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Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024 • \$3

Letters urge Biden to empty death row

Trump would not be able to undo commutations of federal sentences

BY MARK BERMAN, ANN E. MARIMOW AND YASMEEN ABUTALEB

A coalition of former prison officials, relatives of homicide victims, civil rights advocates and religious leaders are urging President Joe Biden to empty federal death row before he cedes the White House to President-elect Donald Trump, who staunchly supports capital punishment.

Letters to Biden that are slated to be made public Monday ask him to commute all federal death sentences to life without parole, invoking the president's Catholic faith and public opposition to capital punishment, and criticizing the death penalty as arbitrary, unfair and biased.

"We need clear and lasting steps that will ensure that the next administration will not execute the people currently facing death sentences in the federal system," states one of the letters, signed by a collection of current and former prosecutors, police chiefs and attorneys general.

Forty people are on federal death row, including the gunman who killed nine Black parishioners in Charleston, South Carolina, the surviving Boston Marathon bomber and the attacker who gunned down 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue. All three were sentenced to death when Biden served as president or vice president.

Others are far less prominent, including a person convicted of killing a fellow federal inmate and another convicted of robbing a bank with an associate who shot and killed a guard. Their attorneys are telling Biden in some

SEE DEATH ROW ON A4

Musk's Mars dreams have benefited U.S. military

BY EVA DOU AND AARON GREGG

Amused observers have long dismissed Elon Musk's dream to colonize Mars as unserious science fiction. But in his pursuit of the Red Planet, Musk has managed to build a deadly serious business with vast military consequences.

Security experts say SpaceX has leapfrogged so far ahead in several critical technologies that it could deter major rivals like China from engaging in a war with the United States — or tip the balance if one breaks out. Others worry that it could provoke an untimely response.

Musk is in the first camp. In recent days he has remarked on X that his ambition to send crews to Mars as soon as 2028 would result in "alien-level technology that is crushingly better than competitors," along with making an oblique reference to averting a war against China. That prospect may not be imminent, but it has become the focus of U.S. defense preparations as China rises.

Technological prowess is one reason SpaceX's value has jumped to around \$350 billion from \$210 billion earlier this

SEE MUSK ON A14

In Syria, a new era as Assad's regime falls



OMAR SANADIKI/AP

Syrian opposition fighters in Damascus, Syria, on Sunday celebrate the fall of Bashar al-Assad, who was in power for a quarter-century.

Biden says U.S. forces launched airstrikes against Islamic State

BY MICHAEL BIRNBAUM, CAT ZAKRZEWSKI AND MISSY RYAN

The Biden administration raced Sunday to try to help stabilize Syria after the collapse of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, targeting the Islamic State with dozens of airstrikes and monitoring Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons.

President Joe Biden announced that U.S. forces had hit Islamic State camps and operatives in Syria and said that the United States was working with its partners to address concerns that extremist groups could capitalize on the power vacuum left by Assad's departure to Russia.

"We're clear-eyed about the fact that ISIS will try to take advantage of any vacuum to reestablish its capabilities to create a safe haven," Biden said, speaking from the Roosevelt Room. "We will not let that happen."

The rebel groups that toppled the autocrat had their own "grim record of terrorism," he said. "They're saying the right things now. But as they take on greater responsibility, we will assess not just their words, but their actions."

SEE U.S. ON A11



SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST

Syrians living in Turkey burn photos of Assad in celebration in the city of Gaziantep on Sunday.

Multiple cracks led to collapse of singular hold on power

BY LIZ SLY

President Bashar al-Assad ruled his country with an iron fist for 24 years, as his father had done for 30 years before him. When he appeared to prevail in Syria's civil war, it was widely assumed he would remain in power until he was ready to hand over to his own son.

Instead, his supposedly indomitable regime turned out to be a hollow shell, crumbling in only 11 days in the face of an advance by lightly armed rebels. As opposition forces converged on Damascus from the north and the south late Saturday night, Assad fled to the airport and boarded a plane, according to Syrians in Damascus. Russian state media reported

Sunday that he had been granted asylum in Moscow.

By the time the end came, Assad was isolated and alone, abandoned by his main international allies, Russia and Iran, by an army that was no longer willing to fight for him, and by his minority Alawite constituents, many of whom chose to defect or

SEE ASSAD ON A10



OLIVIA BEE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Soil samples from the Oregon Coast have provided scientists with evidence of a quake and tsunami that hit the region in 1700.

Scientists look to past for clues to future quake

Researchers hope to mitigate tsunami risk in the Pacific Northwest

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

BANDON, ORE. — The warnings of a looming cataclysm are ubiquitous along the Oregon Coast. On blue-and-white signs, a cartoon wave curls out of the sea, capital letters blaring: TSUNAMI HAZARD ZONE. Harbingers of a future disaster are always in the periphery, staked next to highways, on neighborhood streets, between the crab shack and the chowder house.

A massive earthquake will one day rattle the region. Minutes to hours later, a surge of seawater will swallow the land. No one

knows when.

In the late 1980s, scientists began to recognize that one of the biggest hazards on the planet lurks just off the coast of the Pacific Northwest. The Cascadia Subduction Zone, where one plate of the Earth's crust dives beneath another, stretches from Northern California to Canada's Vancouver Island, getting stuck and building up stresses. Until the day they release.

The last time this happened was more than 300 years ago. That means to understand the future risk, scientists must reconstruct the past. This summer, a

team of tsunami detectives, clad in waders and knee-high muck boots, trudged into soggy marshes at the mouth of Oregon's Coquille River — on the hunt for buried catastrophes.

Finding this record intact isn't easy.

On a sunny July day, scientists wove their way through waist-high marsh grasses, stepping over driftwood trip hazards and sneaky, ankle-twisting channels. They were searching for "1700" — a 9-magnitude temblor that year that shook the land, caused large swaths of the coast to sink several

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Oldest gun in continental U.S. is found in Arizona

BY KYLE MELNICK

After archaeologist Deni Seymour found the rarest artifact of her career, her excitement turned to worry that she would be investigated by police.

She had unearthed a 3½-foot bronze cannon in Nogales, Arizona, near the U.S.-Mexico border. Seymour and her colleagues placed it atop a beige bedsheet and carried it into the back seat of her Jeep Wrangler. She had to pass a Border Patrol station on her drive home, she said, and she didn't know how she would start to explain why she had a 500-year-old firearm.

"If that thing got taken," Seymour said, "I might not ever see it again."

Seymour escaped with the roughly 40-pound cannon, which she said was probably built in the early 16th century and was carried by Spanish explorers to North America a few decades later. Seymour, who published her findings in the International Journal of Historical Archaeology last month, said the cannon is the oldest firearm that has been found in the continental United States.

The cannon, also referred to as a wall gun, often was placed on a large wooden tripod and was operated by two people. It could fire buckshot — which researchers said sprayed opponents like a swarm of hornets — and lead balls, which were used to destroy thin walls. Gunmen placed priming powder on a flat ledge near the touch hole, and the cannon ignited with a slow-burning match cord.

Firearms are now more deadly than ever and can be purchased without a license in many U.S. states. "Ghost guns" can even be built by anyone. But the cannon Seymour discovered is believed to be among the first portable firearms.

"An artifact like this can connect people to the past, to history, and really stirs their imagination," Seymour, 66, told The Washington Post.

Seymour began searching for 500-year-old artifacts in southern Arizona in July 2020. She hoped to find items from the expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, a Spanish explorer who traveled north in the mid-16th century from what is now Mexico in search of mythical cities and a route to Asia. He traveled with hundreds of soldiers and enslaved people and established one of the first European settlements, which explorers called San Geronimo III, located near the modern-day Santa Cruz River.

Vázquez de Coronado's team reached as far north as Kansas before returning to Mexico — probably after losing in battle to Native Americans who lived on the land. Seymour's research could help fill in the missing pieces of that ill-fated expedition, including whether they made camp in Arizona — and what happened to the Spaniards there.

Items believed to stem from their expedition — caret-headed nails from horses, the head of crossbow bolts and musket balls — had been found in New Mexico and Texas, but Seymour wanted to learn whether the explorers also traveled through Arizona.

Using metal detectors near the Santa Cruz River, Seymour and

her team dug up equipment they believed belonged to the Spanish explorers: a rowel spur, European pottery and fragments of olive jars, which Spanish colonies used as storage and shipping containers. She said she believed she was in San Geronimo III.

In September 2020, Seymour was digging in Nogales when she said she struck something that looked like bronze or copper. She thought it may have been a bell.

"What in the world is there?" she asked a colleague, according to a video Seymour took of the discovery.

As she kept digging through dirt, Seymour said it became clear that the item was wider than a bell. Then she saw parts of a firearm — a touch hole and a barrel. After uncovering it, Seymour said, she and a colleague marveled at their discovery for a few minutes.

"I was in shock," she said. "It was just an odd feeling that I rarely get."

While historians haven't agreed on an exact date that firearms came to the United States, some researchers had believed that guns first came to the area in the early 17th century, when European colonizers traveled to the Americas in force. A metallurgical analysis found that the cannon's materials were from the early 16th century, Seymour said.

There was no black residue in the cannon's barrel, Seymour said, so it was probably never fired. By the mid-16th century, some soldiers no longer used portable cannons, instead carrying lighter weapons such as wheellocks, muskets and matchlocks, Seymour said. But the cannon was still light enough for people, horses and mules to carry, according to researchers.

Explorers may not have had time to collect the cannon before retreating from attacks from Native Americans, Seymour said. Her team also found lead shot, parts of chain mail and plate armor, and pieces of broken swords and daggers near the cannon, supporting the theory that a battle occurred there.

Matthew Schmader, an adjunct archaeology professor at the University of New Mexico who wasn't involved in the study, said there are still unknown parts of the Spanish expedition that Seymour's research could help answer.

"It may help to fill out some of the missing details of, not only some of the material and the weaponry, but also that area," Schmader said. "Because that particular area, that portion of the expeditionary route, is really pretty unknown."

Seymour said the cannon is in a secure area but will eventually be displayed at a museum. She has continued searching southern Arizona for materials, and, in March, she said she found another cannon that's designed similarly to her first discovery. She still hopes to find skeletons, animal bones and more parts of adobe-and-stone buildings that Spanish explorers often built.

"The cannon is pretty darn wonderful, but each artifact we find and the context of them has the potential to convey a really interesting part of the story," she said. "And that's what's fun about it. That's what's interesting, and that's what keeps me going."

BY JISELLE LEE

One of the country's largest health insurers is facing backlash from doctors and government officials over its decision to no longer pay for anesthesia care if a surgery or procedure goes beyond a time limit.

Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance announced in early November that it planned to change how it evaluates billed time on professional claims for anesthesia services next year and deny any claims for anesthesia services that exceed that time limit.

The change was set to apply to members in Connecticut, New York and Missouri. A spokesperson for the company said in a statement that Anthem had de-

cided not to proceed with the change following what the company claimed was "widespread misinformation."

"To be clear, it never was and never will be the policy of Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield to not pay for medically necessary anesthesia services," the spokesperson said. "The proposed update to the policy was only designed to clarify the appropriateness of anesthesia consistent with well-established clinical guidelines."

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong said in an Instagram post that Anthem's anesthesia coverage limits would have been "a terrible policy."

"Neither patients nor anesthesiologists can control the length of a surgical procedure once it

begins," Tong wrote. "What did Anthem expect doctors to do? Wake patients up in the middle of surgery?"

On Thursday, Connecticut Comptroller Sean Scanlon said he had contacted Anthem after "hearing from people across the state about this concerning policy."

"I'm pleased to share this policy will no longer be going into effect here in Connecticut," Scanlon wrote on X.

Madi Csejka, a spokesperson for the Connecticut comptroller's office, said the office was unable to comment on Anthem's decision-making process that led to the reversal.

Anthem wrote in a news release in November that the updated billed time would include

preservice evaluations and the intra-service and post-service periods. Doctors would have to document the pre- and post-operation time, following American Society of Anesthesiologists guidelines, to appropriately charge the patients for the billed time.

Donald E. Arnold, president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, wrote that Anthem's decision was "appalling behavior" that will inhibit anesthesiologists from providing patients with complete and safe anesthesia care.

"This egregious policy breaks the trust between Anthem and its policyholders who expect their health insurer to pay physicians for the entirety of the care they need," Arnold said.

Researchers study massive 1700 quake

TSUNAMI FROM AI

feet and triggered a tsunami. To find evidence of it, they plunged the pointy tip of a cylindrical metal tool called "the Russian" deep into marshy sediment, twisted it like a corkscrew through layers of peat, sand and roots, and yanked up a core. Again and again and again.

To a layperson, these cores would be an unintelligible tube of waterlogged sediment. But to Virginia Tech paleoseismologist Tina Dura, they were part mystery, part puzzle, part history book.

Starting at the bottom, a brown, peat layer that gave off a sulfur aroma was the marsh, pre-earthquake. A grayish layer on top of it was 1700 — fine sand washed in by the tsunami right after the earthquake. On top of that was gray silt, evidence that the quake had caused the land to drop down, transforming what had once been high marsh into a tidal mudflat. Above that was a more gradual transition, representing centuries of uplift and marsh formation, to a brown soil that looked eerily similar to the marsh before the disaster.

"This was a rough day for the marsh, for sure," Dura said, scraping a sharp knife over the sandy section of the core, carried in by the tsunami. "And basically, what we're standing on today looks a lot like what was pre-1700 earthquake."

A really big one, or a decade of terror?

In earthquake hotspots around the world, people have often felt occasional tremors or heard stories passed down in family lore. In California, small quakes are periodic and the risk of "the big one" is part of the culture. The scale of risk to the Pacific Northwest is hard to grasp: ground-shaking that lasts five minutes, more than 600,000 buildings toppled or damaged, 13,800 deaths and more than 100,000 injuries, according to a 2022 plan from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The economic losses from the earthquake alone have been estimated to reach \$134 billion.

But near the Pacific Northwest's particularly fraught fault zone, where the Juan de Fuca plate located just offshore dives beneath the North American continental plate at the rate fingernails grow, geologists trade stories that illustrate the mismatch between human and geologic time scales.

"I've had people tell me, 'I've lived here my whole life. My parents lived here. What are you talking about?'" recalled Carrie Garrison-Laney, a tsunami hazards specialist at the Washington Sea Grant, based at the University of Washington and part of a national network administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Dura recalls visiting a historic house in Oregon built in 1898 and being assured by the curator: "It's survived every earthquake. So we're not worried."

Among Native people who have lived in the region much longer, there are oral histories of sea flooding that uprooted trees and swept away villages. Many tribes in the region have stories of supernatural creatures, called Thunderbird and Whale, who cause the earth to shake and the ocean to flood.

Despite that ancient wisdom, the conventional scientific puzzle took longer to piece together.

In the 1980s, geologists discovered buried tidal marshes along the coast — indicators that the land had sunk at some point. A clue to the timing came from stands of stumps and dead trees, called "ghost forests," that were killed when the land abruptly dropped down, leaving forests to be submerged by tides — somewhere between August of 1699



PHOTOS BY OLIVIA BEE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Soil samples from a marsh near Bandon, Oregon, yield evidence of a quake and tsunami from 1700.



Brett Hanley, left, Lydia Staisch and Bering Tse take soil samples from the Oregon Coast that give clues about a tsunami from 1700.

and May of 1700. A final clue came from Japanese historical records. Tsunami waves swamped not only the nearby coast, but traveled nine hours across the Pacific Ocean — and written records recorded an "orphan tsunami" that swamped Japan without being preceded by local shaking — allowing scientists to pinpoint the last big Cascadia earthquake to Jan. 26, 1700.

Scientists now believe there have been at least 19 major, megathrust earthquakes triggered at the Cascadia Subduction Zone in the past 10,000 years.

But the data is still too sparse, said Diego Melgar, a University of Oregon seismologist who works on models that generate tens of thousands of theoretical earthquake scenarios, which can vary in how large the quake is, how much the fault slips and whether the entire zone ruptures at once, or in fragments.

While many scientists have assumed that 1700 was a single, catastrophic event, Melgar said uncertainties in the data don't rule out the possibility there were two or three slightly-less-giant quakes. For planners and policymakers trying to fathom future risk, understanding that is consequential: the difference between one really big one, and a decade of terror.

To narrow down which earthquake scenarios are likely, Melgar tells scientists including Dura, "Guys, I need more data!"

That means more cores. "I've been out to the marshes a few times with them," Melgar said. "After you go out there a few times, you're like, 'Oh, this is why we don't have more data. It's brutal work!'"

Algae fossils spill secrets

By the 11th core of the day, the scientists were a little loopy. Some lay on the ground, or reclined on bent-over stalks of marsh grass as they ate snacks and tried to avoid

sunburn. Andrea Hawkes, a paleoseismologist from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, used a knife to cut off small sections of sediment, pinching them between her fingers and sniffing them to classify each section, while Virginia Tech graduate student Brandon Hatcher took notes.

In Hatcher's backpack were a few cores, packed in PVC tubes cut in half, swaddled in plastic wrap and taped with blue painter's tape. The tubes will be shipped back to the lab for more painstaking study.

Scientists will slice thin cross sections, add hydrogen peroxide to get rid of decaying plant matter and use a microscope to examine fossils of single-celled algae called diatoms. Diatoms are sensitive to salinity and tides, so identifying which species inhabit a particular layer of sediment can reveal what the environment was like. Some thrive in the high marsh and others in tidal mudflats. By studying which kinds of diatoms are present, scientists can come up with estimates of how high the land was relative to sea level before a quake — and after it dropped down.

Quantifying how much the land subsided will help scientists such as Melgar figure out which earthquake scenarios are more realistic. Dura is also interested in using the information to understand how floodplain maps will be redrawn after an earthquake. Sea level is rising gradually due to climate change, but in the Pacific Northwest, there's an additional factor to consider: Sea level could rise by up to six feet in an instant after an earthquake causes the land to drop. That means places that weren't previously prone to flooding would be at risk.

While the broad strokes of the tsunami risk are known, the details matter in seismology — and the only way to answer those questions is to sink more holes

into the ground.

"In many of these places, when they were visited in the '80s and '90s and 2000s, they might have collected, one core, two cores," Melgar said. "But when I run a tsunami model ... what we really would like to know is does this one model get the sand to all the places there was sand in the past?"

A landscape of hazard

None of this work can answer the question at the top of most people's minds: When is this big one coming? But geologists hope to provide the best science to give people, planners and policymakers the best chance to prepare.

Melgar leads the Cascadia Region Earthquake Science Center (CRESCENT), a \$15 million National Science Foundation research initiative that began in 2023 to bridge gaps between scientists who study different aspects of Cascadia but may have been isolated in their own silos — and to connect policymakers to the latest science.

Valerie Sahakian, a lead investigator for CRESCENT, recalled that at a recent event, experts who work on resilience at utilities, federal agencies, emergency management and grassroots organization came together. It was a rare networking opportunity for people from across disparate industries and backgrounds to discuss challenges they share in preparing for a future emergency.

"It's three states and two countries. And so it's challenging for everybody to be working in unison," Sahakian said. "For things like critical infrastructure, like dams and energy hubs, they still need the best science. What we have right now, they'll work with. But it really isn't good enough."

To be a seismologist in the Northwest is to be a Cassandra. Scientists look at bridges and other infrastructure with a discerning eye. Some communities along the coast simply won't be able to evacuate quickly enough, but only a handful of tsunami evacuation towers for people to take refuge have been built. The building next to Melgar's, the one where the volcanologists at the University of Oregon work, is constructed of unreinforced masonry — a structure that he knows will be vulnerable when the next big one comes.

Sahakian, who surfs, said when she goes out, there are places on the coast she avoids because it will take too long to get out of the water and out of the hazard zone if a quake strikes.

Dura said there's a spot on the coast where she sees people park RVs on a narrow spit of sand, with one bridge off — one person's bucolic camping adventure, a scientist's nightmare waiting to happen.

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POLITICS & THE NATION

Trump says members of Jan. 6 committee should be jailed

In an NBC interview, the president-elect discusses tariffs, immigration

BY MARIANA ALFARO

President-elect Donald Trump, in his first post-election TV interview, promised a confrontational return to the White House, saying he would like to see many of those who investigated him jailed, including lawmakers who led an inquiry into his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

In a wide-ranging interview that also covered his tariff plans and support for his Cabinet picks, the president-elect promoted an aggressive immigration agenda, doubling down on his promise to deport all undocumented immigrants, including their family members who are in the country legally.

While it is exceedingly abnormal for the leader of a democracy to express a desire to see political opponents jailed, Trump has long called for the prosecution and imprisonment of those he believes unfairly launched investigations into actions he took during his first administration.

In a 45-minute interview with NBC News's "Meet the Press" that aired Sunday and was recorded on Friday, Trump said members of the now-defunct House select committee tasked with investigating the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol should be in jail.

"Everybody on that committee ... for what they did, yeah, honestly, they should go to jail," Trump said, including former congresswoman Liz Cheney (R-Wyoming), the top Republican on the Jan. 6 panel.

The committee, which shuttered when Republicans took back the House in January 2023, consisted of seven Democrats and two Republicans: Cheney and Adam Kinzinger (Illinois). The panel was chaired by Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Mississippi).

The committee concluded that Trump actively inspired his supporters to commit violence in his name as he attempted to remain in office despite losing the 2020 election. News outlets, including

The Washington Post, have said that Biden is considering pre-emptive pardons for individuals he and his team believe might face legal threats from the incoming Trump administration.

Trump's comments on "Meet the Press" mark an escalation of his threats to members of the committee. While he posted in March 2023 that the committee members "should be prosecuted for their lies," accusing them of "treason," he has largely refrained from calling for their imprisonment.

He has only repeatedly expressed interest in jailing Cheney — a longtime Republican who lost her seat in Congress after refusing to excuse Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Cheney endorsed and campaigned with Vice President Kamala Harris this election cycle, further infuriating Trump.

"Of course this poses a very serious threat to democracy; Kings and despots jail their political opponents," said Victoria Nourse, leader of the Center on Congress and Democracy at Georgetown Law. "The former president is playing with fire here. Putting fellow Republicans in jail will only embolden the faction in his party that is deeply never-Trump."

In a statement to The Post, Cheney said Trump "again lied about the January 6th Select Committee."

"Here is the truth: Donald Trump attempted to overturn the 2020 presidential election and seize power. He mobilized an angry mob and sent them to the United States Capitol, where they attacked police officers, invaded the building, and halted the official counting of electoral votes," Cheney said. "Donald Trump's suggestion that members of Congress who later investigated his illegal and unconstitutional actions should be jailed is a continuation of his assault on the rule of law and the foundations of our republic."

Cheney also sought to clarify Trump's baseless claims during the NBC News interview that the select committee destroyed evidence, citing a 2023 letter Thompson sent House Oversight subcommittee chairman Barry Loudermilk (R-Georgia) noting that select committee staff carefully archived all evidence.



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Donald Trump after being declared the winner at an election night watch party in West Palm Beach, Florida, on Nov. 6.

"There is no conceivably appropriate factual or constitutional basis for what Donald Trump is suggesting — a Justice Department investigation of the work of a congressional committee — and any lawyer who attempts to pursue that course would quickly find themselves engaged in sanctionable conduct," she said.

Representatives for Kinzinger and Thompson did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump also expressed disdain for Jack Smith, the Justice Department special counsel tasked with investigating allegations that he mishandled classified materials and also any role he had in efforts to overturn the results of Joe Biden's 2020 election victory.

Trump also said he would let Pam Bondi, his pick for attorney general, "do what she wants to do" regarding an investigation into Smith. Trump has previously said he would like to fire Smith's entire team, including career attorneys typically protected from political retribution, according to two individuals close to Trump's transition.

When Kristen Welker, host of NBC's "Meet the Press," asked if Trump wanted to see Smith in prison, he called Smith "very corrupt" but said the decision would be left to Bondi.

"I'm not going to instruct her to do it," he said.

Trump claimed he would not appoint a special prosecutor to

investigate Biden — something he promised to do last year — unless Bondi and Kash Patel, his choice to lead the FBI, think there's a reason to go after the Democratic president.

"I'm not doing that unless I find something that I think is reasonable," Trump said. "But that's not going to be my decision, that's going to be Pam Bondi's decision and, to a different extent, Kash Patel's."

Before he can nominate Patel to lead the FBI, Trump would first need to fire its current director, Christopher A. Wray, or Wray would have to resign several years before the end of a 10-year term.

When Welker asked Trump if he wants to fire Wray — a move that many experts have warned would hurt the FBI's independence — Trump said it "would sort of seem pretty obvious that if Kash gets in, he's going to be taking somebody's place right now. Somebody is the man that you're talking about."

The president-elect also reiterated his intention to pardon the rioters who broke into the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"They've been in there for years, and they're in a filthy, disgusting place that shouldn't even be allowed to be open," Trump said.

As The Post has reported, judges appointed by both parties who are handling cases of Jan. 6 defendants have said that the

executive branch plans are "irrelevant" to the judiciary's duties, showing no signs of being deterred by the prospect of pardons.

"No matter what ultimately becomes of the Capitol riots cases already concluded and still pending, the true story of what happened on January 6, 2021 will never change," U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth, a Ronald Reagan appointee, said Friday.

During the NBC interview, Welker asked Trump if he's willing to finally concede the 2020 election "for the sake of unifying this country?"

"No, why would I do that?" Trump replied.

He then blamed Biden for any divisions in the country, baselessly accusing him of "weaponizing" the Justice Department after the department launched investigations into his efforts to reverse the results of the 2020 election as well as his alleged mishandling of classified documents after he left the White House.

Biden "went after his political opponent violently because he knew he couldn't beat him," Trump said. "And I think it really was a bad thing."

While Trump told Welker that he does not believe warnings from economists that imposing tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China will raise prices for U.S. consumers, he insisted the levies would benefit Americans but added that he "can't guarantee" that prices won't go up.

Trump then claimed that the United States is "subsidizing" Canada, Mexico and other countries. He said that, if "we're going to subsidize them, let them become a state."

When Welker noted that tariffs imposed during his first term cost Americans billions, the president-elect again claimed that the tariffs "cost Americans nothing."

Companies across the United States that rely on foreign suppliers have started preparing to raise prices, The Post reported in October, saying they will pass along the cost of the tariffs to their American customers. Economists have also told The Post that tariffs would probably be a swift run-up in prices on necessities like meat, fruits and vegetables, along with cars, clothing and crude oil — all of which play an outside role in family budgets.

Trump threatened Mexico and Canada with tariffs as part of his hard-line immigration stance, portraying both countries as failing to secure their borders with the United States and allowing criminals and fentanyl to cross into the country.

In the "Meet the Press" interview, Trump repeated his plan to deport everyone who is in the country illegally, but offered no specific details on how he envisions an operation of that magnitude to be conducted.

Trump said he wants Dreamers — individuals protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy — to stay in the country. But he also said he would not hesitate to deport mixed-status families — families with members who have legal status and members who don't.

"I don't want to be breaking up families, so the only way you don't break up the family is you keep them together, and you have to send them all back," he said.

Trump defended his selection of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who founded a prominent anti-vaccine group, to serve as the nation's top health official. The choice has unnerved public health officials and Democrats who say that Kennedy should be nowhere near the nation's public health infrastructure. Some Republicans also say that Kennedy must explain his views on vaccines, abortion and other issues to get their votes. Kennedy has said he is not anti-vaccine.

While Trump and Kennedy have both said that Kennedy could play a sweeping role in remaking the nation's health system, the president-elect walked back his proclamation in the NBC interview. "He's not looking to, you know, to reinvent the wheel totally," Trump said.

He added that he recently convened a conversation between Kennedy, pharmaceutical executives and Mehmet Oz, Trump's pick to oversee the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "I said, let's all get together and let's figure out where we're going," Trump said, adding that the conversation focused on vaccines, drug pricing and pesticides, among other topics.

Dan Diamond, Cat Zakrzewski and Marianne LeVine contributed reporting.

Newsom tries to walk Trump 'tightrope' as he eyes a future White House run

BY MAEVE RESTON

SAN DIEGO — Days after Donald Trump won reelection to the White House, Gavin Newsom was in a fighting posture — calling a special legislative session to prepare for expected legal battles with the incoming Trump administration. He flew to Washington to strategize with President Joe Biden about how to protect the state from Trump's threats about immigration enforcement and disaster relief. But weeks later on his "Politickin'" podcast, Newsom seemed to be recalibrating — emphasizing his desire to collaborate with the Republican president-elect, suggesting voters want to see a back-to-basics approach to governing and crediting Trump with being "crisp and clear" in his diagnosis of the country's problems.

Stepping into the spotlight last week as his home state hosted the nation's Democratic governors at their winter gathering in Beverly Hills, Newsom was back on offense against Trump, making a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border to launch construction on a new port of entry and warning that there will be devastating consequences for California if Trump carries through with his plans for mass deportations and higher tariffs on trading partners such as Mexico.

It's "not a closed fist as it relates to these issues; [it's] an open hand," Newsom said when asked whether he would direct state officials to cooperate with Trump's mass deportation plans. He said the state would not "interfere with the federal right to advance federal laws with federal resources" but would also abide by state laws intended to shield some immigrants. "It's not black and white."

Like other potential 2028 Democratic presidential contenders, Newsom is grappling with how to strike a balance with Trump as he faces pressure from liberal California voters to lead the opposition against the president-elect. But how Newsom finances his relationship with



SANDY HUFFAKER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) visits the U.S.-Mexico border in San Diego on Thursday.

Trump over his two remaining years in the governor's office could shape voters' perceptions of Newsom nationwide and damage — or bolster — his odds of eventually winning the White House. (Newsom has continually demurred when asked about his presidential aspirations).

Newsom's potential 2028 primary rivals — including Govs. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Jared Polis of Colorado and JB Pritzker of Illinois — are also trying to find the most politically advantageous positioning. The Democratic Party is in the midst of its own messaging reset as it examines the reasons for its losses in November and whether it can find any common ground with Trump's agenda.

Pritzker and Polis launched a nonpartisan alliance of "Governors Safeguarding Democracy" in mid-December — an effort that would push back against what they described as the dangers of authoritarianism and the undermining of democratic institu-

tions. Shapiro, like others, has emphasized the need to "work together" and "compromise" after his state went red for Trump. And Whitmer took an oblique shot at other Democrats who were adopting a combative stance toward the president-elect while speaking to reporters in mid-November.

"Some of my colleagues have staked out some pretty aggressive strategies," Whitmer said. "As I'm thinking about what a Trump administration will mean for our work ... I'm trying to focus on where we can find some shared priorities."

Newsom has insisted that he is not aiming to lead the Democratic resistance to Trump, and several of his confidants noted that the California governor didn't use that phrase in his initial comments about the election results and his call for a special legislative session (though others ascribed that label to him).

For much of this year, Newsom became a target for Trump as he blasted "Newsom" in his stump

speeches — reviving a schoolyard taunt that Newsom said was first directed at him by his seventh-grade peers. In those same speeches, Trump threatened to withhold disaster funding — punishing blue states that didn't support him — and weighed moves such as revoking California's ability to set strict pollution standards.

The warning shots from the president-elect were "sobering," Newsom told reporters last week after he greeted lawmakers at the California Capitol at the start of the special session.

He is urging the state's lawmakers to create a multimillion-dollar legal fund for the next round of legal battles — seeded initially with a \$25 million litigation reserve. He told reporters he is deeply worried about potential cuts to Medicaid as well as how Trump's vow to carry out mass deportations could rock California's economy, which would be the fifth largest in the world if the state were its own country.

"We are reacting to the reality

of Trump 1.0 and his assertion of what he wants to do in the second round," Newsom said, alluding to the state's 122 lawsuits against the Trump administration in his first four years in the White House.

But after a year in which Newsom repeatedly baited Trump on the campaign trail, several people close to him, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations, acknowledged that the governor has been reflecting on how to lower the rhetorical temperature and focus on voters' day-to-day concerns rather than ideological battles.

Dan Newman, a California-based strategist close to Newsom who has advised several of his campaigns and spearheaded the outside effort backing San Francisco Mayor-elect Daniel Lurie, argued that the November presidential results showed that the voters signaled that they were more interested in seeing leaders focus on results rather than the ideological battles that Democrats have waged in recent cycles.

Even in liberal San Francisco, Lurie defeated Democratic Mayor London Breed by presenting himself as a pragmatic problem solver who would address issues such as public safety, public drug use and homelessness.

"I really think people are weary of politics and they want to see leaders who are focused on the tangible, on daily realities," said Newman, who helped Newsom defeat a 2021 recall effort. Though Newsom will be drawn into ideological warfare with Trump, Newman noted, he will also have to show voters that he's focused on the more basic concerns that he was elected to fix.

"It is that tightrope walk of delivering on what you're elected to do, but you can't be naive or unprepared for the potential horrors of the Trump administration," Newman said. "If this Cabinet from Fox News sends the military to California to start deporting citizens and taking rights away, you've got to be prepared, but then at the same

time, remain focused on the fundamentals, which is what voters are asking for."

Newsom and Trump initially forged a partnership in Trump's first term as they worked together on the early response to the pandemic. Their first policy talks unfolded shortly after Trump took office when then-Gov. Jerry Brown (D) toured fire-ravaged areas of California with Trump and Newsom joined them as the governor-elect.

Ann O'Leary, Newsom's former chief of staff and a partner at Jenner & Block LLP, said that as they traveled the California wildfire areas, Trump and Newsom "established in those early days this important working relationship around disasters that was critical to California's ability to address the wildfires, but became even more critical when the coronavirus hit."

"Newsom really figured out a way to be in partnership and responsive from a federal-state government standpoint," O'Leary said. "The question is: Is that going to hold, because now Trump is in much more of a fighting spirit?"

But she noted that Newsom and other state leaders also waged an aggressive legal strategy with the 122 lawsuits the state filed against Trump administration actions. Once again, she said, that will be "an extraordinary tool that Democrats have to push back against anything that [Trump's] doing — on the environment, on immigration, on guns."

When asked last week in Sacramento about his effort to build a collaborative relationship with Trump during his first term — including in the early days of the pandemic in 2020, Newsom said, "It didn't make any difference whatsoever in terms of his desire to attack California and try to unwind our progress."

"His call for retribution, revenge, is pretty clear," the Democratic governor said, "and anyone who is not paying attention, I think, is doing so at their own peril."

Biden has said he opposes death penalty

DEATH ROW FROM A1

cases that the victims’ relatives oppose executing the condemned, and that their clients received poor legal counsel and had trials tainted with racial bias.

If Biden commutes any death sentences, he could anger supporters of capital punishment. Commutations — unlike executive orders or regulations that can be rescinded or rolled back — could not be undone by his successor.

The White House has been listening to the arguments and discussing possibly taking steps to commute at least some federal death sentences, according to multiple people familiar with the internal conversations who spoke on the condition of anonymity to detail private and ongoing deliberations.

No decision has been made, however, about the breadth or scope of such a possible move, including whether to do it at all or how many or which death row inmates might be included, the people said.

Biden said he opposed capital punishment during his 2020 campaign and vowed to push for its abolition in the United States. During his presidency, the Justice Department halted federal executions while defending existing death sentences in court and seeking new ones.

Biden has been criticized by liberal activists and criminal justice reform advocates for not more aggressively granting clemency while in the White House, recriminations that go beyond the death penalty cases.

Last week, the president ignited intense blowback after issuing a broad pardon to his son Hunter Biden, who was found guilty of gun-related charges in Delaware and pleaded guilty to tax evasion in California after prosecutions that Biden said were politicized. Some White House allies and Democrats were frustrated that Biden pardoned his son alone, rather than as part of a broader effort to use his clemency power. Biden is also said to be weighing preemptive pardons for people who may be targeted by the incoming Trump administration.

Supporters of capital punishment say delaying executions for decades, or not carrying them out at all, can retraumatize the victims’ relatives. They also argue that not carrying out death sentences is a betrayal of the court process through which the punishments were handed down and lets horrific crimes go unpunished.

When Trump’s first administration moved to resume executions, then-Attorney General William P. Barr said the government owed it to “the victims and their families to carry forward the sentence imposed by our justice system.”

Robert Blecker, who wrote a book on the death penalty and taught criminal law and constitutional history at New York Law School, cautioned against mass commutation, saying Biden’s administration should take the time to examine each case and circumstance.

“The essence of executive prerogative is to be discriminating — to discriminate the worst of the worst of the worst from the less bad,” Blecker said.

And if Trump revives the federal death penalty, Blecker said, there should be the same careful individual review.

Trump’s first administration restarted federal executions after a nearly two-decade pause, carrying out 13 lethal injections, some in the days before Biden was sworn in. The president-elect’s transition team did not respond to a request for comment about whether Pam Bondi, his pick for attorney general, would seek to resume federal executions if she is confirmed.

Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, a death penalty opponent who heads the Catholic Mobilizing Network, said she hopes Biden’s religious convictions will guide him.

“It’s not lost on me that Biden is Catholic, he takes his faith seriously, and he’s at the very end of his presidency, likely thinking through his legacy,” she said. “He could be part of bringing forth this incredible righting of a wrong — all these men facing execution. It doesn’t mean they don’t need to be held accountable, but it doesn’t mean their lives have to be taken.”

In his Sunday address, Pope Francis, who has called for the abolition of the death penalty, prayed that the sentences of death row inmates in the United States be commuted or changed. He called on Catholics to “think of these brothers and sisters of ours and ask the Lord for the grace to save them from death.”

Ruth Friedman, director at the

Federal Capital Habeas Project, said Trump has made clear he wants to revive executions and accelerate the process. “For this administration that has signaled its opposition to the death penalty to leave these men to be executed would be a travesty,” she said.

The letters to Biden calling on him to commute every federal death sentence approach the issue from different angles. Former correctional chiefs and prison leaders, including some who have overseen executions and found it traumatic, said that “we know first-hand the devastating toll executions take.”

Families of homicide victims said capital punishment “does not prevent violence. It does not solve crime.” Civil liberties groups and social justice organizations said the death penalty is plagued by racial bias. Business leaders called it “inhumane and irreconcilable with human dignity.” Some of the arguments echoed similar efforts by opponents of the death penalty to push for commutations earlier in Biden’s term.

The death penalty has largely declined nationwide over the past quarter-century, with fewer people executed or sentenced to death. A Washington Post examination found there are more than 2,100 prisoners with death sentences in the United States, more than half of them in places where executions are on hold for reasons that include court orders and governor-imposed moratoriums. Many appear likely to die without being executed.

While no president has issued a mass commutation of federal death sentences, governors have in some cases taken similar steps. Most recently, Kate Brown (D), Oregon’s outgoing governor at the time, in 2022 commuted all 17 death sentences in her state, which had a long-standing moratorium on executions and had last carried one out in 1997. Opponents of capital punishment are urging North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper (D) — who is term-limited and leaving office in weeks — to commute the sentences of all 136 people on death row in that state.

Presidents can grant clemency for only federal offenses, not state crimes.

While Biden’s administration has not carried out executions, it has not shut the door on the death penalty. Attorney General Merrick Garland, who like Biden has expressed concerns about capital punishment, imposed a moratorium on federal executions in 2021. But that did not prevent prosecutors from seeking new sentences.

Federal prosecutors won a death sentence last year for the Pittsburgh synagogue gunman, Robert G. Bowers. Earlier this year, the Justice Department said it plans to seek the death penalty for Payton Gendron, the White man who fatally shot 10 Black people in a racist rampage in a Buffalo grocery store in 2022.

Since Biden took office, the Justice Department has also defended the death sentences for Dylann Roof, the Charleston gunman, and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the Boston Marathon bomber. Both of those sentences were won during the Obama administration, while Biden was vice president.

Attorneys who have submitted clemency petitions for federal death row prisoners describe the process as akin to a black box, saying that after filing their requests and making presentations to the Office of the Pardon Attorney — which is housed within the Justice Department — they rarely receive any updates.

In some cases, they say, the only answer comes in the form of an execution taking place.

“You understand that you weren’t successful because your client was executed,” said Kelley Henry, an attorney who has worked on multiple capital clemency cases. “But you receive no notice.”

Henry’s client, Lisa Montgomery, who was convicted of strangling a pregnant woman and cutting the baby from her abdomen, was executed by the Trump administration the week before Biden was inaugurated. Montgomery’s attorneys had argued she was too mentally ill to understand her death sentence and had suffered years of violent abuse.

Henry said she was so shaken by Montgomery’s execution that it prompted her to start therapy. She is petitioning Biden for clemency for two other death row prisoners and said she is feeling anxiety ahead of Trump’s inauguration.

“I’ve had clients get clemency, and I’ve had clients get stays of execution, and I’ve had clients get executed,” Henry said. “Particularly with what happened the last time, the fear of what could happen next time is definitely trauma-triggering.”

The fascinating dynamics of Fla., Ohio Senate picks

The Fix

AARON BLAKE

President-elect Donald Trump is engaged in a battle of wills with GOP senators over his Cabinet picks

— a joust that will say a lot about just how much of a rubber stamp congressional Republicans will be over the next four years.

They have thus far shown at least some willingness to buck Trump, or at least resist him. That has endangered Pete Hegseth’s selection as defense secretary and led to attorney general pick Matt Gaetz’s rapid withdrawal.

Republicans will have 53 senators, so just four voting with Democrats can reject Trump’s ideas. And we’re already getting a sense of which GOP senators could be thorns in Trump’s side.

But we also don’t know exactly what the Senate GOP conference will look like next year, thanks to an impending vacancy in Ohio (Vice President-elect JD Vance’s seat) and another likely vacancy in Florida (secretary of State pick Marco Rubio’s seat). And given the fine margins, the appointments to replace them could matter greatly.

The big question is whether a pair of governors who have had their differences with Trump, to varying degrees — Florida’s Ron DeSantis and Ohio’s Mike DeWine — will choose picks that enable Trump or maybe provide some more potential checks on him.

Let’s dive into the dynamics for each pick, starting with perhaps the more interesting one in Ohio.

Ohio: Could DeWine’s latitude lead to a Trump skeptic?

This one has the highest likelihood to matter over the next four years, for one big reason: DeWine is one of the foremost examples of a Republican who has demonstrated independence from Trump — and not only lived to tell the tale, but thrived.

He’s also term-limited after a long career in politics that will probably end in early 2027. In other words, he has some latitude.

DeWine sharply criticized Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, saying Trump “started a fire that has threatened to burn down our democracy.” He defended an Ohio GOP congressman who



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has demonstrated independence from Donald Trump — and not only lived to tell the tale, but thrived.

voted to impeach Trump. The president-elect last year attacked DeWine when the governor vetoed a ban on gender-affirming care for minors. And DeWine at the tail end of the 2024 campaign criticized Trump pretty sharply over false claims about Haitian immigrants eating pets in Springfield, Ohio.

In the middle of all of this, DeWine beat a Trump-allied former congressman by 20 points in the 2022 primaries, and then won reelection by 25 points.

DeWine has provided few hints about his plans, except that he wants someone who can seek and win the seat in 2026. If recently defeated Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) runs, that could be a tough race.

Among the possibilities mentioned for the appointment are Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, state Attorney General Dave Yost, Secretary of State Frank LaRose, Republican National Committeewoman Jane Timken, Rep. Mike Carey (R-Ohio) and state Sen. Matt Dolan.

The big question for me is whether he goes for Dolan, who could be the biggest Trump skeptic of the bunch, or to a lesser extent LaRose, who has in the past carved out some distance from Trump.

Their names make a lot of sense next to the others.

Both Husted and Yost have indicated they’re more interested in running for DeWine’s gubernatorial seat in 2026. (DeWine favors Husted in that race and could seemingly try to

pick Yost to clear Husted’s path, but Yost’s spokesman has suggested Yost prefers to run for governor.) Picking Carey seems unlikely because House Republicans will already have such a historically thin majority in early 2025. And Timken wouldn’t seem to be the ideal pick for the criterion DeWine has laid out (being able to win the seat), given she finished fifth in the 2022 Ohio GOP Senate primary.

Dolan has run twice for Senate, and he finished a distant second to Senator-elect Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio) earlier this year. He distanced himself more from Trump in 2022 than in 2024, but even in the latter race he sounded notes of independence as other Republicans bear-hugged Trump. (He also, very notably, earned a surprise endorsement from DeWine in that race.)

LaRose vied for Trump’s endorsement in 2024, but he as recently as 2019 criticized a “racist” tweet from Trump. And after the 2020 election LaRose rebuked claims of widespread voter fraud both in Ohio and elsewhere. He finished third behind Moreno and Dolan in the Senate primary earlier this year.

Florida: DeSantis’s political future looms large

DeSantis has more of a political future to mind than DeWine, given he could run for president again. That means we should hardly expect him to pick anyone MAGA regards with

THE TRUMP TRIALS

As other cases lose steam, all eyes on New York

BY PERRY STEIN

The federal D.C. election interference case against incoming President Donald Trump? Dismissed. The appeal to revive the Florida case alleging that Trump mishandled classified documents? Trump has been dropped as a co-defendant. The Georgia state election case? That’s stalled for the long-term, maybe gone for good.

And the New York state hush money case in which a jury already convicted Trump? Well, that one’s more complicated, with a lot still up in the air.

Welcome to this week’s edition of The Trump Trials, where I’ll explain what’s happening in Trump’s nearly wound-down legal cases, with a particular focus on New York — where much of Trump’s remaining legal dangers are concentrated.

Okay, let’s get started.

What’s ahead, New York edition

Manhattan prosecutors have until Monday to respond to the Trump defense team’s most recent request to overturn his felony convictions in the hush money case. The lawyers argued that the case should be dismissed because the entire legal process surrounding the conviction, appeal and sentencing would impede his second White House term.

Separately, New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan — the trial judge overseeing the case — still has to rule on whether the conviction should be overturned in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision this past summer that expanded the scope of a president’s immunity from criminal prosecution.

As part of that ruling, the justices said prosecutors could not introduce evidence against a former president that includes actions that would be considered official presidential conduct. While the bulk of the New York trial focused on Trump’s private conduct before he became president in 2017, the jury heard testimony about conversations Trump had in the Oval Office and with

aides. Trump’s team argued to Merchan that this evidence violates the Supreme Court ruling.

Merchan must also decide when, or if, to sentence Trump, who faces up to four years in prison. In a recent letter to Merchan, prosecutors acknowledged that it might make sense to sentence Trump after his second presidential term concludes in 2029. But they also said they want to respect the jury’s verdict.

Trump is separately fighting hefty judgments from lawsuits in New York, which — unlike his criminal cases — are not affected by him winning a new term in office.

He has appealed two judgments totaling nearly \$90 million after he was found liable for sexually abusing writer E. Jean Carroll decades ago and found to have defamed her. A decision in at least one appeal could come soon.

Separately, an appeals court could decide soon whether to reduce, uphold or toss out a judge’s order that Trump pay more than \$350 million in penalties plus interest for illegally inflating the value of certain Trump Organization assets to obtain better interest rates and lower insurance costs.

Now, a recap of action from the last couple of weeks, as prosecutors contended with federal guidelines that say a sitting president cannot be prosecuted.

New York: State hush money case

The details: 34 charges connected to a 2016 hush money payment. A jury found Trump guilty on May 30.

Last week: Trump’s attorneys filed their new motion Tuesday to overturn the conviction.

In addition to citing his transition back to the White House, Trump’s legal team claimed the prosecution was politicized, citing President Joe Biden’s similar statement about the prosecution of his son Hunter, whom he pardoned on Dec. 1.

D.C.: Federal case on 2020 election

The details: Trump faced four

counts related to conspiring to obstruct the 2020 election results.

Just before Thanksgiving, special counsel Jack Smith asked for the case to be dismissed, citing federal guidelines that prohibit prosecuting a sitting president. The judge agreed.

Because the judge dismissed the case without prejudice, prosecutors could in theory reindict Trump after he leaves the White House in 2029. But there are a lot of legal hurdles they would need to overcome.

Georgia: State case on 2020 election

The details: Trump faces eight state charges for allegedly trying to undo the election results in Georgia. Four of his 18 co-defendants have pleaded guilty.

The case is on pause while the Georgia Court of Appeals hears an appeal from Trump and some of his co-defendants seeking to disqualify Fulton County District Attorney Fani T. Willis, the top prosecutor.

Last week: Oral arguments had been set for Dec. 5, but have been indefinitely delayed. Trump’s lawyers asked a Georgia appeals court to order a lower judge to dismiss Trump’s indictment because he was again elected.

Nerd word of the week

Jurisdiction — The defense lawyers argued that because Trump is the president-elect, the Georgia state court system no longer has jurisdiction over the case. In the American legal system, parties must file their cases in a court that has the authority, or jurisdiction, to oversee them. That jurisdiction can be defined by location or subject matter.

In this instance, Trump’s lawyers cited in their motion federal policy that says a sitting president cannot be prosecuted. While this has never been tested in state court, Trump’s attorneys are arguing that the federal regulations do apply and Georgia’s courts cannot hear this case. The lawyers also argue that because federal case precedent says states cannot impede a president’s official duties,

suspicion. But some lingering tensions from DeSantis’s run against Trump in the 2024 primaries could loom.

By the same token, it seems increasingly possible Trump could cut a deal with DeSantis that could not only grease the skids for a Trump-y Senate pick, but possibly even an actual Trump: Lara Trump.

The big recent news here is that Trump is considering DeSantis as a backup for defense secretary if Hegseth fails. There is some thought that DeSantis could cement the sudden partnership by picking Trump’s daughter-in-law for the Senate appointment. Lara Trump has been very open about her interest. (President-elect Trump has also shown a huge desire to install his family in positions of power.)

At the same time, it’s hard to see how that wouldn’t look like a quid pro quo, and there are all manner of ambitious Florida politicians who would probably be pretty upset at being passed over for a relative political newcomer like Lara Trump. Trump picked her to co-chair the Republican National Committee — a position she already had little relevant experience for — less than a year ago.

Beyond Lara Trump, there aren’t any obvious contenders that could be prominent Trump skeptics. Among the possible picks are Lt. Gov. Jeanette Núñez, state Attorney General Ashley Moody, Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd and former state House speakers Paul Renner and Jose Oliva.

If there’s a pick that might make the most sense, it could be Moody. That’s in part because DeSantis chief of staff James Uthmeier — another name floated by some for the Senate pick — has shown interest in taking her job.

Interestingly, Moody was a Democrat a quarter-century ago, and her family once sued Trump over a condominium dispute, accusing him of fraud in the process. But she was a prominent Trump surrogate in Florida in 2020, and she backed a desperate legal attempt to overturn those election results in Trump’s favor, despite lawyers in her office privately ridiculing it.

The real question here seems to be whether Lara Trump has an actual shot, or we’ll see a relatively standard issue Trump-era Republican.

the Georgia courts do not have jurisdiction — or authority — to prosecute Trump.

Florida: Federal classified documents case

The details: Trump used to face 40 federal charges over accusations that he kept top-secret government documents at Mar-a-Lago — his home and private club — and thwarted government demands to return them.

U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon dismissed the case, saying Smith was unlawfully appointed as special counsel. Smith is appealing that ruling but successfully requested that Trump be dropped as a co-defendant in the appeal.

What next: We are waiting for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit to schedule oral arguments in the case, which could be resurrected against Trump’s two co-defendants.

Question Time

What is the difference between pardon and clemency?

This question is not directly related to Trump’s criminal trials, but because Biden pardoned his son last week and Trump has been talking about pardoning the Jan. 6 rioters, I figured I’d give it a shot.

Clemency is the general term used to describe the act of lightening one’s punishment. That can include commutation, which is the reduction of someone’s criminal sentence. If someone’s sentence is commuted, it could be shortened from 10 years to five years, for example. Or a death sentence could be reduced to life in prison. Clemency can also include a pardon, which is when a president or governor forgives a person (usually after a conviction) for the crimes they committed, rendering them not guilty. While it is not usually expunged from their records, people who receive pardons no longer have to serve prison sentences.

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THE WORLD

Asian farmworkers risk death in Israel’s border regions

BY REBECCA TAN
AND HEIDI LEVINE

METULA, ISRAEL — Israel’s northern border with Lebanon has been largely emptied of civilians for over a year. Even before the cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah started to fray in recent days, Israeli officials had said it wasn’t safe for residents to return.

There is one group of civilians, however, who have been here throughout the war.

When Israel ordered more than 143,000 of its citizens to evacuate border regions more than a year ago, it allowed migrant farmworkers, mostly from Thailand, to stay put — to water crops, prune trees and harvest fruit as rockets fell around them. Thousands of Thai workers have been laboring in Israel’s frontiers for months, some inside closed military zones where they’re the only civilians present alongside Israeli soldiers, authorities say.

At least six migrant workers — five Thai, one Indian — have been killed in cross-border attacks in the north this year. Four Thai workers were killed by rocket fire in October after receiving Israeli military permission to work in the evacuated town of Metula, about 500 feet from the border, Thai authorities said.

“We have tried everything, everything possible to stop this,” Thailand’s ambassador to Israel, Pannabha Chandramanya, said in an interview in Tel Aviv.

Even before the Metula incident, Thai leaders had pleaded with Israeli officials dozens of times not to allow workers in high-risk zones, the ambassador said, and each time were given assurances by Israeli officials. The legality of sending foreign workers into military zones was vague, workers’ rights groups said, until October, when a Thai worker was killed. Then Israeli Interior Minister Moshe Arbel said it was illegal to employ them in areas that had been evacuated. In a private meeting the following month, Pannabha said, Arbel promised again that Thai workers would not be sent to the front lines.

And yet, Pannabha said, she knows Thai citizens remain in the open fields of Israel’s embattled north and south, far from shelters and with virtually nothing to shield them from exploding shrapnel. As air attacks across the Israel-Lebanon border intensified in mid-November, Washington Post reporters saw trucks of Thai workers being waved into closed military zones at Israeli checkpoints.

“It’s unacceptable,” Pannabha said, her voice rising in exasperation. Thailand has already lost too much in this war, she added. Forty-one Thai nationals were killed by Hamas militants on Oct. 7, 2023, and six are still being held hostage in Gaza.

The Israel Farmers’ Federation, which represents private farmers in the country, did not respond to requests for comment. Israel’s Interior Ministry directed questions to the Population and Immigration Authority, which said responsibility for allowing workers to enter high-risk zones lies with the Israeli military.

In a statement, the military said: “Agriculture is a central component of the northern residents’ economy, and to balance various needs and allow for the preservation of agriculture as much as possible, requests from farmers for agricultural work in closed military zones are reviewed. Based on situational assessments, exceptions are made to permit agricultural work in restricted military areas.”

A ‘free’ choice

Israeli officials say Thai workers are not being forced to work in border regions or even to stay in Israel. But labor rights advocates say this is disingenuous.

“It’s not a free choice. Not really,” said Nir Dvortchin, an Israeli filmmaker who produced a documentary on Thai workers in Israel. Even if they want to change employers or worksites, most Thai laborers are too afraid to ask or



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A Thai agricultural worker in an orchard in Metula, near Israel’s border with Lebanon. Thai farmworkers at a makeshift camp in northern Israel. Thitiwat Klangrit, 35, sits by the bed of his roommate Prahyat Pilasrum, 42, who was among four Thai workers killed by a Hezbollah rocket attack in northern Israel.

aren’t able to because they speak little to no English, said Orit Ronen, manager of the agriculture workers department at Kav LaOved, an Israeli rights group.

A half-dozen Thai workers interviewed by The Post said they earn four to 10 times more in Israel than in Thailand’s impoverished northeast, where many of them are from. All said they have young children to raise, and some said they incurred debts to travel to Israel.

Employers don’t pay them if they choose on a given day not to work because of security concerns, the workers said. So on most days, they do. Videos from the workers show them plucking apples and kiwis with air-raid sirens blaring, ducking behind trees or under trucks as missiles streak overhead, and taking off through the fields on foot when panic sets in.

It’s not normal work, said Thitiwat Klangrit, 35, as he stood pruning a peach tree in Metula one recent afternoon. Dressed in a thin cotton shirt and a sun hat, he grimaced as rocket fire boomed nearby.

He had been getting used to the sounds of war, he said, but became more skittish a few weeks ago, after a group of four workers he knew went to work near the hill behind him. Thitiwat squinted into the sun, pointing in the direction of the borderline. His friends went past that hill, he said, and never came back.

Leaving and returning

Israel has come under mounting pressure to boost its domestic

agriculture sector, especially after Turkey, which had been a major food exporter, halted all trade in May.

But much of Israel’s home-grown crops are in its northern and southern border regions, where labor is in short supply. Palestinian laborers have been barred from working in Israel since the war, and many Israeli workers have been conscripted to fight.

Before the Oct. 7 attack, about 30,000 Thais worked on Israeli farms, the result of a decades-old recruitment effort by Israel to wean itself off a Palestinian workforce, labor researchers say. About 9,000 of them went home immediately following the attack. But Israeli farmers offered higher wages to those willing to return — and many accepted, coming in waves since the start of the year. As of November, there were 35,000

Thai workers in Israel, according to government figures.

Lior Bez, 51, a member of the Israel Defense Forces reservist unit guarding a checkpoint into Metula, said there were “loads” of Thais working in and around the heavily bombarded town. “They have their own reasons for coming back,” Bez said. “It’s not like we can ask them to leave.”

Suraphut Theerawuth, 37, was working on irrigation systems along the Gaza border during the Hamas assault and said he survived by locking himself inside a bunker. He fled to Thailand, but there were no jobs in his home province of Udon Thani that rivaled his pay in Israel of 10,000 shekels, or about \$2,700 a month, he said. So he returned to his old farm — which was “abandoned,” he said, except for Thais.

The sounds of Israeli bombardment of northern Gaza are near-

constant. Grenades and occasionally rockets are still launched onto the Israeli side of the border. “Of course I’m scared,” Suraphut said, “but I have to work.” He shared photos of his 5-year-old daughter, a girl with bright eyes and dark, bushy brows.

Anuchat Khokham, 43, said he came back to Metula because his wife gave birth to twins eight months ago.

Pradoemchai Samart, 37, said he returned to the farmlands north of Haifa because he accrued debts in Thailand he now has to pay off. He thought it would be safer in the north than in the south. But there, too, the sounds of the missiles, jets and drones play in a loop, keeping him up at night, Pradoemchai said. “I didn’t know it was going to be like this,” he said.

‘I had no idea how to feel’

When Thitiwat arrived to work in Metula in April, Prahyat Pilasrum had been there six months. The two shared a room, along with a third worker, at a hotel about 17 miles from the border, Thitiwat recounted. They cooked Thai food for each another on a gas stove they set up on their balcony and shared beers on Saturdays, their only days off.

In recent months, they’d talked more about the war. Prahyat was more optimistic than he was, Thitiwat said. Once it became less dangerous, his roommate told him, they would go fishing together.

On Oct. 31, Thitiwat was at work in a peach grove when he saw an explosion that seemed

nearer than usual. Soon after, he and other workers watched a helicopter descend onto the site of the blast. Thitiwat said he called Prahyat’s phone repeatedly but his roommate didn’t pick up. “I had no idea what to do. I had no idea how to feel,” Thitiwat recalled.

Prahyat was one of four Thai workers killed that day. He was 42, a father of three and his family’s breadwinner.

The workers’ remains were collected and sent to Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport, where Pannabha led Thai and Israeli officials in a ceremony. Pannabha said repatriating the remains of Thai citizens, which she’s had to do multiple times in the past year, has been the toughest assignment of her career. “Every single time,” she said, “I pray it’s the last.”

After the incident, Thailand’s foreign minister sent Israel a letter of protest and called for all Thai nationals to evacuate the border regions. The Thai Embassy in Tel Aviv circulated pamphlets telling workers it’s not safe in the north. But ultimately, Pannabha said, Thailand doesn’t have authority in the country.

Thitiwat said he couldn’t bring himself to go to work the day after Prahyat was killed. He didn’t go on the second day either. On the third day, he called his wife, who was home in Thailand, taking care of their 2-year-old daughter.

And on the fourth day, Thitiwat said, he got up before sunrise, left the hotel room with Prahyat’s empty bed, and went back to work.

Wilawan Watcharasakwej in Bangkok contributed to this report.



A Thai laborer works on irrigation pipes in southern Israel’s fields.

DIGEST

GHANA Former president set to return to office

Former Ghanaian president John Mahama is set to return to office after the ruling party candidate, Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, conceded defeat Sunday in the West African nation’s presidential election as

voters vented anger at the government’s handling of the economy.

Mahama, 65, who was president from 2012 to early 2017, had promised to “reset” the country on various fronts during a campaign that prioritized the economy and largely appealed to young Ghanaians who saw the vote as a way out of the country’s economic crisis.

The election for president and members of Parliament was held amid the country’s worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation and was seen as a litmus test for democracy in a region shaken by extremist violence and coups. West Africa’s regional bloc, ECOWAS, said the election was generally peaceful, a continuing trend in Ghana.

— Associated Press

South Korean prosecutors on Sunday detained a former defense minister who allegedly recommended last week’s brief but stunning martial law imposition to President Yoon Suk Yeol, making him the first figure detained over the case. On Sunday, ex defense minister Kim Yong Hyun was taken into custody at a Seoul detention facility after undergoing an

investigation by prosecutors, a law enforcement official said on the condition of anonymity in line with privacy rules.

Burkina Faso’s ruling military junta appointed a new prime minister a day after dissolving the government without providing any reason. Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo, until now communications minister, will be

the West African country’s new prime minister, junta leader Ibrahim Traore said in a presidential decree read on state television Saturday. Traore issued a decree Friday dismissing Prime Minister Apollinaire Joachim Kyelem de Tambela and announcing the dissolution of the national government. No reason was given for the move.

— From news services



ED RAM FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Kyiv under U.S. pressure to conscript younger men

BY ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN AND SERHII KOROLCHUK

KYIV — For nearly three years, Ukraine has resisted drafting men as young as 18, as is done by so many other wartime armies — a choice that has baffled some of Kyiv’s Western allies but is a deeply sensitive issue at home.

As Russia has continued gaining ground on the battlefield with high-attrition-style combat, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is facing increased pressure to deploy more younger people to the front lines. With future aid from Washington uncertain, U.S. officials have warned that Ukraine’s personnel shortage is perhaps more critical right now than its arms deficit.

“Even with the money, even with the munitions, there have to be people on the front lines to deal with the Russian aggression,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters in Brussels last week.

A communications adviser to Zelensky said Ukraine “will not compensate for the lack of weapons, aviation, or long-range capabilities with the youth of our men, and it is unfair to demand this from Ukraine.”

“Unfortunately, we’ve always had fewer weapons than needed and are far from matching Russia’s advantages in aviation, bombs, and missiles,” Dmytro Lytvyn said in a statement.

“This is what we explain to our partners,” he added. “We are fighting to protect the Ukrainian people, while [Russian President Vladimir] Putin is fighting for his right to destroy. . . . He does not value human lives, but we do.”

Even with Ukraine in a precarious battlefield situation, many of the military’s fiercest backers here are against reducing the draft age to 18. They say Ukraine’s young people should be protected most, as they’re the country’s future and are free from the decades of Russian influence past generations experienced.

Though young men have historically been the backbone of most armies, the question of who should serve in the fight is deeply divisive in Ukrainian society. Mobilization is unpopular, and Zelensky’s administration has said further lowering the mobilization age — it’s now 25, which is old compared with other countries — doesn’t make sense when there aren’t enough weapons to equip the soldiers already on the battlefield.

It’s unclear if the debate will continue to be a sticking point between Kyiv and Washington after President-elect Donald Trump is inaugurated next month. He has promised to broker a swift end to the fighting, but Ukrainians are concerned they’ll be forced into territorial concessions.

Ukrainians have characterized Russia’s invasion as a genocide that has already killed too many of their brightest and most patriotic people on the front lines. Some influential activists have said that Ukraine should sooner start drafting women than lower the conscription age.

Gen. Valery Zaluzhny, Ukraine’s former commander in chief who called on Zelensky to mobilize more troops, is among those against conscripting 18-year-olds.

“We need Ukraine to exist in 20 or 30 years,” said Zaluzhny, Ukraine’s current ambassador to Britain, while addressing students in London. “That future lies with them — those who are 18 now. They are a completely different generation who will save this country.”

Men ages 18 to 25 can still volunteer to serve in Ukraine’s military, but recruitment numbers have lagged across the country as the war grinds on. Most

men who wanted to volunteer have already done so.

There are also potential long-term demographic considerations; people under 30 are part of Ukraine’s smallest generation in its modern history. Ukrainian officials point out that men age 25 and older are more likely to already have at least one child than those under 25.

Oleksandr Gladun, deputy director of the Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies, said the country’s birth rates started to fall after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when it faced economic difficulties. The lowest birth rate recorded was in 2001, he said, adding that Ukraine’s military leadership asked the institute for an assessment two years ago.

“Right now, Ukraine is facing the most difficult situation, but we need to survive it and fight through it,” Gladun said. “We are living in a new reality, including a demographic one.”

Zelensky lowered the draft age from 27 to 25 in April and did away with an array of exemptions to try to boost personnel numbers. But progress has been slow. Kyiv intended to draft 200,000 new soldiers by the end of this year after the new mobilization measures were approved in the spring, Ukrainian officials said. But some believe that’s still not enough.

Zaluzhny had previously advocated for drafting 500,000 men — a figure that Zelensky dismissed as too high before he fired Zaluzhny months later.

U.S. officials say there is spare capacity to help train an entire brigade of Ukrainian recruits outside the country if only Kyiv sent people their way.

While Zelensky has repeatedly claimed that Ukraine’s newly formed brigades don’t have the weapons promised by the West, those in field complain that their units are understaffed and struggling to fend off a much larger Russian force.

Soldiers are also angry that the lagging recruitment means the Ukrainian government hasn’t created any legislation to demobilize the troops who have been fighting since the start of the war.

Yuriy Fedorenko, commander of the Achilles battalion in Ukraine’s 92nd Brigade, proposed in an interview that, even in peacetime, all men and women should begin mandatory military service from the age of 18, but that they would not see combat action until at least 23. The first five years would be devoted to training, he said.

“We must tell the Ukrainian nation today: Friends, starting next year, everyone will be subject to military conscription,” Fedorenko said.

“This decision is not popular — oh, everyone must serve — but on the other hand, if you break it down, this decision enables us to act preemptively to prevent war,” he added. “When a nation is prepared, any potential aggressor will think twice before starting a full-scale war.”

Ukrainian lawmakers have called for other compromises, possibly lowering the conscription age to 20 instead of 18. Col. Roman Kostenko, a parliamentarian who has served in the military, said in an interview with Ukrainian television that he is often asked by his American counterparts in Congress for a reason Kyiv won’t draft younger. And he doesn’t have a good explanation.

“It’s hard for me to explain because I don’t know,” he said. “But in reality, when we are fighting in the most brutal war, some people are being conscripted while others are not.”

Michael Birnbaum contributed to this report.

Soldiers in Ukraine’s Donetsk region in May. On Sunday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that about 43,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died since Russia’s invasion.

Zelensky disputes toll cited by Trump

BY DAVID L. STERN

KYIV — Around 43,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died since Russia invaded in 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday, in apparent response to President-elect Donald Trump’s claim hours earlier that Kyiv had “lost” some 400,000 soldiers in battle “and many more civilians.”

In a post on Telegram, Zelensky wrote that Ukraine had about 370,000 “cases of providing assistance to the wounded.” “Approximately 50 percent of the wounded return to the ranks, and all wounds, including minor and repeated ones, are recorded.”

Zelensky’s count Sunday was greater than the 31,000 he reported in February but remained far below estimates by Western intelligence agencies. He did not say how many troops were missing, a number believed to be significant. Russia, Zelensky said, had suffered 198,000 killed and more than 550,000 wounded.

Last week, Zelensky disputed a report of around 80,000 deaths

published by the Wall Street Journal. The true count, he told the Japanese agency Kyodo News, was “less, much less,” but he did not give details.

Trump, posting on his Truth Social platform on Sunday, called Ukrainian losses ridiculous. He did not clarify whether his 400,000 included both dead and wounded.

He wrote that “close to 600,000 Russian soldiers lay wounded or dead, in a war that should never have started, and could go on forever.”

The exchange came a day after Zelensky and Trump met in Paris, their first face-to-face encounter since Trump’s election in November. French President Emmanuel Macron hosted the pair Saturday at the Élysée Palace before all attended a ceremony to reopen the Notre Dame cathedral.

Trump, in his post Sunday, wrote that Zelensky and Ukraine “would like to make a deal and stop the madness.”

“There should be an immediate ceasefire, and negotiations

should begin,” Trump wrote. “If [the war] keeps going, it can turn into something much bigger, and far worse. I know Vladimir [Putin] well. This is his time to act.”

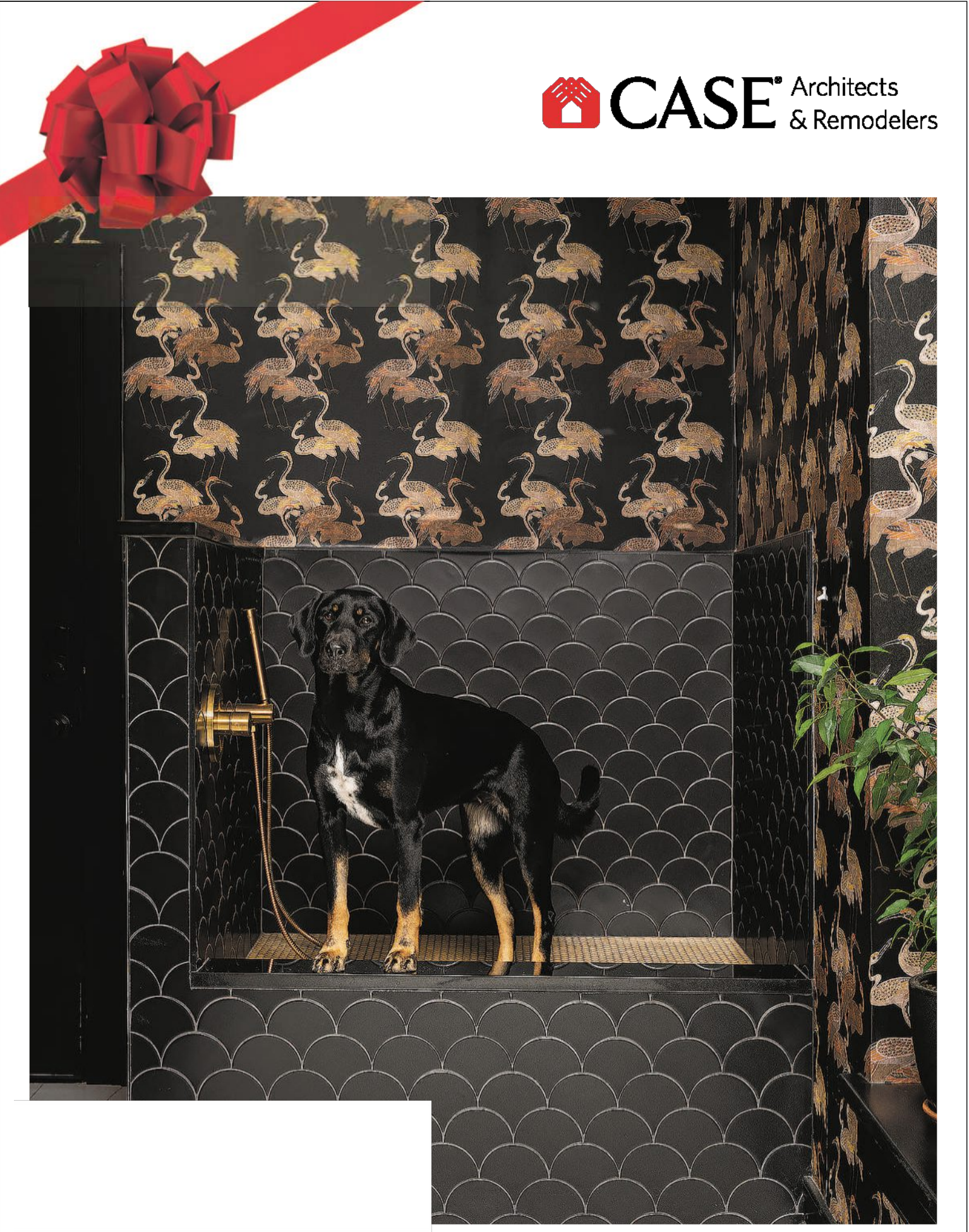
Zelensky described their meeting Saturday as “good.”

“We discussed important things on the battlefield in Ukraine and in the global situation — from our front to North Korea,” he wrote on Telegram. He wrote that Ukraine required “a just and strong peace that the Russians will not destroy in a few years, as they have already done.”

He reiterated Kyiv’s need for security guarantees from its Western allies. He also wrote of “thousands” of Ukrainian military personnel and civilians in Russian captivity, as well as Ukrainian children deported to Russia.

“This is what this war is all about,” Zelensky wrote. “It cannot be finished with just a piece of paper and a few signatures.”

“War should not be endless,” he wrote, but “peace should be permanent and reliable.”



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Years of anguish, hope culminate in single day

Syrian prisoners’ families begin frenzy of searching for long-missing relatives

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK AND MUSTAFA SALIM

GAZIANTEP, TURKEY — There was no place more feared in Bashar al-Assad’s Syria than Sednaya Military Prison. By Sunday, the guards had fled, its doors were flung open and this fortress of terrified silence near Damascus was alive with the sounds of parents and children calling out for their missing.

Videos on social media showed families streaming toward the prison they had known as a “slaughterhouse,” searching for loved ones who had disappeared there — ready, at long last, to bring them home, or to know with finality that they were gone.

The lightning advance of rebels, culminating in the fall of Damascus early Sunday, saw prison guards abandon their posts in cities from north to south. Now, Syrians are bracing to learn who among the country’s more than 100,000 unaccounted-for detainees are still alive.

The insides of government jails, once known only to those who had suffered or served there, were broadcast on televisions across the country. Videos showed freed inmates — exhausted, stunned, often barefoot — staggering out into the night.

Although all sides in Syria’s conflict have arrested, disappeared and killed prisoners, the Syrian Network for Human Rights monitoring group estimates that as many as 85 percent were held throughout the state’s network of prisons. Over the years, rights groups documented the systematic use of torture, starvation and other forms of lethal abuse by Assad’s security forces.

At one point, Sednaya alone had up to 20,000 inmates, according to Amnesty International. Many were executed or died of neglect, former inmates said, as guards enforced near-total si-

lence among the prisoners, who slept under bug-infested blankets on stone floors sticky with blood and sweat.

Diab Serriya, co-founder of the Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison, and a former detainee there himself, said Sunday that up to 8,000 relatives of prisoners were combing the cells, as civil defense workers struggled to reach secret chambers farther underground.

“Some of the rebels are trying to organize the search, but until now there are no proper lists,” Serriya said.

In other prisons, video showed rebel fighters shooting the locks off one by one. The inmates hailed from all over Syria. Some had been missing for decades, and there were tearful reunions in almost every major city. Overseas too, where the war had turned more than 5 million Syrians into refugees, families prayed for calls they had feared would never come.

Over the years, relatives of the disappeared likened the loss to a wound that couldn’t heal. One man recalled turning on the radio to drown out his thoughts, only to turn it off again when his missing wife’s favorite songs would play.

In the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, Jihad Dalain, 40, had been waiting to hear the voice of his youngest brother, Majd. The 24-year-old was arrested by government security forces in summer 2023 from the family home in Darayya, alongside their elderly parents. Their mother and father were missing for 100 days before middlemen agreed to secure their release, Jihad said.

His father refused to speak about what had happened inside the prison, no matter how many times Jihad asked, worried the government was surveilling their phones.

Majd, who has a degree in physics, had remained behind bars and was eventually moved to Adra Central Prison in Damascus. He called his parents early Sunday “with these exact words,” Jihad said: “He said: ‘There’s something happening; I can’t talk much.’”

The next call was to the whole



Jihad Dalain, 40, outside his home Sunday in Gaziantep, Turkey. His brother was freed from Adra Prison after the Assad regime fell.

family, Jihad said, at exactly 9:22 a.m. “He said he was coming home,” Jihad said, struggling to describe everything he felt in that moment. Jihad had married in the year and a half since Majd had been taken; the video call Sunday morning was the first time he had seen his sister-in-law.

Lists shared by activists on social media Sunday purported to name the newly released. Some Facebook posts showed men with shaved heads, said to have been freed from Sednaya, alongside phone numbers for their loves ones to call. On other pages, website administrators urged people to write the names of those still missing.

From the northern city of Azaz, Mayasa Marie, 40, said she was looking for her husband, Mohammed, arrested for his anti-government activism in

2012, in the early days of the revolution. She had heard rumors that he had died inside Sednaya, but refused to believe it. Their son was 6 when Mohammed was arrested. He is 18 now, she said, studying to become a lawyer to help the unjustly detained.

“My son and his uncle went to Sednaya immediately ... but still they didn’t find anything,” Marie said. “We are finally free but I need my husband with us again.”

In the German city of Hanover, Hussien Idris, 40, posted in search of his brother Ahmed. “I believe he is still alive, he should be 32 years old,” he wrote. “I will go back to find him myself.”

The families said their phones were flooded with messages, but none brought solace. There were lists their loved ones weren’t on; well-meaning questions from contacts, but no answers.



Jihad shows a photo of his brother Majd Dalain arriving home after he was freed from the prison in Damascus, Syria.

Naila Alabbasi has spent 12 years without her sister Rania — a proud mother, dentist and Syria’s two-time national chess champion. Members of Syria’s military intelligence arrived at her home in March 2013, arresting her husband, Abdul Rahman. Later, they returned to take Rania and her six children, ages 2 to 14. On one occasion, an intermediary suggested that Rania had been seen near Damascus, but that was all Naila had ever heard.

In early October, her brother Hassan found a letter Rania had written to a friend years before the country’s uprising. She was sitting outside in the soft Damascus breeze, she had written, wondering whether she should leave Syria altogether and join Naila in Saudi Arabia. “I felt a burn in my heart and a lump in my throat,” Hassan wrote in a post to Facebook. “I felt for a moment like I

was communicating with her.”

Naila had been glued to the news since the rebels’ offensive gathered pace, and stayed up late watching the news, unable to sleep. On her rounds as an obstetrician in Riyadh, she said, she thought only of her sister, and her nieces and nephews.

Her voice broke as she started to describe the videos she had watched of the freed prisoners. She had been studying their faces, she said, knowing that the children might be unrecognizable after so many years.

“We should be happy, we should be celebrating, but Rania is not here,” she said. Her hope was diminishing, but still she clung to it.

“There’s no news, no news,” she kept saying. “I’ve tried every-one.”

Salim reported from Baghdad.

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Assad’s fall deals large blow to Iran’s ‘axis of resistance’

Syrian regime’s toppling follows weakening of Hezbollah and Hamas

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE AND MUSTAFA SALIM

The rapid fall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, coming hard on devastating losses suffered by Hezbollah, has dealt a serious blow to Iran’s “axis of resistance,” a central pillar of Tehran’s foreign policy, forged over decades.

Through Syria’s 13-year civil war, Iran devoted a great deal of blood and treasure to propping up the Assad regime, only to watch its investment fail in a matter of days as city after city fell to Syrian rebels. But Tehran hasn’t only lost a client; it has seen its ability to project power, key to its own security, upended.

Hezbollah, the militant group whose power once rivaled that of regional armies, suffered a humiliating defeat to Israel last month and was counting on Iranian support to rebuild.

“The resistance front has had a really hard year,” Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi acknowledged Sunday in an interview on Iranian state television. But he said it had outperformed expectations, and cited continued Hamas attacks on Israel. “Nobody could have predicted that the front could be so strong.”

Others were skeptical.

“Without Syria, we could see the entire axis of resistance just unravel,” said a Western diplomat who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive policy.

Inside Iran, news of Assad’s fall prompted sharp criticism of Tehran’s policy. Even supporters questioned the decision to spend billions on a network that fell apart so quickly.

“Iranians can be happy,” Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, a former member of parliament, wrote on X. “No one has the right to spend the nation’s dollars to maintain spiderwebs anymore.”



An opposition fighter steps on a broken bust of former Syrian president Hafez al-Assad, Bashar al-Assad’s father, in Damascus on Sunday.

After Hamas launched its attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, the axis — a loose alliance of armed groups backed by Tehran from Yemen to Gaza — appeared to be ascendant.

In support of Hamas, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and groups in Iraq joined in attacking Israel and U.S. interests in the region.

But Israel has killed Hamas’s and Hezbollah’s leaders and worn down their forces in Gaza and Lebanon. Rather than deterring its foe, Iran’s direct attacks on Israel have only exposed greater weaknesses.

Iran fired about 200 ballistic miles at Israel in October, the largest covert action in their

decades-long shadow war. But the barrage, largely intercepted by Israeli, U.S. and allied defenses, inflicted little damage. Israel’s retaliation took out some of Iran’s most sophisticated military equipment: its air defenses.

“Iran needs to rethink its strategy of proxies,” said Maria Luisa Fantappiè, head of the Middle East program at the International Affairs Institute in Rome. “The proxies have become more of a liability than an asset.”

As officials in Tehran spent money on far-flung militias, they told Iranians that the network provided a layer of protection: It allowed them to fight their adversaries abroad, rather than at home.

When the Hamas attack ignited a regional war, that reasoning was put to a test. In Fantappiè’s view, it failed.

“The axis is not an effective way to project power,” she said. “On the contrary, it was projecting weakness.”

In the hours after Assad was toppled Sunday, Iran’s most senior officials were silent. When the Foreign Ministry issued a statement, it emphasized a long history of ties between Iran and Syria.

“The relations between the two nations of Iran and Syria have a long history and have always been friendly,” the ministry said. “It is expected that these relations will continue with the

wise and far-sighted approach of the two countries.”

When Iran mobilized forces last week to protect Assad, it called on allies to protect the supply lines that link Tehran to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Days after the armed Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham overran Aleppo, Araghchi, the foreign minister, visited Assad in Damascus. After their meeting at the presidential palace, Iranian media shared images of Araghchi dining at a downtown restaurant with messages of solidarity.

But as the rebels continued to advance, Iran’s concern soon turned to panic. “What was surprising was the inabilities of the Syrian army and the speed of

developments in Syria,” Araghchi said in the Iranian state television interview. Even Assad, he said, “was stunned by the state of his own army.”

Araghchi traveled to Baghdad on Friday to rally support. But by then, regional officials and diplomats were reporting, Assad’s forces had lost the city of Hama and were abandoning the Damascus suburbs.

Iraq refused to commit troops.

“The Iranian foreign minister left Iraq disappointed,” said an Iraqi official with ties to the country’s Shiite militias. Araghchi assumed Baghdad would support Tehran, as it had earlier in Syria’s civil war, and was “surprised” to hear otherwise, the official said.

By the end of the day, a regional diplomat said, Iran had concluded Assad was “a lost cause” and ordered military personnel and embassy staff to evacuate. After four decades as allies, Tehran was cutting its losses.

Iranian commanders and diplomats scrambled to board flights out of the Damascus airport. Others tried their luck on overland routes to Lebanon and Iraq, according to the diplomat and an Iraqi official.

“The Syrian government, and Mr. Bashar Assad himself, did not have the will to stay in power anymore,” Mohammad Ghaderi, an Iranian analyst, told the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran News Network on Sunday.

He dismissed claims that Iran abandoned its longtime ally. “Iran supported Syria up until the last moment,” he said.

But criticism of Tehran was rampant.

Some called for Iran’s leadership to learn from Assad’s fall.

“The experience of dominoes falling in Syrian cities has an important lesson,” Abdolreza Davari, who was an adviser to former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said on X.

“The main ally of every government is its people,” he wrote, “and people’s satisfaction is a necessary condition for its survival against external attacks.”

Salim reported from Baghdad.

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Many causes cited in sudden fall of regime — all wrapped in one man’s hubris

ASSAD FROM A1

flee to their coastal heartland.

Assad made no public address in his final days in power and remained out of sight, except for one meeting, photographed by state media, with the Iranian foreign minister. A widely anticipated speech expected Saturday night never materialized. “He did not say a word of comfort to us, and we are disappointed,” said an Alawite woman in Latakia who had remained a staunch supporter of the president, speaking on the condition of anonymity for fear of rebel reprisals.

He leaves a legacy of cruelty, fear and destruction that has disfigured the modern Middle East. Huge swaths of Syria are in ruins, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in the country’s civil war and tens of thousands are missing, many of them vanished into the black hole of the regime’s notorious prisons.

The speed of the rebel successes stunned an international community that had long ago given up on the Syrian opposition and had become reconciled, in varying degrees, to Assad’s rule.

But the warning signs of a collapse were there all along. Assad missed multiple opportunities to reconcile with his opponents and the international community, and failed to implement policies that might have rescued his country and united his people, Syrians and analysts said.

“He had no answers and no solutions,” said Amr Al-Azm, a former Damascus University professor who teaches at Shawnee State University in Ohio. “Just more of the same, the same intransigence, the same oppression.”

“He brought this all on himself,” said Andrew Tabler, who founded Syria Today in the early 2000s under the auspices of Bashar’s wife, Asma. He later wrote a book about Assad and is with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “In the end he lost everything and it cost the Syrians hundreds of thousands of lives.”

After Assad succeeded in putting down the uprising, there had been an expectation among his followers of a “peace dividend” — a revival of the shattered economy, at least some steps toward reconstruction, perhaps a new chance for acceptance on the global stage.

But none came. Eventually,



A Syrian opposition fighter sits inside an office Sunday at the Presidential Palace in Damascus after the Syrian government collapsed.

even those Syrians who remained loyal because they saw him as a bulwark against the Islamists they feared became disenchanted, Azm said. The Assad family ran the country as though it was their personal piggy bank, and the lavish lifestyles of the president’s relatives, frequently shown on Instagram, fueled the resentment.

Meanwhile, the country was descending ever deeper into deprivation. According to the United Nations, 90 percent of Syrians are living in poverty and half are food-insecure. “His biggest problem was that he didn’t seem to care,” Azm said. “When even his own people couldn’t put food on the table, he lost all support from his own base.”

Assad squandered numerous opportunities to shore up his status externally and internally, with his stubborn refusal to make the kind of concessions that could have brought him international recognition and desperately needed economic relief. Russia, his chief ally, made strenuous efforts to bring about a peace settlement

that would have been accepted by the West, but he refused to compromise when it came to his absolute hold on power.

In the weeks before the rebel offensive, he rebuffed several fresh approaches from global powers that might have helped secure his rule. One, made indirectly from the United States through the United Arab Emirates, would have lifted crippling U.S. sanctions in return for Assad severing Iran’s ability to arm and sustain Hezbollah militants in Lebanon using land routes through Syria, said Bassam Barabandi, a former Syrian diplomat who defected in the early days of the revolt.

Perhaps more fatally for his regime, he also rejected an olive branch from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was seeking to normalize relations with Damascus in return for efforts by Assad to keep Kurdish forces off his border, engage in dialogue with the Syrian opposition and accept the return of at least some of the millions of Syrian

refugees who have sought sanctuary in Turkey.

Turkey has long backed parts of the Syrian opposition and appears to have countenanced the rebel offensive as a retort to Assad’s rejection, Erdogan hinted Friday.

“We had called Assad. We said, let’s determine the future of Syria together,” Erdogan said Friday, expressing hope that the rebels would reach Damascus. “We did not receive a positive response.”

The Turkish efforts “all failed,” Foreign Minister Hasan Fidan said Sunday in Doha, Qatar. “We knew something was coming.”

Assad’s departure heralds an end to one of the most brutal dictatorships in the modern Middle East, one that stretched back to Assad’s father, Hafez, who seized power in a coup in 1970 and became president the following year. Hafez established the family’s reputation for cruelty with a harsh crackdown on a Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama in 1982, which killed tens of thousands of people.

Bashar assumed the presidency

after his father died in 2000, and there were hopes that he would introduce reforms and modernize the centralized, state-run economy. But after a brief flowering of freedoms in the early 2000s, known as the Damascus Spring, he reverted to repression.

By the time the Arab Spring protests swept the Middle East in 2011, Syrians were more than ready to join in. Protesters surged onto the streets around the country chanting for “freedom” and “justice,” only to be met with hails of gunfire from security forces.

Initially, Syrians aimed their protests not at Assad but at the corruption of the officials and family members surrounding him. In the first few weeks of the nationwide protests, he seemed to be willing to countenance reforms that might have appeased the demonstrators, according to Syrians involved in the discussions.

Instead, he chose to crack down, unleashing the vicious civil war that would forcibly displace millions, help fuel the rise of the Islamic State and draw soldiers

from the United States, Turkey, Russia and Iran into the country.

Almost from the outset, Assad’s army was bolstered by the presence of advisers and fighters from Iran, but it was the intervention of Russian warplanes in 2016 that definitively turned the war in his favor. Four more years of bloodshed followed before a ceasefire deal negotiated by Russia and Turkey brought the fighting to a halt in the north — freeing the conflict but not resolving it.

Assad survived in Damascus, but two-thirds of the country remained beyond the control of his forces, with the opposition still holding an enclave of territory in the north. Kurdish forces, backed by the United States, controlled the east and northeast.

In 2019, the Arab countries that had broken ties with Assad and backed the opposition began reestablishing diplomatic relations with Damascus, starting with the UAE. The reasoning, Emirati officials said at the time, was to lure Assad away from his dependency on Iran and thereby reduce its expanding influence in the region.

To that end, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries followed suit, and in 2023 Syria was readmitted to the Arab League after being expelled for its brutal crackdown on protesters.

Yet for all the regional efforts to restore Assad’s standing, he refused to break ties with Tehran, lamented a former Egyptian official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter. “We spent a lot of efforts,” the official said. “But he was in the arms of Iran.”

In his final weeks in office, Assad seemed oblivious to fast-changing regional dynamics, as Israel’s military pummeled Hezbollah, which had contributed thousands of fighters to defend the Syrian government at the peak of the civil war. Some of his advisers recommended that he accept the indirect U.S. offer to sever ties with Iran in return for the lifting of sanctions, Barabandi said. But Assad held firm, he said, thinking he might get a better deal once President-elect Donald Trump was in office. As rebels raced south toward the Syrian capital, Iran began withdrawing its forces and Assad’s time ran out.

Claire Parker in Cairo contributed to this report.

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Biden administration races to help stabilize Syria after regime’s collapse

U.S. FROM A1

The flurry of activity capped an astonishing turn of events in which rebel forces needed just days to upend a status quo that stretched across the administrations of three U.S. presidents, and as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to steer a very different foreign policy from that of his predecessor.

Biden said he had directed his administration to work to ensure that Syria remains as stable as possible, as many actors inside and outside the country seek to capitalize on the situation to grab power and advantage. With Israel seizing control of border areas of Syria and Turkish-backed forces skirmishing with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the country’s northeast, the situation remains deeply combustible.

Chief among the fears is that the Islamic State — which long held portions of Syrian territory under the fierce rule of its self-declared caliphate — could seize advantage of the situation to reestablish itself as a major force in the country.

Many parts of the U.S. government were caught off guard by Assad’s collapse, including long-time advocates for Assad’s ouster, according to one senior U.S. official, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak frankly about sensitive internal assessments. U.S. officials are far from confident that the rebels will govern in a humane or productive manner, the official said.

To battle back the militant group, forces from the U.S. Central Command, whose area of responsibility includes the Middle East, on Sunday struck over 75 Islamic State targets using B-52, F-15 and A-10 warplanes, the command said in a statement.

“Battle damage assessments are underway, and there are no indications of civilian casualties,” Central Command said in a statement.

“There should be no doubt — we will not allow ISIS to reconstitute and take advantage of the current situation in Syria,” said Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla, who leads the command, using another name for the Islamic State. “All organizations in Syria should know that we will hold them accountable if they partner with or support ISIS in any way.”



ALLISON ROBBERT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

President Joe Biden said the United States was working to address concerns that extremist groups could capitalize on the power vacuum.

Among numerous concerns is the fate of the remnants of Assad’s chemical weapons program. The Syrian leader once had a major stockpile of chemical weapons and used them repeatedly against rebel forces, the Obama administration said in 2013.

After international condemnation, much of the stockpile was dismantled, but monitoring chemical weapons inside Syria remains a “primary focus” for the Biden administration, a senior administration official said while briefing reporters. The official said chemical weapons experts are “fairly confident” the situation is under control, without elaborating.

The administration does not expect that the current chemical weapons threat will require “boots on the ground,” the official said.

With a wide range of regional actors threatened by instability in Syria and seeing an opportunity to

seize advantage, Biden administration officials have been reaching out extensively to countries that share borders with Syria. The country’s central location makes it a hub for many regional dynamics and rivalries.

Iraq, Turkey, Israel, Lebanon and Jordan all have stakes in what happens in Syria. Russia and Iran — long Assad’s chief backers — also stand to lose from the collapse of his regime.

U.S. officials said the Biden administration is working with Turkey in an attempt to set up a deconfliction mechanism for the northern city of Manbij, where the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces have clashed in recent days with Turkish-backed forces.

Israeli forces moved Sunday into buffer areas of the Golan Heights and limited areas on the Syrian side of its border, describing those as temporary moves as Israel seeks to determine who is in the area. The Israeli government

informed the Biden administration ahead of time, U.S. officials said.

“That is going to take an enormous effort from everybody. We think that should be the focus of those with an interest in building a better future Syria,” the senior Biden administration official said. “Additional fronts opening up, not in anybody’s interest.”

U.S. officials are in contact with all the groups involved in fighting in Syria, including the main group that ousted Assad, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which was once affiliated with al-Qaeda and remains on a U.S. terrorist list, the official said.

Asked whether the U.S. government would strip the group of its terrorist designation, which would enable deeper U.S. contacts and cooperation with them, the official would not rule it out.

A third U.S. official said the administration is in the process of doing a “real-time assessment”

about HTS and its level of independence from Turkey and Turkey’s views on Syrian Kurds, and whether the group should be removed from the foreign terrorist organization list.

Syria has long been a danger hot spot for U.S. interests. The Biden administration had been tracking the Islamic State targets that were hit in Sunday’s strikes for some time, even before the events of the last few days, and took the moment to weaken the group’s operational capacity, the official said.

The administration hopes the strikes will serve as an additional deterrent to aggression by the group, the official said.

Biden on Sunday sought to take credit for Assad’s fall from power, saying it was the result of the actions his administration took to boost allies amid the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. Russia, Iran and Hezbollah were unable to aid the Assad regime as they had in

the past because they are “weaker today than they were when I took office,” he said.

Biden said he was sending administration officials to the region and offering assistance to Syria’s neighbors, including Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. He also promised humanitarian relief and announced his administration would coordinate with the United Nations to help Syrians build an independent and sovereign state.

For more than a decade, U.S. presidents have grappled with how to contain the brutal leadership of Assad without triggering a spiraling international conflict. The fall of the Assad regime fulfills a longtime U.S. foreign policy goal, after Russia and Iran supported Assad amid the Obama administration’s efforts to oust him.

U.S. officials have also for years sought the release of Austin Tice, the American journalist who was kidnapped there in 2012. On Sunday, Biden was asked about Tice’s whereabouts. “We believe he’s alive. We think we can get him back,” he said.

Trump, on Saturday, called for the United States to stand back in Syria, saying that Washington does not have a direct stake in the conflict.

On Sunday, Vice President-elect JD Vance echoed Trump’s call for the United States not to intervene, but he appeared to share Biden’s concerns about the future of the region. He tweeted that he was “nervous” about calls on social media to celebrate Assad fleeing the country.

“Many of ‘the rebels’ are a literal offshoot of ISIS,” Vance wrote. “One can hope they’ve moderated. Time will tell.”

Retired Gen. Frank McKenzie, who led the U.S. Central Command during part of Trump’s first term, said he was concerned that the Islamic State’s possible resurgence could have “profound negative implications” for the region.

He said Trump would have to take a “good hard look at” addressing Syria amid risks that it could become a foothold for extremist groups trying to plot attacks against the United States and its allies. He noted that 900 U.S. troops are present in Syria for counterterrorism efforts.

Zakrzewski reported from Paris. Ben Brasch and Ellen Nakashima contributed to this report.

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Syrians celebrate the fall of Assad’s regime near the border between Lebanon and Syria in Masnaa, Lebanon. Within Syria, many saw the events as a long-postponed reckoning after the uprising begin in 2011.

Joy and anxiety after rebel factions unite to topple Assad

SYRIA FROM A1

If there was ecstasy in Syria over Assad’s ouster, there was also anxiety over the nature of the rebel force that now held sway over the country. “We all have the windows and shutters closed,” the person said.

The startling rebel success in toppling Syria’s leader has come amid efforts by the insurgents, known at times in the past for infighting, extremism and atrocities, to unify their disparate factions and project a responsible and caring image to skeptical Syrians.

HTS, the faction leading the rebel offensive, was an affiliate of al-Qaeda until about eight years ago and has been designated by the U.S. government as a terrorist organization. HTS has since sought to rebrand itself as an Islamist movement focused on local concerns rather than transnational jihad. The effort intensified during the rebel advance over the past 11 days, when the Sunni Muslim group released statements intended to reassure Syria’s religious minorities, including Christians.

Its leader, previously known by his nom de guerre, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, for the first time gave interviews with Western news outlets using his given name, Ahmed al-Sharaa, while dismissing his association with extremists as a youthful folly.

Syria’s army appeared to fold in the face of the rebel advance, ceding large swaths of territory “without firing one bullet,” Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Sunday.

And as Assad’s security forces failed to come to his defense, Russia and Iran, Syria’s most important military allies, proved unwilling or unable to save the embattled Syrian dictator. Both countries have been preoccupied with other conflicts — in Ukraine and in Lebanon — and there was no sign of the muscular effort they had mounted in years past to defend Assad.

After Assad had gone Sunday, an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement said Syria’s future was “solely the responsibility of the Syrian people, without any destructive interference or external imposition,” suggesting that Tehran had reconciled itself to the rebel tide.

Russia said it was “in contact with all opposition factions in the country,” including groups it had previously derided as terrorists. Russia also said there was “no serious threat” to Moscow’s military installations in Syria, its primary interest in the country.

Countries in the region appeared to watch the developments in Syria with a measure of alarm. Fidan, whose government has supported the Syrian opposi-



People step on torn images of ousted Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad in Masnaa on Sunday. Russian state television said he fled to Moscow.



The leader of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, known by his nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Jolani. The faction led the rebels’ advance.

“Whoever emerges as Syria’s new leadership should make a full and determined break from the repression and impunity of the past and establish a system that respects the human rights and dignity of all Syrians regardless of background or political views.”

Lama Fakih, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch

tion, warned that the rebels needed to be “inclusive” and that “there must never be a desire for revenge,” a sign of concern that the insurgents might turn on Assad officials or loyalists.

The Arab League, in a statement Sunday, said it was “following with great interest the rapid developments in Syria, which is passing through one of the most important and dangerous moments in its modern history.” The group, which includes governments such as the United Arab Emirates that had recently eased Assad’s international isolation by normalizing relations with Damascus, urged Syrians to “uphold the concepts of tolerance and dialogue” and “protect the rights of all components of Syrian society.”

Assad’s exit did not immediately bring calm to Syria. Israel and Turkey remained focused on what they perceive as threats emanating from inside Syria and engaged in military action to secure their interests.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday he had instructed the Israeli military to strengthen the defense of his country’s borders by advancing into the buffer zone separating Syrian and Israeli-controlled land in the Golan Heights and seizing new territory.

Turkish-backed Syrian rebels, meanwhile, advanced on Manbij,

a town in northern Syria controlled by Kurdish-led Syrian fighters allied with the United States. The offensive, part of a long-standing Turkish effort to push Kurdish fighters it considers terrorists away from its border, threatened to draw a response from the United States, which views the Kurds as critical in the fight against the Islamic State militant group.

Within Syria, the fast-moving events were seen by many Sunday as a long-postponed reckoning after the uprising nearly 14 years ago against Assad’s government. That revolt was fanned by the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings and set off in Syria by graffiti spray-painted by a teenage boy in the country’s south.

“It’s your turn, doctor,” the graffiti read, in a challenge to Assad, a trained ophthalmologist. The slight prompted a furious security response and eventually, Syria’s long civil war.

The conflict, beginning in late 2012, displaced millions of Syrians, forcing them across the country’s border into Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, or farther from home. Desperate Syrians braved the Mediterranean Sea in dinghies or rafts, in the hopes of reaching Europe. Syria’s refugee crisis became a global concern, especially for European countries receiving the exiles — but never urgent enough that it

prompted a settlement of Syria’s conflict.

Over those years, thousands of Syrians had disappeared into Syria’s prisons.

Youssef Sousanieh, 65, a resident of Damascus, said he had not seen his older brother Michel in nearly four decades. Assad’s departure might make it possible to learn his fate. His brother would be 71 years old.

“We asked every security branch and they all said it’s none of your business,” Youssef said in a phone interview. His family had long given up hope of finding him, until Saturday, when Youssef saw prisoners being released across the country.

“They reminded me of him again, seeing these people freed,” he said. “I hope, maybe, after 39 years, God will keep him alive.”

Lama Fakih, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement Sunday that for “Syrians scattered across the globe, the dream of accountability for years of crimes and brutality is closer to becoming a reality.”

“Whoever emerges as Syria’s new leadership should make a full and determined break from the repression and impunity of the past and establish a system that respects the human rights and dignity of all Syrians regardless of background or political views,” she said. The rebels needed to preserve and protect evidence of crimes, she added.

For Yassin al-Haj Saleh, a Syrian dissident, the collapse of the Assad government was not the end of his struggle, which has included seeking to solve the mystery of what had befallen his wife.

“The regime fell a day after the anniversary of my arrest in 1980 and a day before the anniversary of my wife Samira’s disappearance in 2013,” he wrote. His wife, Samira Khalil, and three other human rights activists disappeared during the chaos of Syria’s civil war.

The four — Khalil, Razan Zaitouneh, Wael Hamadeh and Nazem Hammadi — vanished from a Damascus suburb, believed to be kidnapped by Islamist rebels who were active in the district at the time. They were known as the Douma 4, for the area where they were last seen.

“It is my country and my people’s right that my wife and friends be freed,” Saleh wrote. “Or that we know the full truth about them and the perpetrators.”

El Chamaa reported from Beirut and Morris from the Masnaa Border Crossing, Lebanon. Claire Parker in Cairo, Catherine Belton in London, Leo Sands in Washington and Suzan Haidamous at the Masnaa Border Crossing contributed to this report.

A season of uncertainty for a Helene-stricken tree farm

BY ALLISON JOYCE
AND SCOTT DANCE

Before a Fraser fir can become “O Tannenbaum,” it must grow tall.

That takes a decade or longer. So when Hurricane Helene left much of North Carolina’s famed and valuable Christmas tree crop toppled, crumpled or steeped in mud, farmers like Graham Avery had little reason for hope.

“There’s a lot better ways to use your land to make money than Christmas trees,” said Avery, whose family’s farm lost about three-quarters of its trees in the storm — more than 70,000 of them, at varying stages of growth. Some tree growers faced with such a disaster might choose to turn their tree farms into campgrounds or sell to a housing developer, he said.

“That’s not who we are,” Avery said.

Instead, this Christmas season is one of uncertainty, and maybe some hope, as the Averys do what they can to salvage their tree farm. Normally, they would be busy boxing up trees and shipping them around the country for \$200 apiece. This year, they just hope to sell as many \$60 wreaths and table toppers as possible, cutting off the nicest branches of damaged trees to make them. Later, they will have to worry about replanting, and the seasons to come.

For now, they are shaking the mud off whatever intact trees they have, however imperfect, to sell to people who have been eager to lend support. Some have paid extra for trees to support hurricane relief fundraisers, bought trees even though they are allergic or don’t have room, and happily taken them home even if they’re “not as beautiful as you would typically want,” said Tiffany McDaniel, one of many volunteers who stepped up to sell some of the Averys’ trees.

In the two days after Thanksgiving, she sold more than 100 of them from a church parking lot near Greensboro, North Carolina.

“It was pretty incredible community support,” McDaniel said.

The tree industry’s turmoil is the latest sign of Hurricane Helene’s once-unthinkable devastation and of a community’s fervent



Christmas trees from several farms are loaded out on Nov. 25 in Newland, North Carolina.

PHOTOS BY ALLISON JOYCE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

resilience to it. Nearly a quarter of the “real” Christmas trees across the country come from North Carolina in a typical year, according to the North Carolina Christmas Tree Growers Association. But after untold numbers were damaged or destroyed when Helene flattened hundreds of thousands of acres of mountain forests, many tree growers were left navigating a precarious path forward.

This holiday season looks different in a place that would normally be drawing families from across the Southeast and sending them back home with a piece of North Carolina forest strapped to their car’s roof.

“Going out and picking out a tree is a big part of people’s traditional Christmas season,” said McDaniel, who grew up in the western part of the state. But with so much damage to the forests and many major roads and bridges still impassable, “it’s got a long way to go” to recover.

The state has about 940 Christmas tree growers who, in a normal year, sell about 3 million trees out of a stock of more than 50 million, according to the growers association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2022 census. That year, the state’s tree growers reported more than \$144 million in sales.



Waightstill Avery III cuts trees that survived on a hill. His family’s farm is pushing Operation Imperfect Christmas Tree.

Nearly all of those trees are Fraser firs, a species brought to the southern Appalachians by a Scottish botanist named John Fraser in the late 1700s, according to the association. Prized for their

soft, dark-green needles and classic evergreen aroma, the trees are an ideal crop in the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia because they can grow naturally only at elevations of 4,500 feet or higher, the association says.

North Carolina tree farms have supplied the White House with its

Christmas tree more than a dozen times since the 1970s, according to the association — including this year’s, a Fraser fir cut from another Helene-stricken farm in Avery County, the Cartner Christmas Tree Farm. In 2022, a red spruce from western North Carolina’s Pisgah National Forest, also hit hard by Helene, was chosen to stand alight in front of the U.S. Capitol.

The Averys say their family was among the first to bring Fraser firs to this corner of North Carolina, in a county that is named for their ancestor, Revolutionary War Col. Waightstill Avery. Waightstill Avery III now runs Avery Farms and the Trinity Tree Company along with his sons, Graham and Sawyer Avery.

Helene brought damage unlike anything the family had ever seen as it sent the North Toe River coursing across their land. It destroyed Waightstill Avery III’s home, and while the waters spared those of his sons, they washed away bridges and cut them off from the rest of the 500-acre property. All three men and their families escaped.

Besides deep deposits of mud and muck, the floodwaters left behind significant debris, including part of a massive pipe or culvert and a large trailer or shipping container. Waightstill Avery III’s house dates to the 1970s and was originally his mother’s hair salon. The water rose six feet high inside, so the family doesn’t know if they will be able to salvage it, but they hope to.

“There’s a lot of sentimental value there,” Graham Avery said.

About 30,000 of the farm’s Christmas trees were spared because they are on higher ground. But the flood damaged or destroyed the bulk of the Averys’ trees, as well as farming equipment and machinery, that sit near the river. Any trees that are still standing and intact but were inundated with water will eventually turn brown and die, Avery said.

At first, it wasn’t clear if they would be able to sell any trees this year. But as so many people rallied around the communities of western North Carolina, some of them began to ask: Can I help sell them?

Melodi Fentress had been connected to Avery Farms as she helped get relief to hurricane victims in the area. As the Christmas season approached, she offered up Rainbow Magic Alpaca Farm in Greensboro, where she helps raise more than 50 alpacas, as a tree lot. She and her husband managed to quickly get the supplies they needed to bale the trees and stand them on wooden blocks. So far, they have sold about two dozen of nearly 200 trees they got from the Averys.

At Oak Ridge Methodist Church northwest of Greensboro, McDaniel quickly sold all but 30 or 40 of the 160 trees she got from the Averys’ farm. She told customers that she was looking to recoup the \$56 per tree she paid and that anything more would go to a group called Cabins 4 Christ, building small homes for hurricane victims. Many of them gave an extra \$40 or \$50 to help, she said.

Every tree sold helps put a dent in the farm’s losses, Avery said. But it cannot make up for them.

In a normal year, the farm makes about \$500,000 in sales, with 5,000 to 10,000 of the farm’s trees large enough to sell. But next season, and many after, “those will be the years that we’re really down,” Graham Avery said. Among what survived Helene unscathed, there may be 1,000 to 2,000 market-size trees next year, he said.

He worries that in a year or two, “people will start to forget about this hurricane. It’s going to take a lot of years to rebound.”

So, next, the farmers will face the challenge of replanting. There are only so many seedlings to go around. And so many growers need them.

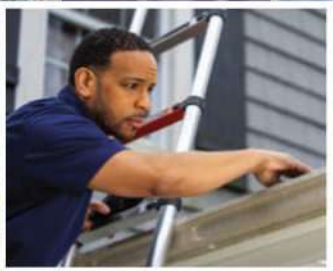
“It’s not like we can pick up the phone and call another tree grower and say, ‘Hey, we need 1,000,’” Avery said of seedlings and smaller trees. Even if they could, “You have to pay to keep the trees up for 10 years before you ever see any return on your investment.”

He expects a strenuous effort to buy new trees from anywhere he can find them — once the stress of this unusual and uncertain Christmas season subsides.

“That’ll be next year’s problem,” he said. “We’re still trying to get through this year.”



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SpaceX’s technological leaps bring benefits to U.S. military

MUSK FROM AI

year, according to a recent Bloomberg report, pegging it as the world’s most valuable private company and most valuable defense contractor. Another likely reason: investors’ belief that Musk, the world’s wealthiest man, could find it easier to further enrich his business empire after aiding the campaign of President-elect Donald Trump.

Musk has said he founded SpaceX to get to Mars. His advanced satellite system Starlink — which he has said he set up partly to fund Mars expeditions — has proved to be a killer app on battlefields for steering next-generation drone swarms and coordinating troops. No other nation is anywhere close to matching the capability.

The company’s massive Starship, the most powerful rocket in history and the first reusable heavy-duty one, is likewise in a class of its own. Even as Musk has touted its potential to help humanity explore the cosmos, the Pentagon is eyeing its 165-ton carrying capacity for rapid transport of troops and gear to Asia in case of war.

Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, Space Force chief of space operations, traveled to Texas last month to watch the latest Starship launch and review the company’s operations. “The Department of the Air Force and the U.S. Space Force are monitoring Starship’s progress and look forward to potentially leveraging its capabilities in the future,” the Space Force said in a statement.

At an investor gathering last month, one of SpaceX’s early investors, Ron Baron, recalled SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell once telling him that “one of the only things that’s preventing my grandchildren from speaking Mandarin is SpaceX.” Shotwell backpedaled the remark on camera — “No, that was very bold of me” — but confirmed she believed SpaceX is “very important” for U.S. national security.

SpaceX, Shotwell and Musk did not respond to requests for comment for this article.

Todd Harrison, a space policy analyst with the American Enterprise Institute, said it would probably take China 10 years to develop a rocket with carrying capacity like Starship’s, giving the U.S. military a window of exclusivity.

Gary Henry, former SpaceX senior director of national security space solutions, said he believed the next-generation military applications that can be built from Starlink and Starship will serve as deterrents that may prevent China from risking a war against the United States.

“I think no company or nation-state actor will be able to replicate or match Starship’s evolving performance capabilities in our lifetimes,” Henry said.

There has long been an intersection between space exploration and the military, dating back at least to World War II, when German engineer Wernher von Braun designed the V-2 rocket. And often new technology brings its own risks of sparking conflict. Earlier this year, Washington was roiled by the revelation that Russia had launched a “counterspace weapon” into orbit, which was partly a response to the U.S. satellite buildup. Security experts at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory have noted that U.S. dominance in low Earth orbit investment means China “has more latitude to start war in space” than the United States.

“These are old ideas, that the United States might be able to be so dominant in space that others might not even try to catch up or contest that dominance,” said Laura Grego, a senior scientist and research director at the

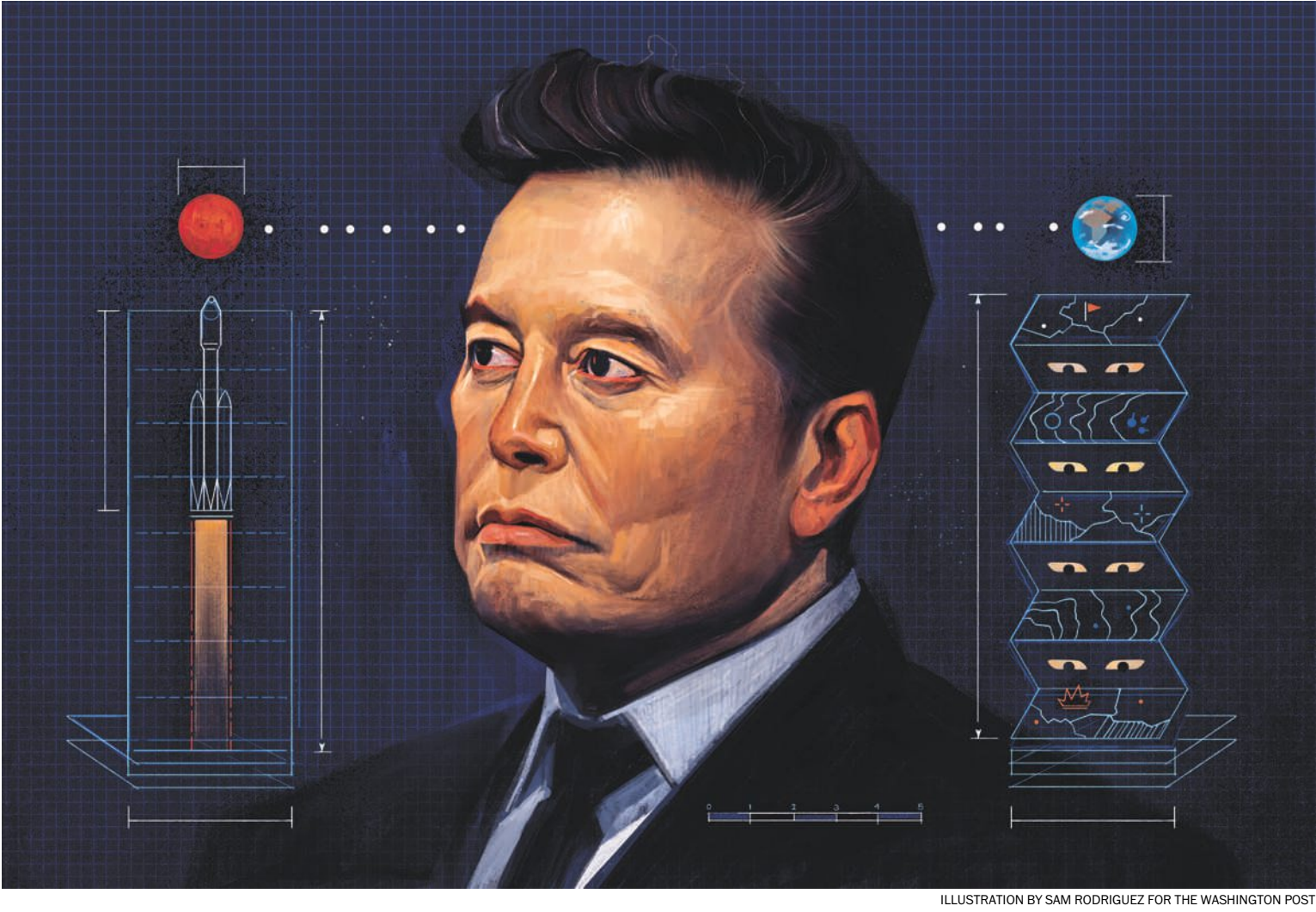


ILLUSTRATION BY SAM RODRIGUEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Union of Concerned Scientists. “That kind of rhetoric caused a lot of distrust and ... accelerated the space arms race that we are currently in.”

William Hartung, a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, who has been a critic of arms sales, called the predictions that SpaceX could help the U.S. deter or win a war against China “wishful thinking” that is “typical of the techno-optimism of the Silicon Valley defense sector.”

Such optimism exists outside the valley, too. Karl Bingen, a former deputy undersecretary of defense, likened today’s Mars dream to the 1960s race to the moon, which, despite criticism of Apollo’s extravagant costs, spurred technological advances like the miniaturization of computers.

“I think the same thing will happen here,” she said. “There will be technological and other benefits which we can’t fathom right now. But they will be amazing, and they will be game changers.”

Eyes in the sky

SpaceX has constructed Starlink, the world’s largest satellite network with about 6,400 satellites, in just five years, unlocking new capabilities for the U.S. government in encrypted communications, surveillance and next-generation drone warfare.

The recent revelations of the “Salt Typhoon” hacks, in which Chinese government hackers deeply compromised major U.S. phone and internet networks, has underscored Starlink’s value as a new airborne network circumventing traditional data “pipes.” The U.S. government has already shifted some communications to Starlink’s encrypted government service, Starshield. Although satellites are not immune to hacking either, Starlink’s equipment is manufactured in the United States, a rarity in the globalized telecommunications industry, providing less opportunity for a foreign hacker to intercept and tamper with gear.

Aside from its consumer internet service, Starlink is building out a next-generation network of surveillance satellites for government use, jostling with more established players like Maxar Technologies and Planet Labs.

Industry experts say the company is on track to build the world’s

first system able to monitor all spots on Earth continuously in near real-time, revolutionizing reconnaissance.

“When you look at what SpaceX has done to revolutionize cost,” said Robert O. Work, former deputy secretary of defense, “that is allowing us to get closer to real-time visibility across the globe using different sensors ... You could have hardly dreamed of [it] a decade ago.”

Starlink has also emerged as a key tool on the modern battlefield, after Ukrainian soldiers pioneered tactics of steering swarms of bomb-rigged small drones into Russian targets, in a successful experiment partly funded by the Pentagon. William Gerstenmaier, SpaceX vice president of build and flight reliability, told the Senate Commerce Committee last year he believed the deployment of Starlink and Starshield were “crucial” to U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives abroad.

“There will be technological and other benefits which we can’t fathom right now. But they will be amazing, and they will be game changers.”

Kari Bingen, former deputy undersecretary of defense, on technological advances spurred by SpaceX’s pursuit of colonizing Mars

“Future wars are all about drones & hypersonic missiles,” Musk posted last week on X. “Fighter jets piloted by humans will be destroyed very quickly.”

U.S. defense officials are also eyeing Starlink’s potential uses in a theoretical conflict with China, according to former SpaceX executive Henry. Beijing has used missile installations and other tactics to prevent any unauthorized approach toward the country by plane or ship, a strategy dubbed “anti-access/area denial.” Satellites float freely at a higher altitude, Henry said, helping

“America and its allies to project power necessary anywhere on the globe.”

Some ideas about these capabilities run counter to hard-won historical insights into the logistics of land-based warfare. Earlier this year, Maj. Brian E. Hamel wrote in Army Sustainment, a U.S. Army periodical, that satellites could even be potentially loaded with cargo needed by soldiers in a war against China, ranging from weapons to food to blood transfusions. The supplies could be released at the right point in orbit, he wrote, surmounting the “tyranny of distance” and challenging the conventional wisdom that the United States could never sustain an occupation of the Chinese mainland.

“The entire satellite could fall back to Earth or just eject the desired payload,” Hamel wrote.

Beijing has expressed displeasure at the U.S. satellite advances as it races to build a similar system. China Military Online, a media outlet run by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, has fretted that Starshield may be able to conduct detailed reconnaissance of other nations and intercept foreign communications: “The entire Earth will be wrapped in a large web.”

Even the European Union, a U.S. ally, has worried that the United States alone commands such a powerful new tool, and is attempting its own version, called IRIS².

“Depending on a foreign private company is not exactly what European governments want,” said a European space industry executive, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive topic. “It would mean that at any time, this private company can decide to switch off communications.”

Super Heavy

Even as Starlink’s satellites are revolutionizing communications and battlefield tactics, Shotwell recently predicted that the company’s giant rocket, Starship, will become the most valuable part of the business. NASA is investing \$4 billion into Starship, with plans to use the rocket to return astronauts to the moon, a nearer-term goal than Mars.

In October, SpaceX successfully “caught” Starship’s first stage, Super Heavy, proving the massive system can be reusable. That

suggests a dramatic drop in launch costs and could make Musk’s dream of a Mars colony a reality. “Big step towards making life multiplanetary was made today,” Musk celebrated on X.

It was a big step as well toward the Pentagon’s realizing its plan to build a rocket transport system that can shuttle troops and weapons to Asia within 90 minutes if a war breaks out with China. The Air Force awarded SpaceX a \$102 million, five-year contract in 2022 to develop such a system.

Bingen, the former Pentagon undersecretary, said it can take two to three weeks to resupply forces in the Western Pacific through traditional methods. This delay has figured into Washington’s concerns that Beijing could invade Taiwan, a geopolitical flash point, so quickly that the United States would not have time to come to its defense.

“How do you deliver supplies to a heavily denied environment? One way to do that is launch a rocket with the equipment and munitions you need, and have it land in a contested operating environment,” she said.

One dilemma there, however, is how to ensure a rocket cargo shipment flying downward is not mistaken for something else — say, a nuclear ballistic missile.

“We would not want to create confusion,” Bingen said. “These would be space launch vehicles, launched from very different locations from where we launch our nuclear missiles.”

Starship rockets could also enable the U.S. military to head off a brewing war by rapidly assembling a show of force overhead, Henry said: “I can show a potential adversary ... do you really want to go to the next level? Hopefully, they take their toys home, and we bring ours home.”

Peter Klupar, former director of engineering of the NASA Ames Research Center, said executives and officials are still getting their heads around how the Starship breakthrough will change technologies as we know them.

“People are behaving like it’s 1999, and the cost of lift is \$100,000 a kilo,” he said. “We’re headed to a place where the cost of lift is going to be \$100 a kilo.”

The multiplanetary dream

Musk has often gone big when discussing Mars. In a 2009 essay, he listed key events on Earth as

including the emergence of multicellular creatures, the differentiation of plants and animals, and the advent of mammals. “On that scale,” he wrote, “the next important step is obvious: making life multiplanetary.”

People familiar with Musk say the Mars dream has been deeply woven into the DNA of SpaceX since its earliest days. Musk himself has called it the motivating force when in 2002, at age 30, he started Space Exploration Technologies Corp. in the aerospace hub of El Segundo, California. Fresh off a windfall from selling PayPal to eBay, Musk hoped to lower the stratospheric price of rockets to aid exploration of the Red Planet.

But whether by accident or design, SpaceX soon found its practical business to be spy satellites. The first customer Musk landed was the Pentagon, which took a chance on booking the Falcon 1’s maiden flight in part because Musk had promised to keep the rocket cost below the unheard-of low price of \$6 million. The payload was a radically small and cheap satellite called TacSat-1, developed by the Navy and Air Force.

This first SpaceX rocket blew up in launch in 2006 and TacSat-1 never got off the ground. But defense officials helped Musk troubleshoot. More contracts followed with the Air Force and DARPA, the Pentagon’s experimental technologies agency.

This early exposure to the Pentagon’s cutting-edge satellite technology was valuable experience. In 2014, Musk began talking with a start-up called WorldVu, founded by a former Google executive, which had an audacious idea to build a next-generation satellite internet network in the air. The partnership with WorldVu fell apart, but Musk decided to build his own satellites.

While WorldVu and other rivals floundered, SpaceX’s Starlink satellites, first launched in 2019, succeeded. Today, Starlink controls more than half the satellites orbiting Earth, unlocking some of the futuristic capabilities that Pentagon engineers had envisioned two decades ago as they experimented with TacSat-1.

Until recently, Musk has discussed the military implications of SpaceX’s technologies in public only sparingly, focusing instead on his vision of interplanetary exploration.

“Starship will allow us to inhabit other worlds,” Musk tweeted in 2019. In July, he added: “Starship is the kind of thing that makes people from little kids to seniors excited about the future!”

In recent days, Musk has become bolder in his remarks, perhaps stung by criticism by celebrity astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson over the feasibility of a Mars colony on Bill Maher’s “Overtime” show.

“For him to just say, ‘Let’s go to Mars because it’s the next thing to do,’ what does that venture capitalist meeting look like?” deGrasse Tyson had quipped. “‘So Elon, what do you want to do?’ ‘I want to go to Mars.’ ‘How much will it cost?’ ‘A trillion dollars.’ ‘Is it safe?’ ‘No, people will probably die.’ ‘What’s the return on the investment?’ ‘Nothing.’ That’s a five-minute meeting, and it doesn’t happen.”

Musk took to X afterward, posting a meme based on Trump’s narrowly escaping an assassination attempt by turning his head. He was suggesting that SpaceX’s “Occupy Mars” goal could help produce a narrow miss of “World War 3.”

Aim high, beyond mere Earth orbit, he wrote. What assures payoff is “the absurdly ambitious nature of the goal.”

Christian Davenport and Nitasha Tiku contributed to this report.

As the rest of the world is soaked, U.S. heads into winter in a long drought

BY BEN NOLL

Even after a polar plunge, a bomb cyclone and atmospheric river, and heavy lake-effect snow, more than 71 percent of the United States was still facing abnormally dry conditions as of December.

That number is down from a record-breaking 87 percent in November. But the winter season, which begins on Dec. 21, does not typically come with this much drought.

Only 2012, 2021 and 2022 were more unusually dry this late in the year, putting 2024 in fourth place for countrywide dryness since such records began in 2000. Moderate drought is still happening in all but one state, Alaska, making up 27 percent of the land area in the country.

With its dryness, the United

States continues to be a global outlier.

Last month was the third wettest November on record for the planet, which was associated with flooding in Greece, Malaysia and Thailand, and Cuba.

Because the dryness was most pronounced during the crop harvest rather than the growing period, the effect on crop conditions wasn’t as bad as it could have been. Corn and soybean yields reached near-record levels.

The states still dealing with extreme drought

Parts of 23 states, from California to New Hampshire, are experiencing extreme (level 3 out of 4) or exceptional (level 4 out of 5) drought.

Precipitation deficits are stark. Climate data from September

through November confirmed that more than 30 states had well below normal rainfall.

However, drought severity is not just about intensity — it’s also about duration.

Over the past six months, deficits of six inches or more were observed in more than two dozen states.

That could equate to two to three months’ worth of rain, depending on the location.

Parts of Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have experienced similarly stark deficits.

Is there any relief in sight?

Most regions are forecast to continue to have below-normal rainfall in the short term. The exceptions will be the East Coast, Deep South and Pacific Northwest.

Much-needed rainfall is fore-

cast in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Hampshire — states that still have areas of extreme or exceptional drought.

In an area extending from Louisiana to Maine, two surges of soaking precipitation are likely from Monday through Wednesday. For many areas, this will fall as rain, but for interior New England, snow is possible.

This should result in a broad improvement in the drought status in these areas.

What to know about the type of drought and the impacts

Meteorological drought, a prolonged period of below-normal precipitation, typically takes at least a month or two to develop. But new research is investigating the emergence of flash droughts,

which come about in only weeks, typically because of high temperatures, high evaporation rates and low rainfall.

Agricultural drought develops when low precipitation translates to low soil moisture and water stress for plants.

The third category is hydrologic drought, which occurs when the above deficits translate to very low river flows and reservoir levels and reduced wetlands — culminating in the potential for environmental, social and economic effects.

The 2024 U.S. drought, which developed during late summer and intensified throughout fall, had cascading effects across all three drought types.

Persistently below-normal rainfall contributed to a significant reduction in soil moisture levels and stream flows. Reser-

voir levels in New York City recently slipped below 60 percent, compared with a normal of 82 percent.

But because these effects were most pronounced during the crop harvest rather than the growing period, barley, corn, oats and soybeans reported the highest proportion of good or excellent conditions in several years, with record or near-record yield for corn and soybeans in particular.

While that’s the good news, droughts take a long time to build and a long time to ease, meaning the effect of this year’s drought won’t be erased overnight. And it could easily linger into 2025.

If that happens, farmers could be in for challenging times ahead — and that could have consequences for grocery prices.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

TECH FRIEND

As season of holiday scams arrives, these tips can help you protect yourself

BY SHIRA OVIDE

Fraud experts say that scammers tailor their tricks to the holidays.

To steal your money, they’ll con you with bogus pleas for charitable donations or gift cards. Crooks entice you with holiday coupon links that hijack your bank account or let them order goodies from your online shopping accounts.

“There’s a season for every scam,” said John Haraburda, a director of product management at Transaction Network Services (TNS), whose technology verifies that business calls are legitimate.

No one is immune from the criminal grinch. Scam victims are just like you and me.

My colleague Michelle Singletary wrote a series of articles last week about a woman who was cheated out of nearly \$600,000 by a criminal who impersonated an FBI agent. And Ashkan Soltani, a technology expert who leads California’s consumer privacy agency, was nearly tricked by a scammer armed with detailed personal information.

You’re not to blame for being victimized by crime. But you can build your resilience against scams by honing these four self-protection tips.

1. If you’re prompted to click or call, don’t do it

It’s easy for criminals to make it look like an incoming phone call, email or text message is from your

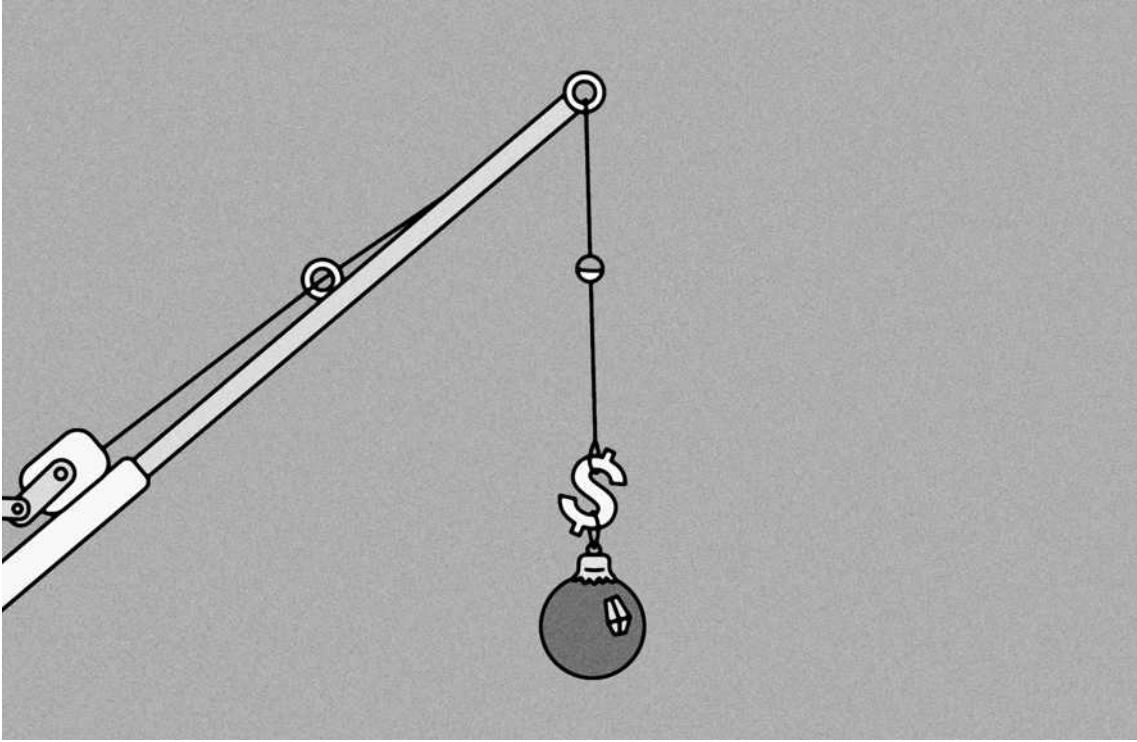


ILLUSTRATION BY EMMA KUMER/THE WASHINGTON POST

brother, FedEx or the local police department.

Be suspicious of every web link or phone call that you didn’t initiate. Overkill? Maybe. But your motto should be: Always verify another way.

If you get a text message claiming FedEx is holding a package, don’t click a link or call a number listed there. (Digital security company Cloudflare said there’s been an increase in scam attempts posing as package deliv-

ery notices.)

Find the FedEx website, app or customer service number on your own and then type in the tracking number from the text.

If you get an email that seems to be from your human resources department with a link to contribute to a holiday gift drive, don’t click the link or reply to the email. Separately find contact information for HR and make sure they sent it.

Related: Be careful of business

phone numbers you find in Google or from voice assistants like Siri. That number might be a scam.

2. Never pay in a weird way

That rhyme, from my colleague Heather Kelly, reminds you that reputable companies and government agencies won’t ask you to make payments by cash, gift cards, cryptocurrency or personal payment apps like Zelle, Venmo or Cash App.

Don’t pay an organization like a bank or cellphone company over the phone or in an online chat, unless you initiated the call or chat.

If a customer support person asks you to download software to your computer or hand over an account password or confirmation code, that’s probably a scam.

3. It’s a red flag if you feel scared or pressured to meet a deadline

Scammers specialize in eliciting fear or the thrill of a great deal. It’s difficult to fight your instincts, but it’s a self-preservation measure to slow down when you feel emotional.

If a caller claims there’s an emergency with your bank account or a fraud attempt on your Amazon account, and they ask for money or information like your password, take a minute and verify the information, as in tip No. 1.

Doriel Abrahams, principal technologist with the fraud prevention firm Forter, also said criminals appear to be using artificial intelligence to generate mass messages pretending to offer big discounts.

Stop before you click on what could be a bogus holiday coupon that swipes your credit card details or account information.

Verify the deal another way. Use the company’s app or website to see if you can find the discount. Or search Google or Reddit to see if people are talking about the deal.

4. Talk to someone you trust

If you’re asked to hand over money or give out personal information like your children’s names or bank password, talk to another human first. You can gut check the request, plus it buys time for your instincts to kick in.

“Talking to someone else takes you out of the loop that the fraudster is trying to keep you in,” Abrahams said.

Practice white lies if you need to wriggle out of conversations. Try, “Someone is at my door. I’ll call you right back.” Or say that you need to feed your baby or dog.

Here’s some good news

Technology and legal protections are making life tougher for scammers.

A technology system known as STIR/SHAKEN is helping stop con artists from using numbers that mimic those of legitimate businesses. TNS said that’s helped cut the number of suspected spam or scam robocalls from roughly 107 billion in 2019 to 68 billion in the past year. (Yes, that’s still far too many.)

Soltani, of the California privacy agency, said he’s encouraged by recent regulatory crackdowns and laws, including in his state, to limit companies from harvesting and selling your data.

The less personal information that criminals can buy or steal — including your Social Security number, address and phone numbers — the fewer opportunities they have to personalize scams.



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts), seen last month, introduced the legislation along with Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-Missouri).

TECH BRIEF

Bill fixes on Big Tech’s hold on deals

BY CRISTIANO LIMA-STRONG, GERRIT DE VYNCK AND ANDREA JIMÉNEZ

An unlikely Senate duo is pushing to loosen the grip that tech giants such as Google and Amazon have over defense contracting in cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) and Eric Schmitt (R-Missouri) introduced a bill on Thursday requiring the Defense Department to ensure there is a “competitive award process” — which they say is currently lacking — when it doles out contracts for advanced AI models, the cloud and data infrastructure.

It would also restrict what data government contractors are able to get from agencies and would mandate a report examining concentration in the AI market and identifying potential “barriers to entry” for smaller companies. (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

The Protecting AI and Cloud Competition in Defense Act, which was exclusively previewed by the Tech Brief, would bring fresh bipartisan scrutiny to the billions the federal government regularly awards to some of Silicon Valley’s biggest players.

Warren, an outspoken critic of

the tech giants who has called for them to be broken up, said in an interview that lucrative defense contracts can play a huge role in entrenching the power of major corporations and give an “unfair advantage to a few big players.”

“Few players call the shots on social media, sucking up Americans’ personal data and selling it for profit and skirting any meaningful regulation,” she said.

“Now those same companies are getting ready to run the same playbook in the artificial intelligence and cloud computing market.”

Schmitt, who sits with Warren on the Senate Armed Services Committee, has previously talked about the importance of fostering the defense technology industry in places outside of Silicon Valley, including in his home state of Missouri.

Warren said the limits the bill would impose on sharing government data are particularly crucial to ensuring a level playing field in the rapidly changing AI sector.

“The way that the big get bigger in AI is by sucking up everyone else’s data and using it to train and expand their own systems,” she said.

“That means that a new competitor can’t get a foot in the door because they don’t have that

same reach.”

The bill comes as tech companies prepare to jockey for major federal contracts under the incoming Trump administration, and some are hoping for a business boom.

In 2018, Google opted not to renew a contract with the Pentagon to provide image-recognition technology after some of its workers objected to working on military projects. But since then, Silicon Valley companies have become more comfortable selling to the Defense Department.

Cloud giants such as Google, Microsoft and Amazon jostle for contracts to provide file storage and productivity software to the sprawling bureaucracies that make up the armed forces. And a wave of new start-ups is trying to sell military hardware like drones and radar-jammers to the Pentagon as it seeks to find more affordable ways to engage enemies among a proliferation of cheap drones on battlefields around the world.

While the bill has bipartisan support, it could face resistance from Republicans who have called for cutting down on red tape in government to unleash more innovation in AI.

Warren offered a preemptive rebuttal to those arguments.

“This is not a red-tape issue.

It’s a smart contracting issue,” she said. “I don’t know anyone, Republican or Democrat, who says they want the United States government to give away value for free and promote giants at the expense of smaller competitors.”

Schmitt made the case that expanding competition among defense contractors is important toward keeping up with China’s military.

“At a time when we are facing a growing threat from the People’s Republic of China, the Department of Defense is in desperate need of procurement reform that induces more competition,” he said in a statement.

It’s the first time the two senators have teamed up on legislation, forging an alliance of Big Tech critics on both sides of the aisle.

Warren campaigned for the White House in 2020 in part by calling for the breakup of the tech giants, while Schmitt sued the federal government over its contacts with social media companies when he served as Missouri’s attorney general.

Warren said she and Schmitt will try to tuck the proposal into the upcoming defense spending package, which lawmakers often use as a vehicle for year-end priorities.

HELP DESK

How to switch to encrypted messaging after FBI warning

BY HEATHER KELLY

If you don’t use secure messaging apps, now is a good time to start.

U.S. officials say a massive Chinese hacking campaign, dubbed Salt Typhoon, has compromised the communications of an unknown number of Americans. The FBI and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) have recommended that people switch to encrypted messaging and phone call options.

Most people don’t think too much about what apps they use to make calls or send texts. They assume some amount of security and privacy is built into their devices or provided by their phone carriers.

With no timeline on when the networks will be safe, and no guarantee it can’t happen again, it may be time to switch your chats to something safer. We’ll get you started.

What’s end-to-end encryption?

When you’re researching apps, what you’re looking for is something called end-to-end encryption, which is the standard for secure communications. That means that you can see a message on your phone, and the recipient can see it on theirs, but other parties along the way — the cell company, the company that makes your phone and any other middlemen — cannot see what it says.

Not all encryption is the same, and there are loopholes to look out for. For example, if you have a cloud backup option turned on, the company storing it might be able to access those files. Or if your app only encrypts in certain situations but not others, such as across different operating systems or in a group text, your messages aren’t always safe. Encryption might also mean that some information — say, the content of a call — is secure but metadata such as the date, time and number are not.

Who actually has to worry about this?

If you’re in a sensitive job, are an activist, journalist or dissident, or are traveling someplace where you’re worried about being targeted for something like being gay, increase your defenses.

Hackers aren’t the only risk you should consider. Private conversations can be subpoenaed by law enforcement or shared without consent by other people.

What encrypted apps are best?

If you are low risk and just getting started, the best app depends on where you’re most likely to find your friends and family.

Many third-party options, including Signal and WhatsApp, offer end-to-end encrypted messaging and phone calls.

“Signal is the easiest and works out of the box by default for everyone. WhatsApp is fine but collects more metadata,” according to Thorin Klosowski, a security and privacy activist at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Signal is an open-source free tool made by a nonprofit that can be installed on a computer, iOS or Android device and works across platforms. WhatsApp, owned by Meta, is also considered a safe option. Make sure you have WhatsApp message backups turned off for extra safety.

If you are on Apple devices and exclusively talk to other people on Apple devices, then you can use Messages and WiFi calling through FaceTime. However, any communications with people outside the Apple ecosystem won’t be encrypted. For extra safety, turn off iCloud backups of your chats.

The same goes for Google’s default messaging app on Android devices — it’s only encrypted if you’re speaking to other people on the same app.

Another option for one-to-one conversations is Facebook’s Messenger app, which made end-to-end encryption the default last year.

What are other best practices?

Loopholes and hacks are a real risk, but the weakest link is often human beings. If the person on the other end of a conversation decides to copy, screenshot or photograph it to share with people outside the chat, encryption won’t stop them.

Avoid saying things in text messages that you don’t want to get out. Always protect your physical devices like phones, tablets and laptops with a passcode or biometric security. Turn on multi-factor authentication for any sensitive accounts instead of just using a password to log in.

Stick to reputable apps, and avoid tools where there’s any doubt. For example, don’t use direct messaging options on apps such as TikTok or X, and definitely don’t say sassy or fireable things on work chat apps such as Slack or Teams, or devices owned by your employer. They can install software that tracks your communications.

Some apps, including Signal, have an option for disappearing messages. On Apple devices, you can set all messages to only be saved for a set amount of time, such as 30 days. Whatever you do, skip email.

“Email is almost never a good idea,” Klosowski says. Encrypted email options do exist, but they are difficult to get right, he said.

OPINION

The Washington Post
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The road from Damascus

Europe – and the United States – must handle the new Syria with care.

IF LIFE is full of surprises, life in the Middle East is full of shocks. Even by that standard, the fall of Damascus is a stunner. Until two weeks ago, nothing in the region seemed more permanent than Syrian President Bashir al-Assad's hated regime. And yet, on Sunday, anti-government militia forces culminated a lightning offensive across the country, seizing Syria's capital as Mr. Assad's army melted away. Mr. Assad has fled the country, thus ending his family's brutal half-century dynasty.

To Mr. Assad we say: Good riddance. The speed of his downfall is testament to the illegitimacy of his awful rule, marked by mass executions, torture and support for terrorism. During the past 13-plus years of civil war, the regime depended on Russia, which carried out devastating airstrikes, Iran and its Lebanese proxy group, Hezbollah. But Russia had withdrawn troops for its war with Ukraine, Hezbollah has been decimated by its war with Israel, and Iran, also weakened by clashes with Israel, wrote off Mr. Assad.

For Syrians, the nightmare of Mr. Assad's misrule is finally over. But euphoria over his ouster must be tempered by questions over what comes next.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

These 'do-nothing' agencies would like a word

Regarding Ronald Kessler's Dec. 3 Tuesday Opinion essay, "To cut government, start with this do-nothing agency":

Mr. Kessler's recommendation to abolish the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) betrays a profound ignorance of how the intelligence community is structured and functions, and of the important role played by the director of national intelligence.

Before the ODNI, there was no formal process to set priorities, determine budget requirements and allocate money to the 17 different intelligence agencies. The ODNI established a rational process to assess needs, analyze trade-offs and review results.

Before the ODNI, agencies' teamwork was voluntary. That includes collaboration on the toughest and most important intelligence challenges, such as understanding the capabilities and intentions of the closed dictatorships hostile to the United States. The results of those team efforts varied widely. With the ODNI's mission managers, there is a means to assign resources and track progress. There is also a formal mechanism for agencies to make requests of other agencies and appeal to the ODNI if they get denied.

Before the ODNI, very few intelligence officers knew how the other agencies functioned. Fewer still had worked outside their home agencies. This led to poor coordination and missed opportunities. The ODNI established cross-training programs for officers ascending the ranks.

Mr. Kessler repeated the complaints of nameless FBI and CIA officers that the ODNI is slowing them down. In fact, the ODNI has no operational responsibility for the law enforcement operations of the FBI or the covert actions of the CIA. Actually, it would be better if the ODNI did. There have been too many operational mistakes made by both FBI agents and CIA officers that could have been prevented by knowledgeable and responsible higher-level supervision.

Mr. Kessler also complained about the number of employees. In fact, the staffing is appropriate for its assigned responsibilities. The ODNI is in charge of integrating the entire intelligence community — a huge feat. The National Counterterrorism Center, one of many offices within the organization, is the largest and accounts for about one-third of the total ODNI staff.

The ODNI can certainly be improved. However, abolishing it, as Mr. Kessler recommends, would make the United States less secure.

Dennis Blair, Durham, North Carolina
The writer was the director of national intelligence from 2009 to 2010.

I agree with Ronald Kessler that the incoming administration should cut the ODNI. It's a bureaucratic agency that should have never been established and should be abolished for all the reasons he articulated: bloat, mission drift, ineffectiveness and inessential operations.

That said, those reasons are exactly why President-elect Donald Trump will not cut the ODNI. It's a place where he can put his cronies — sinecures on the government payroll. No one will ever know about them, who they are or what they do.

Mr. Kessler pulled no punches when he wrote that the agency's budget is classified and taxpayers know nothing about how their money is wasted on "this boondoggle." And half of America's voters know Mr. Trump loves a boondoggle.

Laura Conrad, Angola, New York

Ronald Kessler recommends that President-elect Donald Trump take a hard look at the value proposition of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Indeed, Mr. Trump should examine the origins of all federal agencies and determine whether their continued existence is justified, even the Coast Guard.

By statute, this jack-of-all-trades branch of the military has more non-homeland security functions than homeland security functions. Its marine safety function, which regulates America's marine transportation system, belongs in the Transportation

It might be tempting to assume that anything is better than Mr. Assad. That would be a mistake. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, the main rebel group behind the current offensive, is an al-Qaeda offshoot that once had links to the Islamic State. Deemed a terrorist organization by the United States, HTS is led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, who fought U.S. troops in Iraq. Mr. Jolani has lately been trying to project a more moderate image and convince Syrians that all ethnic groups would be welcome in the post-Assad Syria. In the Idlib region of northwestern Syria, which it controls, HTS has provided protections for women and religious minorities but has also been accused of human rights abuses and authoritarian rule.

How Mr. Jolani handles the immediate transition after Mr. Assad's ouster will give clues as to which face of HTS to believe. Mr. Jolani needs to publicly commit to upholding Security Council resolution 2254, adopted in 2015, which calls for a ceasefire, a transitional authority involving all Syrian warring factions except terrorist groups, and U.N.-supervised elections after 18 months. Syria's economy is a wreck, and it needs international assistance to rebuild. That help should be made contingent on Mr. Jolani's commitment to

an inclusive, pluralistic Syria.

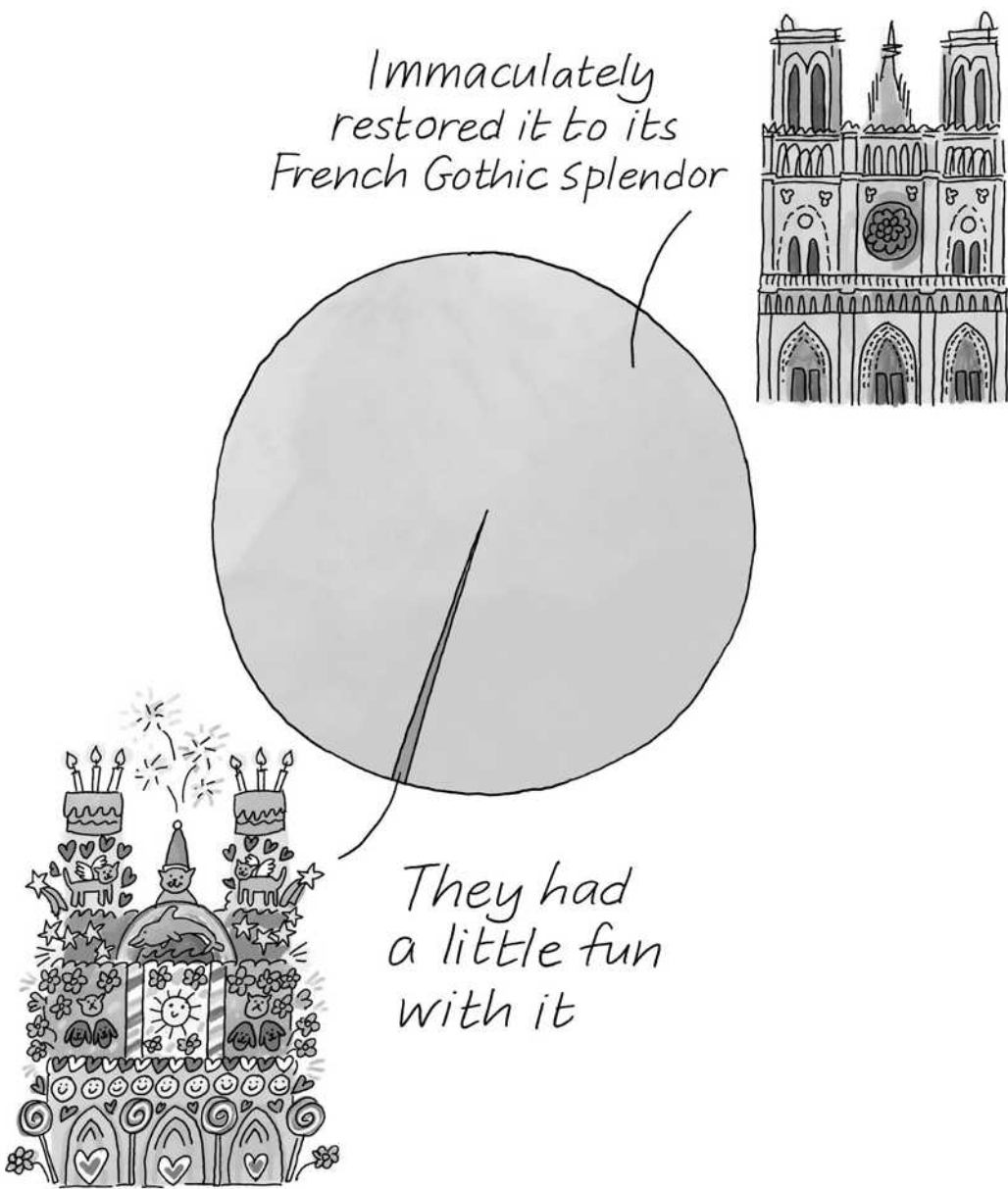
There should also be no wholesale retribution against old regime officials or the military. If Mr. Assad and his most-complicit aides are ever again in the country, the new government would be perfectly reasonable to hold them accountable for the crimes of his 24-year rule. But his soldiers were mostly conscripts. And some civil servants from the old regime will be needed to help necessary state institutions continue to function. Mr. Assad's erstwhile prime minister has already offered an olive branch, saying, "We are ready to cooperate with any leadership the people choose." Mr. Jolani and the HTS should take up the offer.

Syria might seem far removed from U.S. interests. Before Mr. Assad's fall, President-elect Donald Trump posted; "DO NOT GET INVOLVED!" But America is involved. Some 900 U.S. troops and an undisclosed number of military contractors are operating in northeastern Syria near Iraq, battling the Islamic State and backing Kurdish forces fighting the Assad regime. Iranian-backed militants using rockets, missiles and drones have attacked U.S. troops 125 times since October 2023.

Mr. Assad possessed prohibited chemical weapons, which he used against both rebels and —

EDITH PRITCHETT

What did they do to Notre Dame?



Department, which regulates all transportation systems — air, road, rail, public transit and automobile — except the nation's maritime system. Folding this function into the Transportation Department's Maritime Administration would reduce cost and increase efficiency.

Without having to meet the officer requirements for marine safety, the Coast Guard could also eliminate its academy, with its exorbitant four-year officer program. Instead, the Coast Guard should rely entirely upon its much thrifter — but just as good — 12-week officer candidate school and its even cheaper direct commission officer program for all its officer requirements, which is a far better bargain for American taxpayers.

Bruce Stubbs, Alexandria
The writer is a retired Coast Guard captain.

Among his other destructive "concepts," the incoming climate change-denying commander in chief might follow Project 2025's plan to privatize the National Weather Service's forecasting.

Besides letting us know if we should carry an umbrella the next day, this long-respected federal agency routinely warns us when inclement weather threatens our lives and property. This is what government is for: providing a public service.

President-elect Donald Trump appears content trying to deflect Mother Nature's wrath with a Sharpie, the way he tried faking the course of a hurricane during his first term. Maybe he can blast the storm away with a

few nuclear warheads — reportedly another one of his real-life, harebrained suggestions.

The National Weather Service needs to stay as it is. It's the least we can ask in the face of the next four catastrophically stormy years.

Vin Morabito, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Regarding The Post's Nov. 28 article "Elon Musk wants to 'delete' federal financial watchdog":

This report about the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should strike fear in the heart of anyone who thinks the federal government should work for the good of the people.

The Post wrote, "Since its founding, the CFPB has secured more than \$19 billion in consumer relief, while penalizing large financial institutions." Both Elon Musk and Project 2025 call for abolishing the agency. I can think of no clearer indicator that the incoming administration will favor the wealthy and big businesses over ordinary workers, consumers and taxpayers.

Add to that the soaring food prices that Americans will probably shoulder if the Trump administration deports agricultural and meatpacking industry workers while imposing needless tariffs, and I fear that those who voted for President-elect Donald Trump to protect their own standard of living are in for bitter disappointment.

Kathryn Hope, Silver Spring

With the discussion of the effort to eliminate waste

mostly — civilians. Securing that stockpile and keeping it out of the wrong hands is a paramount U.S. concern.

Syrian unrest has created the world's largest refugee crisis, with nearly 6 million displaced Syrians living in neighboring countries and Europe. The European Union hosts more than 1 million Syrian refugees, mostly in Germany, and a backlash against migration has helped fuel the rise of far right parties, one of which is a contender for power in German elections planned for February. France is in the throes of a political crisis with a national assembly paralyzed by the far right National Rally party. Even before Mr. Assad's ouster, some European politicians were angling — prematurely — to declare the Syrian conflict over so they could force the refugees home. They must not act too quickly now until Syria's situation clarifies.

The Middle East badly needs a success story: a pluralistic, democratic Arab country committed to upholding human rights. For more than 50 years, Syria under the Assad family regime epitomized so much that is wrong about the region. With engaged diplomacy, the United States can help write a brighter next chapter for this strategically located, and long-suffering, country.

in the federal government, the first place to look is the appropriations process in Congress.

In 1974, the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act established "the timetable with respect to the congressional budget process for any fiscal year." The last congressional action is to occur on Sept. 25. Yet it should come as no surprise that Congress — regardless of the majority — has often failed to follow its own timetable. In the almost half-century since, it succeeded only four times (1977, 1989, 1995 and 1997).

When I worked with the Energy Department's budget, we often spent the end of the fiscal year analyzing how we would function under a continuing resolution while Congress sorted things out. I cannot estimate how many work hours were wasted on such efforts that would have been better used if the budget had passed on time.

Michael Mescher, Burke

Regarding the Nov. 26 letters, "The DOGE can protect us by butting out":

Rantch Isquith's letter suggesting restructuring the Treasury Department based on private-sector incentives requires a response. By definition, the private sector and public sector have different purposes, accountabilities and metrics. Direct comparison of the two leads to faulty conclusions.

The purpose of the public sector is to provide: services, policies and regulations that facilitate commerce, trade and competitiveness; protection of people and property; a stable and acceptable currency; banking and financial oversight; transportation infrastructure; communications networks; fair and prompt legal and regulatory systems; and the right to form businesses, among other things. This allows the private sector to carry out its purpose to: provide goods and services; compete and carry out cost-cutting innovations; expand trade and grow market share; and earn returns on research and development. Using a sports analogy, the private sector is a participant-player in the economy, while the public sector is the regulator-referee.

Typical metrics of larger private-sector firms include profits, earnings, cost per unit and other quarterly factors. Public-sector metrics include good-faith compliance with and enforcement of laws and regulations in fair and transparent ways; implementation of federal programs, providing services and policies in a competent, timely and responsive manner; and ensuring value from the money provided by taxpayers.

As for public-sector incentives, assuming someone's work is satisfactory, a stable salary often offsets generally lower pay. The motivation for advancement in the public sector is often greater responsibilities and influence rather than money.

If public-sector employees were obsessed with "huge financial increases," they would turn to the private sector. Rather, my former colleagues took satisfaction in faithfully and lawfully doing their duties according to the oath of office, promoting the general welfare and, yes, a hard-to-define desire for and sense of civic duty in service of their fellow Americans.

Lastly, besides meeting unexpected urgent deadlines, mid-level and higher public-sector colleagues also work long hours and extra days under constant pressure, just like in the private sector.

Philip Steffen, Arlington

Guest opinion submissions

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Letter submissions

Letters can be sent to letters@washpost.com. Submissions must be exclusive to The Post and should include the writer's address and day and evening telephone numbers. Letters are subject to editing and abridgment. Please do not send letters as attachments. Because of the volume of material we receive, we are unable to acknowledge submissions; writers whose letters are under consideration for publication will be contacted.

OPINION



People celebrate in Damascus on Sunday after rebels captured the city and overthrew Bashar al-Assad.

HASAN BELAL/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

MAX BOOT

The 10 days that rocked the Middle East

The historian's occupational hazard is giving the impression that what happened must have happened, that the march of events was inevitably leading to a single destination. Recent events in Syria — and I do mean recent — show how unpredictable history actually is when seen in real-time rather than in retrospect.

Just two weeks ago, the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, was widely seen as a frozen conflict, and Syrian president Bashar al-Assad was seen as firmly entrenched in power. Then, on Nov. 27, an Islamist group called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) launched an unexpected offensive to take Aleppo, the country's most-populous city, which had been under regime control since 2016. Aleppo fell within days — and then just a few days later the rebels marched into Hama and Homs, two other major cities. By Saturday, they were in Damascus, and Assad — after a quarter-century of ruthless rule — had fled the country. Syria was free at last.

The lightning speed of Assad's downfall recalls the adage — often wrongly attributed to Lenin — that “there are decades when nothing happens and there are weeks when decades happen.” It was as though some cosmic hand had pushed “fast forward” on the narrative of our times, changing history in the blink of an eye. The only comparable event in recent years was the downfall of the Afghan government, but that was a positively glacial process by comparison: The Taliban launched their final offensive in May 2021 and did not reach Kabul until mid-August. The Syrian rebels' triumph — the 10 days that shook the Middle East — now appears inevitable. But even two weeks ago, it was still highly improbable.

How could Assad fall so quickly after so many years in power? Recent history shows that home-grown dictatorships (e.g., Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela, Iran) have considerable resiliency and staying power. They can survive any number of shocks, from massive street demonstrations to the loss of external assistance. By contrast, despotic regimes imposed by foreign forces are usually brittle. When Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made clear that he was not going to use force to keep in power the Soviet client regimes of Eastern Europe, they quickly collapsed in 1989.

The Assad regime in Syria was initially home-grown. It could be traced back to the takeover by the Baathist Party in 1963 — a branch of the same organization that also took over Iraq. Hafez al-Assad was an air force officer who became defense

minister in 1966 and president in 1971. When the Muslim Brotherhood rose up to challenge his rule in 1982, Hafez al-Assad crushed the uprising, centered in Hama, killing 20,000 people.

Upon his death in 2000, his son Bashar, a Western-educated ophthalmologist, took over. The authoritarian regime proceeded as before, until the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011. Assad was soon on the verge of losing power, and likely would have, were it not for the intervention of two critical allies: first Iran and then, in 2015, Russia. Iran provided Assad's ground forces, many of them coming from Hezbollah in Lebanon, while Russia provided air power. Assad and his backers perpetrated terrible war crimes, including the use of chemical weapons and the dropping of “barrel bombs” on civilians, to suppress the rebellion. The Obama administration, by contrast, did not provide much support to the rebel groups, and the regime was able to prevail. Or so it seemed.

Assad's ultimate downfall came because he did not use the breathing space provided by the Russian and Iranian interventions to extend his base of power, to buttress his legitimacy, or to reach out to the rebels. He continued to rule through terror, either killing or imprisoning anyone suspected of disloyalty. His secret police operated a vast network of prisons where suspects were subject to gruesome torture. The base of the regime never extended much beyond the Alawite minority, a Muslim sect whose members included Assad and many of his closest cronies. The Sunni majority was left to seethe in discontent.

Meanwhile, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the leader of HTS, was busy transforming his group from an al-Qaeda affiliate into a broader Islamist organization capable of winning the support of more moderate Syrians. He broke with al-Qaeda and sought to reassure Christians, Kurds, Shiites and other minorities that HTS rule would be no threat to them. “From the March 2020 ceasefire in Syria to last month, [Jolani] made concerted efforts to build more resilient institutions locally and reform Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's governance and military apparatuses,” Aaron Zelin of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy recently wrote for War on the Rocks.

Guerrilla wars are ultimately decided not on the battlefield but in the hearts and minds of the population. Assad did nothing to win popular support, while Jolani, considering his radical Islam-

ist roots, had surprising success in this regard. By the time the HTS offensive started, the Assad regime was an empty husk ready to collapse in a stiff wind.

There was almost no fighting in the past 10 days, because, as it turned out, almost no one was willing to fight for Assad. Charles Lister of the Middle East Institute wrote on Bluesky that the HTS triumph was primarily diplomatic, not military. The organization “negotiated intensively with Ismaili notables, with Assad regime military commanders & with Sunni tribes — most resulting in peaceful takeovers, safe exits & some [publicly unacknowledged] regime defections.”

Assad was no doubt counting on Iran, Russia and Hezbollah to save him from his own people once again, but that was no longer possible. The fall of Assad's government can be seen as one of the unforeseen ripple effects of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and Hamas's assault last year on Israel — and the people of Syria can thank Israelis and Ukrainians for indirectly helping rid them of their bloody tyrant. Russia suffered such heavy losses fighting Ukraine — and Hezbollah fighting Israel — that they had no military power to spare in Syria. Absent foreign help, Assad was a goner. Russia and Iran, after having bolstered their aura of power by keeping Assad in his palace, have now suffered massive blows to their credibility and their ability to project power in the region. Imperial overstretch isn't just an American problem.

This is a wonderful moment of liberation for the Syrian people after 13 hellish years of civil war. But they will have to struggle to avoid the dangers of a new conflict among the rebel factions. That, after all, is what happened after two other Russian-allied despots fell — Mohammed Najibullah in Afghanistan in 1992 and Moammar Gaddafi in Libya in 2011. Jolani's political skills will be severely tested in trying to put together a government of national unity, and trying to avoid clashes with Kurdish groups that will not be eager to submit to the authority of another Arab-run regime in Damascus.

It is impossible to predict what will happen next in Syria. The situation could look very different two weeks from now, just as it looked very different two weeks ago. All we can do is marvel at the unpredictable path of history and extend our best wishes to the Syrian people as they emerge from the dark days of the Assad regime. Let us hope they do not trade one dictator for another.

and religions and people and young men and women, including those that liberated the country,” he said. “Syria definitely is on a path toward democracy.”

The collapse of Assad's regime is not just a victory for Syrians — it's also a strategic win for the United States. Russia, Iran and Hezbollah have suffered a devastating blow. Assad's fall deprives each of a critical foothold in the Middle East, weakening their regional influence. For Iran, it's a particularly colossal loss. Its efforts to maintain a corridor of power from Tehran to the Mediterranean are a shambles. Millions of Syrian refugees, whose plight has destabilized neighboring countries and reshaped European politics, now have a chance to return home. And for those in Washington who have long wanted to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, this might offer a path forward.

Many questions remain. How will HTS evolve as it becomes one part of a transitional government? How will Assad and his accomplices be held accountable for their crimes? How will Turkey approach the question of the Kurdish forces in Syria that Ankara has long sought to vanquish? The road ahead is rocky and unpaved.

But the collapse of Assad's regime should be a cause for global celebration, not hesitation. Dictatorships offer the illusion of stability, but as Syria has shown, they are brittle structures, propped up by fear and violence. And this triumph should give those who doubt that Ukraine can repel Russia or that Taiwan can withstand Beijing's aggression some reason for second-guessing. Dictatorships might endure for a time, but they cannot silence the human spirit forever.

DAVID IGNATIUS

Assad has fallen. What will emerge?

With the sudden collapse of the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Iran's proxy empire in the Middle East has been devastated — in Gaza, Lebanon and now Syria. But filling the resulting power vacuum across the Middle East with stable governance will be an urgent and complex challenge.

The worm turns: Just 14 months ago, Israel was terrorized and reeling after Hamas fighters surged across the Gaza fence. Now, Israel's enemies across the region are dead or in flight. It has been a convulsive process, rich with promise but perhaps carrying a toxin of regional instability and turmoil.

Assad fled Damascus for Moscow on Sunday, leaving his capital to the control of a Turkish-backed jihadist insurgency called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS. Arab sources told me Sunday that HTS was securing Syria's intelligence headquarters in Damascus and trying to contain violence in the capital. But with thousands of Syrians suddenly freed from years in Assad's torture prisons, there will be a yearning for revenge.

Arab regional powers are attempting to steady the transition. Led by the United Arab Emirates, they had been trying to persuade Assad for months to break from Iran and rejoin the Arab fold. Assad hesitated too long and was ultimately abandoned by his erstwhile allies. “In the end, the Syrian military didn't fight, and Iran and Russia didn't show up,” noted a former CIA officer with extensive experience in the region.

“At long last, the Assad regime has fallen,” President Joe Biden said Sunday. For the United States, the ouster of a despot backed by Moscow and Tehran is “a huge strategic move of the needle in the right direction,” as one administration official put it. The United States has been seeking Assad's replacement, through overt and covert means, since 2011. Still, as Biden rightly cautioned, it brings “a moment of risk and uncertainty” for the region.

The chaos in Damascus on Sunday was eased by HTS's decision to allow the current Syrian prime minister to operate an interim government, with HTS protection, a senior Biden administration official told me. The group has said it intends to maintain current government administrative institutions, including the army. That would certainly ease the transition.

Qatar, which has long been a covert backer of HTS, appeared to be leading the Arab effort to create a transitional government under United Nations sponsorship. A Qatari statement Sunday underscored “the necessity of preserving national institutions and the unity of the state to prevent it from descending into chaos.”

The Qataris urged implementation of years-old U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for a new Syrian government that would include members of the regime and the opposition. But for the moment, Syria is a violent mosaic, with Turkish-backed groups controlling western Syria all the way to Damascus, a U.S.-backed Kurdish militia controlling the northeast and Jordanian-supported militias dominant in the south.

The United States and Russia will doubtless play a diplomatic role in shaping a future Syria, but it's the regional players that will be decisive. “There was a time when great powers would sort out what happens next. No more. For better or worse, this is now up to Israel, Turkey, the Saudis, the UAE and Jordan,” noted the former CIA official.

President-elect Donald Trump underlined his lack of interest in an American role in Syria in a social media post Saturday, which stressed: “THIS IS NOT OUR FIGHT. ... DO NOT GET INVOLVED!” In a post Sunday, Trump suggested that after abandoning Assad, Russian President Vladimir Putin should negotiate an end to the carnage in Ukraine. Trump wrote: “I know Vladimir well. This is his time to act. China can help. The World is waiting!”

The 10-day transformation in Syria has echoes of three other events, each carrying its own lesson. First, the speed of Assad's demise recalls the collapse of the U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan. The fall of Kabul happened just nine days after the loss of the first provincial capital to the Taliban. When an army feels abandoned and demoralized — by the United States in Afghanistan and Russia and Iran in Syria — it slides into a free fall.

A second analogy is to Hamas's rapid thrust across the Gaza fence and its success storming nearby Israeli kibbutzim and military bases on Oct. 7, 2023. Like Hamas, HTS was well-trained and well-equipped, with rapid-assault capabilities that defenders never imagined. Turkey obviously played a big role in Syria, as did Qatar with its long-standing ties to HTS leadership.

A third parallel is Iraq, which shows the chaos that can follow regime change. When the United States toppled Saddam Hussein in Baghdad in 2003, it set off rumbles of ethnic and regional conflict that continue to this day. Similarly, Israel has crushed the military power of Hamas in Gaza. But that enclave is now a lawless region of bandits and gangs, without a hint of stable governance.

One ominous fact is that since the Syrian uprising began in 2011, jihadist groups have been the strongest military faction. I learned their power in the opposition firsthand in October 2012, when I smuggled myself into Syria to report on the early days of the uprising that finally triumphed Sunday.

A nominally pro-Western opposition militia was battling Assad's army the day I reached Aleppo. With shells raining down a few hundreds yards away, I asked one of the secular leaders whether the potent al-Qaeda offshoot known as the al-Nusra Front was fighting alongside his forces. Of course, he said, pointing to their headquarters a block away. “They're the best fighters.”

HTS, leading the battle that just toppled Assad, is a descendant of the group I glimpsed 12 years ago. As a senior administration official told me Sunday, along with the White House's exhilaration over Assad's demise, there's a recognition that “we have a counterterrorism problem.”

In the Middle East, there is no silver lining that does not have a cloud.

JOSH ROGIN

Syria is free at last. Just ask its Christians.

Damascus woke to a new dawn Sunday, a city no longer under the grip of Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship. As the streets filled with jubilant crowds, the world witnessed an event that seemed unthinkable just weeks ago: the capital of Syria, liberated by a rebel coalition that rose from years of oppression and despair. The man who once vowed to crush any opposition fled into the shadows, leaving behind the remnants of his once-iron regime.

For many, the swift and stunning rebel offensive has upended years of assumptions about Syria's fate. In Washington, it should prompt reflection and some embarrassment: Only days ago, the Biden administration was quietly pursuing a deal with Assad, one in which the dictator would promise to pivot away from Iran and toward more moderate Gulf states such as the United Arab Emirates for support. The logic behind that approach now lies in ruins, as does the regime it sought to court.

This moment is even more extraordinary when viewed against the backdrop of Assad's atrocities, which defined his 14-year campaign to cling to power. More than 500,000 Syrians have died during the conflict, many killed by indiscriminate bombings, chemical weapons or starvation sieges orchestrated by the regime.

The events of the past week also expose the hollowness of the propaganda that has long surrounded the Syrian conflict. For years, Assad's apologists — backed by Russian disinformation — insisted the Syrian revolution was nothing more than a U.S.-led regime change war. But this offensive had nothing to do with the United States.

This was not a Western intervention. Instead,

The collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime should be a cause for global celebration, not hesitation.

Some conservatives in Washington, including Vice President-elect JD Vance, are warning that Assad's downfall will result in the mass persecution of Syrian Christians by the new leadership. But the evidence on the ground so far and the testimony of top Syrian Christian leaders should temper such concerns. Syria's Christians, who Assad had long claimed were reliant on his protection, remain safe, the top Catholic in Syria, Bishop of Aleppo Hassan Jallouf, told me in a telephone interview. He said the world should give Syrians space to chart their own pluralistic future and judge the new leaders by their actions. “Syria is a mosaic of amazing cultures



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Up on the housetop, as sure-footed as Santa Claus



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Paul Dyck and his 12-year-old daughter, Claudia Dyck, hang lights Sunday at their home in Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood while their dog, Norman, watches. While Christmas decorations are going up around the region, there's little in the way of a winter wonderland arriving early this week after the recent cold snap. Expect damp conditions and high temperatures in the 50s through Wednesday. **Forecast, B6**

Youngkin's telling of incident at base differs from prosecutors'

BY LAURA VOZZELLA
AND SALVADOR RIZZO

RICHMOND — There are two versions of a May 3 incident at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia involving two Jordanian men, both undocumented immigrants, who pulled up to the entrance in a box truck.

There's the mundane account given by federal prosecutors about some confusion over where to check in during an Amazon delivery stop. And there's the one that Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) has been telling for the past six months that makes it sound as if two foreigners stormed the gates at the fortified military installation.

"We have folks that have crashed the — illegal immigrants — that have crashed the front gate at Quantico in a box truck,

trying to gain access to Quantico," Youngkin told CNN's Jake Tapper on Oct. 14 in one of multiple national television appearances — plus speeches at the National Republican Convention and a rally in Virginia with then-Republican nominee Donald Trump — where he has invoked the episode to criticize the Biden administration's border policies.

Federal prosecutors — who initially charged the pair with misdemeanor trespassing but later dropped those charges — say that, while the Jordanians were in the country illegally and are in the process of being deported, they did not crash the gate or intend to do any harm at Quantico.

Mohammad Dabous, working for an Amazon subcontractor, was trying to make a delivery to the post office in the town of

Quantico, which can only be accessed through the gates of the military base, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander Amico, who handled the case, said in a court filing. Hasan Hamdan was a passenger in the truck.

"Marine Corps ... agents spoke with Mr. Dabous's supervisor at the subcontractor delivery company, who confirmed Mr. Dabous's employment and verified the scheduled authorized delivery to the Northern Virginia town of Quantico on May 3, 2024," Amico wrote in a motion filed Sept. 13 in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

The same filing noted that neither man had any known terrorist links. "The FBI has not identified any national security concerns regarding either defendant," wrote Amico, who also said

he consulted the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "Neither defendant is on the watch list."

At Quantico's main gate on Fuller Road, Dabous presented officials with a delivery manifest and photo identification, then drove the vehicle toward a holding area as directed, according to Amico's filing. Things went awry there, as Dabous continued toward the entrance of the base that encompasses the Prince William County town of 582 residents and failed to stop at the holding area for an inspection. Military police deployed "denial barriers" to prevent the truck from crossing into the base.

Hamdan's lawyer said in a court filing that the men speak limited English and misunderstood the directions about the

holding area. Dabous stopped the truck before reaching the barrier, so there was no crashing or ramming of the gate, filings from the defense and prosecution said. He then moved the truck back to the holding area as directed, where an inspection turned up no weapons or contraband.

Quantico officials issued Dabous and Hamdan citations for trespassing, a petty offense punishable by a maximum six months in jail and a \$5,000 fine. They then turned the pair over to ICE because of their immigration status. The men were later released on bond from ICE custody.

The U.S. attorney's office dropped the charges Oct. 3, but the deportation proceedings continue.

"I am glad that the government did the right thing by dismissing

SEE QUANTICO ON B3

Laid to rest with man's best friend

Beloved animal rescue pilot is buried with dog he died trying to save

BY MARISSA J. LANG

The day before he left on the last rescue mission he would ever fly, pilot Seuk Kim stood on a tarmac in Northern Virginia and watched two puppies nuzzle into the arms of their new owner.

The dogs, barely 8 weeks old, were deaf and blind and had been scheduled to be euthanized.

Kim, who knew the would-be adopter through his work with animal rescue nonprofit Pilots N Paws, had made her a promise: He would get the dogs to her himself.

As Kim disembarked his plane and handed over the puppies to Cathy Gillespie, she beamed. "You kept your promise," she recalled saying to Kim.

Of course he did, she said recently. That was the kind of person Kim was.

Kim, 49, died the next day, Nov. 24, in a plane crash in the Catskill Mountains while transporting three dogs from Virginia to Up-



ANIMAL SHELTER OF SCHOHARIE VALLEY/AP

Pilot Seuk Kim during a flight to deliver rescued dogs to an animal shelter on Nov. 11. Kim was killed in a crash on Nov. 24.

state New York. One of the dogs, Lisa, a 2-month-old puppy, died in the crash. The other two dogs, Whiskey and Pluto, were injured but survived.

On Thursday, a service and burial was held for Kim at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home and Fairfax Memorial Park in Virginia, just up the hill from his father's grave. More than 200 mourners filled the

chapel, and an overflow space, during a funeral where Kim was remembered for his boundless compassion and infectious joy. Photos that Kim took of himself in the cockpit flanked by his four-legged passengers lit up the two screens on either side of the casket.

His brother, Sejin Kim, 51, held

SEE PILOT ON B2

Outcry after GMU bans 2 activists from campus

BY DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF

A coalition of organizations representing faculty, staff, students and other advocacy groups at George Mason University and beyond is alleging that university police acted inappropriately in banning two pro-Palestinian student activists from campus and searching their family's home for reasons authorities have yet to describe publicly.

A letter signed by more than 90 advocacy and faculty organizations and a Virginia state lawmaker takes aim at criminal trespass orders that bar two sisters — one the co-president of Students for Justice in Palestine, the other a past president — from campus for four years. It alleges the students were apparently targeted "for their advocacy for Palestinian human rights" and were told that the search was related to alleged property damage on campus. The letter urged administrators to revoke the trespass orders and investigate the events that led to its execution.

The trespass orders, issued Nov. 8 by George Mason's police

force, effectively bar the students from attending class, a move some critics compared to an expulsion without due process. One day earlier, university and Fairfax County police searched the family's Fairfax home — a move the letter also criticized.

Court documents, which do not publicly indicate a reason for the search, allege that authorities found guns and magazines inside the home — materials authorities say belonged to the father and brother of the George Mason students. Police also alleged that Hamas and Hezbollah flags were found, according to an emergency petition filed to temporarily prohibit the men from possessing or buying firearms.

Prosecutors later said during a hearing that authorities found four weapons unsecured in the home, along with more than 20 magazines with 30 bullets each, according to Laura Birnbaum, spokesperson for the Fairfax County commonwealth's attorney. Also found were arm patches with Arabic text that was translated in court to read, "Kill them

SEE GMU ON B2

Backlog persists in D.C. courts

LOCAL JUDGES' CASELOADS MOUNT

10 nominees awaiting Senate confirmation

BY TOBI RAJI
AND KEITH L. ALEXANDER

When Senate Democrats returned to Capitol Hill in November after Republicans secured a ruling trifecta, lawmakers vowed to act on President Joe Biden's judicial nominees before they lose majority control of the chamber in January.

The Senate has confirmed more than a dozen nominees to the federal judiciary since Election Day. But with roughly two weeks remaining before Congress recesses for the holidays, that promise has so far not extended to the 10 people up for judgeships on the backlogged local D.C. courts, many of whom have been awaiting confirmation since July.

Kenechukwu O. Okocha, who was nominated in June 2023 to replace retired D.C. Superior Court judge William W. Nooter, has been waiting for a confirmation vote — largely seen as a noncontroversial procedural hurdle — since January.

Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) has not said when he plans on putting the nominees up for a floor vote, ignoring written pleas from the D.C. courts to fix the judicial vacancy crisis and ease the mounting caseloads.

In a statement to The Washington Post, he said, "We're going to try to do as much as we can when it comes to judges and nominees."

If the Senate cannot confirm the D.C. picks before it recesses on Dec. 20, then their nominations will be returned to the commission that selected them, thus restarting the lengthy, multistep nominating process as additional D.C. judges decide whether to retire in the new year. The situation has escalated long-simmering tensions between the District's courts and Congress, where D.C. judgeships have for years been held up by lawmakers who wield discretion over local matters in the nation's capital.

"The clock is ticking," said Milton C. Lee, chief judge of the D.C. Superior Court. "We have never been this close with this many candidates. We can't keep operating like this."

Eight nominees are waiting to be confirmed to a seat on the Superior Court, which has nine vacancies. Two more — Carmen G.

SEE COURTS ON B3

TODAY'S WEATHER

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
44°	48°	54°	50°

High today at approx. 4 p.m.: 54°

Precip: 85% Wind: SSW 6-12 mph

For weather news, go to B6

MARYLAND

Hate-crime charges are dropped in an assault at Salisbury University. **B3**

RETROPOLIS

At washingtonpost.com/retropolis, find tales about the past, rediscovered.

OBITUARIES

Helen Gallagher, 98, won two Tony Awards before pivoting to a soap. **B4**



Pilot killed in crash is buried with dog he tried to save

PILOT FROM B1

up a paper airplane as he looked out over the gathered crowd. “My little brother,” he said, voice cracking. “I didn’t realize what a hero he was.”

‘Seuk’s army’

Kim began to fly during the pandemic after spending a lifetime thrill-seeking on the ground, his brother said. He had a passion for motorcycles, fast cars and anything that could scratch his itch for speed. He worked for two decades in the financial sector, married and had three children. But a few years ago, his brother said, he quit his desk job and decided to go in a new direction: He wanted to fly. Full time.

After Kim got his pilot’s license, family and friends said, he began looking for ways to stay airborne — to log his hours and maintain his flight skills, but also to use his ability and private Grumman aircraft to help others.

Pilots N Paws, a nonprofit that connects pilots with organizations seeking to transport animals out of kill shelters and into no-kill shelters or homes around the country, spoke to Kim’s love of animals and desire to fly. Before long, he was signing up for runs all over the East Coast, ferrying dogs and cats from one state to another, several times a week.

Pilots N Paws has a network of thousands of volunteer pilots that spans the United States and transports about 16,000 animals each year, according to the nonprofit. But the logistics of moving animals across state lines — often with several stops along the way and different pilots stepping in to cover different legs of a trip — can get complicated.

That’s where Sydney Galley, 60, comes in.

Galley, whose husband is also a pilot, helps coordinate logistics for Pilots N Paws from her home base in North Carolina and maintains her own network of volunteer pilots across the Eastern Seaboard. She calls on them when she sees rescue groups in need and coordinates pickups and drop-offs from states as far away as Florida and Texas, all the way up to New England.

She makes sure there are volunteers to meet them at airports — to walk and water the animals, to make sure they’re safe and healthy, and to unload and reload them onto different aircraft — and coordinates which pilot is flying and when.

She calls them her “army” of volunteers.

Soon after Kim began answering calls to fly, Galley quickly noticed his passion for the animals he transported. He would take selfies with them in the plane and use his social media platform to raise awareness about the need for



Volunteer pilots Chris Moon and Ed Ciolkowski pose with blind and deaf rescue puppies that had been scheduled for euthanasia.



Moon now flies with a sticker memorializing fellow Pilots N Paws volunteer Seuk Kim on the window of his private plane.

“I didn’t realize what a hero he was.”

Sejin Kim, brother of Seuk Kim

adoptive homes and more comprehensive spay-and-neuter programs. He spent time getting to know the backstory of each animal he picked up. When he would hand them off at their final destination, she said, he would even whisper well-wishes.

“Good luck,” she recalled once hearing him say to a dog. “You’re going to go have a great life now.”

Fellow pilot Kley Parkhurst, 61, flew several missions with Kim and said he became accustomed to Kim running late or throwing off flight schedules because he had been “doing Seuk things.” Like socializing with the volunteers at the airport or taking the animals out of their crates to pose for photos.

“I want to fly as many dogs from point A to point B as possible. I don’t chat much with the rescuers. I have been at airports where I don’t even get off the plane to deliver a dog,” Parkhurst said. “Seuk was just totally the opposite. He cared so deeply about everyone and every animal. And he kind of wore his inner child on the outside. He just exuded joy, and everyone loved him for that.”

In Northern Virginia following

Kim’s death, pilots and volunteers with Galley’s “army” gathered to mourn and share memories of him. From here on out, they decided, they’ll be known as “Seuk’s army.” Several have even affixed a sticker featuring Kim to their planes.

Galley said even though she knows he’s gone, she has had a hard time not reaching for her phone to exchange texts with Kim — the way they used to.

On Thursday, after leaving his memorial service, she pressed send on one last message. “I met your lovely family today,” it read. “I’m so sad you’re not here on earth with us but I know you’re in heaven & will always watch over us. I’m going to watch over and love your family for you. Your friendship meant a lot to me. I will treasure the memories and hold you in my heart forever.”

A crash alert

On the day Kim’s plane went down, near the small town of Windham, New York, Parkhurst and Kim were both flying animal rescue missions out of Culpeper Regional Airport in Virginia. Though Kim left about 45 minutes

before Parkhurst, he said, they linked up in the air just outside Philadelphia.

Kim, who was flying a new single-engine Mooney M20J plane that he had acquired about a month earlier, was thrilled by its zip — it was faster than the four-seater he had been flying before, Parkhurst said. They talked aircraft and flight plans and then went their separate ways. It felt like just another flight, Parkhurst said. Kim was heading to New York. Parkhurst was on his way to New Hampshire. Both had several animals in tow.

By the time Parkhurst touched down in Concord, he said, his phone was lit up with messages.

He stopped as he read one from Kim’s wife. She had received an automated crash alert from Kim’s iPhone, she wrote.

She asked him: What do I do?

When Parkhurst reached out to Galley, who typically tracks the flights her pilots are taking, she said the flight tracker had lost contact with Kim’s plane just outside of Albany.

It had been dark and stormy, with poor visibility in the mountains, authorities later said. Kim

had reported turbulence and requested permission to change altitude, according to the Greene County Sheriff’s Office. About 6:10 p.m., a no-voice 911 call had gone out from Kim’s phone. Reports from the U.S. Air Force and the Albany airport had followed, saying the aircraft had vanished from their radar.

As authorities worked to locate the downed aircraft and determine the fate of its pilot, Parkhurst climbed back into the cockpit of his plane and headed for Upstate New York. When he got there, he said, Sejin Kim had just arrived on a commercial flight from Virginia.

For hours, the men waited for news. Around 2 a.m. the next day, the sheriff’s office confirmed they had located the plane — and Kim’s remains.

“He was a very proficient pilot, and he practiced in adverse conditions to maintain that proficiency,” Parkhurst said of Kim, who had just been hired as a commercial pilot for a charter company set to begin in January. “It’s inexplicable.”

Whiskey, a 4-month-old yellow Labrador mix, was found in the snow nearby with two broken legs

that required surgery to mend. Pluto, an 18-month-old terrier mix, had internal bruising but recovered quickly. Both have been placed in foster homes.

Lisa, a tiny pup with black fur and a white streak down her muzzle, died in the crash. She was cremated before taking one last flight: On Sunday, Chris Moon, 62, a pilot and a member of Galley’s “army,” flew back to fetch her remains.

Exactly a week after Kim’s death, Moon flew over the crash site with Lisa’s ashes resting on the dashboard of his small plane. He circled the site in the air, then snapped a photo in Kim’s honor.

Hours later, Moon handed the ashes to Kim’s family.

“He died doing what he loved to do,” Sejin Kim said. “Lisa was a dog that represented all the many dogs he saved. We wanted her to be with Seuk forever.”

To the hundreds who gathered at Kim’s funeral Thursday, Sejin Kim said he hopes his brother will inspire people to “be just a little bit nicer” to one another and in the world.

In addition to his brother, Seuk Kim is survived by his mother, Jiho Kim, his wife, Anna Kang, and their three children, ages 16, 14 and 13.

The family hopes to continue a dream Kim left unfinished when he died: starting a nonprofit to provide food and other necessary supplies to rescue dogs and cats, Sejin Kim said, and work toward the mission of minimizing the killing of adoptable animals and helping them find homes.

‘With Seuk forever’

Sejin Kim wanted a moment alone with his brother before the rest of their family arrived for the memorial service on Thursday. He opened the casket and looked down at the man inside.

He still thinks of him as the kid he grew up with in South Korea, the little brother who kept him company and made him laugh after the family immigrated to the United States in the mid-1980s.

He thought about their shared history, how their childhood was marked by struggle: how their father suffered paralyzing injuries in a car crash soon after the family arrived in Burke, Virginia, and never walked again, how their mother soon became the family’s primary breadwinner and their father’s nurse.

He thought about his brother’s sunny demeanor and unflappable commitment to pursuing his passions. He leaned in closer.

“And I cursed him out,” Sejin Kim said. “I cursed him for leaving us, but then I told him, ‘Hey, I’m going to look after your family. I love you. Rest in peace.’”

Then he tucked the box containing Lisa’s ashes into the casket alongside Kim.

Authorities have yet to publicly describe reasons for search of family’s home

GMU FROM B1

where they stand,” and other patches that call for death to Jews and America, Birnbaum said.

Prosecutors argued that the high volume of weapons and ammunition, along with the specific threats, posed a reasonable danger to others, she added. A judge later denied prosecutors’ petition to bar the brother and father from possessing or buying guns and to extend the emergency risk order, court records show.

No one has been charged with any crimes. It was also not clear what link, if any, existed between the sisters’ criminal trespass notices and the alleged guns and insignia of their relatives.

Abdel-Rahman Hamed, the family’s attorney, said the actions taken against the students “are not just legally dubious, but morally reprehensible.” He also called the allegations against the brother and father “baseless and inflammatory.” He said that the Arabic patches were mistranslated and had been cherry-picked out of a collection of hundreds and that no credible evidence of danger was ever presented.

“This case reeks of racial and religious profiling,” Hamed said in a statement. “The items found were part of a historical collection, not evidence of any threat. ... This is yet another example of the police state targeting American Muslims without cause.”

None of the agencies listed on

the records as involved in the search would detail the reason for it or offer more information on the trespass orders. Fairfax County police referred questions to the FBI and university police, the two agencies it said were leading the investigation. The FBI’s Washington Field Office said it would not confirm or deny the existence of an investigation and referred questions to the university. GMU said it would not comment on the ongoing investigation and would not say why the search warrant and the criminal trespass notices were issued.

“George Mason’s Code of Student Conduct explains that the Code applies to all student organizations and when a student organization will be held responsible for the conduct of its members,” Paul Allvin, a George Mason vice president, said in a statement.

In addition to the trespass orders against the students, the George Mason chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) has been temporarily suspended. In his statement, Allvin did not name the group specifically but said student organizations can be temporarily punished to uphold the safety of the university community.

George Mason was one of many campuses that experienced a wave of protests after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel and the resulting war. Three people were detained but not arrest-



Two pro-Palestinian student activists have been banned from the George Mason University campus in Fairfax County for four years.

ed in November 2023 after an altercation at a protest. In the spring demonstrations — which brought some schools across the country to a halt and led to the arrest of thousands of students — some pro-Palestinian students from George Mason helped organize a regional encampment at George Washington University to call for that school to cut ties with Israel. This fall, messages voicing support for Hamas have intensified on some campuses.

In the past year, college administrators have tried to balance freedoms of speech and expression with efforts to ensure safety,

and a number of campuses have implemented stricter measures on protests. Some SJP chapters have felt silenced by the resulting enforcement, their freedom of speech impaired, representatives say.

George Mason, a 40,000-student school, unveiled rules in August to limit, among other things, gathering and putting up posters.

The new policies were tested soon after students returned to campus this fall. At the end of August, activists spray-painted words on Wilkins Plaza outside the university’s Johnson Center.

“This case reeks of racial and religious profiling. ... This is yet another example of the police state targeting American Muslims without cause.”

Abdel-Rahman Hamed, an attorney for the family of two George Mason University student activists

GMU police posted fliers across campus offering a \$2,000 reward for information on the spray-painters, calling the act “criminal vandalism.”

Months later, in the early hours of Nov. 7, university and Fairfax County officers raided the sisters’ family home, seizing their phones and computers, according to the letter from advocates. The letter was written and reviewed by GMU’s Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine chapter.

The next day, the sister who is the current co-president of the school’s SJP chapter was sent an email saying the club had been

temporarily suspended. Faculty adviser Ben Manski said he was not initially notified of the club’s suspension. The sister couldn’t read the notification because she didn’t have access to her phone or computer, according to the advocates’ letter.

Alexander Monea, an associate English professor, said he asked GMU President Gregory Washington about the raid during a Nov. 20 faculty senate meeting.

“He declined to share any information,” Monea said. Minutes from the meeting show Washington said that the university’s actions were justified.

The case became public in the past week when the Intercept published an article on the raid and the letter was released. In addition to seeking the revocation of the criminal trespass notices, advocates are calling on the university to reinstate the SJP chapter, return property, and launch an independent investigation into how the decisions to raid the sisters’ home and issue the trespass notices were made. The national Council on American-Islamic Relations called the police raid one of many attempts to silence pro-Palestinian protesters.

This is not just about one student or one protest,” Hamed, the family’s attorney, said in a statement. “It’s about the right of all Americans to speak out against injustice without fear of retaliation.”



The Guide to Offers
The Washington Post

Enter for the chance to win a pair of tickets to White Ford Bronco on December 31 at The Lincoln Theatre

With its infectious energy and spot-on renditions of your favorite '90s hits, White Ford Bronco will transport you back to the era of flannel shirts, grunge music and iconic boy bands. From Nirvana and TLC to Spice Girls and Pearl Jam, the band's got all your guilty pleasures covered.

See details at [washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388)



MARYLAND

Hate-crime charges dropped for most Salisbury students accused in assault

BY DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF

Prosecutors have dropped hate-crime and first-degree assault charges against at least 12 of the 15 Salisbury University students alleged to have beaten and slapped a gay man in October, court records show.

The students allegedly lured a man to an apartment, where police say the group punched, kicked and spit on him. Police had said the students targeted the man because of his sexual orientation, leading to the initial hate-crime charge.

The Wicomico state's attorney's office said in a statement Friday that it "has reviewed the evidence gathered during the

course of the investigation and we have charged as appropriate in light of that evidence."

Steve Rakow, an attorney for one of the students, said he was notified last week that most charges against his client would be dropped. The charges were officially dismissed Friday during a preliminary hearing.

"The state finally realized with respect to my client that he was overcharged," Rakow said. "It was never a hate crime, and it was never a first-degree assault."

In addition to those two counts, prosecutors dropped eight other charges, Rakow said. His client now faces second-degree assault and false-imprisonment charges, as do many of

the other alleged perpetrators, records show.

Officials at Salisbury University, which serves roughly 7,000 students at its campus on Maryland's Eastern Shore, had previously suspended the students. The Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, of which many of the accused students were members, expelled the men from the organization.

The university said it was still monitoring the cases as due process plays out. As of Friday, the students were still on interim suspension, according to university spokesperson Jason Rhodes.

"We remain committed to maintaining safe and welcoming

spaces for our students, our employees and the greater community," Rhodes said in a statement.

The case came to light in October, when two witnesses who had seen videos of the alleged assault reported it to university police, who contacted local law enforcement.

Authorities alleged in court papers that one of the students posed as a 16-year-old on Grindr, a messaging app for LGBTQ+ people, to meet the man. The student and the man allegedly then made plans to meet at an off-campus apartment building for a sexual encounter on Oct. 15.

A group of as many as 15 students surrounded the man

when he entered the apartment and forced him to sit in a chair in the middle of a living room, according to court records and the cellphone video reviewed by police.

The students called the man derogatory names, made him read a weather report and threw him to the ground, according to court records, refusing to let him leave. One used a cooking sheet to hit the man multiple times, charging documents showed. After several minutes, the group let the man flee, records said.

Following the assault, the LGBTQ+ community organized a vigil, and Salisbury University President Carolyn Ringer Lepre announced the formation of a

task force on LGBTQ+ inclusiveness.

Defense lawyers for some of the Salisbury students, including Rakow, have previously contended that the alleged victim was seeking sex with a minor and that the alleged assault was not driven by his sexual orientation.

"Once all of the facts are out, it will be quite clear that this case has less to do with sexual orientation than with a grown man soliciting a child for sex," James L. Britt, an attorney for a different student, previously told The Washington Post. The age of consent in Maryland is 16.

Trials for many of the defendants are set for January.

As Senate prioritizes nominees to federal judiciary, vacancies drag on in D.C.

COURTS FROM B1

Iguina Gonzalez and Joseph R. Palmore — are waiting to be confirmed to vacancies on the D.C. Court of Appeals.

Lee said his court has had to adapt to the growing caseload as it waits for new judges to take the bench.

Each judge in the civil division — where lawsuits involving landlord and tenant disputes, medical malpractice and discrimination, among other issues, are filed — typically handles about 225 cases a year, he said. But because of the shortage of judges, that annual caseload has more than doubled to about 473 per year.

Similarly, the number of misdemeanor criminal cases handled by each judge per day has jumped from about 30 to about 50, he said. The result is that judges prioritize the cases they handle, with criminal cases where the defendant is in jail pending trial, for example, receiving priority over those where the defendant is on release.

"This is not sustainable to do forever," Lee said. "The impact is you can't get to the cases as quickly as [we] would like to."

Judicial nominees for the D.C. Superior Court and the D.C. Court

of Appeals are first selected by the Judicial Nomination Commission, whose seven members are appointed by local and federal officials. The commission sends potential nominees to the president, who then sends their picks to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for consideration.

Historically, the nominations have taken lower priority than other federal court postings. They have on occasion elicited debate.

In September, Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-Tennessee) blocked Sen. Gary Peters (D-Michigan), chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, from confirming Rahkel Bouchet and John Cuong Truong to the D.C. Superior Court through unanimous consent. President Donald Trump had previously nominated Bouchet and Truong to local judgeships on the same court.

In a brief floor speech after blocking the vote, Hagerty said he and other Senate Republicans would not agree to fast-track any judicial nominee before the November election. "We are keeping our word on that," he said at the time.

If a unanimous consent agreement cannot be reached, Schumer can instead file cloture on the



Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York), seen Sept. 25 on Capitol Hill, has not said when he plans on putting nominees for judgeships on local D.C. courts up for a floor vote.

nominee, which brings the floor debate to a close. A simple majority is needed to invoke cloture. Then Schumer can hold a confirmation vote. Schumer's office

didn't respond to questions asking why the leader hadn't filed cloture on these 10 nominees and whether he plans to do so.

Senate Democrats spent the

first week of December confirming Biden's 229th judicial nominee — Sarah Morgan Davenport — to a lifetime seat in the District of New Mexico.

"They're obviously prioritizing other federal issues with the floor time that they have," said Misty C. Thomas Zaleski, executive director of the nonprofit Council for Court Excellence.

And because the city doesn't have a "champion" in the Senate, Zaleski said, referring to the fact that D.C. does not have elected senators, as states do, it's easy for lawmakers "to ignore the needs of a unique court that they have this rare responsibility for."

Lee said the effect has been "paralyzing."

The court, the D.C. Council and the D.C. Bar have all written to Schumer urging him to bring the nominees to a floor vote. But the court has not heard from the senator's office. Lee said Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D), the District's nonvoting delegate in the House, has also petitioned Schumer's office on behalf of the court.

Zaleski said while there has been some "drip" of action on the city's judicial nominees in the past, the confirmations haven't been enough to keep up with the pace of retirements. The Senate Homeland Security Committee has advanced 16 nominees since the start of the two-year congressional term. Of those, six were confirmed by the full Senate.

Jordanians did not intend to do any harm at Marine base, prosecutors say

QUANTICO FROM B1

the case," Courtney Dixon, the assistant federal public defender who represented Hamdan, said in an email to The Washington Post.

Dwight Crawley, who represented Dabous, declined to comment. Amico did not respond to a request for comment. Federal officials declined to identify the Amazon subcontractor who employed one or both of the undocumented immigrants. Officials with Amazon did not respond to a request for comment. (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

At first the episode drew the kind of media attention typical of criminal cases involving misdemeanors. Which is to say, none at all.

That changed when Matt Strickland, a Virginia military veteran, Republican activist and grilled-cheese restaurateur known for bucking the state's coronavirus pandemic restrictions, wrote about the incident on Facebook.

"Terror attacks are coming soon. A box truck just ran through the gate at Quantico Marine Corps Base. Even if nothing was found in the truck, it's a problem. That's what we call a dry run," he posted May 6.

Alongside that, Strickland posted an image of a text message saying that a box truck had recently "run the gate" with two men inside, one with a Virginia driver's license, the other "a known Jordanian terrorist who just crossed the border not 3 days prior." Federal officials have not publicly disclosed how either man entered the country.

Strickland told The Post last week that the text came that from a Quantico employee he knows.



An Osprey aircraft flies at Marine Corps Base Quantico in 2012. Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) has been telling a story for months that makes it sound as if two foreigners stormed the gates at the base.

"It wasn't just somebody who works at the PX," he said, referring to the local market, or "post exchange," at the base. "They would know about this. ... So I put it out on social media, and it kind of spread like wildfire. I didn't expect it to."

His post got picked up by the news site Potomac Local News, which posted a story May 10 stating that "multiple sources" said one of the men "is on the U.S. terrorist watch list." The New York Post followed up with several articles, including one that speculated in the headline that the incident was a possible "ISIS dry run."

On May 22, Youngkin got involved. He demanded a briefing from federal officials in a letter to President Joe Biden, which the

governor posted on X. The governor acknowledged in the letter that "federal partners" had already shared some information with the state, but noted that they "did not engage with Virginia officials" until May 16 — nearly two weeks after the fact and "after the event had received national media coverage." He still had many questions, Youngkin wrote.

"Basic information regarding how these men entered the country, if terrorism is being considered as a motive, and the contents of the box truck that attempted to enter Quantico, should be made public," he wrote. "At this point, I cannot even begin to adequately assess the true nature of these potential threats — let alone take the necessary action to fulfill my

duties as Chief Executive and Governor of the Commonwealth."

Republican members of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security followed up with a letter of their own the day after Youngkin's, seeking information from Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and FBI Director Christopher A. Wray.

Committee members have not received answers to their questions, according to two committee aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the issue. Youngkin spokesman Christian Martinez said the governor never got a response.

The White House press office did not respond to a request for

comment.

In interviews and speeches, Youngkin has routinely mentioned the Jordanians at the Quantico gate as part of a trio of problems — along with fentanyl overdoses and sexual assaults — that he attributed to Biden's border policies. He also has sought to connect the incident to breaches of other military facilities.

"The FBI has not identified any national security concerns regarding either defendant."

Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander Amico, in a motion filed Sept. 13 in U.S. district court

"Just a few months ago, Quantico Marine Corps Base's front gates were literally rammed by two Jordanian illegal immigrants in a box truck trying to get into the base," Youngkin told a break-fast gathering of GOP activists at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in July. "It's happened to bases in California. It's happened all over the country. We have people coming across the border who want to do our nation harm. We must stop it."

Though court filings have since shown that the men have been cleared of wrongdoing beyond their illegal presence in the country, Youngkin seems unlikely to give up the talking point, relaying it as a cautionary tale about illegal immigration and potential terrorism.

"President Joe Biden's Justice

Department has quietly dismissed the charges without acknowledging what truly matters — two illegal Jordanian immigrants came dangerously close to breaching the premier Marine Corps Base Quantico, just outside our nation's capital," Martinez said in an email to The Post on Thursday.

And the inflated version of the story has gained a life of its own among GOP leaders outside of Virginia, who see it as a way to blame Democrats for illegal border crossings that soared under Biden during a mass exodus of migrants from Venezuela and other countries.

"Notwithstanding the dismissal of these charges, Americans deserve answers on why these two individuals were here illegally," Rep. Mark Green (R-Tennessee), chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, said in an email to The Post, which claimed one of the men "entered through the Southwest border, claimed asylum, and was released into the interior just a month before the incident at Quantico."

"The circumstances surrounding this event remain concerning, and I urge the Biden-Harris administration to respond without further delay to Congress and the American people," Green's email said.

Strickland, who got the terrorism rumor rolling on Facebook, said he is not sure what to think now that the charges have been dropped.

He remains wary, having spent years in Afghanistan and Iraq with the Army and as a Blackwater contractor. But he also thinks it is possible that the whole thing was just "an honest mistake" by a pair of delivery drivers with limited English proficiency.

Retropolis

Stories of the past, rediscovered.
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The Washington Post



OBITUARIES

HELEN GALLAGHER, 98

Scene-stealing Tony winner in Broadway musicals

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Helen Gallagher, a scene-stealing performer of Broadway musical theater who won Tony Awards for supporting roles in revivals of “Pal Joey” and “No, No, Nanette” before spending more than a decade as the resilient matriarch on the soap opera “Ryan’s Hope,” died Nov. 24 at a hospital in Manhattan. She was 98.

The death was confirmed by Edith Meeks, executive and artistic director at the Herbert Berghof Studio, a New York acting school where Ms. Gallagher had a long affiliation. She did not provide a cause.

In a career spanning eight decades, Ms. Gallagher was cast in some leading roles — including the 1953 screwball musical “Hazel Flagg” on Broadway — but she often said her sweet spot was lower down the marquee. With her loose-limbed dancing, crisp comic timing and spirited vocals, she found a niche as onstage sidekick and said she preferred it that way.

“I could have had a more high-powered career, but I never wanted to be anyone’s commodity,” she told the New York Times in 1983. “I am shy about going out the stage door. I’ve always had an ability to duck and run down the street. I was made for repertory and character parts.”

During a stint in 1969 in the Broadway musical “Mame,” Ms. Gallagher boasted that she had the best part as the mousy secretary Agnes Gooch. “Gooch takes that show and puts it in her back pocket,” she once recalled. “What a sneak!”

Ms. Gallagher landed her first major break as a dancer in a Cole Porter revue, “Seven Lively Arts,” in 1944 at New York’s Ziegfeld Theater. (She said she stuffed cotton in her ears because the combo led by clarinetist Benny Goodman, one of the revue’s stars, was so loud.)

She soon secured her next role as a dancer in “Billion Dollar Baby,” a 1945 farce about mobsters and molls set in the Prohibition era and choreographed by Jerome Robbins.

Mr. Gallagher was reunited with Robbins as she played the role of the maid Nancy in the 1947 musical conman-caper “High Button Shoes” and worked on other shows influenced by other dance greats, including George Balanchine in “Mr. Strauss Goes to Boston” (1945) and Bob Fosse in Neil Simon’s “Sweet Charity,” which debuted on Broadway in 1966.

Ms. Gallagher was once asked what those dance masters shared. “Tempers,” she deadpanned, “that’s what they had in common.”

As the embittered chorus girl Gladys Bumps in 1952’s “Pal Joey,” Ms. Gallagher showed off her ability to command the stage with comedic grinds and a devilous heart as her character plots against the philandering nightclub singer Joey Evans (Harold Lang).

The show — a revival of the 1940 hit with music and lyrics by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and starring Gene Kelly as Joey — gained rave reviews and established Ms. Gallagher as a rising Broadway talent. “A natural-born imp, who can dance



Helen Gallagher, seen performing with Bobby Van, was once described by a writer as a “natural-born imp, who can dance anything.”

“I could have had a more high-powered career, but I never wanted to be anyone’s commodity. ... I was made for repertory and character parts.”

Helen Gallagher, in an 1983 interview with the New York Times



Ms. Gallagher, right, with choreographer Bob Fosse, second from left, at a party in New York in 1966. The two worked together on Neil Simon’s “Sweet Charity,” which debuted on Broadway the same year.

anything, be very funny and sing,” wrote critic John Chapman in the New York Daily News as Ms. Gallagher went on to receive her first Tony for best actress in a featured role in a musical.

Nearly two decades later, she found acclaim in another musical brought back to Broadway: the romantic romp “No, No, Nanette” from the 1920s. In the 1971 cast, Ms. Gallagher played the free-spending Lucille Early, who dispenses relationship advice, then finds her husband is straying.

Her song-and-dance number “You Can Dance with Any Girl,”

performed with Bobby Van, was one of the show’s top moments and was performed at the ceremonies for the 1971 Tony Awards, which included Ms. Gallagher winning for best lead actress in a musical. They performed the song at the Tony Awards the next year as well.

Dancing was always her strength. Learning to sing, she said after winning her second Tony, took more work. She enlisted voice coaches and often spent hours practicing on her own. “The whole task in life is refining the instrument,” she told United Press International in 1971, refer-

ring to her dedication to improve her singing. “I learned it from the nuns in school. They were terrific taskmasters.”

A few years later, Ms. Gallagher made a career pivot to a new ABC soap opera, “Ryan’s Hope,” that left her fans from the theater world baffled. Yet Ms. Gallagher said she wanted a fresh challenge, and a daytime drama offered a chance to remain in New York with steady work.

A theater friend, actress Rea Allen, helped set up the audition for “Ryan’s Hope,” a serial centered on the lives of an Irish American family that operated a

bar in upper Manhattan. “It wasn’t easy for me to convince directors that I could do something besides musical comedy roles,” Ms. Gallagher told the Miami News in 1975.

She was cast as Maeve Ryan, the Irish-born head of the clan. Maeve was a central character of the show during its entire run from 1975 to 1989 — leading to three daytime Emmy Awards for Ms. Gallagher. In her contract, she stipulated that she had Tuesdays off from filming so she could attend acting classes at Herbert Berghof Studio with actress Uta Hagen, whose husband

founded the studio.

On the final episode of “Ryan’s Hope,” Ms. Gallagher’s character sits on a piano and sings “Danny Boy.” Ms. Gallagher continued in other ABC soap opera roles including a no-nonsense nurse on “All My Children” and a sex therapist on “One Life to Live.”

“It probably killed my career in theater, but I don’t care,” Ms. Gallagher joked in an interview with the website TheaterMania in 2003. “It made me independently wealthy.”

‘A fearful little girl’

Helen Gallagher was born in Brooklyn on July 19, 1926. Her father was in banking, and the family soon moved to Scarsdale in suburban Westchester County. The stock market crash of 1929 left them in financial straits.

Her parents separated, and Ms. Gallagher spent a year in boarding school. Her mother found work in New York at a bank, and they moved in with an aunt in the Bronx and later spent time with a relative in California. Throughout, Ms. Gallagher suffered from bouts of asthma and remained painfully shy. “I was a fearful little girl,” she recalled.

They returned to New York when Helen was about 14, and she begged her mother to resume dance lessons. “The problem was no money,” Ms. Gallagher said in an interview with the Broadway Podcast Network. Her mother managed to pull together enough to pay for classes that eventually led to a spot at the School of American Ballet at 15.

“I always wanted to be on Broadway,” she said. “I don’t know how I got the idea even.”

Ms. Gallagher appeared in other Broadway shows, such as “Brigadoon” (1947), “The Pajama Game” (1954) and “Sugar Babies” (1979). She also performed in London’s West End, the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut and off-Broadway shows including the title role in “Tallulah,” a 1983 musical on the life of stage and screen actress Tallulah Bankhead.

Her movie roles included the drama “Roseland” (1977) opposite co-star Christopher Walken, and “Neptune’s Rocking Horse” (1997), a crime story that explored issues of gender identity.

For more than three decades, Ms. Gallagher taught singing classes at her apartment each Wednesday. After using Zoom to connect with students during the pandemic, Ms. Gallagher resumed hosting the lessons. She continued until earlier this year.

“She gave us a family,” said Marie Sassi, who began classes with Mr. Gallagher in the early 1990s and went on to perform in clubs. “She and her students were truly a family.”

Ms. Gallagher’s marriage to Frank Wise, a stagehand she met during the “The Pajama Game,” ended in divorce. Her longtime partner, Gardner Brooksbank, died in 2019. Survivors include a brother.


Ms. Gallagher often described acting in dramas as a challenge that only reinforced her love of musical theater.

“I find acting quite painful,” she said. “I don’t really want to strip away my innermost feelings. I don’t want to be pained onstage. I want to have a good time.”



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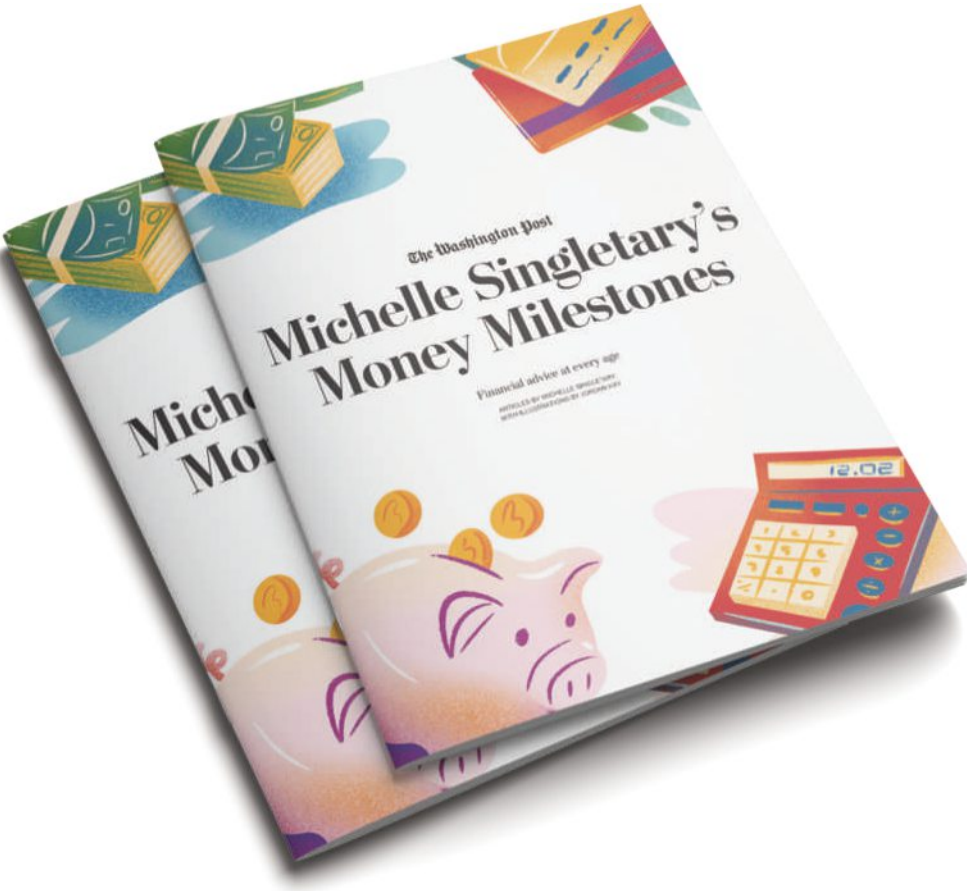
wapo.st/climatexp

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The Washington Post

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IN MEMORIAM

WEBSTER

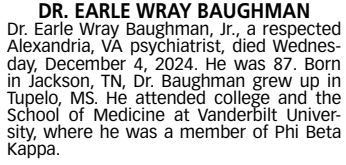


DONALD A. WEBSTER
December 9, 1931 – November 6, 2019
Colleague, Mentor, Dear Friend:
We treasure your wisdom,
humor and generosity.

Forever in our hearts,
Mary Ann Allin, Rex Beach
and Doug Frechtling

DEATH NOTICE

BAUGHMAN



DR. EARLE WRAY BAUGHMAN
Dr. Earle Wray Baughman, Jr., a respected Alexandria, VA psychiatrist, died Wednesday, December 4, 2024. He was 87. Born in Jackson, TN, Dr. Baughman grew up in Tupelo, MS. He attended college and the School of Medicine at Vanderbilt University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

For more than 50 years, Dr. Baughman practiced psychiatry and was a faculty member of the Psychiatry Residency Training Program at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington. He was also a Training and Supervising Analyst with the Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis.

He was an avid tennis player, Faulkner fan, and music enthusiast whose wide-ranging album collection included classic and contemporary rock, country, and jazz. He traveled extensively and particularly enjoyed family vacations to Europe and Chile. He was a Commanders season ticket holder, a frequent concert-goer, and a lifelong lover of restaurants.

Baughman was married for 43 years to Toni Musso Baughman, who died in 2002. His eldest daughter Rachel Baughman Gannaway died in 2021. He is survived by daughters Laura Baughman Devereux (Nick) and Sarah Baughman (Matthew Reinhardt), as well as grandchildren Savannah, Olivia, Milo, and Evan Devereux, and Eli, and Claire Reinhardt. A service is scheduled for a later date.


When the
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Funeral Services
Directory, please call
paid Death Notices at
202-334-4122.



DEATH NOTICE


MARTIN



FRANCES MARTIN (Age 89)
Our hearts were broken Friday night the 6th of December when our mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend Frances Helen Myers Martin was called home to be with her loving husband Harold Thompson Martin in Heaven. They are already dancing a square dance or a 2-step just like old times.
Last week, Frances was driving home from swimming, one of her favorite pastimes. She suffered a massive stroke. Rushed to Suburban Hospital, she never regained consciousness. She was immediately placed in hospice where she was treated like a queen for 3 days. Happily, this gave time for friends and family to come, pay respects and reminisce. Many stories were told. Some exaggerated. Some more true than others. Laughter and tears were shared in equal measure. We thank God for giving us those 3 days.
Frances was born in Washington, DC on March 2, 1935 to John William and Helen Mosley Myers. Sadly, her mother passed away before her first birthday. She was raised by her father and some loving aunts. Her father moved the family to Southport, NC and later to Raccoon Ford, VA. Frances grew up with her brothers Bob, Dave, and Don and sister Barbara. She grew up strong and resilient, which were traits she carried with her throughout her life. She attended Culpeper High School and Mary Washington College where she excelled in both academics and athletics. She started her career teaching PE in Culpeper High School. A short time after graduation Frances met Harold Martin at a Saturday night dance at the Center in Richardsville, VA. On May 2, 1959, they were married.
Frances and Harold, a master carpenter, moved to Maryland and landed in Kensington, a place they loved and where they both lived until each passed away. Harold in 1992 and Frances just now. They attended St. Paul's United Methodist Church. In 1960 they welcomed a daughter, Sandra (Scott) Wilson, later joined by their son Scott (Pam) Martin in 1962, another son, Steve in 1968 and in 1971, their youngest daughter Sheri (Mike d/c) Griffin.
Frances worked for Montgomery County Public Schools as a substitute teacher, math resource para-educator and later she was a data technician in the County math department. After 29 years in the County, she retired when her supervisor suggested (strongly) that she take several computer classes designed to enhance her computer capabilities. I won't repeat the words she used, but the gist was she was too old to go back to school. Retirement began in 2005. It consisted of spending time with family and friends, leading an aerobics group at church, walking, swimming, jigsaw puzzles and Sudoku.
Frances is survived by her first children, eight grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren, and many relatives and treasured friends. She was predeceased by her mother and father, husband, siblings, and other beloved relatives.
We welcome you to attend visitation on Tuesday December 10 from 4 to 7 p.m. at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Kensington, MD. For information about the Richardsville, VA funeral arrangements, please contact Scott Martin.
In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the following organizations which were close to Frances' heart: the American Diabetes Association, the Children's Hospital Foundation, the Retina Foundation, and the Tourette Association of America.

DEATH NOTICE

SHORTER



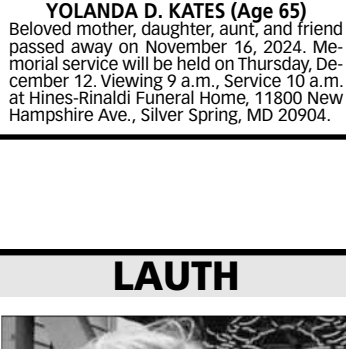
CHARLES KENNETH SHORTER "Eddie"
Charles Kenneth "Eddie" Shorter, 91 of Broomes Island, MD passed away on December 1, 2024 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born on December 31, 1932 in Piney Point, MD to the late Al Shorter and Fannie Margaret Hammett Shorter.

Eddie graduated from Great Mills High School in 1951 and after graduation he enlisted in the Air Force. When he left the Air Force, Eddie pursued a career with the C&P Telephone Company, later Verizon, as a test man. He married his loving wife Margaret McLeod Shorter on January 19, 1963 in Washington, DC. They spent 61 wonderful years together. They enjoyed spending time with family, fishing, gardening, travel, being by the water, and the beach.

DEATH NOTICE


KATES



YOLANDA D. KATES (Age 65)
Beloved mother, daughter, aunt and friend passed away on November 16, 2024. Memorial service will be held on Thursday, December 12. Viewing 9 a.m. Service 10 a.m. at Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Home, 11800 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20904.

DEATH NOTICE


LAUTH



WILLIAM J. LAUTH (Age 84)
Bill Lauth passed away peacefully in his sleep November 21, 2024. Son of the late Harold Lauth, Sr. and Kerrie Lauth, he was predeceased by his siblings, Laurence, sisters Rita and Mary Carolyn.
Surviving are his wife, Rosemary; children, Dan and Kim; siblings James, Harold, Thomas, and Mary Clare and relatives.
Born in DC, raised in Beltsville, MD on the Agricultural Research Center Farm, family was the focus of his life. He lit up a room with his joyful spirit, playful banter, and easy laugh. An avid reader, he started his day with The Washington Post and black coffee.
A Catholic mass will be celebrated Dec 11, 10:30 a.m. at Holy Trinity St. Ignatius Chapel, 3513 N Street, NW Washington, DC. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Amy Elizabeth Lauth Charitable Foundation that honors Bill's late niece's legacy by helping at-risk women, children, and families. Send your donation to 3333 Peters Creek Road, NW, Roanoke, VA 24019-2719.

DEATH NOTICE

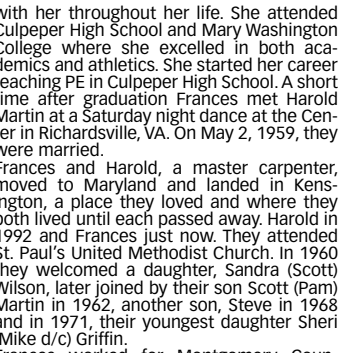
POWELL



BETTY JANICE POWELL (Age 75)
Entered into eternal rest on Monday, November 25, 2024. Betty was a beloved sister, mother, grandmother, and friend, known for her giving spirit and many who she endeared. Betty had a beautiful smile, and enjoyed life, traveling, dancing, laughing and more. She dedicated herself to her family, always putting others before herself. Betty is survived by her two sons Stacy L. Powell Sr., Marion Powell, seven siblings, six grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends who will carry her memory in their hearts forever. A celebration of her life will be held on December 11, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. at Fort Lincoln Funeral Home, where friends and family are invited to share their memories and honor her legacy.

DEATH NOTICE

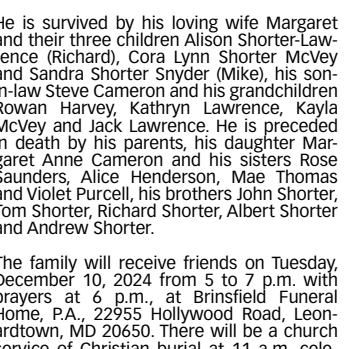
MARTIN



LEONARD M. RANDOLPH JR.
Maj. Gen. Dr. Leonard M. Randolph, Jr. (Ret.) beloved husband, father, and grandfather, as well as, a distinguished leader in military medicine and healthcare, passed away on November 20, 2024, in Cincinnati, Ohio. A funeral service will be held on Friday, December 13, 2024, at 2 p.m. at Spring Grove Cemetery (Norman Chapel), 4521 Spring Grove Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45232. Interment will immediately follow at Spring Grove Cemetery. For complete obituary or to leave online condolences, please visit: www.springgrove.org

DEATH NOTICE

SHORTER




CHARLES KENNETH SHORTER "Eddie"
Charles Kenneth "Eddie" Shorter, 91 of Broomes Island, MD passed away on December 1, 2024 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born on December 31, 1932 in Piney Point, MD to the late Al Shorter and Fannie Margaret Hammett Shorter.

Eddie graduated from Great Mills High School in 1951 and after graduation he enlisted in the Air Force. When he left the Air Force, Eddie pursued a career with the C&P Telephone Company, later Verizon, as a test man. He married his loving wife Margaret McLeod Shorter on January 19, 1963 in Washington, DC. They spent 61 wonderful years together. They enjoyed spending time with family, fishing, gardening, travel, being by the water, and the beach.

IN MEMORIAM


HUGHES



LORRAINE R. HUGHES
Lorraine R. Hughes, of Clinton, MD, entered into eternal peace on September 18, 2024. **But today is her birthday! She is 39 again!!** This is a loving message to her: HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!, to a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother, volunteer, businesswoman, chapter member, star, supporter, partner, and friend!!! Thank you for all that you are to us!!! You are beautiful Lorraine!!! You may have passed away, but you will always remain in our hearts and souls, forever loved.
From our hearts, your family – Paula, Kennard, Lauren, Mailé, and Ms. Ros.

DEATH NOTICE

CARTER




DONNA LEE CARTER
August 26, 1959 – November 20, 2024

Donna Lee Carter entered into eternal rest on November 20, 2024. She is survived by her adopted son, Kalef Seymore and her sisters Gwendolyn Cavanaugh and Linda Ferrell and her best friend, Dionne Hughes. She was a graduate of Morgan State University and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She worked at the National Academy of Sciences for 38 years.

Her Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at Metropolitan Baptist Church, 1200 Mercantile Lane, Largo, MD 20774. Wake 10 a.m.; Ivy Beyond the Wall Ceremony 10:30 a.m.; Service 11 a.m. Interment George Washington Cemetery.
www.jbjenkinsfuneralhome.com

DEATH NOTICE

RANDOLPH



LEONARD M. RANDOLPH JR.
Maj. Gen. Dr. Leonard M. Randolph, Jr. (Ret.) beloved husband, father, and grandfather, as well as, a distinguished leader in military medicine and healthcare, passed away on November 20, 2024, in Cincinnati, Ohio. A funeral service will be held on Friday, December 13, 2024, at 2 p.m. at Spring Grove Cemetery (Norman Chapel), 4521 Spring Grove Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45232. Interment will immediately follow at Spring Grove Cemetery. For complete obituary or to leave online condolences, please visit: www.springgrove.org

DEATH NOTICES

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
SATURDAY 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
SUNDAY - SELF - SERVICE ONLY

To place a notice, call:
202-334-4122
800-627-1150 ext 4-4122
EMAIL:
deathnotices@washpost.com

Email and faxes MUST include name, home address & home phone # of the responsible billing party.
Email deadline - 3 p.m. daily
Phone-in deadline
4 p.m. M-F
3 p.m. Sa-Su

CURRENT 2024 RATES:
(PER DAY)

MONDAY-SATURDAY
Black & White
1" - \$160 (text only)
2" - \$370 (text only)
3" - \$525
4" - \$575
5" - \$725

SUNDAY
Black & White
1" - \$191 (text only)
2" - \$405 (text only)
3" - \$580
4" - \$610
5" - \$790

6"+ for ALL Black & White notices
\$160 each additional inch Mon - Sat
\$191 each additional inch Sunday

MONDAY-SATURDAY
Color
3" - \$670
4" - \$725
5" - \$855

SUNDAY
Color
3" - \$710
4" - \$810
5" - \$985

6"+ for ALL color notices
\$268 each additional inch Mon - Sat
\$299 each additional inch Sunday

Notices with photos begin at 3"
(All photos add 2" to your notice.)

ALL NOTICES MUST BE PREPAID

MEMORIAL PLAQUES:
All notices over 2" include complimentary memorial plaque

Additional plaques start at \$26 each and may be ordered.

All Paid Death Notices appear on our website through www.legacy.com

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The Washington Post

THE WEATHER

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Morning rain

 Low pressure will spread light to moderate rain into the area from west to east around 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. The rain looks likely to be fairly steady before it moves out around noon to 2 p.m. The rain and cloudy skies will hold highs in the upper 40s to the low 50s. In the evening and overnight, skies will be mostly cloudy but dry, with lows in the low 40s.

Today



54° 43°
FEELS*: 50°
CHNCE PRECIP: 85%
WIND: SSW 6-12 mph
HUMIDITY: High

Tuesday



58° 54°
FEELS: 57°
P: 40%
W: S 4-8 mph
H: High

Wednesday



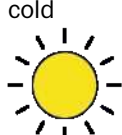
59° 33°
FEELS: 50°
P: 100%
W: W 12-25 mph
H: High

Thursday



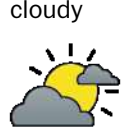
40° 27°
FEELS: 31°
P: 0%
W: W 10-20 mph
H: Low

Friday



40° 29°
FEELS: 35°
P: 0%
W: NW 7-14 mph
H: Low

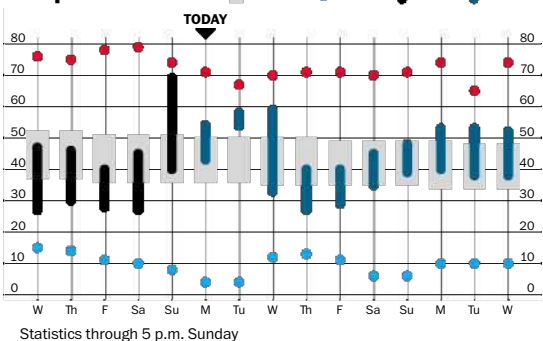
Saturday



45° 35°
FEELS: 46°
P: 0%
W: S 4-8 mph
H: Moderate

OFFICIAL RECORD

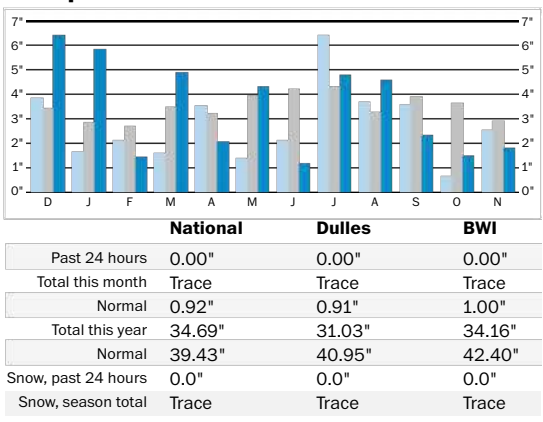
Temperatures



	National	Dulles	BWI
High	69° 1:41 p.m.	66° 2:00 p.m.	64° 2:50 p.m.
Low	40° 1:00 a.m.	34° 2:00 a.m.	35° 12:11 a.m.
Normal	51°/36°	48°/30°	50°/31°
Record high	74° 1978	76° 1980	74° 1980
Record low	8° 1882	13° 2002	10° 1882

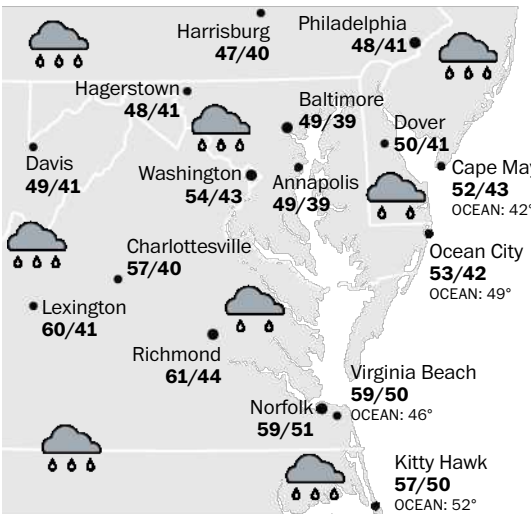
Difference from 30-yr. avg. (National): this month: -5.2° yr. to date: +2.4°

Precipitation



Moon Phases	Solar system
Dec 15 Full	Sun Rise 7:15 a.m.
Dec 22 Last Quarter	Moon Set 12:28 p.m.
Dec 30 New	Venus 10:27 a.m.
Jan 6 First Quarter	Mars 8:13 p.m.
	Jupiter 4:34 p.m.
	Saturn 12:17 p.m.

REGION



- Pollen: Low**
 - Grass Low
 - Trees Low
 - Weeds Low
 - Mold Low
- Air Quality: Good**
 - Dominant cause: Nitrogen oxide
- UV: Low**
 - 1 out of 11+

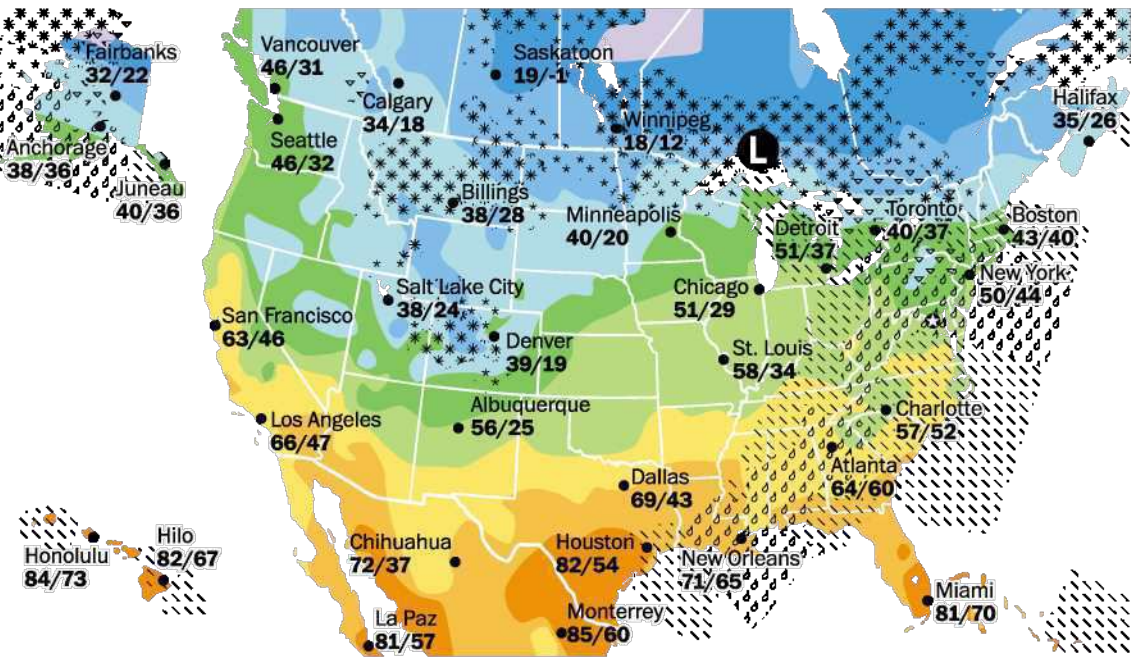
Blue Ridge: Today, rain; only in the morning in central parts. High 46 to 51. Winds west-southwest 8-16 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy in central parts; mostly cloudy elsewhere. Low 37 to 41. Winds west-southwest 6-12 mph.

Atlantic beaches: Today, periods of rain; arriving in the afternoon in central parts. High 51 to 59. Winds south 10-20 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy in central parts; a shower in spots in the south. Mostly cloudy elsewhere. Low 41 to 51.

Waterways: *Upper Potomac River:* Today, occasional rain, drizzle. Wind south-southwest 6-12 knots. Waves 2 feet or less. • *Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay:* Today, rain, drizzle. Wind south 8-16 knots. Waves 1-2 feet on the Lower Potomac; 1-3 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. • *River Stages:* The stage at Little Falls will be around 2.90 feet today, falling to 2.80 Tuesday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides	(High tides in Bold)
Washington	1:38 a.m. 8:41 a.m. 2:08 p.m. 9:22 p.m.
Annapolis	5:29 a.m. 11:42 a.m. 5:47 p.m. 11:44 p.m.
Ocean City	1:23 a.m. 7:37 a.m. 1:45 p.m. 8:09 p.m.
Norfolk	3:16 a.m. 9:41 a.m. 3:37 p.m. 10:01 p.m.
Point Lookout	1:42 a.m. 7:39 a.m. 2:02 p.m. 7:44 p.m.

NATION



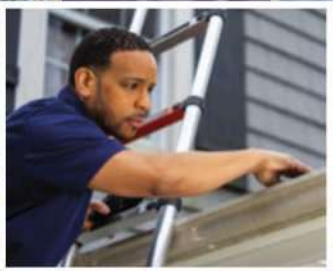
Yesterday's National High: Hollywood, FL 79° Low: Gunnison, CO -12° for the 48 contiguous states

World High: Paraburdoo, Australia 113° Low: Kabardino, Russia -49° excludes Antarctica

NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow	Des Moines	50/24/s	32/18/c	Oklahoma City	56/34/p	45/29/p	WORLD	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	39/37/r	45/42/c	Detroit	51/37/sh	44/31/p	Omaha	48/26/p	36/16/c	Addis Ababa	75/42/s	76/42/s
Albuquerque	56/25/s	41/22/s	El Paso	68/42/s	54/29/s	Orlando	80/60/p	81/64/c	Amsterdam	44/41/c	43/37/c
Anchorage	38/36/r	38/34/r	Fairbanks, AK	32/22/c	32/21/p	Philadelphia	48/41/r	56/50/sh	Athens	69/56/s	67/52/s
Austin	64/60/r	66/44/r	Fargo, ND	31/18/s	23/-2/c	Phoenix	73/49/s	67/43/s	Auckland	72/60/sh	71/56/p
Baltimore	49/39/r	56/50/sh	Hartford, CT	46/38/r	44/41/sh	Pittsburgh	52/47/r	55/37/r	Baghdad	74/45/p	72/42/p
Bellings, MT	38/28/c	40/28/c	Honolulu	84/73/p	83/73/s	Portland, ME	37/28/p	33/32/sn	Bangkok	91/74/c	92/74/c
Birmingham	67/62/r	67/35/sh	Houston	82/54/p	65/39/p	Portland, OR	49/32/p	47/36/c	Beijing	44/21/c	43/23/c
Bismarck, ND	31/21/c	27/-1/sn	Indianapolis	53/37/c	42/24/s	Providence, RI	46/40/r	47/42/sh	Berlin	41/35/sh	39/33/c
Boise	38/22/s	38/22/s	Jackson, MS	71/65/r	68/37/sh	Raleigh, NC	59/52/r	67/60/sh	Bogota	69/45/s	68/47/s
Boston	43/40/r	45/41/sh	Jacksonville, FL	77/57/c	80/62/p	Reno, NV	43/16/s	46/23/s	Brussels	41/39/r	41/36/c
Buffalo	45/42/r	47/38/r	Kansas City, MO	53/27/p	39/24/c	Richmond	61/44/r	64/58/sh	Buenos Aires	75/65/p	81/69/s
Burlington, VT	34/32/s	43/39/sh	Las Vegas	61/36/s	57/36/s	Sacramento	62/33/c	60/37/p	Cairo	73/54/p	74/57/p
Charlotte, SC	70/58/c	74/64/sh	Little Rock	64/49/c	52/32/s	St. Louis	58/34/p	39/29/p	Caracas	77/63/r	77/62/sh
Charleston, WV	58/48/r	61/39/sh	Los Angeles	66/47/s	73/49/s	St. Thomas, VI	85/78/sh	85/78/p	Copenhagen	41/35/p	39/31/p
Charlotte	57/52/sh	64/58/r	Louisville	58/49/c	50/28/c	Salt Lake City	38/24/p	39/24/s	Dakar	85/74/p	84/73/p
Cheyenne, WY	33/18/s	33/26/c	Memphis	64/51/c	52/32/s	San Diego	64/45/p	74/41/s	Dublin	47/40/c	46/36/c
Chicago	51/29/p	35/21/c	Miami	81/70/p	83/74/p	San Francisco	63/46/s	60/45/p	Edinburgh	45/29/p	37/26/p
Cincinnati	55/46/sh	47/28/c	Milwaukee	50/29/p	35/24/c	San Juan, PR	87/76/sh	85/76/r	Frankfurt	42/38/r	43/36/c
Cleveland	51/41/r	46/33/p	Minneapolis	40/20/c	25/12/c	Seattle	46/32/c	44/37/c	Geneva	42/35/c	40/32/c
Dallas	69/43/p	52/35/p	Nashville	64/53/sh	59/31/sh	Spokane, WA	33/27/c	34/26/p	Ham, Bermuda	71/62/c	71/65/c
Denver	39/19/sf	39/27/c	New Orleans	71/65/r	75/47/r	Syracuse	42/39/r	50/40/r	Helsinki	31/22/c	34/31/s
			New York City	50/44/r	52/49/sh	Tampa	77/62/p	79/67/p	Ho Chi Minh City	92/75/p	89/75/p
			Norfolk	59/51/r	65/61/sh	Wichita	54/29/s	44/26/s	Hong Kong	67/60/s	71/63/s



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JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Although some theories have roots in reality, others are purely fantastical, looking for tea leaves in the numbers in Vice President Kamala Harris's post-election fundraising emails or the color of President Joe Biden's tie when he met with President-elect Donald Trump.

The new election denialists

For some on the left, another Trump term is too difficult to accept. So they're choosing not to.

BY TRICIA ROMANO

First, the voters noticed that women around the country seemed to have woken up at 4 a.m. with a strange feeling. A vibe shift, if you will. When they grabbed their phones, they saw the news: Donald Trump would be president. Again.

They also noticed that many people in their mentions in TikTok videos could not find proof that their votes had been counted or even received. They thought: Why were so many states red for president but blue downballot? Did Elon Musk's Starlink satellites tamper with the votes somehow?

Something didn't seem right. The math, they said, "wasn't mathing."

On the heels of an unorthodox 2024 election season, there's a new brand of election denialism on the left. Appalled by the outcome — and thrown for a loop by the speed of its conclusion — some Kamala Harris supporters have clung to all manner of theories that the truth is being hidden from them. Like the QAnon-obsessed insurrectionists who came before them, they are seeking clues in photos, words, numbers, vibes, even the stars.

If the news or the government wasn't going to give them the answers they sought, there were myriad psychics, mediums and astrologers to turn to. Some had long been posting that they didn't see a clear election outcome or Trump ever taking office. Before the election, these soothsayers were offering lifelines of hope.

Now, they are buoys in a surging sea of hard-to-swallow outcomes, as each day brings news more horrifying than the next: Kash Patel, a man who believes in the "deep state," tapped to be the director of the FBI; Matt Gaetz, in, then out, as attorney general pick; a "compromised" Tulsi Gabbard in charge of intelligence agencies; and just about anything Musk is doing.

MSNBC's and CNN's ratings have dropped drastically in the month since the election, and liberal Americans are getting their news from other sources. Cue the TikTok election denialism posts with captions such as "Math That Just Doesn't Math" (513K views), "It's Not Over" (224K), "My Vote Didn't Count" (181K), "Stars ... Starlink" (388K) and "Tinfoil Hat Time" (315K).

Although some of the theories have roots in reality — some people *had* reported that their ballots went missing or believed that their in-person votes were not recorded when they checked later — others are purely fantastical, looking for tea leaves in the numbers in Harris's post-election fundraising emails or the color of President Joe Biden's tie when he met with Trump. (It was purple.)

For many on the left, another four years of Trump and the prospect of Project 2025 becoming a reality are too much to accept. Some are turning to large doses of "copium" (a portmanteau of "cope" and "opium" popular on social media).

SEE ELECTION ON C2

Family of journalist finds hope in chaos

Austin Tice's relatives call on Biden, Trump to bring him home after Syrian power shift

BY HERB SCRIBNER

The family of Austin Tice, an American journalist who went missing in Syria in 2012, said Sunday that the Assad regime's fall in Syria has provided a new opportunity to locate and bring home the Marine veteran.

"We are eagerly anticipating seeing Austin walk free," his parents, Marc and Debra Tice, said in a statement shared with The Washington Post. "We are asking anyone who can do so to please assist Austin so he can safely return home to his family."

Deposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's decades-long regime crumbled over the weekend after the armed Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham pushed into the country's capital city, Damascus. Many Western leaders have called for a peaceful transition of power and regional stability.

"In chaos, there is opportunity. And I think for a lot of us, that's really what we're focusing on right now," said Austin's sister Naomi Tice in a phone interview. "There is so much that's happening in Syria, and this is such an opportunity to bring Austin home."

Austin's specific whereabouts remain unclear, the family said. "But there is so much hope that this is going to be the thing that finally brings him back to us," his sister said, adding, "We're waiting and seeing."

President Joe Biden said at a news conference Sunday that the White House is monitoring the events in Syria, as well the Americans still in the country, including Tice. "We remain committed to returning him to his family," Biden said.

"We believe he's alive," Biden said. "We think we can get him back, but we have no direct evidence to that yet, and Assad should be held accountable." Biden said the United States had not identified Tice's location.

SEE TICE ON C3

ANALYSIS

Presidential election may have reshaped Oscars season

BY JADA YUAN

NEW YORK — For the film world, the Monday after Thanksgiving has typically served as the unofficial launch of Oscars season.

It's when Hollywood's newest class of rising and already risen stars gathers in the chandelier-festooned former bank building of Cipriani Wall Street for the Gotham Awards, which has the vibe of a huge, joyous artistic family reunion.

This year, though, the mood felt more akin to the first meeting of the resistance.

Donald Trump's name wasn't mentioned from the stage, but there is no doubt that his election has dramatically shaken up the most wide-open Oscar race we've seen in years, just as it has shaken the core members of the film industry, who largely lean left. (It's hard to argue against Republicans' categorization of Hollywood as liberal elites when George Clooney can write an op-ed in the New York Times and dramatically influence President Joe Biden's decision to step aside in the 2024 campaign. When I asked an Academy member — who can't be named because ... showbiz — about the state of the race, they replied: "What race?! It happened and we lost! Oh, you mean the other race.")

All season, Oscar prognosticators have talked about this being a down year with a dearth of contenders. Could we really fill out all the best picture slots? Would they all be tiny movies from international film festivals because American production was so curtailed last year because of the screen actors and writers guild strikes? But end-of-year blockbuster entries and the total vibe shift after the election have sudden-

SEE ANALYSIS ON C3

THEATER REVIEW

How a play set in 1899 Vienna still speaks to us here and now

BY TREY GRAHAM

History sweeps up whole populations, yes, and yet it's uncountable individuals who wander daily through it, absorbing its incidents even as we often remain blind to its implications. That's one of the profoundly sobering reminders on offer in "Leopoldstadt," Tom Stoppard's richly embroidered chronicle of a well-to-do Vienna family and the shining city that holds such endless promise for them — at least as the play opens, there in the halcyon days of 1899.

This is Vienna at its peak, where Sigmund Freud and Gustav Mahler socialize with Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, where the vast wealth of empire is every day assuming physical form in the palaces rising along the Ringstrasse. Less than two decades later, it will be a lost dream, wrecked by the Great War and ripe for Adolf Hitler's Anschluss.

Among the casualties as Stoppard's half-century saga unspools at Shakespeare Theatre Company: much of the Merz family, revealed in a merry opening tableau as the enviably cosmopolitan occupants of a chic art nouveau apartment in the heart of the new monumental city.

Matriarch Emilia (an imposing Phyllis Kay) and her merchant-prince son Hermann (Nael Nacer) preside over three



TERESA CASTRACANE/SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

The cast of Shakespeare Theatre Company's "Leopoldstadt," about a well-to-do family in late 19th-century Vienna.

SEE THEATER REVIEW ON C2

Election denialism has swung to the left

ELECTION FROM C1

After Karen Clark, 49, began posting about her disappointment in the election outcome, she heard from many people who told her, “No, my vote was never counted.” (She advises they to go to their county election board to double-check.)

“And all I said was: ‘You guys, something is not right. I don’t feel right about this. It doesn’t seem right to me how this election was called so soon. It doesn’t feel right to me that Elon Musk is involved with this.’”

As a volunteer in North Carolina, she saw the on-the-ground organizing and heard from people in other states that turnout was strong for Harris. “They were not worried about turnout at all. At the risk of sounding crazy, I think her turnout was bigger.”

While the 2024 election denialists aren’t arguing that the White House is populated by reptilian hybrids eating babies, some of them *are* looking for hidden messages — in Harris’s concession speech mentioning stars (stars, Starlink, get it?) or her choice of playing Connect 4 in a photo that is supposed to ... well, never mind.

Sandra Colton-Medici, 46, began posting about the election on her second account. Her posts are often coy response videos to commenters’ questions like: “Has anyone explicitly come out and denied the conspiracies flying around on Kamala’s team, including her? I’m tinfoil hatting.”

Colton-Medici is based in Los Angeles and teaches English and dance. (She was in the first season of the TV competition show “So You Think You Can Dance.”) “A lot of what I’m doing on TikTok specifically is amplifying the questions and amplifying specific things that I think need to be pointed out,” she said.

Astrologer Laurie Rivers, 55, host of “The Awake Space Astrology Podcast,” understands the appeal of Easter eggs. In this case, people are looking for clues for what might really be happening behind the scenes with the administration.

“I think when people are desperate, they’re going to look for signs. Anything. Like, please let my coffee grounds show me that this is not going to be the reality,” said Rivers, who has maintained since 2021 that Trump will not be president “based on health reasons.”

Gia Prism, a 44-year-old medium based out of Utah, posted about her eerie 4 a.m. awakening the day after the election. She was surprised

to see an outpouring of replies from women (and some men) around the country who had similar experiences. Many had dreams of a Harris victory party or inauguration, of electoral maps flipping from red to blue, of numbers invoking the electoral college — which didn’t align with the news when they awoke.

Prism has maintained since before the election that Harris will serve; she sees this as an incoming of the “divine feminine.” But after her 4 a.m. post, her followers and viewing numbers skyrocketed. She had previously been operating, she says, in her little niche corner of SpiritualityTok. Now, she had a new, larger audience of people desperately seeking solace or answers. Her videos have several million views combined.

“In all my years of being a spiritual practitioner, I’ve never seen a collective experience this widespread,” she says.

Licensed professional counselor Jeff Guenther, who goes by “Therapy Jeff” on social media, posted that looking for alternative answers to reality is a coping mechanism. People are in the shock and denial stage of grief.

“Your brain literally cannot accept it as reality,” he said in a video. “... Also, what feels just as realistic, there’s another timeline, another parallel universe, where she won.” The biggest reason for the denial, he said, is “accepting this reality means that you or your loved ones could very well be in danger under this administration.”

For Priya Hubbard, a reality television producer in Los Angeles, that’s tough to accept.

“I’m having a hard time getting my head around these tech bros having now entered the government chat,” she said from her home. “And because of that, and because of the potential of the [Affordable Care Act] being taken away, I have preexisting conditions that, if I don’t have insurance, I will not make it through Trump’s second presidency. My father, who is recovering from cancer, will not make it through a second presidency.”

There’s at least some self-awareness among left-wing voters that they might seem a little delulu to outsiders.

“You should be able to have a little election denialism as a treat,” joked TikTok creator @lukefromohio. “Just a little.”

“I do look at the videos that people post about the numbers where they’re treating it like Taylor Swift, and I’m like, ‘This is fun,’” Hubbard said. “This is like an hour that I can spend and just ignore the hellscape



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

“You should be able to have a little election denialism as a treat,” one TikTok creator joked. “Just a little.”

that is about to be.”

And she knows what her post-election questioning looks like to outsiders, even as she stays away from psychic predictions and Easter eggs and sticks to facts. “I have gotten hundreds of comments of people saying, ‘You’re being just like QAnon, you’re being just like the insurrectionists, you’re like in election denial, you need to get your mental health checked,’” she says.

To self-soothe, she keeps spreadsheets on the updated vote numbers, tracking anomalies. “I am going to hold out hope until December 17th, knowing full well that this is probably real, but I personally need, for my own mental health, to ease into reality,” she said, referring to the date the electoral college casts its ballots.

One of the biggest differences between the 2020 election denialists and those emerging today is the lack of a central leader, whether that is “Q” or Trump.

Nobody inside the Democratic Party is drumming up the idea that the election was stolen or somehow fraudulent. “The insurrection, January 6th and all the election denial started in 2016,” Hubbard said. Even back then, Trump was claiming that he didn’t lose the popular vote and that, if he lost any future election, it was because it was rigged.

“The insurrection was years in the making of getting all these people, the MAGA army, so aggravated

that they would do anything that was asked of them,” she said. “I’m definitely not heading to the Capitol to s--- in a senator’s office,” she said, laughing.

Phil Elberg, a trial lawyer who served as president of the International Cultic Studies Association, says this lack of a central figure means the phenomenon won’t have very long legs.

“There’s no leader of this group. There’s nobody of significance articulating this. You’d have to go a long way to convince me there’s any kind of a political movement in the absence of somebody particularly significant, some influence articulating this theory about any particular state or place,” he said.

“If you tried to organize a demonstration of these people, if you got a hundred people there, it would turn very quickly into a party.”

Still, some have seen people on the left fall down the conspiracy theory rabbit hole before. During the coronavirus crisis, QAnon merged with psychics and sign seekers, giving momentum to a phenomenon dubbed “conspiratoriality” by sociologists David Voas and Charlotte Ward in 2011.

“The almost immediate overlap with QAnon in those spaces was horrifying to watch,” Prism said. “I was under the belief that there’s no dogma here, there’s no leaders. We’re all just kind of love and light, doing our own thing.”

It’s a phenomenon that author Naomi Klein observed in her 2023 bestseller, “Doppelganger,” which

examines former feminist turned Steve Bannon associate Naomi Wolf’s slide into what Klein dubs the “mirror world.”

Though some political experts explain this blurring of left and right by way of the horseshoe theory (in which extremes on both sides seem to meet), Klein sees it as “a diagonal line,” sliding from the green left to conspiracist right. (See: Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a staunch environmentalist turned anti-vaccine proponent and Trump pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.)

But this iteration is different. “I think this is more grounded in actual reality in that we have this convicted felon who’s trying to take the highest office in the land and we’re p---ed about it,” Prism said.

During the covid-QAnon crossover, many left-leaning voters got folded into the Republican Party tent. For these Harris supporters, that is not an option. Some of those interviewed have urged their viewers to get more involved in politics at the local level.

Already, there’s pushback online. One woman jokingly tore off her tinfoil hat when the astrologically important dates passed without a major announcement.

Others, like content creator Erynn Chambers, are speaking out plainly. “I’m going to hold your hand when I say this,” she said in one video: “Nothing is going on behind the scenes.”

Chambers, who became active posting on social media during

Black Lives Matter protests, was not shocked that Harris lost. Chambers said she didn’t think Harris’s messages were effective enough in differentiating herself from Trump. Most of the misinformation making the rounds was due to a simple misunderstanding of basic election rules. The 2020 election took longer because of the pandemic and mail-in ballots.

“I think a lot of people expected things to maybe take a while to be definitive,” she said. “I just think people were reading into normal parts of the electoral process as if they were a conspiracy.”

“There is this sort of idea that a lot of people on the left hold that, like, ‘Oh, we’re the smart ones, so we don’t have to investigate our biases or, you know, pay more attention to where we’re getting our information.’”

The astrologically meaningful dates have mostly passed, the electoral college will vote on Dec. 17, and even if there were any election malfeasance, the new Trump administration is hardly going to investigate itself.

So Prism has been holding online meditation circles for the people of her 4 a.m. club.

It’s all about helping disappointed voters heal, said Jennifer Lisa Vest, a medical intuitive and psychic in Los Angeles who has also predicted that Harris will be president. As Vest sees it: “If the worst thing that we are doing is giving people hope when they should be in despair — I don’t think that’s a bad thing.”

‘Leopoldstadt’ is smaller but affecting

THEATER REVIEW FROM C1

generations and two branches of family, distributing Sacher torte and seasonal cheer while the servants pass libations and the grandkids decorate the Christmas tree.

They are proudly and primarily Austrians, these Merzes, intermarried and assimilated and perfectly cozy in their position as haut-bourgeois Jews, reveling in their rise from cloth-peddlers to patricians in under a century, joking about how they’re only putting up the tree “for you little Papists” (Hermann has converted

ed, and the kids are a mixed-faith bunch) but struggling at the same time to remember when Passover falls. They teach at the fabled university, flirt with dashing Imperial dragons and rub elbows with the horsey Von Baers — and as the action spins forward, first to 1924 and the aftermath of one global convulsion, then onward to 1938 and the eve of a second and still more unthinkable one, the family’s confidence in an imminent return to sanity and the irreversible march of liberalizing progress is first stretched and then utterly smashed.

Hermann, his mathematician

brother-in-law Ludwig (Firdous Bamji), their other brothers-in-law Ernst (Maboud Ebrahimzadeh) and Kurt (Bamji again) and their various broods — you’ll struggle to keep track even with the playbill’s handy family tree, but then that’s part of Stoppard’s melancholy point — will internalize every incremental blow, living through intensifying outrages from social snubs to political crackdowns to Kristallnacht, all without ever quite comprehending that worse is always around the corner. Only when Act 2 looks back on the carnage from the perspective of 1955 and a re-

stored and rebuilding Austria does the picture become wholly clear.

“Leopoldstadt,” which won the 2023 Tony Award for best play on Broadway, is a Tom Stoppard adventure, with much of the delight in intellectual acrobatics you’d expect from the author of “Arcadia” and “Jumpers,” “The Real Thing” and “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.” There are insoluble mathematical conundrums here, arch dream-analysis parables there, and always the sense that these are lives touched by grace and taste and the champagne air of erudition. But as an unmistakable personal accounting, a confession of complacency and incuriosity from a thinker who came only later in life to

understand his own family’s Holocaust-era history, the play packs a tremendous emotional wallop too, not least in the homestretch reckoning it requires of one of the youngest Merzes — a character clearly meant as a stand-in for its creator.

Stoppard specialist and D.C. native Carey Perloff steers the luxuriously upholstered staging, a co-production with Boston’s the Huntington, where it played earlier this year. It’s an assured reading, simultaneously intimate and epic, even with a cast scaled down to a more manageable 20-something from the London original’s 41, and at moments it takes on the heft of an almost holy picture — testament, perhaps, to the director’s own family history in the

play’s milieu: Her mother, the avant-garde poet Marjorie Perloff, fled occupied Vienna as a child.

Celebratory and cautionary, expectant and exuberant in its contemplation of a century’s hopes and aspirations, hollow-eyed and solemn as it assesses that same century’s calamities and the possibility of their cyclic return, this “Leopoldstadt” makes itself shatteringly relevant here and now, in the battered, beating heart of another storied empire — one that, as Stoppard unmistakably suggests, could likewise go either way.

Leopoldstadt, through Dec. 29 at Shakespeare Theatre Company’s Harman Hall. About 3 hours including intermission. shakespearetheatre.org.

Husband vents his road rage onto his spouse in the car and refuses to change



Carolyn Hax

Adapted from an online discussion.

Dear Carolyn: My husband is a competent driver. As a result, he drives a bit aggressively. In the past five

years, I’ve really come to dislike driving anywhere with him. When someone does something stupid, which is always the case, he starts yelling and using foul language in the car. I’ve told him many times the other driver can’t hear him. I don’t want to hear one expletive after another in a 10-minute ride.

This behavior has really turned me off. And he won’t change. I asked him numerous times, and he just thinks I’m overreacting.

— Passenger

Passenger: An angry, aggressive driver is not a competent driver. He may be skilled, but he is distracted by others and therefore dangerous.

Since this is a newish development, there could be an underlying health issue, even if

it’s just intensifying prior tendencies. Depression can present as anger, as can cognitive decline, to name two.

Someone convinced he’s the only competent admiral in a sea of idiots has a roughly 0 percent chance of admitting he’s a problem. I get that — but a girl’s gotta try.

And a spouse does, too: “*I feel unsafe*. And you’re not making bad drivers better. Stop dismissing me.” You have that tack, too — his negating you. Urge him to get a health workup, citing the uptick in anger.

In the meantime, heed this response in the original chat: “Decline to be a passenger ... when he is driving. You drive or take separate cars. Maybe he will take the message more seriously.” Good luck.

Re: Passenger: My wife is an aggressive driver — not angry, but six lane changes in three minutes. I would refuse to be her passenger. BUT she is the complete opposite as a passenger and will literally scream if the car 500 feet in front of me taps its brakes.

I have refused to ride with her.

Two cars is stupid and expensive. Rideshare and taxis are expensive and not reliable in my city. I’m at a loss.

— Anonymous

Anonymous: Her behavior as driver and passenger makes “stupid and expensive” sound smart and economical. Unless she’s willing to get evaluated for that anxiety problem she’s apparently harbored for a while? Please? Or you drive, she sits in back.

Readers’ thoughts:
• That used to be me. Then I admitted to myself I could be a better driver if I anticipated every dumb thing the other driver could do. So if I expect that guy to cut me off, then either he does and I can pat myself on the back for being the better driver, or he doesn’t and I can be pleasantly surprised. As a side effect, it helps me focus on the other drivers and my situation better.

• I was having the same issues as your husband. A while ago, I offhandedly started watching “bad driver” and “road rage”



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

videos on YouTube, and believe it or not, I totally adjusted how I drive! The more you watch them, the more you become aware of the pointlessness of driving aggressively and also what leads to accidents. I now drive 20 percent slower and get amused as other “ragers” race around me. See if he’ll watch them with you!

• None of you drives as well as you think you do. So start being more demanding with the driver in your life who is making you uncomfortable. I’m confident they are even worse in an empty car than an occupied one, and when they inevitably hit and kill someone, your life is going to be thrown asunder. Worth 1,500 awkward conversations and

demands to keep that out of your future.

Write to Carolyn Hax at tellme@washpost.com. Get her column delivered to your inbox each morning at wapo.st/gethax.

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at washingtonpost.com/live-chats.

‘This is such an opportunity to bring Austin home’

TICE FROM C1

Tice’s family gathered for prayer at a service on Sunday morning at St. John’s Church, Lafayette Square in D.C. According to a representative, the family wished to spread awareness about Tice’s disappearance within the congregation.

The Tice family also called on both Biden and President-elect Donald Trump to use whatever tools necessary to help bring Austin home, according to a representative of the family, who declined to say whether the family spoke with Biden or Trump on Sunday.

“We’re not foreign policy experts. We’re not Middle East experts,” said Austin’s younger brother, Jacob Tice. “We’re just American citizens. We’re just a family of Americans. So we are asking that they exercise their

best judgment in taking the appropriate actions to bring Austin home as soon as possible.”

Mouaz Moustafa, executive director of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, a nonprofit organization that advocates for civility in Syria, said on CBS’s “Face the Nation” Sunday morning that rebel groups are working to find Tice.

“The first thing that we are working really hard — and I can tell you, all the rebel factions are working really hard — to do is find Austin Tice and hopefully bring him home,” Moustafa said. “. . . He’s a hero. He went to cover the plight of the Syrian people from what Assad, Iran and Russia have been doing to them. And God willing, we bring him home alive, but we need to find him and bring him to his mom, no matter what. And the Syrians owe him a debt forever.”

Tice, who had contributed to The Post, was abducted while reporting on the civil war in Syria on Aug. 14, 2012. Video footage surfaced months later showing him blindfolded and held up by men holding assault rifles.

The White House has maintained that the Syrian government was holding Tice, but Syria has long denied the claims.

“We know with certainty that he has been held by the Government of Syria,” Biden said in an August 2022 statement. “We have repeatedly asked the government of Syria to work with us so that we can bring Austin home.”

Questions about Tice’s whereabouts resurfaced last week, as rebels moved in on the Syrian capital. On Friday, the family held at a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington.

Tice’s mother, Debra, said that a “significant source” had said that her son is alive.

“We have from a significant source that has already been vetted all over our government: Austin Tice is alive. Austin Tice [is being] treated well. And there is no doubt about that,” she said.

“He is being cared for and he is well — we do know that,” she said.

It is unclear whether Assad’s fall will lead to Tice’s release.

Jason Rezaian, the director of press freedom initiatives at The Post, recently launched the Press Freedom Center with Bill McCarrren, director of the Press Freedom Center at the National Press Club, which aims to advocate for the release of detained journalists such as Tice.

Rezaian, a former Tehran bureau chief for The Post, was imprisoned beginning in 2014 in



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Meagan Malone speaks about her brother Austin Tice, as brother Jacob Tice, center, and his wife, Cassie Fastabend, listen on Friday.

Iran on charges of espionage for 544 days. He said moments like the Assad regime’s crumbling can matter in the search for missing journalists.

“This 48 hours is, in many ways, would be hard to argue

from a public point of view the most consequential moment in the 12-plus years that Austin has been detained,” Rezaian said.

Michelle Boorstein contributed to this report.

After Trump’s victory, Oscar voters look toward feel-good escapism

ANALYSIS FROM C1

ly made things interesting.

Feel-good movies with messages of tolerance and redemption, such as “Wicked,” with its two powerhouse superstars (Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande) singing about acceptance and forgiveness, and “Sing Sing” (an A24 film about a prison theater program with a cast that includes formerly incarcerated actors who are real graduates of the program), are on the rise, while violent spectacles such as “Gladiator II” seem to have taken a dive.

The first flurry of awards of the long trek to the Oscars ceremony on March 2 was announced against a week of remarkably chaotic news. The *Gothams* — which named A24’s droll comedy about warped beauty standards, “A Different Man,” as best feature — took place in the wake of Biden pardoning his son Hunter.

The next day, the New York Film Critics Circle met in a closed-door ceremony many have compared to the papal voting process in best picture contender “Conclave” — naming “The Brutalist” its top feature, as South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law and opposition lawmakers climbed the walls into the National Assembly to vote it down.

On Wednesday, “Anora” and “I Saw the TV Glow” got six Independent Spirit Award nominations each, and “Wicked” was named the National Board of Review’s top film of the year. Meanwhile, activists were gathered on the steps of the Supreme Court to protest the possible ban of transgender care for minors; a manhunt was underway for the killer of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson; and bitcoin’s value soared above \$100,000 in a surge tied to Trump’s victory.

And on Thursday, as the American Film Institute named its top 10 films — a list that is highly predictive of best picture nominees — Pete Hegseth scrambled for Senate votes in a bid to become Trump’s defense secretary.

Judging from the deluge that got announced last week, the race could go six (or seven!) different ways.

The Spirit Award nominations were all over the place, but it’s a ceremony that often predicts what the Academy will pick from non-studio entries, which bodes well for one of the two most-nominated films, “Anora” — which earlier this year won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

The biggest post-election shake-up in the race is probably the ascendancy of “Wicked.” Oscar voters reeling from a Trump win seem ready for escapism,

and eager to see two very talented musical theater nerds do their thing. But there’s also an unexpectedly robust thematic resonance, too, about the pain of being othered and the beauty of acceptance. In a shocker, NBR gave “Wicked” best feature, best director, and a spotlight award for Erivo and Grande’s “creative collaboration.”

Meanwhile, the *Gothams* reinvigorated Oscar hopes for “Sing Sing,” which had hit theaters this summer with little fanfare and much criticism of A24’s distribution strategy.

“Let’s keep doing the work, the work that really matters, that makes a difference. That’s what we can really do right now. That can be the light in the darkness,” said Colman Domingo, the sole name actor in “Sing Sing,” playing a prisoner who maintains his innocence.

His gist was clear in the room, which rose to its feet every time “Sing Sing” was honored. It took home the preannounced social justice tribute award, plus (in gender-neutral categories) the lead acting award for Domingo and outstanding supporting performance for Clarence “Divine Eye” Maclin, who served a 17-year sentence for robbery in Sing Sing, where he found purpose acting in Shakespeare plays.

The day after the *Gothams*, the company announced that the film would be rereleased in theaters on Jan. 17, the day Oscar nominations are announced.

As Maclin spoke about the men with him onstage, he referenced how his castmate Jon-Adrian “JJ” Velazquez had been formally exonerated on Sept. 30 after 23 years in prison for a crime he didn’t commit. With tears in his eyes, another formerly incarcerated actor, Sean “Dino” Johnson, told the room, “We’re living proof that no matter where you start, you should always be able to dream of where you can go and be.”

And with that, this tiny feel-good prison movie that had been flying under the radar now seems poised for a “CODA”-esque run toward a best picture nod. Little-cast-that-could. Heartfelt message of art as salvation. The chance to see rehabilitated men of color become advocates for the arts and live their best lives among the likes of Zendaya and Timothée Chalamet.

Elsewhere throughout the night and week, the specter of OUR CHANGING WORLD and THE TIMES WE NOW LIVE IN seemed potent.

Take Sebastian Stan. A month before the election, there was talk that he could get a best actor nod for playing a young Donald Trump in “The Apprentice,” but his chances felt dead in the water the minute Trump won. Then,

last week, he got a Spirit nomination for “The Apprentice.” Will the Academy follow suit? Or perhaps reward his performance in “A Different Man,” as a way of recognizing his work on both films, while avoiding any mention of 45 and 47?

Accepting her performance tribute honor at the *Gothams*, a radiant Angelina Jolie — a close-to-sure-thing best actress nominee for playing opera singer Maria Callas in “Maria” — paid tribute to her mother, who was such an advocate of literature that she kept books inside the oven due to lack of shelf space in their tiny apartment. She dedicated her award to “all those who teach and inspire art in others,” and she spoke of art as a conduit for people to laugh together and to understand each other. “And that’s why it’s so important that art is taught in our schools, and so concerning that many of those programs are being reduced,” she said, to applause.

That night also saw Vera Drew, winner of breakthrough director for “The People’s Joker,” confess that seeing Nicole Kidman — another best actress contender for “Babygirl” — in “Batman Forever” in a theater in Wisconsin when she was 6 was the moment Drew knew she was trans. Kidman screamed and raised her hands in the air in enthusiastic affirmation.

Tuesday, studios took advantage of everyone being in town for the *Gothams* and threw one of the most packed nights for movie events the city has seen all year. The hope is to stay fresh in Academy members’ minds as they head toward the holiday break — and barrel toward Trump’s inauguration.

At the Museum of Modern Art, the heretofore best picture front-runner, “Anora,” was screening, with director Sean Baker and star Mikey Madison in tow (both high on the list for predicted best director and best actress nods, respectively). Also in Midtown, at the Whitby Hotel, Patti Smith came out to support best actor hopeful Daniel Craig at a premiere of yet *another* A24 film, “Queer.”

Down in SoHo, at the Crosby hotel, Karla Sofia Gascón was tirelessly working the room full of Academy members, including directors Paul Schrader and James Schamus, until nearly midnight. She will possibly be the first trans person ever nominated for an acting Oscar, for her starring role in Netflix’s “Emilia Pérez,” an audacious Spanish-language musical from French master Jacques Audiard about a vicious cartel boss who transitions to being a woman.

She’d done 35 six-minute interviews that morning, and barely knew what city she was in, having traveled from Los Ange-



CINDY ORD/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE GOTHAM FILM & MEDIA INSTITUTE



EUGENE GOLOGURSKY/GETTY IMAGES FOR MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

TOP: From left, Vanessa McDonnell, Aaron Schimberg, Adam Pearson, Gabriel Mayers, Sebastian Stan and Mike Marino of “A Different Man” at the Gotham Awards in New York. ABOVE: Sean Baker, left, and Mikey Madison attend a screening of “Anora” at the Museum of Modern Art.

les to Berlin to Rome to Madrid to New York. She’d be heading for London the next day. “The hallways of the hotels are nice,” she said, through an interpreter.

And across town, at Metrograph, an independent theater with a bar on the Lower East Side, Grande was hugging small children and holding space for Erivo at a screening of “Wicked” attended by Blake Lively, Ryan Reynolds and what looked like all their kids, plus Lively’s mother. (Lively wore bedazzled ruby Mary Janes from Marc Jacobs and carried a Chanel purse decorated with embroidered poppies.)

“It’s a lobbying opportunity, right? And they spend millions and millions of dollars,” said actor Joe Pantoliano at the “Wicked” screening. His friend Anne Ramsey got him into the Academy after they both played cartoonish villains in “The Goonies,” and right now, he likes “Conclave” and is hoping June Squibb and Richard Roundtree get surprise acting nominations for “Thelma.”

“It’s a machine, and, in the end, it’s a big f---ing joke,” he continued. “You spend 30 percent of your budget, and you get the [tax] write-off, everybody gets to go to parties and all this


bulls---, and then, in the end, the obvious movies get nominated. Sometimes people vote from their heart, but you know, the Academy is becoming more autocratic than democratic.”

Mostly, he’s looking forward to catching up on all the movies and tuning out “the end of democracy,” he said. “As George Carlin says, I’m just kicking back and waiting for the fireworks. And they’re coming. Especially for our world. It’s all going to change, and the manipulation of the fascist government will demomize the creatives, because creative people are the first that they’re going to go after.”

the

GUIDE

to the Lively Arts

SHOW NAME	DATES & TIMES	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS	PRICE	ADDITIONAL
HOLIDAY EVENTS					
<div><div>Holiday Cheer! Sharon Christman soprano</div></div>	Dec 14, 2024 7:30 PM	Enjoy the finest classical masterpieces and holiday favorites together for all. Soprano Sharon Christman, Young Artist String Competition winners perform. Works by Vivaldi, Dvorak, Handel, Strauss, Leroy Anderson and more. Concluding Carols Sing-Along will get everyone in the holiday spirit!	Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington 44444 Arlington Boulevard Arlington, VA 22204 (Free parking) www.nationalchamberensemble.org (703)685-7590	Gen Adm \$40, Student \$20	Reception to follow performance.

The Guide to the Lively Arts appears: • Sunday in Arts & Style. deadline: Tues., 12 noon

• Monday in Style. deadline: Friday, 12 noon • Tuesday in Style. deadline: Mon., 12 noon • Wednesday in Style. deadline: Tues., 12 noon

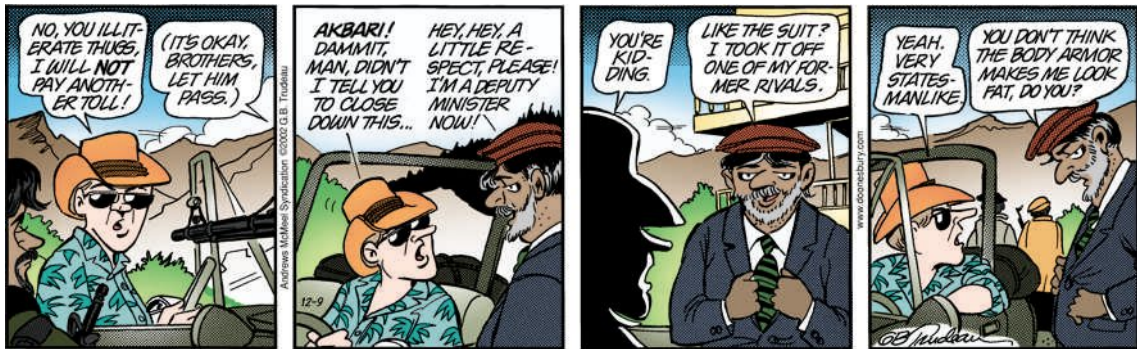
• Thursday in Style. deadline: Wed., 12 noon • Friday in Weekend. deadline: Tues., 12 noon • Saturday in Style. deadline: Friday, 12 noon

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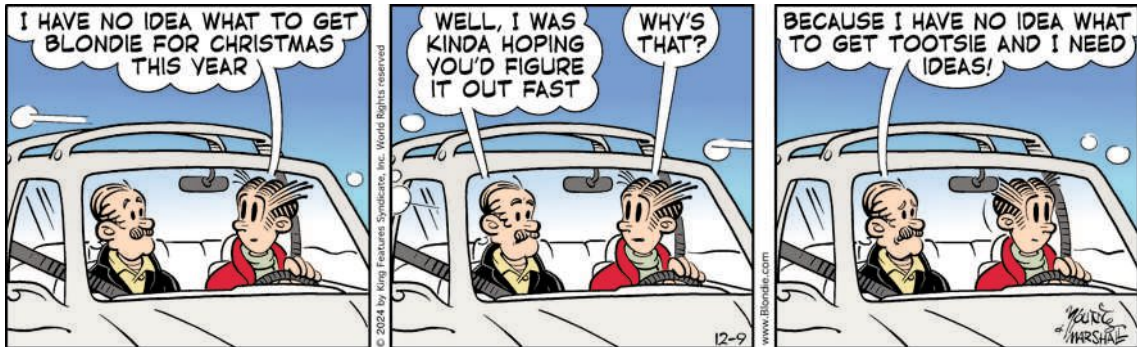
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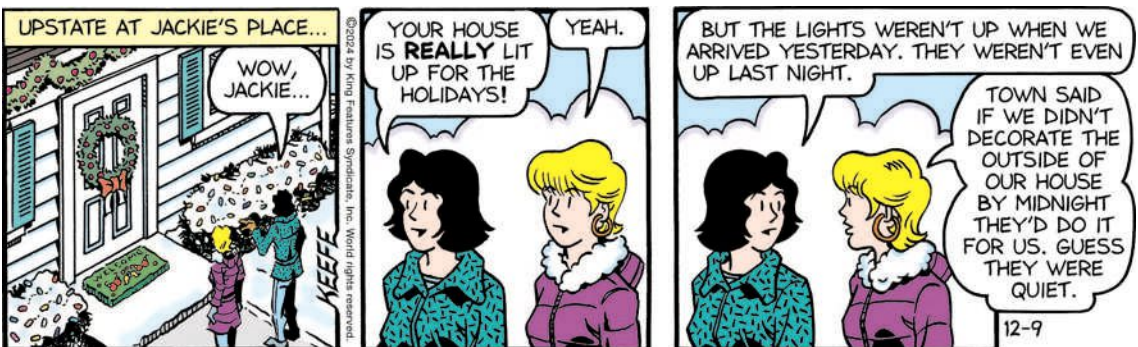
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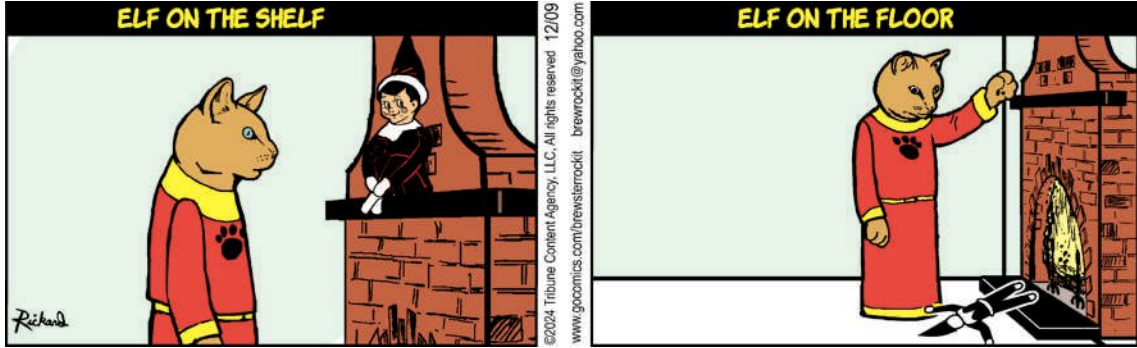
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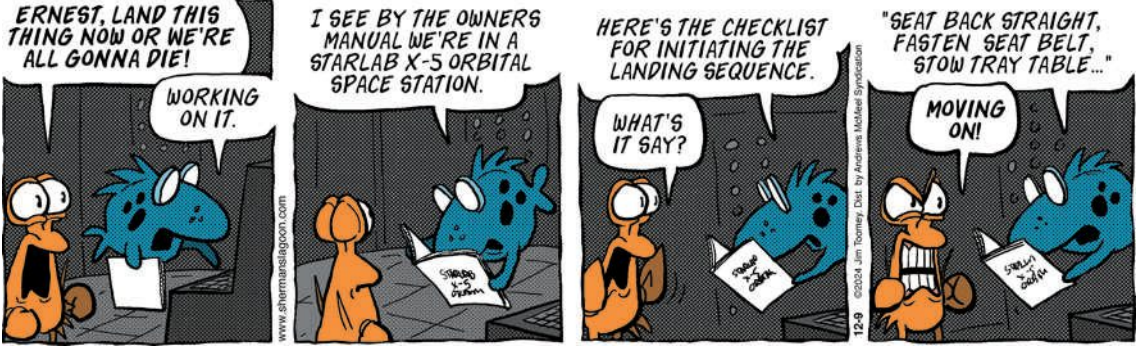
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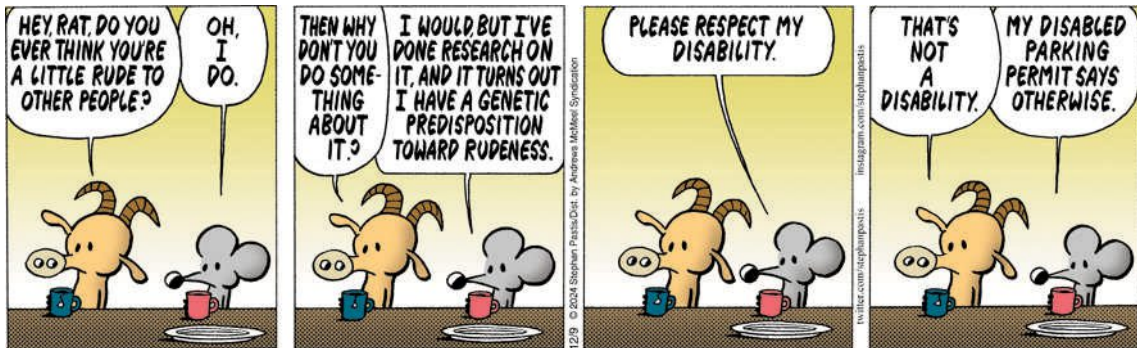
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JIM TOOMEY

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STEPHAN PASTIS

CURTIS



RAY BILLINGSLEY

MUTTS



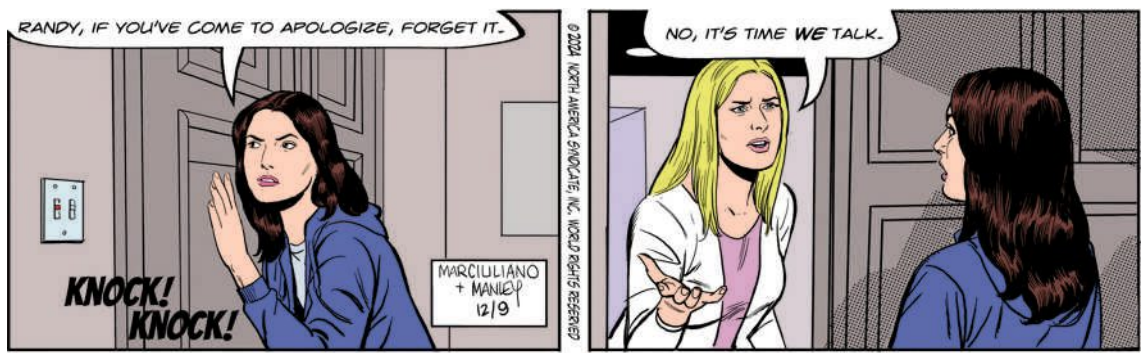
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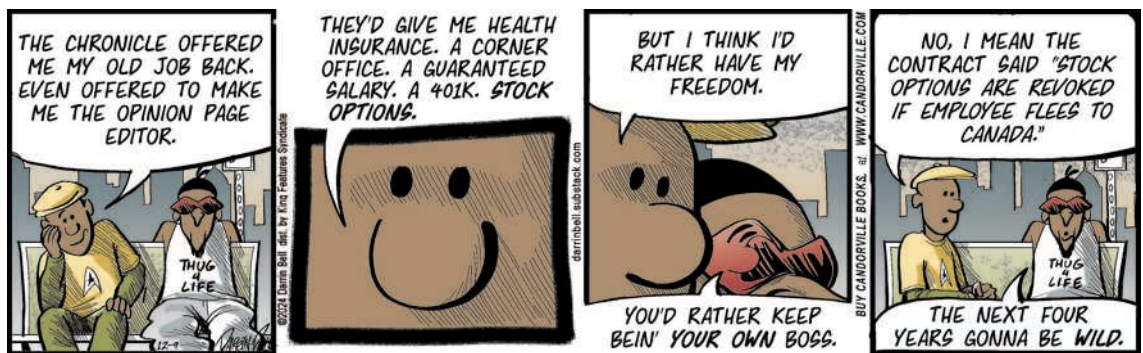
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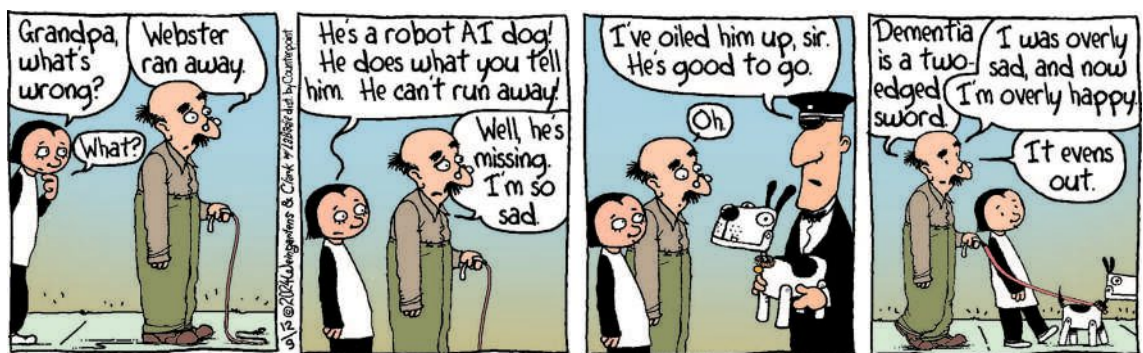
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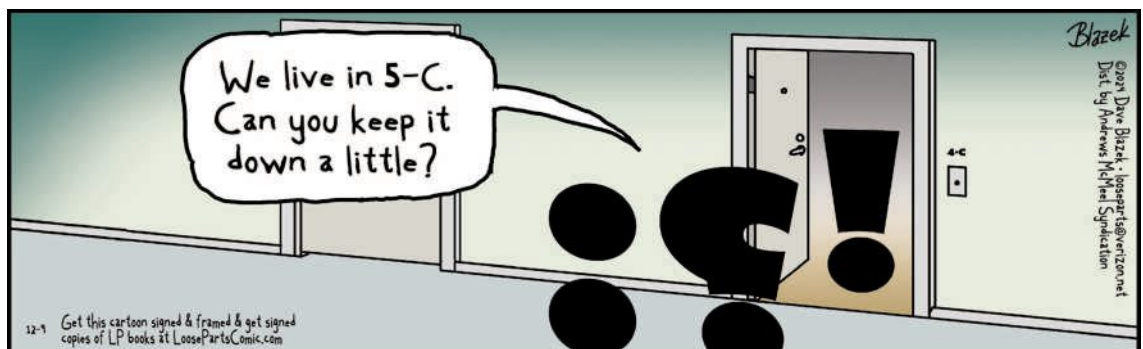
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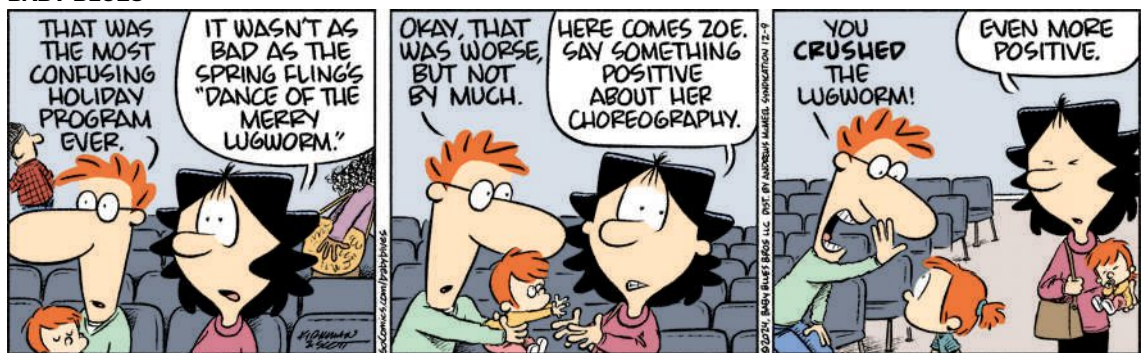
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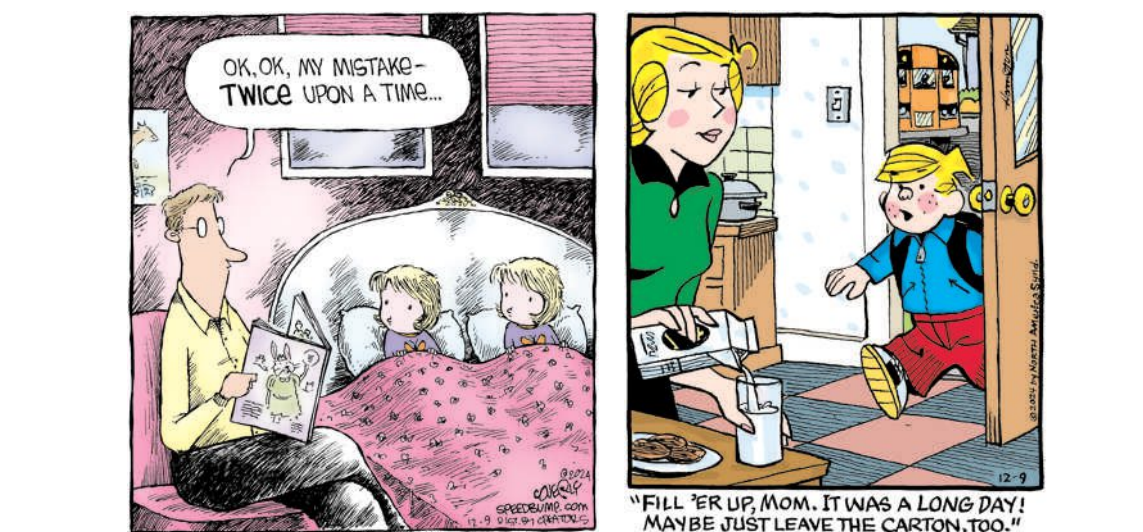
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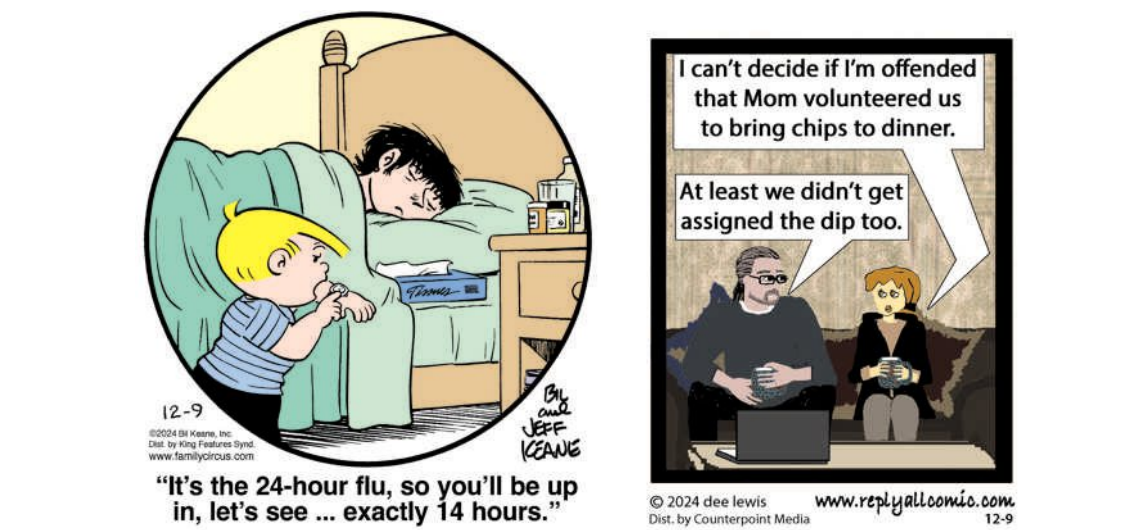
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ON THE FASTTRACK



FAMILY CIRCUS



BEETLE BAILEY



The biggest contracts, by total value, in MLB history

\$765M

Juan Soto, Mets
(2025 to 2039)

\$700M

Shohei Ohtani, Dodgers
(2024 to 2033)

\$426.5M

Mike Trout, Angels
(2019 to 2030)

\$365M

Mookie Betts, Dodgers
(2021 to 2032)

\$360M

Aaron Judge, Yankees
(2023 to 2031)

Source: Spotrac.com; specifics of Soto's deal remain pending



SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGES

Juan Soto, who helped the New York Yankees to the World Series in October, will join the crosstown rival New York Mets with the largest deal in baseball history.

Prodigious payday

Financial advice for Nats: The money is there. The time to spend it is now.



Barry Svrluga

Let's preview the Washington Nationals' appearance at this week's MLB winter meetings thusly: They should have been in the mix for old friend Juan Soto to see whether he might be interested in a reunion and a run at another World Series title. Instead, they're pinching pennies over closer Kyle Finnegan and whittling what — long ago — was

a robust payroll to what might be wedged between the Lerner's couch cushions. That's an oversimplification. But not by much. As the Nationals prepare to add players this offseason — note to ownership: You *must* add players this offseason — let's dig in.

Start with what the Nationals have. Before you say, "a promising young core," replace that with "extreme payroll flexibility." Patrick Corbin is off

SEE SVRLUGA ON D5

Soto, Mets agree to the biggest deal in MLB history: 15 years, \$765 million

BY CHELSEA JANES

When the New York Mets made clear they would be pursuing Juan Soto, much of the baseball world contemplated this scenario: Mets owner Steve Cohen is willing to spend without limit. Soto and his agent, Scott Boras, seemed likely to chase a historic deal. If Soto's choice came down to dollars, the Mets seemed like the favorites.

As it turned out, that's exactly how things played out. Soto agreed to a 15-year, \$765 million contract with the Mets, the largest

deal in baseball history, a person familiar with the situation confirmed to The Washington Post on Sunday night.

ESPN reported the contract includes an opt-out after five seasons, could end up being worth more than \$800 million and does not include deferred money. MLB.com noted the deal includes a \$75 million signing bonus.

Soto, who spent this past season with the New York Yankees and helped lead them to the American League pennant, is a

SEE SOTO ON D5

Terrapins fall short of a tough road upset

PURDUE 83, MARYLAND 78

Defensive breakdowns, Reese's exit prove critical

BY GENE WANG

WEST LAFAYETTE, IND. — The Maryland men played mostly stout defense for more than 30 minutes Sunday afternoon against eighth-ranked Purdue. But breakdowns down the stretch, combined with rugged forward Julian Reese's departure after he fouled out, doomed the Terrapins' bid for a second straight Quadrant 1 win.

The Terps' 83-78 loss at Mackey Arena ended their five-game winning streak. Just four days earlier, they had thumped Ohio State at home in their Big Ten opener. The difference this time was the Boilermakers' 10-0 run that produced a 67-62 advantage with five minutes left.

The deficit grew to 77-67 with two minutes to play, and the closest the Terps (8-2, 1-1) came from there was four points. Purdue (8-2, 1-1) made 4 of 5 free throws in the final 20 seconds to deal Maryland its second loss against a ranked opponent; its other came to then-No. 15 Marquette, 78-74, on Nov. 15 in College Park.

"This game reminded me a lot of the Marquette game, the first time we played in front of a big crowd," Maryland Coach Kevin Willard said. "This was the first road game for us as a team. What I'm really excited about is when they came at us in the second half, we came back and retook the lead. They're a really, really good team. We're a really good team."

Derik Queen led the Terps with game highs of 26 points and 12 rebounds for his fourth double-double. The 6-foot-10 freshman center shot 11 for 18 to pace four Maryland players in double figures. Junior point guard Ja'Kobi Gillespie, who made 4 of 7 three-pointers, added 18 points.

Junior guard Braden Smith scored 24 points for Purdue, which was coming off an 81-70 loss at Penn State on Thursday.

SEE MARYLAND ON D5

St. Francis (Pa.) at Maryland
Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m., Big Ten Network

PRO BASKETBALL

Bilal Coulibaly impresses offensively in the Wizards' loss to the Grizzlies. **D2**

BASEBALL

The Hall of Fame's classic era committee picks Dave Parker and Dick Allen. **D2**

PRO FOOTBALL

In Week 14, the Eagles find a way, and the Bills' winning streak ends. **D3-4**

At last, we have a real bracket. Now let's build one even better.



Jerry Brewer

As a pacifier during a volatile time, the maiden 12-team College Football Playoff served the batty sport well enough. The selection committee did a decent job working within a tournament structure that tries, at the same time, to be inclusive and bow to the new megaconference caste system.

It's a wonky mission, for sure. But now there's a true playoff with (limited) accessibility for all, which is an upgrade over the elitist four-team invitational that mostly reinforced our laziest assumptions. It took just 10 years

and the utter chaos of conference realignment for all parties to try harder.

Logic — or even what's best for college football — hasn't been the priority because there is often a crisis to manage. Navigating the selfish and greedy waters takes precedence. At present, this postseason model placates some of the desire to destruct every sacred fiber of the sport. For that, we should be relieved. However, it merely buys a little time to create something truly representative of how the game has changed.

This 12-team field is solid and balanced, reflecting both the national parity of the season and the might of the reconstructed

SEE BREWER ON D6

SMU makes the playoff field, keeping Alabama out



LM OTERO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kevin Jennings and SMU, the ACC runner-up with an 11-2 record, secured the final open spot in the College Football Playoff field.

BY CHUCK CULPEPPER

One year after the inclusion of Alabama in a four-team playoff wreaked outcry, the exclusion of Alabama from a 12-team playoff piqued debate Sunday as the final College Football Playoff rankings went public. The Crimson Tide program with a peerless eight berths in the 10 playoffs of the four-team era became the first of the 12-team era to occupy the aching 13th spot in consideration as it lost out narrowly to an SMU upstart few saw coming during the training-camp wilds of summer.

Where the 13-member committee of 2023 saw a 12-1 Alabama as inching past a 13-0 Florida State for the No. 4 ranking based on Alabama's towering win over No. 1 Georgia in the SEC championship game, Alabama's superior

strength of schedule and Florida State's injured star quarterback, the 13-member committee of 2024 faced a different puzzle. It noted a 9-3 Alabama's superior strength of schedule but also its dreadful 24-3 loss at a 6-6 Oklahoma on Nov. 23, and it nodded toward an 11-2 SMU that lost early to BYU but roared from there until a photo finish of a loss to Clemson on Saturday night in the ACC championship game.

The seventh and final list of the late fall translated into four first-round games on campus sites — and hallowed campus sites at that: Notre Dame, Penn State, Texas and Ohio State. No. 10 seed Indiana (11-1) will visit No. 7 seed Notre Dame (11-1) in an intrastate occasion Friday, Dec. 20, before three tussles on Saturday, Dec. 21:

SEE CFF ON D6

THE DAY IN SPORTS

PRO BASKETBALL

Embiid scores 31 points in return as 76ers win

Joel Embiid had 31 points and 12 rebounds in his return, **Tyrese Maxey** got his first career triple-double and the visiting Philadelphia 76ers held on to beat the Chicago Bulls, 108-100, on Sunday.

Maxey finished with 25 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds. **Paul George** and **Kelly Oubre Jr.** each scored 12 as the 76ers won for the fourth time in five games.

Zach LaVine led Chicago with 30 points, and **Nikola Vucevic** and **Coby White** each had 13 in the Bulls' second straight loss. ...

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 34 points, 11 rebounds and four assists and the Milwaukee Bucks snapped a two-game skid with a 118-113 win over the Brooklyn Nets in New York.

HOCKEY

Bjorkstrand, Grubauer lead Kraken to victory

Oliver Bjorkstrand had two goals and two assists to help **Philipp Grubauer** and the visiting Seattle Kraken beat the New York Rangers, 7-5.

Eeli Tolvanen had a goal and two assists for Seattle, which trailed 3-1 early in the second period. **Brandon Tanev**, **Vince Dunn**, **Shane Wright** and **Yanni Gourde** also scored, and Grubauer made 32 saves. ...

Brayden Point scored twice and added two assists, and the Tampa Bay Lightning edged the host Vancouver Canucks, 4-2. ...

The Chicago Blackhawks placed goaltender **Petr Mrazek** on injured reserve with a left groin injury.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Tigers take down top-ranked Jayhawks

Tamar Bates had 29 points and five steals to help Missouri beat **Hunter Dickinson** and No. 1 Kansas, 76-67, in Columbia, Missouri.

Mark Mitchell scored 17 points in the Tigers' first win over the Jayhawks since a 74-71 victory on Feb. 4, 2012. **Anthony Robinson II** had 11 points and five steals for the Tigers (8-1), and **Josh Gray** grabbed a team-leading 10 rebounds. ...

In local men's games, Richmond fell to 4-5 after losing to No. 2 Auburn (8-1), 98-54, in Auburn, Alabama. **Mikkel Tyne** led the Spiders with 16 points. Howard (3-6) lost, 84-67, at No. 14 Cincinnati (7-1). **Blake Harper** led the Bison with 23 points and 10 rebounds. ...

In area women's action, James Madison (7-3) dropped its matchup with No. 4 Texas (8-1), 93-62, in Harrisonburg, Virginia; Virginia Tech (7-3) lost to No. 8 Duke (9-2), 91-59, in Durham, North Carolina; Virginia (6-5) lost to Boston College (7-4), 72-57, at John Paul Jones Arena; Howard (5-5) fell to Hofstra (3-5), 55-52, in Hempstead, New York; and Richmond (9-1) defeated Columbia (7-4), 85-76, in Glen Allen, Virginia.



KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

On top of the world

Scottie Scheffler captured the Hero World Challenge in Nassau, Bahamas, on Sunday and received the trophy with his family.

SPOTLIGHT: BASEBALL

Parker, Allen are elected to the Hall of Fame

BY RONALD BLUM

DALLAS — Having waited for the call from Cooperstown for nearly three decades, Dave Parker burst into tears Sunday when he was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame along with the late Dick Allen.

"Yeah, I cried," Parker said after receiving the news from Hall chair Jane Forbes Clark. "It only took a few minutes, because I don't cry."

Parker received 14 of 16 votes from the classic era committee at the winter meetings, and Allen got 13. A vote of 75 percent or more was needed for election.

They will be inducted into the Hall in Cooperstown, New York, on July 27

along with players voted in by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, whose balloting will be announced on Jan. 21.

Tommy John was third with seven votes on a committee that considered candidates whose primary impact was before 1980. Ken Boyer, Steve Garvey and Luis Tiant each received less than five votes, as did Negro Leaguers John Donaldson and Vic Harris.

Nicknamed the Cobra, Parker hit .290 with 339 homers and 1,493 RBI for Pittsburgh (1973-83), Cincinnati (1984-87), Oakland (1988-89), Milwaukee (1990), California (1991) and Toronto (1991).

Allen, who died in 2020 at age 78, was born in Wampum, Pennsylvania, and he

was nicknamed the Wampus Whammer along with Crash — shortened from Crash Helmet, which started when he wore his helmet in the field to protect himself from demanding Philadelphia Phillies fans.

He hit .292 with 351 homers and 1,119 RBI from 1963 to 1977 for Philadelphia (1963-69, 1975-76), St. Louis (1970), the Los Angeles Dodgers (1971), Chicago White Sox (1972-74) and Oakland (1977).

Known as Richie Allen with the Phillies before asking to be referred to as Dick for the rest of his career, Allen was a seven-time all-star who was voted the 1964 National League rookie of the year and the 1972 American League MVP.

— Associated Press

TELEVISION AND RADIO

NFL	
8:15 p.m.	Cincinnati at Dallas » WJLA (Ch. 7), WMAR (Ch. 2), ESPN, WJFK (106.7 FM), WTEM (980 AM)
NBA	
7:30 p.m.	New York at Toronto » NBA TV
NHL	
7 p.m.	Chicago at New York Rangers » NHL Network
MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL	
6:30 p.m.	Minnesota at Indiana » Big Ten Network

7 p.m.	Pennsylvania at VCU » MASN
8 p.m.	Abilene Christian at Baylor » CBS Sports Network
WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL	
4:30 p.m.	Delaware State at VCU » MASN
SOCCER	
3 p.m.	English Premier League: Wolverhampton at West Ham » USA Network
WOMEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER	
7 p.m.	NCAA tournament, final: Wake Forest vs. North Carolina » ESPNW

At the helm of the offense, Coulibaly rises to the moment

GRIZZLIES 140, WIZARDS 112

BY VARUN SHANKAR

For a brief stretch late in Sunday night's first half, the Washington Wizards turned to Bilal Coulibaly to pilot their offense. Again and again, they gave him the ball. And again and again, the second-year guard rose to the occasion.

Coulibaly used that second quarter, in which he had 12 points and two assists, to emerge from a multi-week slump. He finished with 17 points on 6-for-13 shooting and was among the few positives for the Wizards, who lost, 140-112, to the Memphis Grizzlies at Capital One Arena.

The Wizards (3-19) got 20 points apiece from big men Jonas Valanciunas and Marvin Bagley III. They shot just 6 for 32 (18.8 percent) from three-point range, but Coulibaly made one long-range attempt — his first in the past five games — and beamed as he backpedaled down the court.

"I needed that. It's been a few games. It's been tough for me to shoot the ball. ... I knew it was going in because, as soon as I shot the ball, it felt really good," Coulibaly said.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis, which was without Ja Morant (back soreness) and Desmond Bane (left toe soreness) among



GEOFF BURKE/IMAGN IMAGES

Second-year guard Bilal Coulibaly had 17 points. He had not scored in double digits since Nov. 24.

others, with 21 points. Seven players scored in double digits for the Grizzlies (17-8).

The second-quarter stretch highlighted Coulibaly's burgeoning potential as an on-ball creator. He started by whipping a bounce pass to Bub Carrington in the right corner. After the rookie guard knocked down a three-pointer, the two pointed at each

other in appreciation. Coulibaly drove inside on the next two possessions, finding Valanciunas for a dunk on the first and rattling in a floater on the second.

He also added a putback layup and a pass to Valanciunas in the post that led to a foul.

"I was feeling really good [about the stretch] because they were trying to change the defense

every time, but it wasn't working," Coulibaly said. "... That's how I get my confidence back."

While Coulibaly couldn't continue his outburst in the second half, the performance remained notable because of his recent struggles. He hadn't scored in double digits since Nov. 24 and hadn't made at least six field goals since Nov. 17.

Washington needed it on a night when it didn't have, among others, Malcolm Brogdon (left hamstring inflammation), Kyshawn George and Corey Kispert (left ankle sprains), Kyle Kuzma (left rib sprain) and Alex Sarr (lower back soreness). The Wizards also got just nine points from Jordan Poole, who attempted a season-low six field goals one game after scoring 39 points in the Wizards' skid-snapping victory over the Denver Nuggets on Saturday. Coach Brian Keefe said the Grizzlies focused their defense on Poole, employing what he said was near a box-and-one look.

Coulibaly added four assists, five rebounds, a steal and a block. Those parts of his game, Keefe often pointed out amid the scoring slump, never wavered even when the shots weren't falling. In Saturday's win, Coulibaly scored just six points but had four offensive rebounds, five assists, four steals and three blocks.

If the 20-year-old can add consistent scoring to his repertoire, it would fulfill his desire to become a two-way force.

"I want to be a good two-way player. ... When it's rough offensively, I got to play good defense," he said. "It's just mental."

Here's what else to know about the Wizards' loss:

Valanciunas impresses

Valanciunas's 20-point, 14-re-

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Boilermakers make Odom their new coach

The Purdue Boilermakers are giving UNLV coach **Barry Odom** a second chance to lead a Power Four program.

Athletic Director **Mike Bobinski** announced that he hired the 48-year-old Odom to replace **Ryan Walters**, who was fired last week after compiling a 5-19 record in two seasons in West Lafayette, Indiana. ...

Marshall coach **Charles Huff** was hired for the same role at Southern Mississippi a day after the Thundering Herd won the Sun Belt championship game.

Huff will go from the Sun Belt's best team to its worst. He replaces **Will Hall**, who was fired in October after a 1-6 start. The Golden Eagles finished the season 1-11. ...

North Carolina State defensive coordinator **Tony Gibson** was named head coach at Marshall, shortly after Huff's hiring was announced at Southern Mississippi. ...

Navy will play Oklahoma in the Armed Forces Bowl at Amon G. Carter Stadium in Fort Worth on Friday, Dec. 27 at 3 p.m.; Virginia Tech will face Minnesota in the Mayo Bowl at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte on Friday, Jan. 3 at 7:30 p.m.; and James Madison will go up against Western Kentucky in the Boca Raton Bowl at FAU Stadium in Florida on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 5:30 p.m.

MISC.

Chelsea, Bournemouth prevail in EPL play

In a wild London derby, Chelsea conceded twice in the opening 11 minutes before recovering brilliantly for a 4-3 win at Tottenham.

Bournemouth scored in the 87th, and again in the fifth minute of added-on time through to win 2-1 at Ipswich.

Leicester staged a late recovery to draw 2-2 at home to Brighton.

Arsenal drew 1-1 at Fulham. ...

Scottie Scheffler won the Hero World Challenge with a 9-under-par 63 to tie the tournament record at Albany Golf Club in Nassau, Bahamas, and win by six shots. Scheffler, the first player since **Tiger Woods** in 2009 to spend an entire calendar year at No. 1 in the world, won for the ninth time in 21 starts. ...

American golfer **Johannes Veerman** claimed his second title on the European tour after winning the Nedbank Golf Challenge at Gary Player Country Club in Sun City, South Africa, by one shot following a bogey on the 72nd hole by home favorite **Aldrich Potgieter**. ...

Lando Norris ended McLaren's 26-year wait for the Formula One constructors' title as he won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix in the United Arab Emirates.

Norris held on for the win with Ferrari's **Carlos Sainz Jr.** in second and **Charles Leclerc** surging up to third from 19th on the grid.

— From news services

NFL WEEK 14



JUSTIN BERL/GETTY IMAGES

Pittsburgh's Ben Skowronek recovered a muffed punt by Cleveland in the fourth quarter, helping the Steelers avenge their loss to the Browns from last month and extend their AFC North lead to two games.

Eagles fly a bit low in victory, but the Buccaneers and Seahawks are soaring

On the NFL

ADAM KILGORE

The thrilling Thursday night showdown between the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers stole some luster from Week 14's Sunday slate. Who knew that the Philadelphia Eagles and Carolina Panthers could deliver just as much drama? Here is what to know.

Eagles hung on for dear life

For a fraction of a second, rookie wide receiver Xavier Legette held the shock of the NFL season in his hands. He had sprinted behind Darius Slay and C.J. Gardner-Johnson, and Bryce Young's pass floated about 50 yards into his grasp. If he held on, the Panthers would have completed a 97-yard drive and led the Eagles, a two-touchdown favorite, with less than 90 seconds left.

The ball slipped through Legette's fingers, and a horrific upset became a collective exhale in Philadelphia. The Eagles survived Young's final, desperate push and won, 22-16, to avoid a humiliating end to their winning streak and maintain contact with Detroit in the race for the NFC's top seed.

The Eagles' ninth consecutive victory was surprisingly difficult, but it revealed only minor cracks in their 11-2 record. It's not shocking to see a team on a dominant stretch look flat against an also-ran. The primary takeaway may be further evidence that Young's revitalization is for real.

The close call, though, did surface some mild concerns. The Eagles' inability to produce explosive plays stood out — Jalen Hurts threw for 108 yards, and Philadelphia managed just two gains of at least 20 yards. Slay and Gardner-Johnson are key veterans for Philadelphia's culture, but they are also the clear weak points of Philadelphia's dominant defense. (In Slay's defense, he also batted away a pass from Adam Thielen on the game-sealing incomplection.)

The most pressing issue may be kicker Jake Elliott, who has become the JV version of Justin Tucker: a struggling mainstay too ingrained to easily move on from. Elliott missed a 52-yarder, which made him 0 for 5 this season on kicks from at least 50 yards. He also hooked an extra point wide before an offside call on Carolina gave him a reprieve. For a team whose realistic Super Bowl hopes could come down to a kick, that's troubling.



EMILEE CHINN/GETTY IMAGES

Cornerback Cooper DeJean broke up a pass intended for Carolina's Xavier Legette and later helped Philadelphia's defense stand tall.

The Bucs start with Mayfield

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers rewarded Baker Mayfield with a three-year, \$100 million extension last offseason after he led them to the NFC South title and a playoff victory over the Eagles. Mayfield has proved his career resurgence is not a one-year fluke.

Tampa Bay's 28-13 victory over the Las Vegas Raiders pushed the team to 7-6 and, combined with the Atlanta Falcons' loss at the Minnesota Vikings, into the NFC South lead. Mayfield threw for 295 yards and three touchdowns. For the season, Mayfield ranks fourth in passing yards and is tied for third in touchdown passes.

Mayfield's gunslinging approach and rugged scrambling have given the Buccaneers an identity since they signed him off the scrap heap before last season. He only has been better this season under new offensive coordinator Liam Coen. His competitiveness permeates the franchise. The Bucs are the only team to beat the Lions and one of two to beat the Eagles. They also took the Chiefs to overtime.

If the Bucs make the playoffs, they can compete with anybody.

Vikings have the best WR duo

Sam Darnold built the best day

of his NFL career Sunday by leaning on the best tandem of wide receivers in the league. In the Vikings' 42-21 destruction of the reeling Falcons, Justin Jefferson (seven catches, 132 yards, two touchdowns) and Jordan Addison (eight catches, 133 yards, three touchdowns) combined for 15 catches, 265 yards and five touchdowns.

Atlanta's defense could not accomplish the reasonable task of slowing down at least one of them. But together, they are nearly unstoppable against any opponent. Jefferson, of course, might be the best wideout in the league. He scored his first touchdown in nearly two months Sunday and moved just ahead of Cincinnati's Ja'Marr Chase, who plays Monday night, for the NFL lead in receiving yards with 1,170.

Addison, a 2023 first-round pick who won the Biletnikoff Award in college, has punished defenses when they shift coverage toward Jefferson. His pedigree and production suggest he could be a No. 1 wideout on most teams. Across from Jefferson, he is a nightmare thanks to his quickness, great hands and knack for big plays.

As the Vikings improved to 11-2, Darnold passed for

347 yards. Their defense leads the NFC in turnovers and picked off Kirk Cousins twice. The Vikings will have to go on the road in the postseason if they can't catch the Lions, but they will be tough to beat in January.

It's clear: Steelers are elite

The longer the season goes, the clearer it becomes that the Pittsburgh Steelers belong on any short list of potential Super Bowl winners. They dominated the Cleveland Browns, who under Jameis Winston are much better than their 3-10 record, in a 27-14 victory that pushed them to 10-3 and two games ahead of the Baltimore Ravens in the AFC North.

Pittsburgh has been expertly designed by Mike Tomlin, who should be the favorite for coach of the year honors, to win games. Entering Sunday night, only the Bills had a better point differential in the AFC than Pittsburgh's plus-85. The Steelers lead the NFL in forced turnovers. While that can be a volatile statistic, it's not an accident given the Steelers' personnel and emphasis. "It's not a lightning strike," defensive coordinator Teryl Austin said this past week. The Steelers instruct pass rushers

to swat at the ball as quarterbacks throw. They set aside practice time for turnover-focused drills, including scooping rolling footballs off the turf.

Offensive coordinator Arthur Smith and quarterback Russell Wilson have been perfect for each other. Smith's system uses the running game as the foundation and relies on a quarterback using play-action, moving out of the pocket and throwing deep, all of which are among Wilson's strengths. Even without wideout George Pickens to create big plays and open space for others Sunday, Wilson played efficiently and mistake-free against a fierce defensive line.

New York football is a wreck

The Jets and Giants deserve credit for their creativity. In wretched seasons for both New York franchises, they continue to find ways to reach new depths.

The Jets blew an eight-point, fourth-quarter lead, moved back ahead of the Miami Dolphins with a last-minute field goal and still went to overtime after yielding a big kickoff return and an ensuing field goal drive. Their defense laid down on the first possession of overtime and gave up a touchdown that finalized a

32-26 loss to keep alive Miami's faint playoff hopes.

The Giants somehow overcame Drew Lock's attempt to commit offensive football and drove to set up a 35-yard field goal attempt on what was essentially the game's final play. New Orleans tackle Bryan Bresee hopped over the line and blocked Graham Gano's kick, sealing a 14-11 win that kept the Saints within shouting distance in the NFC South.

Another week, another two losses for the smoldering wreck that is New York football. The Jets and Giants are 5-21 combined, and neither has won since November began. The Kansas City Royals have won more recently than the Giants. The Jets have fired their coach and their general manager, and Brian Daboll and Joe Schoen — who hold those jobs for the Giants — may want to consult a real estate agent.

The Giants at least have a silver lining. They strengthened their chances of landing the first pick in next year's draft. Not only did they drop to 2-11, but the Jacksonville Jaguars beat the Tennessee Titans, 10-6, for their third win. Only the Raiders also have two victories, and the Giants are ahead of them on tiebreakers in the race to the bottom.

As for the Jets' future outlook? They, uh, have an Aaron Rodgers Netflix documentary to watch.

Seahawks soar, Cardinals fall

The diametric trajectories of the Seahawks and Cardinals crossed paths in Seattle's 30-18 steamrolling of host Arizona. The Seahawks remained in first place in the NFC West at 8-5. The Cardinals, who controlled the division less than a month ago, lost their third straight and have tumbled to the fringes of playoff contention at 6-7.

His latest defeat continues the unfortunate trend of Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray's career. Late in the season, whatever the reason, his effectiveness wanes. The Cardinals are 22-16-1 in games Murray starts in Week 8 or earlier. In games in Week 9 and later with Murray starting, they are 12-28, his one playoff appearance included.

The Seahawks have continuously improved under first-year coach Mike Macdonald and have emerged as a physically imposing team. With running back Kenneth Walker III out with an injury, Zach Charbonnet ran for 134 yards and two touchdowns on 22 carries. Defensive lineman Leonard Williams has been one of the best defensive players in the NFL and had another dominant performance.

NFL WEEK 14

Chiefs claim AFC West with another walk-off

Matthew Wright kicked a 31-yard field goal that banked off the left upright as time expired, and the Kansas City Chiefs (12-1) survived another close call, beating the Los Angeles Chargers (8-5), 19-17, in Missouri on Sunday night to win their ninth straight AFC West title — two short of the NFL record.

Patrick Mahomes led two-time defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City on a drive that took 4:35 to set up Wright's fourth field goal. It looked routine until the ball clanged off the upright in the latest narrow escape for the Chiefs, who have 10 wins by a one-score margin.

Kansas City led 13-0 at halftime after Los Angeles punted on its first six possessions, but Justin Herbert and the Chargers woke up in the second half, scoring on all three of their drives. Cameron Dicker's 37-yard field goal put the Chargers ahead 17-16.

Vikings vex Cousins in sixth straight victory

Sam Darnold added yet another highlight to his brilliant first season with the Minnesota Vikings (11-2), passing for 347 yards and five touchdowns — both career highs — in a 42-21 victory over the Atlanta Falcons (6-7) in Minneapolis.

Darnold passed for 250 yards after halftime to help Minnesota break a 21-all tie early in the fourth quarter and win its sixth straight. Jordan Addison had eight catches for 133 yards and three scores, and Justin Jefferson racked up seven receptions for 132 yards and two touchdowns.

Kirk Cousins, who was booed as he took the field, threw two more interceptions in this unhappy homecoming with Atlanta, which has dropped four straight to tumble out of first place in the NFC South.

Barkley rolls as defense steps up late for Eagles

Saquon Barkley rushed for 124 yards to break the franchise single-season record, and the Philadelphia Eagles (11-2) earned their ninth straight win, 22-16

over the visiting Carolina Panthers (3-10), to remain the No. 2 team in the NFC.

Barkley's consistent brilliance aside — he now has 1,623 rushing yards, surpassing LeSean McCoy's 2013 total of 1,607 — Jalen Hurts and Philadelphia slogged through another rough offensive outing and needed a late defensive stop to seal the win.

Bryce Young gamely moved Carolina downfield on the final drive, but his final attempt on fourth and nine was broken up by Darius Slay.

Browns' miscues help Steelers avoid a sweep

Russell Wilson threw for 158 yards and two touchdowns, Cameron Heyward recorded two sacks, and the Pittsburgh Steelers (10-3) capitalized on numerous

miscues by the Cleveland Browns (3-10) for a 27-14 home win.

Two weeks after a messy pratfall in the snow, Pittsburgh overcame a slow start to avoid being swept by Cleveland for the first time since 1988 and moved two games ahead of the idle Baltimore Ravens for the AFC North lead.

Two Jameis Winston interceptions, two missed field goals from inside 50 yards, a muffed punt and several ill-time penalties added up to the Browns reaching double-digit losses for the 18th time since the franchise returned in 1999.

Seahawks solidify hold on first in NFC West

Zach Charbonnet ran for a career-high 134 yards and two touchdowns, Geno Smith threw

for 233 yards and a score, and the Seattle Seahawks (8-5) beat the Arizona Cardinals (6-7), 30-18, on the road in Glendale to stay atop the NFC West.

Seattle won its fourth straight and swept the season series from Arizona. The Seahawks have won seven in a row against their division rival.

The Cardinals could have moved into a share of first place with a win. Instead, they have lost three straight and are fading from the playoff picture.

Mayfield, surging Bucs move atop NFC South

Baker Mayfield threw for 295 yards and three touchdowns, helping the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (7-6) beat the Las Vegas Raiders (2-11), 28-13, in Tampa and take over sole

possession of first place in the NFC South.

Jalen McMillan caught two touchdown passes and Rachaad White scored on a five-yard reception and a three-yard run for Tampa Bay, which pulled away in the second half after Las Vegas quarterback Aidan O'Connell was carted off with a knee injury.

Three first-half turnovers by Mayfield helped the Raiders stay close, but the Bucs recovered to earn their third straight win — all over last-place teams.

49ers turn back clock with a blowout of Bears

Brock Purdy threw for 325 yards and two touchdowns, and the San Francisco 49ers (6-7) bounced back from two blowout losses to rout the Chicago Bears (4-9), 38-13, in Santa Clara,

California, spoiling the debut of interim coach Thomas Brown.

With several stars sidelined by injuries, San Francisco had been outscored by 53 points the past two weeks in road losses that left its playoff hopes teetering. But the 49ers responded with a performance more reminiscent of the 2023 Super Bowl team, handing Chicago its seventh straight loss.

Dolphins tie score late, then topple Jets in OT

Tua Tagovailoa threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Jonnu Smith in overtime, and the Miami Dolphins (6-7) overcame Aaron Rodgers's first 300-yard passing game since 2021 for a 32-26 win in Miami Gardens, Florida, that eliminated the New York Jets (3-10) from the playoff race.

Anders Carlson hit a go-ahead field goal for New York with 52 seconds left, but a big kickoff return by Malik Washington helped Tagovailoa and Miami put Jason Sanders in position for the game-tying kick.

Breesee's leaping block lifts Saints over Giants

Bryan Breesee jumped over the line to block a game-tying field goal with 11 seconds left, and the New Orleans Saints (5-8) held on to top the New York Giants (2-11), 14-11, in East Rutherford, New Jersey, after losing quarterback Derek Carr to a left hand injury.

After quarterback Drew Lock's two tries at a go-ahead touchdown pass fell incomplete, Graham Gano's kick was a little low, and New York couldn't stop Breesee from getting a hand on the ball.

Jaguars win a slugfest to end Titans' chances

Tank Bigsby ran eight yards for the game's only touchdown with 6:46 left, and the Jacksonville Jaguars (3-10) ended a five-game skid and the slim playoff hopes of the Tennessee Titans (3-10) with a 10-6 victory in Nashville.

Tennessee had two chances in the final two minutes, but Will Levis threw incomplete passes on fourth down both times.

— Associated Press

STANDINGS												
NFC												
EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
y-Philadelphia	11	2	0	.846	342	234	5-1-0	6-1-0	4-0-0	7-2-0	3-0-0	
Washington	8	5	0	.615	376	296	5-2-0	3-3-0	3-2-0	5-3-0	2-2-0	
Dallas	5	7	0	.417	248	339	1-5-0	4-2-0	2-2-0	3-5-0	3-1-0	
N.Y. Giants	2	11	0	.154	194	293	0-7-0	2-4-0	1-2-0	1-9-0	0-5-0	
SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
Tampa Bay	7	6	0	.538	363	309	3-4-0	4-2-0	1-3-0	6-3-0	2-2-0	
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	278	333	3-4-0	3-3-0	0-4-0	6-3-0	4-1-0	
New Orleans	5	8	0	.385	290	292	3-4-0	2-4-0	1-3-0	4-5-0	2-3-0	
Carolina	3	10	0	.231	233	388	2-5-0	1-5-0	1-4-0	2-6-0	1-3-0	
NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
y-Detroit	12	1	0	.923	417	234	6-1-0	6-0-0	4-0-0	8-1-0	4-0-0	
Minnesota	11	2	0	.846	339	240	6-1-0	5-1-0	5-0-0	6-2-0	2-1-0	
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	349	274	5-2-0	4-2-0	5-0-0	4-4-0	1-3-0	
Chicago	4	9	0	.308	254	278	4-3-0	0-6-0	2-3-0	2-6-0	0-3-0	
WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
Seattle	8	5	0	.615	302	283	3-4-0	5-1-0	4-1-0	4-4-0	3-2-0	
L.A. Rams	7	6	0	.538	298	332	4-3-0	3-3-0	2-2-0	4-5-0	2-1-0	
Arizona	6	7	0	.462	284	332	4-3-0	3-4-0	3-1-0	3-6-0	2-2-0	
San Francisco	6	7	0	.462	308	308	4-3-0	2-4-0	2-2-0	4-5-0	1-3-0	
AFC												
EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
z-Buffalo	10	3	0	.769	397	268	6-0-0	4-2-0	7-2-0	3-1-0	3-0-0	
Miami	6	7	0	.462	264	292	4-3-0	2-4-0	5-4-0	1-3-0	3-2-0	
N.Y. Jets	3	10	0	.231	251	300	2-4-0	1-6-0	3-6-0	0-4-0	1-3-0	
New England	3	10	0	.231	221	307	1-5-0	2-5-0	2-7-0	1-3-0	1-3-0	
SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
Houston	8	5	0	.615	308	288	4-2-0	4-3-0	6-2-0	2-3-0	4-1-0	
Indianapolis	6	7	0	.462	267	298	3-3-0	3-4-0	5-4-0	1-3-0	1-3-0	
Jacksonville	3	10	0	.231	238	345	2-4-0	1-6-0	3-5-0	0-5-0	2-2-0	
Tennessee	3	10	0	.231	227	342	1-5-0	2-5-0	3-5-0	0-5-0	1-2-0	
NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	323	238	5-1-0	5-2-0	7-2-0	3-1-0	3-1-0	
Baltimore	8	5	0	.615	383	318	4-2-0	4-3-0	5-4-0	3-1-0	2-2-0	
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	335	340	1-5-0	3-3-0	2-6-0	2-2-0	1-3-0	
Cleveland	3	10	0	.231	232	335	2-4-0	1-6-0	3-5-0	0-5-0	2-2-0	
WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV	
z-Kansas City	12	1	0	.923	308	252	7-0-0	5-1-0	7-1-0	5-0-0	5-0-0	
L.A. Chargers	8	5	0	.615	277	207	4-2-0	4-3-0	5-4-0	3-1-0	2-2-0	
Denver	8	5	0	.615	305	234	4-2-0	4-3-0	4-4-0	4-1-0	2-2-0	
Las Vegas	2	11	0	.154	236	361	1-4-0	1-7-0	2-8-0	0-3-0	0-5-0	
y-clinched playoff spot; z-clinched division												
Thursday's result												
at Detroit 34, Green Bay 31												
Sunday's results												
Jacksonville 10, at Tennessee 6 at Miami 32, N.Y. Jets 26 (OT) at Minnesota 42, Atlanta 21 New Orleans 14, at N.Y. Giants 11 at Philadelphia 22, Carolina 16 at Pittsburgh 27, Cleveland 14 at Tampa Bay 28, Los Vegas 13 Seattle 30, at Arizona 18 at L.A. Rams 44, Buffalo 42 at San Francisco 38, Chicago 13 at Kansas City 19, L.A. Chargers 17 Bye: Washington, Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, New England												
Monday's game												
Cincinnati at Dallas, 8:15 p.m.												
Thursday's game												
L.A. Rams at San Francisco, 8:15 p.m.												
Sunday's games												
Washington at New Orleans, 1 p.m. Baltimore at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m. Cincinnati at Tennessee, 1 p.m. Dallas at Carolina, 1 p.m. Kansas City at Cleveland, 1 p.m. Miami at Houston, 1 p.m. N.Y. Jets at Jacksonville, 1 p.m. Buffalo at Detroit, 4:25 p.m. Indianapolis at Denver, 4:25 p.m. New England at Arizona, 4:25 p.m. Pittsburgh at Philadelphia, 4:25 p.m. Tampa Bay at L.A. Chargers, 4:25 p.m. Green Bay at Seattle, 8:20 p.m.												
Next Monday's games												
Chicago at Minnesota, 8 p.m. Atlanta at Las Vegas, 8:30 p.m.												

Stafford outduels Allen as Los Angeles takes thriller

RAMS 44, BILLS 42

BY GREG BEACHAM

INGLEWOOD, CALIF. — Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams had to pile up a veritable mountain of points, yards and time-of-possession advantage early on to give themselves a chance against a ferocious fourth-quarter rally and a historic six-touchdown performance by Josh Allen.

Los Angeles just had enough to hang on for a victory that might change its season.

Stafford passed for 320 yards and hit Puka Nacua for a 19-yard touchdown with 1:54 to play, and the Rams snapped the Buffalo Bills' seven-game winning streak with a 44-42 victory Sunday.

Allen passed for 342 yards and rushed for 82 yards. He became the first player in NFL history with three passing touchdowns and three rushing touchdowns in a game during his league-record fifth career outing with at least two of each. But it wasn't enough for Buffalo (10-3) to overcome its 17-point deficit entering the fourth quarter.

“Josh Allen is an alien,” Los Angeles Coach Sean McVay said. “Some of the stuff that he can do and the things that he can create, we knew he was capable of that. He's shown that. That's why he's as well respected and well regarded in this league as he is.

“But our guys made just enough plays to be able to come out on top.”

Allen capped his third long touchdown drive of the fourth quarter by scoring on a one-yard dive with 1:00 left, but Ronnie Rivers recovered the onside kick, and the Rams ran out the clock on their first win over the Bills since 2012 and their first at home since 1983.

This game was monumental for both teams: They combined for 902 yards of offense without a turnover or a sack. Los Angeles had the ball for 17 more minutes and ran 18 more plays than Buffalo — and the Rams needed every bit of it to survive.

Nacua, who had 12 catches for 162 yards and also recorded his first career rushing touchdown



ERIC THAYER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Puka Nacua's fourth-quarter touchdown helped the Rams earn their first win over the Bills since 2012.

in another monster game, called it “fantastic being able to feel like, man, this is what it feels like when the Rams are moving and connecting on all cylinders.”

Hunter Long returned a blocked punt 22 yards for a touchdown for Los Angeles (7-6), which has won six of eight to stay in the NFC West race. Kyren Williams rushed for 87 yards and two touchdowns as the Rams moved above .500 for the first time this season.

Allen and the Bills ran out of time after they struggled through the first three quarters, which ended with Los Angeles leading 38-21 before Buffalo stirred from its post-division title-clinching hangover.

“Hate losing,” Allen said. “If you lose by two or lose by 100, it doesn't matter, you are still losing. Offensively, we have to find ways to score before and after the half. We didn't do our part.”

Allen dismissed his historic six-touchdown performance: “I

have to make one more play than they do. It was a total team loss in three phases. We didn't play up to our standards.”

Ty Johnson and Khalil Shakir caught long scoring passes for the Bills, who became the first NFL team to score six touchdowns without a turnover in a loss. Buffalo's 42 points were the most scored in defeat in franchise history.

“They did a great job controlling the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball,” Bills Coach Sean McDermott said. “Defensively and special teams, neither were good enough to help us win this game.”

One week after securing the AFC East title by trouncing the San Francisco 49ers at home in the snow, Buffalo got off to a dismal start at SoFi Stadium, giving up 24 points in the first half and Cooper Kupp's 17-yard touchdown catch with 18 seconds left in the third quarter.

“Obviously, offensively, what

those guys have been doing is very impressive,” Kupp said. “Seeing it firsthand, they're a really good football team, so we needed everything we had as a team today.”

Allen ran for a score early in the fourth before the Bills forced the Rams' first punt. But after Mack Hollins' 21-yard touchdown catch for Buffalo with 8:49 to play, Stafford led Los Angeles on a clock-consuming 11-play drive that included a gritty 11-yard pass to Tutu Atwell on fourth and five with less than four minutes remaining.

After Nacua's catch-and-run touchdown on a pick play, Bills wide receiver Amari Cooper drew a 34-yard pass interference penalty against Quentin Lake on fourth and 15. Two plays later, Buffalo had first and goal at the 1 with 1:06 left — but Omar Speights stuffed Allen on his first attempt, forcing the Bills to burn a timeout that ultimately cost them dearly.

— Associated Press

Maryland falters late in loss at Purdue

MARYLAND FROM D1

Junior forward Trey Kaufman-Renn added 21 points, including 15 in the second half on 7-for-10 shooting.

The Terps led 62-57 with 8:25 left on the heels of an 8-0 push during which Queen made back-to-back three-pointers. He had missed all 10 of his three-point attempts entering the game. And Queen's defensive responsibilities expanded even more when Reese fouled out with 6:25 to play, 13 seconds after he reentered the game. The 6-9 senior forward finished with five points and seven rebounds in 23 minutes.

"We were scrambling for a lot," Queen said of playing without Reese.

After Maryland claimed a 40-34 lead early in the second half thanks to Reese's tip-in, late closeouts at the three-point arc gave the Boilermakers, who entered ranked first in the Big Ten in three-point percentage, clean looks during a 12-2 flurry that compelled Willard to call a time-

out with 15:34 to play.

Queen picked up his second foul in that ragged stretch but responded by sinking a layup and a jumper that tied the score at 46. Fifth-year guard Selton Miguel (13 points, four assists, three rebounds) then got to the rim, weaving through several defenders, to give the Terps the lead at 48-46 with 13:47 remaining.

Maryland had used a late 9-4 burst to take a 36-31 lead into halftime. Miguel got it started with a three-pointer and added a driving layup moments later. Queen contributed a block and two free throws. He also drew boos after he directed words at the student section following a sequence in which he was fouled while driving to the rim. Unbothered by the environment, Queen nearly posted a double-double by halftime despite receiving much of the Boilermakers' defensive attention.

"Queen's fabulous," Purdue Coach Matt Painter said. "He can pass at an elite level. He can rebound at an elite level, and then his ability to dribble, spin

and do stuff very, very uncanny — you don't see that a lot. He's got a bright future."

A 7-0 first-half run by the Boilermakers led to Willard using his first timeout with 12:40 to play. The Terps' sloppy ballhandling helped the Boilermakers open a five-point lead.

But following the stoppage, Maryland emerged looking far crisper, particularly in terms of ball movement. In transition, for instance, Gillespie sent a cross-court pass to Miguel, who immediately delivered the ball to Rodney Rice (13 points) for a three-pointer in front of the Boilermakers' bench. On the Terps' next possession, Miguel collected another assist when he passed to Queen for a dunk. Other first-half highlights for Queen included a pass over two defenders to Gillespie for a layup, the final points before halftime.

"We've just got to lock in, take care of the ball each possession," Gillespie said. "... We're going to rest and then come back hard, working to get better on everything."

BARRY SVRLUGA

It's time for Nats to buy some credibility

SVRLUGA FROM D1

the books. Stephen Strasburg is still on them, despite his retirement, but only for two more seasons. The point: The number of underperforming or injured veterans soaking up dollars on a team that was rebuilding anyway is dwindling. A burden is being lifted.

To demonstrate that, a quick quiz: What current member of the 2025 Nationals will cost the most next season?

Stumped? Think it over a bit. We'll come back to it.

You know whom it would have been? Finnegan, the 33-year-old reliever whose 38 saves were third in all of baseball last summer. The right-hander was entering his final year of arbitration eligibility, and by some estimates — we'll use the one from MLBTradeRumors.com — he would have earned \$8.6 million in 2025.

Last month, the Nationals "front-loaded" him — which is not offered parlane for not offering him a contract, which makes him a free agent. To any Nats fan pondering ticket purchases as holiday gifts, the reaction had to be, "Really?" Here's what's defensible: thinking \$8.6 million is too much for a back-end reliever whose underlying stats — i.e., a strikeout rate of 22.1 percent that ranked 111th among relievers with at least 50 innings pitched — would indicate he's not elite. The Nationals made that evaluation. Most of baseball would have made that evaluation. For a normal team figuring out the puzzle of its payroll, that part's not crazy.

What's not defensible for these Nationals at this time: taking that money and not spending it elsewhere.

That's what's important for this Washington offseason: showing a commitment from the Lerner family ownership — or, should that change, from a new steward. (Hello, Mr. Leonsis!)

Not simply to spend money to spend money but to make sound baseball decisions that cost money because that's what fielding a competitive team requires. (You remember fielding a competitive team, right, Mark?)

Before we move on to Soto, a final thought on Finnegan: If you knew during the season that non-tendering him was even a remote possibility, how could you not move him at the trade deadline? The Nats made the difficult decision to part with fellow high-leverage reliever Hunter Harvey and got a player and a draft pick in return, a move other execs said was an impressive use of resources. Even if Finnegan's return wouldn't have brought as much, it had to be better than ... nothing.

Whatever. On to Soto.

Oh, wait. Before that: With Finnegan gone, have you guessed which current Nat would make the most money next season?

That would, at the moment, be Keibert Ruiz, the catcher whose .619 OPS last season ranked 166th of the 169 players with at least 450 plate appearances.

Ruiz, who signed an eight-year, \$50 million pre-arbitration extension with the Nationals before the 2023 season, is due \$5.375 million in 2025, according to Spotrac. He could be outdone by Luis García Jr., who is up for arbitration and most projections have worth between \$4.5 million and \$5.5 million after a season in which his .761 OPS ranked fourth out of 22 second basemen with at least 300 plate appearances.

The point isn't that Ruiz's contract is bad — it doesn't have to be, because even if he's not the long- (or short-) term answer at catcher, the deal will never strangle the Nats financially. (And if he eventually blossoms, he'll almost certainly be underpaid — a steal for the club.) The point is the Nationals are paying *no one*. Their most

promising players — outfielders James Wood and Dylan Crews, shortstop CJ Abrams, pitchers MacKenzie Gore and Jake Irvin — are either not yet eligible for arbitration or entering their first year of that process. For the time being, their salaries are suppressed by the system. Take advantage of that.

Given the situation, wouldn't it have made sense to sit down with Soto and say: "Hey, Juan. You know what it's like here. You know what it's like to *win* here. Let's run it back?" Before he agreed to a 15-year, \$765 million deal with the New York Mets. Just to at least chat?

From a baseball standpoint, there's no argument against it. He was the best free agent of the past decade (non-Ohtani division), and he might be the best free agent of the coming decade, too. That's because his combination of age (just 26) and ability (career .421 on-base percentage) is rare. We've explored that ad nauseum.

Were there financial reasons not to pursue Soto? Sure. It seemed like the floor for a deal was something like \$600 million over 15 seasons — \$40 million per year — and it wound up being \$51 million per year. That's a lot to allocate to one player, particularly for a franchise that doesn't have the television and gate receipts of Soto's top suitors.

And yet, to compete as they once did, the Nationals will have to spend. This is a pivotal offseason to reestablish themselves financially. The World Series title now seems eons ago. None of the players remain. Since that final out in 2019, no franchise has lost more games.

Rebuilding didn't have to mean bringing back Juan Soto. But it can't mean jettisoning Kyle Finnegan and doing nothing in return, either. The winter meetings are upon us. The time to add players is now. What say you, Nationals?

Vikings 42, Falcons 21

ATLANTA	.....	7	3	11	0	—21
MINNESOTA	.....	7	7	7	21	—42

FIRST QUARTER

Atlanta: Allgeier 6 run (Koo kick), 8:58.
Minnesota: Addison 49 pass from Darnold (Reichard kick), :37.

SECOND QUARTER

Minnesota: Jefferson 12 pass from Darnold (Reichard kick), 2:01.
Atlanta: FG Koo 20 ,:10.

THIRD QUARTER

Atlanta: FG Koo 29, 5:06.
Minnesota: Jefferson 52 pass from Darnold (Reichard kick), 2:25.
Atlanta: B.Robinson 13 run (B.Robinson run), :39.

FOURTH QUARTER

Minnesota: Addison 11 pass from Darnold (Reichard kick), 12:59.
Minnesota: Addison 6 pass from Darnold (Reichard kick), 8:23.
Minnesota: A.Jones 15 run (Reichard kick), 3:38.
Attendance: 67,008.

	ATL	MIN
First Downs	.....25	.....23
Total Net Yards	.....496	.....433
Rushes-Yards	.....32-158	.....24-113
Passing	.....338	.....318
Punt Returns	.....1-11	.....0-0
Kickoff Returns	.....1-31	.....2-46
Interceptions Ret.	.....0-0	.....2-4
Comp-Att-Int	.....23-37-2	.....22-28-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....1-6	.....4-29
Punts	.....1-53.0	.....2-51.0
Fumbles-Lost	.....1-1	.....0-0
Penalties-Yards	.....12-127	.....6-35
Time Of Possession	.....31:35	.....28:25

PASSING

Atlanta: Cousins 23-37-2-344.
Minnesota: Darnold 22-28-0-347.

RUSHING

Atlanta: Robinson 22-92, Allgeier 9-63, McCloud 1-3.
Minnesota: A.Jones 13-73, Akers 5-37, Darnold 4-7, Mullens 2-(minus 2).

RECEIVING

Atlanta: McCloud 9-98, Mooney 6-142, D.London 5-70, Robinson 2-9, Pitts 1-14, Woerner 1-11.
Minnesota: Addison 8-133, Jefferson 7-132, Hockenson 4-45, A.Jones 2-11, Oliver 1-26.

MISSED FIELD GOALS

Minnesota: Reichard 47.

Buccaneers 28, Raiders 13

LAS VEGAS	.....	0	10	0	3	—13
TAMPA BAY	.....	14	0	0	14	—28

FIRST QUARTER

Tampa Bay: McMillan 15 pass from Mayfield (McLaughlin kick), 8:07.
Tampa Bay: R.White 5 pass from Mayfield (McLaughlin kick), 3:52.

SECOND QUARTER

Las Vegas: O'Connell 1 run (Carlson kick), 9:21.
Las Vegas: FG Carlson 25, 4:28.

FOURTH QUARTER

Tampa Bay: R.White 3 run (McLaughlin kick), 8:47.
Las Vegas: FG Carlson 27, 3:05.
Tampa Bay: McMillan 29 pass from Mayfield (McLaughlin kick), 1:56.
Attendance: 63,250.

	LAS	TB
First Downs	.....16	.....21
Total Net Yards	.....286	.....420
Rushes-Yards	.....25-91	.....26-152
Passing	.....195	.....268
Punt Returns	.....2-30	.....1-3
Kickoff Returns	.....2-59	.....2-48
Interceptions Ret.	.....2-24	.....1-0
Comp-Att-Int	.....23-37-1	.....18-29-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....2-10	.....4-27
Punts	.....4-44.25	.....3-42.667
Fumbles-Lost	.....2-1	.....2-1
Penalties-Yards	.....3-31	.....5-31
Time Of Possession	.....31:30	.....28:30

PASSING

Las Vegas: O'Connell 11-19-1-104, Ridder 12-18-0-101.
Tampa Bay: Mayfield 18-29-2-295.

RUSHING

Las Vegas: McCormick 15-78, O'Connell 6-6, Bowers 1-1, Ridder 2-3, Abdullah 1-1.
Tampa Bay: White 17-90, Tucker 3-47, Mayfield 2-12, Irving 4-3.

RECEIVING

Las Vegas: Mayer 7-68, Meyers 7-67, Bowers 3-49, McCormick 2-11, Tucker 2-7, Marshall 1-6, Abdullah 1-(minus 3).
Tampa Bay: Evans 4-69, Shepard 4-63, McMillan 4-59, Otton 3-70, White 2-19, Irving 1-15.

Dolphins 32, Jets 26 (OT)

N.Y. JETS	.....	3	10	10	3	0	—26
MIAMI	.....	6	9	0	11	6	—32

FIRST QUARTER

Miami: Achane 2 run (kick failed), 10:24.
N.Y. Jets: FG Carlson 28, 5:19.

SECOND QUARTER

Miami: FG Sanders 39, 14:53.
N.Y. Jets: L.Davis 17 run (Carlson kick), 11:56.
Miami: FG Sanders 24, 4:56.
N.Y. Jets: FG Carlson 30, 4:02.
N.Y. Jets: FG Sanders 37, 49.

THIRD QUARTER

N.Y. Jets: D.Adams 3 pass from Rodgers (Carlson kick), 11:20.
N.Y. Jets: FG Carlson 40, 1:02.

FOURTH QUARTER

Miami: T.Hill 4 pass from Tagovailoa (Waddle pass from Tagovailoa), 9:04.
N.Y. Jets: FG Carlson 42, 5:2.
Miami: FG Sanders 52, 0:07.

FIRST OVERTIME

Miami: J.Smith 10 pass from Tagovailoa, 6:05.
Attendance: 65,787.

	NYJ	MIA
First Downs	.....23	.....28
Total Net Yards	.....402	.....375
Rushes-Yards	.....21-83	.....19-43
Passing	.....319	.....332
Punt Returns	.....2-0	.....1-10
Kickoff Returns	.....1-29	.....4-123
Interceptions Ret.	.....0-0	.....0-0
Comp-Att-Int	.....27-39-0	.....33-47-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....2-20	.....0-0
Punts	.....2-48.0	.....3-49.333
Fumbles-Lost	.....0-0	.....0-0
Penalties-Yards	.....10-83	.....8-49
Time Of Possession	.....31:02	.....32:53

PASSING

N.Y. Jets: Rodgers 27-39-0-339.
Miami: Tagovailoa 33-47-0-332.

RUSHING

N.Y. Jets: Allen 11-43, L.Davis 10-40.
Miami: Achane 14-23, Wright 2-7, T.Hill 1-6, Wilson 1-4, Tagovailoa 1-3.

RECEIVING

N.Y. Jets: D.Adams 9-109, Wilson 7-114, Allen 4-38, Conklin 3-33, L.Davis 3-27, Lazard 1-18.
Miami: T.Hill 10-115, Waddle 9-100, Achane 6-45, J.Smith 3-44, Wright 2-6, J.Hill 1-14, Wilson 1-7, Beckham 1-1.

Saints 14, Giants 11

NEW ORLEANS	.....	7	0	7	0	—14
N.Y. GIANTS	.....	0	3	0	8	—11

FIRST QUARTER

New Orleans: K.Miller 8 run (Grupe kick), 1:19.

SECOND QUARTER

N.Y. Giants: FG Gano 43, 11:20.

THIRD QUARTER

New Orleans: J.Johnson 11 pass from Carr (Grupe kick), 3:40.

FOURTH QUARTER

N.Y. Giants: Tracy 1 run (Nabers pass from Lock), 4:11.
Attendance: 76,143.

	NO	NYG
First Downs	.....18	.....17
Total Net Yards	.....191	.....325
Rushes-Yards	.....33-92	.....23-112
Passing	.....199	.....213
Punt Returns	.....0-0	.....5-46
Kickoff Returns	.....2-49	.....0-0
Interceptions Ret.	.....1-0	.....1-0
Comp-Att-Int	.....20-31-1	.....21-49-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....2-19	.....2-14
Punts	.....7-41.714	.....8-37.375
Fumbles-Lost	.....2-0	.....0-0
Penalties-Yards	.....6-40	.....12-112
Time Of Possession	.....31:49	.....28:11

PASSING

New Orleans: Carr 20-31-1-218.
N.Y. Giants: Lock 21-49-1-227.

RUSHING

New Orleans: Kamara 17-44, Miller 10-32, Carr 2-12, Williams 1-9, Hauser 1-(minus 1).
N.Y. Giants: Lock 5-59, Tracy 16-45, Singletary 2-8.

RECEIVING

New Orleans: Kamara 5-35, Valdes-Scantling 4-51, Johnson 4-49, Moreau 2-40, Williams 2-10, Wilson 1-13, Holker 1-10, Austin 1-5.
N.Y. Giants: Nabers 5-79, Bellinger 5-45, Tracy 5-38, Robinson 4-38, Slayton 2-27.

MISSED FIELD GOALS

New Orleans: Grupe 60, Grupe 53.
N.Y. Giants: Gano 35.

Steelers 27, Browns 14

CLEVELAND	.....	7	0	0	7	—14
PITTSBURGH	.....	3	10	14	0	—27

FIRST QUARTER

Pittsburgh: FG Boswell 30, 9:32.
Cleveland: Jaudy 35 pass from Winston (Hopkins kick), 5:56.

SECOND QUARTER

Pittsburgh: Na.Harris 1 run (Boswell kick), 11:00.
Pittsburgh: FG Boswell 54, 4:21.

THIRD QUARTER

Pittsburgh: Jefferson 10 pass from Ru.Wilson (Boswell kick), 8:41.
Pittsburgh: Freiermuth 20 pass from Ru.Wilson (Boswell kick), 3:56.

FOURTH QUARTER

Cleveland: Njoku 15 pass from Winston (Hopkins kick), 7:25.
Attendance: 66,845.

	CLE	PIT
First Downs	.....19	.....14
Total Net Yards	.....300	.....270
Rushes-Yards	.....25-104	.....35-123
Passing	.....196	.....147
Punt Returns	.....4-44	.....2-20
Kickoff Returns	.....1-56	.....0-0
Interceptions Ret.	.....0-0	.....2-9
Comp-Att-Int	.....24-41-2	.....15-26-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....3-16	.....1-11
Punts	.....5-45.2	.....6-52.333
Fumbles-Lost	.....2-1	.....1-1
Penalties-Yards	.....9-81	.....6-61
Time Of Possession	.....30:00	.....30:00

PASSING

Cleveland: Winston 24-41-2-212.
Pittsburgh: Ru.Wilson 15-26-0-158.

RUSHING

Cleveland: Chubb 11-48, Winston 4-28, J.Ford 10-28.
Pittsburgh: Harris 16-53, Warren 9-47, Ru.Wilson 6-17, Patterson 4-6.

RECEIVING

Cleveland: Njoku 7-42, Jaudy 5-64, Moore 3-34, J.Ford 3-19, Proche 2-18, Strong 2-9, Akins 1-14, Woods 1-12.
Pittsburgh: Freiermuth 3-48, Miller 3-38, Williams 3-36, Warren 2-25, Jefferson 1-10, Austin 1-4, Pruitt 1-(minus 1), Patterson 1-(minus 2).

MISSED FIELD GOALS

Cleveland: Hopkins 43, Hopkins 38.

Jaguars 10, Titans 6

JACKSONVILLE	.....	0	0	0	10	—10
TENNESSEE	.....	3	0	3	0	—6

FIRST QUARTER

Tennessee: FG Folk 46, 8:32.

THIRD QUARTER

Tennessee: FG Folk 39, 4:30.

FOURTH QUARTER

Jacksonville: FG Little 23, 12:09.
Pittsburgh: Bigsby 8 run (C.Little kick), 6:46.
Attendance: 61,644.

	JAC	TEN
First Downs	.....16	.....17
Total Net Yards	.....291	.....272
Rushes-Yards	.....26-71	.....28-126
Passing	.....220	.....146
Punt Returns	.....1-6	.....1-6
Kickoff Returns	.....2-34	.....2-98
Interceptions Ret.	.....0-0	.....2-10
Comp-Att-Int	.....23-31-2	.....19-32-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	.....1-0	.....2-22
Punts	.....4-49.5	.....3-47.667
Fumbles-Lost0-01-0
Penalties-Yards5-394-25
Time Of Possession28:1631:44

PASSING

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

After surges and snubs, the inaugural 12-team playoff is set

CFP FROM D1

No. 11 seed SMU at No. 6 seed Penn State (11-2), No. 12 seed Clemson (10-3) at No. 5 seed Texas (11-2) and, in probably the loudest clash, No. 9 seed Tennessee (10-2) at No. 8 seed Ohio State (10-2).

With the new system gushing with fondness for conference champions, four teams that won title games this past weekend gained first-round byes regardless of ranking: No. 1 seed Oregon (13-0) of the Big Ten with its No. 1 ranking, No. 2 seed Georgia (11-2) of the SEC with its No. 2 ranking, No. 3 seed Boise State (12-1) of the Mountain West with the Group of Five bid and its No. 9 ranking, and No. 4 seed Arizona State (11-2) of the Big 12 with its No. 12 ranking. The presence of Arizona State in the bunch stands as particularly stunning in the wider lens, coming five months after the Sun Devils finished 16th among the 16 teams in the Big 12 preseason poll. Oregon will play the Ohio State-Tennessee winner in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1; Georgia will play the Notre Dame-Indiana winner in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1; Boise State will play the Penn State-SMU winner in the Fiesta Bowl on Dec. 31; and Arizona State will play the Texas-Clemson winner in the Peach Bowl on Jan. 1.

A fifth and bye-less automatic berth went to Clemson, the interloper of the playoff dozen after it squeaked into the ACC championship game only because Miami was upset at Syracuse on Nov. 30. That ACC game between Clemson, ranked No. 17 at kickoff, and SMU, ranked No. 8 at kickoff, became the late-night focus of the committee Saturday.

In that game — in some ways the introduction of SMU to much of the nation — Clemson jumped ahead 14-0, 24-7 and 31-14 before SMU showed the pluck that might have served as its finish-line lunge into the playoff. With drives of 61, 21 and 79 yards, the Mustangs tied the score at 31 with 16 seconds left, only to have Clemson get a 41-yard kickoff return, a 17-yard pass and Nolan Hauser's 56-yard field goal as both time and the pre-playoff season expired.

That last boot was necessary to propel Clemson to its seventh playoff, second behind only Alabama, especially as the Tigers' final ranking tiptoed only to No. 16, precluding any at-large bid. It also left overnight the dilemma between Alabama and SMU, which sent Alabama's strength of schedule (16th) and record vs. the top 25 (3-1) against the like categories of SMU (60th, 0-2). Ultimately, SMU slid only from No. 8 to No. 10, with Alabama holding at No. 11 as slots Nos. 13 through 15 went to Miami (10-2), Mississippi (9-3) and South Carolina (9-3). "It was quite a debate," committee chairman Warde Manuel, the athletic director at Michigan, said on ESPN of Alabama vs. SMU. "We value strength of schedule, and that's why Alabama as a three-loss team is ahead of other teams that have two losses." Those include Arizona State at No. 12, Miami at No. 13 and BYU (10-2) at No. 17.

Where the previous weekend



GRANT HALVERSON/GETTY IMAGES

Nolan Hauser (81) nailed a 56-yard field goal to give Clemson the ACC crown and send the Tigers to their seventh College Football Playoff.



the committee had parsed three-loss Alabama against two-loss Miami and judged Alabama a hairbreadth ahead, now it parsed three-loss Alabama against two-loss SMU and judged SMU a hairbreadth ahead. The deliberations included an old phrase Manuel used Sunday afternoon on a conference call: "total body of work." He noted SMU had lost only to currently ranked teams, while Alabama had lost to two unranked foes: Vanderbilt and Oklahoma, the latter loss both dismal and recent. He noted Miami had lost two of its past three games. And he said, "The difference in terms of how we saw SMU was that going into their [conference championship game], they were undefeated in their conference," a conference in which SMU debuted this season.

In the end, Clemson and its Alabama graduate of a coach, Dabo Swinney, had thwarted the Crimson Tide, a construct that happened on playoff fields twice last decade. It left the Big Ten ahead with four berths, the SEC

next with three, the ACC with two and the Big 12, Mountain West and Notre Dame with one each.

It also left third-year SMU coach Rhett Lashlee saying on ESPN it "probably took my heart rate from about 200 to 160" when reporter Brett McMurphy tweeted the verdict a minute before the announcement (the first leak in the event's 11-season history), and it left Alabama Athletic Director Greg Byrne with take-my-ball-home childishness in a statement: "With this outcome, we will need to [assess] how many P4 non-conference games make sense in the future to put us in the best position to participate in the CFP," with a further sulk, "This is not good for college football." In non-conference play set against eight conference games (where it went 5-3), Alabama played at Wisconsin (5-7) of the Big Ten, at home to Western Kentucky (8-5) and South Florida (6-6) of the Group of Five, and at home to Mercer (11-2) of the Football Championship Subdivision. Before falling to Clemson, SMU played eight con-

ference games (where it went 8-0) and nonconference-wise faced No. 17 BYU and TCU (8-4) of the Big 12, Group of Five Nevada (3-10) and FCS Houston Christian (5-7).

Some onlookers had wondered whether ranking Alabama ahead of SMU would have detonated the value of conference championship games given that SMU would get penalized for playing in one with Alabama validated for not. In fact, the committee's deliberations showed a clear regard for the extra effort involved in those games. In the rankings, which are separate from the seedings, the four losing teams in Power Four title games fell mildly: Texas from No. 2 to No. 3, Penn State from No. 3 to No. 4, SMU from No. 8 to No. 10 and Iowa State from No. 16 to No. 18. Arizona State's rise from No. 15 to No. 12 reflected its status as the only romper among the four winners, given its 45-19 artwork against Iowa State. "We didn't boost people because they were champions or knock people down because they lost; it was how

those games were played," Manuel said, including the fact that Texas went to overtime with Georgia in an occasion of highbrow bruises. Rather than causes for demerits, conference title games became "another data point" that could help even runners-up such as Penn State, Manuel said, as its strong performance against Oregon helped it stay ahead of idle teams with similar résumés, such as fifth-ranked Notre Dame and sixth-ranked Ohio State.

Along with Penn State came a question sure to come up going forward if commissioners meet to tweak the format: the way the byes toward conference champions fiddles with the perceived fairness of the bracket. To take its No. 6 seed to the semifinals, Penn State will have to beat SMU and Boise State. To do the same with its No. 1 seed, Oregon will have to beat Ohio State or Tennessee. "It's not something in the purview of the selection committee," Manuel said. "That would be something for the commissioners and [CFP] Executive Director [Rich] Clark."

JERRY BREWER

Enjoy finally having a real postseason bracket. Don't get attached to this version.

BREWER FROM D1

Big Ten and SEC. Those conferences dominate the bracket, combining for seven bids. The other two Power Four conferences, the ACC and Big 12, combined for three. The final spots went to independent superpower Notre Dame and Mountain West champion Boise State, whose only loss was a well-played 37-34 game at unbeaten No. 1 Oregon.

It's not worth wasting much time debating the teams chosen. The most passionate argument came down to whether SMU deserved an at-large bid over three-loss Alabama, which lost to two 6-6 teams that finished in the bottom five of the SEC, including a 24-3 no-show at Oklahoma two weeks ago. The Crimson Tide had some of the most impressive highs this season, but it played its way onto the bubble. The discourse about the final spot underscored how flawed the second and third tiers were this season. Some of these megaconference teams want to dismiss it as parity, but there appeared to be a lot of middling teams.

A year ago, Alabama made the final four-team playoff over undefeated ACC champion Florida State, and this time, the expanded version took ACC

runner-up SMU over the Crimson Tide. For Alabama, that's how life on the edge works. It's a 50-50 proposition.

The committee's goal wasn't to keep the peace, but that's what choosing SMU did. The Mustangs weren't punished for losing their conference championship game on a last-play 56-yard field goal. The Crimson Tide wasn't elevated after failing to reach the SEC title game. If the latter had happened, it could've triggered the end of title games. Instead, the focus will return to where it should be: determining a more sophisticated way to judge teams when realignment yields an even greater strength-of-schedule imbalance.

It will be a major issue as stakeholders convene to negotiate the next iteration of this tournament. The current format — 12 teams, automatic bids for the five highest-ranked conference champions and byes for the top four conference champs — will remain for next season. Then perhaps everyone will be honest when trying to settle on a new deal.

One remedy that shouldn't be hard to broker: Seed the field the way the NCAA basketball tournament does. Acknowledge that all conferences aren't equal, which would mitigate the foolish



JUSTIN CASTERLINE/GETTY IMAGES

Oregon, the only undefeated team in the College Football Playoff, has a tougher path to the title game than some teams seeded lower.

scenario at the top of the bracket.

On paper, No. 1 seed Oregon has a tougher path to a semifinal than No. 5 Texas and No. 6 Penn State do — and that's despite

getting a bye. The Ducks' quarterfinal opponent in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1 will be No. 8 Ohio State or No. 9 Tennessee.

If you seeded the tournament according to how they're ranked

in the CFP top 25, the Buckeyes and Volunteers would be two spots higher. Both would be hosting home games in the first round. In a tournament with true seeding, Oregon's quarterfinal opponent would be the winner of No. 9 Boise State at No. 8 Indiana.

This is how the field would be rearranged. The byes would go to No. 1 Oregon, No. 2 Georgia, No. 3 Texas and No. 4 Penn State. The rest of the bracket: No. 12 Clemson at No. 5 Notre Dame, No. 11 Arizona State at No. 6 Ohio State, No. 10 SMU at No. 7 Tennessee, and the aforementioned Boise State-Indiana matchup.

It wouldn't be good for Boise State (No. 3 in the actual tournament) and Arizona State (No. 4), the last two byes in the field. But while still messy, a seeded field is a truer reflection of the world that college administrators have created. The four Big Ten and SEC teams that made their title games would sweep the byes in this revision and during most seasons. It's unfortunate, but I'm okay with that. With the imbalance they've created, it should take an extraordinary effort for other teams to get those byes.

This isn't a Power Four sport. It's a Super Two sport. I don't like it. I would prefer balanced

College Football Playoff schedule

FIRST ROUND

Friday, Dec. 20

No. 10 seed Indiana at No. 7 seed Notre Dame, 8 p.m. (ABC/ESPN)

Saturday, Dec. 21

No. 11 seed SMU at No. 6 seed Penn State, noon (TNT)

No. 12 seed Clemson at No. 5 seed Texas, 4 p.m. (TNT)

No. 9 seed Tennessee at No. 8 seed Ohio State, 8 p.m. (ABC/ESPN)

QUARTERFINALS

Tuesday, Dec. 31

Fiesta Bowl (in Glendale, Arizona)
SMU/Penn State winner vs. No. 3 seed Boise State, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Wednesday, Jan. 1

Peach Bowl (in Atlanta)
Clemson/Texas winner vs. No. 4 seed Arizona State, 1 p.m. (ESPN)
Rose Bowl (in Pasadena, California)
Tennessee/Ohio State winner vs. No. 1 seed Oregon, 5 p.m. (ESPN)
Sugar Bowl (in New Orleans)
Indiana/Notre Dame winner vs. No. 2 seed Georgia, 8:45 p.m. (ESPN)

SEMIFINALS

Thursday, Jan. 9

Orange Bowl (in Miami Gardens, Florida)

Quarterfinal winner vs. quarterfinal winner, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Friday, Jan. 10

Cotton Bowl (in Arlington, Texas)
Quarterfinal winner vs. quarterfinal winner, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

FINAL

Monday, Jan. 20

CFP national championship game (in Atlanta)

Orange Bowl winner vs. Cotton Bowl winner, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Final rankings

- No. 1 Oregon (13-0)
- No. 2 Georgia (11-2)
- No. 3 Texas (11-2)
- No. 4 Penn State (11-2)
- No. 5 Notre Dame (11-1)
- No. 6 Ohio State (10-2)
- No. 7 Tennessee (10-2)
- No. 8 Indiana (11-1)
- No. 9 Boise State (12-1)
- No. 10 SMU (11-2)
- No. 11 Alabama (9-3)
- No. 12 Arizona State (11-2)
- No. 13 Miami (10-2)
- No. 14 Mississippi (9-3)
- No. 15 South Carolina (9-3)
- No. 16 Clemson (10-3)
- No. 17 BYU (10-2)
- No. 18 Iowa State (10-3)
- No. 19 Missouri (9-3)
- No. 20 Illinois (9-3)
- No. 21 Syracuse (9-3)
- No. 22 Army (11-1)
- No. 23 Colorado (9-3)
- No. 24 UNLV (10-3)
- No. 25 Memphis (10-2)

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

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Trustees Sale - DC

BuckmanLegal, PLLC
1808 Florida Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-351-6100

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE
REAL PROPERTY**
1111 19th Street NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
Lot 90 in Square 140
(Including all Easements)

By virtue of Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing ("Deed of Trust") recorded among the land records of the District of Columbia, on October 5, 2017 as Instrument #2017110903 in accordance with Public Law 90-566, a default having occurred thereby and after notice recorded among the same land records on November 13, 2024 as Instrument #2024106926 and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustees who were appointed by Deed of Appointment of Substitute Trustees recorded on November 7, 2024 as Instrument #2024104996 will offer to sell at public auction, within the offices of HARVEY WEST AUCTIONEERS, INC. 5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015 202-463-4567 on **December 17, 2024 AT 12:45 PM**, the land and premises situated in the District of Columbia and designated as being Lot 90 in Square 140 and more particularly described in said Deed of Trust.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$1,000,000 by a cashier's check will be required at time of sale. Settlement shall occur within 30 days. There will be no adjustments for real estate taxes, water and sewer charges or fees, special assessments, District of Columbia fines or liens, etc. Purchaser pays interest on the purchase price at rate 8.685 percent from the day of sale to the day of settlement. The Purchaser assumes all risks of loss following the sale. Purchaser pays all conveyance fees, recordation tax, transfer tax, outstanding taxes, special assessments, District of Columbia fines or liens, water bills, water and sewer liens. Purchaser purchases the Property subject to all leases, superior liens or loans, etc. The property is sold in "AS IS, WHERE IS CONDITION AND SUBJECT TO ALL FAULTS", as of the day and time of sale including any tenant or tenancy. Pursuant to the terms of the Deed of Trust, all personal property of the Borrower located at or about the Property shall be subject to and part of the public auction described above. Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the holder of the Note, or their respective agents, successors, and assigns, make any representations or warranties with respect to the Title, the Property, the Zoning Classification, and the existence of a Certificate of Occupancy or Business License. If the Substitute Trustees determine, in their sole and absolute discretion, that the final bid is not commensurate with the value of the Property, they may reject the bid and withdraw the Property from sale. Should the Substitute Trustees be unable to convey good and marketable title, then, in that event, the Substitute Trustees and Purchaser mutually agree that the Purchaser's sole remedy in law or equity shall be the refund of the deposit to the Purchaser. The Substitute Trustees do not guarantee title or the Purchaser's ability to obtain Title Insurance or financing. Upon refund of the deposit, the sale shall be void and of no effect. The Substitute Trustees, their attorneys and/or the note holder shall not be liable individually or otherwise for any matters relating to this sale, title and/or the property. The defaulting Purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profits resulting from any resale of the Property. The Substitute Trustees will not deliver possession of the Property to the successful bidder, who shall be solely responsible for obtaining physical possession of the Property. The original Affidavit of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure is recorded among the Land Records of the District of Columbia on November 14, 2024 as Instrument Number 2024107203. Additional terms and conditions will be announced at the time of the sale. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

Steven M. Buckman
Jason S. Guetzkow
Substitute Trustees



Dec 4,6,9,11,13 2024 0012477520

1447 Autos Wanted

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2012 Perfect vehicle for anybody
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side doors electronically automa-
ted, and automated trunk. routine
maintenance since we've owned
the vehicle in 2015. Only one pre-
vious owner prior to us. Vehicle has
only been for personal use by us
and previous owner.

815 Legal Notices

Authorization is being request-
ed from the State's Attorney's
Office for Montgomery County,
Maryland to remove the remains
of David Robert Zeller, currently
interred in Gate of Heaven Cem-
etery, Silver Spring, Maryland,
Section 9, Lot 879, Site 2, which
will be then cremated, then in-
urned at Emmanuel Lutheran
Church Columbarium. This re-
location is being made to inter
the deceased with his parents
Robert and Donna Zeller. This
request is being made by two
siblings, Mary Foringer and
Nancy Elwood. Any interested
party should contact Robert A.
Pumphrey Funeral Home/Rock-
ville, Inc. at 301-762-3939 before
January 1, 2025.

**OPTUM WOMEN'S AND
CHILDREN'S HEALTH, LLC
STATEMENT OF
UNCOMPENSATED CARE**

Under District of Columbia law,
Optum Women's and Children's
Health, LLC (Optum) is obligat-
ed to provide uncompensated care
to eligible persons. Optum
has satisfied all outstanding un-
compensated care obligations
from previous reporting periods.
In fiscal years 2024 and 2025,
Provider will provide services at
no or a reduced charge to all pa-
tients requesting such services
but who are unable to pay.

KAREN A. BUSHELL
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Dec 9, 16, 23 2024 0012479121

Trustees Sale - DC

BuckmanLegal, PLLC
1808 Florida Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-351-6100

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE
REAL PROPERTY**
1341 G Street NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
Lot 60 in Square 252
(Including all Easements)

By virtue of Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing ("Deed of Trust") recorded among the land records of the District of Columbia, on August 24, 2017 as Instrument #2017094222 in accordance with Public Law 90-566, a default having occurred thereby and after notice recorded among the same land records on November 13, 2024 as Instrument #2024106924 and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustees who were appointed by Deed of Appointment of Substitute Trustees recorded on October 17, 2024 as Instrument #2024097631 will offer to sell at public auction, within the offices of HARVEY WEST AUCTIONEERS, INC. 5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015 202-463-4567 on **December 17, 2024 AT 12:15 PM**, the land and premises situated in the District of Columbia and designated as being Lot 60 in Square 252 and more particularly described in said Deed of Trust.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$1,000,000 by a cashier's check will be required at time of sale. Settlement shall occur within 30 days. There will be no adjustments for real estate taxes, water and sewer charges or fees, special assessments, District of Columbia fines or liens, etc. Purchaser pays interest on the purchase price at rate 8.685 percent from the day of sale to the day of settlement. The Purchaser assumes all risks of loss following the sale. Purchaser pays all conveyance fees, recordation tax, transfer tax, outstanding taxes, special assessments, District of Columbia fines or liens, water bills, water and sewer liens. Purchaser purchases the Property subject to all leases, superior liens or loans, etc. The property is sold in "AS IS, WHERE IS CONDITION AND SUBJECT TO ALL FAULTS", as of the day and time of sale including any tenant or tenancy. Pursuant to the terms of the Deed of Trust, all personal property of the Borrower located at or about the Property shall be subject to and part of the public auction described above. Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the holder of the Note, or their respective agents, successors, and assigns, make any representations or warranties with respect to the Title, the Property, the Zoning Classification, and the existence of a Certificate of Occupancy or Business License. If the Substitute Trustees determine, in their sole and absolute discretion, that the final bid is not commensurate with the value of the Property, they may reject the bid and withdraw the Property from sale. Should the Substitute Trustees be unable to convey good and marketable title, then, in that event, the Substitute Trustees and Purchaser mutually agree that the Purchaser's sole remedy in law or equity shall be the refund of the deposit to the Purchaser. The Substitute Trustees do not guarantee title or the Purchaser's ability to obtain Title Insurance or financing. Upon refund of the deposit, the sale shall be void and of no effect. The Substitute Trustees, their attorneys and/or the note holder shall not be liable individually or otherwise for any matters relating to this sale, title and/or the property. The defaulting Purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profits resulting from any resale of the Property. The Substitute Trustees will not deliver possession of the Property to the successful bidder, who shall be solely responsible for obtaining physical possession of the Property. The original Affidavit of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure is recorded among the Land Records of the District of Columbia on October 18, 2024 as Instrument Number 2024098130. Additional terms and conditions will be announced at the time of the sale. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

Steven M. Buckman
Jason S. Guetzkow
Substitute Trustees



Dec 4,6,9,11,13 2024 0012477501

850 Montgomery County

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
MARYLAND**

ANDREW J. BRENNER, et. al.
4003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101
Rockville, MD 20852
Substitute Trustees/Plaintiffs ,
VS.
**JOSEPH MARSHALL
WASHINGTON
DOROTHY M. WASHINGTON
(DECEASED)
15325 Holly Grove Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905
Defendant(s).**

Case No. C-15-CV-24-003051

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given this **21 day of November 2024**, by the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland, that the sale of the property mentioned in these proceedings and de-
scribed as **15325 Holly Grove Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905**, made and reserved by the sub-
stitute Trustee, will be RATIFIED AND CONFIRMED, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **24 day of December, 2024**, provided a copy of this NOTICE be inserted in some daily newspaper printed in said County, once in each of three successive weeks before the **24 day of December, 2024**. The report states the amount of the sale to be **\$600,000.00**.

KAREN A. BUSHELL
Clerk, Circuit Court for
Montgomery County, Maryland
BWW#MD-330327
Dec 2, 9, 16 2024 001247574

850 Montgomery County

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
MARYLAND**

Brennan Ferguson, et al.
Substitute Trustees
Plaintiffs,
V.
Estate of Jose Perdomo Morel,
Defendant.

Case No. C-15-CV-24-000456

NOTICE
Notice is hereby issued this **6 day of December, 2024**, that the sale of the property in this case, **3832 Bel Pre Road, #10, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906**, reported by Brennan Ferguson, John C. Hanftan, Jeremy B. Wilkins, Amanda Driscoll, Robert Oliveri, and Paul Heilmuller, Sub-
stitute Trustees, be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary be shown on or before the **6th day of January, 2025**. The report states the amount of sale to be **\$126,000.00**.

KAREN A. BUSHELL
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Dec 9, 16, 23 2024 0012479121

Trustees Sale - DC

LTX LAW GROUP
1966 GREENSPRING DRIVE, SUITE LL2
LUTHERVILLE, MD 21093
410-238-2840

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE
REAL PROPERTY**
3208 POPE STREET, SE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20020

By virtue of a certain Purchase Money Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Fixture Filing and Security Agreement (Construction) from 3208 GSD LLC, a District of Columbia limited liability company dated December 23, 2022, and duly recorded December 29, 2022 as Instrument No. 2022126669 and subsequently assigned by Assignment of Mortgage recorded February 27, 2023 as Instrument No. 2023016021 (collectively the "Deed of Trust") among the Land Records of the District of Columbia (the "Land Records"), which Deed of Trust also constitutes a security agreement and creates a security interest in all fixtures described in the Deed of Trust, a default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness secured thereby and the covenants contained therein, and at the request of the party secured thereby (the "Noteholder"), and in accordance with Public Law 90-566 and following mailing of the Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit recorded among the Land Records on November 6, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024104404 and the recordation of the Affidavit of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure recorded among the Land Records on March 27, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024028208 the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell, at public auction, within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024 AT 11:00 AM

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows:

Lot numbered Eighty (80) in Square numbered Fifty-five Hundred Ten (5510) in a subdivision made by Lillian T. Stone and Maurice Samuels, as per plat recorded in Liber 146 at folio 21 in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia.

Property Address: 3208 Pope Street SE, Washington, DC 20020 Tax Parcel ID No: SSL 5510-0000-0080

TOGETHER WITH any and all buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances now erected on the above-described land, including, without limitation, all equipment, apparatus, machinery and fixtures of any kind or character forming a part of said buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances, and any furniture, furnishings, equipment, machinery and other personal property owned and located in, upon or about the above-described land and any buildings thereon all as more particularly described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust (the "Property"). The "Property" does not include any property owned by any tenants at the Property.

TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. The Property will be offered as an entirety only. The bid that yields the highest price for the Property will be accepted by the Substitute Trustees (unless the sale is postponed or cancelled) and all bids will be provisional until acceptance. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Substitute Trustees absolutely reserve the right to postpone the sale and/or cancel the sale at any time until the auctioneer announces that the Property is "sold" and the Substitute Trustees receive the deposit in the required amount and form. A deposit in the amount of \$25,000.00 will be required at the time of sale as a condition to bidding. Such deposit must be by cashier's check or certified check or in such other form as the Substitute Trustees may determine in their sole discretion, which check shall be payable to "Mark H. Wittstadt or Kevin Hildebeidel, Substitute Trustees." The deposit must be increased to 10% of the purchase price within 2 business days after consummation of the sale and delivered to the Substitute Trustees in the same form of funds as the initial deposit. The Noteholder secured by the Deed of Trust (or any related party) shall be exempted by the Substitute Trustees from submitting any bidding deposit. The Substitute Trustees will, as a condition of the sale, require all potential bidders except the Noteholder to show their deposit before any bidding begins. The retained deposit of the successful purchaser shall be applied, without interest, to the successful purchaser's credit at settlement; provided, however, that in the event the successful purchaser does not consummate the purchase in accordance with the terms of sale as herein provided, such deposit, will be forfeited, and after payment of all expenses and commissions due in connection with the defaulted sale, the balance shall be applied to the indebtedness due under the terms of the note and Deed of Trust. The terms of sale must be complied with, and settlement consummated thereon within 25 days from the day of sale unless extended at the sole discretion of the Substitute Trustees. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.** The balance of the purchase price over and above the retained deposit, with interest thereon at the default rate of 18% per annum being charged from the date of sale through the date of receipt of the balance of the purchase price, will be due at settlement by bank wire transfer; and if not so paid, the Substitute Trustees as stated above will forfeit the deposit and reserves the right to resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser, after such advertisement and on such terms as the Substitute Trustees may deem proper, and to avail himself and the Noteholder of any legal or equitable rights against the defaulting purchaser.

The Property is sold subject to the rights, if any, of parties in possession, if such rights have priority over the Deed of Trust or have been granted non-disturbance or similar rights, and to any and all covenants, conditions, restrictions, easements, rights of way and limitations of record. The Property will be sold "WHERE IS" and in "AS IS" condition without any warranty as to condition, express or implied, and without any representation or warranty as to the accuracy of the information furnished to prospective bidders by the Substitute Trustees or any other party, if any, and without any other representations or warranty of any nature. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Property will be sold without representation or warranty as to (i) title to the Property, (ii) the nature, condition, structural integrity, or fitness for a particular use of any improvements, fixtures or personal property included within the Property, (iii) the environmental condition of the Property or the compliance of the Property with federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning the presence or disposal of hazardous substances, (iv) compliance of the Property with the Americans with Disabilities Act or any similar law, (v) compliance of the Property with any zoning laws or ordinances and any and all applicable safety codes, or (vi) compliance with any tenants' rights or similar laws, and acceptance of the Deed to the Property by the successful purchaser shall constitute a waiver of any claims against the Substitute Trustees or the Noteholder concerning any of the foregoing matters. The successful purchaser recognizes that any investigation, examination, or inspection of the Property is within the control of the owner or other parties in possession of the Property and not within the control of the Substitute Trustees or the Noteholder.

Conveyance shall be by Substitute Trustees' Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied. The risk of loss or damage by fire or other casualty to the Property from and after the time of sale shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser. The Property shall be sold subject to all taxes, ground rents, public charges, assessments, sewer, water, drainage, and other public improvements, if any, whether assessments have been levied or not. The Noteholder and Substitute Trustees assume no liability for fuel, gas, electricity, utilities, and other operating charges accrued before or after the sale and all such charges shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser from the date of sale. All costs incident to the settlement and conveyancing including, without limitation, examination of title, conveyancing, all recordation taxes and charges, all transfer taxes and charges, title insurance premiums, notary fees, settlement fees and all other costs incident to settlement shall be at the cost of the successful purchaser. The District of Columbia Government may impose transfer and recordation taxes on any assignment of the successful bid prior to recordation of the Substitute Trustees' Deed. The successful purchaser shall be solely liable for payment of such additional transfer and recordation taxes, if any. If the Substitute Trustees cannot convey title, the purchaser's sole remedy is a return of deposit. Further particulars may be announced at the time of sale.

Mark H. Wittstadt
Kevin Hildebeidel
Substitute Trustees



4910 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Suite 100
Washington, DC 20016 • 202.364.0306
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 9, 11, 13, 16, 18 2024 0012476438

Trustees Sale - DC

**TRUSTEE'S SALE
Of Valuable Real Estate located in the
District of Columbia
known as
1261 Gallatin Street NE, Washington, DC 20017**

By virtue of a certain Commercial Deed of Trust, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing duly recorded in the Land Records of the District of Columbia on May 26, 2022, as Instrument No. 2022058155 (the "Deed of Trust") and in accordance with the Mediation Certificate recorded November 7, 2024 and the Notice of Intention to Foreclose dated and recorded November 7, 2024 pursuant to D.C. Code § 42-815, and at the request of the party secured by the Deed of Trust, the Substitute Trustee having been substituted for the trustee(s) named in said Deed of Trust, will sell, at public auction, at the office of HARVEY WEST AUCTIONEERS INC., 5335 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015, on **December 12, 2024, at 10:30 A.M.**, some or all of the property described in said Deed of Trust, including certain land and premises, situate in the District of Columbia, and being now known for purposes of assessment and taxation as Lot 0072, Square 3910, and more particularly described as follows:

Lot numbered Seventy-two (72) in Square numbered Thirty-nine Hundred and Ten (3910) in the subdivision made by Ian Woodner, as per plat recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Liber 127 at folio 32, with improvements thereon known as 1261 Gallatin Street, N. E.

Subject to building restriction line as established and shown on plats recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Liber 126 at folios 99 and 123 and to the agreement as shown on said plats not to build upon the area between the building restriction lines and the lines of the street, except as permitted under the building regulations of the District of Columbia, and further that the area between the building restriction lines of the street shall be subject to all the provisions and conditions as expressed in the Act of Congress approved May 31st, 1900 (31 Statutes, pages 248 and 249). Subject to declaration, building restrictions and covenants of record.

Property Address: 1261 Gallatin Street NE, Washington, DC 20017 (the "Property")
TAX ID: Square 3910, Lot 0072

Terms of Sale

The Property will be sold "WHERE IS" and in "AS IS" condition and the purchaser shall assume the risk of loss or damage to the property after the time of the foreclosure sale. Neither the Trustee, the party secured by the Deed of Trust, the auctioneer, nor any of their respective agents, successors or assigns (collectively, the "Selling Parties") make any representation or warranties, express or implied, with respect to the Property, or any tenancies or parties in possession, including, without limitation, the description, use, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, habitability, marketability, or insurability (hazard or title), subdivision, zoning, environmental condition, compliance with building codes or other laws (such as Americans with Disabilities Act), ordinances or regulations, fitness for a particular purpose, or merchantability of all or any part of the Property. The purchaser waives and releases the Selling Parties from any and all claims the purchaser or the purchaser's successors or assigns may have now or may have in the future relating to the sale or the condition of the Property. The Property will be sold subject to rights of parties in possession, any building or housing violations, easements, agreements, restrictions, terms, rights of way, covenants, conditions, rights of redemption, other encumbrances, statutes, if any, affecting the Property, whether or not of record and all statutes, ordinances or court rules, including any lien for unpaid condominium assessments pursuant to D.C. Code § 42-1903.13, if applicable, to the extent such things have priority over the Deed of Trust and to the extent such things survive the foreclosure sale. The Property is also sold subject to a post-sale audit of the status of the loan. All interested bidders are specifically encouraged to review all federal, state and local statutes, ordinances, and court rules concerning the Property and to contact the appropriate governmental authorities prior to the sale date regarding the Property, including without limitation, encumbrances, liens, violations, permitted uses and the requirements, if any, for registration, obtaining possession, cure of violations, construction, completion, or development. The Trustee will not deliver possession to the purchaser, who shall be solely responsible for obtaining possession of the property.

A deposit of the lesser of \$54,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the winning bid amount will be required at the time of sale, such deposit to be in the form of a certified check or cashier's check, or in such other form as the Trustee may determine, in his sole discretion. Whenever the purchaser is also the party secured by the said Deed of Trust, payment of the required deposit and purchase price is made by crediting the amount thereof to the indebtedness. The balance in cash or immediately available funds, with interest at nine and seventy-five hundredths per centum (9.75%) per annum from the date of sale to the date of settlement or the balance of the proceeds are received by the Trustee, whichever is later, shall be paid within thirty (30) days after the date of sale. There will be no abatement of interest due from the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The party secured by the Deed of Trust shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER.**

Real property taxes, water charges, condominium fees and/or homeowner association dues, all public charges/assessments payable on an annual basis, including sanitary and/or metropolitan district charges, if applicable, to be adjusted for the current year to date of sale and assumed thereafter by the purchaser. All costs incident to the settlement and conveyancing including, without limitation, examination of title, conveyancing, all recordation taxes and charges, all transfer taxes and charges, title insurance premiums, notary fees, settlement fees and all other costs incident to settlement shall be at the cost of the successful purchaser. Conveyance of the Property shall be by Trustee's Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied, specifically including marketability or insurability (hazard or title), unless otherwise required by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust. In the event the Trustee is unable for any reason to convey title, the purchaser's sole remedy at law or in equity shall be to request and receive a return of the deposit. Upon return of the deposit, this sale shall be void and of no effect and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Trustee.

Compliance with terms of sale shall be made within thirty (30) days after the date of sale or the deposit shall be forfeited. In the event of a default, all expenses of this sale (including attorneys' fees and trustee's commission) shall be charged against and paid out of the forfeited deposit, and any remaining balance of the forfeited deposit shall be applied against the outstanding balance of the debt secured by the Deed of Trust, as determined by the Trustee, unless expressly prohibited by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust. The Trustee may then re-advertise and resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser (such risk and cost shall include any attorneys' fees or costs in connection with all litigation, including appeals, involving the Property or the proceeds of a resale; or contesting the Selling Parties' right to conduct a resale; or seeking to invalidate this sale unless expressly prohibited by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust; and, if the defaulting purchaser has received any 'rent' from any occupant or tenant of the Property such amount received shall be promptly delivered to the Trustee; or, without reselling the Property, the Trustee may avail himself of any legal or equitable remedies against the defaulting purchaser). In the event of a resale, the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to receive the surplus, if any, even if such surplus results from improvements to the Property by said defaulting purchaser. This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any oral announcements during the conduct of the sale, constitutes the entire terms upon which the property shall be offered for sale.

Benjamin P. Smith, Trustee

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Shulman Rogers, P.A.
12503 Park Potomac Avenue, 6th Floor
Potomac, MD 20854
(301) 230-5241



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	<p>HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP 800 17TH STREET N.W., SUITE 1100 WASHINGTON, DC 20006 PHONE 202.469.5178</p> <p>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING WITH LOWER-LEVEL RETAIL</p> <p>1800 M STREET, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20036</p>						
<p>Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust, Assignment of Rents and Leases, Collateral Assignment of Property Agreements, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing from 1800 M Street Owner, LP and 1800 M Street TRS, LP, each a Delaware limited partnership ("Borrower"), dated as of December 8, 2021, and recorded with the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds ("Land Records") as Instrument No. 2021161852, assigned to 1800 M Property Owner LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("Assignee") by Assignment and Assumption of Interest Under Deed of Trust, Assignment of Rents and Leases, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing recorded in the Land Records on November 15, 2024 as Instrument No. 2024107581 (collectively, the "Deed of Trust"), and those certain Notices of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property, which were recorded in the Land Records on November 19, 2024 as Instrument Nos.: 2024108568 and 2024108570 pursuant to Sections 42-815 and 42-818 of the D.C. Code, the holder of the indebtedness secured thereby (the "Beneficiary"), having appointed June L. Marshall and Philip T. Evans as Substitute Trustees (collectively, the "Substitute Trustees") by instrument duly executed, acknowledged and recorded among the Land Records as Instrument No.: 2024107582, default having occurred under the terms of said Deed of Trust and at the request of the Beneficiary, the undersigned Substitute Trustees, either of whom may act, will offer the following property for sale at Public Auction:</p> <p>Sale to be held at the Offices of Alex Cooper Auctioneers, Inc. 4910 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20016 On Friday, December 20, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.</p>							
<p>PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (the "Real Estate"):</p> <p>All of that certain lot or parcel of land situated, lying and being in the District of Columbia, and being more particularly described as follows: Parcel I: Lot 95 in Square 140 in a subdivision made by Knickerbocker Properties, Inc. VII, as per plat recorded in Liber 185 at folio 6 in the Office of Surveyor of the District of Columbia. Parcel II: TOGETHER WITH the benefits of that certain Easement Agreement, by and between Square 140 Associates, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, Gustave Ring, et al, dated October 18, 1982, and recorded December 16, 1982 as Instrument No. 32590. Parcel III: TOGETHER WITH the benefits of that certain Easement Agreement, by and between Square 140 Associates, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, 1850 M Limited Partnership, et al, dated October 18, 1982, and recorded December 16, 1982 as Instrument No. 32591.</p> <p>FIXTURES, TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE PROPERTY</p> <p>Pursuant to the Deed of Trust, Beneficiary holds a security interest and lien on all of the tangible and intangible assets of Borrower and will sell at public auction on the same date and at the same time and place, all of the personally, fixtures, plans and property agreements of Borrower located on or about or related to the Real Estate that is subject to the security interest and lien of Beneficiary and not owned by any third party and excepting therefrom any cash or cash accounts or the like in the possession of Beneficiary or to which Beneficiary has rights or holds a security interest (such cash or cash accounts or the like to remain the property of Beneficiary).</p> <p>TOGETHER WITH any and all buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances now erected on the Real Estate, including, without limitation, all equipment, apparatus, machinery and fixtures of any kind or character forming a part of said buildings, structures, improvements or appurtenances and located in, upon or about the Real Estate and any buildings thereon, all as more particularly described in the Deed of Trust (collectively with the Real Estate, the "Property"). The "Property" does not include any property owned by any tenants at the Property.</p> <p>CONDITIONS OF SALE:</p> <p>The Property will be sold in an "AS IS/WHERE IS" condition without any warranty as to condition, express or implied, and without any representation or warranty as to the accuracy of the information furnished to prospective bidders by the Substitute Trustees or any other party, if any, and without any other representations or warranty of any nature. In particular, neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Beneficiary make any representation or warranty with respect to: (1) title to the Property; (2) the existence, nonexistence, or continued existence, validity, scope or nature of any zoning, land use, development, site plans, occupancy or other governmental permits or approvals; (3) fitness for any particular purpose or use; (4) flood zone designations; (5) compliance with any and all zoning or building laws, regulations and ordinances; (6) the fitness for habitation or the structural integrity or condition of any buildings or improvements; (7) ingress, egress or access to the Property or any portion thereof, whether vehicular, pedestrian or otherwise; (8) the rights of parties in possession, if any, or the existence, validity, terms, conditions or other matters with respect to any lease of all or any portion of the Property; (9) the existence of any security deposits or rental payments; (10) the environmental condition of the Property or the compliance of the Property with federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning the presence or disposal of hazardous substances; (11) compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or any similar law; or (12) the condition of the Property, either patent or latent, of any nature whatsoever.</p> <p>Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Beneficiary shall have any obligation to obtain possession of the Property. It shall be the purchaser's obligation, at the purchaser's sole cost, to obtain possession of the Property.</p> <p>Conveyance shall be by Substitute Trustees' Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied. RISK OF LOSS, INSURABLE OR OTHERWISE, SHALL PASS TO THE PURCHASER IMMEDIATELY AND AUTOMATICALLY AT THE TIME OF SALE. Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Beneficiary shall have any obligation to obtain or maintain any insurance coverage with respect to the Property.</p> <p>The Property shall be sold subject to: (1) the rights of any tenant in possession of all or any portion of the Property under its lease if such rights have priority over the Deed of Trust; (2) any easements, restrictions, declarations, site plans, and restrictive covenants of record affecting the same, including, but not limited to any and all condominium restrictions, declarations, bylaws and plats and amendments thereto; (3) any and all disclosures and conditions on any plats of record affecting all or any portion of the Property; (4) any encroachments, overlaps, boundary line disputes and other matters which could be disclosed by an accurate survey of the Property; (5) any matters which would be disclosed by a physical inspection of the Property; (6) any and all environmental conditions, problems and/or violations, if any, that may exist on, affect or relate to the Property or any buildings or improvements thereon; (7) any and all zoning laws, regulations, PUD overlays, and ordinances or governmental permits or approvals affecting the Property (including without limitation any housing or building code violations, the existence of any lead paint, asbestos or radon or any other hazardous or toxic substances); and (8) all unfunded lease commissions, if any, and all unfunded lease and capital improvement costs, if any, all of which shall be the sole responsibility of the successful purchaser. The successful purchaser waives and releases the Substitute Trustees and the Beneficiary and each of their respective affiliates, agents, successors and assigns from any and all claims the successful purchaser may now have or may have in the future whatsoever relating to all or any portion of the Property, including without limitation: (1) any environmental condition or violation affecting all or any portion of the Property; (2) any existing or future building or zoning code problems or violations, and (3) the accuracy or validity of any information described herein. Acceptance of the Substitute Trustees deed to the Property by the successful purchaser shall constitute a waiver of any and all claims against the Substitute Trustees or Beneficiary concerning any of the foregoing matters. Certain occupancy leases to the United States Government, or agencies thereof, may require the consent of the tenant to the assumption of such leases, and compliance with applicable law concerning the assignment of rights under Government contracts.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENTS:</p> <p>The Property is believed to be improved by a ten (10) story commercial office building with lower-level retail.</p> <p>TERMS OF SALE:</p> <p>ALL CASH. This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any oral announcements during the conduct of the sale, constitutes the Substitute Trustees' entire terms upon which the Property shall be offered for sale, sold or purchased. The Substitute Trustees reserve the unqualified right to postpone the sale, withdraw the Property from sale, in whole or in part, at any time before sale or to release the Property, in whole or in part, from the Deed of Trust at any time before the sale. If the Substitute Trustees determine in their sole discretion that the final bid is not commensurate with the value of the Property, they may reject the bid and withdraw the Property from sale. If any dispute arises among the bidders, the Substitute Trustees shall have the sole and final discretion either to determine the successful bidder or to reoffer and resell the Property. A deposit in the amount of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) will be required at the time and place of sale as a condition to bidding. Such deposit must be by cashier's check or certified check or in such other form as the Substitute Trustees may determine in their sole discretion, which check shall be payable to "June L. Marshall, Trustee, and Philip T. Evans, Trustee." The deposit must be increased to 5% of the purchase price within 2 business days after the foreclosure sale and delivered to the Substitute Trustees in the same form of funds as the initial deposit; provided, however, that the Substitute Trustees may require that the successful purchaser wire transfer the entire amount of the deposit in escrow to a title insurance company approved by the Substitute Trustees, pursuant to an escrow agreement in form satisfactory to the Substitute Trustees. The Beneficiary, or its nominee or its assignee, shall be exempted by the Substitute Trustees from submitting any bidding deposit. In the event the successful purchaser fails to deliver the additional deposit as and when required, the initial deposit will be forfeited. The Substitute Trustees will, as a condition of the sale, require all potential bidders except the Beneficiary to show their deposit before any bidding begins. The retained deposit of the successful purchaser shall be applied, without interest, to the successful purchaser's credit at settlement; provided, however, that in the event the successful purchaser does not consummate the purchase in accordance with the terms of sale as herein provided, such deposit, at the option of the Substitute Trustees, will be forfeited. The successful purchaser shall settle and comply with the sale terms within thirty (30) days after date of sale unless said period is extended by the Substitute Trustees at the sole discretion of the Substitute Trustees. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. The balance of the purchase price over and above the retained deposit, with interest thereon at the interest rate then being charged under the notes secured by the Deed of Trust on the unpaid purchase money from the date of sale to date of settlement (as hereinafter specified), will be due at settlement by bank wire transfer, and if not so paid, the Substitute Trustees reserve the right to retain the deposit and resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser, after such advertisement and on such terms as the Substitute Trustees may deem proper, and to avail themselves and the Beneficiary of any legal or equitable rights against the defaulting purchaser. The purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profit resulting from any resale of all or any portion of the Property.</p> <p>All outstanding real property taxes shall be the sole responsibility of the successful purchaser. All other taxes and assessments, including, but not limited to, ground rents, other public charges, sewer charges, water rents, regular and special assessments and utilities payable on an annual or any other basis shall be adjusted as of the date of the foreclosure sale and paid by the successful purchaser at settlement. The successful purchaser shall pay in full all costs incident to the settlement and conveyancing including, without limitation, (i) examination of title and conveyancing charges, (ii) all recordation taxes, fees and charges, (iii) all transfer taxes, fees and charges, (iv) title insurance premiums, if any, (v) notary fees, (vi) settlement and escrow fees, and (vii) all other fees, costs and charges incident to settlement. Settlement will be handled by Chicago Title Insurance Company in Washington, DC.</p> <p>Neither the Substitute Trustees, the Auctioneer or the Beneficiary or its affiliates are liable individually or otherwise for any matter relating to the sale or to the Property, except that if title to the Property cannot be transferred in accordance with the terms hereof for any reason, such liability is limited solely to the return of the purchaser's deposit. There shall be no other rights or remedies against the Substitute Trustees, the Auctioneer and/or the Beneficiary or any of their respective affiliates, agents, successors and assigns, either in law or equity.</p> <p>NOTE: The material contained herein describing the Property has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable; however, no express or implied warranty is made as to the accuracy of any description. All dimensions or areas referred to herein are approximate.</p> <p>For further information regarding the sale and the Property, please contact the offices or visit the website of the Auctioneer.</p> <p>JUNE L. MARSHALL PHILIP T. EVANS, Substitute Trustees</p> <p>ALEX COOPER <i>auctioneers</i></p> <p>4910 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Suite 100 Washington, DC 20016 • 202.364.0306 www.alexcooper.com</p>							
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840	Trustees Sale - DC	840	Trustees Sale - DC
	<p>McCabe, Weisberg & Conway, LLC 312 Marshall Avenue, Suite 800 Laurel, MD 20707 www.mwc-law.com</p> <p>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF APARTMENT BUILDING BELIEVED TO CONTAIN 6 UNITS</p> <p>"ANACOSTIA NEIGHBORHOOD" known as 1521 V STREET, SE WASHINGTON, DC 20020</p>		
<p>Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, and Security Agreement dated July 21, 2023 from 1521 V ST SE LLC, a District of Columbia limited liability company ("Borrower"), to the trustees named therein and recorded on July 26, 2023 among the records of the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia (the "Records") as Document No. 2023063554 (the "Deed of Trust"), the holder of the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust ("Noteholder") having subsequently appointed Laura H.G. O'Sullivan, Michael T. Cantrell, as Substitute Trustees ("Trustees") in the place of the original trustees under the Deed of Trust by a Deed of Appointment of Substitute Trustees recorded on November 1, 2024 as Document No. 2024103159 among the Records, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust and at the request of the Noteholder, and pursuant to a Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit filed on November 19, 2024 as Document No. 2024108559 among the Records in accordance with D.C. Code § 42-815 and the applicable laws of the District of Columbia, the Trustees will offer for sale to the highest qualified bidder at a public auction within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on</p> <p>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024 at 1:35 P.M.</p>			
<p>the following described land and premises (the "Land"):</p> <p>Lot numbered Nine Hundred Seven (907), in Square numbered Fifty Seven Seventy Nine (5779), in the subdivision made by Edmond V. Lawrence and Mary A. Lawrence, as per plat recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Liber 47 at Folio 7.</p> <p>NOTE: At the date hereof the above described land is designated on the Records of the Assessor of the District of Columbia for assessment and taxation purposes as Lot 907 in Square 5779.</p> <p>The Improvements comprise an apartment building believed to contain a total of six (6) apartment units. It is located in the Anacostia neighborhood.</p> <p>TERMS OF SALE</p> <p>Summary terms of sale: A deposit in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00), payable by certified or cashier's check, will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale. Within two (2) business days after the date of the sale, the purchaser of the Property shall deliver a certified or cashier's check to the Trustees to increase the purchaser's deposit to an amount that is equal to ten percent (10%) of the full amount bid by such purchaser at the sale. The balance of the purchase price, together with interest thereon at the default rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date of settlement, shall be due from the purchaser by wire transfer or certified check within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of sale, unless such closing deadline is extended in writing by the Trustees. Time is of the essence. If settlement is delayed for any reason, there shall be no abatement of interest on the unpaid purchase price. Settlement shall be held at such place as may be agreed to by the Trustees. In the event the Noteholder, or an affiliate or subsidiary thereof, is the successful bidder at the sale, such party will not be required to make a deposit or to pay interest on the unpaid purchase money. The Trustees reserve the right to withdraw the Property from sale, to reject any and all bids at the sale, and to extend the time for settlement, at their discretion.</p> <p>The Property is being sold in an "AS IS" condition and without any warranties or representations of any kind, either express or implied, as to the value, nature, condition, use or description of the Property or the improvements thereon. The Property is also being sold subject to: (a) any existing building and zoning code violations; (b) any environmental problems and conditions, lead paint conditions, encroachments and/or violations which may exist on or with respect to the Property; (c) any senior liens, encumbrances, easements, conditions, restrictions, agreements, declarations and covenants of record which are not extinguished as a matter of law by the foreclosure sale; (d) any rights of redemption; and (e) such state of facts that an accurate survey or physical inspection of the Property might disclose, if any. The purchaser is responsible for conducting its own due diligence regarding the Property.</p> <p>All senior liens, real estate taxes, water charges and municipal charges and assessments owed against the Property which are not extinguished as a matter of law by the foreclosure sale shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser and shall be paid for by the purchaser at settlement. The cost of all documentary stamps, recordation taxes, transfer taxes, document preparation costs, title examination costs and other costs associated with conveying the Property to the purchaser shall also be the sole responsibility of the purchaser and shall be paid for by the purchaser at settlement.</p> <p>The purchaser at the foreclosure sale shall assume the risk of loss for the Property immediately after the sale takes place. It shall be the purchaser's responsibility to obtain possession of the Property after the closing. The purchaser shall not be entitled to receive any rent relating to the Property until the Purchaser pays the entire purchase price and closes on its purchase of the Property.</p> <p>In the event the purchaser fails to increase the deposit or go to settlement and pay the entire purchase price as required herein, in addition to any other legal or equitable remedies available to the Trustees and the Noteholder, the Trustees may declare the aforementioned deposit forfeited by the purchaser and resell the Property at the purchaser's sole risk and expense. In such event, the defaulting purchaser shall be liable for the payment of any deficiency in the purchase price sustained by the Trustees and/or the Noteholder, all costs and expenses of both sales, attorneys' fees, and any other damages sustained by the Trustees and/or the Noteholder, including, without limitation, all incidental damages. In the event a resale of the Property results in a sale in excess of the amount originally bid by the defaulting purchaser, the defaulting purchaser waives any and all claims, rights and interest to any such excess amount and shall not be entitled to any distribution whatsoever from the resale proceeds or a return of any portion of the purchaser's forfeited deposit.</p> <p>If the Trustees are unable to convey the Property as described above, the purchaser's sole remedy at law or in equity shall be limited to a refund of the aforementioned deposit, without interest thereon. Upon refund of the deposit to the purchaser as aforesaid, the sale shall be void and of no effect, and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Trustees, the Noteholder or the Auctioneer conducting the sale of the Property.</p> <p>The parties' respective rights and obligations regarding the terms and conduct of the sale shall be governed by the laws of the District of Columbia. (File #24-800378)</p> <p>Additional terms and conditions may be announced at the time of sale. All inquiries regarding the sale should be directed to Paul R. Cooper at 410-977-4707.</p> <p>Laura H.G. O'Sullivan, Michael T. Cantrell, Substitute Trustees</p> <p>ALEX COOPER <i>auctioneers</i></p> <p>4910 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Suite 100 Washington, DC 20016 • 202.364.0306 www.alexcooper.com</p>			
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840	Trustees Sale - DC	840	Trustees Sale - DC
	<p>McCabe, Weisberg & Conway, LLC 312 Marshall Avenue, Suite 800 Laurel, MD 20707 www.mwc-law.com</p> <p>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF GARDEN-STYLE APARTMENT BUILDING BELIEVED TO CONTAIN 12 UNITS</p> <p>"DEANWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD" known as 4725 MINNESOTA AVENUE, NE WASHINGTON, DC 20019</p>		
<p>Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, and Security Agreement dated July 21, 2023 from 4725 Minnesota Ave NE LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("Borrower"), to the trustees named therein and recorded on July 26, 2023 among the records of the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia (the "Records") as Document No. 2023063626 (the "Deed of Trust"), the holder of the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust ("Noteholder") having subsequently appointed Laura H.G. O'Sullivan, Michael T. Cantrell, as Substitute Trustees ("Trustees") in the place of the original trustees under the Deed of Trust by a Deed of Appointment of Substitute Trustees recorded on November 1, 2024 as Document No. 2024103160 among the Records, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust and at the request of the Noteholder, and pursuant to a Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit filed on November 19, 2024 as Document No. 2024108563 among the Records in accordance with D.C. Code § 42-815 and the applicable laws of the District of Columbia, the Trustees will offer for sale to the highest qualified bidder at a public auction within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on</p> <p>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024 at 1:25 P.M.</p>			
<p>the following described land and premises (the "Land"): Lot numbered Nine (9) in Square numbered Fifty One Hundred Sixty One (5161), in the subdivision made by Cary W. Brincefield and Leatrice J. Brincefield, as per plat recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Liber 145 at Folio 200. Subject to a 35 foot easement and right of way for storm and sanitary sewer and drainage purposes as granted to the District of Columbia by Deed of Easement recorded among the Land Records of the District of Columbia on April 19, 1960 in Liber 11407 at Folio 426 as Instrument No. 09830. NOTE: At the date hereof the above described land is designated on the Records of the Assessor of the District of Columbia for assessment and taxation purposes as Lot 0009 in Square 5161. The Improvements comprise a garden-style apartment building believed to contain a total of twelve (12) apartment units. It is located in the Deanwood neighborhood across the street from the Deanwood metro stop.</p> <p>TERMS OF SALE</p> <p>Summary terms of sale: A deposit in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00), payable by certified or cashier's check, will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale. Within two (2) business days after the date of the sale, the purchaser of the Property shall deliver a certified or cashier's check to the Trustees to increase the purchaser's deposit to an amount that is equal to ten percent (10%) of the full amount bid by such purchaser at the sale. The balance of the purchase price, together with interest thereon at the default rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date of settlement, shall be due from the purchaser by wire transfer or certified check within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of sale, unless such closing deadline is extended in writing by the Trustees. Time is of the essence. If settlement is delayed for any reason, there shall be no abatement of interest on the unpaid purchase price. Settlement shall be held at such place as may be agreed to by the Trustees. In the event the Noteholder, or an affiliate or subsidiary thereof, is the successful bidder at the sale, such party will not be required to make a deposit or to pay interest on the unpaid purchase money. The Trustees reserve the right to withdraw the Property from sale, to reject any and all bids at the sale, and to extend the time for settlement, at their discretion.</p> <p>The Property is being sold in an "AS IS" condition and without any warranties or representations of any kind, either express or implied, as to the value, nature, condition, use or description of the Property or the improvements thereon. The Property is also being sold subject to: (a) any existing building and zoning code violations; (b) any environmental problems and conditions, lead paint conditions, encroachments and/or violations which may exist on or with respect to the Property; (c) any senior liens, encumbrances, easements, conditions, restrictions, agreements, declarations and covenants of record which are not extinguished as a matter of law by the foreclosure sale; (d) any rights of redemption; and (e) such state of facts that an accurate survey or physical inspection of the Property might disclose, if any. The purchaser is responsible for conducting its own due diligence regarding the Property.</p> <p>All senior liens, real estate taxes, water charges and municipal charges and assessments owed against the Property which are not extinguished as a matter of law by the foreclosure sale shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser and shall be paid for by the purchaser at settlement. The cost of all documentary stamps, recordation taxes, transfer taxes, document preparation costs, title examination costs and other costs associated with conveying the Property to the purchaser shall also be the sole responsibility of the purchaser and shall be paid for by the purchaser at settlement.</p> <p>The purchaser at the foreclosure sale shall assume the risk of loss for the Property immediately after the sale takes place. It shall be the purchaser's responsibility to obtain possession of the Property after the closing. The purchaser shall not be entitled to receive any rent relating to the Property until the Purchaser pays the entire purchase price and closes on its purchase of the Property.</p> <p>In the event the purchaser fails to increase the deposit or go to settlement and pay the entire purchase price as required herein, in addition to any other legal or equitable remedies available to the Trustees and the Noteholder, the Trustees may declare the aforementioned deposit forfeited by the purchaser and resell the Property at the purchaser's sole risk and expense. In such event, the defaulting purchaser shall be liable for the payment of any deficiency in the purchase price sustained by the Trustees and/or the Noteholder, all costs and expenses of both sales, attorneys' fees, and any other damages sustained by the Trustees and/or the Noteholder, including, without limitation, all incidental damages. In the event a resale of the Property results in a sale in excess of the amount originally bid by the defaulting purchaser, the defaulting purchaser waives any and all claims, rights and interest to any such excess amount and shall not be entitled to any distribution whatsoever from the resale proceeds or a return of any portion of the purchaser's forfeited deposit.</p> <p>If the Trustees are unable to convey the Property as described above, the purchaser's sole remedy at law or in equity shall be limited to a refund of the aforementioned deposit, without interest thereon. Upon refund of the deposit to the purchaser as aforesaid, the sale shall be void and of no effect, and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Trustees, the Noteholder or the Auctioneer conducting the sale of the Property.</p> <p>The parties' respective rights and obligations regarding the terms and conduct of the sale shall be governed by the laws of the District of Columbia. (File #24-800377)</p> <p>Additional terms and conditions may be announced at the time of sale. All inquiries regarding the sale should be directed to Paul R. Cooper at 410-977-4707.</p> <p>Laura H.G. O'Sullivan, Michael T. Cantrell, Substitute Trustees</p> <p>ALEX COOPER <i>auctioneers</i></p> <p>4910 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Suite 100 Washington, DC 20016 • 202.364.0306 www.alexcooper.com</p>			
Dec 9,11,13,16,18 2024			0012477898

EZ

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

840

Trustees Sale - DC

840

Trustees Sale - DC

TRUSTEE'S SALE

Of Valuable Real Estate located in the

District of Columbia

known as

5001-5005 Hanna Place, SE, Washington, DC 20019

By virtue of a certain Deed of Trust, Assignment of Rents and Security Agreement duly recorded in the Land Records of the District of Columbia on July 10, 2023, as Instrument No. 2023057590 (the "Deed of Trust") and in accordance with the Notice of Foreclosure dated and recorded November 7, 2024, Public law 90-566, and at the request of the party secured by the Deed of Trust, the Substitute Trustee having been substituted for the trustee(s) named in said Deed of Trust, will sell, at public auction, at the office of HARVEY WEST AUCTIONEERS INC., 5335 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015, on **December 12, 2024, at 10:35 A.M.**, some or all of the property described in said Deed of Trust, including certain land and premises, situate in the District of Columbia, and being now known for purposes of assessment and taxation as Lot 0014, Square 5341, and more particularly described as follows:

BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED as Lot Numbered (Fourteen) 14 in Square numbered Fifty-three Hundred Forty-one (5341), in a subdivision made by Eli Busada, as per plat recorded in Liber 118 at Folio 125, of the Records of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia.

The improvements are known as 5001-5005 Hanna Place, SE, Washington, District of Columbia 20019.

Tax ID: Lot 0014, Square 5341 (the "Property").

Terms of Sale

The Property will be sold "WHERE IS" and in "AS IS" condition and the purchaser shall assume the risk of loss or damage to the property after the time of the foreclosure sale. Neither the Trustee, the party secured by the Deed of Trust, the auctioneer, nor any of their respective agents, successors or assigns (collectively, the "Selling Parties") make any representation or warranties, express or implied, with respect to the Property, or any tenancies or parties in possession, including without limitation, the description, use, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, habitability, marketability, or insurability (hazard or title), subdivision, zoning, environmental condition, compliance with building codes or other laws (such as Americans with Disabilities Act), ordinances or regulations, fitness for a particular purpose, or merchantability of all or any part of the Property. The purchaser waives and releases the Selling Parties from any and all claims the purchaser or the purchaser's successors or assigns may have now or may have in the future relating to the sale or the condition of the Property. The Property will be sold subject to rights of parties in possession, any building or housing violations, easements, agreements, restrictions, terms, rights of way, covenants, conditions, rights of redemption, other encumbrances, statutes, if any, affecting the Property, whether or not of record and all statutes, ordinances or court rules, including any lien for unpaid condominium assessments pursuant to D.C. Code § 42-1903.13, if applicable, to the extent such things have priority over the Deed of Trust and to the extent such things survive the foreclosure sale. The Property is also sold subject to a post-sale audit of the status of the loan. All interested bidders are specifically encouraged to review all federal, state and local statutes, ordinances, and court rules concerning the Property and to contact the appropriate governmental authorities prior to the sale date regarding the Property, including without limitation, encumbrances, liens, violations, permitted uses and the requirements, if any, for registration, obtaining possession, cure of violations, construction, completion, or development. The Trustee will not deliver possession to the purchaser, who shall be solely responsible for obtaining possession of the property.

A deposit of the lesser of \$30,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the winning bid amount will be required at the time of sale, such deposit to be in the form of a certified check, cashier's check, or in such other form as the Trustee may determine, in his sole discretion. Whenever the purchaser is also the party secured by the said Deed of Trust, payment of the required deposit and purchase price is made by crediting the amount thereof to the indebtedness. The balance in cash or immediately available funds, with interest at thirteen and ninety-nine hundredths per centum (13.99%) per annum from the date of sale to the date of settlement or the balance of the proceeds are received by the Trustee, whichever is later, shall be paid within thirty (30) days after the date of sale. There will be no abatement of interest due from the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The party secured by the Deed of Trust shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER.

Real property taxes, water charges, condominium fees and/or homeowner association dues, all public charges/assessments payable on an annual basis, including sanitary and/or metropolitan district charges, if applicable, to be adjusted for the current year to date of sale and assumed thereafter by the purchaser. All costs incident to the settlement and conveyancing including, without limitation, examination of title, conveyancing, all recordation taxes and charges, all transfer taxes and charges, title insurance premiums, notary fees, settlement fees and all other costs incident to settlement shall be at the cost of the successful purchaser. Conveyance of the Property shall be by Trustee's Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied, specifically including marketability or insurability (hazard or title), unless otherwise required by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust. In the event the Trustee is unable for any reason to convey title, the purchaser's sole remedy at law or in equity shall be to request and receive a return of the deposit. Upon return of the deposit, this sale shall be void and of no effect and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Trustee.

Compliance with terms of sale shall be made within thirty (30) days after the date of sale or the deposit shall be forfeited. In the event of a default, all expenses of this sale (including attorneys' fees and trustee's commission) shall be charged against and paid out of the forfeited deposit as determined by the Trustee unless expressly prohibited by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust. The Trustee may then re-advertise and resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser (such risk and cost shall include any attorneys' fees or costs in connection with all litigation, including appeals, involving the Property or the proceeds of a resale, or contesting the Selling Parties' right to conduct a resale, or seeking to invalidate this sale unless expressly prohibited by statute, court rule or the Deed of Trust; and, if the defaulting purchaser has received any 'rent' from any occupant or tenant of the Property such amount received shall be promptly delivered to the Trustee; or, without reselling the Property, the Trustee may avail himself of any legal or equitable remedies against the defaulting purchaser). In the event of a resale, the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to receive the surplus, if any, even if such surplus results from improvements to the Property by said defaulting purchaser. This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any oral announcements during the conduct of the sale, constitutes the entire terms upon which the property shall be offered for sale.

Benjamin P. Smith, Trustee

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Shulman Rogers, P.A.
12505 Park Potomac Avenue, 6th Floor
Potomac, MD 20854
(301) 230-5241

HARVEY WEST

AUCTIONEERS, INC.

5335 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Ste 440

Washington, DC 20015

(202) 462-4077

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S0114 10x2

SCOREBOARD

PRO BASKETBALL

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston.....	14	9	.609	4½
New York.....	14	9	.609	4½
Brooklyn.....	10	14	.417	9
Philadelphia.....	7	15	.318	11
Toronto.....	7	17	.292	12

SOUTHEAST	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando.....	17	9	.654	—
Miami.....	12	10	.545	3
Atlanta.....	13	12	.520	3½
Charlotte.....	7	17	.292	9
Washington.....	3	19	.136	12

CENTRAL	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland.....	21	4	.840	—
Milwaukee.....	12	11	.522	8
Indiana.....	10	15	.400	11
Chicago.....	10	15	.400	11
Detroit.....	10	15	.400	11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis.....	17	8	.680	—
Dallas.....	16	8	.667	¼
s-Houston.....	15	8	.652	1
San Antonio.....	12	12	.500	4½
New Orleans.....	5	20	.200	12

NORTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City.....	18	5	.783	—
s-Minnesota.....	12	10	.545	5½
Denver.....	12	10	.545	5½
x-Portland.....	8	15	.348	10
x-Utah.....	5	17	.227	12½

PACIFIC	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Golden State.....	13	9	.591	—
x-L.A. Clippers.....	12	10	.545	1
Phoenix.....	12	11	.522	1½
x-L.A. Lakers.....	12	11	.522	1½
x-Sacramento.....	11	13	.458	3

x-Late game

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

at Washington 122, Denver 113

Cleveland 116, at Charlotte 102

Oklahoma City 119, at New Orleans 109

Dallas 125, at Toronto 118

Detroit 120, at New York 111

at Miami 121, Phoenix 111

Memphis 127, at Boston 121

SUNDAY'S RESULTS

Memphis 140, at Washington 112

Philadelphia 108, at Chicago 100

Milwaukee 112, at Brooklyn 113

Charlotte 113, at Indiana 109

Denver 141, at Atlanta 111

at Orlando 115, Phoenix 110

Miami 122, Cleveland 113

at San Antonio 121, New Orleans 116

Minnesota at Golden State, late

Houston at L.A. Clippers, late

Utah at Sacramento, late

Portland at L.A. Lakers, late

MONDAY'S GAME

New York at Toronto, 7:30

TUESDAY'S GAMES

NBA cup quarterfinal: Orlando at Milwaukee, 7

NBA cup quarterfinal: Dallas at Oklahoma City, 9:30

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

NBA cup quarterfinal: Atlanta at New York, 7

NBA cup quarterfinal: Golden State at Houston, 9:30

Grizzlies 140, Wizards 112

Memphis.....	34	38	29	29	—	140
Washington.....	26	29	30	30	—	112
MEMPHIS	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF
Jackson Jr.	16:46	8-15	2-4	1-4	1	3
Wells	29:47	0-3	4-4	1-2	2	2
Clarke	23:11	6-10	0-0	0-7	2	12
Pippen Jr.	22:19	6-11	2-3	0-12	0	14
Smart	20:58	5-8	0-4	0-3	1	13
Spencer	22:03	4-10	5-6	1-5	2	7
Huff	23:45	6-14	2-2	1-3	1	17
LaRavia	23:43	3-7	2-3	1-3	3	9
Konchar	22:10	3-4	0-0	4-8	2	1
Aladama	19:49	7-11	2-3	1-7	5	19
Castleton	7:08	1-3	4-4	2-2	0	1
Kawamura	5:20	1-2	1-2	0-0	0	4
TOTALS	240	50-96	23-29	12-46	34	140

Percentages: FG, .521, FT, .793. 3-Point Goals: 17-43, .395 (Aladama 2-5, Smart 3-6, Jackson Jr. 2-8, Huff 3-11, Spencer 2-4, Kawamura 1-2, Konchar 1-2, LaRavia 1-3, Castleton 0-1, Pippen Jr. 0-1). **Team Rebounds:** 8. **Team Turnovers:** 2. **Blocked Shots:** 8 (Jackson Jr. 4, Aladama 3, Konchar). **Turnovers:** 16 (Pippen Jr. 4, Smart 3, LaRavia 2, Aladama 3, Clarke, Huff, Konchar, Spencer, Spencer, Wells). **Steals:** 12 (Clarke 2, Konchar 2, LaRavia 2, Pippen Jr. 2, Aladama, Kawamura, Smart, Spencer). **Technical Fouls:** Pippen Jr., 9:27 third.

WASHINGTON	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Championship	34:17	6-12	0-0	2-8	4	14	
Coubaly	28:14	6-13	4-5	1-5	4	5	17
Valancianus	23:28	8-17	4-4	7-14	2	0	20
Georgie O-5	22:53	0-4	0-5	1-5	2	7	
Poole	28:37	2-6	4-4	0-1	2	2	9
Butler	26:09	6-14	1-1	2-5	7	4	14
Bagley III	24:32	9-15	2-2	5-7	2	20	
Bagley III	22:26	0-1	2-2	1-4	1	2	0
Davis	19:47	3-4	2-2	0-0	1	6	
TOTALS	240	43-100	20-22	20-52	20	112	

Percentages: FG, .430, FT, .799. 3-Point Goals: 3-22, .188 (Championship 2-4, Coubaly 1-4, Poole 1-4, Butler 1-6, Carrington 1-7, Gill 0-1, Valancianus 0-1, Bagley III 0-2, Davis 0-3). **Team Rebounds:** 5. **Team Turnovers:** 9. **Blocked Shots:** 5 (Bagley III 3, Coubaly, Valancianus). **Turnovers:** 21 (Butler 3, Carrington 3, Coubaly 3, Valancianus 3, Championship 2, Davis 2, Gill 2, Poole 2, Bagley III). **Steals:** 10 (Championship 5, Davis 2, Carrington, Coubaly, Gill). **Technical Fouls:** None. At: 15:012 (20,356).

76ers 108, Bulls 100

PHILADELPHIA	23	39	26	20	—	108
CHICAGO	33	17	29	21	—	100

PHILADELPHIA: George 6-13 0-0 12, Yabusele 2-5 0-0 4, Embiid 13-28 5-6 31, Maxey 10-22 2-2 25, Oubre Jr. 3-6 4-4 12, C.Martin 0-0 0-0 0, K.Martin 3-3 0-0 6, Drummond

CHICAGO: Dosunmu 3-6 2-2 10, LaVine 10-21 4-5 30, Buechel 4-7 4-4 13, Giddey 4-10 0-9, White 5-17 0-13 30, Vucelja 2-7 1-15, Phillips 1-20 0-3, Terry 0-0 0-0, Smith 4-7 0-11, Ball 1-7 0-3, Horton-Tucker 1-2 0-3. **Totals** 35-86 11-12 100.

Three-point Goals: Philadelphia 9-36 (McCain 3-7, Maxey 3-12, Oubre Jr. 2-3, Lowry 1-2, Yabusele 0-2, Embiid 0-5, George 0-5). **Championship:** LaRavia 24 (Mick 9), White 3-11, Dosunmu 2-4, Horton-Tucker 1-2, Phillips 1-2, Vucelja 1-2, Giddey 1-4, Ball 1-5, Buechel 0-5. **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Philadelphia 56 (Embiid 12), Chicago 35 (Vucelja 8). **Assists:** Philadelphia 25 (Mickey 14), Chicago 29 (Giddey 11). **Total Fouls:** Philadelphia 15, Chicago 18. At: 18:837 (20,917)

Bucks 118, Nets 113

Bucks 118, Nets 113

MILWAUKEE	27	24	35	32	—	118
BROOKLYN	25	27	34	27	—	113

MILWAUKEE: Antetokounmpo 14-22 6-10 34, Prince 0-2 0-0 0, Lopez 1-4 1-2 3, Jackson Jr. 2-3 0-0 6, Lillard

BROOKLYN: C.Johnson 9-16 4-4 26, Finney-Smith 3-7 0-0 9, Claxton 9-14 3-21, K.Johnson 2-8 0-6 6, Schroder 13-19 4-5 34, Watford 1-2 2-2 4, Wilson 3-8 0-3 3, Simmons 0-0 0-0 0, Sharpe 1-3 2-2 4, Milton 2-6 0-6 0. **Totals** 41-81 15-16 113.

Three-point Goals: Milwaukee 15-31 (Portis 5-5, Trent Jr. 3-7, Green 2-2, Jackson Jr. 2-3, Lillard 2-7, Middleton 1-3, Lopez 0-2, Prince 0-2), Brooklyn 16-35 (Schroder 4-7, C.Johnson 4-8, Finney-Smith 3-5, Milton 2-4, K.Johnson 2-5, Wilson 1-5, Claxton 0-1). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Milwaukee 31 (Antetokounmpo 11), Brooklyn 30 (Claxton 10). **Assists:** Milwaukee 26 (Lillard 11), Brooklyn 24 (Schroder 21). **Total Fouls:** Milwaukee 18, Brooklyn 25. At: 17:926 (17,732)

Hornets 113, Pacers 109

CHARLOTTE	28	35	20	30	—	113
INDIANA	24	38	20	27	—	109

CHARLOTTE: Green 3-4 4-7 10, Martin 6-10 0-0 14, Richards 3-5 3-4 9, Micic 7-15 0-0 18, Miller 9-18 4-5 26, Gibson 2-3 2-3 6, Jeffries 3-4 0-0 8, Curry 3-6 2-2 9, Simpson 1-3 2-2 4, Smith Jr. 0-4 0-0 0, Wynn 3-6 2-3 9.

INDIANA: Mathurin 4-11 2-2 11, Siakam 8-8 3-3 9, Turner 3-9 1-2 10, Haliburton 4-10 1-9, Nembhard 3-5 2-2 10, Freeman 1-10 0-2, Toppin 4-11 0-11, Walker 6-7 0-15, Furphy 0-1 2-2 2, McConnell 14-19 2-2 30. **Totals** 42-82 13-15 109.

Three-point Goals: Charlotte 14-29 (Micic 4-6, Miller 3-5, Jeffries 2-3, Martin 2-3), Indiana 12-33 (Siakam 5-9, Turner 3-9 1-2 10, Haliburton 4-10 1-9, Nembhard 3-5 2-2 10, Freeman 1-10 0-2, Toppin 4-11 0-11, Walker 6-7 0-15, Furphy 0-1 2-2 2, McConnell 14-19 2-2 30. **Totals** 42-82 13-15 109.

Three-point Goals: Charlotte 14-29 (Micic 4-6, Miller 3-5, Jeffries 2-3, Martin 2-3), Indiana 12-33 (Siakam 5-9, Turner 3-9 1-2 10, Haliburton 4-10 1-9, Nembhard 3-5 2-2 10, Freeman 1-10 0-2, Toppin 4-11 0-11, Walker 6-7 0-15, Furphy 0-1 2-2 2, McConnell 14-19 2-2 30. **Totals** 42-82 13-15 109.

Magic 115, Suns 110

PHOENIX	34	28	25	23	—	110
ORLANDO	29	28	27	31	—	115

PHOENIX: Beal 8-12 1-2 18, O'Neale 6-10 0-16, Plumlee 2-5 3-4 7, Booker 8-21 8-25, Jones 7-16 2-2 21, Ighodaro 2-5 0-4 0, Bol 1-2 0-2, Allen 3-3 5-13, Morris 2-8 0-4, Okogie 0-1 0-0 0. **Totals** 39-83 19-22 110.

ORLANDO: Carter Jr. 2-4 2-6, da Silva 3-7 1-4 8, Bitadze 8-15 5-6 21, Caldwell-Pope 3-6 0-2 8, Suggs 8-18 6-7 26, Howard 2-4 2-2 6, M.Wagner 3-8 3-6 10, Anthony 6-14 0-0 14, Black 4-8 0-1 8, Houstgan 3-4 0-0 8. **Totals** 42-88 19-30 115.

Three-point Goals: Phoenix 13-28 (Jones 5-8, O'Neale 4-6, Allen 2-2, Beal 1-2, Booker 1-5, Morris 0-5), Orlando 12-36 (Suggs 4-10, Houstgan 2-3, Caldwell-Pope 2-5, Anthony 2-6, M.Wagner 1-3, da Silva 1-3, Bitadze 0-1, Carter Jr. 0-1, Howard 0-1, Black 0-3). **Fouled Out:** Phoenix 1 (Beal), Orlando None. **Rebounds:** Phoenix 39 (O'Neale 7), Orlando 44 (Bitadze 16). **Assists:** Phoenix 24 (Booker 7), Orlando 17 (Bitadze 4). **Total Fouls:** Phoenix 24, Orlando 19. At: 18,311 (18,846)

Heat 122, Cavaliers 113

CLEVELAND	25	26	29	33	—	113
MIAMI	21	38	31	32	—	122

CLEVELAND: Mobley 2-4 0-0 4, Wade 3-7 2-2 11, Allen 3-7 0-0 6, Garland 9-19 3-4 23, Mitchell 5-16 1-1 12, Niang 5-7 2-2 15, Thor 2-2 0-0 5, Jerome 4-11 6-6 14, LeVert 5-7 1-1 13, Merrill 3-6 2-2 10, Travers 0-0 0-0 0, Tyson 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals** 41-86 17-18 113.

MIAMI: Butler 6-12 6-18, Highsmith 0-2 0-0, Adebayo 7-14 0-16, Herro 10-19 9-9 34, Robinson 7-11 5-23, Bryant 0-0 2-2, Love 0-1 0-0 0, Jaquez Jr. 0-2, Rozier 6-14 0-14, Smith 4-9 0-0 11. **Totals** 41-86 24-26 122.

Three-point Goals: Cleveland 14-33 (Niang 3-4, Wade 3-7, LeVert 2-2, Merrill 2-5, Garland 2-6, Thor 1-1, Mitchell 1-5, Mobley 0-1, Jerome 0-2), Miami 16-37 (Herro 5-9, Robinson 4-6, Smith 3-6, Adebayo 2-4, Rozier 2-5, Love 0-1, Butler 0-2, Highsmith 0-2, Jaquez Jr. 0-2). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Cleveland 36 (Wade 8), Miami 47 (Adebayo 13). **Assists:** Cleveland 23 (Jerome 6), Miami 27 (Herro 7). **Total Fouls:** Cleveland 18, Miami 15. At: 19,600 (19,600)

Nuggets 141, Hawks 111

DENVER	38	33	35	35	—	141
ATLANTA	23	25	36	27	—	111

DENVER: Gordon 1-6 4-5 6, Porter Jr. 12-17 1-1 26, Jokic 17-29 11-13 48, Braun 7-11 1-2 17, Westbrook 4-6 0-1 9, Tyson 2-2 0-0 5, Nnaji 1-2 0-1 2, Hall 1-2 0-0 2, Jordan 2-2 0-0 4, Alexander 1-2 0-0 2, Pickett 2-2 0-0 2,

ATLANTA: Nance Jr. 6-11 2-2 16, Rischey 3-11 4-6 10, Capela 4-7 1-29, Daniels 7-15 2-4 18, Young 6-13 1-25, Roddy 0-1 0-0 0, Okongwu 5-10 4-4 14, Hunter 7-20 3-3 20, Bufkin 2-3 0-4 0, Krcijic 1-6 1-2 3, Mathews 0-4 2-2 2. **Totals** 41-101 20-71 111.

Three-point Goals: Denver 12-27 (Strawther 3-4, Jokic 3-6, Braun 2-2, Pickett 1-1, Tyson 1-1, Westbrook 1-3, Porter Jr. 1-5, Watson 0-1, Gordon 0-4), Atlanta 9-40 (Hunter 3-9, Daniels 2-5, Nance Jr. 2-7, Young 2-7, Bufkin 0-1, Roddy 0-1, Rischey 0-2, Krcijic 0-4, Mathews 0-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Denver 43 (Jokic 14), Atlanta 45 (Capela 10). **Assists:** Denver 43 (Westbrook 11), Atlanta 26 (Young 10). **Total Fouls:** Denver 22, Atlanta 22. At: 16,137 (18,118)

Spurs 121, Pelicans 116

NEW ORLEANS	34	28	25	29	—	116
SAN ANTONIO	28	43	21	29	—	121

NEW ORLEANS: H.Jones 5-10 1-2 12, Murphy III 8-16 5-5 25, Missi 6-14 6-18, McCollum 8-18 0-19, Murray 6-20 5-5 18, Cain 1-2 0-0 2, Robinson-Earl 2-5 0-5, Jemison III 0-1 0-2 0, Boston Jr. 7-11 0-0 17, Reeves 0-2 0-0 0.

SAN ANTONIO: Barnes 4-6 5-6 16, Champagnie 5-13 0-10, Boston Jr. 7-5, McCollum 3-8, Robinson-Earl 1-2, H.Jones 1-4, Murray 1-7, Cain 0-1, Reeves 0-1, San Antonio 12-39 (Barnes 3-5, Wembanyama 3-7, Castie 2-5, Paul 2-6, Champagnie 2-8, Johnson 0-2, Sochan 0-2, Vassell 0-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** New Orleans 43 (Missi 14), San Antonio 55 (Bassett 12). **Assists:** New Orleans 26 (Murray 11), San Antonio 27 (Paul 10). **Total Fouls:** New Orleans 21, San Antonio 18. At: 16,840 (18,581)

Pistons 120, Knicks 111

2-7, Paul 2-6, Cunningham 2-6, Johnson 0-2, Stock 0-2, Vassell 0-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** New Orleans 43 (Missi 14), San Antonio 55 (Bassey 12). **Assists:** New Orleans 26 (Murray 11), San Antonio 27 (Paul 10). **Total Fouls:** New Orleans 21, San Antonio 18. **A:** 16,840 (18,581)

NEW YORK: Anunoby 6-15 3-4 17, Hart 7-12 2-17, Sims 0-0 0-0 0, Bridges 1-7 1-2 20, Brunson 11-21 6-31 31, Achiuwa 2-3 2-5 6, Hukportir 4-4 1-2 9, Kolek 1-1 0-0 3, McBride 3-2 0-6 0. **Totals** 42-97 16-27 111.

Three-point Goals: Detroit 18-36 (Beasley 7-10, Cunningham 5-9, Fontecchie 2-3, Ivey 2-6, Harris 1-4, Hardaway Jr. 1-5), New York 11-34 (Brunson 3-7, Bridges 3-9, Anunoby 2-8, Kolek 1-1, Hart 1-4, McBride 1-5). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Detroit 43 (Cunningham 10), New York 31 (Achiuwa 10). **Assists:** Detroit 28 (Cunningham 15), New York 27 (Brunson 10). **Total Fouls:** Detroit 20, New York 12. At: 19,812 (19,812)

SOCCER

MLS playoffs

FIRST ROUND
Best of three
EASTERN CONFERENCE
NEW YORK CITY FC ELIMINATED CINCINNATI, 2-0
Game 1: at Cincinnati 1, New York City FC 0
Game 2: at New York City FC 3, Cincinnati 1
Game 3: New York City 0, at Cincinnati 0 (6-5 PK)

ORLANDO ELIMINATED CHARLOTTE FC, 2-1
Game 1: at Orlando 2, Charlotte FC 1
Game 2: at Charlotte FC 0,