. During the Obama administration, we saw eight years of international apology tours, the sequestration of our military, the buildup of ISIS, Russia's invasion into Crimea, the spread of malign Chinese influence across the globe, and a nuclear deal that gave Iran everything they wanted.

Today, the same failures we saw under Obama have happened under Joe Biden, because he's empowered an out-of-touch foreign policy establishment whose agenda is to once again appease, apologize and accommodate.

# Dems' (Polite) Civil War

Democrats' civil war rages on, in a bizarrely passive-aggressive way.

Cue ex-Speaker Nancy Pelosi: Two days after President Biden called into "Morning Joe" to insist that he's absolutely staying in, she went on the same show to say, "It's up to the president to decide if he is going to run," noting that "time is running short" to find a replacement. That was a polite way of saying *get out*, and a key sign party bigwigs still know where they must go.

The night before, suburban Jersey Rep. Mikie Sherrill joined the drip-drip of House Dems calling outright for Joe to go; later Wednesday, so did upstater Rep. Pat Ryan.

Biden's threats were enough to make Rep. Jerry Nadler blink: He'd joined the putschists behind closed doors on Sunday — but publicly proclaimed his Biden support barely a day later. Yet other top Dems who'd spoken up Sunday *aren't* recanting: Reps. Mark Takano (Calif.), Adam Smith (Wash.) and establishment Upstater Joe Morelle.

And Bronx Rep. Ritchie Torres, who *had* called the panic among Dems "self-destructive," followed Pelosi by tweeting on the need for "a serious reckoning with the down-ballot effect of whomever we nominate." More: "An unsentimental analysis of the cold, hard numbers ... should inform what we decide and whom we nominate."

And those show that Biden means disaster: What *had* been swing states are falling

into Trump's column, while Politico reports that *New York* is a "battleground" state thanks to Joe's plummeting polls.

That is: Biden threatened to destroy the party if he's pushed, but smart Democrats are seeing "cold, hard numbers" showing he'll destroy it if he *stays*.

What candidate in a tight race wants to have to claim the top of the ticket is just fine, when all the voters can see that he's *not*? You either tell the truth and outrage the base, or lie and outrage everyone else.

Meanwhile, Sen. Bernie Sanders and AOC stand with Joe — because *their* seats are safe, and a Biden humiliation may hand the party over to progressives (who grew by leaps and bounds in the *first* Trump term).

Yet the numbers for most Dems will keep getting worse, since Biden can only reverse them by proving he's truly fit: give up TelePrompTers and pre-taped interviews, do a barnstorm tour of speeches and live Q&As — and commit to public release of the results of a major medical cognitive test.

That he's done *none* of that since his collapse on the debate stage is damning: He (or his handlers) know he doesn't dare.

Biden hopes to bluff this out, just as he summed up his disastrous Afghan bugout as a "tremendous success." But Pelosi's made it plain: His fellow Democrats will keep pushing ever-harder for Joe "to decide" until he gives them the decision they truly want.

## Iran's Protest Ploy

Iran is boosting anti-Israel protests in America. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines confirmed it Tuesday: "Iranian government actors have sought to opportunistically take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza." People "tied to Iran's government" are "posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests and even providing financial support to protesters." Yes: *funding* demonstrations.

Most of the useful idiots railing against Israel (and America!) on our streets and campuses won't realize they're being manipulated, she notes. Iran's goal: to "stoke discord and undermine confidence in our democratic institutions."

And undermine Israel: These demos have moved President Biden to offer sympathy for the protesters and denounce (nonexistent)

Israeli "excesses," and even to slow the supply of arms to the beleaguered Jewish state.

Tehran's shadow war complements its proxies' actions on the ground, such as their strikes on our bases in the Middle East, killing three US soldiers in January — attacks the prez has hesitated to answer with the devastating response they deserve.

No, the administration insists Tehran can play a positive role in the region. Biden has worked to *protect* Iran — demanding, for example, Israel not retaliate after Tehran launched 300+ missiles and attack drones directly at it. And in the years before that, he rolled back sanctions on Iran, allowing billions to fund its terror pawns.

Has the prez *heard* this ugly truth from his top spy? If so, what must Iran do to get him to treat it as the enemy it clearly is?

## Oh, No — Not Nathan's!

Americans have lost trust in Congress and the political class, the universities and the media, but woe that it's come to ... Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest.

Since 1972, it's been a pure and joyous meritocracy, uniting tourists, locals and fast-food lovers of all ages to watch men and women test the limits of the human stomach by downing as many weenies as they can off pre-filled plates in 10 short minutes. After 600 seconds, the judges count the plates and announce the scores.

But now this not-quite-ancient rite has met

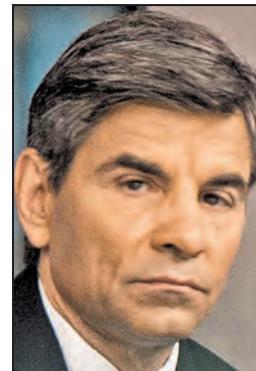
with foul play. Or at least Nick Wehry isn't contesting that charge: He requested that his score be adjusted in the face of claims that this past July 4 competition he pilfered an empty plate from a fellow competitor, boosting him to 51.75 dogs, putting him over the coveted 50-mark and into the elite.

Wehry insists he didn't cheat, but wants no hint of "impropriety." If he is as kosher as the dogs, he can prove it next year.

At least this controversy is dead, and the contest's honor redeemed. The decline of the West has yet to conquer Coney Island.

# Prez's Weak ABC Interview Only Added More Doubts

**THE ISSUE:** President Biden's interview with George Stephanopoulos following the presidential debate.



George Stephanopoulos

President Biden's interview with George Stephanopoulos about Joe's disastrous debate raised the question whether Biden had undergone a neurological evaluation ("Prez: I was sick and tired," July 6).

The question was not directly answered by Biden, who said a test was not required of him. It is time the Democratic Party demands such a test. They need to give him a prompt date so they can determine whether he is fit to serve a second term.

For a long time the party's members, along with much of the public, have seen embarrassing gaffes from the president.

Furthermore, asked if he had watched the debate, Biden could not definitively answer yes. His condition is dangerous to the welfare of our republic.

**Matthew Pease**  
Demarest, NJ

Trump take a cognitive test, and he complied. Why can't you take a test?"

Biden has suffered two aneurysms in his life — he should take a neurological test. **Gary Layton**  
Interlaken, NJ

In Biden's interview, he said he had "just had a bad night" during the debate.

I'm sure that Stephanopoulos, as a staunch Democrat, was hoping that Biden would somehow redeem himself from his debate debacle, but Biden continued his litany of bizarre excuses and unintelligible ramblings.

When asked what it would take for him to withdraw his candidacy, Biden said only "if the Lord Almighty came down and said, Joe, get out of the race" would he step aside.

Well, Joe, the Lord gave you 81 years — and possibly dementia. He's telling you to get out of the race, but it seems you're just not listening.

**Jack Kaufman**  
Naples, Fla.

This interview was another failure by the mainstream media. All Stephanopoulos had to say was "Democrats demanded that former President

to undergo testing that would reveal the true nature of his illness.

Americans may be able to accept physical limitations, like those of President Franklin Roosevelt, who ran the country for nearly 12 years in a wheelchair. But mental deficiencies are another matter altogether.

Now the intervention process is underway by members of his own party: some concerned about their own survival, and others urgently concerned about the country. We can only hope the intervention works.

**Phil Serpico**  
Queens

Unfortunately, President Biden's denial that he needs cognitive testing is endangering his health.

If the Democratic Party cares about Biden, it needs to take the decision of running for office out of his hands and find a replacement.

**Chris Robertson**  
Stony Plain, Canada

Now that he appears basically nonfunctional after 9 p.m., he would have a really bad night if, say, China invaded Taiwan between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

In the business world, every paid position has a detailed job description and the qualifications needed to do the job. We need to update the qualifications for the office of president: You should be able to pull an all-nighter every once in a while.

**Elinor Hite**  
Carrollton, Texas

Nobody has to be a master chef to know the ham and eggs are burning: It's clear President Biden isn't running on all cylinders. It was only a matter of time before the coverup was exposed.

The ABC interview showed a person in denial of his decline and therefore his resistance

ABC's George Stephanopoulos was right to ask Biden whether he would take a cognitive test, but he failed to ask a most important follow-up.

That would be regarding Biden releasing his medical records and tests from the last three years, instead of the short summaries.

If Biden refused, we would wonder what he was hiding. Or a treasure trove of medical documents would potentially become available for experts to evaluate.

Unfortunately, the public will never know Biden's true neurological condition until that happens. **Paul Kamenar**  
Chevy Chase, Md.

**E-MAIL:** letters@nypost.com or **WRITE** to The Editor, The New York Post, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Include name, address and daytime phone number. No unverifiable letters will be published. The Post reserves the right to edit all letters.

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# Shield Your School

## How to dodge new trans rules



**MAUD  
MARON**

**R**ADICAL changes to Title IX, the landmark federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against girls and women in school sports, are set to take effect across the country on Aug. 1. Thanks, Joe Biden!

But the US Department of Education can't enforce its controversial new revisions in schools where at least one parent belongs to the 130,000-member Moms for Liberty advocacy group, a federal judge has ruled — including some right here in New York City.

Passed in 1972, Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and guarantees girls equal sport opportunities with boys at federally funded educational institutions from elementary school through college.

Yet the coming changes championed by the Biden administration will grant federal protection to boys who want to compete in girls' sports or access girls' locker rooms or showers based on their "gender identity" — and will also make "misgendering" a fellow student a civil rights violation.

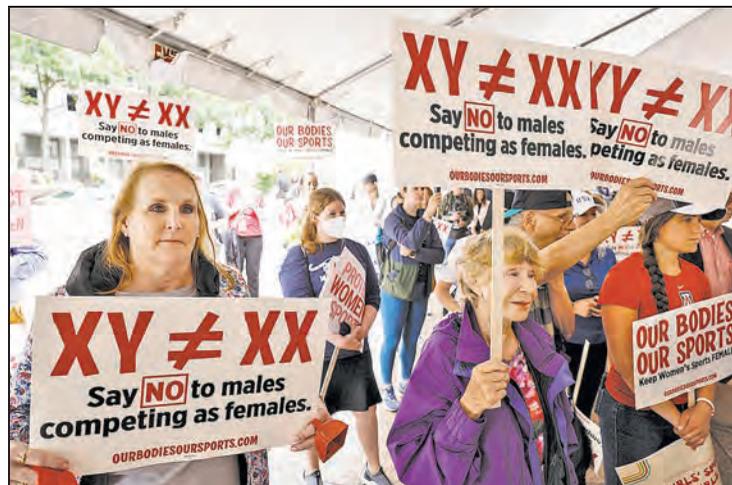
But, due to an injunction from a

Kansas judge, thousands of schools across the nation will be exempt — and all a parent has to do is join Moms for Liberty before July 15. Did I mention that membership is free and you can sign up online?

This is great news for parents who want fairness for their athlete-daughters, and for those who want their kids to be able to speak the truth about who's male and who's female without getting in trouble at school. It's good news, too, for parents who worry about their kids making a mistake and getting hounded for a federal civil rights offense — after all, genders can change fast among teens today.

The Supreme Court case *Loper Bright v. Raimondo*, decided in June, overruled a 40-year rule known as "Chevron deference" that directed judges to defer to administrative interpretations of ambiguities in the law. The Kansas judge who ruled in favor of Moms for Liberty wasted no time in citing the brand-new precedent.

On July 2, Judge John Broomes of the District of Kansas granted an injunction that stops the implementation of the new Title IX changes for all plaintiffs in the case, including members of three national organizations. In other words, because of the Supreme Court ruling, the Kansas judge did not have to defer to the US Depart-



**Just Say No: Women's sports advocates are fighting Biden's Title IX rewrite.**

ment of Education when the feds tried to "clarify" that the term "sex" in the text of Title IX actually means "gender identity."

Good thing, too: As the judge pointed out, the department couldn't even *define* "gender identity." But anyone who has seen a girl standing to the side of the winner's podium while a boy got her medal knows what it means: cheating.

Judge Broomes also found that the government's new rules likely violate the First Amendment. He explained that neither he nor any of the lawyers in the courtroom could "offer any possible explanation of what a parent should tell their child about the limits of legal speech at

their schools on the topic of gender identity or sexual orientation" under the new Title IX rules.

"The result is that speech is chilled because what student wants to run the risk of being accused of sex-based harassment and subjected to an investigation and potential discipline," he wrote.

Due to state regulations, New York City kids must still navigate the social, legal and educational minefields of gender identity in our schools. Our State Education Department has adopted official guidance that calls for almost everything the US Department of Education is now enjoined from doing.

But at least students in schools

with Moms for Liberty parents can't be threatened with federal civil rights violations for defying the new rules — and schools that comply with Judge Broomes' decision can't lose federal funding for doing so.

Yet it's deeply unfair — not to mention unconstitutional — that New York students can't earnestly say, "Hey, I want to talk about what the gender identity rules mean for girls' sports." Nor can they truthfully say "I don't think humans can change their sex" without risking accusations of discrimination and school discipline.

It's certainly "speech-chilling" to face such consequences, as Judge Broomes determined. And I know: After passing a non-binding resolution seeking to review New York City's 2019 guidelines allowing boys to play girls' sports in city schools, the chancellor removed me from my elected Community Education Council seat — and 18 local politicians wrote a public letter calling my request "hateful and discriminatory." It's neither.

Parents everywhere should demand that Title IX, a law passed to prohibit discrimination against girls in sport, is not rewritten to allow boys to take records, medals, scholarships and opportunities away from girls. Students who identify as trans or non-binary should certainly be welcome and encouraged to play sports in school, and they can right now — on teams that align with their biological sex.

That's basic fairness — and a majority of Americans across both parties agree.

*Maud Maron is an NYC public school parent and president of the consulting firm ThirdRail.*

# EURO ELEX WARNINGS FOR REPUBLICANS

**T**HE American right hasn't been this giddy since the tears started flowing at the Javits Center on election night in 2016.

For months, President Biden's manifold failures as commander-in-chief have given Donald Trump an edge in this year's rematch between the two.

Their June 27 debate turned Trump into the prohibitive favorite and raised the possibility that Biden might be enough of a drag on his ticket to bring the rest of the Democratic Party down with him.

But as it begins measuring drapes and preparing for its likely return to power, the GOP would be wise to glance across the pond to take heed of two cautionary tales.

Before Sunday's legislative election, National Rally — France's populist right-wing party headlined by the controversial Marine Le Pen — had champagne on ice after winning big in the first round of voting.

In the end, though, a leftist coalition ended up popping that cork: National Rally earned the most votes, but Jean-Luc Melenchon's New Popular Front took the most seats.

Meanwhile the center-right Republicans — reeling ever since their 2017 presidential

candidate flamed out and allowed Le Pen to become the de facto leader of the French right — lost 25 seats.

Despite persistent dissatisfaction with the status quo in France, Le Pen fails, time and time again, to deliver the sweeping electoral victory expected of her.

American conservatives must never make the same mistake, allowing the unviable fringe to hijack the GOP from the center-right coalition that's long been at its helm.

In the United States, Trump's charisma and lack of ideological center — as well as the Democrats' abundant weaknesses — have insulated him from the charges of extremism that have attached so firmly to Le Pen.

But if he retakes the presidency unburdened by the need to consider his political future, he could justify such a tag and do lasting damage to the Republican brand.

At a recent campaign rally, for example, Trump praised the "amazing" Laura Loomer, a bat-guano crazy, "pro-white nationalism" social-media addict who spends the bulk of her time spreading wild conspiracy theories online.

Meanwhile, Steve Bannon — proud platformer of the alt-right — still boasts of a "direct line" to Trump, despite his flameout during the former president's first term and his later scheme to defraud Trump's voter base.

And Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, who once basked in the glory of *The New York Times'* praise for his 2016 memoir and now hobnobs with the likes of Bannon and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, is reportedly a finalist in Trump's veepstakes.

If these voices are empowered under a Trump redux, the results could be as devastating as they would be far-reaching — not only hampering Trump's presidency, but also permanently harming the Republican Party by ruining its claim to represent the center-right.

"Center-right," however, also cannot come to mean "feckless" — as the United Kingdom's Conservative Party has come to define it.

The Tories were wiped out last week by Keir Starmer's Labour Party — but not as a result of the voters' mass hunger for the watered-down, utopian socialism Starmer

advocates.

To the contrary, it's the consequence of the Tories' inability to address some of the major issues that its base has been practically begging them to for years. Immigration, in particular, which YouGov polling found was the second most important issue to voters just a couple of weeks before Election Day.

"The reason that we lost the trust of millions of people across the country is not because we were too left-wing or right-wing, or had this slogan or that slogan," Conservative MP and ex-Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick observed after the drubbing.

"But fundamentally because we failed to deliver on the promises we made to the British public," he continued, arguing that immigration was "at the heart" of their defeat.

Holding together a durable conservative coalition, as it turns out, is not about ceding ground to the left, but about being effective enough to neutralize the far right.

As Republicans prepare to take the reins again, they'd best bear in mind the lessons that their European counterparts have taught them — or risk the same fate.

*Isaac Schorr is a staff writer at Mediaite.*

**ISAAC  
SCHORR**

**NEW YORK POST**

**BEN**

**SHANE**





NYP/Post: Charles Wenzelberg

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# New \$1 Joint-Injection Pill Puts Surgeons Out Of Work

**Studies show active ingredient boosts the same lubricating joint fluid in just days without expensive injections. Relieves joint stiffness. Increases joint mobility and freedom.**

Joint sufferers are now using a new inexpensive non-prescription pill called FlexJointPlus instead of popular needle injections.

The developers of this new pill say it delivers the same relief molecule as injections in just days. However, it has some impressive advantages.

First, it's inexpensive and non-prescription. Also, studies show the active ingredient delivers relief to every joint in the body because it enters the bloodstream through the digestive system.

Top doctors have recommended needle injections in the past because they deliver powerful relief. Unfortunately, the shots are painful and expensive. They also only work on the joint being treated.

But initial FlexJointPlus users report greater flexibility and less stiffness in their knees. Hands and shoulders move pain-free for the first time in years. Even neck and lower back pain improve dramatically.

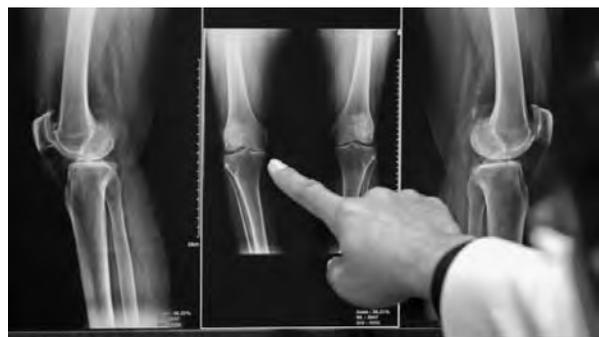
Even upstate New York senior Paul Sansbury says his knee pain has gone from 8 out of 10 to a two after just 7 days, and no longer needs a cane.

"I needed a left knee replacement, but since using FlexJointPlus, I have less pain. I can walk...I feel much comfort...and I ditched my cane. I am 82 years old," he says.

## BREAKTHROUGH MEDICAL DISCOVERY

Doctors have used joint injections to boost a critical element of the joint called synovial fluid. This lubricating fluid is found between the cartilage and bones of every joint.

Until recently there's been no way to deliver the "relief molecule" needed to boost synovial fluid in the body without a needle.



**PROOF THAT IT WORKS:** Dr. David Vallance was so astounded by the clinical results of FlexJointPlus' active ingredient that he said; "Based on my 20 years of experience with joint patients, FlexJointPlus receives my highest recommendation to any person suffering from joint pain and stiffness."

But now after years of intensive research, scientists have discovered a new pill that not only helps boost synovial fluid in multiple affected joints, but can provide long-lasting relief from pain by actually delivering this molecule through the bloodstream.

Many joint pain sufferers see an increase in flexibility and mobility. Others are able to get back to doing the things they love.

"My left hip joint was so stiff and painful I could barely get to sleep at night," says Amanda Johnson of Chatham, ON. "but since using FlexJointPlus my pain and stiffness has been relieved, and I am now able to get a good night's rest again."

## SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN RESULTS

A 90 day double-blind clinical study was performed on 160 joint patients suffering with grade 2 or 3 knee osteoarthritis for 1-5 years.

The results were published in the Journal of Arthritis in 2019.

Some participants experienced incredible results, reducing their knee pain and stiffness by 50% in just days.

The data also shows that their joint comfort just kept getting better the entire time they were taking the active ingredient during the clinical study.

"The active ingredient found in FlexJointPlus has extensive scientific support and has been tested in over a dozen well-controlled clinical studies," says Jesse Williams, Chief Developer for FlexJointPlus.

"The results of this study revealed that FlexJointPlus was effective in improving all measured parameters (joint pain, joint stiffness, activities of daily living and overall joint function). No serious adverse reactions were noted in any of the groups," he added.

The combination of quick relief coupled with continuing long-term relief is impressive to say the least.

And while no pill works for everyone, during this clinical trial, every one of the participants that took the active ingredient found in FlexJointPlus reported an improvement in their joint comfort.

## HOW IT BOOSTS JOINT FLUID

"The latest research shows that as we age, the amount of synovial fluid in the joints decreases," says Christina Stevens, Medical Researcher for FlexJointPlus.

"Loss of this fluid results in a decrease in cartilage thickness and increase in friction, which can lead to joint degeneration and pain.

And now recent studies have shown the active ingredient found in FlexJointPlus has the unique ability to help boost this lubricating fluid for powerful joint relief," she added.



**NO MORE NEEDLES:** New discovery may help people avoid painful injections like this one. The key joint-relieving molecule in these injections can now be delivered by taking a new low-cost pill called FlexJointPlus.

FlexJointPlus' key ingredient is known as NEM.

Clinical studies show NEM contains 4 key glycosaminoglycans that help boost the production of joint fluid allowing for effortless motion. It not only eases pain in the joints, but it also acts as a powerful lubricant.

"In essence, it can actually 'turn back the clock' on your tired, worn, old joints and help replace them with healthy, flexible, pain-free, new ones," she added.

There have also been no adverse side effects reported with the use of FlexJointPlus.

This is a bonus for joint sufferers who have been taking prescriptions that can cause gastric irritation over time.

This seems to be another reason why the release of this powerful new pill has triggered such a frenzy of sales.

## BACKED BY TOP MEDICAL DOCTORS

"I use FlexJointPlus everyday for my stiff and aching joints. I also have my wife and daughter taking it regularly as well," said Dr. Oozeer, G.P. from Windsor, ON

"One of my patients taking FlexJointPlus has reported a significant decrease in pain when going up or down stairs, sitting with legs bent for an extended period of time, and even getting up from a seated position," said Dr. Richard Gibson, chiropractor from Windsor, ON.

"Based on my 20 years of experience with joint patients, FlexJointPlus receives my highest recommendation to any person suffering from joint pain and stiffness," said Dr. David Vallance, Rheumatologist from Ann Arbor, MI.

## SPECIAL DISCOUNT SUPPLY AVAILABLE FOR NEXT 48-HOURS

This is the official release of FlexJointPlus ins New York. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to any person who calls within the next 48-hours.

A Regional Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try FlexJointPlus.

Starting at 7:00 am today, the order hotline will be open for 48-hours. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE 1-800-741-8177. The company will do the rest.

**IMPORTANT:** Due to FlexJointPlus' recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call, and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

Current supplies of FlexJointPlus are limited. So consumers that don't get through to the order hotline within the next 48-hours will have to wait until more inventory is produced. This could take as long as six weeks.

Dow Jones Indust. Avg. **Up 429.39**  
39,721.36

# Business

Nasdaq Comp. **Up 218.16**  
18,647.45

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Dow rebound

The Dow rallied more than 400 points, or 1.1%, snapping a two-day losing streak, as investors appeared more confident that interest-rate cuts are on their way. The S&P 500 and Nasdaq again cruised to records.

### Fed pushback

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, testifying at a House hearing, said the central bank will make interest-rate decisions “when and as” they are needed, pushing back on a suggestion that a September rate cut could be seen as a political act before the election.

### Pharma suit

The Federal Trade Commission is planning to sue United-Health, Cigna and CVS Health over their tactics as middlemen in negotiating prices for drugs including insulin.

### Costco hike

Costco said it would hike annual membership fees for the first time in seven years by as much as \$10 for its US and Canada customers, effective Sept. 1.

### AI fashion

Samsung unveiled its first-ever premium smartwatch and a smart ring, heralding its entry into a niche market that will include AI features that are supposed to help people monitor and manage their health.

Sources: Reuters, Dow Jones, AP

# OUT IN BLINK OF ‘EYE’

## CBS News prez quits after months amid controversy.

By ALEXANDRA STEIGRAD

CBS News president Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews — who was accused of sidelining white journalists and blocking an acclaimed correspondent’s reporting on the Hunter Biden laptop — is stepping down at the network, the company said Wednesday.

The controversial boss, who was named president just last August, is exiting after she made headlines in February over the firing of Catherine Herridge, a respected senior investigative reporter who had been doggedly covering the Hunter Biden laptop story for the network.

At the time, media insiders speculated that Herridge’s exit was linked to her reporting that President Biden may have kept evidence that he had foreign business dealings while in office. Another reason, according to sources, may have been Herridge’s role in a 2021 human-resources probe of Ciprian-Matthews over favoritism and discriminatory hiring and management practices. CBS and Herridge declined to comment.

As revealed by an investigation by The Post in January, Ciprian-Matthews had racked up HR complaints from staffers over unfair hiring and management practices, particularly against white female journalists. Among those who complained was Herridge, according to sources.

The shake-up comes during a tumultuous period for the network. CBS News parent company Paramount Global recently agreed to merge with Skydance, a deal that will enact a \$2 billion cost-cutting blitz. Ahead of the deal, Paramount’s co-CEOs are poised to slash \$500 million from the budget.

Still, one insider at the network said that Ciprian-Matthews’ exit comes under the “guise of cuts.”



### That was quick

**Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews (left) is leaving CBS News after less than a year at the helm. She’s been accused of suspiciously firing reporter Catherine Herridge (below right) — who was digging into the Hunter Biden (below left) laptop story, apparently finding links to President Biden.**



On Wednesday, CBS said Ciprian-Matthews will move to the role of senior adviser for coverage of the 2024 presidential election before leaving the company.

Ciprian-Matthews “will transition into this new role over the next few weeks, and we will share more updates soon,” said Wendy McMahon, president and CEO of CBS’ news, stations and syndication operations, in a memo.

A new president of CBS News was not immediately named.

“The cost cutting gave Wendy the opportunity to rid herself of Ingrid,” a source close to the network said, noting that aside from the HR

issues, Ciprian-Matthews was an “impediment” to McMahon, who is trying to consolidate the news and stations divisions.

The Dominican-born exec was the subject of a Post investigation in January over her allegedly “divisive” management and hiring practices.

### Should be ‘different color’

This included telling Pamela Browne, a white female journalist who applied to work at the network, that she would be easier to hire if she were a “different color.” Browne didn’t get the job.

In the Hunter Biden laptop con-

troversy, CBS had seized Herridge’s personal files, which included her reporting for CBS and legal documents pertaining to a First Amendment case she has been ensnared in, and initially refused to return them.

SAG-AFTRA, the union representing CBS News journalists, slammed the network — a public black eye that sources said embarrassed McMahon.

The documents were returned, but the House Judiciary Committee launched a probe calling on CBS to provide answers about why it held the documents, who handled them and whose decision it was to fire Herridge.

# CNN boss cuts 100 jobs in ‘milestone’

CNN boss Mark Thompson swung the ax Wednesday to chop 100 jobs — the first major round of layoffs since he took over the struggling cable channel.

Thompson, who has mainly tinkered with the morning lineup since taking

the reins from Chris Licht last October, attempted to lay out a new vision for the third-place network.

“Turning a great news organization towards the future is not a one-day affair,” Thompson told staff in a memo, ahead of a town hall

scheduled for later in the day. “It happens in stages and over time.”

The new “five-point plan” will include eliminating 100 jobs — about 3% of the workforce — as part of an effort to consolidate news operations and bolster

CNN’s digital business.

Thompson, a former New York Times and BBC executive, called the upcoming changes a “key milestone in the transformation of CNN.”

CNN’s announcement last month that it will once

again partner with The Associated Press to use its copy on its website sparked fears among CNN staffers of impending layoffs.

A CNN spokesperson had denied that the AP deal would lead to job cuts.

Taylor Herzlich

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# CBRE takes over running Midtown icon

**STEVE  
CUOZZO**



**REALTY CHECK**

**T**HE MetLife Building, a crown jewel asset of the Grand Central-East Midtown office district, is putting all its assets under one ownership and management roof, Realty Check has learned.

In a move that surprised industry watchers, CBRE has taken over the triple crown of office tower assignments — playing the role of property manager, asset manager and leasing agent.

The commercial brokerage and service firm succeeds Tishman Speyer's roles at the Irvine Company's 3 million-square-foot tower, officially at 200 Park Ave. Tenants got the news in an internal memo this week.

CBRE will now oversee everything at the iconic skyscraper, from long- and short-term financial strategizing to keeping the floors clean. In addition, CBRE renewed its 180,000-square-foot lease into 2037.

The deal marks the end of Tishman Speyer's nearly 20-year investment in 200 Park Ave., which it bought in 2005 for \$1.7 billion. It later brought Irvine in as a joint-venture partner and gradually reduced its equity to a small percentage over time.

A Tishman Speyer spokesman said, "We are immensely proud of our stewardship and redevelopment of 200 Park Ave. and the significant returns we achieved for our investors."

"The Irvine Company informed us they will be exercising their contractual right to buy our remaining equity and take control of the property as per our 2014 joint-venture agreement. We are grateful for their partnership and wish them all the best for the future."

Irvine owns 54 million square feet of premium office space nationwide, but 200 Park Ave. is its only Manhattan commercial holding. Tenants also include Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's headquarters and law firms Gibson, Dunn as well as Winston & Strawn.

Confounding prevailing wisdom that only brand-new, "class triple-A" properties can thrive in today's market, the 62-year-old tower once known as the Pan Am Building is 97% leased.

## High achiever

In a landmark deal, CBRE is now doing triple duty at 200 Park Ave. — what used to be known as the Pan Am building and now the MetLife building — managing the property, as well as serving as asset manager and leasing agent for the jewel of the Grand Central-East Midtown office district.



NY Post: Brian Zak

# 200 Park new lease on 'Life'

Its success is in part due to sustained commitment to modernization and meeting 21st-century needs.

Mary Ann Tighe, a leader of the CBRE leasing team, commented, "Tishman Speyer is a class act. They spearheaded a \$200 million upgrade that brought wonderful hospitality features to the building, including major restaurants, redesigned lobby and a health and wellness center."

She added, "What's exceptional

about 200 Park Ave. is its scale. More than 8,000 people come to work here every day. It's a crucial component of the Grand Central transportation hub."

## Next chapter

The future of 200 Park will include "a large focus on sustainability, which is very important to the Irvine [Company] and to CBRE," Tighe added.

Tishman Speyer's exit made the management change to CBRE a logical step, sources said. CBRE and its predecessor companies,

Insignia/ESG and Edward S. Gordon Company, have called 200 Park home for 37 years.

"We're thrilled to work alongside Irvine Company to create the next chapter of the building's remarkable history, said CBRE tristate advisory services president Matt Van Buren.

CBRE oversees \$144 billion in commercial assets worldwide.

Asset management is a high-stakes role that includes both long-term and day-to-day oversight of a property's cash flow, capital structure and debt.

scuzzo@nypost.com

# M'Soft, Apple AI pullback

Microsoft and Apple reportedly dropped their plans to hold observer seats on OpenAI's board of directors — a move that comes as the Big Tech firms face a widening antitrust crackdown in the US and Europe.

Microsoft, which has committed \$13 billion toward CEO Sam Altman's ChatGPT maker, informed OpenAI in a letter late Tuesday that it would give up its nonvoting board seat effective immediately, the Financial Times reported.

Satya Nadella-led Microsoft was set to join OpenAI's board after an internal coup to oust Altman sparked chaos at the AI firm last fall. Nadella reportedly played a key role in talks that eventually led Altman to return to his post as part of a total overhaul of the board.

"Over the past eight months we have witnessed significant progress from the newly formed board and are confident in the company's direction," Microsoft wrote in the memo, according to Bloomberg. "We no longer believe our limited role as an observer is necessary."

Additionally, Apple — which was set to hold an observer seat after inking a deal to bring ChatGPT features to its most powerful iPhones later this year — will not move forward with the plan, the outlet reported. *Thomas Barrabi*

# BMW recall over airbags

BMW is recalling 394,000 vehicles in the US due to faulty airbag inflators that could potentially cause serious or fatal injuries, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Wednesday.

An airbag inflator could explode, sending potentially deadly sharp metal fragments flying and striking the driver or others in the vehicle, NHTSA said.

The recall includes certain BMW 3 Series sedans and sports wagons from the model years 2006 to 2012. *Reuters*

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**BILL HWANG**

Manipulated stock prices.

## Archegos big guilty in fraud

Bill Hwang, the founder of Archegos Capital Management, was convicted Wednesday of manipulating stock prices and defrauding banks in a scheme that minted him a multibillion-dollar fortune before his firm collapsed in March 2021.

Federal prosecutors in the Manhattan US Attorney's Office accused Hwang, 60, of misleading banks to borrow billions in an effort to drive up prices of a handful of media and tech stocks in Archegos' portfolio.

"That's what it meant to run Archegos," Assistant US Attorney Andrew Thomas said in a New York courtroom on Monday. "Lying was part of the job."

Hwang's lawyers argued his trading instructions were legal and didn't amount to market manipulation.

Hwang was convicted on 10 of 11 criminal counts, while Patrick Halligan, Archegos' finance chief and co-defendant, was found guilty on all three counts he faced.

The men face maximum 20-year prison sentences on each charge for which they were convicted. *Dow Jones*

## Musk win in suit by fired workers

Elon Musk emerged victorious after a San Francisco federal judge sided with him in a lawsuit brought by thousands of laid-off employees of X who claimed the billionaire mogul stiffed them on \$500 million worth of severance payments.

Musk, who purchased Twitter for \$44 billion in late 2022, cut most of the company's staff — prompting the laid-off employees to file several lawsuits. *Ariel Zilber*

# CAMP BILLIONAIRE

## Couples (and a deal) spur early Sun Valley gossip

By THOMAS BARRABI

Shari Redstone, Barry Diller and Jeff Bezos and his fiancée Lauren Sánchez were among those fueling the gossip mill as Allen & Co.'s "summer camp for billionaires" kicked off in Sun Valley, Idaho, on Wednesday.

Redstone's deal to merge Paramount with David Ellison's Skydance Media was the big story as business bigwigs gathered for the first full day of festivities at the swanky ski resort.

The agreement announced Monday includes a "go shop" provision that gives Redstone 45 days to entertain outside offers.

Diller, the 82-year-old chairman of IAC, was reportedly considering a bid for Paramount as recently as last week — and hinted that he hasn't ruled out the possibility.

The 45-day window is a "lifetime" in the business world, a coy Diller told reporters while walking the grounds with his wife, fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, according to Bloomberg News.

### 'Good' loser

Meanwhile, Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav — reportedly an early bidder for Paramount who dropped out of the process — cryptically replied to questions on the Paramount-Skydance deal upon his arrival at the resort, calling it "good for the industry."

The deal marked the cul-

### No small potatoes

High-roller couples at the annual Allen & Co. "summer camp for billionaires" in Idaho include Lauren Sánchez and Jeff Bezos (right). Shari Redstone (below), with a pending merger deal for Paramount, inadvertently flashed her "status" for all to see.



Reuters

mination of months of negotiations about Paramount's future. Notably, Paramount would have to pay a \$400 million breakup fee if it receives another offer and Skydance opts out.

Redstone, who wore a pink fleece and sunglasses on her first day at Sun Valley, was spotted with a large coffee in hand, though she gave no hint as to whether she intended to

field offers at the notoriously secretive event.

### Packing heavy

The media heiress inadvertently gave photographers a glimpse of her wallet at one point, revealing what appeared to be American Express gold and platinum credit cards in addition to her Connecticut driver's license.

Elsewhere, Amazon

founder Bezos was seen walking hand-in-hand with his wife while the elderly "Oracle of Omaha" sits out the conference. Karlie Kloss and her husband, Thrive Capital boss Josh Kushner, were seen exchanging a smile.

Sheryl Sandberg, another Sun Valley regular, held hands with her husband, Tom Bernthal.

Greg Abel, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Energy and the heir apparent to Warren Buf-

fett, was snapped walking with his wife while the elderly "Oracle of Omaha" sits out the conference.

Zaslav briefly held court with reporters upon arrival at the lodge a day earlier, expressing hopes for a business-friendly president.

"We just need an opportunity for deregulation, so companies can consolidate and do what we need to do to be even better," Zaslav said.

*tbarrabi@nypost.com*

# Sens. agree on stock-trade ban

A bipartisan group of senators on Wednesday struck a deal on new legislation that bans members of Congress from trading stock.

Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) joined Democratic Sens. Gary Peters of Michigan, Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Jon Ossoff of Georgia in pushing the new bill — following a string of failed efforts to prevent lawmakers from gaining an alleged

advantage over the general public.

"Congress should not be here to make a buck," Hawley said at a Capitol Hill press conference. "There is no reason why members of Congress ought to be profiting off of the information that only they get."

The bill would prohibit members of Congress, their spouses and their dependent children, as well as the president and vice president, from

buying and selling stocks during their time in office.

It will be introduced later this month in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. If passed, it would immediately ban members of Congress from trading stocks and give them 90 days to sell existing stocks.

Starting in March 2027, the bill would prohibit representatives'

spouses and dependent children from trading stocks and require the president, vice president and members of Congress to divest from any covered investments.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) — whose husband, Paul Pelosi, is a millionaire investor — dropped her opposition to the trading ban before the 2022 mid-term elections. *Taylor Herzlich*

# The Post Puzzle Page

## SCRABBLE® G R A M S

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I <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	U <sub>1</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>4</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	
A <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	U <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>4</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	
E <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>	
I <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	Y <sub>4</sub>	W <sub>4</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	B <sub>3</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	

Triple Word Score

3rd Letter Double

PAR SCORE 145-155  
BEST SCORE 225  
FOUR RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

**TODAY'S ANSWER**

SCRABBLE G R A M S

SOLUTION

RACK 1 = 9  
RACK 2 = 61  
RACK 3 = 89  
RACK 4 = 66  
TOTAL 225

PAR SCORE 145-155

**Directions:** Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7 Letter words get 50 point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE players Dictionary, 4th Edition.

### Bridge

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ A Q 10 5 3  
♥ 10 3  
♦ A J 7  
♣ 10 6 4

**EAST**  
♠ J  
♥ J 8 6 5 2  
♦ K 8 2  
♣ 9 8 7 2

**SOUTH**  
♠ K 8 7 6 2  
♥ A 4  
♦ 9 6 5  
♣ A K 3

South ♠  
1 A  
4 ♠

West Pass  
All Pass

North 2 NT

East Pass

Opening lead — ♥ K

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"My cousin the Queen of Hearts brags that her card is supreme," the Queen of Diamonds told Alice at the Mad Hatter's game. "Big deal. Even a deuce of clubs can win a trick if clubs are trumps."

"Yes," Alice said in a tone of polite disbelief. "Surely, losing a trick can be better than winning one."

"Deal the cards and I'll show you," the Queen sniffed.

When Alice played at four spades, West, the Hatter, led the king of hearts. Alice ducked, won the next heart and saw three more losers: a club and two diamonds. She drew trumps and led the A-K and a third club.

The Hatter won and pondered. He had to break the diamonds to avoid conceding a ruff-suff. If he led low, Alice could succeed by playing low from dummy. Nor would leading the ten beat the contract if Alice read the position.

So with a nod to the Queen of Diamonds, the Hatter led the queen. Whatever Alice did, she would lose two diamonds. Down one.

"See what I mean?" the Queen of Diamonds chortled.

### Word Force

#### CORNERING

From the word or phrase above, form **AT LEAST 14** five-letter words, without using more than one form of the same word. For example, drink or drank (not both).

ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S POST  
Yesterday's word:

#### WORLDER

- |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| direr | droll | oiled | rower | world |
| dowel | dwell | older | weird |       |
| dower | idler | order | wider |       |
| drier | lowed | rider | wield |       |
| drill | lower | riled | wired |       |

### Wonderword

**How to play:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **Circle their letters only. Do not circle the word.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

**MAGIC IN THE AIR** Solution: 9 letters

T T I C K E T S I S O N P Y H  
H O U D I N I M S N I O C O I  
E C P E R F O R M E S H O W D  
A L I H Y T R A P M C P M A D  
T O R R A P O H S G N I E I E  
E W O A C T P C O O C S D N N  
R N T B A U E T I C T P Y I O  
A O A B G I S T U R S E E A I  
E I T I E E C R E T A L R T T  
P S C T R A T E O S N L I R C  
P U E P R A T R S U C O F E U  
A L P T I S Y S A T N A F T D  
S L S N O I T P E C R E P N O  
I I P E N N A N D T E L L E R  
D E C K O F C A R D S P O R P

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**Yesterday's Answer: Goat Cheese**  
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## POST SUDOKU

To solve a Su Doku, you must put a number from 1 to 9, in each empty box.

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Solutions on Page 40

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### Very Easy #6,606

3			7	8		4
			8			6
6	4		5	1	2	7
	5		2	7		8
			1	5		
	2		3	9		1
8	1	7		4		9
4				3		
2		9	1			8

### Difficult #6,396

		4	3	7	8	1
	1	2	6			3
	5		3		4	
2			9			6
6	2			5		
8	9	1		4		
3	1	6		7	2	

## Quick Crossword

- Across**
- Satisfied sounds
  - Comforting text during a bad storm, say
  - Popeyes rival
  - Political coalition
  - Econ. figure used to highlight income inequality
  - Every last one
  - \*Totally falls apart
  - 20-20, say
  - Surgical tube
  - "Deal"
  - Offshore
  - Radiate happiness
  - \*Floating lunar particles
  - Hollywood VIP
  - Doc's order
  - Bygone space station
  - Wine category
  - Breakaway groups
  - \*Gravity powered nourishment
  - Anesthetic of old
  - Praise
  - Musician Yoko
  - Debtor's letters
  - Words on some missing posters
  - \*Tips to the next dollar, say
  - Wolfe of fiction
  - Professionals who work from home about a quarter of the time?
  - 58 Asian language
  - 60 Channels of communication
  - 63 "me guess..."
  - 64 Audio technique, or a feature of the answers to the starred clues
  - 66 "Me" problem
  - 67 Terrarium pet
  - 68 "Night" author Wiesel
  - 69 Juan, Puerto Rico
  - 70 Wipes
  - 71 Related groups

- Down**
- Building blocks
  - Bushels
  - Residential delivery?
  - Act divisions
  - Critical hosp. area
  - Department store department
  - Genesis city
  - Speed skater Ohno
  - Swifties, e.g.
  - Word with public or private

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15							16	
17				18							19	
20				21							22	
23				24							25	
26				27							28	
29				30							31	
32				33							34	
35				36							37	
38				39							40	
41				42							43	
44				45							46	
47				48							49	
50				51							52	
53				54							55	
56				57							58	
59				60							61	
62				63							64	
65				66							67	
68				69							70	
71											72	

- Fried Japanese cutlet
- Takes a high way
- Spiked shoe
- Saves or assists
- Said more
- Griffin who created "Jeopardy!"
- Loch \_\_\_ monster
- Québec pal
- \_\_\_ roller
- Instagram video
- 23andMe material
- Genre for Otis Redding
- Predator with powerful jaws
- Lifford of "Queen Sugar"
- Ad
- Bridle straps
- Former Yank who's now part owner of the Timberwolves
- Japanese noodle
- American leg of a concert series
- Frozen Four game
- "Jurassic Park" dinos
- Principles
- Last Greek letter
- Supermodel Kate

**PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER**

©2024 Tribune Media Services  
53 Saldaña's "Star Trek" role  
55 Slacks  
59 Run in neutral  
61 Still fighting  
62 Grows older  
64 Sault \_\_\_ Marie  
65 Month, in Mexico

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Boldyn Networks Infrastructure US LLC is proposing to construct a 32.5ft metal pole telecommunications tower facility located at 445 5th Avenue, New York, New York County, New York 10016 (40 45 6.1164N; 73 58 55.4082W). Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending comments to: Project 016683-PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, at (781) 418-2314, or at [citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com](mailto:citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com)

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PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that pursuant to Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code, STEPHAN G. MARCELIN, Auctioneer, JOHN WILLIAM O'KEEFE, Auctioneer, RICHARD J. CANTWELL, Auctioneer or TERENCE GEE, Auctioneer, will sell at public auction with reserve to the highest bidder, at the Portico of the New York County Courthouse, 60 Centre St, New York, NY 10007, at 1:30 PM on July 31, 2024, security consisting of 250 shares of 536 WEST 163RD STREET HDFC., in the name of FRANKLIN RODRIGUEZ AND TRAVIS HUDON, and all right, title and interest in and to a Proprietary Lease for Cooperative, located in a building known as and by the street address 536 WEST 163RD, APT 3D, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10032, between FRANKLIN RODRIGUEZ AND TRAVIS HUDON as Lessee, and 536 WEST 163RD STREET HDFC., as Lessor.

This sale is held to satisfy an indebtedness of the unpaid principal balance, interest, attorney fees and advances through July 31, 2024, and to enforce the rights of U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR RCF2 ACQUISITION TRUST (the "Secured Party"), arising under a Security Agreement dated July 13, 2012, executed by and between FRANKLIN RODRIGUEZ AND TRAVIS HUDON and JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, N.A. The Secured Party reserves the right to bid.

**536 West 163rd Street HDFC is a low-income cooperative corporation. Under the regulatory agreement with The City of New York by Department of Housing Preservation and Housing Development, the unit can only be sold to low-income individual, and there is a thirty percent (30%) flip tax that is payable to the cooperative on any sale of this unit.**

The Co-op Apartment will be sold "AS IS", subject to open common charges, and possession is to be obtained by the purchaser.

DATED: July 1, 2024 Knuckles & Manfro, LLP  
Attorneys for SECURED PARTY  
120 White Plains Road  
Suite 215  
Tarrytown, NY 10591  
(914) 345-3020

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF CO-OP APARTMENT**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that pursuant to Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code, STEPHAN G. MARCELIN, Auctioneer, JOHN WILLIAM O'KEEFE, Auctioneer, RICHARD J. CANTWELL, Auctioneer or TERENCE GEE, Auctioneer, will sell at public auction with reserve to the highest bidder, at the Portico of the New York County Courthouse, 60 Centre St, New York, NY 10007, at 1:30 PM on July 17, 2024, security consisting of 75 shares of 854 WEST 181 CORP., in the name of MERVIN EUGENE HORST, and all right, title and interest in and to a Proprietary Lease for Cooperative, located in a building known as and by the street address 854 WEST 181ST STREET, APT 5G, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10033, between ESTATE OF MERVIN EUGENE HORST as Lessee, and 854 WEST 181 CORP., as Lessor.

This sale is held to satisfy an indebtedness of the unpaid principal balance, interest, attorney fees and advances through July 17, 2024, and to enforce the rights of US Bank Trust National Association, Not In Its Individual Capacity But Solely As Owner Trustee For VRMTG Asset Trust (the "Secured Party"), arising under a Security Agreement dated May 30, 2007, executed by and between MERVIN EUGENE HORST and BANK OF AMERICA, N.A. The Secured Party reserves the right to bid.

The Co-op Apartment will be sold "AS IS", subject to open common charges, and possession is to be obtained by the purchaser.

DATED: June 17, 2024 Knuckles & Manfro, LLP  
Attorneys for SECURED PARTY  
120 White Plains Road  
Suite 215  
Tarrytown, NY 10591  
(914) 345-3020

The annual return of **Jenjo Foundation** for the calendar year ended December 31, 2023 is available at its principal office located at The Alda Office at the Yard 109 Grand Street Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520 for inspection during regular business hours by any citizen who requests it within 180 days hereof. Principal Manager of the Foundation is Alan Alda.

Boldyn Networks Infrastructure US LLC is proposing to construct a 32.5ft metal pole telecommunications tower facility located near 8 SPRUCE STREET, New York, New York County, New York 10038 (40 42 37.98N; 74 0 20.4942W). Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending comments to: Project 016602-PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, at (785)760-5938, or at [citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com](mailto:citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com).

Boldyn Networks Infrastructure US LLC is proposing to construct a 32.28ft metal pole telecommunications tower facility located at 88 PINE STREET, New York, New York County, New York 10005 (40 42 22.1682N; 74 0 22.1682W). Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending comments to: Project 016339-PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, at (781) 418-2314, or at [citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com](mailto:citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com)

**NOTICE OF SALE OF COOPERATIVE APARTMENT SECURITY BY VIRTUE OF A DEFAULT**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:** By virtue of a default under a Security Agreement dated December 02, 2010, executed by Stanley B. Aronowitz ("Debtor"), as assigned to CitiMortgage, Inc. ("Secured Party"), said Secured Party, by Auctioneer(s): John William O'Keefe, Terence Gee or Stephan G. Marcelin, will conduct a public sale of the security consisting of 399 shares of stock of 244 Madison Realty Corp. ("Corporation"), and all right, title, and interest in and to a Proprietary Lease between said Corporation and Debtor for the apartment known as **244 Madison Avenue, Apt 10A, New York, NY 10016**, together with all fixtures and articles of personal property now or hereafter affixed to or used in connection with said apartment on **July 17, 2024 at 1:00 PM**, at the Portico of the New York County Courthouse, 60 Centre St, New York, NY 10007, in satisfaction of an indebtedness in the unpaid principal amount of \$314,100.94, plus interest, late fees, attorney fees, maintenance in arrears, and all other advanced charges.

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**ATTORNEYS FOR SECURED PARTY:**  
**Stern & Eisenberg, P.C.**  
20 Commerce Drive, Suite 230,  
Cranford, NJ 07016, and  
1131 Route 55, Suite 1,  
Lagrangeville, NY 12540  
P. 516-630-0288  
F. 732-726-8719  
Dated: June 17, 2024

Firm File No. NY20230000088-1

Boldyn Networks Infrastructure US LLC is proposing to construct a 32.5ft metal pole telecommunications tower facility located near 66 Harrison Street, New York, New York County, NY 10013 (40 43 8.5512N; 74 0 42.0258W). Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending comments to: Project 016604-PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, at (781) 418-2314, or at [citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com](mailto:citybridgelink5g@ebiconsulting.com)

**NOTICES**

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**

Notice of Formation of Barefoot Bobcat Services LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/15/2024. Office location: Livingston County. SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Samantha Barefoot: 375 Park Pl Caledonia, NY 14423. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**

Notice of Formation of Thesaurusaurus Records LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/02/2024. Office location: Nassau County. SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Manowitz and Company, LLP: 300 Garden City Plaza Ste 326, Garden City, NY 11530. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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**CANCER** (June 22-July 23)  
As Venus moves into the money area of your chart today you may be tempted to go on a spree but if you do you will regret it over the weekend when you have to watch the pennies while your friends and colleagues are having lots of fun.

**LEO** (July 24-Aug. 23)  
By all means focus on your work today but schedule some down time too. The influence of Venus in your sign over the next few weeks means you will do better in all areas, not just socially and romantically, if you adopt a more easygoing outlook on life.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)  
If someone you work or do business with throws their weight around today you must not get angry - just turn your back and walk away. They will soon realize how important you are to their plans and come running after you full of regret.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)  
Do whatever it takes (within reason) to stay on the good side of people in positions of authority. If you show willing and make more of an effort than your colleagues they will make a note of it and maybe even promote you in the near future.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)  
If a friend or relative tells you something you don't want to hear today that's too bad - you need to be made aware of what's really going on, because if you carry on walking round with your eyes shut you could end up bumping into something that hurts!

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)  
Someone you work alongside may try to take liberties today

and if they do you must come down on them quickly and hard. You may be a nice guy by nature but that is not an invitation for others to take advantage of your generous nature.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)  
A clash of egos is likely today but with a little goodwill it can be stopped from degenerating into an unseemly fight. The fact is you are both on the same side and should be directing your energy and anger at those who would do you both harm.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)  
You may need to soothe someone who seems to believe you have it in for them. The most important thing now is harmony both at home and at work, because there are more important things to worry about

than gossip about who said this and who said that.

**PISCES** (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)  
Don't rock the boat or say things you know won't go down well on the work front. Saturn in your sign warns that your rivals are as aware of your failings as you are of theirs and are itching for an excuse to draw attention to them.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20)  
Stop trying to be perfect and just be yourself. As Venus moves into the most dynamic area of your chart today you don't need to put on an act, because the world wants to see the real you, the you they have come to admire so much.

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 21)

The more someone appeals to your sense of duty the more you should be on your guard. Almost certainly their ultimate aim is to get you doing all the hard stuff while they sit back and take it easy. You must not let that happen.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21)  
When dealing with people in positions of power it will pay you to be less trusting than you usually are. Saturn in the career area of your chart is going through one of its retrograde phases, which means you need to keep your guard up 24 hours a day.

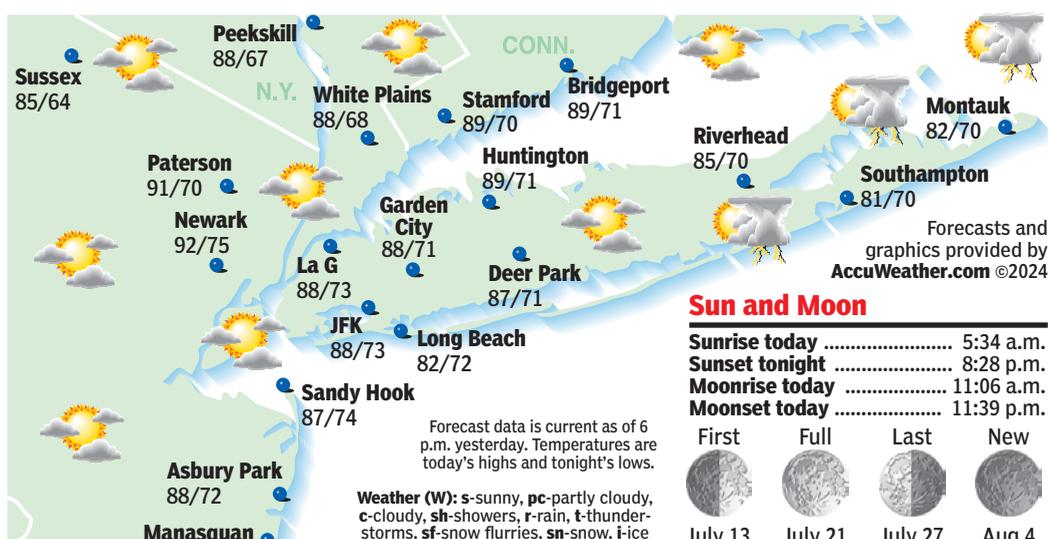
**BIRTHDAY THURSDAY**  
A Sun-Saturn link on your birthday will endow you with the self-discipline you need to get important things done but don't forget to lighten up once in a while. All work and no play may be a recipe for success but not for happiness.

## Post Weather Report

**Thursday**  
Today: Periods of clouds and sunshine. High 86 to 92.  
Tonight: A t-storm around late. Low 71 to 77.**Saturday**  
A t-storm; humid. High 85 to 91.  
Evening: Mainly clear. Low 72 to 78.

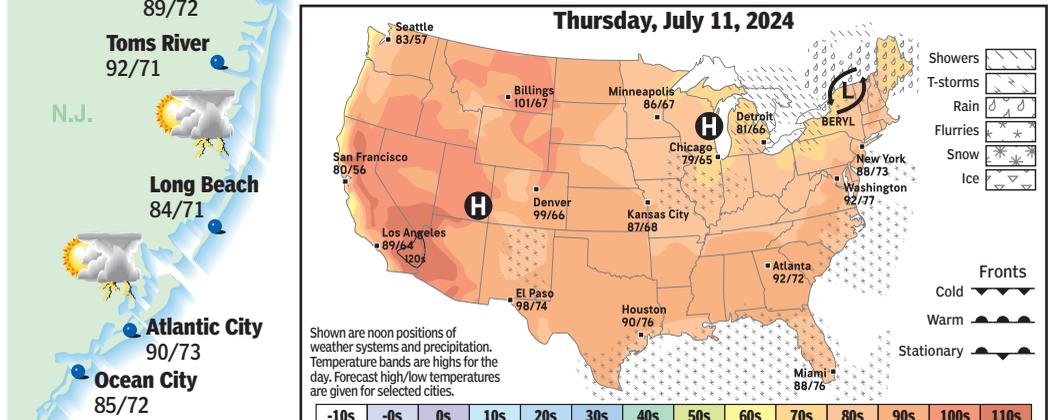
**Friday**  
Tomorrow: Heavy t-storms; watch for flooding. High 81 to 87.  
Tomorrow night: Showers and a heavier t-storm. Low 69 to 75.  
**Sunday**  
Mostly sunny. High 89 to 95.  
Evening: Mainly clear. Low 73 to 79.

**Almanac**  
YESTERDAY'S CONDITIONS AT CENTRAL PARK THROUGH 6PM  
**Temperature**  
High: 91, Low: 79, Mean: 85  
**Departure from Normal**  
Yesterday: +8 degrees  
**Precipitation**  
Yesterday: 0.00", Month: 0.19", Year: 25.87", Normal year to date: 25.14"  
**Cooling Degree days yesterday** .....20  
**Total for the month (normal)** .....159 (120)  
**Total since Jan. 1 (normal)** .....579 (428)  
**Last year to date** .....401  
**Heat Index** (at noon yest.) ..... 97  
**UV index** (for Thu.) ..... 5 (Moderate)  
**Humidity** (at noon) ..... 63%  
**AIR QUALITY**  
**Pollen:** Low Predominant pollen: Trees  
**AQI rating:** (for Thu.) .....Moderate



**Sun and Moon**  
Sunrise today ..... 5:34 a.m.  
Sunset tonight ..... 8:28 p.m.  
Moonrise today ..... 11:06 a.m.  
Moonset today ..... 11:39 p.m.

Phase	July 13	July 21	July 27	Aug 4
First				
Full				
Last				
New				



## AccuWeather Visit AccuWeather.com

**New York Tides**

	TODAY		TOMORROW	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
High Tide for	12:42p	---	12:38a	1:25p
Coney Island	12:04a	12:34p	12:44a	1:17p
Fire Island	3:26a	3:57p	4:09a	4:39p
Hempstead	3:32a	4:01p	4:18a	4:46p
Huntington	12:26p	---	12:22a	1:09p
Jones Inlet	1:24a	2:00p	2:10a	2:48p
Montauk Point	3:21a	3:54p	4:05a	4:36p
Port Washington	12:46p	---	12:42a	1:29p
Sandy Hook				

**Regional cities**

	TODAY	TOMORROW
Albany	86/67/t	87/69/c
Danbury	89/68/pc	85/72/t
Glens Falls	83/66/t	83/62/c
Gr Barrington	87/64/pc	86/68/t
Kingston	87/65/pc	86/70/t
Liberty	77/60/pc	79/65/t
Monticello	77/59/pc	79/65/t
Newburgh	88/66/pc	87/70/t
Poughkeepsie	88/66/pc	86/69/t
Saratoga Springs	84/67/t	84/68/c
Stroudsburg	83/63/pc	84/67/t
Torrington	89/66/pc	86/69/t
Syracuse	78/66/t	84/65/s

**World cities**

	TODAY	TOMORROW
Athens	97/78/s	98/78/s
Baghdad	120/90/pc	119/90/pc
Beijing	98/74/pc	91/73/t
Berlin	79/62/sh	82/64/t
Cairo	103/81/s	102/80/s
Dublin	63/48/c	63/51/sh
Geneva	85/64/t	75/58/t
Hong Kong	92/84/sh	93/84/t
Jerusalem	94/72/s	94/72/s
Kabul	92/64/s	91/65/s
London	73/55/pc	65/52/c
Madrid	96/67/s	92/65/s
Mexico City	72/57/sh	75/56/sh
Montreal	76/66/r	83/65/s
Moscow	82/60/pc	85/67/s
Paris	77/60/t	69/54/c
Rio de Janeiro	78/71/c	78/70/c
Rome	93/68/s	89/69/s
Sydney	65/50/pc	65/53/c
Tokyo	87/76/sh	79/72/sh

Post Time: 1:10 p.m.  
vcangialosi@nypost.com



# Saratoga

Analysis by Vic Cangialosi

Lock of the Day

Aspen Grove (2nd)

## Yonkers for Thursday

Post Time: 7:00 p.m.

FIRST: Mile pace; \$74,500; N.Y.S.S.

- Lonely Ghost (JBartlett) 1-2-X 2-1
- Chanceoflightning (JStrattn) 5-2-2 6-1
- Americanbeachdrem (TBter) 6-2-1 12-1
- The Last Martini (SZeron) 4-1-X 3-1
- SentItDownSlim (MacDnld) 3-1-1 7-5

SECOND: Mile pace; \$20,000; cond

- Mom's Point (YGingras) 1-6-3 9-5
- Bobby Mcgee (MKakaley) 1-4-4 7-2
- Cervi (MMacDonald) 2-4-4 5-2
- Love Trouble (JStratton) 4-2-X 8-1
- Bulvilhighonmaggie (Zeron) 4-2-3 5-1
- Chasing Cash (JBartlett) 5-4-3 15-1

THIRD: Mile trot; \$39,000; invitation

- Unverggonagethis (TButer) 5-3-3 8-1
- Keq Stand (SZeron) 5-6-5 6-1
- Tachyon (JBartlett) 6-3-1 5-1
- NowsTheMoment (McDnld) 3-2-1 6-1
- Once In ALifetime (JStratton) 1-4-2 3-1
- Incommunicado (DDube) 1-5-3 5-2
- Hillextic (YGingras) 7-1-4 9-2

FOURTH: Mile pace; \$20,000; cond

- Classy Patriot (YGingras) 4-4-X 7-2
- Bullvilvalentina (SZeron) 6-4-6 5-1
- Surreal Believer (JStratton) 3-7-4 12-1
- Idyllic Walk (TButer) 5-2-X 7-2
- Seafood Cc (GBrennan) 3-1-4 9-5
- Fashion Terror (JBartlett) 3-1-2 4-1

FIFTH: Mile trot; \$24,000; cond

- The Gruffalo (DDube) 2-6-8 5-2
- B Nucking (GBrennan) 8-6-2 6-1
- Hand Dover Dan (TButer) 7-2-1 8-1
- Top Me Off (JBartlett) 3-1-1 4-1
- Warrior One (YGingras) 4-1-7 7-2
- LosBallykeelamg (Segelmn) 5-1-1 20-1
- Pc Free Wheeling (BHolland) 4-5-2 12-1
- PassionatePromise (MKkley) 1-2-1 6-1

SIXTH: Mile pace; \$20,000; cond

- The Perfume (JBartlett) 3-1-1 5-2
- MoonshineExpress (MKkley) 4-1-1 4-1
- Courtly Maiden (YGingras) 1-3-5 6-5
- CourtsideKaren (MMacDnld) 5-3-2 12-1
- Backdoor Cover (JStratton) 7-5-4 20-1
- Hanky Panky (JMarohn) 5-2-1 20-1
- Baby Bear (PFluet) 1-4-X 8-1

SEVENTH: Mile pace; \$74,500; N.Y.S.S.

- Cowgirl Hanover (SZeron) 1-1-1 6-5
- Martini Star (JBartlett) 1-3-1 6-1
- BlindDateHanover (MKakley) 1-1-2 7-2
- Bronx Mixer (MMacDonald) 2-1-1 3-1
- Shes A Streaker (YGingras) 2-1-1 6-1

EIGHTH: Mile pace; \$20,000; cond

- Gold Leaf (MKakaley) 8-5-2 12-1
- Besta Brynn (RHoughtaling) 3-1-1 7-2
- Hint Of Spring (JBartlett) 4-4-6 6-1
- Bean Town Girl (JStrattn) 7-3-3 9-2
- OnCloudWine (MMacDonald) 1-2-1 9-5
- Bulvilkidunotedna (SZeron) 2-2-2 4-1
- Calamity Hour (TButer) 3-1-1 8-1

NINTH: Mile trot; \$39,000; invitation

- Pariso (JBartlett) 6-3-5 6-1
- Queen Of All (TButer) 2-3-4 6-1
- Diamante Trio It (GBrennan) 5-1-2 6-1
- Perfect Vixen (ASiegelman) 2-5-4 6-1
- Julia Sisu S (DDube) 3-1-2 4-1
- P L Notsonice (SZeron) 4-2-3 5-1
- Tipsy Moni (YGingras) 1-2-5 5-2

TENTH: Mile pace; \$18,000; claiming

- High On Rocknroll (BHolland) 2-5-3 6-1
- Euro Step (DDube) 1-3-5 9-2
- KidFromTheBrnx (MMcDnld) 8-3-7 8-1
- Surfrider (MKakaley) 1-5-6 4-1
- On Daybo (JBartlett) 2-3-4 7-5
- Western Nob (GBrennan) 5-1-9 8-1
- Hunted House (TButer) 4-3-9 20-1

ELEVENTH: Mile pace; \$15,000; claiming

- Century Iglesias (BHolland) 5-7-7 9-2
- Bad Boy Too (SZeron) 4-1-2 5-2
- Fout (MKakaley) 7-6-2 20-1
- Chief Corleone (GBrennan) 2-8-5 7-2
- Cellmate (JStratton) 3-7-5 8-1
- Fade To Light (JBartlett) 8-2-4 9-2
- He's HalfNaked (Siegelman) 1-7-3 4-1

TWELFTH: Mile trot; \$20,000; claiming

- Max (DDube) 3-1-6 7-2
- Infinity Stone (JBartlett) 4-7-6 3-1
- Sheena Soldier (SZeron) 5-5-4 15-1
- Cantkeepmiseret (Brenn) 1-2-7 2-1
- Inn At Rodanthe (BHolland) 6-6-5 20-1
- Roger Rabbit (JMarohn) 2-2-1 6-1
- TheBallykeelDeal (Kakaley) 3-5-3 6-1
- J-S Hopscoth (JStratton) 7-1-3 20-1

### 1 1 1/8 miles; \$50,000; clm(\$20,000); 4up

And they're off at Saratoga! Eleven races on opening day including the Schuylerville...In the opener **EMPTY TOMB** movers lower 2nd off the layoff for Falcone. 0 for 9 at this distance but wired 40k claimers moving a mile in March. **I AM THE LAW** was 3rd best racing for 50k. He's 1 for 8 at this distance. The W earned in 2022. **GUT FEELING** is 0 for 6 at this distance. Ran 4th twice at Aqueduct. Exotics value. **PEOPLE FORCE** enters off back-to-back wins at Gulfstream, both at 1 1/16. Contender with J Ortiz up. **ACCIDENTAL HERO** loads off a 3rd at the distance.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Mason Mania(L),120	J Gomez	8-3-2	Quick	12-1
2	Bold Victory(L),118	R Maragh	5-3-8	Rodriguez	20-1
3	Horse Be With You(L),120	E Cancel	9-1-2	Englehart	20-1
4	Higher Quality(L),118	T Gaffalione	1-7-6	Potts	15-1
5	I Am the Law(L),118	L Rivera, Jr	3-5-5	Terranova	3-1
6	Accidental Hero(L),118	R Vazquez	3-2-5	Maker	6-1
7	Empty Tomb(L),118	J Torres	10-8-2	Falcone	9-2
8	Rocco Strong(L),120	K Carmouche	7-5-8	Giangiulio	4-1
9	People Force(L),120	J Ortiz	1-1-5	David	8-1
10	Gut Feeling(L),118	D Davis	4-4-1	Rodriguez	15-1
11	BossmakinbossmovesL,120	F Prat	7-6-1	Morley	10-1

### 2 1 3/8 miles(T); \$115,000; alw; 3up(f)

The first turf race of the meet. **ASPEN GROVE** was 2nd, 3rd, then 7th tackling graded company. Winner here as Sirsterson stretches the Justify filly longer. Won the Belmont Oaks last summer. **AMANDAS FOLLY** MTO. Has 2 wins over the wet. **SABALENKA** makes 4YO debut. 0 for 7 last year but 2nd at this distance in a stake which was won by **FREYDIS THE RED**. She's 0 for 2 this year. Sabalenka the better value with J Ortiz up. **NO SHOW SAMMY JO** is 2 for 3 but never a step longer than a mile.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
2	Rhombique(L),124	J Castellano	1-2-2	Ribaudo	6-1
1	a-No Show Sammy Jo(L),124	F Prat	1-1-4	Motion	7-2
3	Be Your Best(IRE)(L),122	I Ortiz, Jr	13-4-2	De Paz	3-1
4	Aspen Grove(IRE)(L),122	T Gaffalione	7-3-2	Sirsterson	7-5
5	Freydis the Red(FR)(L),122	B Hernandez	3-7-9	McPeek	5-1
6	Sabalenka(L),122	J Ortiz	7-7-2	Whitworth	15-1
1A	a-Avenue Niel(IRE)(L),122	J Rosario	3-1-3	Clement	7-2
7	Sweetest Princess(L),122	L Rivera, Jr	4-4-5	Ferraro	50-1
8	Amanda's Folly(L),122	Rider TBA	3-3-5	Rice	2-1
9	Toned Up(L),122	M Franco	5-4-4	Kantarmaci	5-2

### 3 6 fur; \$45,000; mdn clm(\$30,000); 3up(f)

Late kick from **DREAMING OF CARLI** but she was outkicked. Lost by a neck at 18-1. **NEIGH JUDE** is the lukewarm fave after a close 3rd and a not so close 2nd. **MISS MAXIMUS** moves lower for Norm Casse after getting outrun twice. Midpack at the Spa last summer. **GOING FOR GLORY** was 2nd in front of Neigh Jude then 3rd behind her. And Davis rides the debuting **PUNCH THE CLOCK** for Handal.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
2	Our Reward(L),119	A Bocachica	7-6-6	B Brown	15-1
1	a-La Indecente(L),119	J Leparoux	7-9-4	Jimenez	8-1
3	Neigh Jude(L),124	I Ortiz, Jr	2-3-8	Breen	7-2
4	Miss Maximus(L),119	R Santana, Jr	11-8-5	Casse	4-1
5	Dreaming of Carl(L),124	R Silvera	2-5-6	Barker	6-1
6	Mia Nipotina(L),119	L Luzzi	5-6-8	Sells	15-1
7	Going for Glory(L),119	J Gomez	3-2-2	Donk	6-1
8	Outta the Cloud(L),124	O Hrndz Mreno	8-8-5	Quick	30-1
9	Punch the Clock(M),119	D Davis	x-x-x	Handal	8-1
1A	a-La Decente(L),119	J Castellano	3-8-x	Jimenez	8-1
10	Needed(L),119	J Lezcano	7-2-4	Rice	5-1
11	Widow(L),114	F Martinez	11-9-x	Barker	30-1

### 4 5 1/2 fur(T); \$120,000; alw; 4up(f)

Couple of ladies tag team for Clement and Russell. **LADY MIA** is fast and brings a modest 2 race win streak from the Big A. **L STREET LADY** returns after a year long layoff. 0 for 1 on turf; a length shy this distance. Won the Jersey Girl on dirt. **SHOSHANAH** was 2nd in a 100k at Pimlico. Her 1st loss in 4 grass starts. Rebound chance. In light (111) as Martinez rides. **SHOOTOUTTHELIGHTS** is 2 for 4 at the distance.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
2	Lady Milagro(L),118	L Rivera, Jr	7-4-7	C Martin	8-1
3	Shoshanah(L),111	F Martinez	2-1-4	Horiacher	8-1
4	Run for the Hills(L),120	J Ortiz	5-3-1	Casse	2-1
1	a-L Street Lady(L),118	M Franco	3-1-3	Russell	5-1
5	Sunday Shoes(L),120	F Prat	11-1-2	Ward	10-1
1A	a-Lady Mia(FR)(L),120	I Ortiz, Jr	1-1-6	Clement	5-1
6	L J's Emma(L),118	T Gaffalione	7-3-8	Kenneally	6-1
7	Shootouttheights(L),118	J Velazquez	3-2-1	Ward	4-1
8	All That Magic(L),118	L Saez	5-10-3	Demasi	8-1
9	Bustin Bay(L),120	K Carmouche	2-1-2	Rice	7-2

### 5 6 fur; \$90,000; mdn; 3up

The **BROWN EYED CAT** gets the green light from Levine after working 5/8 in :59.3. Castellano on the Big Brown colt. **NEW YORK**

**SCRAPPY** makes dirt debut after running 3rd on grass. Casse adds blinkers. **CALL BOB** led, stopped badly racing 7/8. Placed 2nd this distance in January. **CRESCENDOS REIN** (Baker/Rosario) makes career debut as well.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	New York Scrappy(L),119	F Prat	3-x-x	Casse	3-1
2	Stormy's Dreaming(L),119	D Davis	4-5-x	Baker	10-1
3	Tomacon(L),119	T Gaffalione	3-10-x	Duggan	8-1
4	Romantic Charmer(L),119	D Grisles Rave	8-4-4	Ferraro	12-1
5	Crescendo's Rein(M),119	J Rosario	x-x-x	Baker	6-1
6	Clancy Fancyl(L),124	L Luzzi	7-3-3	Englehart	20-1
7	Brown Eyed Cat(L),119	J Castellano	x-x-x	Levine	9-2
8	Call Bob(L),124	J Torres	7-3-2	Caramori	6-1
9	Concorde Spirit(L),119	J Alvarado	3-x-x	Mott	6-1
10	D C Boy's(M),119	R Vazquez	x-x-x	Levine	10-1

### 6 5 1/2 fur; \$80,000; mdn; 2YO(f)

The first 2YO race of the meet. **DARE TO BREEZE** was 3rd and **STRONG STATE** was 2nd, a 1/2 length better when they debuted at Churchill. Dare to Breeze flashed speed and may be tougher the 2nd time around. Inad on Strong State. **TECA** ran evenly for 2nd at 49-1 in her opener at Monmouth. Rice gives her more ground; gets Lezcano to ride. **MEAN EILEEN** (Sharp/Saez/Twirling Candy) and **WILL NOT BE SWAYED** (Cox/Prat/War of Will) are live first-timers.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Strong State,119	I Ortiz, Jr	2-x-x	Stall	5-2
2	Will Not Be Swayed,119	F Prat	x-x-x	Cox	7-2
3	Selectively Sweet,119	D Grisles Rave	x-x-x	Chichakly	20-1
4	Episode,119	J Ortiz	3-3-x	D'Angelo	8-1
5	Flaming Glory,119	D Davis	5-2-x	Correas	6-1
6	My Vanilla,119	L Luzzi	x-x-x	Rverson	20-1
7	My Lady Bae,119	R Santana, Jr	x-x-x	Atras	12-1
8	Mean Eileen,119	L Saez	x-x-x	Sharp	8-1
9	Teca,119	J Lezcano	2-x-x	Rice	5-1
10	Honestly,119	J Castellano	x-x-x	Brown	15-1
11	Mecalfornia,119	B Hernandez	x-x-x	McPeek	12-1
12	Bisa,119	J Torres	6-x-x	Caramori	20-1
13	Dare to Breeze,119	T Gaffalione	3-x-x	Casse	3-1
14	Mischief Maxey,119	K Carmouche	2-x-x	Servis	12-1
15	Amore Sofia,119	R Silvera	x-x-x	Rodriguez	12-1
16	Katerina Ristova,119	O Hrndz Mreno	5-4-6	Chichakly	30-1

### 7 5 1/2 fur(T); \$100,000; alw; 3up(f)

**SOLIB** rallied for 2nd with similar in May. Easy winner, previous pair on dirt. Rider change to Castellano. **SPEIGHTFUL LILY** is 2 for 3, all contested over the wet. Choice if we're off turf. **PATRIA** Up in the final yards to score at Laurel. Moves higher; Santane at a price. **MARCO T** and **WEEKEND RAGS** both beat allowance fields at Aqueduct before shipping. Repeats in cards.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Im Just Kiddin(L),122	I Ortiz, Jr	4-3-7	Kimmel	5-2
2	Concert(L),120	L Saez	12-9-1	Sharp	15-1
3	Solib(L),122	J Castellano	2-1-1	Morley	4-1
4	Mz Big Bucks(L),122	K Carmouche	3-6-5	Nevin	5-1
5	Queens Dancer(L),122	J Davis	6-6-4	Dixon	30-1
6	Weekend Rags(L),124	F Prat	1-4-3	Abreu	6-1
7	Marco T(L),122	M Franco	1-6-1	Clement	3-1
8	Patria(L),122	R Santana, Jr	1-3-9	Salazar	20-1
9	Latest Edition(L),126	J Velazquez	1-1-4	Morley	10-1
10	Sunday Girl(L),122	F Prat	7-1-1	Duggan	6-1
11	Speightful Lily(L),126	J Alvarado	1-2-1	James Bond	8-5
12	Bank On Anna(L),122	M Franco	3-6-5	Kantarmaci	12-1
13	Mosienko(L),122	R Vazquez	4-2-5	Jacobson	2-1

### 8 1 1/16 miles(T); \$70,000; alw; 3up(f)

A quiet 4th for **SILENT MELODY** after a wide trip. Abreu gets Prat to ride. **JUST MUSIC** MTO. Clear 2nd this level on the 4th of July. **SIZZLE** is 0 for 2 on turf, finishing 3rd in both. 1 for 1 on dirt. The W earned at this longer distance. Rider change to Gaffalione. **ELLE EST FORTE** (2 for 23) and **MORE MANGO** (3 for 33) were both narrowly defeated last out.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Diamond Status(L),123	J Gomez	7-3-8	C Martin	15-1
2	Kannon Fire(L),123	J Rosario	3-5-6	Noda	8-1
3	More Than Glory(L),123	L Dettori	2-10-7	Lawrence	8-1
4	Lakeside Getaway(L),123	J Lezcano	4-2-1	Trombetta	5-1
5	Silent Melody(L),125	F Prat	4-4-1	Abreu	6-1
6	Grab the Glory(L),118	J Ortiz	7-1-4	Rice	15-1
7	Spring Magic(L),123	J Ortiz, Jr	4-2-2	Morey	4-1
8	More Mango(L),123	D Grisles Rave	2-6-6	Ferraro	15-1
9	Elle Est Forte(L),123	D Davis	2-7-5	Handal	7-2
10	Sizzle(L),120	T Gaffalione	3-1-3	Lewis	6-1
11	Just Music(L),120	J Lezcano	2-1-4	Rice	2-1
12	Miss Fashionista(L),125	I Ortiz, Jr	5-4-4	Pletcher	5-2

13	Crushed Ice(L),125	J Leparoux	1-1-9	Quartarolo	6-1
14	Shigeko(L),125	M Franco	5-2-4	Kantarmaci	8-1

### 9 1 1/8 miles; \$120,000; alw; 4up

Wide open. **FILM STAR** makes seasonal debut for Rice. Went 2 for 3 at this distance last year. The loss was to Zandon in the Woodward. Gets J Ortiz back. **BLAZING SEVENS** won 2 back, then well back of National Treasure in the Met Mile. 0 for 2 at this distance. Trained by Chad Brown who also enters **ARTORIUS**. Dozen lengths shy in the Salvatore Mile after scoring 2 back. 3rd behind Blazing Sevens previously. **ROCKET CAN** powered off the pace to win at a mile. 4th in the Arkansas Derby lone try at this distance. **CLASSIC CATCH** stormed down the lane but fell a nose short. 2 for 5 at this longer distance.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
2	Salute the Stars(L),118	I Ortiz, Jr	4-8-7	Cox	6-1
3	Film Star(L),1				

## AL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Baltimore	57	35	.620	—	—	5-5	L-2	29-19	28-16
<b>Yankees</b>	56	38	.596	2	+4½	3-7	W-1	25-19	31-19
Boston	50	41	.549	6½	—	7-3	L-1	21-24	29-17
Tampa Bay	45	47	.489	12	—	5½	4-6	L-1	24-26
Toronto	42	50	.457	15	—	8½	4-6	W-1	21-24

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Cleveland	57	34	.626	—	—	5-5	L-1	30-11	27-23
Minnesota	53	40	.570	5	+2	7-3	W-1	27-18	26-22
Kansas City	51	43	.543	7½	—	½	5-5	W-3	31-18
Detroit	44	49	.473	14	—	7	7-3	W-1	21-23
Chicago	27	68	.284	32	—	25	3-7	L-1	17-31

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Seattle	51	43	.543	—	—	4-6	W-2	30-18	21-25
Houston	48	44	.522	2	—	2½	7-3	W-2	26-19
Texas	44	49	.473	6½	—	7	7-3	L-1	24-21
Los Angeles	38	54	.413	12	—	12½	2-8	W-1	19-28
Oakland	35	59	.372	16	—	16½	5-5	W-1	22-25

**\*WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

### Wednesday

**Yankees** 2, Tampa Bay 1  
 Kansas City 6, St. Louis 4, 1st gm.  
 Kansas City 8, St. Louis 5, 2nd gm.  
 White Sox 3, Minnesota 1, 1st gm.  
 Minnesota 3, White Sox 2, 2nd gm.  
 Seattle 2, San Diego 0  
 Detroit 5, Cleveland 4  
 Cubs 4, Baltimore 0  
 Oakland 5, Boston 2  
 Houston 9, Miami 1  
 L.A. Angels 7, Texas 2  
 Toronto 10, San Francisco 6

### Thursday

**Yankees** at Tampa Bay, 6:50  
 Cleveland at Detroit, 1:10

Toronto at San Francisco, 3:45

Cubs at Baltimore, 6:35

Oakland at Boston, 7:10

Miami at Houston, 8:10

Seattle at L.A. Angels, 9:38

### Friday

**Yankees** at Baltimore, 7:05

L.A. Dodgers at Detroit, 6:40

Oakland at Philadelphia, 6:40

Cleveland at Tampa Bay, 6:50

Kansas City at Boston, 7:10

Pittsburgh at White Sox, 8:10

Texas at Houston, 8:10

Seattle at L.A. Angels, 9:38

Toronto at Arizona, 9:40

Minnesota at San Francisco, 10:15

## NL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Philadelphia	60	32	.652	—	—	6-4	W-2	35-14	25-18
Atlanta	51	40	.560	8½	+4½	5-5	L-1	29-17	22-23
<b>Mets</b>	46	45	.505	13½	—	½	6-4	W-2	23-25
Washington	42	51	.452	18½	—	5½	3-7	L-4	20-24
Miami	32	60	.348	28	—	15	3-7	L-2	18-31

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Milwaukee	54	39	.581	—	—	5-5	W-1	28-14	26-25
St. Louis	48	44	.522	5½	+1	6-4	L-2	24-20	24-24
Pittsburgh	44	48	.478	9½	—	3	5-5	L-1	22-24
Chicago	44	49	.473	10	—	3½	6-4	W-3	25-21
Cincinnati	44	49	.473	10	—	3½	5-5	L-1	22-27

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Los Angeles	55	38	.591	—	—	4-6	L-3	28-19	27-19
San Diego	49	47	.510	7½	—	—	4-6	L-4	25-26
Arizona	46	47	.495	9	—	1½	6-4	W-1	23-23
San Francisco	45	48	.484	10	—	2½	5-5	L-1	26-20
Colorado	33	60	.355	22	—	14½	5-5	W-1	20-27

**\*WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

### Wednesday

**Mets** 6, Washington 2  
 Kansas City 6, St. Louis 4, 1st gm.  
 Kansas City 8, St. Louis 5, 2nd gm.  
 Seattle 2, San Diego 0  
 Cubs 4, Baltimore 0  
 Philadelphia 4, L.A. Dodgers 3  
 Colorado 6, Cincinnati 5  
 Houston 9, Miami 1  
 Milwaukee 9, Pittsburgh 0  
 Arizona 7, Atlanta 5  
 Toronto 10, San Francisco 6

### Thursday

Washington at **Mets**, 1:10  
 Colorado at Cincinnati, 1:10

Pittsburgh at Milwaukee, 2:10

Toronto at San Francisco, 3:45

L.A. Dodgers at Philadelphia, 6:05

Cubs at Baltimore, 6:35

Miami at Houston, 8:10

Atlanta at Arizona, 9:40

### Friday

Colorado at **Mets**, 7:10

L.A. Dodgers at Detroit, 6:40

Oakland at Philadelphia, 6:40

Miami at Cincinnati, 7:10

Pittsburgh at White Sox, 8:10

Washington at Milwaukee, 8:10

Cubs at St. Louis, 8:15

Atlanta at San Diego, 9:40

Toronto at Arizona, 9:40

Minnesota at San Francisco, 10:15

## Yankees 2, Rays 1

Yankees	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Verdugo lf	4	0	0	0	0	0	.242
Soto rf	4	0	2	0	0	1	.293
Judge dh	4	0	1	0	0	2	.307
Rice 1b	4	0	0	0	0	3	.250
Cabrera 3b	0	0	0	0	0	0	.237
Torres 2b	3	1	1	0	1	0	.224
Volpe ss	4	1	1	0	0	0	.249
Grisham cf	3	0	1	2	0	1	.176
Trevino c	3	0	0	0	0	0	.239
LeMahieu 3b-1b	2	0	0	0	1	0	.202
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	

Tampa Bay	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Diaz 1b	5	0	1	1	0	1	.269
B.Lowe dh	2	0	0	1	1	1	.233
Paredes 3b	4	0	0	0	3	1	.265
J.Lowe rf	5	0	0	0	0	2	.207
Arozarena lf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.203
Palacios 2b	3	0	1	0	0	0	.247
Siri cf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.203
Rortvedt c	4	1	2	0	0	1	.281
1-DeLuca pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	.181
Jackson c	0	0	0	0	0	0	.063
Walls ss	3	0	2	0	1	0	.176
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	

Yankees	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Stroman	4.1	7	1	1	2	2	84	3.51
Hill, W, 2-0	1.0	2	0	0	0	2	15	2.38
Weaver, H, 12 1-2	0	0	0	0	2	1	27	2.56
Kahle, H, 4	0.2	1	0	0	1	1	18	2.76
Holmes, S,	1.1	0	0	0	0	2	21	2.89
20-25								

Tampa Bay	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Efflin, L, 5-6	7.0	4	2	1	1	6	103	3.99
Cleavinger	1.0	1	0	0	0	2	18	3.22
Rodriguez	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	12	2.53

T: 2:49. **A:** 19,246 (25,025).

## Royals 6, Cardinals 4, 1st Gm.

Kansas City	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Garcia 2b-3b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.230
Witt ss	4	1	1	0	0	1	.323
Pasquantino 1b	3	0	0	1	0	1	.247
Perez c	4	1	2	2	0	1	.279
Renfroe rf	4	1	2	0	0	0	.224
Fermin dh	4	1	1	0	0	1	.303
Melendez lf	4	1	1	1	0	1	.190
Loftin 3b	2	0	0	0	0	0	.197
Massey ph-2b	2	0	0	0	0	0	.274
Hampson cf	4	0	1	2	0	1	.262
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	

St. Louis	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Winn ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	.285
Burleson rf	4	1	1	2	0	0	.283
Contreras dh	4	0	1	0	0	2	.265
Goldschmidt 1b	4	1	1	1	0	3	.229
Donovan lf	4	0	0	0	0	2	.268
Arenado 3b	4	1	2	1	0	0	.269
Nootbaar cf	4	0	0	0	0	1	.228
Gorman 2b	3	0	0	0	0	2	.208
Pagés c	2	1	1	0	1	1	.207
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	

Kansas City	000 031 020 — 6 9 0
<b>St. Louis</b>	<b>012 000 001 — 4 6 0</b>

**LOB:** Kansas City 3, St. Louis 3. **2B:** Renfroe (14), Melendez (14), Hampson (9). **HR:** Perez (15), off Pallante; Arenado (8), off Marsh; Burleson (15), off Marsh; Goldschmidt (13), off McArthur. **RBIs:** Melendez (26), Hampson 2 (12), Perez 2 (57), Pasquantino (60), Arenado (38), Burleson 2 (47), Goldschmidt (35). **SB:** Hampson (6). **SF:** Pasquantino. **RISP:** Kansas City 4 for 8; St. Louis 0 for 1.

Kansas City	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Marsh, W, 7-6	6.0	3	3	3	1	8	101	4.57
Smith, H, 6	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	11	4.71
Long, H, 2	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	21	2.55
McArthur, S,	1.0	2	1	1	0	2	15	4.21
16-20								

St. Louis	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Pallante, L, 4-4	6.1	6	4	4	0	5	101	4.21
Roycroft	1.2	3	2	2	0	1	27	3.05
Gallegos	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	11	7.88

T: 2:27. **A:** 32,108 (44,494).

## Mets 6, Nationals 2

Washington	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Abrams ss	3	0	0	0	1	1	.274
Wood lf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.250
Winker dh	3	0	0	0	1	0	.264
Ruiz c	4						

**White Sox 3, Twins 1, 1st Gm.**

Minnesota	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Castro 2b	3	0	0	0	0	1	0.270
Correa ss	4	0	3	0	0	1	0.310
Larnach lf	3	0	0	0	1	2	0.238
Miranda 3b	4	0	1	0	0	1	0.331
Santana 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.244
B.Lee dh	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.393
Wallner rf	4	1	2	1	0	2	0.206
Margot cf	3	0	0	0	0	0	0.231
Kepler ph	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.258
Vázquez c	3	0	0	0	0	2	0.199
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Pham lf	3	0	0	0	1	1	0.264
Vaughn 1b	3	1	1	0	0	1	0.242
Robert cf	3	1	2	0	1	1	0.226
Sheets rf	3	1	1	0	0	1	0.229
Julks rf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.236
Benintendi dh	3	0	1	0	0	0	0.238
Sosa 2b	3	0	0	0	0	2	0.245
DeJong 3b	2	0	0	1	0	1	0.228
Lopez ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	0.247
K.Lee c	3	0	0	0	0	2	0.225
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	

<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>000 000 100</b>	<b>— 1 6 0</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>000 012 00x</b>	<b>— 3 4 0</b>

**LOB:** Minnesota 7, Chicago 1. **2B:** Sheets (19), Vaughn (18). **HR:** Wallner (3), off Leasure; Robert (11), off Ober. **RBIs:** Wallner (7), DeJong (37), Robert 2 (21). **SF:** DeJong. **RISP:** Minnesota 0 for 3; Chicago 2 for 3. **GIDP:** Vaughn. **DP:** Minnesota 1 (Miranda, Castro, Santana).

Minnesota	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Ober, L, 8-5	6.0	4	3	3	1	6	84	4.14
Sands	2.0	0	0	0	0	3	28	3.70

Chicago	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Fedde, W, 7-3	5.0	4	0	0	2	5	90	2.99
Anderson, H, 3	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	10	4.56
Leasure, H, 9	1.0	1	1	0	0	1	10	5.34
Brebbia, H, 13	1.0	1	0	0	2	19	4.38	
Kopech, S, 9-14	1.0	0	0	0	0	3	9	5.18

**T:** 2:05.

**Rockies 6, Reds 5**

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Tovar ss	5	1	2	0	0	1	0.265
Rodgers 2b	5	0	0	0	0	0	0.272
McMahon 3b	4	1	1	0	0	2	0.274
E.Díaz c	4	0	2	1	0	1	0.296
Doyle dh	3	1	1	1	1	1	0.280
Cave r	4	0	2	1	0	1	0.262
Toglia 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.182
Jones lf	3	1	2	0	1	0	0.199
Hilliard cf	4	2	2	3	0	1	0.267
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	

Cincinnati	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
India dh	4	1	1	2	0	1	0.269
De La Cruz ss	5	0	1	0	0	2	0.250
Candelario 1b	4	0	1	0	0	2	0.240
Steer lf	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.239
Stephenson c	4	1	2	1	0	1	0.245
Slater cf	3	0	1	0	0	1	0.333
Fraley ph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.278
Wynns ph	1	1	1	0	0	0	0.556
Marte 3b	4	2	3	0	0	1	0.176
Hinds rf	4	0	1	1	0	2	0.500
Espinal 2b	3	0	1	1	0	0	0.197
Benson pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.192
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	

<b>Colorado</b>	<b>003 011 010</b>	<b>— 6 12 0</b>
<b>Cincinnati</b>	<b>001 000 103</b>	<b>— 5 12 1</b>

**E:** Slater (1). **LOB:** Colorado 5, Cincinnati 6. **2B:** Tovar (25), Cave (6), Stephenson (16), Marte (2). **HR:** Hilliard 2 (2), off Montas; India (7), off Freeland; Stephenson (8), off Vodnik. **RBIs:** Hilliard 3 (3), E.Díaz (30), Cave (17), Doyle (39), India 2 (37), Hinds (4), Stephenson (29), Espinal (24). **SB:** Hinds (1). **CS:** Jones (2). **SF:** India. **RISP:** Colorado 2 for 8; Cincinnati 2 for 5. **DP:** Colorado 1 (McMah, Rodgers, Toglia); Cincinnati 2 (De La Cruz, Espinal, Candelario; Espinal, De La Cruz, Candelario).

Colorado	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Freeland, W, 1-3	6.2	8	2	2	1	9	93	6.00
Vodnik, H, 6	1.1	1	1	0	2	18	3.99	
Beeks, S, 9-15	1.0	3	2	2	0	21	4.40	

Cincinnati	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Montas, L, 4-7	7.0	8	5	5	2	7	101	4.38
Suter	1.0	3	1	1	0	1	11	3.81
Farmer	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	14	2.74

**T:** 2:27. **A:** 16,836 (43,891).

**Twins 3, White Sox 2, 2nd Gm.**

Minnesota	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
B.Lee 3b	5	1	1	1	0	2	0.364
Correa ss	3	1	1	1	1	0	0.310
Kepler rf	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.253
Miranda dh	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.325
Buxton cf	4	1	1	0	0	0	0.281
Wallner lf	2	0	0	1	0	0	0.222
Margot lf	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.231
Jeffers c	4	0	1	1	0	1	0.239
Santana 1b	3	0	0	0	1	0	0.242
Farmer 2b	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.189
Castro ph-2b	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.268
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Pham rf	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.259
Vaughn 1b	3	0	0	0	1	2	0.240
Robert cf	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.220
Sheets dh	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.228
Jiménez ph-dh	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.235
Sosa 2b	4	1	1	0	0	1	0.246
Benintendi lf	3	0	1	1	0	0	0.195
DeJong ss	4	0	1	0	0	1	0.228
Mendick 3b	3	0	0	0	0	2	0.194
Maldonado c	3	1	1	0	0	1	0.113
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	

<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>000 002 100</b>	<b>— 3 5 1</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>011 000 00x</b>	<b>— 2 4 1</b>

**E:** Farmer (1), Vaughn (3). **LOB:** Minnesota 7, Chicago 5. **2B:** Buxton (19), Benintendi (8). **HR:** B.Lee (2), off Thorpe; Correa (13), off Thorpe; Maldonado (4), off López. **RBIs:** B.Lee (9), Correa (47), Jeffers (47), Benintendi (25), Maldonado (11). **SB:** Robert (8). **RISP:** Minnesota 1 for 8; Chicago 0 for 4.

Minnesota	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
López	5.0	4	2	2	1	5	90	5.11
Okert, W, 3-0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	9	3.95
Alcala, H, 10	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1.62
Jax, H, 14	1.0	0	0	0	1	1	18	2.01
Duran, S, 14-15	1.0	0	0	0	0	2	10	3.03

Chicago	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Thorpe	6.0	3	2	2	1	1	76	3.58
Soroka, L, 0-10	1.0	2	1	1	1	2	29	5.25
Kuhl	2.0	0	0	0	1	1	35	4.15

**T:** 2:23. **A:** 13,607 (40,241).

**Tigers 5, Guardians 4**

Cleveland	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Kwan lf	4	1	1	0	0	0	0.361
Martínez cf-rf	4	0	1	2	0	0	0.333
Ramírez 3b	4	0	1	0	0	0	0.275
J.Naylor dh	3	1	1	0	1	1	0.248
Fry 1b	3	1	0	0	1	0	0.294
Arias pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.222
Giménez 2b	3	0	1	1	0	0	0.252
Schneemann rf	2	1	1	1	0	1	0.247
Freeman ph-cf	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.213
Rocchio ss	3	0	0	0	1	2	0.216
B.Naylor c	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.205
Noel ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.241
Hedges c	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.151
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	

Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Pérez rf	4	1	1	0	0	2	0.261
Keith 2b	2	2	1	1	1	0	0.250
Ibáñez ph-2b	1	1	1	1	0	0	0.290
Vierling 3b	2	1	1	3	0	1	0.246
Greene cf	4	0	2	0	0	0	0.260
Urshela 1b	3	0	0	0	1	1	0.253
McKinstry ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	0.188
Báez ph-ss	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.181
Malloy dh	2	0	0	0	1	1	0.190
Baddoo lf	3	0	0	0	0	3	0.119
Rogers c	3	0	1	0	0	1	0.213
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	

<b>Cleveland</b>	<b>002 100 001</b>	<b>— 4 7 0</b>
<b>Detroit</b>	<b>202 000 01x</b>	<b>— 5 7 0</b>

**LOB:** Cleveland 5, Detroit 4. **2B:** Kwan (14), Martínez (3), Pérez (12), Rogers (8), Greene (18). **3B:** Keith (2). **HR:** Schneemann (4), off Olson; Vierling (12), off Bíbea; Ibáñez (3), off Hentges. **RBIs:** Martínez 2 (3), Schneemann (14), Giménez (44), Keith (32), Vierling 3 (38), Ibáñez (20). **SF:** Giménez, Vierling. **RISP:** Cleveland 1 for 5; Detroit 1 for 4. **DP:** Cleveland 1 (Schneemann, Rocchio, Schneemann); Detroit 2 (Keith, McKinstry, Urshela; McKinstry, Keith, Urshela).

Cleveland	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Bíbea, L, 7-4	7.0	5	4	4	3	8	109	3.77
Hentges	1.0	2	1	1	0	1	29	3.04



BETMGM

NEW YORK POST ACTION

# The *POST* Line



## MLB

Favorite	Thursday Money Line	Underdog
Yankees	\$110-130	RAYS
METS	\$114-134	Nationals
TIGERS	\$116-136	Guardians
REDS	\$176-210	Rockies
Pirates	\$112-132	BREWERS
GIANTS	-104-112	Blue Jays
PHILLIES	\$136-162	Dodgers
ORIOLES	\$112-132	Cubs
RED SOX	\$194-235	Athletics
ASTROS	\$164-198	Marlins
Mariners	\$130-154	ANGELS
Braves	\$114-134	D'BACKS

## WNBA

Favorite	Wednesday PTS (O/U)	Underdog
LIBERTY	11.5 (164.5)	Sky

Home Teams in CAPS

## Men's Olympic Basketball

Sunday, July 28
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
+United States 12.5 (178.5) Serbia
Wednesday, July 31
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
+United States 33.5 (175.5) South Sudan
+Lille, France

Thursday, Sept. 5
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
CHIEFS 3 (47) Ravens

Friday, Sept. 6
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
*Eagles 1.5 (48.5) Packers
*Sao Paulo, Brazil

Sunday, Sept. 8
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
GIANTS 1 (41.5) Vikings
Monday, Sept. 9
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
49ERS 5.5 (45.5) Jets

Thursday
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
ALOUETTES 7 (50.5) Argonauts

Friday
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
BLUE BOMBERS 4.5 (48) Stampeders
Saturday
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
LIONS 7.5 (51.5) Roughriders
Sunday
Favorite PTS (O/U) Underdog
ELKS 4.5 (49) Redblacks

## SPORTS SHORTS

### MLB: Phillies top Dodgers

**Kyle Schwarber** hit his eighth leadoff homer of the season. All-Star reliever **Matt Strahm** struck out two-time MVP **Shohei Ohtani** in the seventh inning to preserve the lead and the Phillies beat the Dodgers 4-3 in Philadelphia. The Phillies won the first two games of the three-game set in a showdown of two NL division leaders.

● In St. Louis, **Salvador Perez** homered in both games to help the Royals beat the Cardinals 8-5 for a sweep of the day-night doubleheader. Kansas City took the opener 6-4.

● In Phoenix, **Eugenio Suárez** had a homer, double and three RBIs, and the Diamondbacks outlasted the Braves 7-5 to win for the first time in five meetings.

● In San Diego, **Bryce Miller** threw six innings to extend his mastery over NL opponents and the Mariners beat the Padres 2-0.

● In Baltimore, **Shota Imanaga** outduelled **Corbin Burnes** in a matchup of All-Star pitchers, and **Christopher Morel** homered to help the Cubs beat the Orioles 4-0.

● In Detroit, **Matt Vierling** hit a home run and drove in three and the Tigers beat the Guardians 5-4 to earn their fifth win in six games.

● In Milwaukee, rookie **Tobias Myers** pitched eight scoreless innings and struck out six batters and the Brewers cruised past the Pirates 9-0.

### NBA: New media deal revealed

The NBA has agreed to terms on its new

media deal, an 11-year agreement worth \$76 billion that goes into effect for the 2025-26 season with ESPN, ABC, Amazon and NBC.

A person familiar with the negotiations told the Associated Press that the networks have the terms sheets, with the next step being for the league's board of governors to approve the contracts.

TNT Sports, which has been part of the league's broadcasting family since the 1980s, could be on its way out, but has five days to match one of the deals.

● The Clippers re-signed 10-time All-Star **James Harden** on Wednesday along with three other players. Terms of Harden's deal were not disclosed, but multiple outlets reported last week it's a two-year deal worth \$70 million, with a player option in Year 2 of the deal.

The Clippers also announced deals with forwards **Nicolas Batum** and **Derrick Jones Jr.** and guard **Kevin Porter Jr.**

### HOOPS: USA defeats Canada

For USA Basketball, the road to the Paris Olympics has started with a win. **Anthony Edwards** scored 13 points, **Stephen Curry** added 12 and the United States opened its tune-up schedule for the Paris Games by topping Canada 86-72 on Wednesday night in Las Vegas. **Jrue Holiday** scored 11 points for the U.S.

**RJ Barrett** scored 12 points for Canada, and **Shai Gilgeous-Alexander** and **Dillon Brooks** each had 10.

## ACTION TOP PLAY

# Yanks still swamped in Florida

By SEAN TREPPEDI  
actionnetwork.com

The capricious nature of baseball could not be personified any better than the trajectory of the Yankees' nosedive in the last month.

A team that sustained the best record in MLB for the first 2½ months of play has dropped 16 of its last 21 before Wednesday's games — much of this a direct result of pitching rotation frustrations.

New York's starting pitching, which led baseball with a 2.77 ERA through June 14, has plunged to a league-worst 7.04 through the following 21-game window, according to FanGraphs.

Nestor Cortes remains night-and-day at home versus on the road; he is allowing 3.82 more earned runs anywhere that is not Yankee Stadium.

His two meetings against the Rays this year were a testament to that: Cortes tallied nine strikeouts in seven innings and

gave up zero earned runs in The Bronx; he then surrendered five earned runs for a 7-2 loss at Tropicana Field in 5⅓ innings — two of the hits he allowed were homers.

What's more concerning is how the consistency of the Yankees' signature power-hitting potential has gone awry. Leading up to June 15, the Yankees were a top-two ranked club in home runs and weighted runs created plus (wRC+); they sit at 17th and 21st in the days since then, respectively.

The Rays' forlorn rotation found encouragement with the arrival of Shane Baz, who threw 92 pitches in his 2024 debut despite coming off Tommy John surgery. The Rays' No. 5 prospect racked up six strikeouts and showcased a fastball averaging over 96 mph despite recording a loss.

With a Tampa Bay offense that's been trending upward over the last month (No. 10 overall in wRC+), I'm backing a galvanized Baz to validate his spot in the rotation amidst the Yankees' turmoil.

**THE PLAY:** Rays (FanDuel +112)

## Pitching Form

		(Game time)	2024			'24 vs OPP		CAREER	LAST 3 STARTS		
			W-L	ERA	*REC	W-L	ERA	vs OPP	W-L	IP	ERA
Yankees	Cortes (L)		4-7	3.40	7-12	0-1	2.92	2-4	0-2	17.1	3.63
Rays	Baz (R)	(6:50pm)	0-1	4.50	0-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-2	14.1	6.91
Nationals	Gore (L)		6-7	3.83	8-10	0-1	6.30	1-2	0-1	14.0	7.07
Mets	Peterson (L)	(1:10pm)	3-0	3.58	6-1	1-0	2.77	4-1	0-0	15.0	3.00
Blue Jays	Gausman (R)		6-8	4.64	8-10	0-1	1.50	0-2	1-2	16.1	6.61
Giants	Hicks (R)	(3:45pm)	4-5	3.47	8-10	0-0	0.00	0-2	0-2	14.0	7.07
Cubs	Steele (L)		1-3	2.95	4-9	—	—	1-1	1-0	22.1	2.42
Orioles	Suárez (R)	(6:35pm)	5-2	2.48	7-4	—	—	0-1	2-1	17.0	3.71
Marlins	Muñoz (R)		1-3	5.48	3-5	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-1	14.2	7.36
Astros	Bloss (R)	(8:10pm)	0-0	4.91	1-0	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-0	3.2	4.91
Guardians	Howard (R)		1-1	5.62	1-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-2	10.1	8.71
Tigers	Flaherty (R)	(1:10pm)	5-5	3.24	8-7	0-1	3.00	0-1	2-1	16.1	3.31
Athletics	Medina (R)		2-3	4.37	2-5	0-0	0.00	1-0	1-1	14.0	3.86
Red Sox	Houck (R)	(7:10pm)	7-6	2.68	12-6	1-0	0.00	1-0	0-1	14.1	6.28
Mariners	Castillo (R)		7-9	3.72	9-10	1-0	0.00	4-1	1-1	17.0	4.24
Angels	Kochanowicz (R)	(9:38pm)	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-0	0.00	0.00	0-0	0.0	0.00
Rockies	Gomber (L)		2-5	4.47	7-10	0-1	8.38	1-1	1-1	18.1	4.91
Reds	Greene (R)	(1:10pm)	5-4	3.45	5-13	0-0	13.50	0-1	0-2	15.2	4.02
Pirates	Skene (R)		5-0	2.12	7-3	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-0	20.0	1.80
Brewers	Breave (R)	(2:10pm)	2-6	5.18	5-13	0-0	1.80	1-1	0-1	15.2	4.02
Dodgers	Knack (R)		1-2	2.86	2-5	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-1	14.0	3.21
Phillies	Nola (R)	(6:05pm)	10-4	3.48	14-4	0-1	7.11	2-1	2-1	19.2	3.20
Braves	Fried (L)		7-4	3.18	12-5	0-0	14.54	1-0	1-1	18.0	3.50
D'Backs	Pfaadt (R)	(9:40pm)	3-6	4.19	9-9	0-0	7.94	0-0	0-0	16.2	3.24

\* REC: Won-lost record of pitcher's team in games he has started.

## STITCHES

# Let's Go Mets! Let's Go Mets!

It's crashing! It's crashing! The Hinden-Biden update.

The good. MSNBC's Joy Reid: "If it's Biden in a coma, I'm voting for Biden in a coma." The bad. Actor George Clooney: "We are not going to win in November with this President. We need a new nominee." And the real ugly. The View's Whoopi Goldberg: "I don't care if he can put a sentence together. I don't care if he's pooped his pants. I have poop days all the time." Oh the humanity!

Is it just me or have the Mets and Nationals already played each other 80 times

this year? MacKenzie Gore throws for the Nats. Gore held the Amazins to one run but was abused by the Cards for five runs in his next start. David Peterson has given up seven runs in his last 21 innings. Play \$50 on the Mets.

-\$

Tried to stretch our winning streak to six. Better chance of George Clooney having Thanksgiving dinner at the White House this year. The Reds scored three runs in the 9th inning but the Rockies held on 6-5. Down -905 vadapinsons.

stitches@nypost.com

Home Team Lineups		HOME	AWAY				
	TODAY July 11	FRI July 12	SAT July 13	SUN July 14	MON July 15	TUE July 16	WED July 17
	<b>Tampa Bay</b> 6:50 YES WFAN 660 AM/ 101.9 FM	<b>Balt.</b> 7:05 YES WFAN	<b>Balt.</b> 4:05 YES, FS1 WFAN	<b>Balt.</b> 11:35 a.m. Roku WFAN	<b>Home Run Derby</b> 8:00 ESPN	<b>All- Star Game</b> 8:00 Fox ESPN	<b>NO GAME</b>
	<b>Washington</b> 1:10 SNY WCBS 880 AM	<b>Col.</b> 7:10 SNY WCBS	<b>Col.</b> 4:10 SNY WCBS	<b>Col.</b> 1:40 SNY WCBS	<b>Home Run Derby</b> 8:00 ESPN	<b>All- Star Game</b> 8:00 Fox ESPN	<b>NO GAME</b>
	<b>Chicago</b> 7:00 Channel 5, Prime Video	<b>NO GAME</b>	<b>Chi.</b> 1:00 ABC	<b>NO GAME</b>	<b>NO GAME</b>	<b>Conn. 7:00 MY9 Prime Video</b>	<b>NO GAME</b>
<b>Saturday</b>		<b>Saturday</b>		<b>Sat., July 20</b>			
	<b>Colorado Rapids</b> 9:30 Apple TV+		<b>Chicago Fire</b> 8:30 Apple TV+		<b>Chicago Red Stars</b> 5:00 CBSN		

Today's Sports on the Air			
<b>MLB</b>	1 p.m.	Rockies at Reds	MLBN
	1:10 p.m.	Nationals at Mets	SNY, WCBS (880 AM)
	6 p.m.	Dodgers at Phillies	MLBN
	6:50 p.m.	Yankees at Rays	YES, WFAN (660 AM/101.9 FM)
	10 p.m.	Braves at Diamondbacks (in progress)	MLBN
<b>WNBA</b>	7 p.m.	Sky at Liberty	Ch. 5, Prime Video
<b>Tennis</b>	8 a.m.	Wimbledon, Semifinals	ESPN
	1 p.m.	Wimbledon, Mixed Doubles Championship	ESPN
<b>Golf</b>	6 a.m.	LPGA Tour: The Amundi Evian Championship, 1st Round	Golf
	10:30 a.m.	PGA Tour: The Genesis Scottish Open, 1st Round	Golf
	2 p.m.	Champions Tour: The Kaulig Companies Championship, 1st Round	Golf
	4:30 p.m.	PGA Tour: The ISCO Championship, 1st Round	Golf
<b>Horse Racing</b>	12:30 p.m.	Saratoga Live	FS2
	4 p.m.	FanDuel Racing	MSGSN
	6 p.m.	Saratoga Live	FS1
<b>Award Show</b>	8 p.m.	The 2024 ESPY'S	ABC
<b>AFL Football</b>	5:35 a.m. (Fri.)	Geelong at Collingwood	FS2

NBA			
Odds to win Rookie of the Year			
PLAYER	ODDS	PLAYER	ODDS
Zach Edey	+600	Jared McCain	50/1
Alexandre Sarr	+700	Kel'el Ware	50/1
Zaccharie Risacher	+800	Yves Missi	66/1
Dalton Knecht	+900	KyShawn George	80/1
Stephon Castle	10/1	Isaiah Collier	80/1
Reed Sheppard	11/1	Terrence Shannon Jr.	80/1
Matas Buzelis	12/1	Ja'Kobe Walter	100/1
Tidjane Salaun	14/1	Tristan da Silva	100/1
Ron Holland	14/1	Daron Holmes II	100/1
Cody Williams	15/1	Pacome Dadiet	150/1
Donovan Clingan	18/1	Jaylon Tyson	150/1
Rob Dillingham	18/1	Baylor Scheierman	200/1
Devin Carter	30/1	Bronny James	250/1
Carlton Carrington	40/1		

## ODDS & ENDS

### TENNIS Odds to win Wimbledon

MEN	ODDS
Carlos Alcaraz	+100
Novak Djokovic	+125
Daniil Medvedev	+650
Lorenzo Musetti	16/1
WOMEN	ODDS
Elena Rybakina	-190
Jasmine Paolini	+333
Donna Vekic	+650
Barbora Krejcikova	+700

### SOCCER Odds to win Euro 2024 Final England vs. Spain Sunday, 3 p.m.

3-WAY REGULAR TIME	ODDS
Spain	+140
Draw	+190
England	+230
TO LIFT TROPHY	ODDS
Spain	-155
England	+110

METHOD OF VICTORY	ODDS
Spain in regular time	+140
England in regular time	+230
Spain after extra time	+1050
England after extra time	+1350
Spain by shootout	+775
England by shootout	+775

ANYTIME GOALSCORER	ODDS
Harry Kane	+200
Ollie Watkins	+225
Alvaro Morata	+225
Ivan Toney	+240
Joselu	+250
Ayoze Perez	+290
Mikel Oyarzabal	+310
Ferran Torres	+340
Fermin Lopez	+350
Nico Williams	+380
Lamine Yamal	+380
Cole Palmer	+400
Dani Olmo	+400

Bukayo Saka	+400
Phil Foden	+425
Jude Bellingham	+425
Jarrod Bowen	+425
Anthony Gordon	+475
Eberechi Eze	+525
Rodri	+550
Mikel Merino	+575
No goalscorer	+575

FIRST TEAM TO SCORE	ODDS
Spain	-110
England	+135
No goal	+500
LAST TEAM TO SCORE	ODDS
Spain	-110
England	+135
No goal	+500
BOTH TEAMS TO SCORE	ODDS
Yes	+100
No	-145

## ACTION BET SMART



# Don't sleep on Daniil at Wimby

**CLUB MED':** Daniil Medvedev has been consistently overlooked at Wimbledon and faces Carlos Alcaraz, who hasn't looked his best. At +260, Medvedev is worth a bet.

By MICHAEL LEBOFF  
actionnetwork.com

We are into championship weekend at Wimbledon, and according to the odds, it looks like we are on a collision course for a rematch of last year's classic final between Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic.

Is it as simple as that? Or will either of the underdogs, Daniil Medvedev and Lorenzo Musetti, be able to cause an upset?

### Carlos Alcaraz (-330) vs. Daniil Medvedev (+260)

Getting back to the Wimbledon semifinals for a second year in a row is an impressive feat for defending champion Alcaraz, but the path to this point has been a lot bumpier than his nearly flawless run in 2023.

Alcaraz was untouchable on the grass a year ago, winning all 12 matches he played on the surface, culminating with a five-set thriller over Djokovic in the final. Even more stunning was that Alcaraz dropped just five sets in those dozen matches.

It would be nearly impossible to replicate that form, but Alcaraz's journey to the final four has been bumpier than anybody expected. The Spaniard started the grass swing with an early exit at Queen's Club, and he's had a couple of hairy moments at the Championships.

Alcaraz cruised through the first two rounds, but he needed to come back in a five-set thriller against an out-of-form Frances Tiafoe, then was not all that convincing against Tommy Paul in a four-set victory. If Paul had even his B-game, we'd probably be talking about him in this spot instead.

Winning without your best stuff is the mark of a champion, but Alcaraz will need to find his level if he's to make it to back-to-back finals, because Daniil Medvedev seems like a man on a mission.

Bewilderingly, Medvedev came into the tournament as a 60/1 outsider to win Wimbledon despite the fact that he made it to one final at a Grand Slam already in 2024 and was a semifinalist

here in 2023. Medvedev's draw was tough, and he didn't set the world alight during the clay swing, but it was pretty shocking to see him flying that far under the radar before the fortnight began.

What was even more confusing was that Medvedev's outright price remained close to 40/1 even after he advanced into the fourth round.

It's clear that the betting market severely underestimated Medvedev going into the tournament, and it's fair to wonder if oddsmakers are continuing to do so given his price against Alcaraz.

The defending champion absolutely deserves to be the favorite on Friday, but Medvedev was brilliant in a five-set victory over world No. 1 Jannik Sinner in the quarterfinals, and we haven't really seen Alcaraz at his best yet.

*The Bet: Daniil Medvedev, +255*

### Novak Djokovic (-650) vs. Lorenzo Musetti (+450)

It is not entirely true to say that it is surprising to see Djokovic in the Wimbledon semifinals this year, but there were certainly a lot more people who doubted that the 37-year-old Serb could pull it off this time around the block, considering his form and the fact that he's one month removed from knee surgery.

But, as he's wont to do, Djokovic has silenced the skeptics with another deep run. And he also caught a big break when Alex de Minaur had to pull out of their quarterfinal clash with an injury. Djokovic will have had three full days to rest after his quick, painless victory over Holger Rune on Monday.

Known for his clay-court ability, Lorenzo Musetti is certainly a surprising semifinalist, but he's had a relatively easy path with a woeful Taylor Fritz as his only true test so far. A fresh Djokovic should be able to overwhelm the Italian, especially after defeating him at Roland Garros in June.

*The Bet: Djokovic -1.5 sets  
Michael Leboff analyzes tennis for The Action Network.*

# American Fritz falls short of Wimby semis

By HOWARD FENDRICH



**NOT AGAIN:** American Taylor Fritz dropped to 0-4 in his career in the quarterfinal round of majors, losing at Wimbledon on Wednesday to Lorenzo Musetti, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1. AP

the stands and joining fans in doing the wave, Musetti did far more to vary his strokes — a drop shot here, a lob there, plenty of slices — than Fritz did.

“I just felt like it took a lot to finish the point,” Fritz said.

Djokovic had knee surgery less than a month before the start of play at the All England Club. But despite limitations on his movement, the 37-year-old Djokovic has dropped only two sets so far — facing a qualifier in the first round, a wild-card entrant in the second and only one seeded player, No. 15 Holger Rune.

Instead of going up against No. 9 de Minaur on Wednesday, Djokovic will get three full days off before meeting Musetti. The other semifinal Friday is defending champion Carlos Alcaraz against Daniil Medvedev.

Djokovic and Musetti have played each other six times previously. Djokovic has won five of those, including a five-setter at this year's French Open that concluded after 3 a.m. It was in Djokovic's following match in Paris that he tore the meniscus in his right knee. — AP

LONDON — American Taylor Fritz had made it to the quarterfinals round of a major three times in his career, only to get stopped before advancing to the semifinals.

Make it four times.

The 13-seeded Fritz was upset by 25-seed Lorenzo Musetti in the Wimbledon quarterfinals round Wednesday, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1.

Instead, it was the Italian throwing his head back and spreading his arms wide to celebrate reaching his first Grand Slam semifinal.

Up next for Musetti, Novak Djokovic.

“He probably knows, better than me, the surface and the stadium, for sure,” Musetti said with a chuckle, aware he'll be making his Centre Court debut Friday. “Jokes apart, he's a legend everywhere, but especially here in Wimbledon.”

This will be Djokovic's record-tying 13th semifinal at Wimbledon alone — equaling Roger Federer — and 49th Slam semifinal overall, extending a mark he already held. As Musetti pursues his first major championship, Djokovic seeks a 25th, including what would be an eighth at the All England Club.

Djokovic's smooth trip through this year's bracket was made even easier when the man he was supposed to play in the quarterfinals Wednesday, Alex de Minaur, pulled out with a hip injury hours before their match was scheduled to begin.

Fritz made Musetti work for his spot in the final four: Musetti's 3 1/2-hour victory over Fritz was the 37th five-setter at the All England Club this year, the most at any Grand Slam tournament.

Playing at a sun-swathed No. 1 Court against Fritz, an American who is one of the sport's biggest servers but fell to 0-4 in major quarterfinals, Musetti managed to accumulate 13 break points and convert six.

With Queen Camilla, the wife of King Charles III, in



# IT'S 'TOGA PARTY TIME

By VIC CANGIALOSI

It's time! For the call to the post and “riders up, please.” For the railbirds chirping for their number as they turn for home. For the photo finishes. For dead heats and dead rails. For early-morning thunder on the Oklahoma training track.

For hats, hats and more hats. For the chalk players, bridge jumpers and jumper races. For the gate scratches that have you sprinting for the betting window. For the blinking “IN-QUIRY” after you've counted your winnings. Yes, it's time for Saratoga!

The 40-day Saratoga meet starts Thursday. Racing will be held five days a week, Wednesdays thru Sundays, until Labor Day, Sept. 2. A total of 71 stake races will be run at the nation's premier meet with purses topping \$20 million.

**Dates to remember:** the Coaching

## Anchored by Aug. 24 Travers, horse meet gallops onto scene

Club American Oaks on July 20, the Jim Dandy on July 27, the Whitney on Aug. 3, the Alabama on Aug. 17, the Travers on Aug. 24 and the Jockey Club Gold Cup on Sept. 1.

**Promotion days:** Tumbler on July 19, baseball jersey on Aug. 2, trucker hat on Aug. 16 and the Saratoga windbreaker on Sept. 1.

**Horses:** The Triple Crown champs — Derby winner Mystik Dan, Preak-

ness winner Seize the Gray and my personal favorite, Dornoch, who won the first ever Belmont Stakes at Saratoga — are all pointed to the Travers.

Sierra Leone and Muth may also be entered. Thorpedo Anna, arguably better than them all, may race in both the CCAO and four weeks later in the Alabama. And heavyweight champ National Treasure, arguably the best horse on the planet, is scheduled to

# Clutch Ionescu makes it a good morning for Libs

By CHRISTIAN ARNOLD



**SUPER SABRINA:** Liberty star Sabrina Ionescu puts up a shot during a 71-68 win over the Sun on Wednesday. Ionescu came through in the clutch on her way to a team-high 21 points. Getty Images

Sabrina Ionescu is clutch, the NBA's social media accounts proclaimed. After Wednesday's performance from the Liberty superstar, it's hard to argue.

Ionescu put up a team-high 21 points, including a pair of buckets in crunch time, in the Liberty's 71-68 road win over the Sun to take sole possession of first place in the WNBA standings.

The Liberty won their sixth straight regular-season game against Connecticut dating to the 2023 season, and the victory was their 14th in their past 16 games.

Ionescu made her first basket of the fourth quarter with 1:58 remaining to give the Liberty a 69-68 lead. Ionescu missed a shot on the next two possessions, but she got another in the closing seconds after Breanna Bonner blocked a DeWanna Bonner attempt.

Ionescu dribbled down the clock before driving into the lane and sinking an off-balance shot for a three-point lead with 4.4 seconds left.

"I had missed two floaters before that that could have put the game away. I think it was just my teammates picking me up," Ionescu said about the sequence that led to the crucial bucket.

"Understanding that we're going to have another opportunity, and just trusting myself out there and what I'm able to do for this team obviously knowing the scoring, but also coming up big defensively when we needed in understanding what our scheme was there at the end. ... Overall,

just wanting to continue to get better as a player, and when you have great players around you that hold you to that standard, that's the level that I come in with every single day."

Connecticut passed it around the 3-point arc before Ionescu made the Liberty's fourth block of the fourth quarter to end it at the buzzer.

Stewart came up with three blocks in the final two minutes of the win over Connecticut. She finished the game with 18 points and 14 rebounds.

"The one in transition, knowing it was literally one-on-one, I knew [DiJonai Carrington would] attack downhill," Stewart said. "On [Bonner], knowing she has a series of shot fakes, she's the one who will shoot at the end."

Courtney Vandersloot finished with 11 points, and Jonquel Jones had 11 rebounds to go with eight points for the Liberty.

Bonner led Connecticut (17-5) with 22 points and nine rebounds. Brianna Jones had 17 points and eight boards, and Tyasha Harris scored 11.

Stewart and Ionescu combined for 20 points in the first quarter to help the Liberty build a 29-19 lead. But they were held to just 10 points in the second quarter, with four points from Stewart and Ionescu, as their lead was trimmed to 39-38 at the break.

Vandersloot opened and closed a 9-0 run to start the third quarter to rebuild a double-digit lead at 48-38.

Wednesday's game started at 11 a.m. as part of the Sun's annual "Camp Day," which caters to local children and summer camps in Connecticut. Ionescu joked that she hoped the early start time was a one-time thing.

"Hopefully there won't be too many more 11 a.m. games. It's a little early," she said.

arnold@nypost.com

## Saratoga essentials

**All the important details you need to know about this season's races at Saratoga Springs:**

**MEET:** Thursday through Sept. 2 (40 racing dates)

**SCHEDULE:** Wednesdays through Sundays (dark Mondays and Tuesdays except Sept. 2)

**ADMISSION:** General: \$7 in advance, \$10 day of; Travers Day (Aug. 24): \$25 in advance, \$30 day of (all prices plus Ticketmaster fees). Children 12 and under free with parent or guardian

**GATES OPEN:** 11 a.m., except Aug. 24 (7 a.m.)

**FIRST POST:** 1:10 p.m., except Aug. 3 (12:35 p.m.), Aug. 24 (11:40 a.m.) and Aug. 31-Sept. 2 (12:40 p.m.)

**MORE INFO:** nyra.com/saratoga

## NOTABLE STAKES SCHEDULE

**July 13:** Diana

**July 20:** Coaching Club American Oaks

**July 27:** Alfred G. Vanderbilt

**Aug. 3:** Whitney, Test, Saratoga Derby

**Aug. 10:** Fourstardave

**Aug. 17:** Alabama

**Aug. 24:** Travers, Ballerina, Forego, H. Allen Jerkens Memorial, Sword Dancer

**Aug. 31:** Spinaway

**Sept. 1:** Jockey Club Gold Cup

**Sept. 2:** Hopeful



race in the Whitney.

**Trainers:** Last year Chad Brown and Linda Rice finished in a 35-win dead-heat atop the standings. Brown and Rice ran 1-2 at the Belmont at the Big A meet. Chris Clement and Rick Dutrow were a distant third and fourth. Brad "make them count" Cox had the highest win percentage (seven winners from 15 starts, 47 percent).

And no, I didn't forget Steve Asmussen. I'm going with Todd Pletcher, who last won the title in 2020.

**Jockeys:** Irad Ortiz Jr. has won two straight titles and a three-peat seems inevitable. But hold on, brother. Little bro Jose Ortiz and Tyler Gaffalione move to Saratoga after finishing in a tie for top rider at Churchill Downs.

Manny Franco, Flavien Prat and Joel Rosario will win their fair share. Hall of Famer John "Johnny V" Ve-

lazquez, who picks his spots wisely, will have his picture taken in the winner's circle. Dylan Davis and his sister Katie will make long-shot players happy. An upset at the top? How about Luis Saez?

The four-day Belmont Stakes Racing Festival held at the Spa was a huge success. However, last summer the meet suffered. Between heavy rainfall amounts, which knocked races off the turf, to equine deaths (12, including the gut-wrenching Maple Leaf Mel in front of a national TV audience), the betting handle was down 9 percent from 2022.

"Last year was challenging, unfortunate, but we move forward," said David O'Rourke, NYRA CEO and president. "The industry is in the best place it's ever been in terms of safety. We're looking forward to having a great, safe meet."

vcangialosi@nypost.com

# Caitlin temp rises in Fever defeat

By JENNA LEMONCELLI

Things got chippy between Indiana Fever rookie Caitlin Clark and Washington Mystics guard Julie Vanloo during Wednesday's Fever loss in Indianapolis.

With the Mystics leading the Fever midway through the second quarter, 33-23, the two players got tangled up, and Clark shoved Vanloo while trying to get open for a pass from Fever veteran Erica Wheeler.

Vanloo eventually put her arms out and appeared to question what Clark was doing.

A replay video showed Clark and Vanloo exchanging words, while Wheeler and Fever All-Star Aliyah Boston were seen chirping with Washington center Stefanie Dolson with 6:27

left before halftime.

A referee was in the middle of the drama, while Clark appeared to make a flopping gesture at Vanloo.

It came after Clark put Vanloo on skates when she knocked down a 3-pointer in her face just a few minutes into the contest.

Clark pushed off Vanloo before she drained a step-back 3-pointer near the right corner to extend the Fever's lead to 5-0 with eight minutes left in the first quarter. After that, the two guards went after it in a tough battle on both ends of the floor.

At one point, Clark was called for an offensive foul, when she pushed off Mystics guard Ariel Atkins, who simultaneously fell into a screen by Boston.

"Don't fall for that. You fell for it," Clark was heard saying. "She's so soft."

Clark's 29 points, 13 rebounds and five assists weren't enough, as the Mystics eventually topped Indiana, 89-84, at Gainbridge Fieldhouse.

## Reese extends her double-double streak

Angel Reese secured her 14th straight double-double in the closing seconds to extend a WNBA record as her Chicago Sky beat the Atlanta Dream, 78-69, on Wednesday.

Reese was fouled with 6.4 seconds left then got a friendly roll on her first free-throw attempt to complete the double-double in the win over the Dream (7-14). — With AP

# REILLY REALITY

## New Rangers winger will be latest to try to join Kreider-Mika unit

By MOLLIE WALKER

As of now, the Rangers' headlining offseason acquisition is Reilly Smith — a 33-year-old right wing who is coming off a down year in Pittsburgh in his

13th NHL season.

Smith was a third-liner by the time his Penguins tenure was up, but he is now primed to compete for a top-six role with the Blueshirts that has seen an excessive amount of turnover since Pavel Buchnevich was traded in July 2021.

It's another year and another candidate to skate on the right side of Chris Kreider and Mika Zibanejad.

The two longest-tenured Rangers have been on a line together relatively consistently since 2016 and have proven to be a tough duo to join. Not Patrick Kane nor Vladimir Tarasenko, nor any others on a laundry list of current Rangers who got looks, were able to find steady success in that spot after Buchnevich's departure.

The last player to look promising there was trade-deadline acquisition Frank Vatrano during the 2022 run to the conference final.

Smith could become the 23rd player to give it a try since the beginning of the David Quinn era on Broadway.

"In the past, it's been working with a guy that can pass, maybe more of a passer, because Kreids is a shooter, I'm a shooter," Zibanejad said on breakup day last month, when the Rangers' No. 1 center was asked what attributes his ideal right wing would have. "But that's not my job to worry about, I guess."

It is, in fact, Chris Drury's job, and the Rangers president and general manager traded a conditional fifth-round pick in 2025 and a 2027 second-rounder to acquire Smith from the Penguins once it became clear a big-name free-agent signing was no longer an option.

There's always a possibility Peter Lavi-

olette deviates from the alignment, and the Rangers head coach will likely do his due diligence and explore that option. But if he's intent on keeping together his most effective line from last season — Artemi Panarin, Vincent Trocheck and Alexis Lafreniere — then it might be difficult to split up Kreider and Zibanejad.

There is also this for Lavolette to consider: Trocheck and Smith logged 1,441.27 of ice time together during the Smith's two seasons with the Panthers from 2015-17.

Smith is about to embark on the final season of the three-year, \$15 million deal the Golden Knights signed him to when he was in a top-line role, but the Ontario native slipped to the third unit during Vegas' Stanley Cup run in 2023 before the same series of events unfolded in Pittsburgh (minus the championship).

That allowed for Drury to negotiate for the Penguins to retain 25 percent of Smith's salary, which put him on the Rangers' books for a more reasonable \$3.75 million. If, say, Kaapo Kakko beats out Smith for the top-six role, if the Finnish wing is still a Ranger come October, then it's a price point that wouldn't be too out of place on the third line.

After recording 14 points in 22 playoff games en route to his and the Golden Knights' first Cup victory, Smith was traded to the Penguins. He started this past season off strong on a line with Evgeni Malkin, but as the Penguins star dropped off, so did Smith.

The downturn also came right after Smith visited the White House with his former Golden Knights teammates in mid-November. As the season continued and he struggled to produce, finishing with 13 goals and 27 assists in 76 games, there was suddenly a narrative coming out of Pittsburgh that Smith wasn't happy.

Having another shot at a top-six role should be a rejuvenating prospect for Smith, who has been described as a cerebral player who sees the game well and has the skill to support it.

"The lineup is Peter's," Drury said on a conference call with reporters this month. "I think Reilly is a very versatile winger, can play both wings. ... Just trying to give Lavi as many options as you can to try and put together the best lineup."

mwalker1@nypost.com

**YOUR TURN:** Reilly Smith was acquired by the Rangers in a trade with the Penguins. He will get a shot to play alongside Chris Kreider and Mika Zibanejad — a spot that has been a revolving door the past few seasons.

Sam Rosen's honors already include the Hockey Hall of Fame's Foster Hewitt Award, four Sports Emmys and an upcoming 40th anniversary season as the Rangers' play-by-play announcer.

His upcoming induction to the New York State Hockey Hall of Fame, though, is another that will last even longer than a lifetime.

"It's a great honor because of the length of my career, being a New Yorker my entire life, it's something that's special," Rosen told *The Post* ahead of the induction this weekend in Troy, N.Y. "And when you say Hall of Fame, it's something to me that connotes forever. There's no greater honor than knowing that a legacy will be left after my career is over. My kids and my grandkids and their kids will be able to recognize the fact that I made a contribution to our sport and to our state."

Rosen will go into the state Hall of Fame alongside a class that includes a trio of Islanders legends — Denis Potvin, Ken Morrow and Ed Westfall — along with 1980 Team USA captain Mike Eruzione.

"I'm just kind of a person that's there, [I'm] fortunate that I've had the career that I've had and been around the greatest players in the world," Rosen said. "Those are the guys that to me deserve the honors. They come from all over the world, great stories and they're great athletes and great people, and I've been fortunate enough to be around them for a long period of time."

"Yes it's a bit surreal when I think about it, but my entire career has been that way. Being around, especially being a part of the

# Announcer Rosen elated by rise to Hall



SAM ROSEN

New York Rangers and being able to do their games. Again, being able to watch and broadcast and meet the greatest players in the world. Hall of Famers to the nth degree, we've had them as Rangers — whether it's Mark Messier or Wayne Gretzky or Marcel Dionne, I don't want to forget Brian Leetch. There's so many that have come through the Rangers organization."

He joins a stable of broadcasters in the Hall that also includes longtime Islanders voice Howie Rose and Al Michaels, who called the *Miracle on Ice*. Currently the longest-tenured active broadcaster in the NHL, Rosen has been the soundtrack of the franchise for two generations, spanning coach Herb Brooks and captain Barry Beck through coach Peter Laviolette and captain Jacob Trouba.

"I think the times that I reflect on it is when fans come

up to me outside the Garden, sometimes inside the Garden, in arenas around the league — whether it's older fans, younger fans, their kids and they're passing along the spirit and the greatness of the sport," Rosen said. "And I think when I step away, people come up and it used to be, in my early days, it was all about autographs and would I pose for a picture on camera? Now it's all about selfies."

"And the people are really terrific, and it means a lot to them. And that's the time when I walk away and I sit in my car and I say, wow, it's really something special that, number one, they say nice things about me, to me, and number two, that they passed on the love of the game, the love of the sport to their kids and sometimes their grandkids, and I've been part of that. That makes it extra special."

As things stand, there are no plans for him to back off at age 76.

"For me, the love is still there, the excitement is still there," he said. "But there are a lot of other considerations. Always travel considerations, health considerations, family considerations. All those things come into play, and basically kind of just go year-to-year and see how it goes. It's been a great ride, and I love it. And I'm looking forward to next season."

esears@nypost.com

# Islanders' Russian prospect is headed back to homeland

By ETHAN SEARS

Ruslan Iskhakov's two games with the Islanders late last season ended up being his only games with the club.

The 23-year-old, who led AHL Bridgeport in goals and assists last season, is signing with CSKA Moscow in the KHL, an industry source told *The Post*. Championat, a Russian news outlet, initially reported the news.

Iskhakov, the team's second-round pick in 2018, was considered one of the better prospects in the organization. But the writing was on the wall as he struggled to get a call-up despite posting strong num-

bers in the American League.

His 5-foot-8 stature posed issues in the NHL that were immediately evident when Iskhakov finally did get the call in the last game of the regular season. With Matt Martin hurt in the playoffs, Patrick Roy tried inserting Iskhakov in Game 4 of the first-round series against the Hurricanes, but the winger failed to make an impact over limited minutes.

Iskhakov was one of four restricted free agents the Islanders had yet to sign — Simon Holmstrom, Oliver Wahlstrom and Dennis Cholowski are the other three. Wahlstrom filed for arbitration ahead of the league's deadline.



# Salty 'Dawg

## Ex-Georgia QB took off rookie season with Rams to 'clear head'

By JENNA LEMONCELLI

Rams quarterback Stetson Bennett said he spent his absence during most of his rookie season clearing his head at home in Georgia.

Bennett, a two-time national champion quarterback with the Bulldogs, missed the majority of the 2023 season after being placed on the reserve/non-football injury list in September, and the Rams have been scarce about the matter.

During a recent appearance on the "Unreserved with TJ Callaway" podcast, the host asked Bennett, "Where have you been?"

"Home," the 26-year-old Bennett said after the pair shared a laugh. "I went home for a minute. Kind of had to clear my head. I don't know, it was a bunch of everything all at once it felt like."

"Just needed some fresh air. And, you know, the Rams and all that were gracious enough to let that happen. ... I just needed a little bit of a break."

Bennett added that he just got back from Los Angeles after participating in the

Rams OTAs.

The quarterback explained things really haven't sunk in after winning back-to-back national championships with the Bulldogs — and being named the offensive MVP in the championship game wins over Alabama and TCU.

"It was pretty special," Bennett said of winning back-to-back titles with the Bulldogs. "But, it's a question of staying, you know, moving on from that because you got all these years to live and to go do other things to be successful at, to work hard at. You can't just hang your head on that."

Bennett was arrested for public intoxication in Dallas in January 2023, shortly after Georgia's national title win versus TCU that month.

The Rams then selected Bennett, who was a Heisman Trophy finalist, in the fourth round, 128th overall, of the 2023 draft.

Bennett recalled feeling uncertain of himself during his final season with the Bulldogs.

"I feel like everybody kind of ... I'd say after the first [national championship]

### WHERE YOU BENNETT?

Rams QB Stetson Bennett (13) did not play in his rookie season last year. He said he needed to "clear his head" and was dealing with "a bunch of everything all at once" after a whirlwind college career at Georgia.

people wanted me to leave ... somewhere in the second natty season," he said. "The whole first national championship season I was not certain of myself. ... I was on the field because if not you'll get run over, but as far as asserting myself as the starting quarterback on the Georgia Bulldogs, but it was very much so that feels like a big piece of s-t."

Bennett's situation raised eyebrows last season, when he was expected to be Matthew Stafford's backup. However, Bennett, was ruled out with a shoulder injury before a Week 1 matchup versus the Seahawks.

McVay said he preferred to keep the details of Bennett's absence "in house" at the time.

"There are certain things that I think are a little bit bigger and more important, and out of respect for the particulars and the specifics, want to be able to keep it in-house, and that's where I'd like to leave it please," the Super Bowl-winning coach said.

The Rams open the 2024 season at Detroit on Sept. 8 in a playoff rematch.

# McIlroy opens up after Open disaster

By JUSTIN TERRANOVA

Rory McIlroy is ready to put the U.S. Open disaster behind him.

McIlroy spoke at length for the first time Wednesday on how he dealt with the disappointment of missing two short putts in the final three holes that cost him the win at Pinehurst No. 2 and his first major in a decade.

“[The days have] been OK. I got over it pretty quickly,” McIlroy told SkySports. “The few days after were pretty tough at times. But I feel like I’ve done a good job of thinking about it rationally and constructively and taking what I need from it and trying to learn from it.”

“For the most part, it was a great day. I keep telling people, it was a great day until it wasn’t. There were a couple of little things I’d like to have back at the end there. Overall, I can’t fault how I played or the game plan that I had or how I handled myself the whole way through the tournament.”

McIlroy duelled with Bryson DeChambeau on the Sunday of the U.S. Open, with the lead shifting back and forth over the course of a dramatic final round.

But McIlroy had seemed to take control and owned a two-shot lead in the latter portions before missing a pair of short par putts on 16 and 18 that opened the door for DeChambeau’s victory.

“I can vividly remember starting to feel a little uncomfortable waiting for my second putt on 16 and the putt on the last was a really tricky putt and I was very aware where Bryson was off the tee,” McIlroy told reporters. “I knew I had to hit it very soft. If the one back didn’t matter I would have hit it firmer but because I was sort of two minds — I didn’t know if Bryson was going to make a par or not — it was one of those ones where I just had to make sure if the putt didn’t go in it didn’t go 10 feet by, which it very easily could have. Thinking back, I think I was probably a little too aware of where Bryson was and what he was doing.”

McIlroy stormed off the North Carolina facility after DeChambeau made a tremendous up-and-down on the final hole to seal a one-shot win.

The 35-year-old then announced in a statement he would be taking a few weeks away from the sport.

McIlroy makes his return Thursday as he defends his Scottish Open title, and next week is the season’s final major with the British Open at Troon.

# BOOTED!

By JARED SCHWARTZ

Disaster prompted repercussions.

Gregg Berhalter was fired as head coach of the United States Men’s Soccer Team, the U.S. Soccer Federation announced Wednesday.

It ends an extremely polarizing 5 ½ seasons in charge for Berhalter, which ended in an embarrassing group stage exit at the 2024 Copa America — hosted on U.S. soil.

“We are deeply grateful to Gregg for his commitment the past five years to the Men’s National Team and to U.S. Soccer,” U.S. Soccer sporting director Matt Crocker said in a statement. “Gregg has earned the respect of everyone within our organization and has played a pivotal role in bringing together a young team and moving the program forward. We wish Gregg all the best in his future endeavors, and we know he will find success in his next coaching position.”

The USMNT will now have a new leader ahead of the 2026 World Cup, which the U.S. will co-host along with Mexico and Canada.

Crocker said U.S. Soccer has “already begun” searching for a new coach.

The potential list of replacements for Berhalter includes former Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, TSG Hoffen-

heim manager Pellegrino Matarazzo, former Norwich manager David Wagner, former El Salvador coach Hugo Perez and ex-Arsenal and Red Bulls star Thierry Henry.

Klopp, 57, would be a home-run hire after he led Liverpool to a Premier League title and Champions League title across his nine seasons; he recently stepped down and it’s unclear if he would be willing to jump right into another job. He’d also cost a lot of money.

Berhalter, 50, took over in December 2018 — one year after the USMNT infamously failed

to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. He’s overseen a “golden generation” of American players, a young core the majority of which plays at the highest levels in Europe.

A former USMNT player himself, Berhalter as manager won two continental championships — the Nations League title in 2021 and the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup, both times defeating Mexico in the final.

His team qualified for the 2022 World Cup, where the team subsequently reached the Round of 16 before falling to the Netherlands.

Berhalter’s contract expired following the World Cup in December 2022. After a search for a new manager, the USSF announced in June 2023 that Berhalter was returning as manager.

But in his first major tournament since being rehired, the Copa America, the USMNT was humiliated. After beating Bolivia in the opener, the USMNT lost to Panama and Uruguay and became the first host nation ever to be eliminated in the group stage in tournament history.

The USSF announced following the team’s exit that it would evaluate the head-coaching position. And on Wednesday, they decided for a new chapter.

Berhalter’s tenure was also marred by a brief scandal. After one of the team’s more promising players, Gio Reyna, did not receive much playing time at the 2022 World Cup, Berhalter, while speaking at a leadership conference, al-

luded to a player he had to discipline and nearly send home due to bad behavior. Berhalter did not name Reyna by name, but it was clear who Berhalter was referring to.

Berhalter claimed he believed he was speaking off-the-record, but Reyna subsequently blasted Berhalter and claimed that the ex-coach told him the incident would remain in-house.

Soon after, the USSF found that Reyna’s parents, Claudio and Danielle, attempted to retaliate against Berhalter. Danielle contacted the USSF about an alleged fight Berhalter got into with his now-wife, Rosalind, 30 years prior when the two were teammates at the University of North Carolina.

Danielle Reyna played with Rosalind Berhalter at North Carolina, while Berhalter and Claudio Reyna were teammates on the USMNT.

Berhalter claimed he was being blackmailed by the Reynas. And the USSF’s investigation and a report by a law firm determined that Berhalter did not improperly withhold information about that 1992 incident, paving the way for him to be rehired in 2023.

Reyna was a staple in Berhalter’s lineups at the Copa America, but now the two will no longer be intertwined.

Perhaps the most important cycle in USMNT history lies ahead in the near future.

But first, finding the man to guide them there.

*jschwartz@nypost.com*



## UGLY SCENE:

Uruguay’s players argue with fans at the end of a Copa America semifinal they lost to Colombia, 1-0, in Charlotte, N.C., on Wednesday night.

AP



## Uruguayan players fight

By CHRISTIAN ARNOLD

An ugly scene unfolded after Colombia defeated Uruguay 1-0 in a Copa America semifinal Wednesday night at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, N.C., as Uruguay players stormed into the stands to engage with fans of Colombia.

Broadcast footage and video from inside the stadium showed a number

of Uruguayan players entering the stands, with punches being thrown and what appeared to be at least one beverage being flung into the melee.

According to multiple reports, Liverpool star Darwin Nunez was among those in the fracas.

The shirtless Nunez could be seen being held back by people in the stands and then a Colombian fan appeared to strike him in the face.

## Berhalter axed after U.S. Copa failure



**KICKED TO THE CURB:** Coach Gregg Berhalter's inability to get the U.S. Men's National Team out of group play in the Copa America tournament despite being its host proved to be his downfall, as he was fired Wednesday.

Getty Images; AP

## in stands after semi loss

It also appeared that Nunez was able to land a punch on someone in another clip.

Uruguay's Jose Maria Gimenez said the Colombian fans had been the aggressors and were being menacing toward family members of the Uruguay team, USA Today reported.

"This is a disaster, our family was in danger," Gimenez said. "We had to get into the stands to get our

loved ones out, with small newborn babies. There was not a single police officer ... and we were there standing up for our own."

Police officers could be seen struggling to make their way into the fracas to try and contain the situation, and even when they did arrive, there were still some people attempting to push and shove.

camold1@nypost.com



**LONDON CALLING:** England's Ollie Watkins celebrates after scoring the game-winning goal past Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen during a Euro 2024 semifinal Wednesday. AP

# Fit for a king: England in final after stoppage goal

By STEVE DOUGLAS

DORTMUND, Germany — England is into another European Championship final after its latest dramatic, come-from-behind win that even took King Charles III on a roller-coaster ride.

Ollie Watkins, who came on for captain Harry Kane in a bold call by coach Gareth Southgate, scored in the first minute of stoppage time to earn England a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Wednesday and a shot at Spain in the title match.

In the knockout stage at Euro 2024, England has scored a stoppage-time equalizer through Jude Bellingham before edging past Slovakia in the last 16 and needed a penalty-shootout to see off Switzerland in the quarterfinals.

England is keeping its supporters back home on the edge of their seats — and that includes its monarch.

"If I may encourage you to secure victory before the need for any last minute wonder-goals or another penalties drama, I am sure the stresses on the nation's collective heart rate and blood pressure would be greatly alleviated!" the king said in a congratulatory message soon after the game in Dortmund.

Watkins' goal was fit for a king.

He had only made one previous appearance at Euro 2024 — as a substitute in the group game against Denmark — so it was a sur-

<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Euro 2024 semis</b>
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	<b>1</b>	

prise when he was introduced by Southgate in the 80th minute in England's biggest match so far.

The gamble paid off.

Fed by another substitute in Cole Palmer, Watkins took a touch with his back to goal just inside the area and, from a tight angle, smashed a fierce shot into the bottom corner.

"Unbelievable — I've been waiting for that moment for weeks," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker who was the fourth-equal top scorer in the Premier League last season. "It's taken a lot of hard work to get to where I am today. I got the opportunity and took it with both hands."

It was painful for Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman.

"I had a feeling toward the end of the match that maybe we could score," Koeman said, "and for sure in extra time I'd have put money on us."

England will play Lamine Yamal and Spain in Sunday's final in Berlin. It will be the nation's first title match on foreign soil, having won the World Cup in 1966 and lost to Italy in the Euro 2020 final — both times at Wembley Stadium.

"It's going to be unbelievably tough — a really difficult game," Kane said of the title match, with Spain widely regarded as the best team at the tournament. "One

more game to make history."

The sea of orange in the giant South Stand at Dortmund's Westfalenstadion fell silent for the first time after Watkins' late goal. It housed the most vocal of the Dutch supporters who dominated the city center before marching in their thousands to the stadium ahead of the game. Police reported three separate clashes between fans from both countries in the city.

It gave the occasion the feeling of a home match for the Dutch and England was up against it even more after the 21-year-old Xavi Simons became the second youngest scorer for the Netherlands at a Euros.

The Paris Saint-Germain midfielder dispossessed Declan Rice about 40 meters (yards) out, drove forward and unleashed a shot into the far corner from outside the area.

Compared to the 16-year-old Yamal, Spain's new superstar, Simons is a soccer veteran but this was another case of a young player shining on the big stage at the Euros.

Kane has had plenty of big moments at major tournaments and he had another when he slotted home a penalty after Denzel Dumfries' outstretched leg made contact with Kane's foot as the England striker attempted a shot.

Kane became the sixth player to be on three goals for the tournament. — AP

# PAYING A BIG COMPLEMENT

## As secondary scorer, Bridges should fit right in

By ZACH BRAZILLER

It won't take much adjusting for Mikal Bridges to get used to his new role with the Knicks.

It will be similar to the one he had at Villanova, with the Suns and even recently Team USA basketball. If anything, being a go-to guy with the Nets was more out of the ordinary for the talented two-way wing.

"I think it's not going to be that hard honestly," Bridges said this week, as he was introduced as the newest Knick. "I think it's just knowing the brand we play here, and playing the right way is who I am. It's like a natural thing. It's kind of like going to [Team] USA, kind of the same thing where obviously, going to USA last year, the role's going to change."

The 6-foot-6 Bridges has excelled as a secondary offensive option from his time at Villanova until now, as someone who can score big when called upon but wasn't leaned on to be that guy every night. On a Knicks team with Jalen Brunson, Julius Randle and OG Anunoby, he won't be asked to do that. Bridges will be one of several quality players for the contending Knicks.



**WHATEVER YOU NEED:** Mikal Bridges says he can adjust his game to whatever role is needed, as he did with Team USA last summer. Aside from his time with the Nets, he has been a secondary scorer throughout his career, which he likely will be with the Knicks, too.

"Just being ready," he said, regarding his approach with his new team. "I adapt pretty fast. Listen, I just want to win. I know the things I've got to do to help us

win, and I'm excited."

A part of that excitement is reuniting with his former Villanova teammates — Brunson, Josh Hart and Donte DiVincenzo. Bridges

watched them excel together from a distance and reach Game 7 of the Eastern Conference semifinals. Now, he's part of "Knicksanova," as Post columnist Mike Vaccaro has dubbed them. Bridges was on both national championship teams with the Wildcats, in 2016 and 2018, and is hoping to win a title in the NBA with them now, too.

He sounded most excited to play with Brunson again. When Brunson signed a four-year, \$104 million with the Knicks two summers ago, some considered it an overpay. The move was heavily criticized. Bridges knew better, tweeting at the time: "Ya'll must not know how cold JB really is lol." That looks smart now, as Brunson has developed into one of the top lead guards in the league.

"J.B.'s just who he is. ... I know how much he works. I know how crazy his father is," Bridges said, referring to Knicks assistant coach Rick Brunson. "I know what he's capable of. So that was kind of simple for me. But yeah, honestly, just J.B. in general, Villanova years, playing in college, it's kind of like second nature playing basketball with him.

"He plays the right way. I know how to play off of him. Excited to play with him and everybody on this team."

Bridges' arrival and Anunoby re-signing has given Knicks fans hope that the roster is now in place to be a legitimate title contender. Bridges figures to mesh well here, not only because of how well he knows Brunson, Hart and DiVincenzo, but because he provides a skill set as a tenacious defender and strong offensive player that complements the roster. Plus, he is an iron man, with a streak of 474 games played since he was drafted 10th overall by the Suns in 2010, which should endear Bridges to his new coach, Tom Thibodeau.

"Looking at the team last year, I think I fit in really well," Bridges said. "Just, obviously, you've got two All-NBA guys, J.B. and Julius. How I play basketball, just a good brand of basketball. Know how to make winning plays, play the right way. So I think I fit in pretty well."

*zbraziller@nypost.com*

## Knicks to get Vegas look at intriguing '21 draft pick

By STEFAN BONDY

Rokas Jokubaitis, the intriguing Knicks draft pick from Lithuania, is coming back to Vegas.

The 23-year-old guard will play for the Knicks' summer league squad, both an NBA source and Jokubaitis' current professional team, Barcelona, confirmed to The Post on Wednesday.

Jokubaitis was drafted 34th overall by the Knicks in 2021, two spots before team

president Leon Rose chose Miles McBride.

Jokubaitis played three summer league games with the Knicks that year — totaling just 29 minutes — and left to play overseas with Barcelona, the Euroleague powerhouse.

Jokubaitis didn't participate in the past two summer leagues, so this month rep-



**ROKAS JAKUBAITIS**

resents the first time he has worked closely with the Knicks coaching staff in three years.

His availability for summer league was secured after Lithuania was eliminated in the Olympic qualifiers Monday, as Jokubaitis' agent told The Post that the guard would've otherwise had to skip Vegas to prepare for the Olympics.

But now he's free and joining a Knicks roster that is expected to also include Pacome Dadiet, the 2024 first-round pick, and Tyler Kolek, the second-round guard from Marquette.

Barcelona's media director, Robert Guell, confirmed a report from Sport45 in Spain that the club gave "the green light" to Jokubaitis' summer league participation.

As a contributor with the senior sides of both Barce-

lona and the Lithuanian national team, Jokubaitis pedigree deserves attention in Vegas.

Additionally, Jokubaitis' future with Barcelona seems tenuous, as his playing time dropped and the backcourt grew crowded with the addition of long-time NBA point guard Ricky Rubio.

Jokubaitis has one year left on his deal with Barcelona, but the team's coach seemed noncommittal about Jokub-

aitis' return next season.

"It's a long summer," Barca coach Joan Penarroya told reporters.

At 6-foot-4, Jokubaitis is a combo guard who is more of a scorer than facilitator. In the four Olympic qualifiers for Lithuania, he averaged 20.9 minutes, 8.8 points and 4.0 assists while shooting 40.7 percent.

The Knicks open their summer league slate Saturday against the Hornets.

*sbondy@nypost.com*

N.Y. Post: Charles Weizelberg; Getty Images

**I adapt pretty fast. Listen, I just want to win. I know the things I've got to do to help us win and I'm excited.**

—Mikal Bridges



By TIM REYNOLDS

LAS VEGAS — Derrick White of the NBA champion Celtics has replaced the Clippers' Kawhi Leonard on the U.S. team for the Paris Olympics, USA Basketball said Wednesday in the first shake-up to a roster that was announced in the spring.

Leonard missed 12 of the Clippers' final 14 games this past season with right knee inflammation, though he said in recent days that he felt fine and the knee was doing well. USA Basketball said it, along with the Clippers, made the decision on Leonard's status for Paris.

"Kawhi has been ramping up for the Olympics over the past several weeks and had a few strong practices in Las Vegas," USA Basketball said in a statement. "He felt ready to compete. However, he respects that USA Basketball and the Clippers determined it's in his best interest to spend the remainder of the summer preparing for the upcoming season rather than participating in the Olympic Games in Paris."

White averaged 15.2 points and 5.2 assists for the Celtics this past season. His selection gives Boston three of the 12 players on the U.S. roster — Celtics teammates Jayson Tatum and Jrue Holiday also are Paris-bound.

White is expected to be in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, later this week to join the U.S. squad. The team will fly to Abu Dhabi from Las Vegas on Thursday and is scheduled to practice

# Kawhi bails on Olympics; White added to squad



**KAWHI LEONARD**



**DERRICK WHITE**

there Saturday ahead of exhibition games against Australia on July 15 and Serbia on July 17.

"I am happy to announce that Derrick will compete at his first Olympic Games on the heels of a championship season in Boston," USA Basketball managing director Grant Hill said. "We look forward to him joining the team in the coming days as we continue preparations for Paris."

"I want to thank Kawhi for his commitment to the USA Men's National Team," Hill added. "He earned the opportunity to represent the United States, but USA Basketball and Clippers leader-

ship felt it's important to allow Kawhi to prepare for the NBA season."

White — a second-team All-Defensive selection after this past NBA season, meaning he'll clearly take some of the on-ball defending duties that the Olympic team likely envisioned Leonard having — has some USA Basketball experience, including being part of the 2019 World Cup team that finished seventh in China. He and the Celtics agreed on a four-year extension worth nearly \$126 million after the playoff run, one in which he led Boston with 65 made 3-pointers on a team-best 40.4 percent shooting from beyond the arc.

Leonard is a two-time NBA champion, six-time All-Star and six-time All-NBA player, but injury issues have been a recurring theme in his career. USA Basketball had monitored him closely in recent weeks, making sure he was doing well enough to be on the court after his season with the Clippers ended prematurely.

—AP

## Porter admits to rigging games

By KYLE SCHNITZER

The former NBA player banned for life for sports betting admitted Wednesday to tipping off gamblers to games he purposely was going to rig — and earning them \$1 million — in an effort to clear his own gambling debt.

Former Raptors forward Jontay Porter, 24, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud in the gambling scandal and will owe an estimated \$456,000 in fines and restitution.

Porter admitted to placing bets and working with others "in order to get out from under a large gambling debt."

"I know what I did was wrong and unlawful, and I'm deeply sorry for my conduct," Porter told Brooklyn federal Judge James R. Cho.

Prosecutors recommended 41 to 51 months in prison at his sentencing, which is scheduled for Dec. 18. He was released on \$250,000 bond, insured by his mom and wife, and he must continue with counseling

regarding his gambling problem.

Porter surrendered to the feds Wednesday morning after a criminal case was opened against him last week, tying him to the alleged betting ring that hinged on Porter's shady performances.

Four gamblers — Long Phi Pham, Mahmud Mollah, Timothy McCormack and Ammar Awawdeh — face charges in the case for cashing in on bets from two games Porter purposely bowed out of early, federal prosecutors have said.

Porter, who had racked up huge gambling debts, tipped off the group at the beginning of the season and was encouraged to clear those debts by botching performances in order for his co-conspirators' bets to hit, prosecutors said.

The quartet allegedly placed "prop bets" — or proposition bets based on a player's performance, like betting whether a player will go over or under of a certain number in a statistical category — after finding out ahead of time through a group chat which

games Porter would botch.

In the Raptors' Jan. 26 game against the Clippers, Porter allegedly told one of the defendants that he was going to take himself out early, claiming he was injured. He played just four minutes in the game after leaving with a phony eye injury.

Porter then ran a similar stunt during the March 20 game against the Kings, only this time he was going to claim that he was allegedly too sick and had to leave the game early.

Porter's stats both performed under expected totals from gambling books.

Each defendant placed "under" prop bets on Porter's performance from those games, knowing in advance that he was going to not play the full games, according to court papers.

On April 4, the same day that Porter was banned for life from basketball for betting on games, he texted the group chat and told them that they "might just get hit w a rico" — referring to a racketeering charge — before asking them to wipe their phones clean.

kschnitzer@nypost.com



**JONTAY PORTER**

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

The Francisco Alvarez Effect has been real. The Mets are 29-13 in games in which their precocious young catcher has played after Wednesday's 6-2 win over the Nationals at Citi Field — and 17-32 without him.

Sure, the upgrade with the bat — his .852 OPS began play Wednesday as third-best among catchers with at least 100 plate appearances — has been significant. But Alvarez's influence on the pitching staff has been nearly as stark.

Consider the fact that with Alvarez squatting behind home plate, Mets pitchers brought a 3.25 ERA into Wednesday. The Mets' overall team ERA entered play an entire run higher — 4.25 — and only four primary catchers in all of MLB brought better marks than Alvarez's into play (Atlanta's Sean Murphy at 2.55, Philadelphia's J.T. Realmuto at 2.86, Boston's Reese McGuire at 3.01 and Seattle's Cal Raleigh at 3.25).

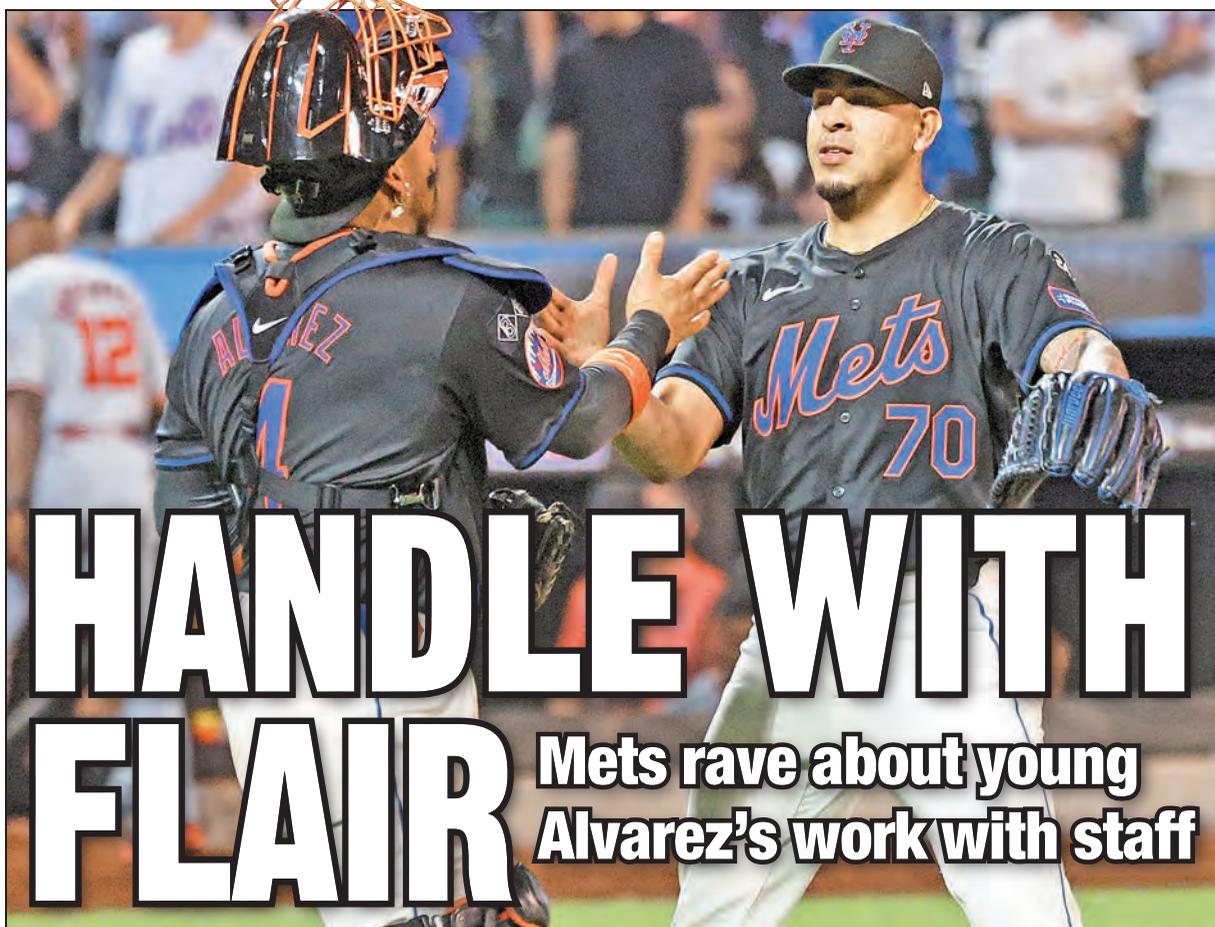
It is not just that the 22-year-old is growing into a star with his bat. A second-year ball of energy has emerged as a defensive difference-maker in the most demanding position in the game while working with a predominantly veteran staff.

"Alvy is amazing," Jose Quintana said after partnering with Alvarez during Tuesday's win. "I love this kid."

Quintana's ERA when throwing to Alvarez: 1.76. Quintana's ERA throwing to anyone else: 5.86.

He's not alone. Sean Manaea's ERA when throwing to Alvarez: 1.33. Manaea throwing to anyone else: 5.17.

Manaea pointed to Alvarez's boisterous personality



# HANDLE WITH FLAIR

## Mets rave about young Alvarez's work with staff

**HELPING HAND:** Second-year catcher Francisco Alvarez celebrates with Jose Butto after Wednesday night's win. A big-hitting prospect, Alvarez's work behind the plate is also garnering rave reviews.

N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg

as a trait that separates him.

"He's very outgoing and outspoken and kind of has those leadership qualities," said Manaea, a nine-year veteran. "I know he's very young, but you can sense that he's just very confident in his work, and you see that in his [preparation]."

"For me, from my perspective, there's no reason not to trust him."

Adrian Houser's ERA with Alvarez: 2.50. Houser's ERA with anyone else: 6.89.

It only took a couple spring training outings for the first-year Met to realize

he would enjoy working with Alvarez.

"After getting to talk to him for a little bit, it was, 'Hey, this is how I like to pitch, this is how I like to attack,'" Houser said of his early talks with Alvarez. "And after a couple outings, it was already pretty easy. 'Hey, I liked how you threw that.'"

"We got on the same page pretty quick."

There have been no complaints about Alvarez's prep work, knowledge of the pitchers he is catching and the opposing hitters. But the

most obvious quality in his defensive game is a demonstrative element to how he catches.

Especially in a big spot or when a pitcher is beginning to tire, it is as if Alvarez attempts to will his partner across the finish line. He will dramatically wave his glove upward when he wants to encourage his pitcher to throw a pitch at the top of the zone. He will tap the dirt in demanding typically a breaking ball gets bounced.

A staff with tiring arms and occasionally tiring en-

ergy has appreciated the boost from a catcher who doesn't seem to run out of energy.

"He really wants you to execute this pitch," Houser said. "I think that helps a lot. He's really trying to work hard for that pitch."

"When you see him, like, 'get it up,'" Manaea said, "It kind of reiterates that fact, that we're going fastball up. ... Having that visual feedback can be helpful."

"And then when you throw a good pitch, and he gives you one of those [fist pumps]."

# Senga schedule in limbo

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

The Mets will wait to see how Kodai Senga feels, but the rehabbing ace may change up his schedule and pitch on normal, four days' rest for his next minor league start.

Over the past year and a half, the Mets have given Senga an extra day of rest between starts as often as possible, which is more akin to how he was used in Japan. His start Tuesday with Triple-A Syracuse came on five days' rest. But with the majors and minors taking a break beginning Monday for the All-Star festivities, the Mets are contemplating pitching Senga on the more normal, four days' rest on Sunday.

## METS NOTES

"That's still TBD," manager Carlos Mendoza said before the Mets beat the Nationals, 6-2, at Citi Field on Wednesday. "Hopefully by [Thursday], end of the day, [we'll know]."

Senga built up to 52 pitches but in just 2 2/3 innings Tuesday in his first start with Syracuse and second rehab outing overall. He is likely multiple starts away from becoming an option for his 2024 debut.

The minor league season pauses after Sunday's games and does not continue until the following Friday. If Senga, who is attempting to come back from a right shoulder capsule strain and triceps tightness, is unable to pitch on four days' rest, he could instead throw a simulated game Monday.

► **Jake Diekmann**, who entered with one out and a runner in the seventh inning and struck out the only two batters he faced, appeared in his 700th career game.

"It's not easy to do," Mendoza said of the 37-year-old Diekmann, who is in his 13th season. "Proud of him for how long he's been doing this. ... Huge influence there in that locker room."

► **Mark Vientos**, who smacked an RBI double in the sixth inning to tie the game, has eight RBIs in his past seven home games.

# Nimmo: Snub not behind power surge

By ZACH BRAZILLER

Brandon Nimmo hasn't hid his disappointment over being bypassed for the All-Star Game.

His numbers, the Mets' outfielder believes, are more than good enough to warrant selection. But that's not what's behind his recent power surge.

"Does it give me any extra [motivation]? You know, sure, but that's never really worked for me," Nimmo told The Post after he homered for the third straight game in the Mets' 6-2 win over the Nationals at Citi Field on Wednesday night. "It worked in football when I played

football, but it's never worked in baseball for me."

To Nimmo, he's now getting rewarded for consistently hitting the ball hard. He's not trying to hit home runs, but they are coming, nine long balls in his past 20 games. With 16 homers, he's on pace to set a career high, after going deep 24 times a year ago.

Nimmo has never been thought of as a power hitter, or even a run-producer. His best asset was always his ability to get on base, with a career .379 on-base percentage produced mainly out of the leadoff stop. But recently, that's changing. He's also sporting an impressive .832 OPS

and has driven in a team-high 59 runs, nine shy of his personal best of 68 set last year.

"I've kind of always known, when I've been in the big leagues, that there was more in the tank," Nimmo said. "It was just getting it out while playing a season, making adjustments, getting a little bit better here and there as you're trying to compete on an everyday basis. You want to be able to produce as you're getting better. ... I did know there was more inside of me and I could be better, and this is kind of the player I always dreamed and hoped and thought I could turn into. It's just taken a little bit of time."

On May 18, the Mets moved Francisco Lindor into the leadoff spot. Nimmo initially batted third, before settling into the second spot. He's excelled there. Since May 31 spanning 33 games, Nimmo is slashing .315/.396/.591 with a .986 OPS, nine home runs and 30 RBIs.

"I do feel like my numbers have spoken for themselves this year, and I do feel like I've played All-Star worthy to be selected," Nimmo said. "But I wouldn't say I'm trying to go out there and hit home runs every day. I'm still doing the same stuff I've been trying to do the whole year. I'm just seeing a few more results home run-wise."

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The Yankees' latest summer swoon has reached a familiar stage: the pitchforks coming out for Aaron Boone.

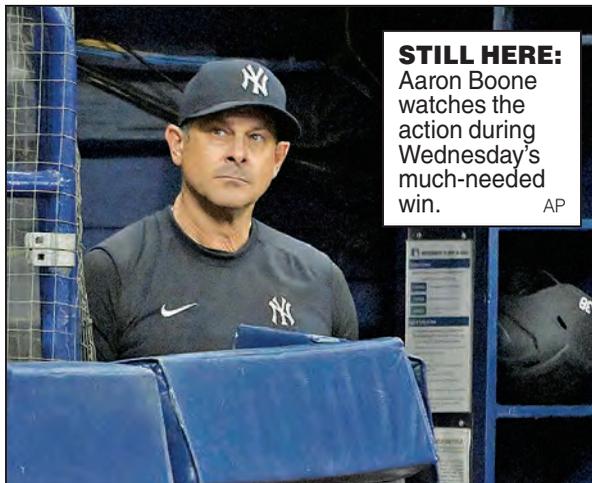
And though much of the fan outrage lately has been centered around Boone — which may have been tempered at least for a night on Wednesday, as the Yankees beat the Rays 2-1 to win for the seventh time in their last 24 games — general manager Brian Cashman offered him a vote of confidence before the series began on Tuesday.

“Obviously he works extremely hard,” Cashman said after making the trip to Tropicana Field because of the team's struggles. “He's very well-connected with these guys. He's charged every day with pushing the right buttons the best he can with what he's got. I think he's navigating that as well as he possibly can.”

“It was a tidal wave of success here for the first two months and then here, as we closed out June and entered July, we've hit a really rough patch for an extended period of time. Ultimately it all comes together with what our current record is, but we gotta be playing better than we currently are right now as an entire unit.”

The Yankees had the best record in baseball on June 14

# Pressure mounting on Boone, Bombers



at 50-22. Since then, they are 6-16, which is the majors' worst record during that span. In that time, the Yankees have gone from holding a 3½-game lead atop the AL East to trailing the Orioles by two games. They finished Wednesday as the top AL wild card but with the Twins (2½ games back), Red Sox (4½ games back) and Royals (five games back) suddenly nipping at their heels. The Astros have also begun to turn things around and the defending World Series

champion Rangers are lurking and getting hot as they try to decide whether or not to sell at the trade deadline.

Boone, who is in the final year of his contract, took responsibility Tuesday night when asked what he could do as manager to help the Yankees snap out of their prolonged funk.

“It starts with me,” Boone said. “I filter in through the coaches and it's about us trying to get these guys prepared the best we can, setting a tone with how we

present ourselves. But it's on us as coaches to put our players in the best position possible to go out there and be successful.

“We got to continue to try to do that to the best of our ability and trust that the ball's going to start to bounce our way a little bit and we can get it rolling here. It starts on that bump and we gotta keep at it.”

And while the Yankees' struggles of the last three-plus weeks may have slightly loosened what not long ago seemed like a surefire grip on a playoff spot, they still ended Wednesday with the majors' fourth-best record. As of Wednesday morning, FanGraphs had their playoff odds at 97.1 percent.

“Acknowledging the last three, four weeks have been brutal — we know we're better than that, and everyone's a little bit frustrated,” Boone said before Wednesday's win. “But the other reality of the situation is we've put ourselves in a good spot here however many games into it. We've set ourselves up to achieve all our hopes and dreams in the season.”

# Soto can't shake hand injury

By GREG JOYCE

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Juan Soto took a big whiff at strike three in the third inning Tuesday night and immediately grimaced in a concerning look.

The Yankees star remained in the game and was back in the lineup Wednesday, going 2-for-4 in a much-needed 2-1 win over the Rays.

But manager Aaron Boone acknowledged that uncomfortable-looking swing was due to the right hand discomfort that Soto has still been feeling at times after banging it on the ground against the Blue Jays on June 28.

“Every now and then, he'll take a swing where it bothers him a little bit or a swing-and-miss where it bothers him,” Boone said Wednesday at Tropicana Field. “But overall, he's doing pretty well with it. It's obviously not affecting his ability to impact the ball much.”

Soto homered a few innings after initially sustaining the bruised hand and was scratched from the lineup the next day because he was having difficulty swinging the bat. He was a late

## YANKEES NOTES

addition to the lineup the following day after it had improved enough and has not missed a game since, though he entered Wednesday batting 5-for-29 (.172) with eight walks, one home run and a .662 OPS in eight games since the injury.

“He's definitely been grinding through some things, but not something that I think any of us are too worried about,” Boone said.

➤ **Giancarlo Stanton**, who did “quite a bit of running” on Tuesday according to Boone, could be in a position to play in games when the Yankees return from the All-Star break next Friday. The team is still debating whether Stanton, coming back from a hamstring strain that he suffered on June 22, will need a rehab assignment before coming back.

Stanton missed six weeks with a hamstring strain last year but only played in one rehab game before returning to the Yankees. He homered and doubled in his first two games back but then fell into a slump.

➤ The Yankees signed lefty reliever **Tim Mayza** to a minor league contract after he was designated for assignment and released by the Blue Jays.

Mayza, who gave up **Aaron Judge's** 61st home run in 2022, had an 8.03 ERA in 35 appearances this season for the Blue Jays with his velocity down. But it was only last year that he posted a 1.52 ERA across 69 games, which the Yankees are hoping they can tap back into.

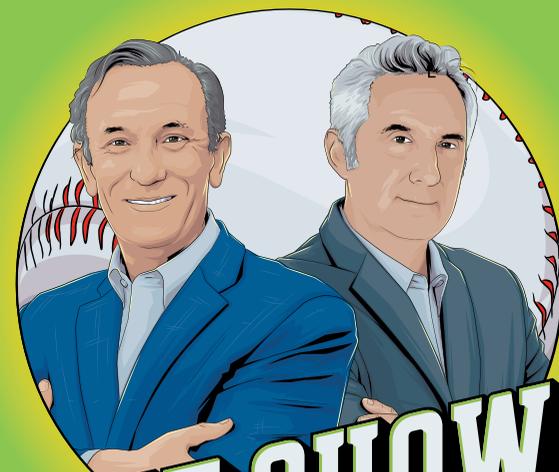
“We'll see what we have,” Boone said. “Pretty good track record. It's been a tough year for him ... but he's been a guy that's performed really well in the AL East.”

➤ **DJ LeMahieu** took a beating at the plate, getting hit on the left pinky by a 92 mph fastball and later fouling off a ball that bounced up and hit him on the neck, just below his jaw. After being tended to by a trainer and Boone both times — needing a longer breather in the second instance — he remained in the game.

➤ Soto stole second base in the eighth inning, marking the Yankees' first steal since June 14 — snapping a 21-game streak without one.

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# UP, UP & JOSE!

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

From the studio to the batter's box, Jose Iglesias is racking up the hit singles.

The "OMG" singer is moonlighting as a platoon second baseman who continues to threaten to turn into more than that.

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**NATIONALS** 2 **Box score**  
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The righty-hitting Iglesias, who gets his starts at second base against opposing lefties, was left in the game against righty reliever Derek Law and responded with the go-ahead, two-run single in the Mets' eventual 6-2 win over the Nationals at Citi Field on Wednesday.

With the bases loaded and no outs in the sixth inning of a tie game, manager Carlos Mendoza did not call for Jeff McNeil. The 34-year-old Iglesias, who somehow has turned into MLB's best clutch hitter, bounced a hit up the middle and motioned toward the dugout on his way to first base to fire up his teammates in a game they were suddenly leading.

"He's just life for us," said winning pitcher Luis Severino. "Even when he's not playing, we got his energy in the dugout. I'm the 'Oh My God' sign [holder] when I'm not pitching. I'm ready to get that thing out there when somebody hits a homer. It keeps everybody happy."

Two batters later, Harrison Bader grounded into what appeared to be an inning-ending double play, but second baseman Luis Garcia Jr. threw wildly to first. First baseman Juan Yezpez picked

## Iglesias catalyst again in decisive 6th inning of Mets' comeback win



up the ball that ricocheted off the railing and threw home a split second too late, allowing Iglesias to slide in safely for an insurance run.

Iglesias quickly got to his feet, looked at the fans behind home plate and threw his right arm into the air, urging the 24,887 on hand to get to their feet.

"It's the energy," Iglesias said. "It's the energy that we need. It's the energy that we have."

The Mets, who were 11 games under .500 in early June, have ridden that energy to within a half-game of the final NL wild card.

The Mets (46-45) are a hot

streak away from solidifying themselves as trade-deadline buyers. In winning four of five, already taking a series from the Nationals before Thursday's finale and awaiting the Rockies before the break, they have the makings of that hot streak.

"We know where we're at, but it's still July," Mendoza said. "And I think the mindset here is 'Take care of one day at a time.'"

Maybe the biggest difference between the cold early-season Mets and the June-July hot Mets is a lineup that has gotten both potent and deep. Perhaps the largest

key has been the return of Francisco Alvarez, who continues to impress at and behind the plate. But Iglesias is certainly among the variables that have led to the mid-season turnaround. While McNeil continues to scuffle, Iglesias keeps playing a winning tune.

After his 3-for-4 night, Iglesias' average is up to .338. That pales in comparison to his .526 average (10-for-19) with runners in scoring position.

"I have no idea," Iglesias, whose 27 games played this season have resulted in an 18-9 record, said about his clutch streak. "I'm just

trying to give my 100 percent every single at-bat, every single pitch, and try to put the team in a good position."

Until the game-changing sixth, the Mets' only offense against Nationals starter Patrick Corbin (who entered with a 5.49 ERA) was a Brandon Nimmo home run in the first inning. It was Nimmo's third straight game with a dinger since learning Sunday he did not crack the All-Star Game.

Severino (6 1/3 innings of two-run ball on four hits, three walks and two hit batters) pitched well enough to win and lowered his ERA to 3.78, though his biggest blemish came with his legs. The Nationals scored two runs on a bloop single from Yezpez, the second because Severino did not back up home plate and Tyrone Taylor's throw skittered under Francisco Alvarez.

The Mets' offense ensured that would not be how the game would be remembered.

Before Iglesias' go-ahead hit in the sixth, Mark Vientos bounced a double off the wall to tie it. The Mets added on in the eighth, when Iglesias — who else? — fought a double down the first-base line before scoring on a triple from Taylor.

Jake Diekman, Danny Young and Jose Butto (first career save) combined for 2 2/3 scoreless innings in relief.

Considering the way the Mets' bullpen has been going, there might have been a few "Oh my God" utterings around the dugout.

msanchez@nypost.com

## Tiring Severino shows he's still got gas left in tank

By DAN MARTIN

The last time Luis Severino threw this many innings in the majors was during his second All-Star season with the Yankees, way back in 2018.

And after allowing eight or more hits in three of his last four outings, it was fair to wonder whether the workload was taking a toll on Severino, in the midst of a bounce-back season with the Mets.

But he had another strong

outing in Wednesday's 6-2 win over the Nationals at Citi Field, as he allowed just two runs — on four hits — over 6 1/3 innings.

Severino said he was "happy" with how he felt physically.

"The work we're doing here and in the offseason is paying off," Severino said. "The routine we do now, we'll keep it the same routine and I'm looking forward to a good second half."

Severino used a six-pitch mix, with more sweepers,

against Washington.

He didn't allow a hit until Ruiz's single with one out in the fourth and was in control outside of a rough fourth inning.

About the only thing Severino did wrong on Wednesday — and he somehow did it on consecutive plays in the fourth — was fail to backup home plate on base hits.

The first one came with two on and two out, when Juan Yezpez singled to right, and it cost the Mets a run.

Tyrone Taylor fired home and it got away from Francisco Alvarez.

Keibert Ruiz scored easily on the play, but Severino staying near the mound allowed Lane Thomas to score all the way from first on the play to give Washington a 2-1 lead.

"At first, I thought they were cutting the throw [off]," Severino said. "After that, I saw everything that happened. Of course, that was bad on me. I should have done a better job there."

Then Ildemaro Vargas singled to left and Severino lingered near the mound again, but Thomas was held at third, so no more damage was done.

Asked about the plays, Carlos Mendoza said: "We'll address it. He knows. He let the play develop and he didn't get to where he needed to get to. We'll fix it."

Otherwise, though, the manager was encouraged again by what he saw.

"He was good," Mendoza said.

And Mendoza added the team would "keep a close eye" on Severino physically, considering his injury history.

Severino was confident his good form would continue in the second half and said his training was "way different" this season.

"My biggest concern going into free agency [last offseason] was getting good trainers and people to keep me on the field," Severino said of his decision to sign with the Mets after his final season in The Bronx went haywire.



**PUMP UP THE JAMS:** Jose Iglesias fires up the Mets bench after hitting a go-ahead two-run single in the sixth inning, then scoring on an errant throw to fuel a 6-2 Mets win over the Nationals at Citi Field on Wednesday.  
Corey Sipkin; Getty Images

# Dire pen comes up big for once

By DAN MARTIN

Bullpen arms are going down with alarming frequency at Citi Field and it happened again Wednesday, as the Mets — on the same day Phil Maton arrived after being acquired from the Rays — lost Reed Garrett to an elbow injury.

With Garrett on the 15-day IL and waiting for an MRI result after experiencing forearm and elbow discomfort following his rough outing on Tuesday, the Mets somehow got a boost from the pen in Wednesday's 6-2 win over Washington.

Three relievers combined to toss 2 2/3 scoreless innings, with two outs coming from the struggling Jake Diekman, two more from Danny Young — just recalled from Triple-A Syracuse — and the final four outs from Jose Butto, who earned his first save.

"I've been saying it, they're gonna get it done," Carlos Mendoza said of the beleaguered pen. "They've been going through a rough stretch here, but at some point, I'm pretty confident they're gonna get the job done and tonight was a perfect example of it: We asked a few guys to come in in different situations, in spots they're not used to, and they got the job done."

Butto, who showed promise in the rotation earlier in the season, has pitched well in his three appearances out of the pen.

Including Wednesday's save, he's pitched five shutout innings and impressed Mendoza with his ability to pitch more than one inning and bounce back quickly, which is why the manager said the team will likely keep him there at least through the All-Star break.

Asked about his role, Butto said, "I just want to be here to help the team."

The Mets will need to continue to be creative — and to add more help in the pen — if they expect to stay in the wild-card race.

Garrett joined Brooks Raley, Drew Smith (both out for the season) and Sean Reid-Foley on the IL.

Because of the number of close games the Mets have been in, with little margin for error — as well as the recently completed suspension of closer Edwin Diaz — the Mets have had to use a number of their relievers in high-leverage situations.

It's something Mendoza acknowledged might have played a role in the number of injuries the pen has seen.

"You're gonna ask guys to throw more stressful pitches and that might be the case with Reed Garrett," Mendoza said. "Those are conversations we're having. ... It's unfortunate we're dealing with the [injury] situation. We'll continue to review our process and make sure we're not putting guys at risk."

## ON DECK: vs. Nationals Thursday, 1:10 p.m., SNY, WCBS (880 AM)

**LHP David Peterson**



**2024 stats:**  
3-0, 3.58 ERA

**Career vs. WAS:**  
4-1, 3.44 ERA

**Last start:**  
Saturday at PIT;  
4.1 IP, 5 H, 2 ER

**PITCH BREAKDOWN**

**31%** Sinker    **25%** Fastball    **20%** Slider

**LHP MacKenzie Gore**



**2024 stats:**  
6-7, 3.83 ERA

**Career vs. NYM:**  
1-2, 3.96 ERA

**Last start:**  
Saturday vs. STL;  
3.1 IP, 6 H, 5 ER

**PITCH BREAKDOWN**

**55%** Fastball    **20%** Curveball    **14%** Slider

**UP NEXT**

**FRIDAY:** vs. Rockies, 7:10 p.m., SNY, WCBS  
TBD vs. RHP Tanner Gordon

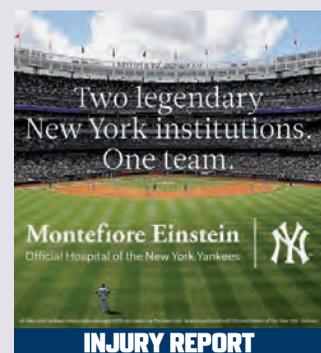
**SATURDAY:** vs. Rockies, 4:10 p.m., SNY, WCBS  
TBD vs. TBD

**INJURY REPORT**

- Reed Garrett was placed on the 15-day injured list with right elbow inflammation. The Mets were waiting on MRI results.
- Kodai Senga (shoulder, triceps) may make his third rehab start Sunday, as the Mets were waiting to see how he recovers from Tuesday's outing.

## Montefiore Einstein

Official Hospital of the New York Yankees



■ **Giancarlo Stanton** (hamstring strain) ran on Tuesday and could be ready to play in games by the time the Yankees return from the All-Star break next week.

■ **Juan Soto** has still occasionally been dealing with right hand discomfort since he initially bruised it on June 28, though he started his ninth straight game on Wednesday against the Rays.



### at Rays

Thursday, 6:50 p.m., YES, WFAN (660 AM, 101.9 FM)

#### LHP Nestor Cortes



**2024 stats:**  
4-7, 3.41 ERA

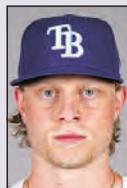
**Career vs. TB:**  
2-4, 4.19 ERA

**Last start:**  
Friday, vs. BOS;  
6.0 IP, 3 H, 1 ER

#### PITCH BREAKDOWN

**46%** Fastball    **29%** Cutter    **14%** Sweeper

#### RHP Shane Baz



**2024 stats:**  
0-1, 4.50 ERA

**Career vs. NYY:**  
0-0, 2.45 ERA

**Last start:**  
Friday, at TEX;  
6.0 IP, 7 H, 3 ER

#### PITCH BREAKDOWN

**40%** Fastball    **37%** Slider    **14%** Curveball

#### UP NEXT

**FRIDAY:** at Orioles,  
7:05 p.m., YES, WFAN  
TBD vs. TBD

**SATURDAY:** at Orioles,  
4:05 p.m., YES, WFAN  
TBD vs. TBD

# A RAY OF HOPE

## Yanks finally see the light, escape with an overdue victory

**THAT'LL DO:** Gleyber Torres slides in safely past Rays catcher Ben Rortved to score on Trent Grisham's sacrifice fly in the fourth inning of the Yankees' nerve-rattling 2-1 victory in St. Petersburg, Fla., on Wednesday. AP

By GREG JOYCE

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — It was by no means pretty, but the Yankees are not competing in a beauty pageant.

Given how ugly it's been for them lately, they will take a win any way they can get it, style points be damned.

On Wednesday night, that meant leaning on their bullpen to tough out a 2-1 nail-biter over the Rays at Tropicana Field that marked only their seventh win in their last 24 games.

After a pair of RBIs from Trent Grisham staked them out to a 2-0 lead in the fourth inning, the Yankees (56-38) hung on for dear life

from there to give themselves a chance Thursday to win their first series since mid-June.

"I think it's big to win a game like that," said Grisham, who added a nice running catch into the gap to strand two runners in the eighth inning. "Really nitty-gritty and just well-fought the whole way, close the whole way. For our pitchers to come up big in all those situations, I think it's going to do a lot for us going forward."

In relief of Marcus Stroman, who went only 4 1/3 innings while giving up one run, the Yankees' bullpen quartet of Tim Hill, Luke Weaver, Tommy Kahnle and Clay Holmes did some high-wire work to keep the one-run lead intact.

The four relievers — part of a bullpen that has been battered for the better part of two months — combined to toss 5 2/3 scoreless innings and strand 12 runners.

"That was the ultimate bend-but-don't-break, playing the nickel defense on them there," manager Aaron Boone said. "Just a great job, a lot of big moments in that game. Especially with what we're going through, guys just coming through over and over again. ... Big day for Grish on both sides of the ball. That one feels really good."

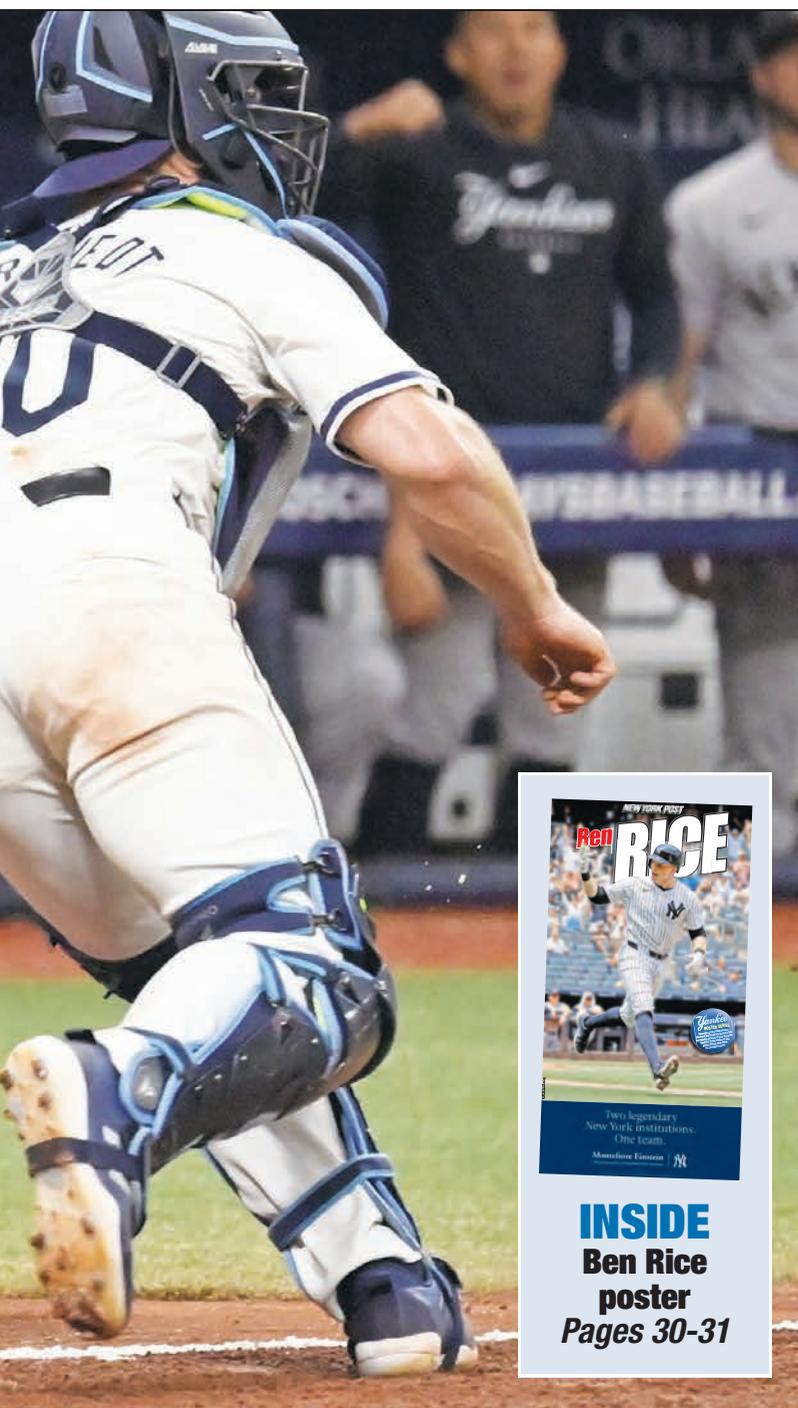
Overall, the Yankees held the Rays (45-47) to 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position, negating a 10-6 hit differential that favored Tampa Bay.

While Boone shook up the top of the lineup, flipping Alex Verdugo

into the leadoff spot with Ben Rice taking over the cleanup spot, it was the middle to bottom of the order — namely Grisham, batting seventh — that was responsible for the Yankees taking a 2-0 lead off Rays right-hander Zach Eflin.

The Rays scraped one run across on Stroman in the fifth inning and then loaded the bases with one out, at which point Boone called on Hill. The lefty sidearmer delivered by striking out Josh Lowe on three pitches and then getting Randy Arzarena to line out to right field. The typically reserved veteran was fired up, yelling and slapping his glove as he walked off the mound with two big outs.

"It was huge," Stroman said. "That's one of those moments in the game where it could go either



way. For him to come in and get the [strikeout] and the out, that's incredible."

In the sixth, Hill put a pair of runners on, which Weaver cleaned up by getting an inning-ending double play on the first pitch he threw.

Then, after Weaver walked two batters in the seventh and stranded them both, Kahnle came on for the eighth and allowed the Rays' Nos. 8 and 9 hitters to reach with two outs. That forced Holmes into the game early for a four-out save, which began with Grisham's running catch on Yandy Diaz's fly ball to the gap in right-center field.

Holmes then recorded only the Yankees' second 1-2-3 inning in the ninth to pick up his first save since June 9. He had blown two saves in between and given up runs in five

of his seven outings since recording his last save.

While the night did not provide much room for breathing, the Yankees were able to exhale at the end of it. Now they are tasked with doing it again Thursday, trying to win consecutive games for the first time since June 9-12 to fully snap out of their funk.

"It's definitely been a rough stretch," Stroman said. "I think we're all aware of that. But the work ethic from every guy, the confidence hasn't changed one bit. It's just one of those spurts. It's a long season. We play 162 games, so we're going to go on skids like this. But definitely glad to get the win. It was a full-team effort tonight. The bullpen was incredible."

gjoyce@nypost.com

By DAVE BLEZOW

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — On June 18, Tim Hill was released by the White Sox — by far the worst team in the major leagues. After going unclaimed by the other 29 teams, the lefty reliever signed with the Yankees two days later as a free agent.

So for anyone searching for the unsung hero in the Yankees' 2-1 victory over the Rays on Wednesday night at Tropicana Field, it doesn't get more unsung than this.

Hill came on for starter Marcus Stroman with the bases loaded and one out in the bottom of the fifth inning. The Rays already had scored one run to cut their deficit in half. But Hill struck out Josh Lowe on three pitches and induced a lineout to right field from Randy Arozarena.

"I was just looking for a double play or strikeout," Hill said. "So I got the strikeout and the next one I could just get any way I could. I was pumped to say the least."

Manager Aaron Boone was rewarded for his decision to lift Stroman at that critical moment in the game.

"It was great. [Hill] came in and kind of just bulldogged it and carved up Lowe there with three straight pitches. Looked like he dotted them," Boone said. "Then [he] gives up some solid contact to Arozarena, but right to [Juan] Soto. It was a great job, one of the many big moments in the game tonight."

In eight appearances with the Yankees, Hill, who was awarded the win Wednesday night, is 2-0 with a 2.38 ERA over 11 1/3 innings.

"I think he's enjoying it. I hope

# Hill climbs out of danger with escape in fifth



**KING OF THE HILL:** Tim Hill's bases-loaded escape in the fifth inning proved critical in the Yankees' 2-1 win over the Rays. Getty Images

he's enjoying it," Boone said. "He's come over and gone through the rough stretch with us, but he's thrown the ball really, really well for us."

And yes, Hill is enjoying his Yankees career that's still less

than a month old.

"It's been hectic [but I'm] starting to settle in, though," the 34-year-old, 6-foot-4 sidarmer said. "But yeah, that's baseball. It's crazy."

dblezow@nypost.com

## Grisham leads with his bat & glove

By DAVE BLEZOW

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Aaron Boone's twin lineup switches of Alex Verdugo to lead-off and phenom Ben Rice to cleanup amounted to nothing — a combined 0-for-8. But the manager found all the runs the Yankees would need on Wednesday night in an unusual place, the 7-hole.

It was Trent Grisham who delivered both RBIs in the Yankees' much-needed 2-1 victory over the Rays at Tropicana Field.

Grisham, who entered the game with a team-low .172 batting average, hit a deep fly down the left-field line in the second inning that Randy Arozarena couldn't handle, the ball caroming off the low wall near the 315-foot sign. Anthony Volpe scored all the way from first base for the first run of the game.

In the fourth inning, Grisham hit another fly to Arozarena, deep enough to score Gleyber Torres on a sacrifice fly.

"[They were] really kind of the same," Grisham said of his two swings against Rays starter Zach Eflin. "Just trying to be ready early, be relaxed. He's around the zone and doesn't walk that many people."

Grisham's biggest contribution, however, came in the eighth inning when the lefty-fielding center fielder ranged far into the gap in right-center to run down a potential gapper by Yandy Diaz to preserve a 2-1 lead for Clay Holmes.

"I knew he hit it pretty well off the bat," Boone said. "[It] looked like Grish ... knew he got a good break on it like he normally does. So I wasn't sure, but pretty shortly I felt like he had a bead on it."

While there was angst in the dugout, the two-time Gold Glove winner in the National League with the Padres made the play look easy.

"Again just kind of the same thing, being relaxed and ready," Grisham said. "He hit it a lot better than I thought so I had to adjust course and get to it."

It was just the seventh win in the last 24 games for the Yankees, but the six-year veteran took umbrage with the suggestion that the victory was a "relief."

"I don't think it's 'relief,'" he said. "I mean, we're trying to win more than one game. We come to the field every day expecting to win and ready to win, and that's what we're going to do [Thursday] and every game going forward."

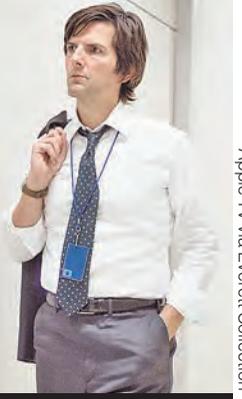
**More Yankees / P. 53**



Getty Images

**THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** “Landman,” the newest series by “Yellowstone” creator Taylor Sheridan, is set to premiere Nov. 17 on Paramount+. Starring Oscar winner **Billy Bob Thornton** (left), the series is about the lucrative world of running oil rigs in West Texas and the divide between the rich and the poor.

**GREAT SCOTT!** Season 2 of the popular drama “Severance” is set to finally premiere Jan. 17 on Apple TV+. Starring **Adam Scott** (right), the Emmy-winning series last aired a new episode way back in April 2022.



Apple TV via Everett Collection

# TV Thursday

# POWER COUPLE

By **KAREN KEMMERLE**

**S**LICKER than ever, “**Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles**” is back for Season 15 on Bravo (Wednesdays at 9/8C). Even though our favorite agents — Josh Altman, Josh Flagg, and Tracy Tutor — are operating at the height of their powers, they are up against powerful adversaries. No, not hotshot competitors or unsellable listings. Their enemies are high interest rates and LA’s “mansion tax” which adds a 4% charge to all property sales above \$5 million and a 5.5% charge to all sales above \$10 million in L.A.

Luckily, a familiar face is stepping into the spotlight to help Josh Altman maintain his successful and ever-expanding real estate agency — his wife and business partner, Heather Altman. “It’s definitely been a volatile market,” said H. Altman. “It’s a fight to get every deal done these days.” J. Altman is pleased that his wife is taking a larger role on “MDLLA” in addition to her everyday responsibilities in and out of the office of the Altman Brothers. Ultimately, J. Altman wondered, “Why is Heather — who sells more than all of us combined — not on the show?” Indeed, her emergence this season has been a

revelation. “It’s new for audiences to see how much of a boss she is,” said Altman. “Nothing new for us over here.”

“I feel I’ve been kept behind the scenes for too long now,” added H. Altman. “Obviously, I’ve always been a part of show, but I really have been able to have a voice this season.” Good thing since J. Altman’s friendship with colleague Flagg is publicly on the outs. “Our relationship is not where it used to be,” admitted J. Altman. “He runs his business the way he wants to run his business, and we do ours a totally different way.”

The Altmans spoke to DECIDER over Zoom to talk about the upcoming season, their beef with Josh Flagg, and why the power couple would welcome their young children — Lexi and Ace — to the family business someday.

**DECIDER: Season 15 of “Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles” feels different. Did you ever expect the real estate market to move in the way it did with the luxury tax, etc?**

**HEATHER ALTMAN:** It’s definitely been a volatile market. I don’t think any of us could have seen this

Josh and Heather Altman take center stage this season on ‘Million Dollar Listing: LA’



The popular Bravo franchise is now entering Season 15

Bravo (2)



coming with the Mansion Tax. All of us are still in complete shock. It’s been difficult. It’s a fight to get every deal done these days. The Mansion tax really impacted the \$5M+ market, but it also trickles down to the homes for sale under \$5M. We’re also dealing with high interest rates and low inventory in addition to a difficult international climate. Everything is just up in air right now.

**Josh, it’s no secret that you and Flagg are on the outs this season. Can you tease how that**

**dynamic is going to play out?**

**JA:** To make it as black and white as possible, our relationship is not where it used to be. For many years, it was not great, and then it started to get better over a five-year period.

Now, it’s not great again. We’re amicable, though. Being friends with anybody in business that you go up against is tricky. There are going to be lots of highs and lows. He runs his business the way he wants to run his business, and we do ours a totally different way. You’ll have to tune in because the deals this season change where we’re at relationship wise. It’s interesting.

**Maurico Umansky is bringing his daughters into his business on “Buying Beverly Hills.” Are you hoping your kids will fol-**

**low in your footsteps one day?**

**HA:** Funny enough, Ace is already in the process. He loves to get up dressed up his dad. He throws on a shirt and his cute little vest with his skinny leg jeans and comes downstairs saying: “I’m Josh Altman. I’m a real estater.” It’s fun to see that he’s excited about what we do and wants to be like mommy and daddy. Lexi’s here at the office right now. We love exposing them to business and working.

**JA:** If they want to, they have a nice office waiting for them. If they don’t, it’s all good.

**HA:** We just want them happy and healthy.

*This interview has been condensed for space. Visit [decider.com/mdlla](http://decider.com/mdlla) to read the complete piece.*



Lifetime

## Back By Popular Demand

Despite seemingly having a sendoff in the previous season, **Ellen Pompeo** (right) is set to appear in at least 7 of the 18 episodes in the upcoming season of ABC’s “**Grey’s Anatomy**.” Just what the doctor ordered!



ABC

## Dancing Queens

On Aug. 7, Hulu is launching a reboot of the reality series “**Dance Moms**,” entitled “**Dance Moms: A New Era**.” Instead of the notorious **Abby Lee Miller** (right) the head coach of this series will be Glo Hampton, who runs Studio Bleu.



### What's on Tonight



### ACTION

**Pacific Rim:** 4:03 p.m. on SYFY. Charlie Hunnam, Diego Klattenhoff. Massive robots, piloted by humans fight off monsters that have risen from the Pacific Ocean.



### HORROR

**Cloverfield:** 6:45 p.m. on PARSHO. Lizzy Caplan. After a giant monster attacks, five New Yorkers risk everything in a quest to rescue a friend.



### COMEDY

**Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls:** 10 p.m. on TNT. Jim Carrey. A pet detective creates havoc between two warring tribes while in search of a rare white bat.

Evening	SP	C	F	6:30pm	7:00pm	7:30pm	8:00pm	8:30pm	9:00pm	9:30pm	10:00pm	10:30pm	11:00pm	11:30pm	
2	WCBS	2	2	2	CBS News Norah	Inside Edition	Entertainment Tonight	Young Sheldon (R)	Ghosts: The Perfect (R)	(9:01) Elsbeth: Artificial Genius (R)	Fire Country: A Hail Mary (R)	CBS 2 News at 11PM	(11:35) Late Show		
4	WNBC	4	4	4	NBC Nightly News	News 4 New York at 7	Access Hollywood	Law & Order: Facade (R)	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit: Combat Fatigue	Law & Order: Organized Crime: Sins Of Our (R)	News 4 New York at 11	(11:35) Tonight Show			
5	WNYW	5	5	5	TMZ	WNBA Basketball: Chicago Sky at New York Liberty from Barclays Center. Live.			The 10 O'Clock News	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)			
7	WABC	7	7	7	ABC World News	Jeopardy! (R)	Wheel of Fortune (R)	The 2024 ESPYS: from The Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Live.			News	(11:35) Kimmel Live			
9	WWOR	9	9	9	Dish Nation (R)	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	Don't Forget the Lyrics!: You Can't Judge a Book!; She's a Fighter!		Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	TMZ Live			
11	WPIX	11	11	11	PIX11 Evening News	Sports Nightly	The Big Bang Theory	The Conners	The Conners	Masters of Illusion	Animals: Episode 408	PIX11 News at Ten	Seinfeld: The Bris	Seinfeld: The Cartoon	
13	WNET	13	13	13	BBC News America	The PBS News Hour		My Music: Big Band Years (R)			Voices Over The Water	Amanpour and Company			
21	WLIW	21	21	21	(6:00) News Report	Dynamic Planet: Earth (R)		The Green Planet			Changing	BBC News			
25	WNYE	25	22	25	Report	Great Conversations		Food.	Potluck	Actors	Feet	Global Health Frontiers	Artbound		
31	WPXN	31	3	531	Chicago PD	Chicago P.D.: A Way Out		Chicago P.D.: Home Safe		Chicago P.D.: Lies		Chicago P.D.: To Protect	Chicago P.D.: Still Water		
41	WXTV	41	6	41	Noticiero	La rosa de Guadalupe		Golpe de suerte			El amor no tiene receta		Noticias	Noticiero	
47	WNJU	47	16	12	Noticias	Top Chef VIP		(7:58) Top Chef VIP: La eliminación			El Conde: Amor y honor		Noticiero	Noticias	
55	WLNY	55	10	10	Queens	Man	Man	News 8pm		48 Hours: The Idaho		Judge Judy	Judge Judy	Neighbor.	Neighbor.
A&E	46	46	181	181	First 48 (R)	The First 48 (R)		The First 48		60 Days In: Jail Lunacy		Inmate to Room: All A Lie		(11:04) The First 48 (R)	
AMC	54	43	231	231	(5:15) Ocean's Eleven	(2001, Crime)		The Bourne Identity (2002, Action)			Matt Damon. PG-13 ★★★		The Bourne Supremacy (2004) ★★★½		
BET	37	54	270	270	(6:00) Feud	Celebrity Family Feud		Celebrity Family Feud			Like Mike (2002, Comedy)		Bow Wow. PG ★★		
BBCAM	71	101	189	189	Lost Boys R	Stand by Me (1986, Drama)		Wil Wheaton. R ★★★½		The Lost Boys (1987, Horror)		Corey Feldman. R ★★★		The Outsiders (1983) ★★★½	
BRAVO	18	44	185	185	Housewives	Real Housewives (R)		Real Housewives (R)			Real Housewives of Orange County		Housewives of Orange: Exes And Ocs		
CNBC	15	24	102	102	Money	Last Call		Shark Tank			Shark Tank		Shark Tank		
CNN	78	25	100	100	Situation	Erin Burnett OutFront		Anderson Cooper 360°			The Source with Kaitlan		CNN NewsNight		
COM	45	50	190	190	South Park	Mike Judge	Mike Judge	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	Laura Coates Live	
DIS	49	31	250	250	Big City (R)	Big City (R)	Big City (R)	Miraculous	Miraculous	ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES	Hailey's (R)	Hailey's (R)	Mike Judge	Mike Judge
DSC	66	27	120	120	Extinct (R)	Expedition Unknown (R)		Monster of Oz			(9:02) Caught! Sharks		(10:07) Great White		(11:10) Serial Killer (R)
E!	24	51	196	196	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Jessie	Jessie
ESPN	28	36	70	70	Sports Live.	SportsCenter Live.		ESPN Films			World of X Games		World of X Games		(11:10) Serial Killer (R)
ESPN2	29	35	74	74	Interruption	NFL Live		The Ultimate			The Ultimate		World Long Drive Tour: Celebrity Shootout		
FBN	43	106	117	117	Bottom	Kudlow (R)		Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	E! News	The Upside
FNC	44	26	118	118	Sp. Rpt.	The Ingraham Angle		Jesse Watters	Primetime	Hannity	Gutfeld!	Gutfeld!	Gutfeld!	Neighbor.	Neighbor.
FOOD	50	97	164	164	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Bound!	BBQ Brawl: Howdy Angus, Texas! (R)		
FREFRM	38	49	199	199	Wreck-It Ralph	(2012, Adventure)		John C. Reilly. ★★★½		Ralph Breaks the Internet (2018, Comedy)		John C. Reilly. PG ★★★		The 700 Club (R)	
FS1	400	99	83	83	Saratoga	Armed Forces Cu Replay.		International Basketball: United States at Canada.			Copa America 2024: from United States.				
FX	10	40	53	53	Star Wars: The Last Jedi	(2017, Science Fiction)		Mark Hamill. PG-13 ★★★½		Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (2019)		PG-13 ★★★			
HALL		191	240	240	A Cozy Inn	Christmas Land (2015, Holiday)		Nikki DeLoach. NR		Christmas Secret (2014, Holiday)		Bethany Joy Lenz.		Let It Snow (2013) NR ★★★½	
HGTV	64	98	165	165	Good Bones	Good Bones (R)		Beach Bargains		Christina on the Coast		Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)
HIST	40	47	128	128	Alone (R)	Alone: Fortune (R)		Alone: Legacy		Alone Australia: Raiders		(10:35) Alone: Legacy (R)			
ID	23	171	123	123	Neighbor	Fear Thy Neighbor (R)		A Sex Scandal (R)			(9:15) A Sex Scandal (R)		(10:15) A Sex Scandal (R)		In Heartland: Orders of
LIFE	62	45	140	140	Castle	Castle: A Deadly Game		Castle: A Deadly Affair			Castle: He's, She's Dead		Castle: Under the Gun		(11:03) Castle: Punked
MeTV	33	33	3	3	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy	Andy	Hillbillies	Acres	Hogan	Hogan	Burnett	P. Mason
MSG	27	87	78	78	Club 30: Sam Morril	Club 30: Sam Morril		NBA Classics: New York Knicks at Miami Heat.			The Bettor		The Juice		NBA Classics Replay.
MSG Plus	48	88	80	80	(4:00) FanDuel Racing Live.	(4:00) FanDuel Racing Live.		Poker			NY Giants		The Juice		
MSNBC	14	23	103	103	Ari Melber	The ReidOut		All in with Chris Hayes		Alex Wagner Tonight		Lawrence O'Donnell		The 11th Hour	
MTV	20	53	210	210	Teen Mom:	Teen Mom: Next: Pinky of		Teen Mom: Next Chapter		Teen Mom: Next (R)		Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous
NATGEO	65	162	121	121	Shark (R)	World's Biggest Great (R)		Biggest Tiger Shark (R)		Shark Beach with Mackie		Sharks Attack		When Sharks Attack (R)	
NICK	6	121	252	252	The Boss Baby:	Family Business (2021, Adventure)		Alec Baldwin.		Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
OWN	173	180	145	145	(6:00) 20/20	20/20 on OWN: Missing		20/20 on OWN (R)		20/20 on OWN (R)		20/20 on OWN (R)		20/20 on OWN (R)	
PARMT	36	56	54	54	Men	Men	Men	World War Z (2013, Horror)			Brad Pitt. PG-13 ★★★		The Italian Job (2003) Mark Wahlberg.		
SNY	26	60	77	77	Mets Specials	Amazin'		MLB Baseball: Washington Nationals at New York Mets from Citi Field. Replay.			Sports Live.		Sports Live.		
SYFY	17	48	180	180	Pacific Rim	Pacific Rim: Uprising (2018, Action)		John Boyega. PG-13 ★★★½		Geostorm (2017, Thriller)		Gerard Butler. PG-13 ★★★½			
TBS	8	39	52	52	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang	Impractical	Impractical	Ace Ventura: Detective	
TCM	82	41	230	230	(6:00) The Incredible Mr. Limpet	(1964)		All Fall Down (1962, Drama)		Eva Marie Saint. NR ★★½		Raintree County (1957, Romance)		Montgomery Clift.	
TLC	52	28	139	139	90 Day (R)	My Fat Fab Life (R)		Welcome to Plathville (R)		Welcome to Plathville (R)		Welcome to Plathville (R)		Unexpected: Dad, Bye (R)	
TNT	3	37	51	51	(5:30) My Cousin Vinny	(1992, Comedy)		Ace Ventura: Pet Detective (1994) Jim Carrey. ★★★		Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls (1995) Jim Carrey.		Queens		Queens	
TVLAND	85	34	241	241	Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	(9:20) Loves Raymond	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Queens	Queens	
USA	16	38	50	50	(6:00) Mission: Impossible	(1996, Action)		Tom Cruise.		Mission: Impossible II (2000, Action)		Tom Cruise. PG-13 ★★★½		Mission: Impossible III	
VH1	19	52	217	217	Mob Wives	Mob Wives (R)		Mob Wives (R)			Mob Wives (R)		Mob Wives (R)		
WE	59	42	149	149	Bones	Bones: Mushrooms		Bones: Party in the Pants		Bones: Pathos		Bones: Secret in Siege		Bones: Proposal	
YES	53	89	76	76	MLB Baseball:	New York Yankees at Tampa Bay Rays. Live.		Yankees Postgame Live.			MLB Baseball Replay.				
HBO	511	301	400	400	Quad Gods (2024)	Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire (2024) PG-13		(9:55) The Sixth Sense (1999, Thriller)		Dragon (R)					
MAX	531	371	420	420	Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit	(2014) ★★½		Aliens (1986, Science Fiction)		Sigourney Weaver. R		(10:18) The Amityville Horror (2005) ★★½		A-Team	
MGM Plus	595	395			(6:10) Necessary Roughness	(1991) ★★½		Bull Durham (1988) Kevin Costner. R ★★★		(9:50) Hoosiers (1986, Drama)		Gene Hackman. PG ★★★		Blue Chips	
PARSHO	551	321	365	365	(6:45) Cloverfield	(2008) Lizzy Caplan.		(8:10) 10 Cloverfield Lane (2016, Thriller)		PG-13 ★★★½		Pearl (2022, Horror) Mia Goth. R ★★★		Bodies ★★★	

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# ANOTHER SMASH HIT FOR IGLESIAS

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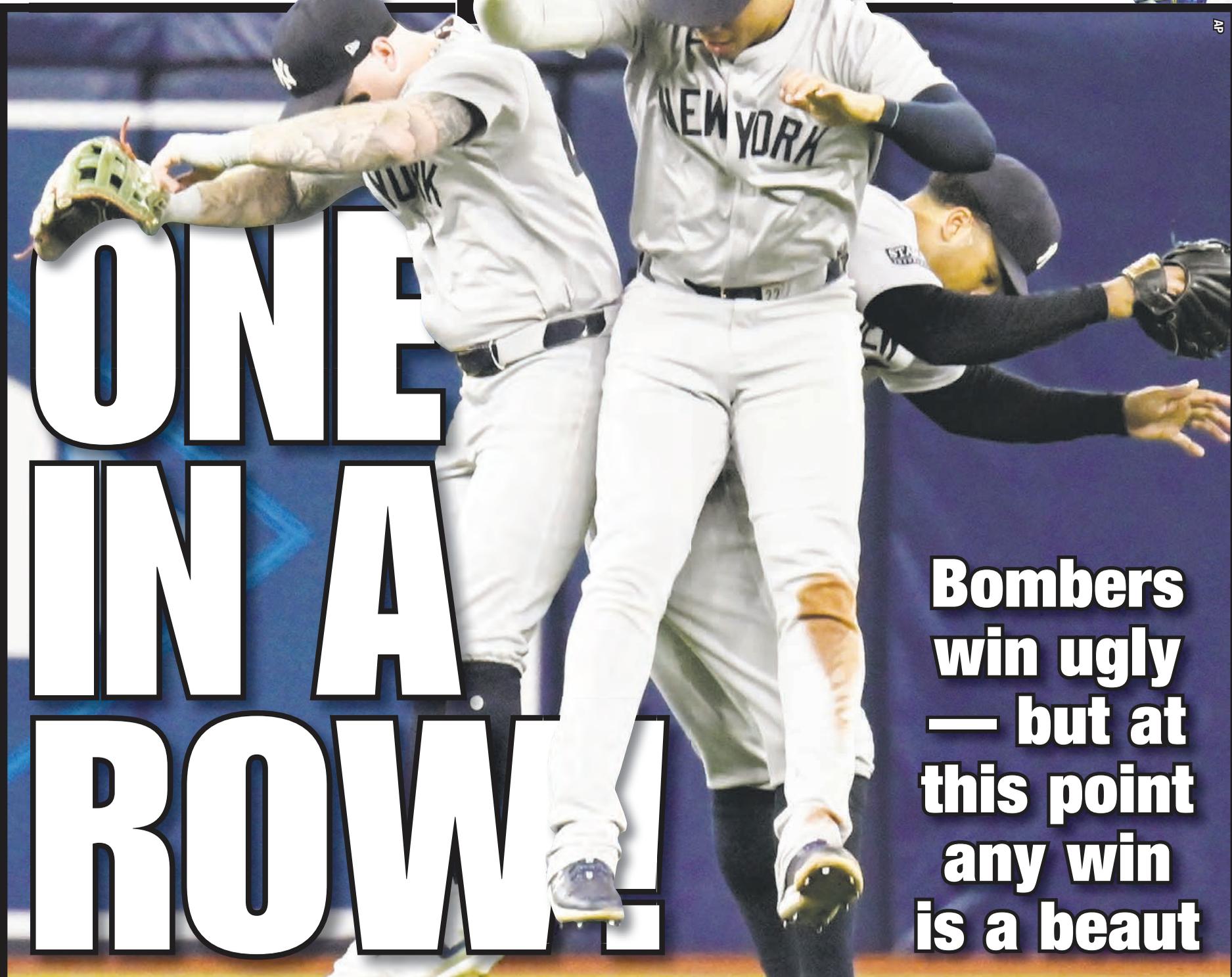
THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024

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## The Best In Town



# ONE IN A ROW!

**Bombers win ugly — but at this point any win is a beaut**

Alex Verdugo (left), Juan Soto and Trent Grisham — who drove in both Yankees runs and made a game-saving catch — celebrate the Yankees' much-needed 2-1 win over the Rays. The Yankees had lost 17 of 23 before Grisham and the bullpen got the job done in St. Petersburg. **JOYCE, BLEZOW / P. 57-56, 53**



### BERHALTER KICKED ASIDE

**USMNT COACH GETS CANNED**

**PAGES 48-49**

