

ABUSED BY THE BADGE



Former Maypearl, Texas, police chief Kevin Coffey during a prison interview.

CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

THE ‘PERFECT’ PREDATOR

How a police chief with a troubled past groomed a small Texas town

This article is by Jenn Abelson, Alice Li, Jessica Contrera, Tucker Harris and Carolyn Van Houten

MAYPEARL, TEXAS — The new police chief quickly impressed the small Texas community he’d sworn to protect. He started a Christmas charity event. He checked on elderly neighbors. He seemed especially good, residents noted, with troubled teenagers. The people of Maypearl trusted Police Chief Kevin Coffey. Few were aware that Maypearl was the eighth law enforcement agency that Coffey had worked



COURTESY OF THE WAXAHACHIE DAILY LIGHT

Coffey during his time as police chief.

at in 11 years. Fewer knew that there was a trail of accusations and secrets in his past. And none could have predicted the destruction he would wreak in their town. The kids would eventually call him The Creeper. The adults would denounce him as a monster. The prosecutors who put him away for child sexual abuse would describe him as a master manipulator “who groomed the community.” But Coffey, sitting behind a glass partition in a state prison, would struggle to describe himself — and how he got away with exploiting his power for so long. SEE MAYPEARL ON A10

GOP scraps deal on budget after revolt from right

WITHOUT ACTION, SHUTDOWN IS DAYS AWAY

Pressure from Musk, Trump dooms bipartisan bill

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND JACOB BOGAGE

Republicans scrapped House Speaker Mike Johnson’s bipartisan plan to avert a government shutdown, as President-elect Donald Trump and Elon Musk joined a broad swath of the House GOP on Wednesday to condemn a compromise bill full of Democratic policy priorities. The rebuke, which built steadily through the day and culminated with a long written statement

from Trump in the late afternoon, has forced Johnson back to the drawing board on a plan to prevent a Christmastime shutdown — and maintain the support of his chaotic conference to be reelected as speaker early next year. “Your elected representatives have heard you and now the terrible bill is dead,” Musk boasted on X, the social media site he owns, after he spent the day blasting the measure. “The voice of the people has triumphed!” SEE HOUSE ON A4

@PKCapitol: Speaker’s critics and allies alike are frustrated. A2

Pentagon policy: Senate passes bill with controversial addition. A4

Musk: On X, the “DOGE” leader went on an hours-long tirade. A6

Local implications: Key Bridge funds, RFK deal face unraveling. B1

Fed lowers rates again, points to inflation ahead

Stocks plunge as central bank signals two cuts in 2025, down from four

BY ANDREW ACKERMAN

The Federal Reserve lowered interest rates on Wednesday by an additional quarter percentage point while pulling back on planned rate cuts next year as inflation proves to be a bigger challenge than its earlier estimates. The Fed penciled in just two rate cuts for 2025, down from

four forecast in September, emphasizing that future cuts would depend on progress toward curbing inflation and continued strength in the labor market. Stocks plunged following the rate cut, as investors soured on the news that interest rates would remain higher for longer than expected in 2025. The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined more than 1,100 points, or 2.6 percent, extending its longest losing streak in five decades. Inflation has weighed heavily on Americans, especially those with middle and lower incomes, and it drove voters to the polls in November to elect Donald SEE RATES ON A20

Analysis of ancient DNA hints at syphilis’s origin

Study suggests disease emerged in the Americas before ravaging Europe

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

In 1495, a devastating infection began to sweep across Europe, causing pustules and sores to erupt on people’s bodies and faces. Accusatory finger-pointing about the scourge, syphilis, began almost immediately. The Italians called it “the French disease”; the French called it “the Neapolitan disease”; the Russians called it “the Polish disease.” The sexually transmitted disease remains a public health menace today, despite the fact that it is easily cured with antibiotics. But the scientific debate still rages about the ancient origins of syphilis — including why the wave of illness that swamped Renaissance Europe was so virulent. Did syphilis initially emerge in the Americas and arrive in Europe in early 1493 when explorer Christopher Columbus returned to Spain, in the reverse of so many other illnesses that wiped out Indigenous peoples? Or was it a much older “pre-Columbian” disease that has been infecting humanity much longer — one that

flew under the radar, perhaps mistaken for leprosy or another ailment in Medieval Europe? In a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature, an international team studied ancient DNA harvested from lesion-ridden bones or teeth of five people who lived in Peru, Chile, Argentina and Mexico either before or around the time of Columbus. They found that early versions of the microbe, *Treponema pallidum*, that causes syphilis and related diseases were already diverse and widespread. Their analysis suggests that syphilis emerged in the Americas within the last 8,000 years and spread across the globe fueled by European colonization. “The syphilis debate was a big one, and it was a very emotional one ... a famous paleopathologist described it as one of the most enigmatic questions in science,” said Kirsten Bos, group leader for molecular paleopathology at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and one of the leaders of the work. She argued the new evidence would settle the matter. “It’s a very clear slam dunk: Okay, this clearly came from the Americas.” Several outside researchers agreed the study provides valuable new evidence strongly suggesting an American origin for SEE SYPHILIS ON A8



LORENZO TUGNOLI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sheikh Ahmed Banawi and his family stop at a checkpoint Monday on the way out of al-Hakeem in Syria’s Latakia province. The Alawite family was leaving the village out of fear of reprisals.

Revenge attacks in Syria fuel fear, mistrust

Vigilantes exploit post-Assad chaos to settle personal and sectarian scores

This article is by Loveday Morris, Suzan Haidamous, Louisa Loveluck, Nilo Tabrizy and Imogen Piper

AL-HAKEEM, SYRIA — The woman was clutching her infant, still in the dressing gown and pajamas she had been wearing a day earlier when fighters

overran this village in Syria’s Latakia province, the heartland of Bashar al-Assad’s Alawite minority sect. Her scorched home still radiated heat from the fires they had set. She hadn’t seen her husband since he fled into the citrus groves. “We are dying from fear,” she

said, standing outside the house, speaking on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. “It’s as though our hearts are in our hands.” Rebels burned four homes Sunday in the retaliatory attack, a day after a family in al-Hakeem had attacked one of SEE SYRIA ON A17

Justices to consider challenge to TikTok ban

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND EVA DOU

The Supreme Court said Wednesday that it will quickly take up TikTok’s challenge to a federal law that would shutter the popular platform next month unless the company divests from Chinese ownership. The justices said they would consider whether the law, passed with bipartisan support to address national security concerns, violates the First Amendment rights of millions of TikTok users and the owners of the video-sharing platform. In a sign of the significance of the issue, the court added a special hearing to its calendar, scheduling two hours for oral argument Jan. 10. A ruling could come any time after that. TikTok had asked the high court to intervene before Jan. 19, the deadline Congress set for TikTok’s China-based parent company, ByteDance, to sell the platform or be barred in the United States. The company wants the justices to put on hold a lower-court ruling that clears the way for the law, which was signed by President Joe Biden. SEE COURT ON A6

IN THE NEWS

Special counsel The Justice Department is reviewing whether Jack Smith and his team ran afoul of any regulations in its federal prosecutions of Donald Trump. A8 Chinese military Beijing’s buildup has been hampered by an anti-corruption purge but still continues rapidly, the Pentagon found. A9

THE NATION A patient in Louisiana has the first severe illness caused by bird flu in the United States. A3 The House Ethics Committee is set to release a report on Matt Gaetz this week. A6

THE WORLD Denmark freed an anti-whaling activist, rejecting calls by Japan for him to be extradited. A14 Across the West, the liberal establishment has fallen out of favor, writes Ishaan Tharoor. A15

THE ECONOMY A California man’s family filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against Amazon One Medical, alleging it was “reckless and negligent.” A19 Some credit card companies may be breaking the law by illegally devaluing rewards, a federal watchdog said. A20

THE REGION Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin preached bipartisanship and echoed Trump while laying out his budget plan, which includes \$50 million in school vouchers. B1 Tired of rowdy behavior, a D.C. café is trying to ban patrons under 30 after 8:30 p.m. B1

STYLE Joshua Oppenheimer reveals what drove him to infuse a postapocalyptic tale with song and dance in “The End.” C1 LOCAL LIVING Hollywood professionals explain the design magic behind the homes in two beloved holiday films.

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CORRECTIONS

- A Dec. 16 A-section article about President Joe Biden's legacy misstated the subject of a White House event last week. It was a conference focused on women's health research, not reproductive health.
- A Dec. 10 Style article about Golden Globes nomination surprises incorrectly referred to categories recognizing supporting actresses and actors "in a musical or comedy." The categories recognize performers in any genre of motion picture.

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# A lot of people are angry with Speaker Mike Johnson — again

@PKCapitol

PAUL KANE

Near the end of his valedictory speech 14 months ago, House Speaker Mike Johnson promised his colleagues transparency, accountability and “good stewardship of the people's treasure.”

This week, behind closed doors, the Louisiana Republican cut a deal to fund the government for three months that includes, among other things, \$110 billion for disaster relief, a rewrite of health policy related to pharmaceutical middlemen and a complicated plan to transfer land to D.C. officials to try to lure back a sports team.

By late Wednesday afternoon, the entire legislative package appeared headed for defeat, as President-elect Donald Trump blasted what he called giveaways to Democrats in the bill and threw a massive wrench into talks by demanding a complex negotiation over the debt limit. Johnson's already tenuous hold on power now faces greater jeopardy in next month's speaker vote.

Johnson, who long opposed end-of-year “omnibus” bills with thousands of pages of legislation tucked in, got defensive this week when critics accused him of doing exactly what he said he would not do. “It's not a Christmas tree, it's not an omni,” he said.

But even allies were skeptical. “I'm not voting for it, I'm not voting for it. And it has more to do with the process,” Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-New York), who usually supports leadership strategy, said Wednesday.

“I like Mike; I'm frustrated with the outcome. I'm frustrated with what we get,” Rep. Ralph Norman (R-South Carolina) said Tuesday morning.

Late Tuesday, when the actual legislation was unveiled, most lawmakers were surprised to see two very big presents to members of Congress themselves.

First, congressional leaders eliminated language that had prevented a raise for lawmakers, freeing them up to receive a cost-of-living adjustment for the first time since 2009.

The bill would also allow



MAANSI SRIVASTAVA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

House Speaker Mike Johnson on Dec. 5. His handling of a spending package has raised critics' ire.

members to opt out of getting their health care from the exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act and enter the more generous plan offered to other federal workers. During the 2010 debate over the ACA, Republicans forced that change, hoping that if Democrats had to receive that type of health care, they might oppose the law. That never happened, and the ACA remained intact, but the provision became conservative dogma.

Just after 4 a.m. Wednesday, Elon Musk turned to his social media platform to amplify criticism from Vivek Ramaswamy of the 1,500-plus-page bill with a blunt declaration.

“This bill should not pass,” wrote Musk, the co-leader with Ramaswamy of a new government-efficiency outfit in the incoming Trump administration.

Musk spent the rest of his day tapping out screeds against the legislation, more than 30 social media posts in the 3 o'clock hour alone, including, “One of the worst bills ever written.”

Even Democrats — who would have been needed to post the

majority of votes for the legislation — faced a revolt from their swing-district members who did not want to be seen voting for their own pay increase at a time when Congress's approval rating has not topped 20 percent in almost two years.

“We should be working to raise Americans' wages and lower their health care costs, not slipping new taxpayer-funded perks for ourselves into must-pass legislation behind closed doors,” Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine), who won reelection last month by just 0.6 percent, wrote on social media.

Even before Trump weighed in, all the uproar threw passage of the sprawling legislation into some doubt, particularly since Johnson would need to pass it on a fast-track calendar that would require a two-thirds majority for approval.

In the process, far-right conservatives are mad enough that the Jan. 3 vote for speaker, in which Johnson is seeking a second term, could get rocky.

Asked about support for Johnson on that vote, some lawmakers simply demurred. “That's a different topic at a different time. We'll see,” said Norman, one of 20 Republicans who forced Kevin McCarthy (R-California) to go 15 rounds of ballots before winning the

speaker's gavel in January 2023.

Malliotakis would not entertain voting for someone else for speaker, but she said Johnson's leadership team needed to spend the next couple of weeks talking with rank-and-file Republicans to explain how things will work next year.

“Look, I'm not willing to take it necessarily that far at this moment. But I do believe that there needs to be a serious conversation before Jan. 3 about how our leadership is going to help our members score small wins,” she said, noting that these types of victories could show results to voters at home. “I have not seen an effort from the current leadership that satisfies me.”

When he took over after McCarthy's ouster — precipitated by McCarthy's mishandling of a different government funding negotiation in the fall of 2023 — Johnson promised to never allow a massive funding bill to pass just before Christmas.

Last December, he punted the final details of government funding into the early spring, then split the package into two large bills in an effort to avoid the “omnibus” phrase.

With Trump winning the presidency again and voicing full support for Johnson, the speaker

seemed to be in a strong position to easily secure another term.

But the GOP won only 220 House seats, the narrowest majority in more than 100 years, and then Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Florida) resigned during his brief stint as Trump's pick for attorney general and amid an ethics investigation.

So, when the 119th Congress starts Jan. 3, Johnson will have at most 219 on his side of the aisle. If all 215 Democrats show up, just two disgruntled Republicans can vote for someone else and leave Johnson short of the outright majority needed to secure the speaker's gavel.

Several moves by Johnson the past few weeks have been clear appeasement attempts, including the creation of a subcommittee working with the Musk-Ramaswamy effort to eliminate government jobs. He gave the chair position to Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Georgia), a previous critic of Johnson who failed in her bid to oust him this year but now supports him.

The speaker also rebuffed efforts to pass all 12 funding bills in one omnibus plan — even from his own colleagues in GOP leadership who want Trump to start his presidency without a government funding fight early next year.

“Look, I'm not worried about the speaker vote,” Johnson told reporters Tuesday. “We're governing. Everybody knows we have difficult circumstances. We're doing the very best we can.”

Their very best was always going to come up short of having enough votes. Some far-right Republicans simply will not vote for government funding bills.

And because a few of these far-right conservatives will not vote for a usually simple parliamentary move to formally start debate, Johnson has to use the fast-track calendar requiring the supermajority. That means he needs more than just a few votes from the other side of the aisle.

Malliotakis said that Johnson, once he opened up talks to include aid for farmers and other measures, needed to work harder for GOP victories.

“If you open up the process, then you should be helping your members get legislative wins, not the Democrats,” she said.

## Starliner astronauts' return is delayed further, to March

BY AARON GREGG

The two Boeing Starliner astronauts kept unexpectedly on the International Space Station since June have had their stay extended yet again because the next crew will arrive later than originally anticipated, NASA said this week.

Barry “Butch” Wilmore and Sunita Williams were previously expected to return in February after spending several months longer in orbit than planned. But NASA said Tuesday that the next ISS crew, which NASA calls Crew-10, will not fly into space before late March. The astronauts who will be leaving the station, including Williams and Wilmore, will spend about five days helping to train the new arrivals, NASA said.

“Known as a handover period, it allows Crew-9 to share any

lessons learned with the newly arrived crew and support a better transition for ongoing science and maintenance at the complex,” NASA said in a statement released Tuesday.

NASA and SpaceX pushed Crew-10's flight to March because they need more time to process the new Dragon spacecraft set to arrive in Florida in January. The space agency noted that the process of building, testing and preparing a new spacecraft is a “painstaking endeavor” that requires great attention to detail.

Wilmore and Williams initially were supposed to spend several days aboard the station in June, as part of a test flight for Boeing's capsule, but NASA opted to return Starliner to Earth without a crew because of misfiring thrust-ers and helium leaks. The space agency decided the Starliner crew would go back in February

on a SpaceX Dragon capsule.

Crew-10 includes astronauts Anne McClain and Nichole Ayers, Japanese astronaut Takuya Onishi and Russian cosmonaut Kirill Peskov. They will replace Williams and Wilmore as well as two Crew-9 members, Nick Hague and Aleksandr Gorbunov.

NASA has emphasized that the Starliner crew members are not stranded on the station, since spacecraft docked there give them a way to evacuate at any time. NASA recently completed two resupply flights to keep the station stocked with food, water, clothing and oxygen.

The current stay of Williams and Wilmore is already longer than the six-month average for astronauts aboard the space station, NASA said, but even a nine-month stay wouldn't register among the longest human trips in space. Astronaut Frank Rubio spent 371 days aboard the space station in 2022 and 2023, and the record is held by Russian cosmonaut Valery Polyakov, who spent 437 days abroad Russia's Mir space station in the mid-1990s.

DIGEST

### SOUTH CAROLINA Court to hear funding of Planned Parenthood

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to take up a case reviewing South Carolina's decision to cut off state funding for Planned Parenthood over its abortion services.

South Carolina in 2018 terminated its funding agreement with Planned Parenthood, which has provided birth control, physical exams and cancer screenings to low-income state residents through its Medicaid program for four decades. The group's health centers in Charleston and Columbia also terminate pregnancies, but Medicaid does not pay for abortions except in limited situations required by federal law.

The move came after South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster (R) issued an executive order in 2017 directing all state agencies to cease providing public funds to any physician or professional medical practice “affiliated with

an abortion clinic.”

Planned Parenthood and a patient sued the state, invoking what they said is a right under federal law for Medicaid recipients to choose to receive their medical care from any qualified and willing provider.

The U.S. District Court sided with Planned Parenthood, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit affirmed that decision, finding that a Medicaid patient can sue to enforce the choice-of-provider requirement.

The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), representing South Carolina's health and human services director, urged the Supreme Court to reverse the decision, noting that some other appeals courts have ruled the opposite way in cases involving similar circumstances in Texas and Arkansas.

The high court will now have to resolve that split among appeals courts.

The case is *Kerr v. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic*.  
— Justin Jowenall and Ann E. Marimow

### NEW YORK Man guilty of running Chinese police station

A Manhattan resident has pleaded guilty to helping establish a secret police station in New York City on behalf of the Chinese government.

Chen Jinping, 60, entered the guilty plea on a single count of conspiracy to act as an agent of a foreign government in Brooklyn federal court on Wednesday.

Prosecutors say Chen and his co-defendant, Lu Jianwang, opened and operated a local branch of China's Ministry of Public Security in Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood starting in early 2022.

The office, which occupied an entire floor of the building, performed basic services, such as helping Chinese citizens renew their Chinese driver's licenses, but also identified pro-democracy activists living in the United States, according to federal authorities.

— Associated Press



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# Anger at speaker from the right could imperil his gavel

HOUSE FROM AI

Johnson has not outlined a backup plan, and multiple people familiar with the real-time conversations said the next step remains unclear, as leaders would need significant support from both parties — and Trump — to pass a funding extension. House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (Louisiana) said Wednesday night that there was “no new agreement” and Republicans were “just looking at a number of options.”

If Congress doesn’t extend the deadline, most federal operations would shut down at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, though the effects of a shutdown wouldn’t fully kick in until Monday.

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement Wednesday evening that “Republicans need to stop playing politics with this bipartisan agreement or they will hurt hard-working Americans and create instability across the country.”

The speed with which the GOP deserted Johnson’s bill on Wednesday underscored how difficult the party’s task could be next year, when Republicans will have control of the Senate and White House, but an even smaller margin in the House. Johnson told Fox News earlier in the day that he had texted Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, the co-chair of Trump’s nongovernmental “Department of Government Efficiency,” that any measure needed Democratic support to pass, and that Ramaswamy understood the challenge he faced.

Resolving the impasse by Friday may be even harder. Trump has asked to keep certain measures Johnson supports, such as aid for farmers and natural disaster survivors, but also demanded the House ditch items that Democrats negotiated. He has also requested that Republicans extend the suspension of the debt ceiling, a limit on how much the U.S. government can borrow, which is set to expire early in his new term next year.

On Tuesday evening, Johnson had introduced legislation to extend federal funding until March 14, send \$110.4 billion to natural disaster survivors and codify a host of unrelated policy changes. Late in negotiations Johnson added an additional \$10 billion of aid for farmers — which opened the door to a slew of unrelated demands by Democrats to ensure the bill could pass the House and Democratic-led Senate. Those included transferring control of the District’s RFK Stadium to Wash-



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

**Tourists at the Capitol on Wednesday. A number of Republicans have said privately that they would not support Mike Johnson to remain speaker in the next Congress.**

ington, D.C., a pay raise for members of Congress, new regulations for health plan administrators and federal funds to rebuild Baltimore’s collapsed Francis Scott Key bridge.

Republicans grew so upset with the speaker over those provisions — even before Musk started attacking the bill — that a number of lawmakers have already said privately that they would not support him to retain his gavel in the next Congress.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) said he would not vote for Johnson to remain speaker. Two other GOP members, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive topic, said the question of support was likely moot: Based on defections that had yet to become public, Johnson would probably be forced out of the running before lawmakers

would have to make up their minds on Jan. 3, the member said. Conversations about replacing Johnson as speaker had already begun in certain corners of the GOP conference in the last several days, according to multiple Republicans who took part in the discussions.

Other lawmakers echoed those warnings.

“I am hearing from an increasing number of people, both inside and outside the Freedom Caucus, that they’re not viewing how this was handled favorably,” Rep. Andy Harris (R-Maryland), chair of the pugnacious and ultraconservative Freedom Caucus, told The Washington Post.

Republicans from the party’s far-right and more moderate wings uniformly protested the way Johnson assembled the legislation, and Musk — now a close

adviser to Trump — spent Wednesday blasting the legislation, calling it “criminal.” Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), a member of that chamber’s GOP leadership team, also weighed in, calling the bill a “cramnibus” on social media, potentially indicating trouble in the Senate even if the measure passes the House.

Democrats were outraged at the collapse of their deal.

“House Republicans have now unilaterally decided to break a bipartisan agreement that they made,” Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-New York) said. “House Republicans will now own any harm that is visited upon the American people that results from a government shutdown, or worse. An agreement is an agreement.”

In the Senate, Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (New York)

was telling fellow Democrats that “we have a deal with Republicans, and we’re sticking with it,” a person familiar with the matter said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to reflect private talks.

Earlier Wednesday, Johnson sought to portray the sprawling bill as unfortunate, but necessary, with Democrats still in control of the White House and Senate.

“By doing this, we are clearing the decks, and we are setting up for Trump to come roaring back with the America First agenda. That’s where we’re going to run with gusto beginning Jan. 3 when we start the new Congress, when Republicans again are in control,” he said on “Fox & Friends” on Wednesday morning.

Johnson won’t be able to rely on Democrats to win the speaker’s election next year. So he’ll need 218 votes from his slim —

and now greatly irritated — conference. House Republicans will have a narrower majority next term.

Still, some House Republicans said they’d stick with Johnson. Moderate Rep. Don Bacon (R-Nebraska) plans to vote for the funding package and acknowledged that Johnson has had a tough job passing legislation that requires Senate approval, since that body is led by Democrats until Republicans take over in the new year.

“There’s mainly Republican bills in the CR so I feel like he’s doing the best he can, but you got to make some horse trades, because that’s what Congress is,” he said. “But I think he’s doing a great job.”

Mariana Alfaro contributed to this report.

# Senate passes Pentagon bill that set off debate over transgender care

BY ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER

The Senate on Wednesday passed an \$895.2 billion defense policy bill that sparked controversy when House Speaker Mike Johnson amended the legislation with language forbidding the use of federal funds to cover specialized medical care for the transgender children of U.S. military personnel.

Though several Senate Democrats protested Johnson’s 11th-hour maneuver, the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was approved 85-14 — a comfortable margin that belied the depth of frustration among lawmakers who said the legislation, as written, discriminates against thousands of military families and their right to health care.

The bill heads next to the president, who is expected to sign it into law.

The backlash to Johnson’s provision overshadowed what historically is an overwhelming display of bipartisanship to pass the NDAA, and left some Democrats alarmed as Republicans prepare to take full control of Congress next month. Others, including some of the bill’s key drafters, expressed bitterness that the process had been hijacked after months of good-faith negotiations between members of both political parties from the House and Senate.

In the House last week, lawmakers passed the NDAA 281-140. Fewer than half of the chamber’s Democrats voted in favor of it after the Armed Services Committee’s top Democrat blasted Johnson’s provision as a “partisan wedge issue” that would prove “deeply damaging” to U.S. service members and their families.

The anger carried over into the Senate, where Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) led 20 other

senators in a largely symbolic, and ultimately unsuccessful, effort to strike Johnson’s provision from the legislation. On Tuesday, she said she was so appalled by its inclusion that she would vote against the NDAA for the first time in her Senate career — “a position I do not take lightly,” she added.

“It’s flat-out wrong,” she said on the Senate floor, saying the policy “guts our service members’ rights” simply “to score cheap political points.” If not for that provision, Baldwin said, “I would have been proud to support it.”

The NDAA sets Pentagon and U.S. national security policy for the year ahead. Republicans and Democrats alike have lauded the bill’s 14.5 percent pay increase for junior enlisted troops, along with its authorization for spending increases on military quality-of-life issues. The bill also strengthens U.S. defenses against China and expands investment in new military technologies and replenishing U.S. weapons stockpiles, they said.

Several senior Democratic senators said that while they shared their colleagues’ frustration with the transgender-care provision, the NDAA was too important to fail.

“The NDAA is not perfect, but it still makes several important advances Democrats fought for,” Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) said Wednesday on the Senate floor, praising the bill’s “strong stand” against China and its authorized investment in artificial intelligence.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island), who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Wednesday ahead of the vote that he shares his “colleagues’ frustration” and that he voted against Johnson’s “frankly misguided provision” during the negotiation



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

**Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) said the National Defense Authorization Act, though imperfect, “still makes several important advances Democrats fought for.”**

process.

Reed earlier this week told reporters that Democrats had also been “successful in stripping out the vast majority of very far-right provisions that had passed in the House bill,” and stressed the bill’s larger mission to provide the resources the military needs to successfully defend America. “We have a duty to support our servicemen and women ... and we believe this bill, by and large, accomplishes that,” he said.

Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Virginia), who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he worried that Johnson’s provision could set a dangerous precedent for the inclusion of other “social policy riders” in future NDAA’s, which in turn could threaten the annual policy bill’s decades-long record of consistent passage.

“But at the end of the day, I’m not going to sink the whole defense and intel bill,” he said in an interview.

Johnson’s provision states that “medical interventions for the treatment of gender dysphoria” — a medical diagnosis for those whose gender identity is different

from their biological sex at birth — “that could result in sterilization may not be provided to a child under the age of 18,” something medical professionals say does not happen in most cases.

Republican supporters of the move, many of whom, like Johnson, have sought to limit transgender rights and treatments more broadly, portrayed the provision as protecting children from the potentially permanent consequences of medical treatments administered to them as minors.

Democrats framed it as an act born of bigotry and ignorance that would deny potentially life-saving treatments to adolescents struggling with gender dysphoria, a population with a high prevalence of suicide.

It is unclear how many children will be affected by the provision. The House Armed Services Committee’s Democratic staff said the Pentagon told them it would affect thousands of families.

In 2017, there were 2,500 minors receiving such health care through the military’s TRICARE health system, according to a report circulated by the American

Civil Liberties Union. The Williams Institute, a UCLA-based think tank that researches gender identity and sexual orientation laws, says that nationwide there are about 300,000 youth aged 13 to 18 who identify as transgender, and that 0.6 percent of the total U.S. population identifies as transgender.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike D. Rogers (R-Alabama) told reporters last week that Johnson’s provision was unnecessary because President-elect Donald Trump is likely to enact the same policy — with or without Congress — once he takes office next month.

Senior lawmakers from both parties have sought to highlight what the NDAA does accomplish. For instance, the bill authorizes a significant pay increase for junior enlisted U.S. service members, whose lagging salaries have forced many military families to resort to food stamps and other forms of public assistance — circumstances that have shocked members of both parties in hearings held over the past two years.

It also authorizes roughly

\$3 billion to improve military housing, including the replacement of dilapidated and crumbling barracks. And it will expand child care and other benefits to a military that lawmakers say has failed to offer competitive career options amid a worsening recruitment crisis.

The bill authorizes the expansion of U.S. military resources to assist with migrant interdiction on the border with Mexico and expands U.S. assistance to Israel — core Republican priorities.

It does not authorize additional military assistance for Ukraine, an issue where many Republicans now echo Trump’s skepticism about continuing to aid Kyiv’s efforts to repel Russia’s full-scale invasion. Instead, it requires the administration to provide Congress with an assessment of the “likely course of war in Ukraine,” including whether its military will be able to “to defend against Russian aggression” if the United States stops providing support.

The bill also does not include an additional \$25 billion to its top line. The additional funding for missile defense, shipbuilding and counter-drone technology was approved over the summer by the Senate Armed Services Committee, at the urging of its top Republican, Sen. Roger Wicker (Mississippi), but was abandoned in the final bill negotiated between the House and Senate.

Wicker on Wednesday called the NDAA “a good bill,” but scolded Congress for having “missed the opportunity to strengthen” Trump’s hand as he takes office next month and confronts what Wicker described as “the most dangerous national security moment since World War II.”

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) this week also derided the NDAA as a “compromised product” for its failure to include those additional funds.

“The absence of the Senate-backed increase to top-line investments will go down as a tremendous, tremendous missed opportunity,” McConnell said on the Senate floor Monday.

Mariana Alfaro contributed to this report.



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Richard N. Merkin (left), F. William Studier (right)

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# With broadsides on X, Musk upends vote on spending

Shutdown had appeared unlikely before leader of ‘DOGE’ panel stepped in

BY FAIZ SIDDIQUI,  
JACOB BOGAGE,  
JEFF STEIN  
AND TONY ROMM

Congressional leaders had lined up on Tuesday to approve a spending bill that would avert a government shutdown — before Elon Musk, President-elect Donald Trump’s “first buddy,” injected himself into the conversation in the wee hours of Wednesday morning.

With a five-word post on X, Musk threw the process into chaos.

“This bill should not pass,” the Tesla and SpaceX CEO wrote at 4:15 a.m. Eastern time, a message that reverberated across Washington, where some took it as the strongest signal yet of the new reality under the head of the “Department of Government Efficiency,” Trump’s nongovernmental panel charged with finding ways to slash federal spending.

Over the ensuing 12 hours, Musk went on a prolific tirade against the bill — with more than 60 updates, some of which boosted false claims — that stood out even for a chronic poster who has commanded an audience of more than 200 million followers by broadcasting his largely uninhibited views on the site he owns.

By midday, Musk’s barrage was increasingly acerbic, decrying the bill as “terrible,” “criminal,” “outrageous,” “horrible,” “unconscionable,” “crazy” and, ultimately, “an insane crime.” He also took aim at those who would support it.

“Any member of the House or Senate who votes for this outrageous spending bill deserves to be voted out in 2 years!” Musk wrote shortly after 1 p.m. Wednesday.

To leaders in Washington, it appeared he was serious. Musk did not respond to a request for comment.

Musk’s word on the funding extension ricocheted around Capitol Hill, as lawmakers jockeyed to invoke his DOGE as reason to reject the legislation that would put off a Christmastime government shutdown.

“It’s good that they’re seeing this, that they’re seeing the failure of Congress now, so they can start and so they can understand how to come after us when they get here,” said Rep. Eric Burlison (R-Missouri), an active member of the House’s DOGE Caucus.

About an hour after Musk’s threat of retribution, the billion-



TOM BRENNER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

On Capitol Hill, Republican lawmakers invoked the “Department of Government Efficiency” as reason to reject the spending legislation.

aire followed up with a new directive: “No bills should be passed Congress until Jan. 20, when @realDonaldTrump takes office.”

“None,” he added. “Zero.” The approach appeared to work, as support fractured even among some establishment Republicans who earlier appeared inclined to support the measure. (A large bloc of conservative rebels already opposed the bill before Musk got involved.)

Burlison posted on X that Johnson’s funding bill was “the very thing the incoming Department of Government Efficiency is trying to put an end to. A vote for this monstrosity is a vote against DOGE.”

Musk endorsed the sentiment: “Absolutely,” he responded.

Alerted to the tech entrepreneur’s endorsement, Burlison grinned and snickered.

“It’s awesome,” he said. Rep. Andy Harris (R-Maryland), chair of the archconservative House Freedom Caucus, told The Washington Post that Musk’s opposition aligned with DOGE’s goals — and he was getting results even before Trump takes office.

“He’s been given a huge responsibility to try to control the size and growth of the federal government, and, I guess, like a lot of people who are used to running businesses, they don’t wait until tomorrow to start,” Harris said. “They’re given a goal, and they start as soon as possible.”

Underscoring the rapid pace of events, less than 12 hours after

Musk first condemned the spending bill, the billionaire was taking a victory lap.

“Your elected representatives have heard you and now the terrible bill is dead,” he said. “The voice of the people has triumphed!”

Longtime political observers were stunned by the swift impact of Musk’s intervention.

Trump stayed largely silent on the measure through Wednesday afternoon, putting Musk in the unusual position of exerting more influence on the bill than the incoming president. Finally, by late afternoon, Trump, too, aired his opposition.

“Republicans must GET SMART and TOUGH. If Democrats threaten to shut down the government unless we give them

everything they want, then CALL THEIR BLUFF,” he said in a joint statement with Vice President-elect JD Vance. “... THIS CHAOS WOULD NOT BE HAPPENING IF WE HAD A REAL PRESIDENT. WE WILL IN 32 DAYS!”

But it was Musk who seemed to force the tipping point.

“Elon is having an incredible effect,” said Gordon Gray, executive director at Pinpoint Policy Institute, a center-right think tank, who noted the “real-time” shift. “I am struggling to recall another instance where an unelected public figure has exercised that kind of influence.”

Still, Musk’s campaign relied on or repeated at least some false claims.

He reposted a claim that the

legislation includes a “40% pay raise for Congress,” calling it “unconscionable.” The DOGE account also said on X that the legislation would raise pay for members of Congress to \$243,000, up from \$174,000.

It is unclear where that number came from. The legislation includes language allowing a 3.8 percent pay bump to take effect, which would result in a pay raise for lawmakers of \$6,600 — far short of what Musk claimed, according to a statement from Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine), who said he would oppose the bill because it allowed the pay raise. Congress has blocked its own cost-of-living allowance increases since 2009.

Musk also amplified false claims that the legislation included \$3 billion in federal funds for a new football stadium in the District. In fact, the provision would transfer the land where RFK Stadium sits to the local government, but it provided no funding, and the city would still have to negotiate with the National Football League’s Washington Commanders over a stadium deal.

Similarly, Musk shared allegations that the legislation included \$60 billion in new aid for Ukraine. Two congressional aides and Brian Riedl, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, said that they had no idea where the number came from and that the bill appeared to have no major new funds for Kyiv. Congress approved \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine this spring.

“I have no idea what he’s talking about — where is that even coming from? Maybe the bill that passed in April?” said one of the aides, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter candidly. “It’s not in there — if you have any evidence of that, I’d like to know.”

But the damage was already done.

Little over a month after an election in which Musk put \$277 million behind supporting Trump and other Republicans, the tech entrepreneur appeared to have successfully sunk a continuing resolution to shut down the government.

“A guy who dropped \$250 million in the last election and doesn’t blink an eye, and can mobilize Republican voters through his social media platform, that’s an intimidating guy,” said Robert Weissman, the co-president of Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group that supports limits on corporate spending in politics. “Having demonstrated his willingness to spend hundreds of millions of dollars, every politician knows they could be next. And the ones most vulnerable are Republicans who might be primaried.”

# In reversal, House Ethics Committee will release Gaetz investigation report

BY JACQUELINE ALEMANY  
AND MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

The House Ethics Committee is set to release its report on former congressman Matt Gaetz (R-Florida) this week, a reversal for the panel that last month voted along party lines not to release the results of a long-running investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct and drug use.

The panel voted this month to release the report, which will be made public as soon as House lawmakers take their final vote for the year, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss confidential deliberations. CNN first reported on the panel’s secret vote to release its report.

The committee’s turnaround

was the culmination of a contentious debate over whether to release the report after Gaetz had resigned from Congress and withdrawn from consideration for attorney general. A majority vote of the committee is required to publicly release a report, meaning that at least one Republican lawmaker joined with Democrats on the matter.

The 10-member panel initially voted to table the report after Trump named Gaetz as his pick to be the nation’s top law enforcement official. The Florida lawmaker submitted his resignation shortly thereafter — and days before the committee was expected to meet to vote on the release of the investigation.

Rep. Michael Guest (Mississippi), the committee chairman, along with other prominent Re-



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

House Ethics Chairman Michael Guest (R-Mississippi) had argued against releasing the report since Matt Gaetz had left Congress.

publicans, argued against disclosing the report since Gaetz was no longer in Congress or Trump’s pick, but Democrats still pushed for its release.

House Republicans successfully quashed a resolution introduced by Rep. Sean Casten (D-Illinois) that would have forced all House lawmakers to vote on making the report public and another resolution by Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tennessee) that asked the panel to preserve all documents investigating Gaetz.

Gaetz has denied all of the allegations, and the Justice Department did not bring charges in a 2022 trafficking investigation.

But the House Ethics Committee investigation, opened in 2021, continued with the committee announcing this summer that it had identified new lines of inqui-

ry that merited review, including whether Gaetz had “dispensed special privileges and favors to individuals with whom he had a personal relationship, and sought to obstruct government investigations of his conduct.”

Last month, new details emerged about Gaetz’s conduct, including testimony provided to the panel by a woman who said she witnessed him having sex with a 17-year-old at a drug-fueled party.

Gaetz on Wednesday once again denied the charges. “My 30’s were an era of working very hard — and playing hard too,” he wrote on X.

“It’s embarrassing, though not criminal, that I probably partied, womanized, drank and smoked more than I should have earlier in life. I live a different life now.”

# Justices quickly take up challenge to TikTok ban

COURT FROM AI

President-elect Donald Trump, who will take office Jan. 20, has suggested he could try to retain access to the app, adding to the uncertainty surrounding the ban-or-sale law.

Lawmakers passed the measure in response to concerns from U.S. officials that TikTok could be pressured by the Chinese government to covertly manipulate public opinion in the United States or to provide access to Americans’ data.

TikTok has said in court filings that the law is a “massive and unprecedented speech restriction” that will “silence the speech of applicants and the many Americans who use the platform

to communicate about politics, commerce, arts and other matters of public concern.”

The justices will be reviewing a unanimous decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, which sided with the Justice Department and said the law does not violate the First Amendment in part because it does not target a specific viewpoint.

“The First Amendment exists to protect free speech in the United States,” wrote Judge Douglas Ginsburg, who was joined by Judge Neomi Rao and Chief Judge Sri Srinivasan. “Here the Government acted solely to protect that freedom from a foreign adversary nation.”

Srinivasan, writing separately,

said even though millions of Americans may lose an outlet for expression, “the record reflects that Congress’s decision was considered, consistent with longstanding regulatory practice, and devoid of an institutional aim to suppress particular messages or ideas.”

The Supreme Court moved with extraordinary speed this week, agreeing to take the case two days after TikTok filed its emergency request and without waiting for a response from the Biden administration, as is its usual practice.

In its brief order Wednesday, the Supreme Court put off a decision about whether to temporarily block the ban-or-sell law while the litigation continues. The justices could put the measure on hold at some point after oral argument or allow it to take effect as planned.

The court’s ruling will have broad implications for TikTok’s more than 170 million U.S. users

and for the future of free speech online. In recent terms, the court has reviewed other cases involving government interactions with social media platforms, but without issuing decisive opinions on the merits.

In a statement Wednesday, a TikTok spokesperson said, “We believe the Court will find the TikTok ban unconstitutional so the over 170 million Americans on our platform can continue to exercise their free speech rights.”

Many U.S. online-content creators depend on advertising revenue from TikTok for their livelihoods, while other small-business owners use the platform for marketing. Numerous other Americans, particularly young adults and teenagers, use TikTok as part of their daily entertainment.

Determined TikTok users in the United States would probably be able to access the app through a VPN or other methods, with enforcement expected to

focus on companies that run app stores rather than on individual users.

The case has attracted high-level interest. On Wednesday, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) filed an amicus brief in which he called TikTok’s emergency application for a stay “meritless and unsound” and urged the court to allow the divestiture requirement to take effect Jan. 19.

“TikTok clearly hopes that the next administration will be more sympathetic to its plight than the incumbent administration,” he wrote.

In a statement from the Chinese Embassy ahead of the court’s announcement, a spokesperson said TikTok is “fully registered in accordance with U.S. laws, operates legally and compliantly, and is subject to U.S. oversight.”

The United States “should genuinely respect the principles of market economy and fair com-

petition, stop unjustly suppressing foreign companies, and provide an open, fair, just, and non-discriminatory environment for foreign businesses operating in the U.S.,” the statement said.

China has long barred access to American social media platforms, including Google, YouTube and Instagram.

Civil liberties advocates have urged the court not to allow the U.S. government to limit free speech based on what they characterized as speculative harm.

“The U.S. government should not be able to restrict speech, in this case by cutting off a tool used by 170 million Americans to receive information and communicate with the world, without proving with evidence that the tools are presently seriously harmful,” said David Greene, civil liberties director at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which joined an amicus brief in support of TikTok’s position.



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# Justice Dept. reviews legal team that investigated Trump

Standard action follows complaint about special counsel prosecutor

BY PERRY STEIN  
AND JACQUELINE ALEMANY

The Justice Department is conducting an internal review to determine whether special counsel Jack Smith and his team of prosecutors ran afoul of any agency regulations when prosecuting Donald Trump, according to court filings, a letter to Congress and people familiar with the probe, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it.

The Office of Professional Responsibility — a division within the Justice Department — opened the review after a prosecutor reported that a defense attorney in one of Trump's cases had accused him of misconduct. It is standard procedure for Justice Department prosecutors to make such reports when wrongdoing is alleged.

The initiation of an internal review does not suggest that the Justice Department believes that any wrongdoing occurred. Under Justice Department regulations, prosecutors are required to report to the OPR when defense attorneys allege improper conduct — and the OPR is required to investigate.

The scope of the internal probe could be broader than examining just that one prosecutor. Probes by the OPR are typically comprehensive and could look at other allegations made by Trump and his allies against prosecutors on Smith's team, as well as Republican claims that the FBI manipulated evidence it seized when conducting a court-approved search for classified material at Trump's Mar-a-Lago property in Florida.

The Justice Department has denied those accusations, and the judges who oversaw the two federal cases against Trump have not sided with the defense in any of its allegations of investigative or prosecutorial misconduct.

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), a Trump ally who chairs the House Judiciary Committee and has been sharply critical of Smith's team, has been asking the Justice Department about the OPR investigation. In a letter he wrote this month to Jeffrey Ragsdale, head of the Office of Professional Responsibility, the congressman raised questions about the probe and confirmed that the Justice Department had briefed him on



Special counsel Jack Smith prepares to address new indictments of former president Donald Trump in Washington in August 2023.

it. The Justice Department replied Wednesday afternoon with a letter that explained OPR's investigation process. The letter, which was obtained by The Washington Post, said Ragsdale expects to complete the investigation in 2025.

The OPR does not typically launch internal probes until the criminal investigations they stem from are complete. In this case, the office started taking significant steps only in recent weeks, after Smith said he was winding down the two federal prosecutions of Trump in the wake of his presidential election victory.

“Such a practice ensures that the OPR process is not inappropriately used to disrupt an ongoing prosecution and avoids interference with the court's own

supervision of the case,” the Justice Department wrote in its letter to Jordan. “The policy also allows OPR to consider the allegations as a whole, after the record is complete, and in the context of the full litigation.”

One federal case against Trump accused him of mishandling classified documents after leaving office and obstructing government efforts to retrieve them. The other alleged that Trump illegally tried to block the results of Joe Biden's 2020 election victory. Both cases against Trump have now ended, due to long-standing Justice Department policy that prohibits prosecuting a sitting president. Trump's lawyers are also trying to use his election to get his state conviction in the New York hush money case thrown out, and to end his state indictment in

Georgia on election-interference charges.

Trump has vowed as president to go after Smith and his team, and the president-elect's picks for attorney general and FBI director — Pam Bondi and Kash Patel, respectively — have voiced similar sentiments. FBI Director Christopher A. Wray announced last week that he would step down next month, with three years left in his 10-year term. Trump had indicated he would fire Wray once he took office, to clear the way for Patel to head the law-enforcement agency.

Jordan has used his perch atop the GOP conference's most powerful committee to probe those involved with investigating the president-elect. He is expected to again chair the House Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, and has al-

ready demanded that any records related to Smith's investigation be preserved, which Justice Department employees are required to do. Jordan has also vowed to investigate David Weiss, the special counsel who oversaw the investigation of Hunter Biden, son of the current president.

Jordan criticized Ragsdale in the letter, accusing him of not aggressively looking into the allegations against the special-counsel team and of not providing his committee with ample information about the internal review.

“The information that you have provided only reinforces our concerns that OPR acts more to protect Department prosecutors than to root out prosecutorial misconduct,” Jordan wrote. “While we appreciate you con-

firming an open investigation into Jack Smith's prosecutors, we are concerned that your refusal to take prompt investigative steps will allow these attorneys to evade internal accountability by leaving the Department.”

Ragsdale is a longtime Justice Department prosecutor who was tapped to head the OPR by Attorney General William P. Barr during the first Trump administration. He and the few dozen attorneys who report to him are career employees, not political appointees, which means the internal probe should continue with little interruption once Trump returns to the White House. The office would submit a report at the end of its investigation, parts of which could be made public.

In a filing unsealed this year in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida — the jurisdiction that oversaw Trump's classified-documents case — the special-counsel team said it was referring an allegation involving prosecutor Jay Bratt to the OPR, even as it defended Bratt's conduct.

“The allegation is false,” says the filing, which was submitted in 2023. “Nonetheless, in an abundance of caution, the Special Counsel's Office and Mr. Bratt are referring the allegation to the Office of Professional Responsibility.”

According to the filing, Bratt — a veteran national security prosecutor and special-counsel team member — reported himself to the OPR.

He did so after Stanley Woodward, the lawyer for one of Trump's co-defendants in the classified-document case, accused Bratt in 2022 of inappropriately mentioning Woodward's application for a judgeship as prosecutors tried to get his client to cooperate with investigators.

The OPR is responsible for examining the conduct of the department's prosecutors who are accused of wrongdoing during investigations. Among its best-known efforts: a probe into the botched prosecution of former senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska).

Stevens was found guilty in 2008 of lying on his financial disclosure forms to conceal his receipt of gifts and expensive renovations to his house. The judge overturned the conviction amid allegations of misconduct.

The OPR's internal investigation found that two attorneys “engaged in reckless prosecutorial misconduct” by failing to hand over key evidence to the defense — which is required by law. The two prosecutors were suspended.

## Study suggests syphilis originated in Americas

SYPHILIS FROM AI

syphilis, but added that it wouldn't close the debate.

“This paper, by being able to anchor when and where it emerged, is going to be fundamental in improving our basic knowledge of syphilis, and therefore act as building a foundation for additional work,” said Molly Zuckerman, a paleopathologist at Mississippi State University.

### Tracking the ‘great imitator’

Today, syphilis and other treponemal diseases caused by subspecies of the same bacteria — including the neglected tropical diseases, yaws and bejel — remain a public health threat. There are more than 8 million new infections of syphilis a year globally. Yaws, a disfiguring skin disease caused by a closely related bacterial infection is endemic in 15 countries.

These illnesses are treatable with antibiotics today, but Zuckerman sees understanding how these diseases emerged as key to unlocking a present-day mystery: why is syphilis so variable in its symptoms today — which helps it to go undiagnosed and untreated.

For decades, the major tool scientists had to probe these ancient questions were examinations of skeletal remains. Syphilis is a disfiguring illness that damages organs and causes neurological problems in the long run, but it also leaves marks on a person's skeleton, including pitted bones.

Scientists have found evidence of ancient skeletons with such lesions in the Americas. But there were also some accounts of “venereal leprosy” from Medieval Europe and European skeletons have been unearthed with bone-scarring that resembles syphilis, lines of evidence that suggested it may have already been in Europe. The disease is sometimes called

the “great imitator” because its symptoms can be so similar to others.

The science of ancient DNA opened up new opportunities to go beyond interpreting lesions and pin down the evolutionary history of syphilis.

It is particularly hard to get ahold of the microbe, *Treponema pallidum*, that causes the disease in ancient samples, said Anne Stone, an anthropological geneticist at Arizona State University. That makes the new study featuring ancient genomes especially exciting — though she said the results also raise new puzzles.

### Syphilis-like diseases

The researchers recovered ancient DNA from bacteria that are the extinct precursors of the microbe that causes modern-day syphilis, as well as bejel and yaws.

They used those genomes to estimate when the most recent ancestor to *Treponema pallidum* emerged, and found that it was 8,000 years ago. That fits best with a New World origin for this group of diseases. But Stone questioned whether that date might get pushed back as more ancient genomes are found, pointing out that much of the world is a black box with a lack of samples to say whether the disease existed or not. She noted that the turn of the 15th century was a time when people were roving the world.

“It's not just the Americas that we're ‘discovering’ — it's also a time when people are exploring the world in general and going to all sorts of places — and it's basically a bunch of lonely sailors on a boat. There's the various trade routes, and we have no ancient DNA from the rest of the world on this pathogen,” she said. “This study is great, in the sense we have more data and more genomes.”

A study of ancient DNA from *Treponema pallidum* infections



RODRIGO NORES



DARÍO RAMÍREZ

**FROM TOP: Darío Ramirez processes a human bone at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. A skeletal upper hip that yielded an ancient syphilis-like genome. Ancient DNA from lesion-ridden bones or teeth of five people who lived in Peru, Chile, Argentina and Mexico were harvested for the study.**

published in Nature in January — which is currently under editorial review because questions have been raised about its data and conclusions — found a timeline that was earlier and which could have placed the emergence of syphilis-like diseases before people arrived in the Americas, suggesting it would have already been in Europe before Columbus voyaged back.

Kerttu Majander, an archaeogeneticist at the University of Basel who led that study, said the new work shows unprecedented diversity of disease-causing bacteria in the Americas, making it clear Columbus didn't bring them to the Americas. But the question of whether there were already treponemal diseases already in Europe in some form “cannot be really proved or disproved” by this data.

Another outstanding question is why the version of the disease that swept Europe was so severe. Ancient genomes from Europe have shown that *Treponema pallidum* was present during the late 15th century — including yaws and syphilis. But the uncertainties around dating the skeletons makes it impossible to know whether these specimens were from before or after Columbus.

Understanding the differences between the subspecies that cause these different, but related, diseases is a key question for scientists trying to understand these diseases today.

“This could tell us more about why these diseases (syphilis, yaws, bejel) have such different disease presentations, and if we can find ways to optimise treatment and patient management as a result. The Origins [of syphilis] are only important if they can help answer that question,” Mathew Beale, a senior staff scientist who studies bacterial evolutionary genetics at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, wrote in an email. He added that as is so often the case in science, the story is likely far from settled: “It is plausible that each set of new genomes will change things, repeatedly reopening the story.”



# Pentagon report warns of China’s rapid military buildup

Anti-corruption purge may have hampered push for modernization

BY CATE CADELL

China’s crackdown on corruption that has ensnared top military officials and several key People’s Liberation Army units has affected the country’s defense buildup, but it continues at a rapid pace, said a Pentagon assessment released Wednesday. The report noted that the scandals may have shaken Beijing’s confidence in senior military leadership as it races to modernize its armed forces in the coming years.

Since summer 2022, the Chinese government has purged a number of senior military officials, allegedly for graft, in a wide-ranging campaign that has included the disappearance of two defense ministers and the dismissal of top leaders at the country’s powerful missile development program, the PLA Rocket Force. China’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the government anti-corruption agency, has continued to release a trickle of indictments — most recently the announcement last month that one of the country’s highest-ranking officers, Adm. Miao Hua, has been suspended on graft charges.

The Pentagon’s China Military Power Report — an annual unclassified briefing to Congress on Beijing’s military progress — said the purge touched every service of the PLA and may have hampered progress toward key military modernizations goals.

“The substantial problems they have with corruption that have yet to be resolved certainly could slow them down on the path toward the 2027 capabilities development milestone and beyond,” said a senior defense official, referring to Beijing’s military modernization plans, and speaking on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the Pentagon. U.S. military and intelligence officials have broadly highlighted 2027 as the year when China’s military could be capable of invading Taiwan, though Beijing has never publicly indicated a timeline for



People’s Liberation Army soldiers march past a banner depicting Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing in 2020.

ANDY WONG/AP

annexing the self-governing island it claims as its own.

Speaking at an event after the report’s release Wednesday, Ely Ratner, the assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, said that it’s likely the effects of the PLA purge will continue for some time, and that it could serve to “paralyze” lower-level officials who may fear similar retribution.

“It’s just the tip of the iceberg, and one should expect that this is something that’s going to continue,” he said. “I think the dramatic nature of the anti-corruption hunt would only be the case if they thought it was really eroding [the PLA’s] effect.”

The Pentagon report said that the purge of the country’s elite Rocket Force may be connected to fraud in the procurement and construction of missile silos, but that subsequent repairs to those faci-

ties initiated as a result of the investigation could ultimately increase operational readiness.

Despite the impact of the crackdown, the Pentagon assesses that China has continued to make rapid advancements. Its arsenal of nuclear missiles had grown to over 600 as of May — up from around 200 in 2020 — putting it on track to exceed 1,000 by the end of the decade. The report assessed that the PLA has also increased the number of silo fields, now totaling more than 320 across remote desert sites in western China and Inner Mongolia.

The official said that the buildup was notable not just for the number of warheads but for the assortment of its nuclear missiles. China is working to construct a missile force that ranges from low-yield tactical weapons to long-range ballistic missiles — allowing it to account for different levels of

escalation.

The Chinese nuclear arsenal is “not only growing in terms of the numbers of operationally deployed warheads, but also in a certain diversity and sophistication,” the person said.

Beijing has also made significant headway in its air force and navy and is rapidly catching up to U.S. capabilities in several areas, the report said. The Chinese navy — already the world’s largest in terms of vessels — has ratcheted up pressure on Taiwan with unprecedented drills encircling the island. Last week, Taiwanese defense officials said China has deployed the largest fleet of navy vessels in almost three decades, in a surprise drill of over 90 military and coast guard vessels near Taiwan, the southern Japanese islands, and the East and South China Sea.

This year’s Pentagon report also

noted the growing potential of attacks that could target Guam — the U.S. territory closest to China, which hosts significant military infrastructure. It said that Guam is a likely target for cyberattacks and that the PLA’s increasingly sophisticated missile program put it within range of land-based nuclear weapons and maritime attacks.

China’s air force has made significant strides in modernizing its aircraft, including upgraded fighter jets and bombers, and is “rapidly approaching technology typical of U.S. standards.” The report noted that the technology of China’s unmanned aerial systems, or drones, had reached levels comparable to the U.S. military.

China’s space capabilities have also continued to expand rapidly. The Pentagon report estimated that in 2023, China conducted 67 space launches — second only to

the United States — putting over 200 satellites in orbit.

A Chinese Embassy spokesman in Washington criticized the report’s intentions and said Beijing adheres to a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons.

“Such reports are filled with ‘Cold War’ thinking and zero-sum game mentality, which China firmly opposes. We hope the U.S. will objectively and rationally assess China’s strategic intentions and defense construction, cease issuing irresponsible reports year after year,” spokesman Liu Pengyu said in a statement.

China is accelerating its efforts to achieve key 2027 military goals as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office, setting the stage for a high-stakes recalibration of U.S.-China relations. On Monday, he struck a cooperative tone, suggesting that Beijing and Washington could “work together to solve all of the problems of the world.” Yet Trump has also issued stark warnings, including a pledge to impose 60 percent tariffs on Chinese imports.

The true extent of how much China’s military has been affected by the purge is difficult to assess, as are the specific projects that have come under scrutiny.

In August, the Rocket Force accused three of China’s top universities of rigging procurement bids for military technology and banned them from participating in purchases until late 2027. President Xi Jinping has stressed a need to increase discipline across all sections of the military, including during an October visit to the Rocket Force, the first since he overhauled the unit’s leadership.

China is also grappling with a sluggish economy, which could further strain efforts to modernize its military.

The Pentagon has previously said it believes China’s total military spending exceeds its officially published figures. This year, it revised estimates upward, suggesting that annual spending could be as high as 90 percent more than the reported figure.

In 2023, Beijing officially disclosed a defense budget of approximately \$220 billion. Even at the high end of the estimate, China’s total military spending would still amount to roughly half of the U.S. defense budget.







MARVELOUS  
and  
BRIGHT











































































































PHOTOS BY CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

CHAPTER 1

The ‘Voice of Maypearl’

MAYPEARL FROM A1

Here in Maypearl, there are several unshakable truths. Friday nights are best spent at the high school, rooting for the Panthers. The most interesting gossip (and cheapest beer) is found at the Busy Bee Cafe. And never, ever mess with Geneva Zoll. Known to everyone as just Geneva, the 49-year-old farmer and grandmother is widely seen as the unofficial mayor of Maypearl. In this city of less than 1,000 south of Dallas, Geneva could always be found at the holiday and homecoming parades, giving out

hugs. She ran a Facebook group called “Voice of Maypearl.” She offered blunt, sometimes profanity-laced advice while she poured coffee at the Busy Bee or the Rock’n R diner on Main Street. At night, when the diner turned into a bar, Geneva’s husband, Zach, could be seen singing onstage in his denim overalls, a beer in each hand. “Everybody in Maypearl knows everybody and knows their business — whether you want them to or not,” Geneva said. Whenever there was a problem in Maypearl, people found Geneva. She’d once led an effort to get rid of a police officer who was

accused of harassing residents, constantly pulling them over for no good reason. After Geneva helped get that cop off the force, she thought the town’s problem with its police department was over. But then, one day in 2015, a 16-year-old girl approached Geneva at the Rock’n R. The girl said the worst officer was still in Maypearl. The proof, she said, was on her broken cellphone. If Geneva could get the phone fixed, she would find messages the teen had been receiving from someone the community revered — its police chief, Kevin Coffey.

Farmer and grandmother Geneva Zoll is known as the unofficial mayor of Maypearl, a small community south of Dallas.

CHAPTER 2

‘Horrible’ Texts

After Geneva shelled out \$150 to repair the cellphone, she started reading message after message from the chief.

Chief Kevin Coffey

Girl u don't wanna see me cause then I'd have to cuff you and put u on the hood again haha

The teen

Shit you wouldn't throw me in jail youd sit there and talk shit and laugh

I'd cuff u and put u on the hood again and smack that ass lol

No yall have cameras don't need to be like what's his face

Haha speed and find out

“I wanted him gone,” Geneva said. “It was horrifying to know that someone in charge of your town, supposed to be protecting these kids, is actually doing this.” The 16-year-old was named Alissa. Her parents owned the Rock’n R. She’d grown up around Maypearl — and knew that it was no small thing to accuse a chief of sexual misconduct. Her encounters with Coffey had started when she was around 14. After getting in trouble for underage drinking, she said, her punishment had been an act of community service: cleaning City Hall. Coffey, who was more than three decades older than her, came by as she was working. Alissa said he told her that her butt looked good in the jeans she was wearing. Then he instructed the teen to dust his office. The chief began messaging the high-schooler on Facebook and Snapchat. Alissa would later report that Coffey flashed his police cruiser lights into her window. He frequently touched her, she said, rubbing her arm, running his hand through her hair. He took photos of her in his patrol car. He sent her a



Alissa asked Geneva for help in 2015 after Coffey sent the teen explicit messages.

“He knew exactly where I was going and what I was doing. ... It just seemed like every corner I would take, he was there.”

Alissa, describing her encounters with Coffey

picture of his handcuffs, saying, “One of these days.” Geneva wanted Coffey to be fired and arrested. But who, she wondered, would she report him to? He had the top job at the police department. He was cozy with the city’s mayor. So Geneva called and texted the sheriff of Ellis County, where Maypearl is located. Surely, Geneva thought, the sheriff would take action against a police chief sending sexual messages to a child. But Sheriff Johnny Brown told her that he couldn’t help.

Geneva

I do have this cell phone that you could get messages from a 14 year old girl to our chief of police they do not want to file a formal complaint the mom nor the daughter what is my other options. The girl is 16 years old now

Sheriff Johnny Brown

Geneva, unfortunately they have to be the ones to file . I can't pursue something if they don't want action sorry. If you have a concern you might take the phone to the mayor for a counsel member you trust and let them at least take care of getting rid of him

Geneva couldn’t let it go. While trying to persuade Alissa’s family to file a report, she looked for someone in law enforcement who would do something. Eventually, Ellis County prosecutors learned of the accusations and formally launched an investigation with the Texas Rangers, a state law enforcement agency. For five weeks after Geneva complained, Coffey remained in power. Brown, who is no longer sheriff, defended his actions to The Washington Post, saying that without cooperation from the girl and her family, he had no case. But the district attorney at the time, Patrick Wilson, was furious. “If someone tells you that there’s a police chief who may be having inappropriate sexual relationships with minors,” Wilson said, “you don’t sit on that information.”



CHAPTER 3

A Chief’s Power

Geneva wasn’t the first adult Alissa had confided in about Coffey’s behavior. About a year earlier, the teen had complained to her mom. At first, her mom said, she encouraged her daughter to ignore Coffey, rather than risk reporting the chief in such a small town: “We kept thinking, this is gonna stop.”

“My parents were just like, ‘Leave it alone,’” Alissa said. “They didn’t want it to affect the small business they were running. So I kept my mouth shut.”

Later, when Alissa’s mom learned from Geneva that Coffey was still targeting her daughter, she finally realized: The chief wasn’t going to stop, unless someone stopped him.

Speaking out against law enforcement is especially difficult in small towns, where cops are deeply embedded in the communities they serve. For the residents, there are often fewer avenues to lodge misconduct complaints and less protection from retaliation.

Like Maypearl, nearly half of all local police departments across America have fewer than 10 full-time sworn officers. Their chiefs wield tremendous power.

A Post investigation identified 47 heads of law enforcement agencies who were charged with crimes involving child sexual abuse from 2005 through 2022. Three-quarters of them worked in departments with fewer than 10 cops.

“When it comes to the police, people are just so scared to say anything,” Geneva said. “They’re so scared for their own safety, or to go to jail, or get a ticket or harassment from it.”

Coffey had spent years gaining the trust of Maypearl’s parents after getting hired there in 2010 as a patrol officer. He followed up with teens after car accidents. He quickly responded to reports of runaways.

But some high-schoolers, like Mallory Meyer, knew things weren’t quite right, even before Coffey got promoted to chief. He’d often message her friends. Once, Mallory said, she’d heard him encourage a teen girl to twerk on his police cruiser. By the time she saw Coffey with Alissa on his lap at the Rock’n R, where Mallory was a waitress, she had already been complaining to her father.

Her dad, James Meyer, went to Shannon Bachman, the man who was Maypearl’s police



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

“It felt like we were screaming and my dad was screaming and no one could hear us.”

Mallory Meyer

chief at the time. Bachman would later maintain in a court affidavit that James talked about an officer making girls uncomfortable but didn’t give specifics.

“Everybody said the same thing,” Coffey’s old boss told The Post. “Oh, he’s creepy.”

Bachman didn’t like Coffey, but said he never received complaints that warranted disciplining or firing the officer.

The harassment started, Mallory said, soon after her father spoke up.

Records show Coffey arrested James in his own home in May 2013 for open traffic violations from another town. Mallory’s dad told friends that police were following him and shining lights into the window of his house. James, who had struggled with his

mental health, grew increasingly anxious.

After Coffey was promoted to chief that September, Mallory said she too was followed and pulled over by the Maypearl police.

James hired a lawyer, and eventually Mallory filed a lawsuit against Coffey, claiming that he had used his position to retaliate against her father and intimidate their family.

James Meyer did not live to see how the chief would be held accountable. He took his own life on June 13, 2015.

Within weeks, state investigators were closing in on Coffey, targeting him in a sting operation, then obtaining a warrant to search his home.

On July 22, Coffey was charged with sexually abusing a teenage girl.



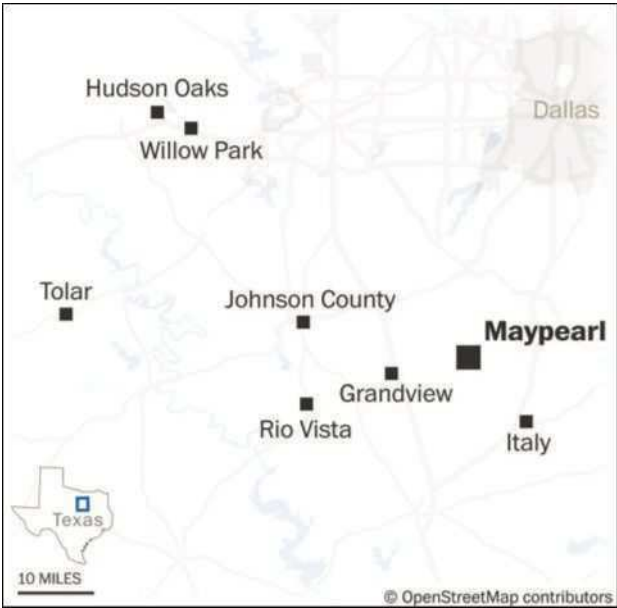
OBTAINED BY THE WASHINGTON POST

Mallory Meyer, above, accused the chief of harassing her father, James Meyer, left, after he complained about Coffey’s inappropriate behavior with teenage girls.

How this story was reported

Washington Post journalists interviewed dozens of people across Texas and obtained hundreds of records and court filings to reconstruct events in Maypearl and the other communities where Kevin Coffey worked. The Post does not name alleged victims of sexual abuse without their permission. Some of the young women in this story chose to be identified by their first name or the name they were called in court records.

Coffey worked at 8 departments in 11 years and was repeatedly accused of misconduct



Complaints against Coffey

- “poorly trained and supervised police officer”
- “Officer Coffey has shown disrespect towards a Commanding Officer”
- “five times that I have asked for this type of aggression from Officer Coffey to stop”
- “you ‘called her a prostitute”
- “Deputy Coffey has over stepped his boundaries”
- “He can not stay out of trouble because of his mouth”
- “Coffey ... unlawfully, and without legal justification, used unnecessary force”
- “your employment with this Agency and City is terminated”

Excerpts from hundreds of law enforcement records and court documents obtained by The Washington Post



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

CHAPTER 4

Hired. Fired. Repeat.

In a town nearly an hour from Maypearl, a 29-year-old nurse saw the news about Coffey’s arrest. She immediately started praying. The next day, Angel Hilton called the Texas Rangers.

For almost 15 years, Angel had kept a secret. When she was 14 and crammed into a pickup truck with a bunch of friends, a cop pulled the teens over. Back then, Coffey was working for the Grandview Police Department. The officer, more than twice her age, ordered Angel and her friends to step out and put their hands on his patrol car. Then, Angel said, he told her that her butt looked cute.

Coffey soon learned about Angel’s troubled home life and how she was often left alone or in the care of her grandfather.

“It got to be a routine,” she said. “He would drive by the apartment and flash his lights on the cop car. ... And then I would meet him out on the side of the road and he would pick me up.”

“I thought, okay, he’s law enforcement. So nobody’s gonna touch me if I’m with him,” Angel said. “Nobody’s gonna hurt me if I’m with him. He will protect me.”

During their rides together, Coffey listened attentively to the teen and told her how pretty she looked. “Those things,” Angel said, “made me feel loved.” But then, the touching began. After Coffey found her at a local ballpark one night, she would later testify, he penetrated her with his finger.



OBTAINED BY THE WASHINGTON POST

Angel Hilton, at top, in a December 2023 portrait and, above, in Coffey’s bedroom on her 15th birthday.

By that time, she thought that one day they could be “boyfriend and girlfriend.”

On her 15th birthday in April 2001, Coffey took her to the Olive Garden to celebrate. She said he gave her alcohol and brought her back to his home. He took photos of the teen beside

his bed in her black boots and miniskirt. That night, she told investigators, the officer groped her breasts and stuck his hand up her skirt.

No one at the Grandview Police Department seemed to notice how much time Coffey was spending in his cruiser with a minor. But at Coffey’s next job, working for the Hudson Oaks Police Department, his supervisor, Brandon Mayberry, said he discovered Coffey was harassing a different teenage girl — and got him fired for it.

“I took his gun and his badge and I said, ‘You’re done,’” Mayberry remembered.

It didn’t matter. Before long, Coffey found another job at a nearby department. He kept being handed a badge and a gun, Mayberry said, even when he tried to warn agencies that Coffey wasn’t fit to be an officer. The more places Coffey worked at, the more complaints he racked up.

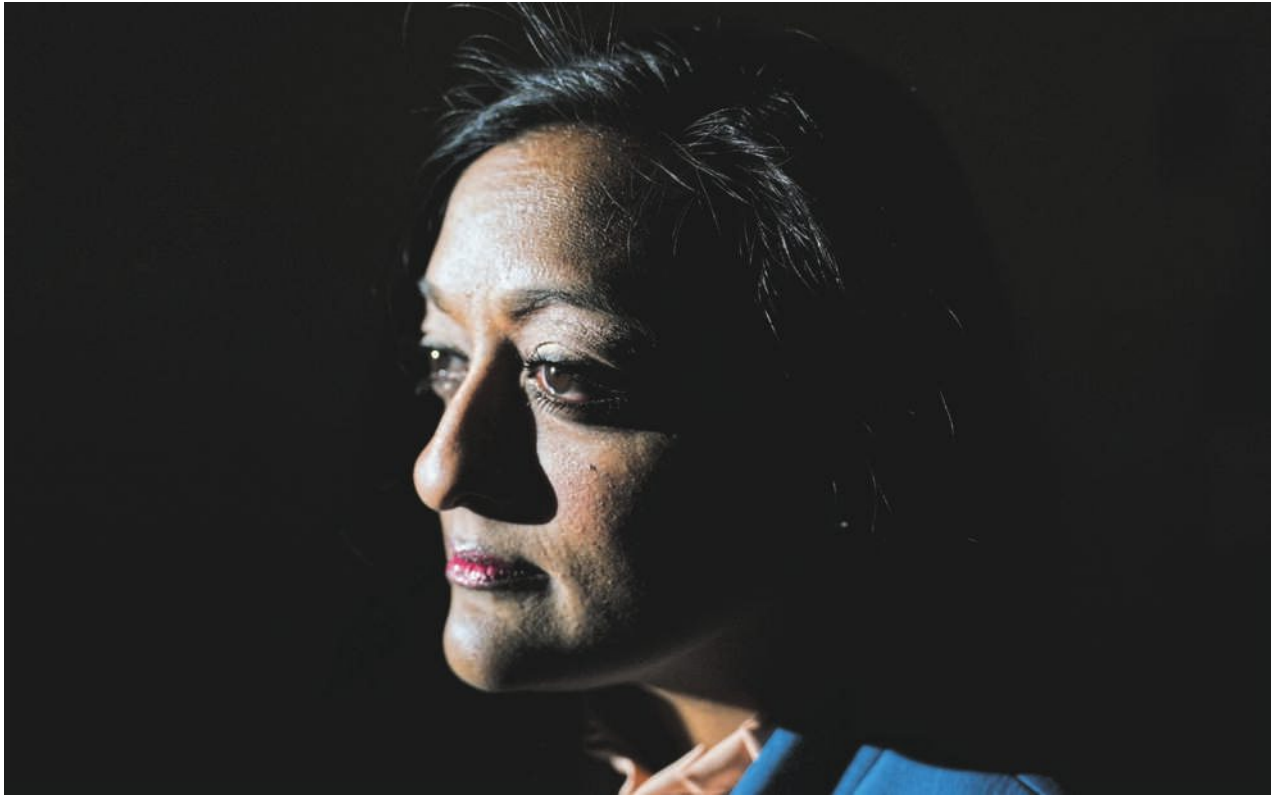
Coffey had even been accused of mistakenly shooting another officer while serving a warrant. The injured cop sued Coffey and his employer, records show, and eventually received a settlement.

It’s unclear what kind of digging Maypearl officials did before they hired Coffey. They told The Post they no longer had any of his employment records.

Three years after he started patrolling Maypearl’s streets in 2010, Coffey got promoted to chief.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





PHOTOS BY CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Grace Pandithurai, an Ellis County prosecutor.

CHAPTER 5

In Plain Sight

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The more state investigators looked into Coffey after his arrest in 2015, the more they unearthed. They interviewed Alissa, who'd come forward in Maypearl, and Angel, who'd called to report his past in Grandview. They searched Coffey's home, office and a storage unit.

On social media, investigators learned, the chief had been calling himself "shadowdancer." But to the prosecutors assigned to the case, it was clear that Coffey hadn't been lurking in the shadows. He'd been grooming the community in plain sight.

"I would call him the perfect perverted predator," said Grace Pandithurai, an Ellis County prosecutor.

On Coffey's electronic devices, investigators found dozens of pictures of teenage girls that he'd been collecting for years. They found the photos of Angel. They found nude pictures of a teenage runaway.

They asked Angie Smith, a Maypearl city employee who sat across from the chief's office, to help identify some of the girls. Then she made a startling discovery: Coffey had pictures of her teen daughter.

"All my kids called him The Creeper," Angie said. "And I didn't even know they called him that."

As news of the investigation spread through Maypearl in the summer of 2015, it seemed that everyone had a story about the chief that they hadn't shared before. In the "Voice of Maypearl" Facebook group, Geneva found post after post about Coffey abusing his power.

Her neighbors, Geneva realized, weren't just grappling with what Coffey had done, but with what most in the community had failed to do: speak up.

*"The thing about Kevin Coffey is that he was more calculated than most child sex offenders. He knew how to hide what he was doing, which is why I think he was able to do it in such plain sight of everyone."*

Grace Pandithurai



Angie Smith, a former Maypearl city employee.



Brandon Mayberry, Coffey's former supervisor at the Hudson Oaks Police Department.

*"There was always younger girls coming in and out. But we just took it as he had a good relationship with the younger kids of the town."*

Angie Smith

*"I wish I would have done more to keep him from being a cop ever again."*

Brandon Mayberry

CHAPTER 6

The Chief on Trial

On Feb. 14, 2017, Coffey arrived on the third floor of the Ellis County Courthouse to face a jury. He'd pleaded not guilty to sexual assault of a child and indecency with a child. But the criminal charges against him were not for what Alissa or Angel had alleged. It wasn't for anything Geneva had reported.

When officers searched Coffey's home, the chief himself had mentioned a girl he talked with all the time. Investigators tracked her down. She was 14 years old. In court documents, she was called "Jane" to protect her identity.

Nearly two years later, Jane took the stand to testify about what the police chief had done to her.

Coffey was sitting feet away, in a tan jacket and blue shirt. She wasn't used to seeing him without his uniform. She told the jury she was "scared to death."

Jane, then 16, explained that she was a lonely home-schooled kid who often tagged along with her parents to work. Her dad made frequent trips to Maypearl City Hall, sometimes stopping by the chief's office.

Soon after meeting Jane in 2014, Coffey was Skyping with the teen late at night. Over the next seven months, jurors would learn, the chief Skyped with Jane 106 times, including days before his arrest.

Jane believed Coffey was someone she could trust — someone who made her feel safe. "I cared about him so much," she testified.

During their online chats, Jane confided that she'd recently been sexually assaulted by someone she knew. Then Coffey preyed on her, too.

In front of the camera, she told the jurors, he exposed himself and masturbated. In his messages, he described violent sexual acts he wanted to do to the teen. In the chief's office, he penetrated her with his fingers. He usually left the door open.

"He liked the rush of it," Jane testified.

To show Coffey's grooming patterns, prosecutors had Alissa and Angel testify, too.

But when the former chief took the stand, he denied their allegations, saying he'd never abused anyone or exploited his authority. He conceded that, yes, he'd asked multiple people to try to persuade Jane's family to drop the charges. And, according to a transcript of the trial, there was something else he was willing to agree with the prosecutor on.

"Are you a pervert?" the prosecutor asked.

"Apparently, I must be a little bit of one, yes," Coffey replied.

When the former chief was ordered to spend 40 years in prison, Geneva sat in the back row, clapping.

*"I'm really a victim. And it was so hard to see before, you know, because I was in love. I thought he loved me back."*

Jane



Jane testified at Coffey's trial about how the chief sexually abused her in his office when she was 14.





CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

CHAPTER 7

## The Prison Confrontation

Coffey had been in prison for more than six years when he agreed to talk to a reporter for the first time about what happened in Maypearl.

He'd never publicly apologized, never admitted he'd committed a crime. And even though he was found guilty of abusing Jane, he'd never had to reckon with the criminal charges involving Angel because that case was dropped.

His interview with The Post took place at a correctional facility in Rosharon, Texas, a 4½-hour journey from Maypearl through flat farmland and other communities that Coffey had once policed.

Beyond brick guard towers and layers of prison security, one question would finally be answered: What did the former chief have to say for himself now?

When Coffey was asked to describe himself in three words, he could think of only two: "introverted" and "compassionate." He said he deeply missed his job and portrayed himself as someone who had made a positive impact as a law enforcement officer.

Once again, the former chief maintained his innocence. Coffey denied any criminal wrongdoing with Angel, Jane or Alissa, even when confronted with the evidence against him.

"The trial was all about character assassina-



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**AT TOP:** Former Maypearl police chief Kevin Coffey, interviewed inside a state prison, is confronted with a photo of him and a teenage girl who testified that he abused her. **ABOVE:** Coffey was convicted of sexually assaulting Jane in the Maypearl police chief's office.

tion," Coffey said. "They used everything they could to make me look bad."

Coffey also rejected claims that he harassed residents or retaliated against those who spoke out against him, including James Meyer. Though James's daughter dropped her wrongful death lawsuit against Coffey after he was convicted, she still believes he bears some responsibility for her father's suicide. Coffey blamed mental health issues and said he played no role in the man's death.

In the hour-long interview, Coffey was dismissive of complaints lodged against him at other agencies. He defended his career in law enforcement, saying he kept switching departments for better pay, not because of poor performance.

As the interview came to a close, Coffey did make one admission.

"You know, thinking back, yeah," Coffey said, "I should have left them alone."

Coffey, now 59, still has more than 30 years left in his sentence. He told The Post that he was attacked by another inmate and transferred because of safety concerns. Prison officials would not answer questions about any violence or threats against Coffey. But they said the former chief has been moved eight times — about as many times as he changed police departments.



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Geneva at her farm in Maypearl, where she said the community has lost trust in law enforcement.

CHAPTER 8

## The Lasting Harm

Nearly a decade has passed since Alissa handed over her cellphone to Geneva. The teen never imagined what that single act would mean and how raw the wound would still feel all these years later. For her, for Angel, for Jane. And for the entire Maypearl community.

"I'm very pissed off. I don't think that will ever change," said Alissa, now 25. "Do I trust anybody around me? Absolutely not."

"I had to go forward, even if my story meant nothing to the trial," said Angel, now 38. "Because these girls needed a voice, they needed someone to be there for them. And I didn't have that."

"I count how long it's been since he's laid a finger on me. And after seven years, all of your cells slough off," said Jane, now 24. "You're a different person every seven years. And I think about that a lot, and I think that now, I'm in a body that he has never touched."

After Coffey's conviction, many in Maypearl lost trust in law enforcement. And no police chief, they said, has stuck around long enough to fix that. There have been eight chiefs since Coffey's arrest.

Geneva is keeping count, of course, and keeping watch on what they do.

A few years back, Geneva was walking by the fire station on Main Street when she saw some city vehicles up for auction. She found the one that belonged to Kevin Coffey. Then she bid on his old black Tahoe and won.

The lights he'd used to flash into the windows of teenagers were removed. The Maypearl police logo was stripped away. But everyone still knew that cruiser had once belonged to the chief.

To banish all traces of Coffey, Geneva smudged the Tahoe with sage. Then she drove around her town, windows down, waving to everyone she passed.

*"If you see something, say something. Stand up. Push back. I don't care if it is law enforcement. ... You have to stop it. Otherwise, what you allow will continue."*

Geneva Zoll



# THE WORLD



Paul Watson in prison early this month in Nuuk, Greenland. He was detained in July on Japanese charges of interfering with a whaling ship in 2010, which he denied.

## Anti-whaling activist saw detention as means to an end

A free Paul Watson, relieved at Denmark’s refusal to extradite him to Japan, says sometimes ‘jail is necessary to make your point’

BY RACHEL PANNETT

Paul Watson, a 74-year-old anti-whaling activist released this week from a Greenland prison after Danish officials rejected calls by Japan for his extradition, told The Washington Post on Wednesday: “Sometimes, going to jail is necessary to make your point.”

Watson, who is Canadian

American, was detained in the autonomous Danish territory of Greenland in July based on an international arrest warrant. He spent five months in prison.

The Sea Shepherd founder was facing charges in Japan for alleged offenses against a Japanese ship in Antarctica in February 2010. The marine conservation group is known for its attempts to disrupt the activities

of whaling ships.

“Every situation offers an opportunity, and this was another chance to shine a global spotlight on Japan’s illegal whaling in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary,” Watson said of his detention in an emailed statement. “If I had been sent to Japan, I might never have come home. I’m relieved that didn’t happen.”

Watson’s legal defense said his

arrest was politically motivated, based on an episode of “Whale Wars,” a documentary series on Animal Planet, in which anti-whaling activists intercepted a Japanese ship. Footage that his legal team said “clearly showed his innocence” was not allowed in court.

Denmark does not have an extradition treaty with Japan. Japan made a request for Watson

to be extradited on July 30. A senior Japanese coast guard official was dispatched to Denmark in late September to request the extradition directly, according to Watson.

Justifying the decision to release Watson on Tuesday, Danish officials said they had taken into account the amount of time he would be expected to be detained before a decision to extra-

dite him was made, the nature of the alleged offenses and the fact that the charges were 14 years old.

“It has been of particular importance for the Danish Ministry of Justice to ensure that the time Paul Watson has been detained in Greenland will be fully deducted from a potential custodial sentence that he might be sentenced to in connection with the criminal case in Japan,” Justice Minister Peter Hummelgaard said in a statement. After corresponding with Japanese authorities, Danish officials could not be certain “that this would be the case,” he said.

Hummelgaard said Danish officials did not share the human rights concerns raised by members of Watson’s legal team, who had argued that he could face inhumane treatment if he was extradited to a Japanese prison. “Japan is a democratic country guided by the rule of law,” Hummelgaard said.

In a news briefing Wednesday, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi called Denmark’s decision “very regrettable” and said his government communicated its position to Danish officials. Hayashi said that the activities of Watson and others damaged Japan’s whaling industry and that the nation “will continue to take necessary and adequate actions.”

The Captain Paul Watson Foundation — another U.S.-based marine nonprofit Watson co-founded — said his arrest exposed potential problems with the Interpol system, highlighting how people can be detained “based on outdated notices, without a thorough review of the evidence.”

“Paul’s relentless commitment to protecting our oceans and standing up against illegal whaling has sparked a global movement,” said Omar Todd, the foundation’s chief executive. “We can’t thank our supporters enough for their incredible efforts, which were key to his freedom.”

Watson received support during his detention from a wide range of people, the foundation said, including conservationist Jane Goodall, rock band Pearl Jam, actors Martin Sheen and Pierce Brosnan, and President Emmanuel Macron of France. Watson was living in France before his arrest.

Michelle Ye Hee Lee contributed to this report.

## Spain opens probe of Airbnb as part of rental crackdown

REUTERS

MADRID — Spain has opened an investigation into Airbnb for failing to delete thousands of rental offers from its platform — part of a crackdown on an industry that is blamed by authorities and many residents for contributing to housing shortages and soaring real estate prices.

Airbnb said Wednesday that it was the platform targeted in an investigation announced earlier by Spain’s Consumer Rights Ministry, which did not name the company. Airbnb said it would appeal if it is found in breach of rules.

The probe is part of a general crackdown in Spain on tourism rentals via sites such as Airbnb

and Booking.com, which many Spaniards say are creating excess tourism, cramping the housing stock and making renting unaffordable for locals.

An agency of the Consumer Rights Ministry had ordered the platform under investigation to remove thousands of listings deemed “illegal advertising” because the properties lacked licenses for tourism use, a ministry spokesperson said.

As the advertisements were not removed, a disciplinary process began, with the platform facing a potential fine of up to \$104,940,

or four to six times the profit made on the practice, the ministry said.

A fine by the ministry can be challenged in court.

Airbnb said it always asks hosts to confirm they have permission to rent their properties and abide by all local rules. The company also said that the ministry had failed to provide lists of non-compliant accommodations, and that many owners do not need a license to rent out their property.

The company said the ministry did not have the authority to make rulings over short-term

rentals and was disregarding certain court rulings, including a European Union Court of Justice ruling in 2019 that Airbnb should be regulated as an “information society service” and not as a real estate agent.

“Airbnb is a platform subject to the Digital Services Act that has no monitoring obligations,” it said.

A spokesperson for the ministry said it “cannot comment on the file and requirements that we have opened against a platform whose name we cannot confirm.”

Spain’s toughest move so far

against the renting of holiday homes came from Barcelona Mayor Jaume Collboni, who in June ordered a total ban on tourism rentals by 2028.

The ban is being challenged in courts by associations representing tourist apartment owners.

Airbnb urged Collboni to reconsider, arguing that the ban would only benefit the hotel sector while failing to address excess tourism and the housing crisis.

Other European countries, including Italy and Croatia, have also taken measures to limit the growth of tourism rentals.

### DIGEST

#### GHANA

##### Court dismisses cases against anti-LGBT bill

Ghana’s Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed two separate cases challenging the legality of one of Africa’s most restrictive pieces of anti-LGBT legislation, paving the way for the president to sign it into law.

The Parliament unanimously approved the bill in February. It increases a crackdown on the rights of LGBT people and those promoting lesbian, gay or other nonconventional sexual or gender identities.

However, President Nana Akufo-Addo delayed signing it pending the court challenges. Amanda Odoi and Richard Sky, both lawyers, filed separate cases seeking to declare the bill illegal.

Justice Avril Lovelace-Johnson, of the seven-member court panel, said in the ruling that the two cases were “premature. “Until there’s presidential assent, there is no act,” she said, adding that the two cases were “unanimously dismissed.”

A coalition of Christian, Muslim, and traditional leaders sponsored the legislation.

Gay sex was already punishable by up to three years in prison. The bill would impose a term of up to five years for the “wilful promotion, sponsorship, or support of LGBTQ+ activities.”

— Reuters

#### ITALY

##### Meloni defends her friendship with Musk

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Wednesday defended her friendship with U.S. tech billionaire and Donald Trump confidant Elon Musk, telling Italian lawmakers she would not be influenced in areas where he has economic interests.

“I can be a friend of Elon Musk and at the same time the head of the first Italian government that made a new law to regulate private activity in space,” she said, answering questions during a parliamentary discussion ahead of a European Union summit in Brussels this week.

Meloni has met frequently with the Tesla and SpaceX billionaire since her far-right-led government came to power in 2022, keen to bring investments in Italy. Her government this summer approved a framework for foreign space companies to operate in Italy, which is expected to generate \$7.7 billion in investments by 2026.

Meloni and Musk’s friendship has attracted attention in the past. Musk denied a romantic relationship in September after a photo of them looking fondly at each other went viral. The two were at a black-tie event in New York where Musk had presented Meloni with an award.

— Associated Press



Cyclone survivors in the French territory of Mayotte. France’s president is set to visit on Thursday

#### MAYOTTE

##### Families struggle to aid French territory

Relatives of those struggling after Cyclone Chido ripped through the French island territory of Mayotte expressed helplessness Wednesday, a day before France’s president and

180 additional tons of aid were expected to arrive.

Some survivors and aid groups have described hasty burials, the stench of bodies and the devastation of settlements whose population of migrants makes it even more challenging to determine the number of dead.

“A catastrophe of exceptional intensity,” French authorities

said in an update Wednesday. “The island is devastated.” It noted 31 confirmed deaths but said the Muslim practice of burial within 24 hours could mean the toll is quite different.

Mayotte, off Africa’s east coast, is France’s poorest territory and a magnet for migrants hoping to reach Europe. The cyclone Saturday was the deadliest storm

to strike the islands in nearly a century, with winds exceeding 136 mph, according to the French weather service.

On the French island of Reunion about a three-hour flight away, loved ones were coming together to donate aid. Some said their families in Mayotte had no food or water; it had taken days to make contact with some. “It is difficult because I feel helpless,” said one relative.

— Associated Press

**China and India agreed to work toward a solution to their long-running border dispute in the Himalayas after a military standoff that began with a deadly clash in 2020.**

The development follows a pact on border patrols the two Asian giants reached in October, which finally broke a stalemate that started with the clash in the Ladakh region. It was the first deadly confrontation between India and China since 1975.

**Several children died in a stampede at a holiday fair in southwest Nigeria, officials said.**

The incident occurred at the Islamic High School in Basorun, Oyo state, near Lagos. Gov. Seyi Makinde said security forces had arrested the event organizers, identified by local media as the Women in Need of Guidance and Support Foundation, which held a similar event last year.

— From news services



# Having lost the public’s favor, the West’s liberal establishment keeps crumbling

**WorldViews**  
ISHAAN THAROOR

Almost everywhere you look, there are grim tidings for center-left parties in the West. In a month, the Democrats will find themselves shunted out of the U.S. executive branch, in opposition in both chambers of the legislature and stuck with a judicial apparatus led by a right-wing-majority Supreme Court. In Britain, the honeymoon for the recently elected Labour government lasted just a matter of weeks, as its approval tanked amid political missteps and factional infighting. In France, President Emmanuel Macron is grappling with a dysfunctional Parliament in which his liberal and centrist allies are beholden to the whims of an ascendant far-right faction.

On Monday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a Social Democrat, lost a confidence vote in the country’s parliament, paving the way for elections in February that probably will see his party’s vote share shrink significantly. The outcome was not unexpected, and it reflected mounting popular dissatisfaction with Scholz’s collapsed coalition government and deepening despair over the state of the country’s stagnating economy and politics. The German leader famously cast the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a historic “turning point” for his nation and Europe as a whole but is seen by critics as failing to grapple with the new realities of the moment.

That same day across the pond, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau saw his top lieutenant, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, quit the cabinet. Freeland, a former high-profile journalist turned stalwart Trudeau ally for the better part of a decade, pulled few punches in her letter to the prime minister, in which she seemed to warn him about not preparing adequately for the looming threat of tariffs imposed on Canadian exports by the incoming U.S. administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

“The abrupt resignation is the greatest challenge yet to



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a confidence vote in the country’s parliament this week, reflecting mounting popular dissatisfaction.

Trudeau’s leadership,” my colleague Amanda Coletta wrote. “The embattled prime minister, elected in 2015, has seen his popularity nosedive over the past year amid economic torpor, a nationwide housing shortage and voter fatigue. If federal elections were held today, polls project, his Liberal Party would be wiped out.”

In Canada and Germany, Trump’s return casts a shadow. His browbeating populist style and right-wing nationalism has been echoed by opponents of Trudeau’s minority government in Ottawa and the far-right Alternative for Germany, which polls show may emerge the second-biggest party in parliament after Germany’s next federal elections — a result that would have been unthinkable

just a few years ago.

Though their contexts are different, Scholz and Trudeau are politically tethered to a liberal establishment in the West that is in pronounced retreat. The values that undergirded it, including an embrace of the virtues of globalization, multiculturalism and environmentalism, are under siege to varying extents across Western democracies, and increasingly seen as the aloof dogma of an entrenched elite that hasn’t adequately reckoned with the concerns of ordinary citizens.

“The Liberal government has not just wasted money,” noted an editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, a leading Canadian daily, which decried years of “narrow, partisan” rule. “Much worse, it has wasted time, long before the

question of Trump’s tariffs arose. The housing shortage, now afflicting major cities, will take years to relieve. The stresses in the immigration system continue to build as the government contemplates quarter-measures.”

It’s unclear if their right-wing opponents have the right solutions, but voting publics across the West are eager for change and more open to anti-system politics. Trump’s bulldozing approach toward his northern neighbor, analysts suggested, is aimed at upsetting an apple cart that was already tilting over.

“Trump is a disrupter, and has less of an ideological agenda than he does to disrupt, dismantle and upset a stable political system,” Jonathan Rose, head of the political

science department at Queen’s University in Canada, told the *Guardian*. “And that’s what he’s doing here. The lesson for other countries is to manage negotiations with a bully carefully.”

Despite calls for his resignation, Trudeau aims to stay in office until elections, slated to be held at the latest by next October. Scholz, meanwhile, will carry on in his lame-duck role and lead his embattled Social Democrats in the next election. The resurgent center-right Christian Democrats are in pole position to form the next government, possibly with Scholz’s party relegated as a junior partner.

Germany’s troubles transcend any one faction. Scholz came to power as part of a three-party coalition with the Greens and

the neoliberal Free Democrats. Internal disagreements over economic and financial policy cratered the coalition, and all three parties are expected to fare poorly in February. As in many countries in Europe, more ordinary German voters are drifting to the far right and, to a lesser extent, the far left.

For Germany’s political establishment, the challenge may be structural. “Scholz could not forge unity in his party or the public,” James Bindenagel, a former top U.S. diplomat in Germany and visiting distinguished fellow at the German Marshall Fund, told my colleague Kate Brady. “He did not successfully manage the country’s three critical dependencies: cheap Russian energy, Chinese markets and American security.”

Jan Techau, an analyst at the Eurasia Group, said the squabbles that brought down Scholz are “a symptom of a broader economic crisis that has undermined competitiveness, growth, and tax revenue” in Germany, which has “high labor and energy costs and a high reliance on exports, especially to China.” That overreliance on the Chinese market has become a weakness, as China’s economy has grown and evolved to start competing with German industry and its major exporters.

The uncertainty and frailty wracking Europe’s biggest economy follows a moment in Trump’s first term when Berlin, under then-Chancellor Angela Merkel, styled itself a bulwark of the liberal order. The confidence of the Merkel era has faded into self-doubt, with Germans in angst about their country’s sluggish growth and new vulnerabilities to open war on the continent.

“The collapse of Germany’s government comes at an awkward and fragile moment for the world,” noted *Post* columnist Marc Fisher. “It’s especially unnerving because, whether they like it or not, the Germans have become a vital symbol of stability for the West — a model of what the U.S.-led community of nations can achieve.”



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# Rebels struggle to prevent revenge attacks in Syria



PHOTOS BY LORENZO TUGNOLI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** A crowd outside a morgue in Damascus reacts to the arrival of a pickup truck Thursday with bodies of former members of the Syrian regime’s security apparatus. Former members of the Syrian security forces line up at a police station in Latakia on Monday to take part in the “reconciliation” process. Members of the new security forces collect surrendered weapons from former members of the regime’s security forces. A woman stands in al-Hakeem village in Latakia province, the heartland of Bashar al-Assad’s Alawite minority sect; four houses were burned in a revenge attack in the village earlier this week. Sheikh Ahmed Banawi, 56, the Alawite leader in al-Hakeem, before he and his family left the village in fear of reprisals from militants, hoping to make it to Turkey.







# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

## Climate risks make insuring homes more difficult, expensive

As companies pass on their costs in the wake of extreme weather damage, consumers are struggling to find coverage at an affordable price

BY MICHAEL J. COREN,  
NAEMA AHMED  
AND KEVIN CROWE

Christina Temple moved to Truckee, California, to buy her first home.

The small mountain town, a short drive from Lake Tahoe, offered the former preschool teacher and her husband, a carpenter, a shot at becoming middle class by escaping crushing housing costs near Santa Cruz, California.

“We moved up here for a better life,” she said in a phone interview. “For two or three years, we got that taste.”

Then the insurance bills came. In 2017, the couple paid \$1,100 to insure their small cabin. But since then, nine of California’s 10 largest wildfires have erupted, sending the insurance market into turmoil. Three insurers have dropped her in three years. This year, a basic policy from the public FAIR plan, the state-run insurer of last resort, and supplemental private insurance will cost Temple \$6,000. It’s likely to rise again. “Now we’re back to watching each paycheck,” she said, “and budgeting for everything.”

Temple is among the many Americans watching their hold on homeownership slip away as insurance costs balloon beyond their ability to pay. “This is our first house. I don’t want to leave,” said Temple, struggling to keep her composure. “I try not to look too far into the future. I get scared.”

There’s no easy fix. A combination of broad economic trends — labor shortages, inflation, higher reinsurance and rebuilding costs — and more costly and uncertain extreme weather events are driving up premiums.

Homeowners face an unsettling reality: Insurers are passing these costs to consumers with higher rates and more restricted coverage. In some states, insurers have stopped issuing new policies altogether. Ordinary Americans must now make hard calculations: Can they afford to stay, or is there a way to navigate this new insurance market?

Historically, insurance was a win-win for everyone. Homeowners paid a small premium to receive a payout after a natural disaster or other loss. Insurers turned a profit by spreading the risk among homeowners across the country.

But costs from extreme weather events have been rising, in part because Americans have continued to move into areas that are more vulnerable to severe storms.

Underwriting losses among U.S. property insurers totaled \$47 billion in 2022 and 2023 alone, according to AM Best, a global credit rating agency.

Property insurance premiums have risen by more than 30 percent since 2020, the last full year the industry posted an underwriting profit. And insurers are still fleeing markets — seven out of California’s top 12 carriers have curtailed coverage over the last two years — or going bankrupt. Public plans, once a last resort, are the largest (and sometimes only) affordable option in “insurance deserts,” where private insurers no longer offer new standard policies.

About 10 percent of U.S. homeowners are now forgoing insurance, double the recent rate. Or in some cases, they’re selling their homes citing insurance premiums that rival mortgage payments.

Sean Kevelighan, chief executive of the Insurance Information Institute, an industry group, expects we’ll pay even more as people move to riskier places. Losses are often subsidized by policyholders everywhere, even if residents of riskier Zip codes generally pay the most. Personal insurance is underpriced “almost across the board,” Kevelighan said. “As long as we see people living in ways that are riskier, the price of insurance is going to reflect that.”

That doesn’t mean insurance can’t work for you. The market is opaque and confusing. But there are ways to find plans that protect your home and safeguard your future amid intensifying climate risk.

It’s a new insurance world out there. Here’s a road map.

### Request a (free) insurance bill of health for your property

Consider requesting a Comprehensive Loss Underwriting Exchange (CLUE) report. It’s the insurance equivalent of a credit score. It includes all the claims filed on a home or vehicle for the last seven years. If you have high premiums, check your own property’s bill of health (and fix any

errors). If you want to buy a home, request it from the seller. You’ll quickly find out the property’s true claims history. You can request one free personal report at *consumer.risk.lexisnexis.com* or over the phone each year from Lexis Nexis at 888-497-0011.

### Consider flood insurance even if you’re not in a flood zone

You’re not safe from flooding even if you don’t technically live in a flood zone. The National Flood Insurance Program says more than 40 percent of its flood insurance claims came from outside high-risk flood areas between 2014 and 2018. For those living in the 100-year floodplain (what the Federal Emergency Management Agency deems high risk), there’s already a 25 percent chance of flooding during a typical 30-year mortgage.

Yet the number of households with flood insurance has been declining. Only about 4 percent of homeowners have flood insurance, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Do you need flood insurance, since historical data is no longer a precise guide? You can look up your community’s risks with our interactive tool at *wapo.st/ClimateRisks*. You can also check FEMA’s flood maps at *fema.gov/flood-maps* to see if your home lies within the 500-year floodplain — areas with 0.2 percent chance of flooding in any given year — to get a better sense of your risk as storms and rainfall intensify.

*The main insurer is FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which offers plans in most communities across the country. You can find an agent or get your own quote at floods-mart.gov. An increasing number of private insurers are also getting into the game, so get comparable quotes.*

Depending on your state, there may only be a few — often expensive — private plans available. But more affordable plans are becoming available in lower-risk places, said Karl Susman, owner of Los Angeles-based Susman Insurance Agency. An annual flood policy for a half-million-dollar home can cost \$100 and may even be added to your existing homeowner’s policy.

In riskier locales, coverage options may be expensive but worth it. “If it’s quite expensive, then that should tell you two things,” said Susman. “I’m in a really risky area and I really should have this.”

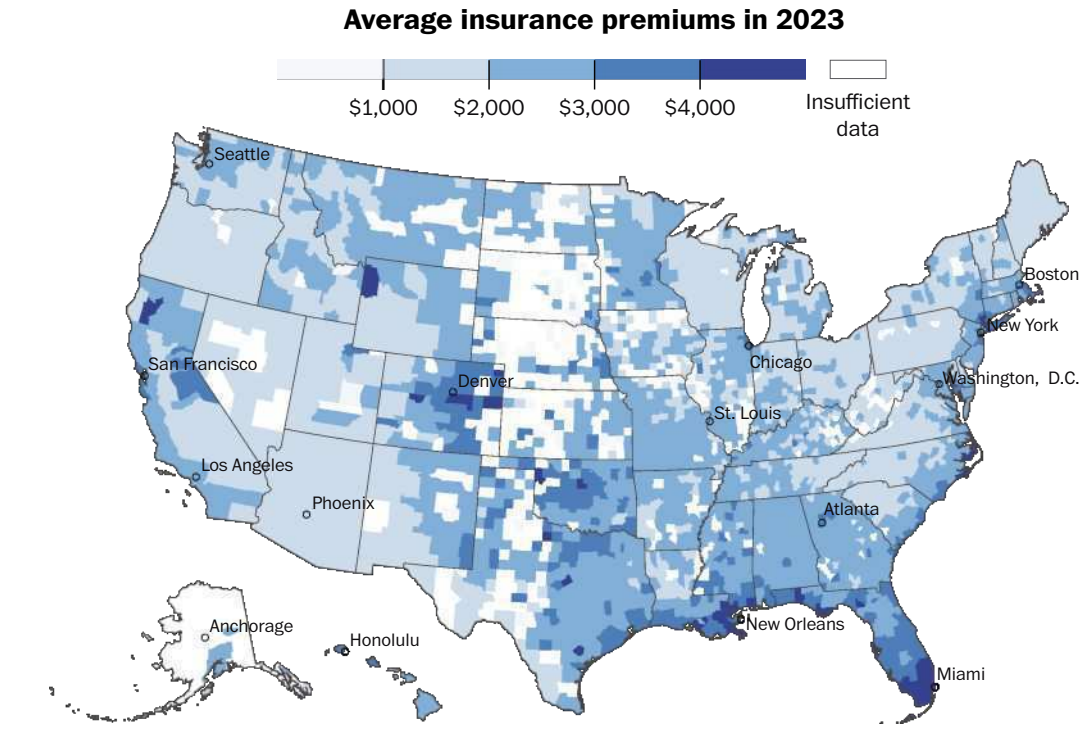
If you go without, don’t expect the federal government to help. FEMA disaster-relief payouts, which are need-based, average about \$3,000 — and only if the U.S. government declares a disaster in your area. “Government programs don’t make you whole after disasters,” warned Amy Bach, the co-founder of United Policyholders, a public interest advocacy group. By contrast, flood insurance claims pay around \$66,000 on average, according to the NFIP.

The worst thing you can do? Let lenders buy insurance for you. Banks usually demand mortgage holders carry insurance. If you let it lapse, or it’s deemed insufficient, these “lender-placed” policies don’t protect your home. It protects their loan. If your house is damaged or destroyed, the payout may not be enough to rebuild — and you’ll still have to pay your mortgage.

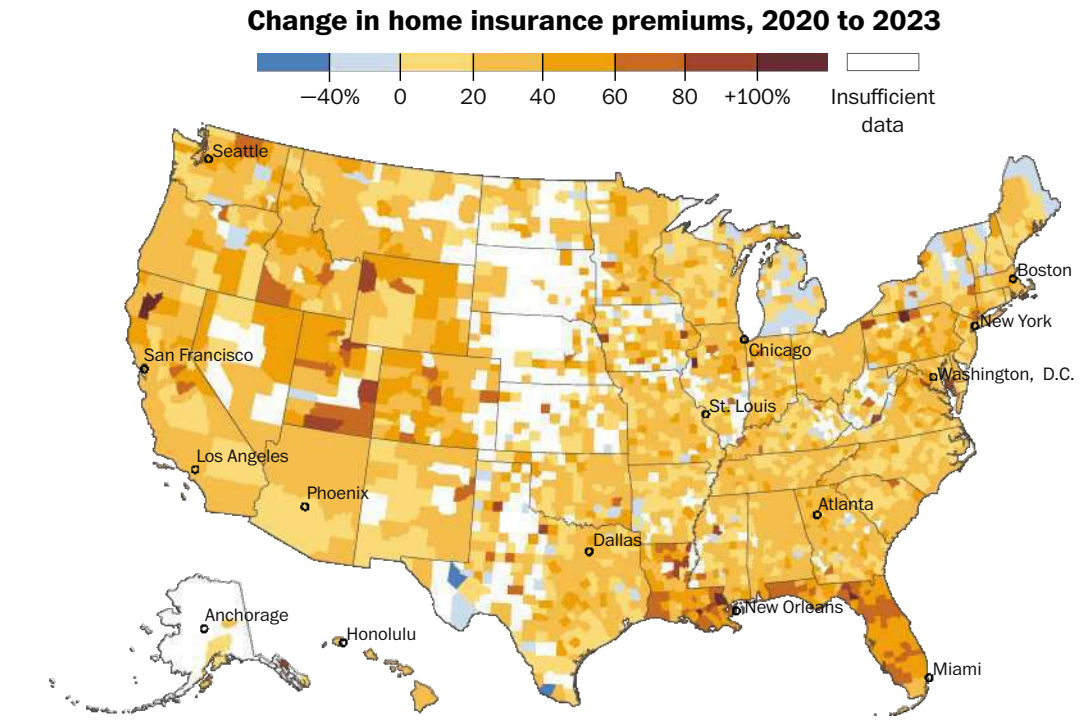
### Customize your coverage — and beware of carve-outs

Insurers once worried most about “primary” perils such as hurricanes and earthquakes. Yet “secondary perils” such as hailstorms, tornadoes, thunderstorms and wildfires are racking up bigger costs. In 2020, these secondary threats caused more than 70 percent of insured losses from natural catastrophes, reports Swiss Re, a reinsurer.

Insurers have started carving these perils out of policies or im-



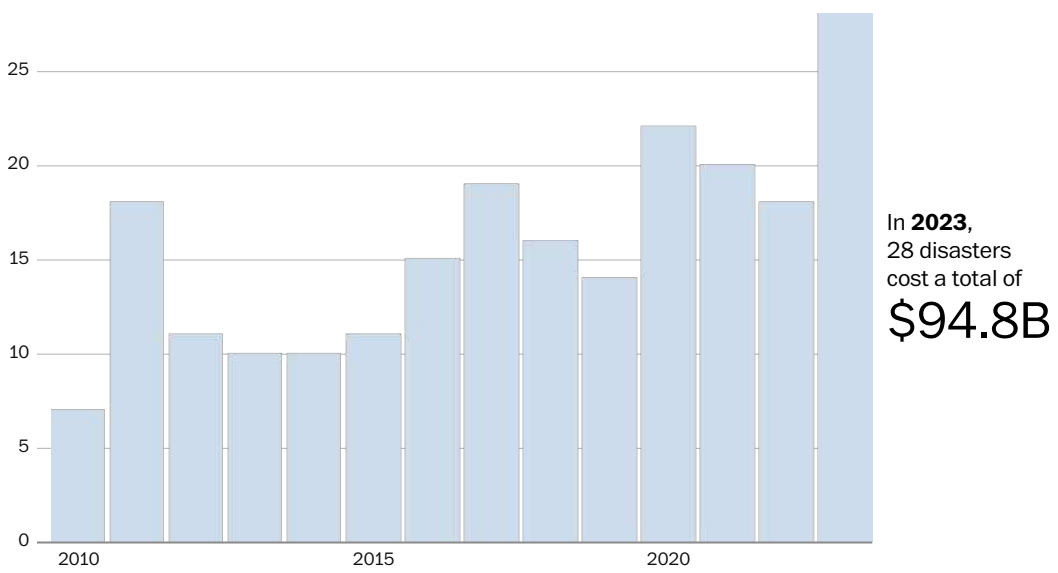
Source: Keys and Mulder, National Bureau of Economic Research



Source: Keys and Mulder, National Bureau of Economic Research

### U.S. billion-dollar disasters, 2010-2023

Severe storms, hurricanes, inland floods, droughts, winter storms, wildfires and crop freezes



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

posing damage caps, meaning you’ll have to shop à la carte. “You used to be able to get one policy to cover all the perils and now it takes two policies to cover the same thing,” said Joyce Feldman, who owns Twin Valley Insurance Services in the fire-prone foothills of California’s Sierra Nevada range. “And people’s premiums are probably triple what they used to be.”

Most insurance policies come in three flavors. “Open peril” coverage encompasses damage from all disasters that are not explicitly excluded; “named peril” policies cover specific hazards; and hybrid policies (“HO-3”) offer different coverage for your house, personal belongings and personal liability. Make sure the one you choose

addresses your area’s hazards: In regions prone to flooding, wind, hail and wildfire, standard homeowner policies often limit or even exclude coverage for those risks.

Get full replacement cost coverage if you can. Be wary of “functional” replacement coverage (instead of original materials, you may get cheaper substitutes). And “actual cash value” policies, which are also less expensive, won’t pay an item’s original price but its current value based on age, wear and tear, and other factors.

Look for “extended replacement coverage,” where carriers will pay to rebuild your home even if the loss exceeds your policy’s stated home value. Adding building code upgrade coverage pays for a share of the costs to rebuild to the most recent standards, which can be a big benefit in areas prone to disasters.

Is this more expensive? Yes. If you need to cut costs, raise your deductible and trim extras, like reimbursement for hotel costs if you have other options.

Finally, consider parametric insurance for your home if you’ll need cash right after a disaster. Some insurers offer to automatically pay you a small amount within days if a disaster is detected. These policies are particularly useful if you need cash to cover immediate expenses or a deductible. However, this does not replace primary insurance.

One pilot program in New York City, which relies on a mix of satellite data, on-the-ground real-time sensors and social media images

to monitor flooding, promises enrollees as much as \$15,000 within days of detecting a deluge. “It provides a stopgap to prevent climate disasters from becoming a downward spiral of an economic disaster,” said Kate Stillwell of Neptune Flood Insurance.

### Shop around

Today, you can often find better deals by expanding your search by expanding your search rather than relying on one “captive” agent or broker who sells only one company’s policies. You can buy insurance directly online or get quotes, but it’s usually worth asking at least one independent insurance broker for quotes from multiple insurers.

If you’re struggling to get private insurance in areas at risk for wildfires or floods, get quotes from state-run property insurance programs known as Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) plans. (California, Florida, Hawaii, New York and North Carolina offer them, among other states.) They generally offer limited coverage for high-risk properties at higher prices — but they may be your only option. Consider buying supplemental coverage and compare similar plans offered by private insurers.

When you’re ready to choose an insurer, don’t just choose a brand name. Experts once favored these “admitted” insurers, tightly regulated companies whose rates are subject to state approval. They also pay into a state fund guaranteeing policyholders are covered, even if the carrier goes bankrupt.

But as traditional insurers pull back, non-admitted insurers’ share of the market is growing. These carriers, also called excess and surplus insurers, are not as strictly regulated; they can set their own rates and typically specialize in high-risk policies. They are required to have sufficient financial backing, such as reinsurance or financial reserves.

Bach of United Policyholders said her group used to tell people to avoid non-admitted carriers. “But now we say just compare ... the coverage you’ll get,” she said.

Susman advised that homeowners should focus on a firm’s financial stability, not its brand. Ask an agent about a company’s track record, financial reserves and how well its coverage matches the typical losses in your area.

You can check a firm’s ratings and reserves on AM Best, a rating agency that gives letter grades to 16,000 insurance companies. (Register on AM Best here free and use this guide on how to search.)

Seek out an “A” or above. Some brand names may have low ratings (State Farm’s California subsidiary was recently downgraded to a “B”), while new firms may rank higher. Beware of unlisted companies, Susman warned. “These little nobodies are starting companies to try and grab money while they can.”

### Harden your home against extreme weather

Preventing a loss is always cheaper than claiming it. There’s no universal list of ways to reduce your premiums. But Bach’s group is pressuring insurers to disclose steps homeowners can take to reduce risks and lower their rates. “It seems like it’s the only thing that’s going to help consumers,” she said.

Prepare your home so that it can withstand extreme weather better. For now, FEMA, state FAIR plans, private insurers, agents and even local fire departments offer advice on how to minimize damage from fire, flood and wind. If a disaster strikes, these investments can pay for themselves several times over. Communities can also cooperate through prevention programs such as Firewise.

Insurers and governments rarely pay for this, but that’s changing. Kin Insurance has compiled a list of state programs, such as California’s Safer from Wildfires program and the My Safe Florida Home Program, which help homeowners upgrade their property. Insurers such as Hippo are beginning to offer discounts for preventive measures, such as removing flammable brush and trees around homes.

### Bailing out may make sense

More places in the United States will become unaffordable for the average person to insure, especially along the coasts, predicts Nancy Watkins, who analyzes insurance risks and pricing for the global consulting firm Milliman. “Because the risk is going up,” she said, “prices will go up.”

First, look up your community’s risks with our interactive tool, or see property-specific risks at Redfin, Realtor.com, ClimateCheck and, soon, Zillow. Then decide if it makes sense to leave before these risks materialize.

In places regularly exposed to flooding, federal and local governments are already buying out properties. Over the past 30 years, FEMA has spent billions of dollars on voluntary buyouts of more than 40,000 flood-prone properties. But that’s unlikely to keep pace with rising waters. By 2050, according to Harvard Law School professor Susan Crawford, millions of Americans may need buyouts. At today’s pace, only a tiny fraction of households will receive them.

Instead, the cost of insurance in risky places is likely to redraw the map where people can live, argued Georgia Institute of Technology professor Brian Stone, who directs the university’s Urban Climate Lab.

He pointed to Gatineau, a city in Quebec that experienced two 100-year floods within three years. The provincial government required owners of heavily damaged homes who received relief money to either leave the flood zone or, if they chose to rebuild, relinquish claim to any public relief funds for themselves and future owners. Homeowners across Canada have been put on notice that anyone rebuilding in dangerous flood zones may lose out on relief funds.

Stone said this offers a preview for the rest of the world. “The forcing mechanism is going to be insurance buyouts,” Stone said. “But we have to do it in advance of the crisis, not in the aftermath.”



THOMAS SIMONETTI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Homes in Florida, like this one in Cape Coral, are expensive to insure because of the potential for hurricanes to wreak havoc.



# ECONOMY & BUSINESS

## California family files suit against Amazon One Medical

A 45-year-old man with diabetes who had a video consultation with the service in 2023 died the same day; hospital is also cited in the complaint

BY CAROLINE O'DONOVAN

One week before Christmas 2023, Philip Tong logged onto a video consultation with health-care clinic Amazon One Medical and said that he was short of breath, coughing up blood, and that his feet were turning blue. The provider told him to buy an inhaler, according to an October lawsuit.

Hours later, Tong collapsed in an emergency room in Oakland, California, according to a complaint filed against the hospital and One Medical. He died the same day.

The loss of Tong, who had diabetes and had been sick with flu-like symptoms for about a week before his death, was an abrupt blow to his wife Suzanne, a lawyer, and their two daughters.

"I think we're all in shock right now," she said at his Dec. 28 funeral, according to an online recording viewed by The Washington Post. "I think no one expected a 45-year-old man who had the flu to suddenly be dead."

The Tong family's lawsuit, which has not been previously reported, was filed in Alameda County Superior Court in October and also accuses an Oakland hospital of malpractice. It appears to be the first wrongful-death suit to be brought against One Medical, which was acquired by Amazon in February 2023.

The complaint claims that One Medical failed to order appropriate testing for Tong and lacked "adequately trained and qualified staff," resulting in treatment that was "careless, reckless and negligent."

Amazon One Medical said it is "prohibited by law from discussing patient records."

"We care deeply about every patient we serve, and the quality and safety of our care are our highest priorities," Amazon One Medical spokesperson Samantha Kruse said. "We're proud of our extensive quality and safety measures, and of the health outcomes we help our patients achieve. We take concerns about our care extremely seriously, and we're



This case appears to be the first wrongful-death suit to be brought against One Medical, which was acquired by Amazon in February 2023.

committed to continuous improvement."

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.

Since Amazon acquired One Medical for \$3.9 billion in February 2023, the provider has expanded its telehealth services. A year after the deal closed, One Medical announced layoffs that included cuts to clinical staff and shifted more of its patient care and communication online, The Post reported in February.

Video appointments with medical professionals became much more common since the coronavirus pandemic. More than a fifth of adults reported attending a telehealth appointment between 2021 and 2022,

according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report, and experts say telehealth improves patient access to health care.

But the Tong family's suit highlights questions about whether telemedicine is effective in life-threatening situations, especially those that patients themselves might have difficulty recognizing.

Simon Rowland, a researcher with health-care company Haleon who has studied telehealth and malpractice, said that while technology can help patients access health care, few providers receive special training in making remote diagnoses, which can be especially difficult in acute

cases.

"Training in that area is in its infancy," Rowland told The Post. "It's a clinical scenario that people need to understand better in terms of the risks and benefits."

Philip Tong worked in the biotech industry and in his spare time collected bicycles, cars and Legos. He loved photography and was building his own watch. Friends at his funeral remembered his sense of humor and his dedication as a dad.

Tong was also struggling with his health. He was diagnosed with diabetes as an adult and, despite being a One Medical patient for years, struggled to get the condition under control, according to his family's lawsuit.

By the time Tong died, the suit said, he was suffering from "uncontrolled diabetes, Stage 3 chronic kidney disease, infection and sepsis." Diabetes is a chronic illness that can complicate an acute infection like the flu.

As One Medical has grown under Amazon's ownership, it has sometimes struggled to adequately care for its more vulnerable patients. Earlier this year, leaked documents revealed that staff had repeatedly mishandled urgent calls from senior patients with potentially life-threatening symptoms, The Post reported. The layoffs that followed Amazon's acquisition included clinical reception staff who were replaced by a call center in Arizona

## EPA lets California enforce emissions limits, setting up clash with Trump

BY MAXINE JOSELOW

The Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday granted California permission to set stronger limits on harmful emissions from cars, SUVs and trucks, setting up a clash between the liberal state and President-elect Donald Trump.

The EPA issued California two waivers to enforce two ambitious rules aimed at curbing auto emissions. The first rule is intended to ban sales of new gasoline-powered cars in the state by 2035, while the second is aimed at cutting smog-forming pollution from diesel-powered trucks in the state by 90 percent by 2027. The Washington Post first reported the agency's plans.

Under the Clean Air Act, California must receive a waiver from the EPA to set tougher vehicle emissions standards than those of the federal government. Eleven other states follow California's stricter car rule, collectively accounting for about 40 percent of the U.S. auto market.

"California has longstanding authority to request waivers from EPA to protect its residents from

dangerous air pollution coming from mobile sources like cars and trucks," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement. "Today's actions follow through on EPA's commitment to partner with states to reduce emissions and act on the threat of climate change."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat who has been floated as a possible 2028 presidential candidate, issued a 2020 executive order that called for all new cars sold in the state to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. The California Air Resources Board, the top air pollution regulator in the state, then approved a rule that codified this goal.

"Clean cars are here to stay," Newsom said in a statement Wednesday, adding, "Naysayers like President-elect Trump would prefer to side with the oil industry over consumers and American automakers, but California will continue fostering new innovations in the market."

Climate activists have cheered California's car standards, noting that transportation ranks as the largest source of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions in the



MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Traffic in Los Angeles on Monday. California has sought to set tougher vehicle emissions standards than the federal government.

state and nationwide. But Trump and other Republicans have slammed the Golden State's approach, saying it will force consumers to drive electric vehicles they don't want.

During his first term, Trump revoked California's waiver for car standards, and he is expected to do so again after taking office in January, setting in motion a mas-

sive legal battle between the Golden State and the incoming administration. While the fight unfolds in court, automakers could be thrust into a prolonged period of uncertainty about their future production plans.

Some automakers, however, have argued that California's car rule is too ambitious in light of a slowdown in U.S. electric vehicle

sales. The Alliance for Automotive Innovation — a trade group that represents Ford, General Motors, Toyota and others — also contends that such regulations should be set by the federal government rather than individual states.

"The 11 states following California's lead aren't accountable to California or the EPA. They're part of a program that is an unaccountable, unachievable regulatory wormhole," the trade group wrote in a memo last week.

Yet Mary Nichols, a former chair of the California Air Resources Board, said she expects automakers to continue ramping up electric vehicle production regardless of how Trump proceeds. She said that car companies are wary of changing their production plans because of a single regulatory change and that they worry that a future administration or a court could reinstate the waiver down the road.

"They generally assume the waiver will ultimately be granted at end of the day," said Nichols, a distinguished counsel at UCLA's Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment.

"They want to be prepared, like most large corporations, especially ones that operate in more than one state and have their own armies of lawyers that advise them not to be in violation."

The truck regulation, which the California Air Resources Board approved in 2021, is aimed at slashing emissions of nitrogen oxides, or NOx — poisonous and reactive gases that contribute to the formation of smog. Long-term exposure to NOx is linked to increased asthma attacks, respiratory illnesses and hospitalizations.

California has requested a total of eight waivers to enforce vehicle emissions standards — not only for cars and trucks, but also for trains and commercial harbor craft. It is unclear whether the EPA plans to issue the six other waivers before President Joe Biden leaves office next month.

"EPA continues reviewing additional waiver requests from California and is working to ensure its decisions are durable and grounded by law," the agency said in a news release.

Evan Halper contributed to this report.

### DIGEST

#### AUTO INDUSTRY

##### Honda, Nissan in possible merger talks

Honda and Nissan are in talks to deepen ties, two people said on Wednesday, including a possible merger, the clearest sign yet of how Japan's once seemingly unbeatable auto industry is being reshaped by challenges from Tesla and Chinese rivals.

A combined Honda and Nissan would create a \$54 billion company with annual output of 7.4 million vehicles, making it the world's third-largest auto group by vehicle sales after Toyota and Volkswagen.

The two firms already forged a strategic partnership in March to cooperate in electric vehicle development, but Nissan's

deepening financial and strategic trouble in recent months has added more urgency for closer cooperation with larger rival Honda.

Nissan announced a \$2.6 billion cost savings plan last month that includes cutting 9,000 jobs and 20 percent of its global production capacity, as slumping sales in China and the United States led to an 85 percent plunge in second-quarter profit.

Shares of Nissan closed nearly 24 percent higher in Tokyo on Wednesday, while shares of Honda, whose market value of \$43 billion is more than four times bigger than that of Nissan, declined 3 percent. Shares of Mitsubishi Motors, in which Nissan is the top shareholder, with a 24 percent stake, gained nearly 20 percent.

— Reuters

#### STOCK MARKET

##### Indexes sink after Fed signals fewer cuts

U.S. stocks tumbled to one of their worst days of the year after the Federal Reserve hinted Wednesday that it may deliver fewer shots of adrenaline to the U.S. economy in 2025 than previously thought.

The S&P 500 fell 2.9 percent to 5,872.16, just shy of its biggest loss for the year from the summer, to pull further from its all-time high set a couple of weeks ago. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 2.6 percent, closing at 42,326.87, and the Nasdaq composite dropped 3.6 percent, ending at 19,392.69.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.5 percent from 4.4 percent late Tuesday, which is a notable move for the bond

market. The two-year yield, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action, climbed to 4.35 percent from 4.25 percent.

The Fed said Wednesday it's cutting its main interest rate for a third time this year. That continues the sharp turnaround begun in September, when it started lowering rates from a two-decade high to support the job market. That cut, though, was widely expected.

— Associated Press

#### ENVIRONMENT

##### Toxic waste led to \$1B in damage, group says

Years of toxic waste dumping in a Jersey Shore community where childhood cancer rates rose caused at least \$1 billion in damage to natural resources,

according to an environmental group trying to overturn a settlement between New Jersey and the corporate successor to the firm that did the polluting.

Save Barnegat Bay and the township of Toms River are suing to overturn a deal between the state and German chemical company BASF under which the firm will pay \$500,000 and carry out nine environmental remediation projects at the site of the former Ciba-Geigy Chemical Corporation plant.

That site became one of America's worst toxic waste dumps and led to widespread concern over the prevalence of childhood cancer cases in and around Toms River.

The state Department of Environmental Protection defended the deal, saying that monetary compensation isn't the main goal but that restoring

damaged areas is a priority. The state declined to comment.

— Associated Press

#### ALSO IN BUSINESS

**General Mills slashed its annual profit forecast** as the Cheerios cereal maker ramps up promotions to attract cost-conscious consumers, sending shares down about 3 percent. Budget-strapped shoppers have increasingly chosen cheaper private-label products over pricier brand names, prompting major packaged food companies to increase promotions. The company also said its Pillsbury refrigerated dough sales were "disappointing" at the start of the holiday season when customers turn to baking and said would focus on better advertising to boost demand.

— From news services



TECH BRIEF

# House sets ‘road map’ for AI, but no policies

BY CRISTIANO LIMA-STRONG AND ANDREA JIMÉNEZ

The House artificial intelligence task force released a sprawling report Tuesday on how Congress can boost the technology’s development and safeguard against its risks, forming what lawmakers said would serve as yet another “road map” for future proposals.

But lawmakers declined to endorse or propose any specific legislation, leaving much of the work of hashing out disputes over policy and priorities to future sessions.

The 253-page document is more detailed and wide-ranging than the Senate’s 31-page “road map” that Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) and a bipartisan gang of senators working on AI released in May. Critics called that one overly vague.

The new document features dozens of findings and recommendations on how AI intersects with labor issues, privacy protections and national security concerns, among other matters. It marks the culmination of the work of the bipartisan House AI task force, launched in February.

Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-California), who led the task force, called the report the “beginning of the conversation” around AI policy, adding, “It will only be effective if future Congresses implement some of the recommendations that we have created.”

Obernolte said the task force met to consider bills that it could publicly endorse for passage this Congress, but the group ultimately agreed not to do so.

“Disagreements started to emerge about the language in each individual bill and we realized that if we wanted to maintain this coalition that was broadly bipartisan ... it probably was counterproductive to actually be talking about legislative language,” he said.

At a news conference announcing the report, members of the task force highlighted AI-related issues that could soon be competing for attention in the next Congress.

Rep. Bill Foster (D-Illinois) said Congress should work on creating methods to identify users digitally, which he has long championed. “That’s something that I think we need to do,” he said.

Foster and Rep. Neal Dunn (R-Florida) urged movement on data privacy, given concerns that AI could further expose consumer data to unwanted collection and use online.

Obernolte and Rep. Laurel Lee (R-Florida) called for swift action against the spread of nonconsensual deepfakes, often referred to as revenge porn. Rep. Valerie Foushee (D-North Carolina) highlighted the need to bolster civil rights protections for the AI era.

It was not clear which, if any, of these issues will take priority in the House next year. It’s also unclear who will lead the efforts moving ahead.

Obernolte said it remained to be seen whether the task force would continue to exist or whether congressional committees would instead lead the charge.

“We’re working through those issues, but we have been very vocal in the belief that something needs to be done,” he said.

President-elect Donald Trump’s administration is likely to also play a major role in shaping any AI package. Obernolte said the task force met last week with Trump’s transition team and plans to meet with AI and crypto czar David Sacks. They are exploring how their efforts may coalesce.

The clearest takeaway from the task force’s report is that lawmakers want Congress to take up AI legislation sector by sector, rather than pursuing an overarching bill.

Its co-chairs had signaled their support for that approach going into the effort.

That’s a contrast to what European Union officials have pursued under their Artificial Intelligence Act, which this year imposed fresh safety standards across industries.

“What we’re embracing here is incrementalism. We don’t think it’s important that everyone agrees on every single aspect of AI immediately,” Obernolte said.



ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A Virginia shopping mall on Black Friday last month. There were positive developments in the recent report on consumer prices from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# Fed chair notes future cuts will require caution

RATES FROM AI

Trump, exit polling showed. Despite the recent rate cuts, mortgage rates have increased and housing inflation remains a challenge.

Interest rate cuts trickle through the financial sector to make an array of consumer and business loans cheaper. But if the Fed cuts rates too much or too quickly, it can stimulate the economy and prompt inflation to surge again, which is why the Fed is being more careful in 2025.

“From here, it’s a new phase, and we’re going to be cautious about further cuts,” Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell said at a news conference. Though inflation had recently been “moving sideways,” he said the Fed still sees it as “broadly on track” and coming down slowly over the next year or two.

To be sure, inflation has cooled significantly from alarmingly high levels of a couple of years ago. But Powell acknowledged the recent pace of progress has been “frustrating because . . . it’s been slower than we had hoped.”

Wednesday’s cut, which was widely expected and reduces rates to the lowest point in about two years, comes about a month before Trump’s return to the White House. His promises around immigration, regulation, and tax and trade policies could shift expectations for the economy and ultimately alter the central bank’s future stance on rates.

Indeed, Powell said some officials were starting to think about the inflationary effects of Trump’s potential new tariffs in their estimates for the economy.

Powell added that the Fed needs to take its time and make “a very careful assessment” of new proposed tariffs, but only once it’s clear what the new policies look like, specifically. “And we’re just not at that stage,” he said.

New projections released after the meeting showed the Fed downgraded its view of how inflation will progress next year. Now officials expect “core” inflation to rise by 2.5 percent at the end of 2025, which is up from an earlier estimate of 2.2 percent. Core inflation excludes volatile food and energy categories, which can



KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell said the economy is healthy, with strong growth and a solid job market.

surge and fall depending on outside factors.

Overall, Powell characterized the health of the economy positively, with strong growth and a healthy labor market. “I feel very good about where the economy is

and the performance of the economy, and we want to keep that going,” he said. “The U.S. economy has just been remarkable.”

Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG, said the Fed is not reacting in advance to whatever

policies will be implemented by the incoming administration. “This is not the Fed front-running policy,” she said. “It’s the Fed reacting to a really strong economy that also left us with higher inflation than we’d hoped.”

After a jumbo cut in September and a smaller one in November, officials have now lowered rates by a full percentage point. Mortgage rates, which generally track 10-year borrowing costs for the Treasury Department, have increased on expectations of a stronger economy going forward.

Wednesday’s announcement comes at the end of the Fed’s two-day policy meeting. The vote was 11-1, with Cleveland Fed President Beth Hammack alone in dissent. She preferred to keep rates unchanged, the Fed said.

In their campaign to lower inflation, Fed policymakers successfully avoided a recession once thought inevitable by economic forecasters. Now, officials are trying not to make too many cuts too quickly, which could keep inflation well above the Fed’s 2 percent target, while also not cutting too slowly, which could allow the labor market to

deteriorate.

Though inflation and growth figures were a bit hotter than the Fed predicted earlier in the year, officials signaled comfort with easing rates for a third and final time in 2024 for a couple of key reasons.

Most officials say the Fed benchmark rate — which was lowered to between 4.25 and 4.50 percent — continues to restrict economic growth, which keeps inflation in check. That means they can afford to cut now while maintaining rates that dampen demand.

Also, there were some positive developments in last week’s report on consumer prices from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While the report showed that the consumer price index grew by 2.7 percent in November from the previous year, one of the largest components of the report, housing, increased at a slower pace than earlier in the year. That’s important because housing costs had previously helped buoy inflation.

Other drivers of inflation, such as auto insurance premiums and airline fares, also grew at a slower pace than in previous months.

Even ahead of Wednesday’s meeting, Powell signaled that the central bank could afford to move deliberately going forward.

“Growth is definitely stronger than we thought, and inflation is coming a little higher,” Powell said at a Dec. 4 conference hosted by the New York Times. “The good news is that we can afford to be a little more cautious.”

The news of the scaling back of planned rate cuts hit markets hard on Wednesday, with the S&P 500 index losing about 3 percent and the Nasdaq down about 3.5 percent.

Some of the biggest winners of a recent stock market rally were down significantly, such as Elon Musk’s Tesla, which fell about 8 percent. Amazon was down about 4.6 percent. Robinhood, a trading app, was down roughly 11 percent.

Meanwhile, yields on Treasury notes that are sensitive to Fed policy also rose.

Rachel Siegel contributed to this report.

# Federal watchdog takes aim at credit card rewards programs

BY SHANNON NAJMABADI

Some credit card companies may be breaking the law by illegally devaluing accrued points, airline miles and other rewards used to entice cardholders, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said Wednesday.

Card companies may be violating federal law if they deploy promotional language that conflicts with fine-print disclaimers, use buried and vague terms to revoke customers’ rewards or otherwise prevent customers from redeeming rewards, the federal consumer watchdog said in guidance to law enforcement agencies.

At the end of 2022, three-quarters of general-purpose credit cards were reward cards, while the amount of earned rewards has increased substantially in recent years, it noted.

“Large credit card issuers too often play a shell game to lure people into high-cost cards, boosting their own profits while denying consumers the rewards they’ve earned,” CFPB Director Rohit Chopra said in a statement.

Rewards programs and sign-up bonuses are a significant draw for consumers shopping for credit cards, especially those with high annual fees, the agency said in May, when it released a report on

reward program problems. The perks can include cash back, hotel and airline points, and access to lounges, among other items. Rewards cards are more frequently held by consumers with high credit scores, but they’re growing most quickly among those with poor credit scores, the agency said.

Consumers said card issuers sometimes increased the number of points needed to redeem a reward or didn’t protect them when reward program partners removed benefits or changed their terms, the agency noted at the time. Consumers complained of technical issues, such as customer service problems that made it dif-

ficult to redeem rewards, or rewards disappearing when an account closed.

The Consumer Bankers Association said the agency misrepresented credit card rewards.

“It’s unfortunate that with a little over a month left in the Biden Administration, the CFPB continues to ignore well-settled facts about one of the most highly competitive, well-regulated, transparently-disclosed industries in the world,” the association’s president and chief executive, Lindsey Johnson, said in a statement.

Also Wednesday, the CFPB released research showing that retail credit cards charge higher in-

terest rates than general-purpose cards. Ninety percent reported maximum annual percentage rates above 30 percent compared with about 40 percent of non-retail cards, according to one agency sample. Retail cards, most of which are operated by four large banks, typically offer store-specific rewards, the agency said.

Consumers have filed complaints about retail cards with the agency, specifically regarding aggressive sales tactics, difficulty redeeming promotions and late fees, it added.

Aaron Gregg contributed to this report.



THURSDAY OPINION

MARC A. THIESSEN

Does Trump want Putin to get Ukraine’s \$26 trillion in gas and minerals?

Donald Trump often says that liberating Iraq without getting its oil resources was one of America’s biggest foreign policy blunders. He has a chance to avoid a similar mistake in Ukraine.

Ukraine is not only the breadbasket of Europe; it is also a mineral superpower, with some of the largest reserves of 117 of the 120 most widely used minerals in the world. Of the 50 strategic minerals identified by the United States as critical to its economy and national security, many of which are quite rare yet key to certain high-value applications, Ukraine supplies 22.

Ukraine possesses the largest reserves of uranium in Europe; the second-largest reserves of iron ore, titanium and manganese; and the third-largest reserves of shale gas — as well as large deposits of lithium, graphite and rare earth metals, according to a 2022 report by the Canadian geopolitical risk-analysis firm SecDev. These minerals are essential to the production of vital goods ranging from air-planes, cellphones and electric vehicles to steel and nuclear power.

The question for the president-elect is: Does he want Russia and China to get that treasure trove of natural resources? Or does he want to develop them with Ukraine to the benefit of the American people?

One of the main reasons Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine (aside from his delusional historical fantasies about how Ukrainians and Russians are “one people”) was to seize these natural resources, which are valued at an estimated \$26 trillion, according to SecDev.

That effort nearly succeeded. In early 2022, Russian forces reached the outskirts of Kyiv and came close to taking the capital and installing a puppet regime. But with U.S. assistance — including the Javelin missiles that Trump supplied (reversing Barack Obama’s lethal weapons ban) — Ukraine forced Russia back. In so doing, it not only liberated its citizens from brutal Russian occupation but also successfully defended roughly 80 percent of Ukraine’s known mineral deposits, according to the SecDev report — including 73 percent of its iron ore, 75 percent of its lithium and graphite, 90 percent of its titanium, and 92 percent of its uranium and other radioactive elements.

Early on, Russia seized control of an estimated 80 percent of Ukraine’s massive offshore hydrocarbon deposits. But over the past three years, Ukraine has wiped out roughly half of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet using explosive sea drones to drive the Russian navy from its territorial waters. With that successful offensive, Ukraine has reopened its shipping lanes and recaptured many of its Black Sea oil and gas deposits.

Today, Ukraine maintains control of 96.5 percent of its proven oil reserves and 96 percent of its proven natural gas reserves — as well as all of its aluminum, cobalt, copper, nickel, tin and beryllium deposits.

Russia did succeed in seizing about 57 percent of the country’s known coal reserves (worth about \$11.9 trillion) and about half of its deposits of certain rare earths (though many of those were captured in 2014 when Russia first invaded and seized Crimea). But those losses notwithstanding, Ukraine has prevented Russia from seizing \$13.6 trillion in mineral and hydrocarbon wealth.

That has been a massive defeat for Putin — and a huge opportunity for the United States.

The American people have already invested about \$183 billion to help Ukraine defend its mineral-rich land from Russian aggression. Though the vast majority of the military portion of that aid has been spent here in the United States — strengthening our defense production capacity and creating good manufacturing jobs for American workers — that amount remains a staggeringly large investment in helping Ukraine defend itself from unjust aggression. Shouldn’t U.S. taxpayers get a return on that investment? Do we want Ukrainian titanium going into American planes, or into Russian and Chinese fighter jets that will threaten the United States and its allies? Do we want Ukraine’s lithium and rare earths powering American-made electronics and electric vehicles, or Chinese ones?

Trump has pledged to “bring Americans the lowest-cost energy and electricity on Earth” as well as expand artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency mining, which require data centers that consume vast amounts of electricity. The only proven way to lower electricity costs while simultaneously increasing electricity demand is to dramatically boost our supply of clean nuclear power. And Trump has pledged to approve the construction of nuclear plants powered by small innovative reactors.



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

Miners ride on a conveyor in the tunnel at the coal mine in Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine on April 7, 2023.

Natural gas

About 96 percent of Ukraine’s natural gas reserves remain under Ukrainian control.



Source: Institute for the Study of War. Control areas as of Dec. 12.

Ukraine’s mineral reserves

Ukraine has some of the world’s largest reserves of minerals, such as lithium, titanium and uranium, which are deemed strategic for growing technologies.



Source: Institute for the Study of War. Control areas as of Dec. 12.

That would dramatically increase U.S. demand for uranium. The United States is already the largest purchaser of Russian-enriched uranium, dependent on Moscow for nearly one-quarter of its supply. It is not in our strategic interest to allow Putin to seize control of the largest uranium reserves in Europe. The United States needs that Ukrainian uranium to lower energy costs for Americans and fuel AI and crypto innovation.

Trump has also set a priority of reducing America’s economic dependence on Communist China. Beijing is the largest source of more than half of the critical minerals the United States imports, including 72 percent of rare earth imports. China is trying to corner the global market on lithium, actively buying mines across the world, as well as mines for other critical minerals, such as cobalt and nickel. And demonstrating its growing power over the U.S. economy, Beijing recently tightened export controls on critical minerals such as aluminum and titanium, banned the export of gallium and severely restricted the export of graphite to the United States. Ukraine has all of these minerals in abundance.

Were Ukraine’s mineral wealth to fall into Russian hands, it would be a strategic and economic boon to China, which has established a “no limits”

partnership with Russia. Meanwhile, the United States needs friendly, reliable sources of these critical minerals. If we help Ukraine secure and develop its natural resources, we can also deal a strategic blow to Beijing and Moscow, while bringing enormous financial benefit back to the American people.

But to do so, Ukraine needs Trump’s help to secure a just and lasting peace.

After Russia’s full-scale invasion, metallurgical production in Ukraine fell by an estimated 80 percent — from 20 million tons in 2021 to just 2.5 million by the middle of 2023. It is hard to mine for minerals while missiles are being fired at your critical infrastructure. It is impossible to develop offshore oil and natural gas in the waters Ukraine controls in the North Crimean Basin under the shadow of Russian forces within firing range.

American businesses can develop those resources for the benefit of the American and Ukrainian peoples — but only if the fighting ends on terms that give investors confidence the Russian assault won’t resume.

The reality is that Putin won’t willingly give up on his quest to conquer Ukraine and its mineral wealth. He will violate any international agreement Russia

signs to achieve his objective. The only way to stop him is to make his objective impossible to achieve. Putin no doubt hopes to use any cessation of hostilities to pause, reconstitute his forces and resume his invasion in a few years’ time — just like he did after his 2014 invasion and annexation of Crimea.

So, Trump needs to do more than simply stop today’s war in Ukraine; he must create conditions that make a resumption of war impossible.

That will require creating defensible borders. During this year’s CNN presidential debate, Dana Bash asked Trump whether Putin’s demands that Russia “keeps the Ukrainian territory it has already claimed and Ukraine abandons its bid to join NATO” were acceptable to him. Trump responded, “No, they’re not acceptable.” He’s right. A good deal that truly secures Ukraine and its resources requires that Kyiv get back critical areas in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. It will also need security guarantees backed up with Western military might — whether through NATO membership for Ukraine, serious bilateral security commitments or a demilitarized zone enforced by an international peacekeeping force made up of European, not American, troops. (Poland will soon have the third-largest military in NATO and could lead a European peacekeeping operation.)

But another key to a lasting peace is a well-armed Ukraine, so that Kyiv possesses a military powerful enough to deter Russia. The United States will need to arm Ukraine regardless of what happens at the negotiating table — either to stop Russia from resuming the war once Trump has left office or to force Putin to the negotiating table if he refuses to agree to peace. So we must find mechanisms to increase the flow of U.S. weapons to Kyiv that do not require U.S. taxpayers to bear the cost. One way to do so? Loans backed by Ukraine’s mineral and fossil fuel resources as collateral.

By creating confidence that attracts private investment, a Trump-brokered peace accord will help the United States and Ukraine jointly develop Ukraine’s mineral and hydrocarbon resources, allowing it to provide for its own defense, just as Poland and the Baltic states do today.

A stable, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine will be an essential partner for America in extracting this natural resource wealth. An unstable Ukraine, under constant threat from Russia, will lead to a resumption of war when Trump leaves office, and ultimately allow Putin to seize that wealth for Russia and China’s benefit.

Who will benefit from Ukraine’s oil, gas and mineral wealth? The choice belongs to Trump.

LEE HOCKSTADER

Russia goes big (and small) in its war against Europe

PARIS When will Europe tire of playing the chump as Russian President Vladimir Putin escalates his shadow war of sabotage, assassination and disinformation?

That’s a key question as Western officials register a sharp recent intensification of the Kremlin’s hybrid campaign across the continent but struggle to devise countermeasures that might deter Russian aggression.

So far, they have focused largely on defensive steps: better intelligence-sharing and surveillance, more assertive denunciations of Moscow’s suspected aggression, hardening infrastructure to make it more resilient.

But my takeaway from recent interviews, including at NATO headquarters in Brussels, is that Europe knows it needs a tougher response but hasn’t figured out a way to show Putin he will suffer consequences if he keeps it up.

Western officials believe Putin’s shadow war in Europe is partly a means of taking revenge for the West’s backing of Ukraine. Yet he hardly needed the pretext afforded by a war he started. Putin’s broader goals are to sow anxiety and discord in Europe, wrong-foot Western allies and test NATO’s resolve. He regards himself as locked in a twilight struggle against the West; hybrid war against Europe is one

front in that conflict.

He appeared to double down earlier this year, with mounting attacks across Europe that security officials believe bore the imprimatur of Russia’s GRU military intelligence agency, notwithstanding the Kremlin’s routinely indignant denials.

There were fires at a Ukrainian-owned warehouse in London and a facility in Berlin owned by a German manufacturer of air-defense missiles provided to Ukraine. Separately, Polish authorities arrested nine alleged operatives planning sabotage attacks. European officials said Russian GPS jamming had essentially blinded civilian flights passing over the Baltic Sea, risking an air disaster.

In France, an explosion in a hotel room near Charles de Gaulle airport in June was caused by a man planning a bomb attack on a hardware store near Paris, officials said. His arrest disrupted what French security sources said was a sabotage plot orchestrated by Moscow.

Since then, Moscow appears to have broadened its campaign with riskier, potentially more lethal plots. By all indications, Russia is going just to the edge of what it calculates the West will tolerate without provoking a military response.

That’s a dangerous game, and one increasingly likely to result in a crisis arising from casualties on European soil. Yet the West remains stuck in a

defensive crouch.

“We need deterrence by punishment,” Eitvydas Bajarunas, a former top Lithuanian diplomat who is now a senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington, told me. “We are at war, and the first thing we need is to recognize we are at war.”

Among recent incidents, several point to an escalation by Moscow.

One was a foiled plot to assassinate the chief executive of Rheinmetall, a big German arms maker. Another was a pair of incendiary devices planted in DHL packages that caught fire in Germany and Britain. If either had ignited on a airborne DHL plane, it probably would have brought down the flight, officials said.

Then there was the Chinese merchant vessel, with Russian fertilizer and at least one Russian crew member aboard, suspected of intentionally dragging its anchor along the Baltic seabed for more than 100 miles last month, severing data cables. One linked Sweden and Lithuania; the other connected Germany and Finland. All four nations are NATO members, and alliance officials suspect a Russian hand in the operation.

Western security officials believe the hybrid attacks, coupled with the war in Ukraine, have made this the most dangerous moment between Russia

and NATO since the Cold War and also the most vulnerable to miscalculation. Russian military intelligence “is on a sustained mission to generate mayhem on British and European streets ... dangerous actions conducted with increasing recklessness,” Ken McCallum, director of Britain’s MI5 domestic counterintelligence agency, said in a speech this fall.

Bajarunas, the former Lithuanian diplomat, advocates countermeasures including impounding ships, along with their crews, on evidence they have intentionally severed undersea Western communications cables.

Other moves that might get Putin’s attention come to mind — specifically, seizing more than \$330 billion in frozen Russian central bank assets held mainly in Europe. Western governments once regarded those holdings as untouchable, but that view has changed. Already, the United States and its European allies have sent Kyiv \$50 billion in loans backed by interest earned from the Russian assets. That should be a template for political will trumping legal caution.

Make no mistake: Putin will not let up. Without a firm Western response, he will pursue his hybrid offensive in Europe and possibly also in the United States. Tut-tuts and tighter defense won’t work. Real consequences might.



OPINION

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

A stamp of approval for USPS reform

PRESIDENT-ELECT Donald Trump is considering overhauling the U.S. Postal Service, including, The Post reports, possibly privatizing it. Condemned by progressives as “extreme” and “truly awful,” postal privatization is actually a mainstream public policy idea. Countries such as Germany, Japan, Britain and the Netherlands have already pursued it at least partially.

To be clear, we are agnostic on privatization for the United States. But with the Postal Service losing \$9.5 billion in fiscal 2024, and headed for \$80 billion more in losses over the next decade

**EDITORIAL** (despite \$50 billion in relief from Congress in 2022), this is no time to think incrementally, much less to impose taboos. Indeed, postal reform is one issue on which Mr. Trump’s disruptive instincts might serve the public interest.

No doubt current arrangements favor certain entrenched interests with influence in Congress, such as postal unions, direct mail advertisers and, yes, the greeting-card lobby. Some defenders of the status quo have gotten very good at influencing public opinion, and they are cranking up old narratives about how this popular institution knits together a far-flung nation.

Actually, what the Postal Service does is move physical objects, primarily paper documents, from one place to another place. The Postal Service spent \$89.5 billion last year, more than three-quarters of which went to personnel costs. The Postal Service has

600,000-plus workers and operates a quarter-million vehicles. Yet demand for its core paper-moving service keeps dwindling — for the obvious reason that modern life is digital.

In 2023, people sent 11.8 billion cards, bill payments and letters through the U.S. mail, down from 21.8 billion in 2014. By admittedly imprecise contrast, there were 12 billion text messages *every two days* in 2021, the most recent year for which data exist. Delivery of what the Postal Service calls “market dominant” mail — items, such as first-class letters or marketing material, over which the Postal Service enjoys legal monopoly power — accounts for 53 percent of the agency’s revenue. Yet market dominant mail volume in 2023 was down almost 50 percent from 2008, according to a September report by the agency’s inspector general.

“The factors driving mail volume trends represent a significant and irreversible change in the way our society communicates,” the report noted. In fact, the Postal Service handled 43 percent fewer pieces of first-class mail per capita in 2023 than it did in 1971, the year it was founded as a successor to the Post Office Department.

It is no coincidence that annual mail volume peaked at 213 billion pieces of all kinds in 2006 — the year before Apple rolled out the first iPhone. And in 2008, the Great Recession hit. (The Postal Service carried just 116.2 billion pieces in 2023.) Some suggest

helping the Postal Service by allowing it new businesses, such as beer and wine delivery or banking. This could not offset lost mail volume but would create inappropriate government-backed competition with the private sector.

It bears emphasis that just over half of the Postal Service’s shrinking market dominant volume consists of marketing mail, also known as advertising,

*Demand for the core paper-moving service keeps dwindling — for the obvious reason that modern life is digital.*

also known as junk mail. Of course, the Postal Service delivers these solicitations on behalf of tax-deductible charities and for-profit businesses — at preferential rates — whether customers want them or not. Recycling junk mail has turned into an expensive environmental challenge.

Even the government is taking its business elsewhere: Some fear that privatizing or otherwise rightsizing the Postal Service would affect Social Security

checks for seniors. In fact, 99.4 percent of recipients use electronic direct deposit, according to the Social Security Administration. Of 67.8 million beneficiaries, just 437,000 receive paper checks. It’s fewer each day: In 2013, the Obama administration required all new Social Security recipients to sign up for electronic payment.

The IRS long ago offered electronic tax return filing and payments; fewer and fewer billing transactions between banks and utilities and their customers move by mail. Yes, people depend on the mail for prescriptions, but not nearly as many as doomsayers about postal reform imply. About one-sixth of adults have gotten medicine via the mail, according to the most recent data. Perhaps competition for brick-and-mortar pharmacies is a good thing; why a federal agency should underwrite it, however, is not obvious.

The agency under Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has gamely tried to restructure. In addition to relentlessly declining mail volume, however, union contract rules and regulatory constraints have made this task a Sisyphean one. More sustainable solutions must be found, because even if the Postal Service, in its current incarnation, cannot survive a digital world, mail is still a necessary part of the communication mix. Collecting and delivering ballots is one vital purpose the agency is still uniquely suited to fulfill. With or without privatization, the risk for the U.S. Postal Service is not radical reform; it’s reform that’s not radical enough.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Biden’s pardons don’t go far enough. What about these?

Regarding the Dec. 13 front-page article “Biden begins series of pardons”:

The president’s clemency actions on Dec. 12 are welcome, but they fall far short of what is required. In commuting the sentences of those who remained in home confinement as a result of the pandemic, and in pardoning only a fraction of those whom the Justice Department has reportedly recommended for favorable action, President Joe Biden has done little to rehabilitate his dismal clemency record. Still before him are tougher decisions about whether to spare those on federal death row before President-elect Donald Trump takes office, and whether to take a serious bite out of the pardon case backlogs that have been growing since the Clinton administration.

To be fair, recent presidents have not been well served by the Justice Department as gatekeeper of the pardon power. I was responsible for the department’s pardon-vetting process for eight years in the 1990s and have since represented applicants for pardon and commutation. So I know firsthand how stingy and unhelpful the department has become over the past 30 years, denying thousands of people who seek the president’s forgiveness.

Congress also has its share of the blame. Members of Congress have allowed the pardon process to become a dumping ground for issues that should instead be brought to a vote and codified into law. This includes restoration of firearms rights, which for federal felony offenders is unavailable without a pardon no matter how minor and dated their conviction.

These concerns call for a broad discussion of how the president’s pardon power should be used in our modern justice system to serve both the presidency and public interest. One instructive example is Delaware’s pardon system, which is designed to help applicants (producing hundreds of grants each year), the governor (who is protected by recommendation from a board) and the general public (with a system that I believe is generally considered fair and safe). Also, Delaware’s state legislature has created statutory off-ramps to restore rights and status to justice-impacted people.

Consideration of the role and operation of the president’s constitutional pardon power is long overdue. It is my hope that the current focus on pardons will at last encourage reform.

**Margaret Love, Washington**  
*The writer is executive director of the Collateral Consequences Resource Center.*

Stay true to your word

It’s clear from the White House’s statement that the Biden administration sees nonviolent drug offenders, particularly those impacted by unjust cannabis laws, as a critical category of people deserving clemency.

However, President Joe Biden needs to go further when it comes to people incarcerated for cannabis convictions. Even with his most recent act of clemency, an estimated 3,000 individuals will probably remain in our federal prison system for cannabis, despite his statement that “no one should be jailed for using or possessing marijuana.”

The president can and should free these individuals with the stroke of a pen. This would be immensely popular; according to a 2020 poll commissioned by the American Civil Liberties Union, 84 percent of registered voters support the release of people serving time for crimes that are no longer considered illegal.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D) pardoned 175,000 cannabis possession and paraphernalia charges this year. Nevertheless, state-level action is not enough. Other Marylanders, such as Jonathan Wall — who has been incarcerated since 2020 on federal cannabis charges — can receive forgiveness only from the president.

Mr. Biden’s sweeping clemency action is a positive step forward. Now, it’s time for him to



secure his legacy on cannabis and criminal justice reform.

**Sarah Gersten, Hartford, Connecticut**  
*The writer is executive director of the nonprofit Last Prisoner Project.*

Give our son the same

Regarding Eugene Robinson’s Dec. 3 column, “Joe Biden chose to be a father first”:

Like Mr. Robinson, I fully empathize with President Joe Biden’s position. No parent wants to see their child go to prison. I also empathize with the sadness, grief and frustration of having a child in the criminal justice system.

That being said, Mr. Biden has a lot of power, and there are so many others who deserve clemency. Our own son, AnDreco Lott, is in prison for 92 years on charges from 2001. If he were sentenced for the same crime today, he would likely be eligible for release after serving 85 percent of a 15- to 20-year sentence. He would be home. Instead, his release date is 2080.

I know in my heart that our son has learned from his mistakes. AnDreco hasn’t had a single disciplinary infraction in 20-plus years behind bars. From prison, he has participated in his NAACP chapter and founded groups to raise awareness for cancer and racial disparities in the criminal justice system. He even learned how to play the bass guitar because the local prison choir didn’t have a bass player. These aren’t the actions of a man who is a

threat to society, and I’m so proud of him. We feel that our son should be pardoned so he can rebuild his life based on his reformed character, attitude and accomplishments.

I do not have the power to bring him home. But I have worked with groups, such as Famm, that have petitioned the president to use his power of clemency and to lead with mercy. There are thousands of other federal prisoners just like AnDreco who deserve their freedom. Mr. Biden should show our children the same compassion he gave his own.

**Delores Eggerson, Mansfield, Texas**

What credit is that to you?

In pardoning his son, President Joe Biden has joined his predecessors in removing legally imposed accountability from yet another privileged White man. From this country’s founding up until today, privileged White men have set and adjudicated the rules that govern us all. As a privileged White man myself, I can’t begin to understand what this centuries-long inequality of justice must feel like for the majority of Americans.

I’m fairly certain Mr. Biden pardoned his son out of love. With Christmas soon upon us, I ask that he extend the same love to those without privilege.

Mr. Biden and I share the same faith. In Luke 6:32-35, Jesus said: “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? ... But love your enemies,

do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great.” Mr. Biden alone has the ability to commute the sentences of those on federal death row. These individuals will continue to be held accountable, but they should not be subject to judicial homicide.

When I go to mass during this season of Advent, I’ll think of Mr. Biden and pray that he exhibits the love he showed for his son to those who — despite being harder to love — are God’s children all the same.

**Garth Gideon, St. Joseph, Minnesota**

**Parents understand**

President Joe Biden deserves our compassion and our love after his decision to pardon his son.

When I was 21, my sister (23 years old) died of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. I saw my father change. My heart aches every time I remember him coping with the grief of losing a child. He was never the same.

When I married, I knew I wanted to have three children because, if something happened to one of my kids, I would still have two. Perhaps this is a morbid way of thinking. Nevertheless, I did lose my eldest adult son 10 years ago, and now I am fighting for the health and well-being of my second adult child.

In a way, I feel Mr. Biden’s pain. He has sacrificed much for America, but he is a father first. Few parents would willingly give their child up, especially to political opponents bent on revenge as I believe the MAGA Republicans are.

**Barbara Wales, Odenton**

Don’t stop there

I completely agree with President Joe Biden’s pardoning of his son Hunter. This prosecution had all the signs of political motivation, especially with the incoming administration’s vows of revenge toward, and investigation and prosecution of, its political enemies. Plus, this case would continue to eat up significant investments of time, energy, resources and attention.

For similar reasons, Mr. Biden should offer pardons to thousands — perhaps tens of thousands — of civil servants, journalists, ordinary citizens and others who appropriately oppose President-elect Donald Trump’s overreaching conduct, or those who might resist his administration’s avowed policies and actions. By issuing such pardons, the many individuals who merely want to do their jobs, or who might legally voice their opposition, will avoid needless ridicule and useless diversions of their attention and resources — which are so desperately needed to address our country’s real issues.

**Christopher M. Kerns, Washington**

We can make limits

In every congressional session since 2017, Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tennessee) has proposed a constitutional amendment to reform the president’s pardon power. His amendment would eliminate corrupt pardons, including pardons for family members. The proposed amendment always goes nowhere. But instead of complaining about questionable presidential pardons from Joe Biden, Donald Trump and Bill Clinton, perhaps we should just amend the pardon power.

**Bruce McKinney, Silver City, New Mexico**

**Guest opinion submissions**

The Washington Post accepts opinion articles on any topic. We welcome submissions on local, national and international issues. We publish work that varies in length and format, including multimedia. Submit a guest opinion at [oped@washpost.com](mailto:oped@washpost.com) or read our guide to writing an opinion article at [wapo.st/guestopinion](https://wapo.st/guestopinion).

**Your holiday cookie traditions**

Every year, Post Opinions staffers compete in a hotly contested holiday cookie bakeoff. Now we want to know: What are your holiday cookie traditions? Share your responses at [wapo.st/cookie](https://wapo.st/cookie) and they might be published as Letters to the Editor.



OPINION

MARC FISHER

To root out corruption, don't stop with Trayon White

Members of the D.C. Council were quick and unanimous at their special meeting to deal with the problem that is Trayon White Sr.: Given the choice of reprimanding, censuring or expelling their Ward 8 colleague, they are ready to toss him out for taking bribes, for seeming eager to take more bribes and for being an embarrassing throwback to an era of municipal malfeasance.

What the council failed to do Monday and isn't likely to do anytime soon is reprimand itself for failing to root out the long-standing waste and corruption in government contracting that White took advantage of to enrich himself at the expense of the city's neediest people.

Or, as the FBI recorded White saying to the man from whom he accepted envelopes stuffed with cash, "That s--- a cash cow." The council member was referring to his desire to get even more money by taking bribes related to mental-health-care contracts.

The man handing over \$35,000 in cash was Allieu Kamara, whose company, Life Deeds, made \$20.5 million from D.C. taxpayers, purportedly to serve the city's most vulnerable residents: kids in group homes, families trying to get out of shelters and into permanent housing, young people prone to violence.

By the time White snarfed up those envelopes of cash, Life Deeds had already been terminated from two city contracts for failing to do background checks on its staff at a shelter for families.

"You would think that might debar them, at least for a time, from other D.C. government work," former council member Elissa Silverman told me. "You would be very wrong. Government contracting in our nation's capital is broken and corrupt, especially in the procurement of services for the city's poor and at-risk residents."

Beyond White's actions, the "even bigger outrage for our city," she said, is that "there is a well-established system in place to make big money off programs for the District's 'least, last and lost,' and despite scandal after scandal, it remains as profitable as ever."

No one talked about that during the council session. The members seemed in a hurry to get rid of White and get back to regular business.

To his credit, the chairman of the special council committee charged with investigating White, Kenyan R. McDuffie (I-At Large), took on the absurd allegation by White's defenders that he has not been afforded due process. White, as McDuffie said, "will have his day in court." He's scheduled to stand trial in 2026 — a sad reflection of the state of the D.C. courts, which are unconscionably short on judges thanks to the disorder in Congress, which treats the city's justice system as its least favorite plaything.

But the council need not wait all that time to deal with the poison that White represents. The council's rules say members must "maintain a high level of ethical conduct" and "act solely in the public interest and not for any direct and tangible personal gain." So the council is obliged to cleanse itself now, not wait for a court to act.

The council spent big money to hire a fancy law firm to investigate White, but they mostly came up empty and relied mainly on the FBI's investigation. That was more than sufficient to justify Monday's action, which will be followed next month by a formal expulsion vote.

White's behavior is entirely in keeping with his nearly eight years on the council. White is the council member who accused Jews of controlling the weather, sort of said he was sorry for his antisemitic remarks and then walked out halfway through an apology tour of the U.S. Holocaust Museum. He's also the council's point man on curbing youth violence.

It was in that capacity that this supposed protector of the city's most troubled ward is shown on video raking in the cash, in exchange for which he is alleged to have contacted city workers to smooth the way for Life Deeds to get more contract dollars.

Or, as White put it on the videotape, "I am on top of all that ... I can start making some s--- happen."

For now, White is going on offense. Speaking to Channel 7 last month, he tried to steal a page from the Marion Barry playbook, arguing that he's being persecuted because of his race.

"The reality is since I was born, I've been under attack," White said. "As a young Black man growing up in the urban city, I've always faced pressure, always faced scrutiny. So this is another level of it."

White wants his constituents to view his prosecution as an attack on their community. But after the White drama plays out, D.C. residents will still have a government that has failed for decades to get a handle on misdeeds and unfulfilled promises by contractors who give big contributions to politicians and are then not held accountable for their work.

"The city's programs for the poor are a pot of gold because it's low-risk with high-payoff," Silverman said. "There's a lot of money to be made."

The council is doing good by cleaning house. Now it needs to scrub harder.



Actors Cynthia Erivo, left, and Ariana Grande in a scene from the film "Wicked."

KATE COHEN

The greatest magic of 'Wicked'? Inspiring a nation of creators.

I admit it: I didn't love "Wicked." I was disappointed by the movie's sound, direction, lighting and length. To make a 2-hour-and-40-minute movie out of the *first act* of a 2-hour-and-30-minute stage musical is, in "Wicked" speak, "horrendible." Both leads are brilliant, but Ariana Grande's Glinda is too lovable to be a bully and Cynthia Erivo's Elphaba is too somber to be fun.

Mostly, though, it seemed so *recycled*. The movie is, after all, a screen version of a musical adaptation of a novel that reimagines a movie based on L. Frank Baum's children's book "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." But beyond that, the details feel familiar, too: Shiz University resembles Hogwarts; Glinda's posse acts like "Mean Girls"; Elphaba's emotion-fueled powers reminded me of Eleven's in "Stranger Things." Does Fiyero have to look like Prince Charming? Doesn't Jeff Goldblum's Wizard seem a lot like Jeff Goldblum?

Can't we make anything new anymore? Then I accidentally started watching the videos. All across social media, YouTube to TikTok, fans have been posting about their love for "Wicked."

Usually, my irritation toward a movie I don't like intensifies in proportion to the praise it wins, so that by the time Best Picture goes to "Oppenheimer," I'm a 10-minute nuclear-test sequence of fury.

But somehow, the more I watched people shower love on "Wicked," the more my cold heart melted.

After begrudging "Wicked" 160 minutes in the theater, I have happily spent days with it on social media. My algorithms are now so far out of whack, I'll never see another kitchen hack, unless the cook happens to be humming "Popular."

My feeds are full of before-and-after videos displaying tearstained post-"Wicked" faces. Oz explainers, deep dives and Easter eggs. BoqFest 2024. Singers, dancers and children "Defying Gravity." A

striding, twirling, book-slapping profusion of people performing "What Is This Feeling?," from Theodore Roosevelt National Park workers to the casts of "Swept Away," "Hamilton" (London), "Hamilton" (Broadway), "Tammy Faye" and "Matilda." Have I missed any? Yes!

It's not just fan reaction and faithful re-creation, though; it's also *creation*: Jinkx Monsoon's "Popular" parody; Elphaba and Glinda joining the "we listen and we don't judge" TikTok trend; a snarky imagined scene between Dorothy and Glinda; and the teasing use and reuse of a Grande/Erivo interview meme.

Finally I realized: It's ridiculous to complain about anything Ozian being recycled. Recycling has always been part of the fun. As soon as Baum published "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" in 1900, the remakes began. The first Broadway version premiered in 1903, 100 years before "Wicked" did; in between, a constant stream. On screen, at least eight movie versions *preceded* the iconic 1939 Judy Garland film.

Picture the field of poppies that fell Dorothy on the way to Emerald City — it would be easier to count those than all the Oz books. Now add children's theater, puppet shows, radio plays, drag shows, television specials, commercials, board games, comic books, music videos, collectible figurines in McDonald's Happy Meals.

Let's not forget the amateurs: the home-made Dorothy costumes, the wobbly renditions of "Over the Rainbow," every time someone quips "I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

What makes this story so inviting to sequel and prequel, reinterpretation and recasting? So beloved of generations of fans?

In the introduction to "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," Baum promises "a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out."

KAREN TUMULTY

Why House Dems rejected AOC's power play

Following Joe Biden's disastrous — and eventually abandoned — campaign to seek a second term as president, questions of age and fitness have become sore spots among Democrats.

So, it was not surprising that the drama accompanying the House Democrats' process this week of selecting their ranking committee members for the next Congress — which usually causes little stir outside the privacy of a Democratic caucus meeting — got a lot of attention.

In particular, the choice of who would be the top Democrat on the all-important House Oversight Committee was portrayed as a referendum on generational change. Veteran Gerry Connolly (Virginia), 74 years old and next in line for the job, faced a challenge from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York), a third-term congresswoman who is less than half his age and widely considered the most dazzling young talent on the left.

She reportedly had the support of more than half the Democrats on the committee, which is packed with younger progressives (and on the Republican side, the panel includes such bomb-throwers as Georgia's Marjorie Taylor Greene and Colorado's Lauren Boebert).

That Connolly easily defeated Ocasio-Cortez — the vote being 131-84 — should not be misread as a victory for the mossbacks and old fogies. Rather, it was a pragmatic decision by House Democrats about the skills and judgment that will be most needed over the next two years, as the minority prepares to do battle with the incoming Trump administration and seeks to put itself on the strongest footing possible for the 2026 midterm elections.

As John A. Lawrence, a Capitol Hill veteran who was chief of staff to former speaker Nancy Pelosi (California), told me, the Democrats made some sound choices, and "a strategic determination by the caucus that you go into battle with

your best generals."

Being an effective messenger is only the beginning of the multifaceted job of the ranking member. It also requires carefully picking your fights, coordinating the most effective lines of assault, maintaining discipline and building cohesion within the Democratic ranks.

"The role of ranking member is very critical because that's a pivot point [from which] the entire Democratic strategy flows," Connolly told me shortly after his victory. Connolly, who is finishing his eighth term, added that in the next two years, his goal is to assure that "everything we do is coordinated to winning back the majority in the midterms."

Ocasio-Cortez, a former bartender who got elected to Congress in 2018 by knocking off a 10-term member of the House leadership in the Democratic primary, has been evolving from an insurgent into a team player.

This year, for the first time, she contributed to the House Democrats' campaign arm, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. She became an energetic surrogate for Vice President Kamala Harris during the presidential race, which dismayed some of her progressive colleagues who wanted her to press the Democratic nominee harder from the left. And in her bid to become the ranking Democrat on Oversight, she promised she would discontinue her practice of backing primary challengers to her incumbent colleagues.

But her positions and comments still take her outside the comfort zone of many Democrats, especially those representing moderate districts, who will be at the front line of the fight to take back the majority. Speaking about the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, for example, Ocasio-Cortez stipulated that violence is never justified, but added: "I think for anyone who is confused or shocked or appalled, they need to understand that people interpret and feel and

I'm not sure what you call being shut out of your family's shelter in a tornado if not "nightmare." See also: attack by flying monkeys, enslavement by a witch, and a long, exhausting quest to get home to Aunt Em.

But facing the heartaches — surviving them — is a hero we can all imagine ourselves to be. Dorothy is not particularly clever or strong; she pleads for help; she triumphs over two witches only by accident. Her powerlessness is familiar to anyone who was once a child, and her virtues are within our reach: perseverance, loyalty and kindness. She trembles as she faces the Wizard, but when she declares herself "Dorothy, the Small and Meek," she does so with dignity.

As for Elphaba, she's technically the Wicked Witch of the West, but really she is Dorothy, too, or rather Dorothy squared. A lonely child who is also feared and rejected, mocked by her peers, and betrayed by the Wizard — not a mere "humbug" (as in "The Wizard of Oz") but a cruel dictator. In place of Dorothy's indefatigable pluck, Elphaba has the somewhat less relatable power to defy gravity.

But in "Wicked" as in "The Wizard of Oz," it's friendship that tempers the terror of being young and alone, friendship that confers courage, and friendship that saves you when adults let you down. When I reread the original book, I was struck by how often the friends pause to restuff the Scarecrow, dry the Tin Man's tears so he won't rust and brave danger to save each other.

No wonder these stories are beloved of queer communities, of musical theater kids, of anyone who's making — always and forever — that terrifying, winding journey from child to grown-up. No wonder so many of us are moved to contribute our own handkerchief or handful of straw to the endeavor.

Together, we make the story fly.

GEORGE F. WILL

Trump's first crisis is on the horizon

When Harold Daggett, the horny-handed son of toil who for more than 10 years has been president of the International Longshoremen's Association, grips with his callused hands the steering wheel of his Bentley (the least expensive of these British-made beauties costs north of \$200,000), he knows that the president of the United States will be riding shotgun. Donald Trump, ever transactional, has rewarded Daggett for the ILA's neutrality (in 2020 it endorsed Joe Biden) in the 2024 presidential campaign.

A brief October strike shut 36 East and Gulf coast ports that Daggett's union controls — the first Maine-to-Texas strike in 47 years. Longshoremen won a tentative 61.5 percent pay increase over six years. The Wall Street Journal editorial page notes "the astounding fact" that there are only about 25,000 port jobs, so about half of ILA members do not have to show up for work daily. The rest stay home collecting payments previously negotiated in contracts protecting "jobs" (loosely — very loosely — defined). In 2010, Daggett said his members should make more than \$400,000 annually. Today, the Journal says, "some now do with overtime."

Daggett, however, threatens another strike on Jan. 15 unless any additional automation — e.g., automated cranes loading and unloading containers — is banned. Resistance to automation is why no U.S. port ranks among the world's 50 most efficient. The strike could "cripple" and "crush" (his promises) the nation's economy before Trump's promised tariffs do.

Daggett cheerfully anticipates car salesmen and construction workers being laid off because cars, lumber, steel and other materials "ain't coming in off the ships." And "they won't be able to do anything in this country without my f---ing people." In October, he said: "If we have to be out here a month or two months, this world will collapse."

Trump, paladin of reactionary populism, who considers imports distasteful, is unperturbed. He begins his reward to Daggett with a social media toot of his own horn:

"I've studied automation, and know just about everything there is to know about it. The amount of money saved is nowhere near the distress, hurt, and harm it causes for American Workers, in this case, our Longshoremen. Foreign companies have made a fortune in the U.S. by giving them access to our markets. ... They've got record profits, and I'd rather these foreign companies spend it on the great men and women on our docks, than machinery, which is expensive, and which will constantly have to be replaced."

Evidently, America will be made great again using only machines that last forever. Skyrocketing pay, stagnant productivity: MAGA.

In the 1950s, the ILA opposed one of history's simplest, yet most consequential, technologies for human betterment: large rectangular steel containers. They replaced swarms of stevedores stowing and unloading (and often pilfering) cargo packed into ships' holds in differently sized wooden crates, a process so slow that ships often spent more time in port than at sea.

Containerization (and bar codes, also resisted by the ILA) facilitated the globalization of commerce that reduced, from about 50 percent in 1975 to less than 10 percent today, the portion of humanity living in what the World Bank calls extreme poverty (on \$2.15 per day, adjusted for inflation). The ILA's limited acceptance of containerization was contingent on featherbedding — inefficient make-work. Seven decades later, the ILA leadership's primary concern is still the number of dues-paying members who enable the leadership to live as it has become accustomed to living.

Like his soulmate Trump, Daggett is a 78-year-old child of Queens. His helper with the task of striking the chains from workers' ankles is ILA's executive vice president, his son Dennis, who says the ILA "does not support any kind of automation." "Machines don't pay taxes," says the automation-opposing president of the ILA local in Mobile, Alabama. But the more productive the workforce is, the more taxes it pays.

During the three-day October strike, Kamala Harris said, "This strike is about fairness." But Reason's Eric Boehm noted two discordant X posts from a progressive, ILA-supporting news outlet. One praised workers for blocking "job-killing automation." The other lamented that ILA members' jobs are "backbreaking."

As Jan. 15 approaches, so perhaps does the first crisis, five days later, for Daggett's foremost friend. Daggett's conversations are often laced with colorful profanities, and he sometimes sports gold chains and a diamond ring. Do not, however, begrudge working stiff (Daggett's 2023 base salary was \$728,694, plus \$173,040 as president emeritus of an ILA local) life's simple pleasures: a lager, a Bentley.



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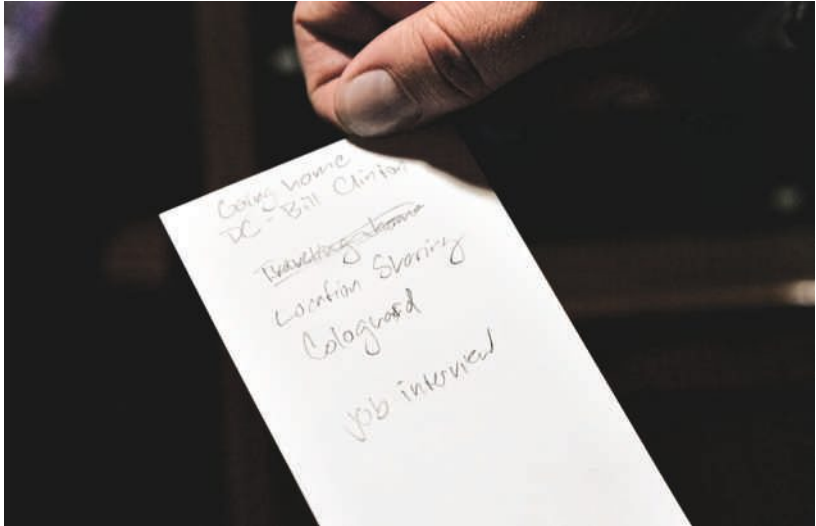
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## CAPITAL LETTERS



PHOTOS BY ROBB HILL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## A mic check — and a gut check

In his first stand-up set since the pandemic, could a comic still make people laugh?

BY ANTHONY J. RIVERA

8:16 p.m. Fourteen minutes to showtime.

Jimmy Maher was fidgeting. He'd done lots of comedy open mics — in cities like New York, Columbus and Orlando — but that felt like eons ago.

He moved from the far corner of the bar to the back stairwell clutching his eight-year-old composition book of jokes. This night at the Crystal City Sports Pub in Arlington was the first

in nearly five years that he was going back onstage.

He stepped away from the noisy room filled with Christmas lights to clear his head.

"I'm on pins and needles right now because I want to be funny," he'd said moments earlier, his hands shaking. But once he gets his hands on a microphone, "I am just in comedy mode."

8:22 p.m. Eight minutes to showtime.

These are boom years for comedy, thanks to TikTok and podcasts, which provide paths to success that comics like Jerry Seinfeld, Jim Gaffigan and Jo Koy didn't have.

Maher was never the class clown in high school. But he remembers people telling him as he got older that he was funny. He flopped at his first open mic in New York back in 2015, so he signed up for D.C. Improv's comedy workshop the following year. Then he

SEE COMIC ON B2

Jimmy Maher, who is in law school at Catholic University, performs his stand-up comedy set at the Crystal City Sports Pub in Arlington on Dec. 4. It was the first time that Maher had been onstage since the pandemic.

## Region's aims get stuck on the Hill

### RFK, KEY BRIDGE DEALS AFFECTED

Movement stalled amid federal infighting

BY MEAGAN FLYNN, ERIN COX AND SAM FORTIER

Legislation allowing D.C. to redevelop RFK Stadium and potentially bring the Washington Commanders to their old home is now in jeopardy less than 24 hours after appearing likely to move forward in Congress.

Likewise, full funding for a new Francis Scott Key Bridge in Maryland — along with a provision giving D.C.'s National Guard fighter jets to that state — was thrown into uncertainty after House Republicans scrapped a federal spending bill Wednesday evening that had been released just a day before and included those regional priorities.

The swift rejection of the spending bill — after President-elect Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk escalated Republican opposition — threatens to unravel weeks of negotiations that led to the inclusion of all three provisions in the spending bill, which is intended to avert a government shutdown.

The RFK legislation would transfer control of the federal property surrounding the stadium to D.C., allowing Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) to negotiate with the Commanders to possibly lure them from their home in Prince George's County back to the site near the Anacostia River where they won three Super Bowl championships.

It's now unclear whether those SEE STADIUM ON B3

## Youngkin proclaims Virginia is 'winning'

Governor echoes Trump, preaches bipartisanship in budget proposal

BY GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER AND LAURA VOZZELLA

RICHMOND — Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) delivered an upbeat budget message on Wednesday to the Democratic-controlled General Assembly, saying soaring revenue surpluses would fund proposed changes to spending and tax policy and keep the state's economy going strong.

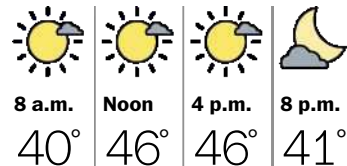
Despite uncertainty about the potential impact of President-elect Donald Trump's plan for tariffs and cuts to the federal workforce, Youngkin was emphatic: Virginia is "winning."

He suggested modifying the two-year state spending plan adopted by the legislature earlier this year to create tax cuts targeted at both working Virginians and corporations, along with spending increases in areas such as education, health care and economic development.

"It is such a joy to stand here today with shared credit for all of us to say simply, my friends, Virginia is roaring," Youngkin said in an annual presentation to a joint gathering of the General Assembly's money committees. He added, "Virginia is growing, Virginia is leading and Virginia is winning."

While he emphasized the need for bipartisanship, Youngkin's proposals — and language — SEE BUDGET ON B3

### TODAY'S WEATHER



High today at approx. 2 p.m.: 49°  
Precip: 0% Wind: NNW 10-20 mph

For weather news, go to B6

### VIRGINIA

The governor proposes \$50 million in vouchers for private schools. B3

### MARYLAND

Barrage of gunfire hits nine people in a minivan, killing one in Towson. B2

### OBITUARIES

Donald Bitzer, a pioneer of cyberspace and plasma screens, was 90. B4

## At Café 8, under-30 ban stirs up legal questions

BY EMILY HEIL

For years, the owners of Café 8, a Mediterranean restaurant and hookah bar in Washington's Capitol Hill neighborhood, have wondered how they could keep their patrons' noise down around their establishment, which backs up to a residential neighborhood.

"They park on the front, they blast music, they party in their cars and all those things," says Elif Sam, who manages the restaurant for her family. Finally, last month, they decided to take a step to attract an older clientele, rather than the younger, rowdier crowds. So they adopted a policy banning patrons under 30 after 8:30 p.m.

"Due to recent unforeseen incidents we have updated our entrance policy to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for all our patrons," a Nov. 27 Insta-



AUSTIN GRAFF

Café 8, a Mediterranean restaurant and hookah bar in D.C.'s Capitol Hill neighborhood, is banning patrons under 30 after 8:30 p.m. "to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment," it said.

gram post read. "... This decision has been made to prioritize the comfort and well-being of our guests, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation."

Sam said the move was partly prompted by crime in the area. Her father was beaten up by teenagers while walking from the restaurant to a nearby Dunkin' several months ago, she said, and last month, a group of young men with guns tried to enter the restaurant, although security was able to close the doors to keep them out.

A more mature crowd, she's hoping, will attract less tumult. "It's easier to communicate with them. They understand, and they are not looking to have trouble," she said. "They're not looking to fight, you know?"

Still, while the family introduced the policy to help keep the SEE BAN ON B2



# After comic took a seat, he stands up again

COMIC FROM B1

hit the open mic circuit, doing two to three shows a week. Other comics gave him tips. His act improved.

Then, in the first year of the pandemic, thousands of bars and restaurants across the country closed temporarily or permanently — and with them, many open mics.

Restlessness led Maher to leave a corporate job at KPMG in 2023. Two weeks later, he started law school at Catholic University to become a trial attorney, which would allow him to perform in a different kind of setting.

In August, he saw comedian Ron Funches in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and could no longer deny the urge to return to stand-up. That’s how Maher, 44, found himself at the second-floor bar at Crystal City Sports Pub getting ready to tell jokes.

He gave his empty beer glass to a bartender wearing a Dead Horse Comedy shirt, straightened his leather jacket and headed toward the stage. The smell of cigarettes hung in the air.

8:31 p.m. *Showtime.* “This is my favorite time of year; I always buy clothes that are a couple of sizes too big so when I get home it looks like I’ve lost a bunch of weight,” Maher said. “It’s terrific.”

The bit didn’t land as he’d expected. He looked at his list of jokes and moved on.

“I’m having a difficult time with my girlfriend. She thinks that I’m cheating on her,” he said. “So, she wants me to share location on my phone. Now, I leave my phone at home when I go out and



ROBB HILL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Jimmy Maher waits in the back stairwell at Crystal City Sports Pub on Dec. 4, minutes before he performed his first comedy set in four years.**

cheat. And it’s like going off the grid for a couple of hours.

“No alerts. It’s like therapy.” A few people chuckled.

He launched into an extended riff on Cologuard, the mail-in colonoscopy service. It drew cackles of recognition, the biggest response of his five-minute act.

Soon, it was time for the closer: “I was talking with my girlfriend, and she wants to move in

together. So, she says well, hey, like, look, we’re going to do this together. And I said okay, well, what do you want in the house? And she says, well, I want granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and I want a yard in the back where the dogs can run. What do you want?

“And I said, ‘carpet.’” A polite laugh, then Maher announced he was out of time.

Some cheers and whistles followed him off the stage.

His heart rate was up and he was a tad shaky, but he was riding high. Being center stage and making people laugh a little not only made Maher feel good — he felt like his genuine self.

Maheer returned to the bar, wiped the sweat off his brow and ordered a second beer. “Good set,” someone said.

Many of his jokes were new and needed polishing, Maher acknowledged, but he was encouraged by the audience response.

His mind soon drifted to the next day’s obligations, like his law school exam. He stuck around for 40 minutes, grabbed his composition book and headed to his home to Gaithersburg.

He had an early morning coming up.

# Tired of rowdiness, Café 8 restricts evening entry to an older clientele

BAN FROM B1

peace, it might run afoul of D.C. law.

Under federal law, age is not a protected class in service settings the way it is when it comes to employment. And laws that do apply to public accommodations, such as eateries, ban discrimination when it comes to race, religion, national origin or disability status — but not age.

In D.C., though, the Human Rights Act expands the kinds of traits that businesses can’t discriminate against, including age over 18, personal appearance and political affiliation.

“It’s pretty straightforward,” said Andrew Kline, principal of

the Veritas Law Firm, who frequently works on cases involving D.C. restaurants. He noted that the D.C. law includes a clause granting exceptions for “business necessity,” such as allowing establishments to ban patrons under 21 to prevent underage drinking. But he questioned whether Café 8’s new rule would meet that standard. “I think making the case that there’s a business necessity for keeping [out people over 21] would be troublesome,” he said.

A spokesman for the D.C. Office of Human Rights emailed The Washington Post a statement saying that it responds to complaints but does not “interpret the law for individual cases.”

While the law “generally prohibits businesses that serve the public from refusing to provide goods and services based on a person’s age,” the statement read, “there is an exception if the age restriction is necessary for the business to operate effectively.”

Sam said she had gotten assurances from the D.C. police and the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission, a body that weighs in on parochial concerns such as liquor license applications and proposed zoning changes, that the restaurant was in the clear. “When I had a conversation with the ANC members and the police department, they said, ‘It’s your establishment, you can make your own rules. So we can’t really

interfere,’” she says. “We can’t really say anything about it, unless if it’s a public place — yes, it can be discrimination — or if it belongs to the government.”

D.C. police spokesman Tom Lynch said he didn’t know what conversations Sam had with officers but said there was “no record of an official recommendation” to the restaurant about the policy.

Sam did clarify that the rule is more of a “preference” and that some people under 30 — such as those dining with older friends or relatives — would be welcome.

Other restaurants around the country have adopted similar policies. A St. Louis-area Caribbean restaurant this year made news for its age limits — 30 for

women, 35 for men — which it said helped cultivate the “grown and sexy” vibe the owners were aiming for. There, such a restriction is legal, because there is no local ordinance that applies.

Whatever its legal status, Café 8’s policy seems to have drawn some support from its clientele. “Thank god!” one person replied to the restaurant’s Instagram post. “A grown up spot! I love it!” wrote another. One seemed to express frustration: “Nooooooo,” she wrote. “I GOT WAIT TILL 2026 to come back.”

Sam said that her customers have generally been pleased with the policy and that even the younger patrons say they understand the need for it.

According to Kline, the lawyer, there are a few ways Café 8’s age limit could be challenged. Someone could lodge a complaint with the Office of Human Rights, or they could file a discrimination lawsuit. They also could challenge the restaurant’s business license with the city.

He says that some restaurant clients of his have discussed adopting similar age restrictions, which he doesn’t think are a good idea. “We’ve certainly looked at the issue, and it causes concern,” he said. “One issue when you’re operating any business is to try to stay on the safe side and not put yourself out there where you are going to unnecessarily expose yourself to liability.”

MARYLAND

# 1 killed, 9 injured after minivan struck by gunshots in Towson

BY DAN MORSE

Authorities in Baltimore County investigating a barrage of gunfire into a moving vehicle that left one person dead and nine others injured were examining possible connections to a homicide 10 days ago in the same area, the county’s police chief said Wednesday.

“There appears to be at least

some rival individuals in this case,” Chief Robert McCullough said. “We’re working to try to determine exactly what’s going on here.”

The gunfire erupted about 7:10 p.m. Tuesday in Towson, about seven miles north of downtown Baltimore. Authorities said the shots appeared to have started along White Oak Avenue as the incident approached Loch

Raven Boulevard.

It was not clear if there was any gunfire coming from the victims’ vehicle, a Dodge minivan. It then crashed onto its side and into a building and caught fire, authorities said.

Arriving officers and medics found nine gunshot victims — ages 14 to 27 — who had been in the van, according to McCullough. One of them, whom he

identified as 26 year-old Charles Graham Jr. of Baltimore City, died at the scene. The eight other gunshot victims, along with another injured person who hadn’t been shot, were taken to hospitals.

Earlier that afternoon, less than two miles away, a funeral had been held for Andrew Blessing, 19, who had been fatally shot in the same area on Dec. 9,

according to an obituary listing and Baltimore County police.

McCullough said at least some of the victims inside the minivan knew the earlier victim.

“They all know each other, and somehow they may have known the individual, Blessing, and his family,” he said.


“The Andrew Blessing homicide occurred not far from yesterday’s shooting,” McCullough

noted, adding the investigation is wide ranging. “We do not believe this was a random act of violence.”

The chief called the type of shooting that erupted relatively uncommon for the area.

“Incidents of violence will not be tolerated or normalized in Baltimore County,” he said.

“These acts are shocking and completely out of character for what happens and how we expect our communities to be safe,” added Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski Jr.




The Guide to Offers  
The Washington Post

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VIRGINIA

# Governor proposes \$50M for private-school vouchers

BY KARINA ELWOOD

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) on Wednesday proposed spending \$50 million to start a scholarship program that would give lower-income families money to pay for private K-12 schooling.

Called “opportunity scholarships,” the program would allocate \$5,000 scholarships to 10,000 students across the commonwealth to pay for private school tuition, fees, uniforms and supplies.

The proposed program — which Youngkin announced as part of his broader budget proposal — would be limited to families making less than twice the federal income limit to qualify for free school meals, or up to about \$81,120 for a family of four.

Similar programs, commonly referred to as vouchers, that use government money to cover families’ education costs outside pub-

lic schools have exploded around the country in recent years. Billions of dollars have been driven into private religious schools, according to an examination by The Washington Post.

Youngkin said the funding for the proposed Virginia program would come from revenue growth, not existing education funding.

“I want to empower low-income parents with more opportunities for their children,” Youngkin said in a speech proposing the budget. “It would provide that in Virginia we can support opportunity in education and continue to support our public schools.”

Youngkin, who campaigned heavily on education issues, has rolled out other initiatives aimed at the state’s public schools. When he first took office, Youngkin made sweeping moves to ban mask mandates in schools and “inherently divisive” topics from classrooms. More recently, the

Virginia Board of Education — made up almost entirely of Youngkin appointees — launched a new accountability system to overhaul how the state will measure school performance.

Virginia currently offers a 65 percent tax credit to individuals and businesses who donate to private-school scholarship foundations. That is the only school-choice program in the state, according to EdChoice, a voucher advocacy group.

A Youngkin spokesperson said the program the governor outlined Wednesday would be modeled similarly to the programs in D.C. and Maryland that offer a limited number of scholarships to families who meet income requirements. According to EdChoice, more than 2,900 students in Maryland and 1,700 students in D.C. received vouchers through the programs in the 2022-2023 school year.

Previous efforts to pass laws

establishing a voucher program in Virginia have failed in the General Assembly, and Youngkin’s proposal is likely to face a similar challenge in the Democratic-controlled legislature in the session that starts in January.

Sen. Ghazala F. Hashmi (D-Chesterfield), chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee, said she was disappointed to see the program in the governor’s proposal and plans to be “working hard” in the session to make sure it does not go through.

“He has touted himself as an education governor, and, repeatedly, he has tried to destroy public education in Virginia,” Hashmi said. “This is not a good plan for public education at a time when our students deserve the best from each of us.”

She noted that private schools are not mandated to accommodate all students, such as those with disabilities, in the same way that public schools are, and she

said she worries about resources being driven away from public schools.

Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, a professor in the education school at Virginia Commonwealth University who specializes in school segregation and vouchers, said in an interview that \$5,000 scholarships are unlikely to cover the full cost for many private schools in Virginia, which could continue to keep low-income students from accessing the more elite private schools.

“[The program] weaponizes the discontent with regular public schools and offers solution that would further drain needed resources from a system that is chronically underfunded, particularly for our most disadvantaged students,” Siegel-Hawley said.

Youngkin’s proposal garnered some attention from national advocacy groups.

“We commend the governor

and legislative leaders for this proposal and look forward to working with them to empower every kid across the Commonwealth to find the educational experience best suited to their needs,” Marcus D. San Marino, vice president of government affairs for Yes. Every Kid, said in a statement.

Youngkin’s budget proposal also includes other measures aimed at education. He urged lawmakers to spend about \$50 million for public schools identified as having the highest needs under the state’s new school rating system, along with an additional \$66 million to create a new state standardized test.

The governor also proposed an additional \$110.7 million to support English-language learners and \$25 million to expand lab schools that would partner historically Black colleges and universities in Virginia with K-12 schools.

# Youngkin pitches tax cuts, spending increases in budget

BUDGET FROM B1

seemed to nod to his recent close alliance with Trump, who has famously characterized his own achievements as “winning.” Youngkin used some form of the word at least 11 times in his half-hour speech.

He also touted a proposal to withhold funding from law enforcement agencies that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration authorities, in line with Trump’s crusade against undocumented immigrants, and a plan to eliminate the tax on tips earned by service workers — a Trump idea. In brief remarks to reporters after his speech, Youngkin brushed off any notion that Trump’s proposed tariffs and his vows to move up to 100,000 federal job out of the Washington region could harm Virginia’s economy.

“So are you concerned about the future economy?” Youngkin shot back when a reporter raised the subject, adding that Virginia has grown its economy over the past three years despite “inflationary headwinds” and “restrictive regulations” coming from the Biden administration.

“I am so looking forward to having a period of tailwinds that will come out of Washington ... I believe that President Trump is going to use tariffs to make sure that America gets good deals,” the governor said.

Youngkin said Trump’s policies will lead to “another level of growth” in Virginia. Already, the governor’s analysts estimate that state revenue through the coming fiscal year will increase some \$4.7 billion above forecasts, providing the means for Youngkin to fund his list of budget proposals for the General Assembly to consider in the legislative session that begins next month.

Senate Majority Leader Scott A. Surovell (D-Fairfax) panned Youngkin’s budget plan, particularly a provision calling for school vouchers, which the Democrat called unconstitutional.

“Sounds like a cornucopia of unconstitutional, poorly thought-out, budget-busting concepts spawned from a Republican presidential primary test tube,” Surovell said in an text message to The Washington Post, referencing Youngkin’s 2028 White House ambitions.

A more muted response came



SARA STATHAS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) denied any notion that President-elect Donald Trump’s proposed tariffs would harm Virginia’s economy.

from House Appropriations Chairman Luke Torian (D-Prince William), who told reporters afterward that he was pleased about the state surplus but declined to weigh in on any of Youngkin’s specific proposals.

“We will visit with our staff and go over the governor’s presentation and we’ll see what is applicable, what we can do, what we can’t do,” he said.

Senate Finance and Appropriations Chairwoman L. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth), one of Youngkin’s most reliable critics, dashed out to a speaking engagement without addressing reporters.

Youngkin’s proposals include:

- Setting aside \$1.1 billion to pay for a credit to offset the state’s car tax for lower-income residents. An individual taxpayer making \$50,000 a year or less could get up to \$150 credit toward the car tax, and joint taxpayers making \$100,000 a

year or less could get up to \$300. While unpopular, the car tax has proved hard to eliminate in Richmond because localities depend on its revenue. The legislature already provides some \$950 million per year to offset the tax for residents. Youngkin said his plan would cover three years of further relief, and then build the reduction into the budget permanently.

- Making permanent recent increases to the standard deduction on personal income tax, which the General Assembly raised this year to \$8,500 for individuals and \$17,000 for couples filing jointly. Those levels are set to expire on Jan. 1, 2026, which would boost state coffers by \$557 million that first year and \$1.2 billion the next, Youngkin said.
- Eliminating the tax on tips at a cost of \$70 million per year.
- Changing the way service-sector companies are taxed so that they pay only on business conducted in Virginia. This “mar-

ket-based” taxation, Youngkin said, is in line with all but 12 other states and would be a net “wash” in state revenue — some companies would pay more taxes, some less. He said it would avoid the problem of companies being taxed twice if they have income in other states as well as in Virginia.

- Adding \$120 million to the current two-year budget to fully fund the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program, which provides tuition assistance for the families of veterans killed or 90 percent disabled as a result of military service. The program has grown far beyond its original scope to include out-of-state and graduate students. Youngkin and lawmakers attempted to cut it earlier this year, but changed tack after an enormous outpouring from military families — a key Virginia constituency.
- Providing \$500 million in capital funds for state colleges

and universities but no new operating funding, while also seeking to impose a 2.5 percent cap on tuition increases. “It’s time for our colleges to cut the administrative bloat, find savings and get a handle on cost escalations without asking taxpayers for more money,” he said.

- Allocating \$50 million for a school voucher program for up to 10,000 lower-income K-12 students, who would receive \$5,000 grants to cover private-school tuition, uniforms, books and transportation. Youngkin said the money to pay for what he calls the Virginia Opportunity Scholarship Program would not come from existing public school funding.

Virginia operates on biennial budgets, with the governor proposing a new spending plan every other year and submitting tweaks in the off-years. Youngkin’s proposals Wednesday would be modifications to the budget he recom-

mended a year ago. The General Assembly convenes Jan. 8 for a 46-day session and will consider Youngkin’s amendments along with those submitted by lawmakers.

After Youngkin addressed the money committees, Finance Secretary Stephen E. Cummings presented the budget plan to them in more detail. Some Democrats raised concerns with him.

Dels. Candi Mundon King (D-Prince William) and C.E. “Cliff” Hayes Jr. (D-Chesapeake) questioned whether some of Trump’s policies could threaten the state’s economy, undermining the rosy revenue projections factored into Youngkin’s budget. Mundon King noted Trump’s vow to slash the federal bureaucracy that is a major employer in Northern Virginia. Hayes brought up threatened tariffs, which he said could especially hurt ports in his Hampton Roads district.

Cummings acknowledged that Trump has promised some “very aggressive actions” toward the federal workforce. But he said Virginia is well-prepared to absorb federal job cuts given the state’s 2.9 percent unemployment rate. He also said that Trump imposed “massive tariffs” against China in his first term with minimal impact to Virginia’s economy.

Del. Mark D. Sickles (D-Fairfax) asked whether Youngkin’s plan proposes putting any “guardrails” on the fast-growing military tuition program, such as limiting it to Virginia residents or undergraduate students. When Sickles asked if it would still be available to “a graduate student from Kansas,” he got a yes.

In an interview with The Post later Wednesday, Surovell said the legislature should “absolutely” consider tightening eligibility requirements to ensure the program’s long-term viability.

House Minority Leader Todd Gilbert (R-Shenandoah) praised Youngkin’s plan in a written statement as a “common sense, families-first approach to Virginia’s future.”

“Our Commonwealth has more than enough room in the budget to lower taxes, and to provide even more tax relief for our hard-working families, while continuing to invest in our schools and other critical priorities,” he said. “I’m hopeful our colleagues across the aisle will agree.”

# Hopes for RFK Stadium deal, Key Bridge funding package dim amid unraveling

STADIUM FROM B1

provisions will be part of a renegotiated, pared-down spending bill. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) has not detailed his plans for a new version. To avoid a government shutdown, Congress must pass a short-term spending bill before Saturday morning.

Opposition to the spending bill, which was intended to keep the government funded through mid-March, mounted all day Wednesday — including from Trump and Musk, who will head a newly created “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE). The CEO posted more than 60 times about the continuing resolution to 200 million followers on his social media site, X, including bashing the RFK Stadium provision and spreading misinformation about it.

“This should not be funded by your tax dollars!” Musk tweeted, reposting an incorrect post about the RFK legislation from Mario

Nawfal, a conservative social media influencer, who said the spending bill contained “\$3-BILLION FOR ... A NEW NFL STADIUM IN D.C.”

But the RFK legislation does not include any federal funding for a stadium. In fact, it prohibits it. The provision only transfers control of the land to D.C. and allows the city to redevelop it for a host of purposes, including a sports stadium. Nawfal later edited the post to remove the \$3 billion figure, after it had gone viral.

Later, Trump’s newly created DOGE commission — headed by Musk and former GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy — also targeted the RFK legislation, misleadingly posting on X that the spending bill included “A new football stadium in D.C.” The legislation does not give the city a new football stadium.

The Commanders, who play in Landover, are searching for a new stadium home. Should RFK legislation ultimately pass, a potential

deal in D.C. could include local, not federal, funding — though it would still require the approval of a divided D.C. Council.

Trump has called for the House to pass a more streamlined bill “WITHOUT DEMOCRAT GIVEAWAYS” — imperiling provisions such as those that Maryland Democrats negotiated into the bill: full bridge funding and getting D.C.’s fleet of F-16 fighter jets, as Maryland is set to lose its own separate air division.

Should the Baltimore bridge funding end up on the cutting room floor, it would be a tremendous financial and political loss for Maryland leaders, who have been lobbying Congress since the bridge was still in the water after its March collapse to come up with cash for the full cost to replace it. Gov. Wes Moore (D) hosted congressional leaders at the disaster site and spent hours on Capitol Hill advocating for the bridge funding, and the state’s entire congressional delegation

was involved in the effort.

President Joe Biden, too, had promised during a news conference hours after the collapse that the federal government would foot the entire bill for a new bridge, now estimated to cost as much as \$1.9 billion. Federal law already would pay for 90 percent of the expense, but without the balance paid by federal cash, Maryland has cut roughly \$170 million from its own transportation projects to finance building the new bridge.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for Moore declined to comment on the uncertainty now surrounding the bridge funding.

The rejection of the plan put forward by Johnson was somewhat of a reversal for some GOP members of Congress who had either supported the bridge funding or the idea of giving D.C. control of the RFK Stadium site for 99 years.

The RFK legislation garnered significant bipartisan support as

it wound its way through Congress this year. Rep. James Comer (R-Kentucky), the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, introduced the bill, rallied GOP support for it and pushed for its inclusion in the spending bill. Bowser has spent years as mayor — nearly a decade — pursuing the RFK site, coming closer than ever in this Congress after finding strategic allies such as Comer. She did not immediately comment on the development Wednesday night.

But while those weeks of negotiations over the RFK site were thrown into certainty, one key deal was untouched by Congress: the separate memorandum of understanding inked between the Commanders and Maryland leaders about what happens at the Northwest Stadium site in Landover should the team decide to leave it behind.

In the nonbinding deal, the team agreed to deconstruct Northwest Stadium at its sole

expense within 90 days of playing in a new home and plan a redevelopment project there “with projected economic impact at least equivalent” to the stadium it left behind.

The team has said it wants to be in a new home by 2030, and the process of building an NFL stadium typically takes several years. If the RFK legislation fails this Congress, the Commanders must decide whether to strike a deal with Maryland — the only jurisdiction with a solidified site and apparatus to offer public funding — or to spend more time and money trying to make D.C. — or Virginia — a realistic option.

If the RFK bill is not passed this Congress, D.C. and the Commanders would have to contend with a Republican Congress and mercurial president in the White House, whose DOGE commission members have already shown a prickliness toward the bill.

A Commanders spokesperson declined to comment Wednesday.



OBITUARIES

DONALD BITZER, 90

Tech pioneer helped develop cyberspace, plasma screens

BY HARRISON SMITH

Years before the internet was created and the first smartphones buzzed to life, an educational platform called PLATO offered a glimpse of the digital world to come. Launched in 1960 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, it was the first generalized, computer-based instructional system, and grew into a home for early message boards, emails, chatrooms, instant messaging and multi-player video games.

The platform's developer, Donald Bitzer, was a handball-playing, magic-loving electrical engineer who opened his computer lab to practically everyone, welcoming contributions from Illinois undergrads as well as teenagers who were still in high school.

Dr. Bitzer, who died Dec. 10 at age 90, spent more than two decades working on PLATO, managing its growth and development while also pioneering digital technologies that included the plasma display panel, a forerunner of the ultrathin screens used on today's TVs and tablets.

"All of the features you see kids using now, like discussion boards or forums and blogs, started with PLATO," he said during a 2014 return to Illinois, his alma mater. "All of the social networking we take for granted actually started as an educational tool."

An Illinois native, Dr. Bitzer had just finished his PhD and joined the Illinois faculty when he got involved with a proposal to develop a computerized educational program. The university had set up a committee in 1959 to explore the concept, but was unable to agree on a proposal until Dr. Bitzer stepped in and offered his vision for PLATO, which stood for Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations.

Under his direction, the platform was launched on the school's groundbreaking ILLIAC I computer, a hulking five-ton mainframe built from 2,800 vacuum tubes. Students could use computer terminals to access course materials through a limited campus network, run off TV signals generated by the ILLIAC I.



MARC HALL/NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

In 1960, Donald Bitzer developed the first computer-based instructional system that grew into a home for early interactive mediums.

To expand the platform, Dr. Bitzer worked to build a better display for the computers, which operated on cathode-ray tubes that caused the screen to flicker. Partnering with fellow Illinois professor Gene Slottow and graduate student Robert Willson, he helped invent the plasma display, using gold electrodes to excite neon gas held within thin panes of glass. Energized to a plasma state, the gas illuminated pixels, forming words and images.

While the earliest plasma screens were illuminated with a single color, orange, full-color plasma display systems were available by the early 1990s. Within a decade, the screens had become a household fixture, used for computers as well as high-definition televisions.

Dr. Bitzer continued to work on PLATO as it took off in the 1970s, expanding to universities,

grade schools, corporations and government agencies. Messaging and communication apps proliferated on the platform, developed by users who found that the system could be a source of entertainment and connection, not just education.

To encourage innovation, Dr. Bitzer maintained an unusually open culture at his lab, where users as young as 12 designed parts of the system, according to Brian Dear, an author and tech entrepreneur who chronicled PLATO's history in a 2017 book, "The Friendly Orange Glow." (Its title referred to the hue of early plasma screens.)

Dr. Bitzer "encouraged young people — anyone with an interest — to show up, wander in, ask questions," Dear said in a phone interview. "He always sought out the brightest people, regardless of their background, and hired and encouraged women" at a

time when the field was dominated by men.

"I interviewed hundreds, even thousands of people for the book over almost 30 years," Dear said. "The one common thread was their undying loyalty to Bitzer and the lab, thanks to the culture he created."

Although PLATO struggled to adapt to the rise of the internet, its applications influenced other developers in Silicon Valley, including visiting researchers from Xerox PARC.

"When networks like the internet were still a research lab curiosity, Don Bitzer's multiuser PLATO system served as a dress rehearsal for what we do on those networks today — learn, teach, collaborate, chat, mail, play games, argue, and more," wrote Dag Spicer, senior curator at the Computer History Museum in California, in a tribute to Dr. Bitzer. PLATO, he added,

"was a postcard from the future of online communities, and its example would help make that future real."

The younger of two children, Donald Lester Bitzer was born in East St. Louis, Illinois, on Jan. 1, 1934. He grew up in nearby Collinsville, where his father ran a Plymouth-Dodge dealership. His mother, a homemaker, died of cancer when he was 17.

Fascinated by math and science, Dr. Bitzer built ham radios and receivers and constructed his own arc lights, repurposing carbon electrodes from batteries. "They had trouble keeping him in the classroom," his son David said, "because he'd much rather be home tinkering and experimenting."

Dr. Bitzer studied electrical engineering at the University of Illinois, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1955, a master's in 1956 and a PhD in 1960.

In 1955, he married his high school sweetheart, Maryann Drost, who became a nurse and educator, incorporating the PLATO system into her work. They started a family and traveled the world, living on the outskirts of Kharagpur, India, for almost a year when Dr. Bitzer got a job as a visiting professor there in the 1960s. It was a thrilling experience, Dr. Bitzer recalled, although it took time to get used to seeing cobras in his garage.

His wife died in 2022. Dr. Bitzer's death, at home in Cary, North Carolina, was confirmed by his son, who said the cause was congestive heart failure.

In addition to his son, survivors include a sister, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Dr. Bitzer left Illinois in 1989 to join the computer science faculty at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He never retired, doing research late in life on artificial intelligence and convolutional coding, among other subjects.

A practicing magician — he liked to tell people he was a member of "IBM," the International Brotherhood of Magicians — he incorporated magic tricks into many of his lectures, passing paper balls through solid plastic cups to explain the concept of induction, according to the Raleigh News & Observer.

Dr. Bitzer was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1974, was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2013 and was named a fellow at the Computer History Museum in 2022. In 2002, he shared an Emmy Award for technological achievement with Slottow and Willson, for their work developing plasma screens.

While television manufacturers have increasingly turned to LED technology instead of plasma screens, Dr. Bitzer wasn't sorry to see the monitors go: He said he had always anticipated that the display's commercial fortunes would fade, and that new technology would replace it.

"That's why I'm trying to teach my students to think," he told Technician, the North Carolina State student newspaper, in 2015. "If they can think, they can have new ideas that can be creative."

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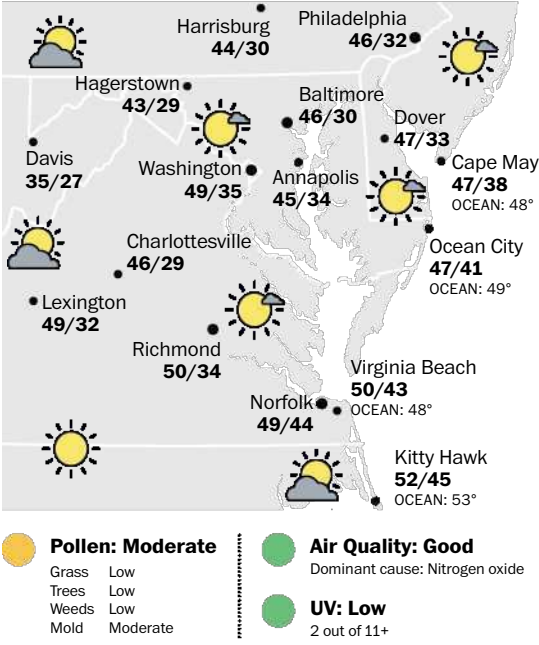
# THE WEATHER

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## Cooler weather ahead

 After a couple of mild December days this week, today will be partly sunny and colder following yesterday evening's rain. Highs will only be in the mid- to upper 40s, and somewhat breezy winds make it feel a few degrees colder. Winds will come in from the north around 10 mph, with some gusts near 20 mph. In the evening, it will be partly cloudy with diminishing winds and lows in the upper 20s to mid-30s.

## REGION



**Blue Ridge:** Today, mostly sunny, colder. High 36 to 41. Winds north-northeast 4–8 mph. Tonight, increasing cloudiness; a flurry in southern parts. Low 27 to 31. Winds south 6–12 mph.

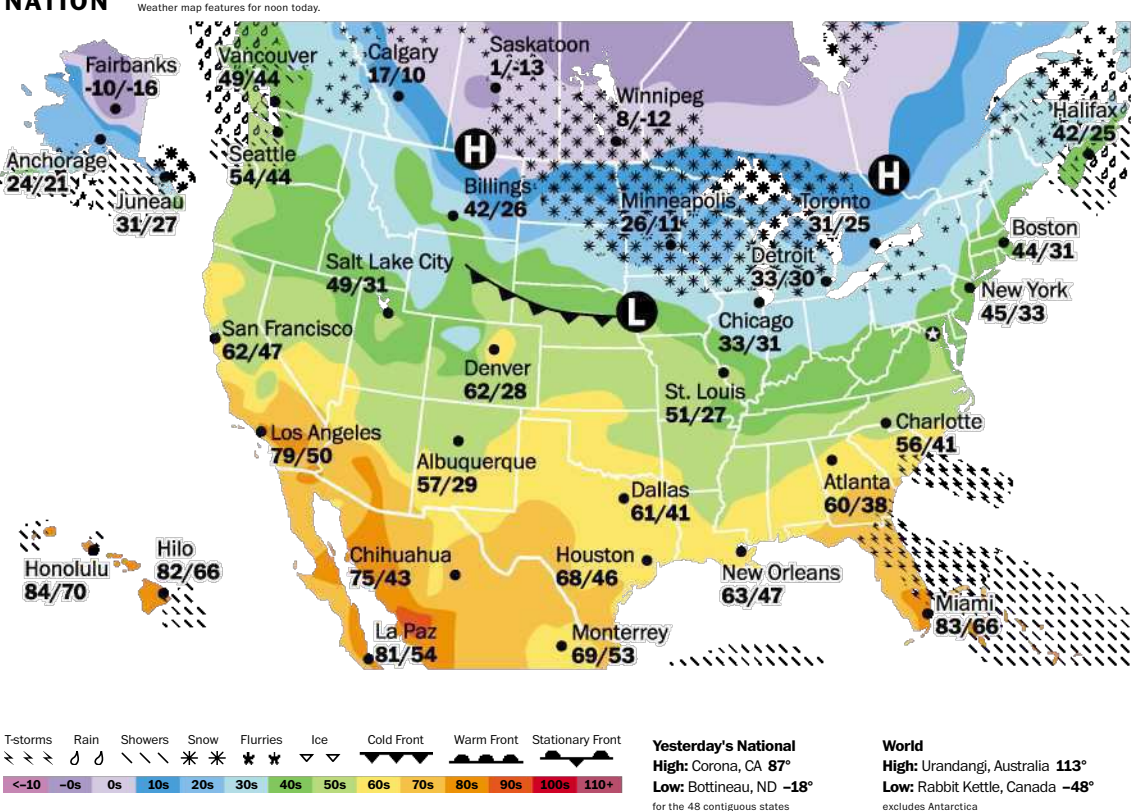
**Atlantic beaches:** Today, cooler; mostly sunny, but clouds yielding to sun in the south. High 45 to 49. Winds north 10–20 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 34 to 44. Winds northeast 7–14 mph.

**Waterways:** *Upper Potomac River:* Today, sunny. Wind north 8–16 knots. Waves 1–3 feet. Visibility clear to the horizon. • *Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay:* Today, sunny. Wind north 8–16 knots. Waves 1–2 feet on the Lower Potomac; 2–4 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. • *River Stages:* The stage at Little Falls will be around 3.60 feet today, with no change of 3.60 Friday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides <small>(High tides in <b>Bold</b>)</small>				
<b>Washington</b>	5:40 a.m.	<b>10:56 a.m.</b>	5:41 p.m.	<b>11:07 p.m.</b>
<b>Annapolis</b>	2:17 a.m.	<b>7:25 a.m.</b>	1:44 p.m.	<b>8:39 p.m.</b>
<b>Ocean City</b>	3:46 a.m.	<b>10:14 a.m.</b>	4:48 p.m.	<b>10:32 p.m.</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	5:50 a.m.	<b>12:14 p.m.</b>	6:45 p.m.	<b>none</b>
<b>Point Lookout</b>	<b>3:39 a.m.</b>	9:46 a.m.	<b>4:28 p.m.</b>	11:27 p.m.

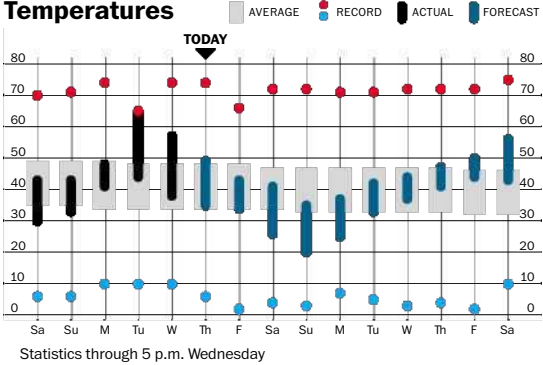
Today	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Mostly sunny	Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Mostly sunny and cold	Mostly sunny and cold	Cloudy
<b>49°</b> 35°	<b>43°</b> 34°	<b>41°</b> 26°	<b>35°</b> 20°	<b>37°</b> 25°	<b>42°</b> 33°
FEELS*: <b>42°</b>	FEELS: <b>41°</b>	FEELS: <b>32°</b>	FEELS: <b>30°</b>	FEELS: <b>38°</b>	FEELS: <b>39°</b>
CHNCE PRECIP: <b>0%</b>	P: <b>25%</b>	P: <b>0%</b>	P: <b>0%</b>	P: <b>0%</b>	P: <b>15%</b>
WIND: <b>NNW 10-20 mph</b>	W: <b>N 4-8 mph</b>	W: <b>NNW 10-20 mph</b>	W: <b>NNW 7-14 mph</b>	W: <b>SSW 4-8 mph</b>	W: <b>S 4-8 mph</b>
HUMIDITY: <b>Moderate</b>	H: <b>Moderate</b>	H: <b>Low</b>	H: <b>Low</b>	H: <b>Low</b>	H: <b>Moderate</b>

## NATION



NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow	Des Moines	46/18/s	25/19/pc	Oklahoma City	60/30/s	45/25/s	WORLD	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	39/25/pc	30/26/sf	Detroit	33/30/c	34/20/sn	Omaha	52/12/s	27/16/pc	Addis Ababa	77/49/s	77/49/s
Albuquerque	57/29/s	57/30/s	El Paso	65/38/s	67/36/s	Orlando	78/61/pc	76/47/pc	Amsterdam	53/40/r	47/44/c
Anchorage	24/21/pc	29/26/c	Fairbanks, AK	-10/-16/s	3/-7/pc	Philadelphia	46/32/pc	42/33/c	Athens	62/49/c	65/58/s
Atlanta	60/38/s	59/30/s	Fargo, ND	24/-8/sn	3/2/sn	Phoenix	80/51/pc	79/50/s	Auckland	77/61/s	75/62/sh
Austin	66/41/s	65/34/s	Hartford, CT	45/28/pc	34/27/sf	Pittsburgh	37/30/c	39/23/sn	Baghdad	64/36/pc	60/46/sh
Baltimore	46/30/s	40/31/c	Honolulu	84/70/pc	82/67/pc	Portland, ME	41/22/pc	29/21/c	Bangkok	88/69/s	86/67/pc
Billings, MT	42/26/s	51/33/c	Houston	68/46/s	69/38/s	Portland, OR	54/44/c	51/44/c	Beijing	34/18/c	38/26/pc
Birmingham	58/36/s	53/30/s	Indianapolis	39/29/pc	34/23/sf	Providence, RI	46/28/pc	37/26/c	Berlin	55/39/r	44/35/pc
Bismarck, ND	25/-3/sn	15/8/sn	Jackson, MS	59/39/s	57/29/s	Raleigh, NC	54/41/s	52/36/pc	Bogota	68/46/c	70/47/r
Boise	43/28/pc	43/29/pc	Jacksonville, FL	75/55/pc	70/37/s	Reno, NV	54/28/s	55/33/pc	Brussels	55/37/r	44/43/pc
Boston	46/31/s	37/28/sf	Kansas City, MO	53/19/s	33/21/s	Richmond	50/34/s	50/32/pc	Buenos Aires	81/73/pc	85/62/pc
Buffalo	32/27/sf	32/20/sn	Las Vegas	68/45/s	67/45/pc	Sacramento	56/41/pc	59/45/pc	Cairo	69/57/s	69/55/pc
Burlington, VT	35/22/c	28/19/c	Little Rock	55/40/s	48/28/s	St. Louis	51/27/s	36/23/pc	Caracas	77/64/r	78/66/t
Charleston, SC	69/49/pc	66/38/pc	Los Angeles	79/50/s	71/48/pc	St. Thomas, VI	85/77/sh	86/77/sh	Copenhagen	50/39/sh	44/39/s
Charleston, WV	40/30/pc	40/28/pc	Louisville	44/35/s	38/27/c	Salt Lake City	49/31/s	48/31/s	Dakar	85/70/pc	84/69/pc
Charlotte	56/41/s	54/34/s	Memphis	51/39/s	45/28/s	San Diego	71/47/s	65/49/pc	Dublin	45/38/s	49/43/r
Cheyenne, WY	52/25/s	56/35/pc	Miami	83/66/pc	80/56/s	San Francisco	62/47/pc	60/55/pc	Edinburgh	44/35/pc	49/43/sh
Chicago	33/31/pc	33/15/sn	Milwaukee	34/32/sn	33/17/sf	San Juan, PR	84/76/sh	86/75/pc	Frankfurt	54/39/sh	44/38/pc
Cincinnati	39/32/pc	36/23/c	Minneapolis	26/11/sn	18/2/pc	Seattle	54/44/c	57/44/c	Geneva	49/34/r	42/29/c
Cleveland	35/32/pc	37/25/sn	Nashville	49/37/s	41/31/pc	Spokane, WA	39/33/pc	41/31/c	Ham., Bermuda	74/70/sh	74/69/sh
Dallas	61/41/s	56/33/s	New Orleans	63/47/s	64/39/s	Syracuse	35/26/c	33/20/sn	Helsinki	41/35/r	38/25/c
Denver	62/28/pc	57/34/s	New York City	45/33/pc	39/31/sf	Tampa	78/62/pc	71/49/s	Ho Chi Minh City	90/69/s	88/69/pc
			Norfolk	49/44/pc	49/37/s	Wichita	58/21/s	40/21/s	Hong Kong	64/52/s	65/54/pc

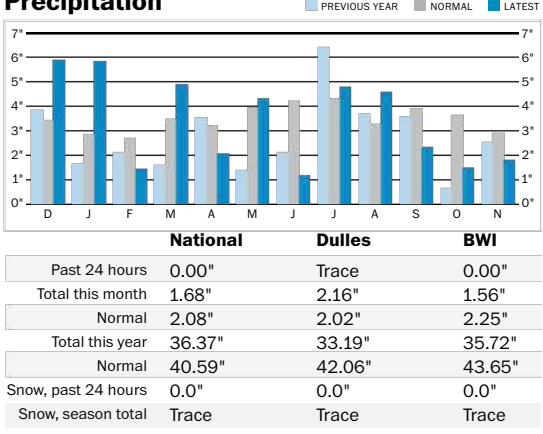
## OFFICIAL RECORD



	National	Dulles	BWI
High	57° 3:00 p.m.	53° 3:00 p.m.	55° 12:37 p.m.
Low	38° 7:23 a.m.	31° 7:42 a.m.	32° 7:41 a.m.
Normal	48°/34°	46°/29°	47°/29°
Record high	74° 2006	76° 2006	72° 2006
Record low	10° 1926	3° 1989	7° 1919

Difference from 30-yr. avg. (National): this month: **-1.1°** yr. to date: **+2.4°**

## Precipitation



## Moon Phases



## Solar system

	Rise	Set
Sun	7:22 a.m.	4:49 p.m.
Moon	9:23 a.m.	10:52 a.m.
Venus	10:21 a.m.	8:23 p.m.
Mars	7:27 p.m.	10:08 a.m.
Jupiter	3:50 p.m.	6:28 a.m.
Saturn	11:39 a.m.	10:51 p.m.

Islamabad	66/37/s	65/36/s	Rio de Janeiro	81/72/s	88/77/pc
Istanbul	56/47/c	59/50/s	Riyadh	71/45/c	78/55/pc
Jerusalem	63/46/pc	53/47/sh	Rome	59/53/pc	57/42/pc
Johannesburg	70/60/t	70/60/sh	San Salvador	87/68/c	87/67/c
Kabul	47/21/pc	46/22/pc	Santiago	93/55/s	88/57/s
Kinshasa, Jam.	90/76/pc	90/76/sh	Sarajevo	44/35/s	42/32/sh
Kolkata	80/59/pc	79/62/c	Seoul	37/20/s	39/30/c
Kyiv	43/35/pc	41/32/c	Shanghai	47/34/c	51/37/pc
Lagos	91/70/pc	92/68/pc	Singapore	85/75/r	85/76/t
Lima	75/66/c	75/65/pc	Stockholm	41/30/pc	33/26/pc
Lisbon	63/46/s	58/42/s	Sydney	74/64/pc	76/64/s
London	47/37/pc	49/42/sh	Taipei City	58/56/r	62/60/c
Madrid	57/34/pc	51/32/s	Tel Aviv	55/33/s	47/34/pc
Manila	90/76/pc	90/76/c	Tokyo	48/36/sh	54/47/pc
Mexico City	68/45/c	68/47/c	Toronto	31/25/c	28/12/sn
Montreal	31/16/pc	21/17/sn	Vienna	46/40/c	45/33/c
Moscow	19/16/sn	39/34/c	Warsaw	52/40/c	44/34/pc
Mumbai	87/68/pc	85/67/pc			
Nairobi	77/61/t	76/62/t			
New Delhi	72/48/pc	74/47/pc			
Oslo	40/32/s	38/27/pc			
Ottawa	27/13/pc	20/12/c			
Paris	55/37/r	46/43/pc			
Prague	51/37/c	41/33/pc			

**Key:** s=sunny, pc=partly cloudy, c=cloudy, r=rain, sh=showers, t=thunderstorms, sf=snow flurries, sn=snow, f=ice  
Sources: **AccuWeather.com**; US Army Centralized Allergen Extract Lab (pollen data); aimow.gov (air quality data); National Weather Service  
\* AccuWeather's **RealFeel Temperature®** combines over a dozen factors for an accurate measure of how the conditions really "feel."



## Planning for the inauguration

A model of the Capitol is seen on a large projected map of downtown Washington ahead of a planning event for the presidential inauguration by the military's Joint Task Force-National Capital Region at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington on Wednesday. A map of the areas involved in the inaugural festivities was shown on the floor so all service members involved in securing the event could envision the terrain. "There's lots of moving pieces," said Army Capt. Andrew Bohn, who is the operations officer for the JTF-NCR. "You have the White House, the Capitol, the parade route, dispersal, screening everyone, the horses at the Prince George Equestrian center, so to coordinate and synchronize everybody moving around all over the national capital region and execute the inauguration, it's a big task."



## Prada coat draws \$78K at auction

Sale of Bessette Kennedy garment drew far more than the bid estimate

BY RACHEL TASHJIAN

When it comes to clothing, just how much is the aura of celebrity worth?

According to fashion fans, hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Three of Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's garments sold at Sotheby's this week for a whopping \$177,600, more than double the \$50,000-to-\$70,000 combined estimates. The pieces, part of the auction house's annual Fashion Icons sale, were a single-breasted black Prada coat, from the mid-1990s, which was estimated at \$15,000 to \$20,000 but sold for \$78,000 after receiving 17 bids; a vintage leopard-print fur coat, which went for \$33,600, slightly above the \$20,000 to \$30,000 estimate; and a black wool jacket by the Japanese master Yohji Yamamoto, which sold for \$66,000, more than three times its high estimate of \$20,000.

The coats all came from Rose-Marie Terenzio, who was John F. Kennedy Jr.'s executive assistant and publicist, and one of the couple's closest confidantes. Bessette Kennedy and her husband died in a 1999 plane crash on their way to a wedding, along with Bessette Kennedy's sister Lauren Bessette.

"It really was like a mini capsule collection of Carolyn's wardrobe," said Lucy Bishop, Sotheby's handbag and fashion specialist, who organized the online auction. Terenzio initially approached Bishop only about Bessette Kennedy's leopard coat. "She didn't wear a lot of print, but the one type of print that she is really known for is the leopard

SEE AUCTION ON C3

### MUSIC REVIEW

## High notes and higher spirits

BY MICHAEL ANDOR BRODEUR

The Washington National Opera continued another long-standing holiday tradition at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater on Tuesday night, as the young countertenor Key'mon Murrah accepted this year's Marian Anderson Vocal Award with a recital of refined technique and raw power.

Winners of the award receive a \$10,000 cash prize and a Kennedy Center recital, and they participate in an opera workshop residency at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. But, as suggested by the list of past winners — including Justin Austin, J'Nai Bridges, Janai Brugger, Eric Owens, Ryan Speedo Green and John Holiday — the award can also provide a blast of momentum for young singers at a key stage of their development.

Murrah has yet to make his proper WNO debut, but the past few years have found the 34-year-old singer appearing at Bayerische Staatsoper, Detroit Opera, LA Opera and the Metropolitan Opera (where he appeared as one of a trio of multipurpose countertenors in John Adams's "El Niño"). Earlier this month, with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, he premiered "Earth 2.0," a new one-man opera by Jake Heggie.

Tuesday evening's program, for which Murrah was accompanied by pianist and writer Brian Zeger, pursued a modest mission as put forth by Murrah in a program note: "I simply want to share the joy that has been given to me." The result was 90 minutes of oversharing in the best possible sense, as Murrah tethered arias, art songs and spirituals into a program of music anchored and elevated by themes of hope, faith and renewal.

Countertenors — whose vocal range extends into that of a

SEE MUSIC REVIEW ON C3

## A musical doomsday

Documentarian Joshua Oppenheimer turns his eye to a postapocalyptic tale



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

BY SONIA RAO

Nearly a decade ago, Joshua Oppenheimer accompanied a Central Asian oil tycoon on a shopping trip for a doomsday bunker. Oppenheimer, an acclaimed documentarian, wondered about the emotional aftermath of the oil man's purchase. Would he feel remorse for his role in the climate crisis while stowing away in this luxurious shelter? Would he gaze upon the paintings in his art collection, now on the walls of his bunker, and recall the real landscapes he had helped destroy? Would his aquaponic food supply, designed to

sustain itself without sunlight, remind him of the people who starved to death without their own privileged retreats?

Oppenheimer, although on the lookout for a new documentary subject, decided to keep his questions to himself. Even if he had asked out loud, the magnate "wouldn't have been able to answer them because the decision inherent in buying the place was one that excluded [considering] these questions," the American filmmaker, 50, said in a recent interview at The Washington Post's D.C. office.

He never discovered whether the man closed the

SEE OPPENHEIMER ON C2

Joshua Oppenheimer is the director of the musical drama "The End."

### TV REVIEW

## Being unlucky in love gets a new spin

BY LILI LOOFBOUROW

"Laid" feels like a throwback to the 1990s. The Peacock show, which dropped Thursday, is fun and gimmicky in all the ways that semi-supernatural films of that vintage were. I'm thinking of "Ghost" and "Groundhog Day," and even (if obscene wealth counts as a superpower) "Indecent Proposal" and "Pretty Woman." The premise — *What if you had to warn everyone you ever slept with that they're going to die?* — feels pitched to that precise moment, when wacky thought experiments and moral tests masqueraded as love stories.

The comedy stars Stephanie Hsu and Zosia Mamet as friends and co-investigators trying to solve a grisly cosmic puzzle: Ruby's (Hsu) ex-lovers are suddenly dying off in the precise order that she slept with them. As a true-crime aficionado, AJ (Mamet) assembles a "murder board" of Ruby's sex life so they can find a pattern and warn all her doomed exes. Ruby, in her capacity as a party planner, meets a dreamy client (Tommy Martinez) precisely when it's becoming clear that romantic contact with her is lethal. Also, he has a girlfriend. Per rom-com regulations (the show is even set in Seattle), there's also an amiable loser named Richie (Mi-

chael Angarano) who appears to genuinely get Ruby, in all her flawed complexity.

A love triangle ensues. So do many cameos, most of whom play Ruby's exes. And innumerable pop culture references, including "Cyrano de Bergerac," Toy Story, "When Harry Met Sally," "Thelma & Louise" and "Dahmer — Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story."

And many, many deaths.

It's noteworthy, given all of the above — and the clear command "Laid" has of its rom-com tropes — that the series doesn't care much about the love triangle. Or the deaths. This last bit is where the

SEE TV REVIEW ON C3



JAMES DITTIGER/PEACOCK

Stephanie Hsu, left, and Zosia Mamet star in Peacock's "Laid."



OPPENHEIMER FROM C1

deal on the former Soviet command structure they had toured in the Czech Republic — he was warned against poking his nose further into the powerful stranger’s business and chose not to name him to The Post for the safety of the local researchers and crew — but that didn’t stop the questions from plaguing him. He wished he could return years later and make a fly-on-the-wall documentary about life in isolation but, in the meantime, decided to imagine what such a life might look like.

The result — a postapocalyptic film called “The End,” now in theaters — is Oppenheimer’s first fictional feature. It also happens to be a 2½-hour musical. If you were to guess who directed Tilda Swinton, Michael Shannon, George MacKay and Moses Ingram in belting melodies inspired by golden-age musicals, you probably wouldn’t name the guy who made two Oscar-nominated documentaries — “The Act of Killing” (2012) and “The Look of Silence” (2014) — about the 1965-1966 mass killings of suspected communists in Indonesia. And yet Oppenheimer regards “The End” as a third installment in his harrowing analysis of wrongdoing and remorse. He and composer Joshua Schmidt, primarily known for stage musical scores, wrote songs in which the characters take turns divulging and denying their inner turmoil as they wander through a bunker not unlike the one he visited.

After “The Act of Killing” was nominated for an Oscar, an Indonesian government official reportedly criticized it for portraying the country as “a cruel and lawless nation” where many who’d perpetrated violence were still operating with impunity. Oppenheimer told The Post that he “wanted to make a third film in Indonesia about the oligarchs who came to power through the genocide by exploiting a country that was terrified of them” but couldn’t do so safely after his documentaries attracted attention. “So I investigated oligarchs in analogous situations elsewhere.”

The oil tycoon, he continued, “was involved in pretty substantial political violence to obtain ... concessions.” The patriarch of the family in “The End,” simply referred to as Father (Shannon), is haunted by actions he took on behalf of his father’s energy business before environmental disaster destroyed the planet 25 years earlier. In the bunker, where his nuclear family lives, Father enlists Son (MacKay) to help him write a memoir whitewashing his misdeeds. Father’s motivations for optimism are misguided but sincere: “He wants to give his son a life worth living, in denial of the fact that his son is doomed,” Oppenheimer said.

Son was born in the bunker and has never ventured beyond the salt mine in which the structure is located. Father and Mother (Swinton) raise him with a carefully constructed version of reali-

# The fallout of a family, set to music



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

“The characters [of ‘The End’] are nameless because they’re all of us,” director Joshua Oppenheimer says. “All of us face mortality.”

ty. Whereas Father dwells on his idealized past, Mother refuses to discuss hers. She becomes prickly, sometimes exploding into fits of rage — and/or song — when asked about the family members she left behind. She fears death. She cowers from her regrets. So she dis- tracts herself with her present, frequently rearranging her price- less art collection.

“It’s tempting to see the film, when you read a quick synopsis, as a satire of the one percent,” Oppenheimer said. “But the char- acters are nameless because they’re all of us. ... All of us face mortality.”

The director dressed entirely in black for his visit to The Post in early December. He spoke about his work with calm, steady deter- mination. Oppenheimer’s politi- cal consciousness was shaped early on: He was born to Jewish parents, and his paternal grand- parents fled Germany just before the Holocaust. He has said he heard about that massacre before becoming acquainted with tradi- tional children’s fare, such as “Cinderella” or “Peter Pan.” He grew up in D.C. and New Mexico with a firm belief in art’s ability to effect change. (And, no, despite those childhood years living in the shadow of Los Alamos, he is not, to his knowledge, related to J. Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb.)

Oppenheimer the filmmaker challenges his viewers to find the humanity in people who have committed the greatest of sins. “The Act of Killing” attracted criticism for “indulging” the vani- ty of men who inflicted large- scale torture and murder, espe-

cially those who don’t seem to have any regrets, but the film and its sequel support Oppenheimer’s childhood lesson that witnessing evil up close can help us prevent it from reoccurring. In 2017, declas- sified documents confirmed that U.S. officials were well aware, maybe even supportive, of the mass killings in Indonesia all those years ago. “We’re all much closer to perpetrators than we’d like to think,” Oppenheimer said.

“Josh has a characteristic that I admire most in an artist, which is relentlessness,” Shannon said. “These movies he makes, they’re like crusades. He spends years making them, as do most great filmmakers. It’s not something you can rush. ... It behooves you to really pay attention.”

The family in “The End” in- vites a trio of others to live with them in the bunker: Friend (Bronagh Gallagher), who knows Mother from before; Doc- tor (Lennie James), a logistical necessity; and Butler (Tim McIn- nerny), a constant reminder of the class friction that remains. But it isn’t until they discover a surprise visitor in the mine — Girl (Ingram), one of few survivors left in the outside world — that the status quo really shifts.

Girl’s resilience helps her find her way to the bunker. Her stub- born honesty almost gets her kicked out. She prods Mother about her past, recognizing a bur- ied grief in the self-deluded wom- an. She tests Father by discussing her own trauma, which mirrors the truth of what happened with his family. She pushes Son, who falls in love with her, to be real

with himself, for once. “The fam- ily lives in a prison of shame ... and they’ve raised Son to inter- nalize that prison of shame,” Op- penheimer explained. “Girl comes with the keys.”

The filmmaker suggests that people are often blinded by a desperation to protect what, and whom, they love. On the flight home from spending time with the oil tycoon, he watched Jacques Demy’s 1964 musical dra- ma “The Umbrellas of Cher- bourg,” about a love affair be- tween a small-town Frenchwom- an and a mechanic drafted into the Algerian War. “They hurt each other, but they’re doing the best they can,” Oppenheimer said. The music highlights their human- ness.

It made him reflect on his time with the tycoon. “It was clear that this man, as much as we’d like to point fingers at monstrous behav- ior in his past, was also trying his best.”

That doesn’t excuse the man’s behavior, but it could help explain some of it. Oppenheimer landed on making a musical about a wealthy American family suffer- ing from foolish hope and creep- ing doubts because “it’s a quintes- sentially American genre that embodies a quintessentially American form of hope ... the idea that no matter what’s going on, no matter what catastrophe may be- fall us, everything will work out for the best.”

This delusion is present throughout music produced in theater’s golden age, which stretched from the 1940s through the 1950s and influenced Oppen- heimer and Schmidt while they

wrote songs for “The End.”

“The golden age was a time when we had [the Great] Depres- sion, then World War II and the Holocaust, the horrors of coloni- zation, apartheid as the national economic and cultural and racial system in this country,” Oppen- heimer said. “It reached its peak flourishing at the moment when we as a nation developed a tech- nology where at the push of a button, we could destroy the en- tire world. The golden age, with its sunny, whistle-stop tour of the American empire at its peak — and the one that I think is nostal- gically referred to when we say Make America Great Again — was always a kind of dark age.”

The family’s conviction that “our future is bright,” as they sing at the start of the film, begins to falter. The choreography — by Sam Pinkleton, who directed Broadway’s “Oh, Mary!,” and his frequent collaborator Ani Taj — increasingly guides them out of the bunker and into the desolate salt mine, where it is harder to deny their depressing situation. There are no masterful paintings to distract them here. Girl and Son frolic in the mine, finding comfort in one another. Father, in his big solo performance, “The Big Blue Sky,” climbs the mine as if it were a mountain, refusing to acknowledge reality.

“They try to recover their equi- librium through song, and usual- ly succeed at the beginning,” Op- penheimer said. “As the film goes on and the conflicts grow more intense and sharp, they fail. ... The little rests between a verse and a chorus, for example, are the limits of those lies. ... The truth

comes through in the cracks.”

During the pandemic, Oppen- heimer, who lives in Europe, workshopped the screenplay for “The End” with a cast of Danish actors. He turned to his friend Jeremy Strong — the American actor from TV’s “Succession,” who lives part-time in Copenhagen — to help develop the Father charac- ter. The most personal material comes through in Son, who Op- penheimer said is “caught be- tween trying to please both par- ents and reassure them of contra- dictory narratives.” While shoot- ing the film, Oppenheimer spoke to MacKay, who plays Son, about feeling a similar responsibility after his own parents divorced in his early childhood.

“There are so many stories that are about a sort of binary good and bad,” said MacKay. “And I don’t think there are many sto- ries, particularly not told in this way, which look to the middle.”

Oppenheimer’s documenta- ries benefit from his sharp set of observational skills. “He’s a really nuanced ... litmus test of the truth,” MacKay said of the director. Oppenheimer recog- nizes that people of all occupa- tions, whether a professional ac- tor or former executioner, per- form for the camera. In “The Act of Killing” in which he tasks onetime death squad members with reenacting executions, he also captures behind-the-scenes interactions. It’s disturbing to learn of their past brutality and worrying to witness how much glee some still derive from the memories.

In his first two films, Oppen- heimer said, he was “working with the gap between how the participant sees themselves and how they want to be seen.” Mak- ing a dramatic feature allowed him to close that gap. He could work with the actors to make sure their visions were aligned. He could prescribe the characters’ actions with intention, write the words he wanted them to say, assign backstories for why they are the way they are.

Still, honesty prevailed. Op- penheimer recalled shooting a scene when Mother is sitting in the bunker next to a massive ventilation duct. It lays flat on the ground until a loud burst of air rushes through, inflating the tube with an almost violent quickness. The sudden movement startles Mother, who contorts her face in surprise. Oppenheimer asked Swinton afterward what she was working with in that moment, and, per the director, she said, “It was like the dead Earth breath- ing.” A moment of relief amid constant torment.

“If you make a film about the last family after they’ve destroyed the world, there would be some- thing grotesque about them find- ing redemption or living happily ever after,” Oppenheimer said. “While it may be too late for them, [‘The End’] is made with the conviction that it’s not too late for us. It’s not too late for the audi- ence because when people leave the film, they’ll go outside. And above them, there’s still a sky.”



“The End” stars George MacKay, left, as Son, who was born in the bunker, Tilda Swinton, center, as Mother, who refuses to discuss her past, and Moses Ingram as Girl, a survivor who joins then in the bunker.



FELIX DICKINSON/NEON

## Mom-group friends insinuate daughter’s race is why she got into a top college



Carolyn Hax

Adapted from an online discussion.

**Dear Carolyn:** So my kid just got into college, and it’s a good one. The women in my moms group got together for a catch-up lunch recently, and everyone was reporting on where their kid is going to college. When I mentioned mine, and I did not gloat, a couple of them asked me whether we had checked the box that she is Hispanic. Which she is. And then they looked at each other that way.

One of them said her son had applied but did not get in because he did not have any special privileges. I went off. I told them that if they did not consider being White a privilege, then they clearly did not live in the same world as I did. I told them yes, my child is Hispanic, but she is also a

straight-A student, has hundreds of volunteer hours and stellar SATs, and is a star athlete, and perhaps they should begin assessing their mediocre children’s abilities before they make assumptions about mine. And then I left.

I saw a couple of them a few days later at a birthday party, and we were pretty chilly to each other. Do I owe them an apology? How do I move forward with these closet racists in a small community?

— *Am I the Glassbowl?*

**Am I the Glassbowl?:** No, you don’t owe them an apology, and you move forward by giving them as wide yet civil a berth as your small community permits.

Well, wait. Apologize for calling their kids mediocre — that was uncalled for. Their kids didn’t get into Wherever because Wherever is as big as Cinderella’s slipper, and sometimes tens of



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

thousands of highly qualified kids apply — of all demographic varieties! — but only a small fraction can ever fit.

But you owe them nothing beyond that.

I am really sorry. Their response was appalling and too common, spoken and un-

For anyone thinking, hmm, but the friends were right? Or

remembering they had the same thought when a “checked box” person did get in and their person didn’t? In addition to the privilege issue, which I will not waste column space repeating when others do it better:

First, the biggest checkboxes are generally recruited athletes (who at least excel at something

else) and legacies (who don’t). It’s not racial or ethnic minorities, so stuff it.

Second, one accepted student is an anecdote, not data. So stuff that, too.

Third, give a half-second of thought to how you’d feel if someone heard of your accomplishment and said, “Oh, it’s because you’re \_\_\_\_.” Yeah. If you need more time, that’s on you.

Take demographics out of it and the answer is still the same: Any response besides “Congratulations!” is just sour grapes, and the only goal in life I see as truly universal is to refuse as many opportunities as you can to be a racist jackhole. Especially to your supposed friends.

**Re: Admissions:** A juicy tidbit I love to have on hand is that the largest demographic beneficiaries of affirmative action admissions are boys.

Because overwhelmingly, girls have better grades, test scores, etc., and colleges therefore have to pad their admission numbers of dudes so the acceptance rate by gender remains closer to 50/50.

— *Juicy*

**Juicy:** Yes! Just cited it the day before writing this, in fact.

A reader’s thought:

• Uh, they said her kid got in because she is Hispanic, suggesting the daughter was also undeserving. Then they got hit with a slap of truth. So ... Glassbowl has nothing to apologize for. She stood up for her high-achieving daughter.

Write to Carolyn Hax at [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com). Get her column delivered to your inbox each morning at [wapo.st/gethax](http://wapo.st/gethax).

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at [washingtonpost.com/live-chats](http://washingtonpost.com/live-chats).



# 3 Bessette Kennedy garments were ‘not standout pieces’

AUCTION FROM C1

print. That in itself is an iconic piece of her personal style,” Bishop said.

When Bishop visited Terenzio in her apartment, Terenzio pulled out the Yamamoto and Prada coats. “Prada was one of [Bessette Kennedy’s] all-time favorite designers. She wore a lot of Prada, with its classic, simple, minimalist approach,” Bishop said. “She also wore a lot of Japanese fashion, which I find very interesting. And she *loved* Yohji Yamamoto. You have this wonderful cross-section of her style.”

(Not everyone in the Kennedy inner circle was pleased with the sale. Earlier this month, Jack Schlossberg, JFK Jr. and Bessette Kennedy’s nephew, posted on his Instagram stories an image of a “Today” show segment on the auction and wrote, “Super creepy if you ask me.”)

A single buyer swept up all three pieces: Sarah Staudinger, the fashion designer behind the Los Angeles-based label Staud and the wife of Hollywood powerhouse and Endeavor CEO Ari Emanuel. Staud’s collections often feature earnest homages to the vibes of 1990s fashion, such as the colorful belly-baring ball skirts seen in the 1995 Isaac Mizrahi documentary “Unzipped” or Gwyneth Paltrow’s green Donna Karan outfit in the 1998 adaptation of “Great Expectations.”

“I plan to treat these pieces with the same reverence a devoted basketball fan would a Michael Jordan championship jersey,” Staudinger said in a text to The Washington Post. “As a life-

long vintage collector, I’ve always been captivated by CBK and the influence she had on fashion and culture. Owning this part of history as a designer is my version of an NBA all star jersey.”

The same style of Prada coat is now for sale on eBay for \$7,000. That would put the power of the Bessette Kennedy provenance — or CBK, as she has come to be known among her sartorial followers — at 10 times its value otherwise.

While some garments are worth a lot because they come from a historically significant collection or are made by a great designer, such as Christian Dior or Karl Lagerfeld, these three are relatively unspectacular.

“These are not standout pieces,” said Sunita Kumar Nair, who published the first book on Bessette Kennedy’s style, “CBK: A Life in Fashion,” last year. “They were just owned by Carolyn. But that is her mystique: She was fashion chemistry working at its best. You think if I buy that coat, I’m going to be her. But it’s actually about her — the woman, confidence.”

“There is a lot of fashion out there that doesn’t hold any value,” Bishop said. “A lot of designer fashion, for example: Contemporary fashion, once it’s bought from the store and you walk out with it, it typically loses value. Where things get really interesting at auction for fashion is when the clothing has been worn by someone of note, a historical figure, such as Carolyn Bessette Kennedy. That can make a huge difference to the value, and it will often add on a couple of zeros to the end of the price achieved.”

Bessette Kennedy’s style has



LAWRENCE SCHWARTZWALD/SYGMA/GETTY IMAGES

Carolyn Bessette Kennedy is pictured in 1997 wearing the Prada coat that fetched \$78,000 at auction this week.

set off a frenzy in fashion, particularly since the publication of Nair’s book. Bessette Kennedy, who was a fashion publicist, is on the mood boards of countless brands, whether the upscale and aloof New York brand Khaite or the Instagram-happy wellness line Sporty & Rich. “She is *the* fashion icon of the 1990s,” Bishop said.

“She had a utilitarian way with luxury,” Nair said. “She put her expensive handbags on the floor, and her Birkin was stuffed with her gym clothes.”

Other pieces in Sotheby’s Fashion Icons sale also achieved record prices — a reflection of the growing importance and appeal, especially among young collectors, of the high-end vintage or archival clothing market. Bishop said that lots had an average of seven bidders — “which is very high” — and that more than 50 percent of the buyers were new to Sotheby’s and more than a third younger than 40.

The star lot was a matching cloche and scarf by Sonia Delaunay from the mid-1920s, which sold for a whopping \$156,000 against a high estimate of \$24,000. Delaunay, an artist who worked across painting, sculpture, furniture and fashion, was the recent subject of a retrospective at the Bard Graduate Center in New York that included these pieces. That probably boosted interest — a museum was the winning bidder — and the fact that very little of Delaunay’s fashion output is available.

Another standout was a gold Alexander McQueen dress from the designer’s Fall 2007 collection, which was estimated at a more modest \$7,000 to \$12,000

and sold for \$114,000. Bishop said that price reflects the historic importance of this particular dress, from a collection made in homage to McQueen’s ancestor who was accused of witchcraft and executed in Salem, Massachusetts. McQueen’s work skyrocketed in value after his death in 2010 and a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art the following year, and has not reached such prices since, but this dress is an exception: “We curate our sales very carefully,” Bishop said.

Vintage and secondhand clothing continues to overtake the appeal of new runway pieces, as sites such as theRealReal, Vestiaire Collective and Poshmark make reselling designer apparel simpler and acquiring designer goods more affordable.

“You can buy a piece of vintage Balenciaga for a couple thousand dollars, which, when you compare that to the prices of contemporary fashion, it’s really remarkable,” Bishop said. (A new Balenciaga gown, by designer Demna, can sell for more than \$5,000.)

It’s a mindset that Bessette Kennedy would have embraced, as a lover of off-piste fashion choices, although Nair, who did not know Bessette Kennedy but spent months immersed in her sartorial mindset, thinks she would have found the sale (and her book) silly.

“She was extremely private. And I think if she were doing something like this, it would have been done in a very different way, in not such a predictable way,” Nair said. “This is the thing about fashion magic that people miss. Repeating magic — it’s just not magic anymore.”

# Peacock’s dark comedy ‘Laid’ tackles mysterious deaths with rom-com logic

TV REVIEW FROM C1

show’s ironic sophistication and great dialogue land it in conceptual trouble. “Laid” understands the cathartic pleasure of a redemption arc in modern storytelling, but it can’t help also undercutting it by correctly identifying the way self-improvement has become a modern, egotistical compulsion.

The urge to seek redemption, for instance, is repeatedly presented and filtered through Ruby’s amusingly unsubtle patter. “This could be a new start,” she tells AJ when she decides she’ll attend an ex-lover’s funeral. “I’m burying the old, judgmental me,” she says. “As well as a literal man,” AJ says, pointedly refusing to let the dead guy become a metaphor. “As well as a man I used to know, yes,” Ruby replies, a little too blithely. At the funeral, she pays her respects to the corpse by catching him up on the role he played in her spiritual journey: “My therapist has actually been telling me I should look at my past more, so, yeah, this all sort of happened at a good time.”

At moments like these, “Laid” can feel like a lacerating send-up of the way a certain kind of contemporary, social-media-savvy person

repurposes therapeutic language for blatantly narcissistic ends. Hsu captures this type. She sells Ruby’s desperate awkwardness at some points while making her entertainingly insightful at others, capable of itemizing exactly what went wrong on a date *to* the date without arousing much ill will.

The character is wildly changeable, but the range of affects makes sense: She’s withdrawn and inattentive toward those she considers unworthy of an elaborate social performance, but manipulative and charming when conditions warrant it. “I think the connection you have drawn between past and present is, like, wow,” she says to her therapist when she’s accused of evading the work because of her family history. “People overuse this word, but you are an actual genius. You and Martin Short. That’s it.”

And although AJ is basically a reprise of the best-friend role that Mamet played in “The Flight Attendant,” there’s a reason Mamet gets those parts: She manages to operate as a straight man without being remotely — in the comedic sense — straight. Mamet grounds a scene without weighing it down. That lets her operate as the show’s



JAMES DITTIGER/PEACOCK

Stephanie Hsu as Ruby in Peacock’s “Laid.”

conscience without being oppressively moral or stuffy within its universe.

AJ was right, for instance, when she called Ruby out for treating a real man’s funeral as a catalyst to work on herself. The trouble is that “Laid” compulsively acknowledges Ruby’s moral errors while structurally replicating them. The series absolutely subordinates the lives of many men to the story of Ruby’s (minimal) self-improvement.

That’s excusable in a black com-

edy, which “Laid” undoubtedly is. But it’s oddly heartless for a rom-com, which it is, or wants to be, too. (There are big speeches. Grand gestures. A chase scene. Even a kiss in the rain!) At one point, I thought the show was trying to graft the two into an ungainly hybrid.

Tonally, however, the series is something else entirely: a womance. Although several of the male actors are great (Angarano and Andre Hyland as AJ’s boyfriend are particular standouts), Hsu and Mamet aren’t just the reason to

watch; they’re the couple you root for. Theirs is the only love story the show rates as genuinely important, and the show’s investment in their relationship — although valid and even touching in principle — seems a little disproportionate given all the blood and gore and death.

That conceptual imbalance may be an artifact of the show’s DNA. Creators Nahnatchka Khan (“Fresh Off the Boat”) and Sally Bradford McKenna (“Will & Grace”) adapted “Laid” from Marieke Hardy and Kirsty Fisher’s Australian series of the same name, which ran there from 2011 to 2012. The timing explains why the adaptation feels a little dated; the concept originated as an edgy, female-centric riposte to Judd Apatow’s spate of bromantic comedies.

Still, Khan and Bradford McKenna are massive talents. Scene to scene, the writing is witty, and the jokes, which are great, rarely take the turn you expect. When the series opens with Ruby at a bank trying to inform a teller she once slept with, via a note, that he’s dying, the expected gag — that she’ll be arrested for attempted robbery — surfaces only to give

way to an infinitely funnier problem: The teller can’t quite hear her through the partition and keeps asking her to repeat herself. “What am I dying from?” he asks her. “Me,” she almost whispers, dramatically. “I just can’t hear you.” “I’m so sorry — me?” she says, leaning down to yell in uptalk through the gap in the glass.

All those aforementioned movies from the ’90s were notable for how rigorously they flogged their central conceit to chart a protagonist’s moral progress. “Laid” rejects that impulse by overusing it so much that it loses narrative potency: Episode after episode features Ruby reflecting on her flaws, resolving to change, then relapsing, so any sense of real suspense dwindles. So does the possibility of any genuine transformation. The series starts to feel more like a sitcom, with beats that reset. As a result, the concept of the “curse” stagnates. So does any metaphoric resonance it may have. “Laid” is fun, but you don’t want it to end for all the wrong reasons: The closer the show drifts to a solution, the less you want to hear it.

**Laid** (eight episodes) is available for streaming on Peacock.

# A showcase of technique and power

MUSIC REVIEW FROM C1

contralto (like Anderson) or even a soprano — tend to wow listeners who remain unaccustomed to hearing such heights from a male singer. And certainly Murrah found several moments in his recital to showcase his vocal acrobatics; several runs in his opening aria, “Riedi al Soglio” from Rossini’s “Zelmira,” drew collective gasps from the audience.

But the sensitive touch and jeweled ornamentation he brought to a set of Handel arias — a sweet and spacious “Ombra mai

fu” from “Xerxes” and a splendid “Dopo notte” from “Ariodante” — identified Murrah as that rarest of vocal treasures: a countertenor or of often startling depth. He also made a magnetic, personable presence onstage, smiling brightly as he welcomed twin brother and skilled tenor Kaymon Murrah for the lively volley of “Fermati! No, crudel!” from Handel’s “Rinaldo.”

The hopeful note sounded by Handel was shadowed by a suite of songs by Strauss: “Allerseelen” (or “All Souls’ Day”), “Morgen!” and “Cäcilie.” The second was the

most beautifully realized, largely thanks to Zeger’s performance — so slowly unfolding it threatened to dissolve but for the ribbon of Murrah’s voice binding it.

The program’s second half was devoted to 20th-century repertoire — art songs and spirituals that carried forth the evening’s theme of joy and how to find it. He brought softness and sweetness to Ricky Ian Gordon’s arrangements of poems by Emily Dickinson (“Will There Really Be a Morning?”) and Langston Hughes (“Joy”). And while Zeger’s playing felt slightly more



SCOTT SUCHMAN/KENNEDY CENTER

Key'mon Murrah.

rigid and less intuitive at the outset, Murrah took flight. (Especially with that last note of “Joy.”)


Hughes’s poetry extended through the next two selections, H. Leslie Adams’s arrangement of the poet’s “Prayer” and a new arrangement by Meilina Tsui of his “Mother to Son.” Murrah drew out the colors of “Prayer,” a subdued demonstration of his dramatic chops and a thrilling display of his control. In “Mother to Son,” we heard a hint of the spiritual final turn of the program, his voice borne up the crystal stairs by Zeger’s attentive, supportive performance. Seldom have I been hit so hard by a sound so tender.

Jacqueline Hairston’s arrange-

ment of “Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired” won the loudest applause of the evening, Murrah deploying his colors slightly outside the lines to aching effect. To finish, Murrah selected Florence Price’s 1937 arrangement of “My Soul’s Been Anchored in the Lord,” a spiritual made legendary by Anderson in 1939 when she sang it to close her historic performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Murrah returned to the stage for an encore of “I Trust in God,” unaccompanied but for a stray “amen” or two from the audience. A bracing affirmation of faith in a time of deep uncertainty, it’s hard to imagine Murrah’s big night ending on a higher note.

the **GUIDE** to the Lively Arts

SHOW NAME	DATES & TIMES	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS	PRICE	ADDITIONAL	
<b>HOLIDAY EVENTS</b>						
 <b>NAT PHIL HARMONIC</b> AT STRATHMORE	<b>Handel’s Messiah</b> with Baltimore Choral Arts Society	Saturday, Dec. 21 at 7:30 PM at Strathmore Sunday, Dec. 22 at 3 PM at Strathmore Monday, Dec. 23 at 7:30 PM at Capital One Hall	Join NatPhil for Handel’s Messiah, guided by guest conductor Anthony Blake Clark and featuring Baltimore Choral Arts Society, soprano Aundi Marie Moore, mezzo-soprano Lucia Bradford, tenor Norman Shankle, and baritone Jorell Williams.	<b>Strathmore</b> <b>5301 Tuckerman Ln</b> <b>North Bethesda, MD 20852</b> <b>Capital One Hall</b> <b>1750 Capital One Tower Rd</b> <b>Tysons, VA 22102</b> <b><a href="http://nationalphilharmonic.org">nationalphilharmonic.org</a></b>	Tickets Starting at \$29	All Kids. All Free. All the Time.

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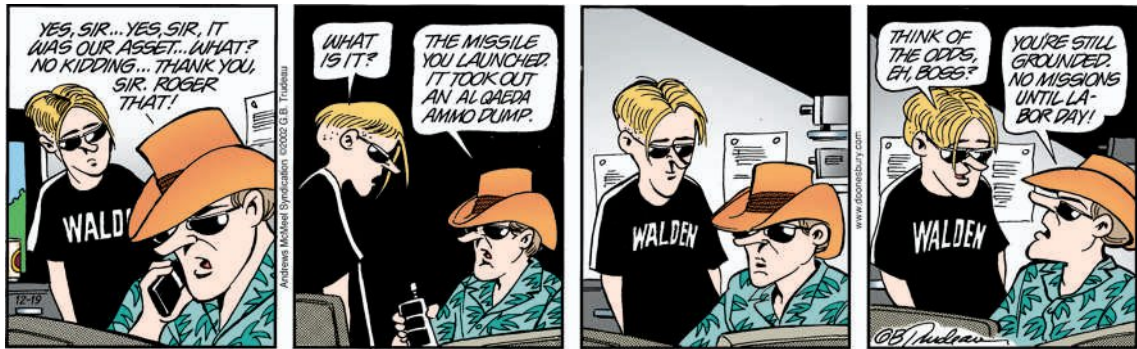






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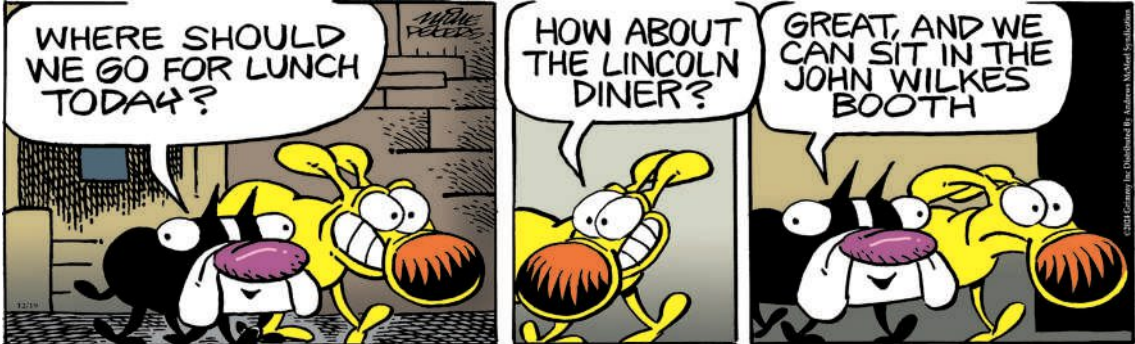
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MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

MIKE PETERS



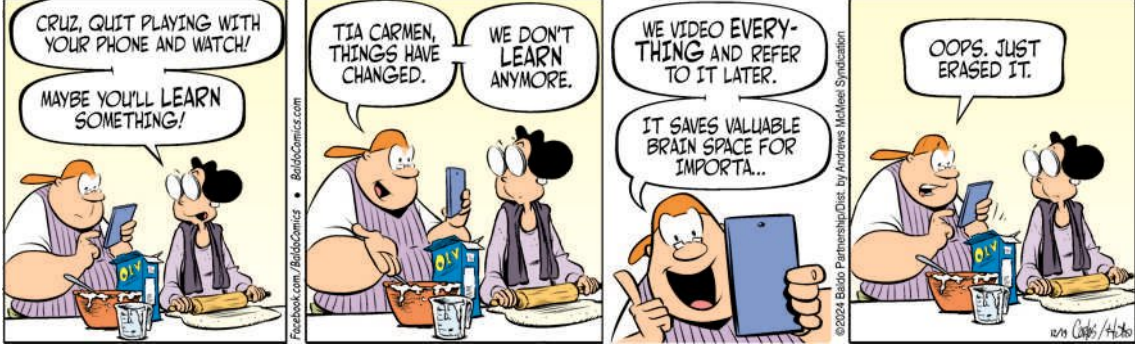
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CHRIS BROWNE



BALDO

HECTOR CANTU & CARLOS CASTELLANOS



BLONDIE

DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL



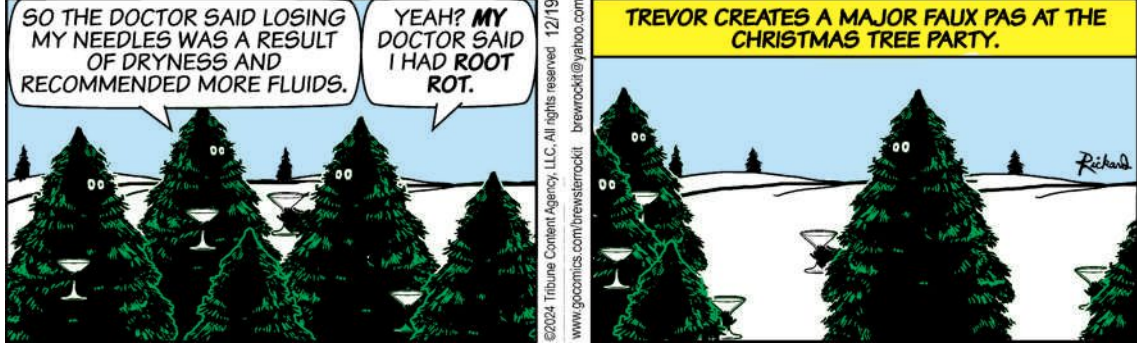
SALLY FORTH

FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE



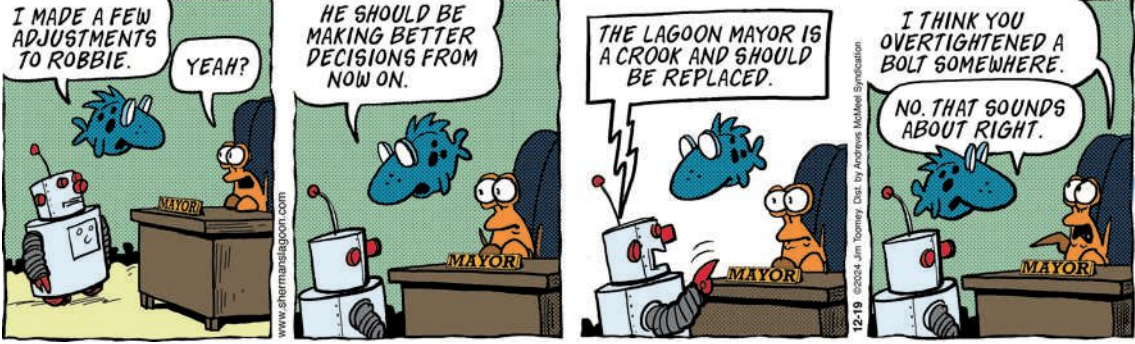
BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!

TIM RICKARD



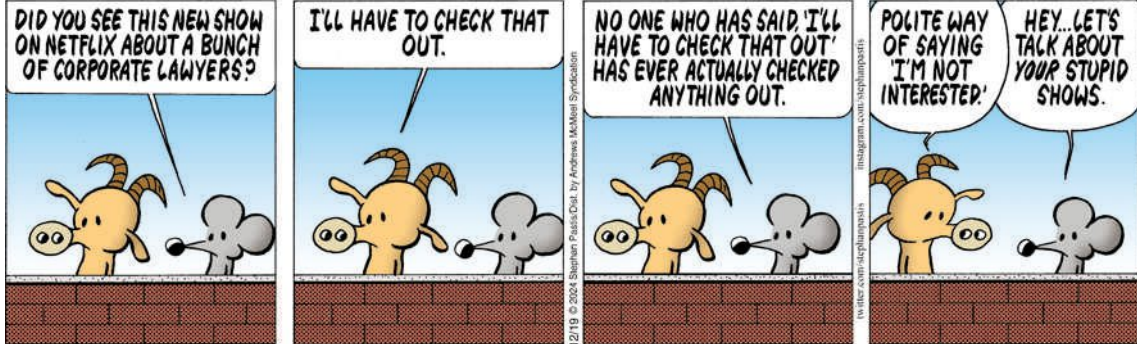
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

JIM TOOMEY



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

STEPHAN PASTIS



CURTIS

RAY BILLINGSLEY





MUTTS

PATRICK McDONNELL

HERE, SHTINKY, HAVE ALL MY FOOD AND THEN I'LL CARRY YOU HOME. I CAN TRY TO FIND MY "PURR" SHOME OTHER DAY.

WOW.

PURRR.

PURRR.

WOW!

HEART OF THE CITY

STEENZ

ANY NEW CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN YOUR REAR WINDOW?

WHAT? THIS IS THE LIVING ROOM WINDOW.

NEVER MIND. YOU KNOW NOT EVERY WEIRD THING THAT HAPPENS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS A CRIME.

OR!! IT'S DEFINITELY A CRIME, AND IT'S UP TO ME TO STOP IT!

FRAZZ

JEFF MALLETT

I SAID BEING AN OMNIVORE MEANS GETTING TO EAT ANYTHING WE WANT.

MY MOM SAID BEING AN OMNIVORE COMES FROM HAVING TO EAT ANYTHING THAT'S AVAILABLE.

THE LINE BLURS BETWEEN BLESSING AND CURSE.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO EAT STUFFED PEPPERS JUST BECAUSE MY ANCESTORS COULDN'T HUNT FOR DOODLY.

GARFIELD

JIM DAVIS

Z

Z

VERY FUNNY, JON ARBUCKLE!

DUSTIN

STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER

I'M SORRY — I CAN'T SEEM TO SEE YOUR FUTURE.

OH NO, DOES SOMETHING HAPPEN?

NO. THAT WAS MY POINT.

PRICKLY CITY

SCOTT STANTIS

HE SAID HE WOULDN'T PARDON HIM. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD ONLY RUN FOR ONE TERM.

WHY ARE WE ALWAYS SURPRISED WHEN POLITICIANS LIE TO US, CARMEN?

WE ALL WANT TO THINK THE BEST OF THE PEOPLE WHO LEAD US, WINSLOW.

ISN'T THAT CLOSE TO THE DEFINITION OF INSANITY? PRETTY MUCH...

NON SEQUITUR

WILEY

OK... I LIKE IT, BUT I THINK WE'RE GETTING WAY AHEAD OF THINGS HERE...

XI THOU SHALT NOT PHISH OR TROLL

MOSES and the EDITING PROCESS

BIG NATE

LINCOLN PEIRCE

OKAY, "OPERATION TOUPEE" WILL NOW COMMENCE!

RATS! MISSED!

THE BALL'S HEADED FOR THE FACULTY PARKING LOT!

WHUMP! BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

THAT'S MY BUICK!

OF COURSE IT IS.

ON THE FASTTRACK

BILL HOLBROOK

SANTA, YOU CAN'T BE REPLACED BY A.I.! HOW CAN I HELP YOU GET YOUR JOB BACK?

THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

TO ME, THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON THE CHILDREN GETTING THE PRESENTS THEY ASKED FOR!

... WHICH IS PROOF THAT YOU GIVE... WHILE A.I. STEALS.

SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SKILL SETS...

BEETLE BAILEY

GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

I NEED TO MAKE A LIST OF JOBS TO DO TODAY

GET ME SOME PAPER TO WRITE ON

OKAY

HERE

ZITS

JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

JEREMY, I'M HAVING TROUBLE RESETTING THIS DARN PASSWORD

LET'S SEE.

WAIT... YOUR OLD PASSWORD WAS "PASSWORD"??

IT IS.

MAYBE I SHOULD MAKE THE NEW ONE "NOGASMONEY FORSMARTY PANTS"

SNARK WITH-DRAWN.

JUDGE PARKER

FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & MIKE MANLEY

NEDDY!

QUICK RECAP—YES, MY EX HANK AND I RECONNECTED. NO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT. YES, THE SPARK'S STILL THERE AND I'M HOPEFUL...

UM, MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU, TOO.

JUST WANTED TO GET THAT OUT OF THE WAY. NOW LET'S HAVE COCOA!

CANDORVILLE

DARRIN BELL

HEY MISTER, WHAT'S THAT?

THIS?

IT'S CALLED "THE TALK." IT'S A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY A GUY I KNEW IN COLLEGE. WE WOUND UP ON THE SAME BOOK TOUR.

HE'D PROMISED TO BUY MY BOOK IF I BOUGHT HIS BOOK. BUT AFTER I BOUGHT HIS, HE SAID HE HAD TO GO GET HIS WALLET FROM HIS CAR. AND THEN HE NEVER CAME BACK.

NO, I MEANT WHAT'S THAT FLOPPY THING IN YOUR HANDS? IS IT SOME KINDA WEIRD TABLET?

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. I MEAN, HE CAME ON A BUS.

BARNEY AND CLYDE

WEINGARTENS & CLARK

Hey, Foxy. Do you have a boyfriend?

WHY DO YOU ASK!

No reason! No reason!

FLASH GORDON

DAN SCHKADE

BACK ON DRY LAND. THE CARAVAN OF THE LION MEN PRAYS FOR THE RETURN OF THEIR KING, QUEEN AND PRINCE...

I DON'T KNOW. YET.

BUT THE SHARKS SEEM TO KNOW TOA'S LAW A LOT BETTER THAN WE DO... SO...

...HANG ON...

...HEY-- IS THERE ANY WAY FOR US TO GET A MESSAGE TO SHARK CITY?

'LESS... --YEAH, THERE COULD BE A WAY, MAYBE.

HOW WELL D'YOU KNOW THAT MAN A' YERS, GIRLIE?

LOOSE PARTS

DAVE BLAZEK

Well, I, for one, love the new \$800 Dyson soup cooler.

BABY BLUES

RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT

SNOWFLAKES!!

I GOT ONE!

BEHOLD!

A WET HAND. ASTOUNDING.

SPEED BUMP

DAVE COVERLY

OH, I DON'T NEED A LEASH—HE NEVER WANDERS TOO FAR FROM MY BLUETOOTH HOT SPOT ANYWAY.

DENNIS THE MENACE

H. KETCHAM

"ARE YOU GONNA GIVE SANTA YOUR LIST?"

"I TEXTED IT TO HIM."

FAMILY CIRCUS

BIL KEANE

"Why isn't it 'God rest ye merry LADIES and gentlemen?'"

REPLY ALL LITE

DONNA A. LEWIS

What you need is chocolate. Wrapped in chocolate.



## Suddenly, offense is an issue for the Capitals

Even as scoring dries up, Washington is 4-2-1 in its past seven games

BY BAILEY JOHNSON

The offense was going to slow down at some point. The Washington Capitals were not, under any reasonable expectation, going to continue to shoot and score at the highest rate in the NHL, a mark that was north of 15 percent for a long stretch to start the season.

There is not much reason for the Capitals to panic. Teams go through ebbs and flows, and Coach Spencer Carbery has been aware for weeks that his team's electrifying goal-scoring pace probably would dip.

But in their past seven games, the Capitals have scored four goals twice, three goals once, two goals twice and one goal twice. That's an average of just 2.43 goals per game, a significant drop from the four-plus goals they were averaging for the first two months of the season.

"We just had some good looks," Carbery said Monday after Washington lost, 3-1, at the Dallas Stars. "You've got to give [goaltender Jake Oettinger] credit. That's a world-class goalie, and there's a reason he's one of the best in the world. But we have to, in those spots, we've got to find a way to break through and finish in those areas."

The Capitals are 4-2-1 in their past seven games, even as the offense has started to dry up. Their losses in Dallas and Chicago, both ends of a back-to-back set, are just the second time they've lost consecutive games. And captain Alex Ovechkin, who has been participating in morning skates while wearing a non-contact jersey, has suffered no setbacks in his recovery from a broken left fibula and is expected to return before the end of the month.

In other words, the sky is not falling.

The Capitals remain in second place in the Eastern Conference and the Metropolitan Division, just one point behind the New Jersey Devils, who have played three more games.

But Carbery's job is to keep his team level and composed through the ups and downs of an 82-game season, and Washington is facing a bit of a rough patch for the first time.

Carbery didn't like how the Capitals played against the Buffalo Sabres on Saturday, even though they eked out a win. He was pleased with their

SEE CAPITALS ON D5

**Hurricanes at Capitals**  
Friday, 7 p.m., Monumental



BUTCH DILL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety Jeremy Chinn was one of two Commanders, joining tight end Zach Ertz, to suffer a concussion Sunday against the Saints.

## A beastly brand of fear

Whether you're an NFL player or an ordinary person, every concussion is frightening



Barry Svrluga

watching a colleague get knocked out cold, kneeling with co-workers in a circle — please, please, please, man, move your limbs — as he comes to, watching him be helped in a wobbly daze to the locker room and then hearing the whistle. Time for the next play.

What's asked of an NFL player wouldn't be asked of anyone in another profession, and that could be applied across so many aspects of this unusual job. None is more striking than

"It's a violent game," quarterback Marcus Mariota said. "You know there are things that happen. You know that's part of it. But you have to have a little separation. Once the person either is removed from the field or comes off, you have to kind of lock back in. Just because if you play timid or play scared, you open up your possibilities of getting hurt as well."

These guys are built differently. On every snap of every game, they are subjected to career-altering — no, make that *life*-altering — danger. Their response is essentially this: More, please.

"You think of your brother," special teams ace Jeremy Reaves said. "You check on your brother. You hope your brother is okay. But at the same time, hey, you still have a job to go do. It's part of it, right? You can't let that engulf you."

On Sunday in New Orleans, the Washington Commanders watched tight end Zach Ertz make an impressive, one-handed catch — then be unable to stay on his feet by himself before he was woozily helped to the sideline. They watched safety Jeremy Chinn get involved in a tackle, then lie limply on the turf,

SEE SVRLUGA ON D3

## NBA Cup could be a winner, but only if the fans champion it

### On the NBA

BEN GOLLIVER

Across Sin City, cowboy hats easily outnumbered basketball jerseys, and leather boots outstepped sneakers. For the same price as one seat at the National Finals Rodeo on Saturday night, a family of five could have watched an NBA Cup semifinal that afternoon. By the time the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Oklahoma City Thunder in Tuesday's final, the rodeo and its legions of fans from across the country had skipped town. Traffic around the Strip was noticeably lighter, and the city had returned to a sleeper pre-

LAS VEGAS — The hottest ticket in town this past weekend belonged to the rodeo, not the NBA.

Christmas pace.

The second edition of the NBA Cup, an in-season tournament launched in 2023, accomplished many of its stated goals and made clear progress from last year's maiden event. But the rodeo, which has been held at UNLV every December since 1985, served as a reminder that aura and ambiance can't be manufactured overnight. While this year's games were well played and well attended, the T-Mobile Arena crowds were mostly flat and Commissioner Adam Silver wouldn't commit to a return to Las Vegas next year.

Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo, who earned NBA Cup MVP honors, could only smile when asked to

SEE ON THE NBA ON D4

### COLLEGE FOOTBALL

The Ivy League's century-old ban on playing in the postseason will end with next year's FCS playoffs. D2

### MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

In its Big East opener, Georgetown takes another step forward by routing Creighton, 81-57. D5

### ANALYSIS

## Sarr is building up blocks, but that has drawbacks



NICK WASS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alex Sarr's aggressive style of shot blocking can leave him out of position to grab defensive rebounds.

## Oh, baby: Kickers given the day off

Gonzalez, Joseph miss Commanders practice for birth of their children

BY NICKI JHABVALA

The Washington Commanders were without a kicker in practice Wednesday: Zane Gonzalez and practice squad member Greg Joseph were excused for the pending births of their children.

"Never a dull moment around here," Coach Dan Quinn quipped. "We keep it exciting all the time."

Yup. Only in Washington.

The news was undoubtedly joyful for the Commanders and their specialists, but it was also the latest twist in a saga that seems to have no end.

Since March, the Commanders have signed seven kickers, starting with Brandon McManus, who they thought would provide a stable and reliable presence at the position. But when he was released in June after sexual assault allegations (the NFL said in September there was insufficient evidence that McManus violated the personal conduct policy, and it did not discipline him), the Commanders began a lengthy tryout for his replacement.

Ramiz Ahmed arrived first, followed by Riley Patterson. Neither stuck around for the regular season. Then Washington acquired Cade York in a trade with the Cleveland Browns, but he was cut after the season opener, and Austin Seibert signed soon after. Seibert immediately set a franchise record with seven field goals in a win over the New York Giants, but injuries derailed his run.

Injuries also derailed the brief run of Seibert's replacement, Gonzalez, who missed Sunday's game in New Orleans after making 3 of 5 field goal attempts in three games with Washington. Joseph, added to the practice squad Friday, went 2 for 3 against the Saints, missing a critical 54-yard attempt before the two-minute warning in the fourth quarter.

Still following?

Only one other team, the New York Jets, has used four kickers in the regular season. Including the preseason, Washington stands alone by using a league-high six kickers in games.

For all the scrutiny of the quarterback carousel since 2019 in Washington, the team has brought in just as many kickers (15) in that span.

And in a season when games

SEE COMMANDERS ON D3

**Eagles at Commanders**  
Sunday, 1 p.m., Fox

BY VARUN SHANKAR

It has been an eventful two weeks for the Washington Wizards (3-21), who tied the longest losing streak in franchise history but avoided a solitary perch overlooking organizational futility by winning their next outing. That is their lone victory in the past 20 games, putting them on pace for just 10 wins.

Through those defeats, interesting nuggets prevail. In this week's five things: how veterans handle the organization's long-term approach, a deep dive into Alex Sarr's defensive rebounding, a look at Bilal Coulibaly's defense and more.

All stats are entering Wednesday's games.

### 1. Blocks, but not rebounds

Dilute NBA rim defense to its base elements, and you'll find a basic question: To jump or not to jump?

SEE WIZARDS ON D4

**Hornets at Wizards**  
7 p.m., Monumental



# THE DAY IN SPORTS

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### James Madison scores its first bowl victory

Backup quarterback **Billy Atkins** threw for 181 yards and a touchdown in his first start since 2022, leading James Madison to the program's first bowl win as it topped Western Kentucky, 27-17, on Wednesday in the Boca Raton (Florida) Bowl.

JMU was without starting quarterback **Alonza Barnett III**, who suffered an injury against Marshall on Nov. 30. The Dukes turned to Atkins, who had just three pass attempts in the past two years.

Atkins went 4 for 5 on a fourth-quarter drive that ended with a 21-yard touchdown pass to **Taylor Thompson** for a 24-17 lead with 9:20 left.

After both teams went three-and-out, **Khairi Manns** ended a Western Kentucky drive with 3:02 remaining when he recovered his own strip sack. JMU marched down the field for a short field goal and a 10-point lead.

It was the fifth game this season that JMU had three or more takeaways.

**George Pettaway** finished with 100 rushing yards for James Madison (9-4).

**Caden Veltkamp** led Western Kentucky (8-6) with 302 passing yards and two touchdowns. ...

Colorado landed former Liberty quarterback **Kaidon Salter** out of the transfer portal to possibly step in and replace **Shedeur Sanders** next season.

Salter figures to compete with five-star high school recruit **Julian Lewis** for the starting job. Lewis is expected to join the 20th-ranked Buffaloes in the spring semester.

A dual threat, Salter is coming off a regular season for the Flames in which he ran for 579 yards and seven touchdowns while throwing for 1,886 yards and 15 scores.

Liberty will play Buffalo in the Bahamas Bowl on Jan. 4. ...

A federal judge granted **Diego Pavia**'s request for a preliminary injunction allowing the quarterback to play the 2025 season and told the NCAA the organization cannot take any action against Vanderbilt or any other university that Pavia plays a fifth season for next year.

U.S. District Court Judge **William L. Campbell** noted that current NCAA bylaws had made Pavia ineligible to play Division I football in 2025 simply because the quarterback started his career at a junior college. ...

Alabama all-American safety **Malachi Moore** will miss the No. 11 Crimson Tide's matchup against Michigan in the Dec. 31 ReliaQuest Bowl with an undisclosed injury that has plagued him this season. ...

Wake Forest hired Washington State's **Jake Dickert**, two days after **Dave Clawson** resigned unexpectedly following 11 seasons that included regular bowl bids and an ACC division title.

Assistant head coach and defensive tackles coach **Pete Kaligis** will lead the Cougars in the Holiday Bowl next week against No. 22 Syracuse.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Virginia men fall short against No. 21 Memphis

**PJ Haggerty** scored 21 of his 27 points in the second half, and No. 21 Memphis shook off a slow start to beat Virginia, 64-62, in Charlottesville.

The Tigers (9-2) trailed 30-21 at halftime and took their first lead at 39-37 on a goaltending call in what became a 26-7 burst that gave them a 47-39 lead.

**Tyrese Hunter** and **Dain Dainja** scored 12 points each for the Tigers.

**Elijah Saunders** scored 15 points and **Taine Murray** had 14 for Virginia (6-5). The Cavaliers lost at home for the first time this season.

In other men's games, **Gerald Drumgoole Jr.** scored 30 points to lead host George Washington (10-2) to an 82-62 victory over Lafayette (5-6); American (6-5) suffered an 84-57 loss to St. Joseph's (7-4) in Philadelphia; and Richmond (4-7) was handed a 93-87 loss by William & Mary (5-6) in Williamsburg. ...

A man accused of stalking and harassing Connecticut star **Paige Bueckers** and who said on social media he intended to marry her pleaded guilty to a stalking charge. **Robert Cole Parmalee**, 40, who had an engagement ring and lingerie with him when he was arrested in August, received a one-year suspended sentence and three years of probation, a court clerk said. ...

The VCU women fell to 5-6 with a 48-46 loss to East Carolina (7-4) in Greenville, North Carolina.



CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

### Melbourne, here we come

Carlos Alcaraz joins trainer Alberto Lledo for a workout in Spain in preparation for the Australian Open, which begins Jan. 12.

## SPOTLIGHT: COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# At last, Ivy League will be in the FCS playoffs

BY JIMMY GOLEN

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. — The Ivy League will compete in the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs beginning next season, the conference announced Wednesday, ending a century-long post-season ban originally aimed at allowing the athletes to focus on their school-work.

“It’s a monumental day in the Ivy League and a special day to be an Ivy League student-athlete,” said Yale wide receiver Mason Shipp, who was the chair of the conference’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee that pushed for the change after a year-long study. “For the future generations that are fortunate enough to represent the Ivy League in the FCS playoffs, go win us some hardware.”

The 2024 Ivy League season ended

with Columbia, Dartmouth and Harvard sharing the championship; it was Columbia’s first conference title since 1961.

The league will spend the offseason coming up with a tiebreaker to determine how its automatic qualifier for the FCS playoffs will be awarded.

The schools that would later form the Ivy League were a force in college football in the leather-helmet days that predated the forward pass, with Yale and Princeton winning 23 of the sport’s first 25 unofficial national championships in the late 1800s. Harvard claimed the other two and went on to add five more, including a 1919 title that was sealed by a victory over Oregon in the Rose Bowl.

That would be — for at least the next century — the Crimson’s only postseason appearance, with Harvard, Yale and

Princeton voting a few years later to decline bowl invitations and maintain their focus on academics.

A few things have changed since then.

As college football grew, the balance of power shifted from the Northeast to the South. Mammoth stadiums turned the sport from a quaint little endeavor for the students to a focus of campus life. Lucrative television contracts helped fuel the business for schools. Athletic scholarships became a lure for players, and the rise of the NFL gave college standouts a chance to make football a career.

Still, the Ivy League, which became a formal athletic conference in 1954, resisted the temptation of big-money college sports, forsaking bowl games and what is now called the FCS playoffs to avoid the disruption on academics.

— Associated Press

## TELEVISION AND RADIO

<b>NFL</b>	
8:15 p.m.	<b>Denver at Los Angeles Chargers</b> » Prime Video, WJFK (106.7 FM)
<b>NBA</b>	
7 p.m.	<b>Charlotte at Washington</b> » Monumental Sports Network, WTEM (980 AM)
7 p.m.	<b>Oklahoma City at Orlando</b> » TNT
9:30 p.m.	<b>New York at Minnesota</b> » TNT
<b>COLLEGE FOOTBALL</b>	
7 p.m.	<b>New Orleans Bowl: Georgia Southern vs. Sam Houston</b> » ESPN2, WSBN (630 AM)
<b>MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL</b>	
5 p.m.	<b>Alabama State vs. Norfolk State</b> » ESPNU
7:30 p.m.	<b>Grambling vs. Delaware State</b> » ESPNU
<b>WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL</b>	
11 a.m.	<b>William &amp; Mary at Maryland</b> » Big Ten Plus

<b>GOLF</b>	
3:30 a.m. (Friday)	<b>DP World Tour: Mauritius Open, second round</b> » Golf Channel
<b>SOCCER</b>	
3 p.m.	<b>UEFA Conference League: HJK at Real Betis</b> » CBS Sports Network
<b>TENNIS</b>	
6 a.m.	<b>Next Gen ATP Finals, round robin</b> » Tennis Channel
11 a.m.	<b>Next Gen ATP Finals, round robin</b> » Tennis Channel
<b>PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL — NBA G LEAGUE WINTER SHOWCASE</b>	
Noon	<b>Greensboro vs. South Bay</b> » ESPNU
1 p.m.	<b>Iowa vs. Stockton</b> » NBA TV
2:30 p.m.	<b>Oklahoma City vs. Grand Rapids</b> » ESPNU
3:30 p.m.	<b>Raptors 905 vs. Rio Grande Valley</b> » NBA TV
5 p.m.	<b>Capital City vs. Sioux Falls</b> » ESPNNews
7:30 p.m.	<b>Westchester vs. Valley</b> » ESPNNews
<b>NCAA WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT — SEMIFINALS</b>	
6:30 p.m.	<b>Pittsburgh vs. Louisville</b> » ESPN
9 p.m.	<b>Penn State vs. Nebraska</b> » ESPN

## SOCCER

### Powerhouses move on in English League Cup

Arsenal, Newcastle and Liverpool advanced in the English League Cup to ensure a powerful lineup for the semifinals.

**Gabriel Jesus** scored a hat trick — including a crucial second goal from an offside position — as Arsenal beat Crystal Palace, 3-2, to reach the semifinals for the first time since the 2021-22 season.

Liverpool kept alive its title defense by winning, 2-1, at Southampton, with **Darwin Nunez** and **Harvey Elliott** the

scorers in the first half for the Premier League leaders.

Newcastle defeated Brentford, 3-1, behind two first-half goals by midfielder **Sandro Tonali** and advanced to the semifinals for the second time in three seasons. The Saudi-controlled club, which hasn’t won a major trophy since 1955, lost in the League Cup final to Manchester United in 2023. ...

Runaway leader Paris Saint-Germain opened a 10-point lead at the top of the French league standings before the year-end break with a 4-2 defeat of host Monaco in a match marred by goalkeeper **Gianluigi Donnarumma**'s injury.

**Ousmane Dembélé** scored twice and striker **Gonçalo Ramos**

put PSG back in the lead with seven minutes left as he headed in a corner after coming in as a substitute.

Donnarumma's face was bloodied after being hit by an opponent's cleat. The Italy international took the studs of **Wilfried Singo**'s cleat in the 17th minute. ...

Serie A leader Atalanta continued its domination of domestic soccer with another hefty victory in the Italian Cup, albeit against second-division Cesena.

**Charles De Ketelaere** and **Lazar Samardzic** each scored twice as Atalanta cruised to a 6-1 win to secure a place in the quarterfinals against Bologna.

Roma also eased through against lower-league opposition, beating Sampdoria, 4-1, to secure a quarterfinal match against AC Milan. ...

Real Madrid beat Mexican team Pachuca, 3-0, in the Intercontinental Cup final in Lusail, Qatar, making **Carlo Ancelotti** the most decorated coach in the club's history.

Ancelotti lifted his 15th title with the Spanish powerhouse, surpassing the 14 trophies that **Miguel Muñoz** won. Muñoz coached the team in the 1960s and 1970s.

**Kylian Mbappé**, **Rodrygo** and **Vinicius Júnior** scored as Madrid became the most successful club in the competition with four

titles. It also won in 1960, 1998 and 2002. ...

Fresh off capturing her latest global award, Spain playmaker **Aitana Bonmatí** scored a goal that helped Barcelona to the Women's Champions League quarterfinals as the winner of its group.

Bonmatí raced through and poked a finish between the goalkeeper's legs for host Barcelona's second goal in a 3-0 victory over Manchester City in their Group D finale.

## OLYMPICS

### Britain's Coe makes bid to be IOC president

**Sebastian Coe**, the two-time Olympic gold medalist who has led track and field's global governing body for the past decade, unveiled a platform to claim the International Olympic Committee presidency that includes “protecting” women's sports, modernizing revenue streams and giving athletes a greater voice.

Coe, a Brit who oversaw the 2012 London Olympics before becoming the president of World Athletics in 2015, is one of seven candidates running for the IOC presidency vacated this year by **Thomas Bach**.

In a video conference with reporters Wednesday and a “manifesto” to be publicly released Thursday, Coe made his case.

Coe positioned himself as an experienced, collaborative administrator who led World Athletics “back from the brink.” He vowed he would prioritize the quality of competition and make IOC decisions more democratic among members while also taking more decisive stances on controversial topics.

Under Bach, the IOC allowed individual sporting federations to make their own policies about hot-button issues, leading to a muddled patchwork of rules across sports on matters such as Russian participation and transgender athlete eligibility.

— Adam Kilgore

## AUTO RACING

### Red Bull drops Pérez after recent struggles

Formula One team Red Bull dropped **Sergio Pérez** after months of poor results.

Pérez has not won a race since April 2023, even as teammate **Max Verstappen** dominated the circuit, and the 34-year-old Mexican was rarely competitive this season.

Red Bull terminated Pérez's contract two years early and said a replacement will be announced “in due course.” ...

The two teams suing NASCAR over an antitrust complaint were granted a preliminary injunction that will allow them to compete as chartered teams in 2025.

23XI Racing, the team owned by Basketball Hall of Famer **Michael Jordan** and three-time Daytona 500 winner **Denny Hamlin**, and Front Row Motorsports refused in September to sign take-it-or-leave-it revenue sharing offers made by NASCAR just 48 hours before the start of the playoffs. ...

**Fred Lorenzen**, a NASCAR Hall of Famer and the 1965 Daytona 500 champion, died at 89.

## MISC.

### Disgruntled Kakko traded by the Rangers

The New York Rangers traded **Kaapo Kakko** to the Seattle Kraken, ending the winger's tumultuous time in the organization less than 36 hours after he expressed displeasure about being a healthy scratch.

The Rangers received defenseman **Will Borgen**, a 2025 third-round draft pick and a 2026 sixth-round pick from Seattle. ...

The Nashville Predators traded **Alexandre Carrier** to the Montreal Canadiens for fellow defenseman **Justin Barron**. ...

**Patrick Kane** scored the decisive third-period goal as the host Detroit Red Wings beat the Philadelphia Flyers, 6-4. ...

Atlanta Hawks guard **Kobe Bufkin** will undergo surgery to deal with lingering shoulder issues, sidelining him for the rest of the NBA season. ...

Two-time Grand Slam champion **Simona Halep**, who is working her way back from a drug suspension, and tennis Hall of Famer **Lleyton Hewitt**'s 16-year-old son, **Cruz**, were among the players who were awarded wild-card entries for Australian Open qualifying. The tournament begins Jan. 12 in Melbourne.

— From news services and staff reports



PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Kickers miss practice, but they had a good reason

COMMANDERS FROM D1

have been especially close — 254 games across the league have finished within one score, the third most through Week 15 of a season this century — Washington's inconsistency at the position has been costly and frustrating.

"It has been, for sure," Quinn said. "And, honestly, the people I give a lot of credit to are [long snapper Tyler Ott and holder Tress Way]. They've had to do the most work. When you're a specialist, there's a lot of very specific skill work that goes into that."

The challenge of adjusting to multiple kickers is felt by many, but for Way, who is also the punter and the emergency kicker, a new kicker means a new undertaking. It's on Way and Ott to adjust the kicking operation and get comfortable enough to perform it in a game. Some kickers like to play the wind with the hold, while some prefer the hold to be uniform every time. Some have different timings to their kicks, and some have different cues for the snap.

"In our world, consistency and timing and rhythm is especially important for the group, so it has definitely added a layer of adapting," Ott said. "I don't want to say stress. It's just not as smooth, and it's unlucky, and I feel bad for the guys that come in and get hurt. ... It's just unusual to see it happen as much as it has here."

On Wednesday, without a kicker on the side field, practice for Way and Ott was a bit different. They went over protections and discussed Way's kicking threshold.

His annual practice as an emergency kicker was last week. "I made them all last week, but I forgot how far they were from," he joked. "I blacked out, it happened so fast."

Way claims to have hit from 67 yards in practice — in high school. His career long in high school was 54 yards, but that was off a tee.

"I was 1 for 6 in my college career — thanks for bringing it up," said Way, who played at Oklahoma. "I bet I'm good from



JONATHAN BACHMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Washington's Greg Joseph, above, and fellow kicker Zane Gonzalez were excused from practice for the pending births of their children.

around 40 ... but we have a pretty good track record of Hail Marys, so we may just do that."

By late afternoon Wednesday, Gonzalez and his wife welcomed their baby, while the Joseph family was still awaiting the arrival of theirs.

"Totally happy circumstances there," Ott said, "but for it to happen on the same day, you can't make this story up."

Early Christmas for D-line

The Commanders opened the 21-day practice window for defensive tackle Jonathan Allen, a surprise but welcome development for Washington's line. Allen was placed on injured reserve after suffering a pectoral injury in Week 6 against the Baltimore

Ravens.

The possibility of a return became real a few weeks ago, Quinn said, after Allen had a positive checkup with his surgeon.

"Post-surgery to where that started it to say, 'Okay, this is something that potentially could be there,'" Quinn added. "And then you had to make the next marker. ... Seeing the surgeon, seeing that process go, because he looked not like a person that had this surgery. Usually you see a lot less on one side. He's built different, that's for sure. But it was within the last month where this trajectory was taking place."

Allen was limited in practice Wednesday and was seen participating in individual work with

the defensive line during the brief media-viewing portion of the workout.

It seems unlikely the team would activate him before Sunday's game against the Philadelphia Eagles. But the final two weeks, against the Atlanta Falcons on "Sunday Night Football" and then at the Dallas Cowboys in the season finale, could be possible return dates, depending on how Allen feels as his workload increases.

Injury updates

Safety Jeremy Chinn, who suffered a concussion in the victory at New Orleans, cleared enough of the protocol to be a limited participant in practice. Tight end Zach Ertz, who also is recovering

from a concussion, did not practice.

Guard Sam Cosmi did not practice because of an illness, while center Tyler Biadasz, who missed Sunday's game because of an illness, returned to the field.

Wide receiver Luke McCaffrey (shoulder), defensive tackle Daron Payne (back) and center Michael Deiter (ankle) were limited.

Another surprise

Quarterback Jayden Daniels turned 24 on Wednesday. To commemorate the occasion, rookie cornerback Mike Sainristil surprised Daniels by bringing out a small cake with a No. 5 candle and serenading him before his news conference.

BARRY SVRLUGA

In game of violence, concussions can make everything questionable

SVRLUGA FROM D1

motionless for what seemed like minutes. They had already endured running back Austin Ekeler going off late in a November game against Dallas, a memory-erasing hit to the head sending him to injured reserve.

After all that, you're supposed to go play this violent sport with the same type of violence?

"For sure, it is a challenge," Coach Dan Quinn said. "... At that point, the focus is on the player. Being able to get into the next space — that does take mental training to go on to the next thing. Because you don't want to be callous to say, 'Next man up' or [anything like] that. That's not what we say at all. But you do have to shift back into the mode of the game and responsibilities."

One theme as the Commanders approach the final three games of the regular season — games that will determine whether they make the playoffs for the first time since the 2020 season — will be their health. In a day-to-day world, those updates appear on an injury report. By Friday, injured players will be listed as "questionable" or "doubtful" or "out," and that will help inform fans about Washington's chances Sunday against Philadelphia. (It'll help inform bookmakers, too, on how to set the line on the game.)

But I can't shake the idea that assessing concussed players with a line on a sheet of paper is dehumanizing to a degree. We can imagine what it takes to rehab a pulled hamstring or a torn knee ligament. Rebuilding a brain is different. I have seen it up close.

A few years ago, a close relative suffered a concussion in a fall. The rehabilitation process was some combination of demanding and demoralizing. Doctors would provide tests: Recite back this string of eight numbers. Repeat a list of objects: apple, button, car, etc. In normal times, it's simple stuff. In those foggy days, it read like quantum physics. Bursting



TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU/GETTY IMAGES

"For concussions, they all have a life of their own," said running back Austin Ekeler, who was concussed last month against the Cowboys.

into tears in front of a doctor you didn't know — frustration mixed with fear — wasn't uncommon.

The rehab instructions included playing simple board games such as "Sorry" to practice counting and moving a game piece at the same time — then finding that task damn near impossible. Getting through a day meant writing down menial tasks in the most minute details: Find number for doctor. Call doctor. Make appointment. Get keys. Lock door.

Driving proved to be a cognitive potpourri. The eyes have to move from the car in front of you to the rearview mirror to the road sign

displaying what exit number is for which direction, then around again. The brain must process what all those moving parts mean and get the body to react. It took months to safely drive across town.

That's one experience. It's different for everyone.

"For concussions, they all have a life of their own," Ekeler said this month on 106.7 the Fan.

Nine days after he couldn't remember coming off the field against Dallas, Ekeler made his weekly appearance on the "Grant and Danny" show.

Co-host Grant Paulsen, listening to Ekeler's mostly upbeat assessment, said it sounded as if his season wasn't over. Ekeler

yanked the reins — hard. He had already recovered from a concussion suffered in Week 3 against Cincinnati. This is serious for football, sure. But it's serious for life, too.

"Hey, man, it's week to week," Ekeler told Paulsen. "It's one of those things I want to continue to learn more about: Hey, it's my second concussion. Am I more susceptible for a third one now that I've had two, and [considering] the severity of mine? It's a learning process for me because I've never had anything like this — this bad and twice in the same year."

Chinn appeared at Washington's practice Wednesday. Ekeler and Ertz did not. The coming games against

Philadelphia, Atlanta and Dallas are paramount for Washington's season. The coming years are more important for the lives of those three players. In that context, the Commanders' position in the playoff picture doesn't matter. Their health does.

"What's been good over the course of the last few years is just how open and honest people are about those symptoms," Mariota said. "Because early on in my career, you got a concussion, it was kind of like, 'Shake it off and get back to the next play or the next game.' That's been good for us as players, to be honest about how you feel. Because it's a scary thing."

NFL NOTES

Rodgers remains uncertain about 2025

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aaron Rodgers is still uncertain whether he'll play football beyond this season. And if he does, he isn't sure if it'll even be with the New York Jets.

The 41-year-old quarterback will consider any and all scenarios during the offseason. That includes mentoring a youngster who might someday take his job. Or even adjusting his contract again to stay with the Jets next season.

"Yeah, I'm open to everything," Rodgers said after practice Wednesday.

He also envisions being even healthier to start next season than he was this season, coming off a torn Achilles' tendon.

"Yeah, it's possible," he said before smiling. "Might be sitting on a beach, though."

Rodgers's future will be a storyline until there's clarity in the offseason, whether he's back with the Jets, retires or is released and plans to play elsewhere. But he reiterated his first choice is to remain in New York.

"There's a lot of reasons why this would be a great opportunity," he said. "But I'm going to see what happens."

•**49ERS:** San Francisco Coach Kyle Shanahan said the team is getting close to ruling out star left tackle Trent Williams for the rest of the season. His injured ankle isn't healing as fast as the 49ers had hoped.

Williams has missed the past four games with the injury as the 49ers have fallen to the brink of playoff elimination. He was unable to get back to practice at the start of this week.

That raised questions about whether San Francisco would be better off shutting the 36-year-old down and start getting him ready for next season.

The 49ers also were missing running back Isaac Guerendo at practice Wednesday as they prepared to face the Miami Dolphins. Guerendo hurt his hamstring in a loss Thursday against the Los Angeles Rams.

•**BROWNS:** Cleveland placed running back Nick Chubb on injured reserve, officially ending a comeback season after he suffered a severe knee injury last year.

Chubb broke his foot early in the second half of Sunday's loss to the Kansas City Chiefs.

•**FALCONS:** Atlanta placed kicker Youngbue Koo on injured reserve and signed kicker Riley Patterson from Cleveland's practice squad.

Koo battled a right hip injury earlier in the season, but the Falcons did not say whether that was the injury that will force him to miss the rest of the regular season.

The Falcons released kicker Tanner Brown from their practice squad.

•**GIANTS:** After sitting out a game with an injury to his left heel, Drew Lock is expected back at quarterback when New York faces the Falcons on Sunday in Atlanta.

Coach Brian Daboll said Lock has recovered and will start when the Giants try to snap a franchise-record-tying nine-game losing streak.

Tommy DeVito started against the Ravens on Sunday and suffered a concussion in the first half of the 35-14 loss. He remains in the protocol.

•**LIONS:** Detroit defensive end Aidan Hutchinson is aiming to return from a gruesome injury and help the franchise play for the NFL title.

"I'm on track for my goal of returning for the Super Bowl," Hutchinson said on "The Squeeze" podcast. "I keep telling all the boys when I see them in the facility, I'm like: 'You guys just got to get there. I promise you — I'm going to be back.'" ...

The Lions are holding out hope that running back David Montgomery might be able to return from what was believed to be a season-ending knee injury.

"We're in a holding pattern as of right now," Coach Dan Campbell said. "That's a positive."

•**TITANS:** Tennessee is keeping second-year quarterback Will Levis on the bench and starting the backup who is on a one-year deal.

The decision to start Mason Rudolph also gives the Titans a chance to show their improvement under first-year coach Brian Callahan on Sunday when they visit Indianapolis.



PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL

ANALYSIS

As losses pile up, Wizards give young players time to learn

WIZARDS FROM D1

The first answer asks the defender to leap and use his long arms to block or alter a shot attempt. The second relies on positioning, being in the right spot to make a shot as difficult as possible. The Wizards want Sarr, the No. 2 draft pick, jumping — and with good reason. The rookie is blocking more than 3 percent of opponents’ shots while he’s on the floor, per analytics site Cleaning the Glass, a mark in the 85th percentile among big men. “You got special shot blockers in the league that you ... tell them to go get everything and we’ll figure it out,” center Richaun Holmes said in mid-November. “Alex is one of those guys.”

A drawback to such a scheme is that Sarr’s aggression can put him out of position to grab defensive rebounds. He is in the 31st percentile among bigs in defensive rebounding rate, per Cleaning the Glass. It is not a problem unique to Washington. Six of the top 10 teams in blocks per game are in the bottom half of the league in defensive rebounding rate.

In several instances this season, Sarr has helped force a miss — a win for the defense. But his effort often leaves his man open to prolong the offensive possession. It falls to Sarr’s teammates to fill those gaps and protect him, the same way his effort at the rim erases their mistakes on the perimeter.

But Sarr’s rebounding issues can’t entirely be attributed to his defensive responsibilities. Eighteen players have a block rate as good or better than Sarr’s, per Cleaning the Glass; he is the fourth worst among them in defensive rebounding percentage. He often gets outmuscled by veteran big men or reacts too slowly to the ball, mistakes that need to be limited to increase the value of his rim protection.

2. Veterans get the long game

The front office’s actions this year have made it clear this season is primarily about development. The organization won’t be diverted from the methodical plan it believes will generate sustained success. That means not rushing its young players. Washington will give them ample time to fail, improve and fail again. The strategy is evident in the heavy minutes the team’s rookies



GEOFF BURKE/IMAGN IMAGES

Bilal Coulibaly welcomes the chance to match up against the likes of Jayson Tatum. “I’m on the court for that, so let me do my job,” he said.

have played and in-game decisions — such as Sarr taking more than four three-pointers per game — that prioritize long-term growth over wins.

That sounds great if you’re a member of that youth movement and have your entire career ahead. But how do veterans, some of whom could impact winning more directly than those above them on the depth chart, feel about the team’s priorities?

It helps to have a clear view, which 32-year-old Jonas Valanciunas seemed to receive in conversations with General Manager Will Dawkins before signing a three-year, \$30 million contract over the summer.

“I know what’s going on. I know we have a bright future in front of us, so we got to keep following the plan, keep working, keep grinding, keep getting better,” Valanciunas said this month. “I’m [an] older guy, but in this environment I got to be young.”

What about Marvin Bagley III, who is just 25 but in his seventh

NBA season and is entering the prime of his career?

“I show up and do my job. Every day, do my best. Every day, come in and try to help the team in whatever way I can,” said Bagley, who is averaging 4.8 points in 8.4 minutes. “... The decision-making is beyond me. I don’t have a say in that. I don’t get to choose. But I’ll be ready when my number is called.”

3. Sarr struggles to hold on

When a quarterback fails to slide properly, fans and reporters wonder whether they should work with the local baseball team. By a similar logic, Sarr may need to start hitting the JUGS machine with Washington Commanders wide receiver Terry McLaurin, because if you watch a Wizards game, you’ll probably see the rookie fumble or drop a pass.

That flaw often affects his rebounding but also plagues his offensive impact. Even if Sarr’s perimeter game doesn’t develop, his athleticism could make him an effective threat rolling to the rim.

That hasn’t happened — and his hands are part of the reason.

On plays when he rolls to the hoop, Sarr is averaging 0.49 points per possession, according to NBA.com. That is the lowest among players who have had at least 40 such possessions. The second-worst player is at 0.84.

Sarr has made just six of nine alley-oop attempts, according to NBA.com.

Compare that with Dallas Mavericks center (and former Wizards player) Daniel Gafford, who is at 1.15 points per possession as the roller and has finished 22 of 28 alley-oops. Having good hands is important down low, Gafford said before the Mavericks’ Dec. 5 matchup with the Wizards.

“You’ve got to expect the unexpected,” he said.

He noted that being an effective vertical threat is about being in the right spot at the right time. Gafford said he used tennis ball workouts to improve his hand-eye coordination. One involved him dribbling the tennis ball with one hand and a

basketball with the other.

4. C’est la vie for Coulibaly

It has become an assumption rather than a point of intrigue that Coulibaly will guard the best player on the opposing team. Night after night, possession after possession, the second-year swingman confronts some of the league’s top players — and rarely takes a play off.

Bub Carrington said he occasionally will ask Coulibaly if he needs a break from his strenuous assignment. Coaches do the same to the Frenchman, whose response is always the same: Thanks, but no. “I’m on the court for that, so let me do my job,” Coulibaly said after Sunday’s loss to the Boston Celtics.

Coulibaly has paired effort with effectiveness. NBA.com’s tracking shows he has been among the best defenders in the league. The five players he has guarded for the most minutes are stars: Trae Young, Jayson Tatum, Donovan Mitchell, Damian Lillard and Franz Wagner.

ON THE NBA

This could be a marquee event, but will the fans ever buy in?

ON THE NBA FROM D1

compare the event to the EuroLeague Final Four, which he attended in Berlin in May. “Obviously, the atmosphere is a little bit different with the crowd,” Antetokounmpo said, recalling the die-hard fans from Greece and Turkey who banged drums and jumped up and down in unison. “I wish we had that atmosphere in the NBA, but we don’t.”

It could take years for the NBA Cup, a 30-team tournament that converges on Las Vegas for its final four, to become a destination event. For now, the NBA has some reasonable counterpoints to skeptics who felt the new tournament was a contrived attempt to boost early-season interest and lacked compelling stakes beyond prize bonuses for the players and a golden trophy.

After launching the event as the clunkily named “In-Season Tournament,” the NBA rebranded it as the NBA Cup and secured Emirates Airlines as its title sponsor. The NBA also included the rights to air NBA Cup games in its new 11-year broadcasting deal with Amazon, solidifying the endeavor as a long-term proposition.

Importantly, the superstar class has bought into the NBA Cup. LeBron James led the Los Angeles Lakers to the first title in 2023, and Antetokounmpo and Oklahoma City’s Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, a pair of MVP candidates, battled for this year’s crown.

Fears that the NBA Cup would flop because the biggest names would jog through it like another All-Star Game have proved unfounded. Several players and coaches acknowledged that the \$514,970 prize money for each player on the championship team was a motivating factor. After securing the title,

Antetokounmpo revealed he had promised teammate Liam Robbins, an Iowa native who went undrafted in 2023, that “we’re going to go all the way and we’re going to get you a house in Iowa.”

Unless the quality of play drops off in subsequent years or the NBA decides it must do something to further boost viewership, the league can probably resist calls to add new incentives — such as improved positioning in the draft or a guaranteed spot in the playoffs — for the NBA Cup winners. The cash is working.

Saturday’s entertaining semifinals featured plenty of signs of genuine competition: Trae Young led the Atlanta Hawks on a spirited upset bid before Antetokounmpo slammed the door with a fourth-quarter scoring barrage and a brilliant block at the rim, and Gilgeous-Alexander broke open a defensive slugfest against the Houston Rockets with a relentless second-half performance. Bucks Coach Doc Rivers showed footage of Antetokounmpo’s block to his team in the triumphant locker room, and security had to squash a shoving match between the Thunder and Rockets late in the fourth quarter.

“This had a little bit of a March Madness feel,” Gilgeous-Alexander said. “Neutral grounds, nobody is home, you’re on the road, single-game elimination. It’s a little bit of nerves.”

Though Milwaukee prevailed, 97-81, in a one-sided final, it wasn’t for lack of trying by Oklahoma City. Antetokounmpo simply dominated the Thunder’s undersized front line, posting a triple-double with 26 points, 19 rebounds and 10 assists. Frustration mounted for Oklahoma City guard Lu Dort and Coach Mark Daigneault, who earned technical fouls as the



ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Every player on the Milwaukee Bucks earned \$514,970 in prize money for claiming the NBA Cup title.

game slipped away during the third quarter.

Even so, the buzz around this year’s event was undercut by a lack of regional ties or big-market teams with national fan bases: Las Vegas is more than 1,000 miles away from the home markets of all four semifinalists, making it difficult to replicate the excitement generated by Lakers fans last year. As the Bucks pulled away in the fourth quarter of the championship game, a relatively quiet crowd passed the time with a vigorous rendition of the wave.

To help with the atmosphere, the NBA invited former stars such as Oscar Robertson and Blake Griffin, filled courtside seats with well-known rappers and hosted a red carpet entry for celebrity guests. The golden court, lit up by a strong spotlight in the arena, channeled Las Vegas’s showiness without being as garish as some of the painted designs used in the NBA Cup’s opening round.

Before the semifinals, representatives from each team held formal news conferences and took questions from social

media influencers in a scaled-down version of NBA Finals media day.

For small-market teams such as the Thunder and Bucks, who weren’t invited to play in the NBA’s Christmas showcase next week, this past weekend might have provided the most national attention they will receive until the postseason.

“As far as the media and all the outside noise surrounding games, I think it is a big deal,” Thunder guard Jalen Williams said. “But it’s very hard, if not impossible, to actually replicate [fans] wearing the same jersey throughout the whole entire arena like Oklahoma does [in the playoffs].”

Shifting the semifinals from Thursday in 2023 to Saturday this year seemed to help fill out the building, and it theoretically gave fans a few extra days to arrange travel to Las Vegas. While much of the crowd sounded like nonpartisan locals, the Hawks enjoyed a boost because fans from Atlanta were in town to see the Falcons play the Raiders on “Monday Night

Football.” A small section of Bucks fans, some donning cheeseheads, saluted Antetokounmpo’s late-game heroics in the semifinals, and Gilgeous-Alexander inspired scattered “O-K-C!” chants as he put away the Rockets.

“Five days ago, no one from Milwaukee knew [the Bucks] were going to be here,” Rivers said. “No one from Oklahoma knew [the Thunder was] going to be here. It’s tough. You’re not going to have like a two-week period so people can plan [trips] and come. That would be the only issue that would be nice to figure out, but I don’t know how you figure that out.”

Players and coaches still have plenty to figure out, like how to value the NBA Cup — an accomplishment that lacks history and doesn’t stack up to a championship. The Lakers somewhat sheepishly raised a Cup banner to the Crypto.com Arena rafters under orders from the NBA last season.

The Bucks adopted a similar approach, smiling and laughing in a subdued locker room after

their triumph. NBA staffers prepared a champagne celebration room — complete with goggles, protective plastic coverings and Cup champion posters — but three cases of Moët & Chandon were left untouched in a cardboard box buried in a back closet. One league employee said Rivers nixed the champagne celebration because he was too superstitious, presumably because he expects his team to compete for a bigger prize in June.

“The last time I drank a little bit of champagne, when we won the [2021] championship, I had a full body cramp,”

Antetokounmpo said. “So I try to stay away from it. Guys should celebrate this. You never know if you’re going to be on this stage again. This has been a great trip. All of [my teammates and coaches] need a glass of wine and a good steak, chicken or fish, whatever they choose.”

By returning for a second year with a simplified name, a new television deal, a tweaked schedule and a high-quality standard set by MVP-level headliners, the NBA Cup gained legitimacy — even if it wasn’t able to nudge the bull riders and barrel racers off center stage.

Therein lies the most fundamental question for the NBA: Does Las Vegas make sense as a permanent home for the NBA Cup, or could the league draw more enthusiastic crowds by cycling host cities as it does with All-Star Weekend?

Silver acknowledged Tuesday that he was “not sure” whether the 2025 event would be held in Las Vegas, adding that some teams have “expressed interest” in playing all NBA Cup games in home markets rather than at a neutral site. He pointed out that scheduling logistics could make that switch difficult and said there was some benefit to building a “tradition” in Las Vegas, where “you have a lot of fans here who can circle these dates on the calendar and plan a holiday around it.”

Rivers, for his part, had just one condition if the NBA Cup moves: “Just no cold places, please.”

WIZARDS’ NEXT THREE		
vs. <b>Charlotte Hornets</b>		
Thursday	7	Monumental
at <b>Milwaukee Bucks</b>		
Saturday	8	Monumental
at <b>Oklahoma City Thunder</b>		
Monday	8	Monumental 2
Radio: WTEM (980 AM)		

That quintet is shooting a combined 24 for 75 (32 percent) from the floor and 8 for 36 (22.2 percent) from three-point range when guarded by Coulibaly.

NBA.com also tracks the difference between a player’s normal shooting percentage and his shooting percentage when a specific defender guards him. Coulibaly’s assignments shoot 3.1 percentage points worse, the eighth-best mark among guards who have faced at least 250 shots.

“I get really mad when somebody scores on me,” he said.

5. And-ones

Carrington, speaking after Sunday’s loss to the defending NBA champions, outlined the difficulties of getting to the free throw line: “It’s impossible for a rookie. Literally. Impossible.” ...

Coach Brian Keefe, 48, grew up in Massachusetts as a Celtics fan. He came of age during their 1980s championship run and said he attended a game or two each year. His favorite players? Larry Bird and Dennis Johnson. ...

The Wizards split into two groups Dec. 10 for charity events, one at a hospital and the other at Savoy Elementary School. At school, players handed out pizza and gifted scooters to students. Forward Anthony Gill went around the room and spoke with multiple students. Carrington, 19, did a TikTok dance with students and later rode one of the scooters around the gym. ...

A question for the next two weeks: Forward Justin Champagnie has averaged 16.5 points and 9.5 rebounds in the four games since he joined the starting lineup. Several injured wings, including Corey Kispert, Kyle Kuzma and Kyshawn George, seem close to returning. Has Champagnie, an undrafted 23-year-old in his fourth NBA season, played well enough to carve out a spot in the rotation?



# Hoyas take another big step by winning Big East opener

GEORGETOWN 81, CREIGHTON 57

BY PATRICK STEVENS

It was roughly sometime between the first time Micah Peavy conjured a steal-to-dunk sequence and the fourth when it became apparent just how different this Big East opener would be for Georgetown on Wednesday night.

Peavy's stat-stuffing adventures and Jayden Epps's slick shooting helped the Hoyas overcome the absence of injured point guard Malik Mack and smack Creighton, 81-57, before 4,062 at Capital One Arena. It was Georgetown's most complete performance in Coach Ed Cooley's two seasons at the helm.

The Hoyas (9-2, 1-0) matched their victory total from last season and won their conference opener for the first time since 2018-19. That 1-0 start six years ago also was the last time Georgetown sat above .500 in the Big East.

"It shows you how far we've come," Cooley said. "You still have a long, long way to go, but you take baby steps."

Not all strides are equal, and this was something altogether unseen from this program for quite some time. It was Georgetown's most lopsided victory in a Big East regular season game since an 83-55 throttling of St. John's on Jan. 9, 2017.

Epps scored 21 points and made all but one of his six three-



MITCHELL LAYTON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Micah Peavy had four second-half dunks — all of them after his own steals — on his way to 20 points.**

point attempts just four days after his 27-point effort helped Georgetown surge past host Syracuse, 75-71, in the waning minutes. With Mack sidelined, the Hoyas frequently turned to Peavy to handle the ball, and he delivered 20 points, eight rebounds and eight assists to go with his second seven-steal effort of the season.

And it all came against the

Bluejays (7-5, 0-1), NCAA tournament fixtures who had won 13 of the past 16 in the series, including the past six.

"Georgetown was great. We were awful," Creighton Coach Greg McDermott said. "They're a big reason we were awful. I never thought we had any flow offensively."

Steven Ashworth scored 21 points for the Bluejays, who lost

at Georgetown for the first time since 2020.

Mack, who didn't practice earlier in the week because of a lower-body injury, went through pregame warmups before Georgetown opted not to play him. Cooley said the sophomore probably would have played if it was a tournament game but opted for a more cautious approach at this stage of the season. Cooley

said he was unsure of Mack's status for Sunday's game at Seton Hall.

That meant Epps's scoring was even more necessary than usual.

"Coach told me he was going to dial me up before the game," Epps said. "Malik was down, so me and Micah knew we had to carry a bigger load."

Mack's injury is merely the latest to whittle Georgetown's depth. Freshman center Julius Halaifonua fractured his left ankle late last month, leaving the Hoyas uncomfortably thin in the frontcourt. First-year guard Kayvaun Mulready missed his second consecutive game while wearing a walking boot on his right foot, depriving Georgetown of a reserve ballhandler.

But it didn't matter against Creighton, which is still adjusting its rotation to the loss of guard Pop Isaacs, who underwent season-ending hip surgery Dec. 11 after averaging 16.3 points in the Bluejays' first eight games.

As disappointed as Creighton was, Peavy only made matters worse.

The graduate student almost single-handedly demoralized the Bluejays with his defensive prowess. He nabbed a cross-court pass from Jamiya Neal and coasted in for an easy dunk. He pilfered the ball from Ashworth and rolled in for another slam. He snagged a Ty Davis pass and cruised in for another fast-break dunk. And he intercepted Ryan Kalkbrenner's pass and broke in for another flush.

"We knew we had a tough guard with Ashworth, and I wanted to take the challenge and

guard him," Peavy said. "After I got my first steal, I just felt like I could keep going, and I did."

It all happened in less than five minutes and helped Georgetown expand its lead from nine to 59-41. Creighton never got closer.

"It changes everything," McDermott said. "They're scoring baskets without your defense set. The crowd's getting into the game. Those are plays that energize a home crowd, and we provided plenty of material to get the crowd energized."

There were other highlights for the Hoyas. Freshman Caleb Williams made his first start and had six points and eight rebounds. Thomas Sorber, dealing with the 7-foot-1 Kalkbrenner for the first time, held the fifth-year senior to 10 points and four rebounds while limiting him to just eight shots. Curtis Williams Jr. had 12 points off the bench.

Most tellingly, the Hoyas frequently outworked Creighton while on defense, something no one would have dared suggest when they were often pick-and-rolled out of the arena by the Bluejays in recent seasons. Instead, Georgetown continued growing its lead into the final minutes, a healthy dash of maturity for a team with only two upperclassmen.

"We've just grown every game," Peavy said. "I feel like everyone is loving to play defense, and I think it's showing. It's giving us energy, and that's how we're winning these games."

**Georgetown at Seton Hall**

Sunday, 7 p.m., Fox Sports 1

## Free agent pitchers are on the move. Will any of them land with the Nats?

BY SPENCER NUSBAUM

The starting pitcher market is not thin, but it is thinning. The Washington Nationals' starting rotation is in a better spot than it was a year ago, but even a conservative appraisal suggests it is at least one veteran starter short. These two truths have yet to intersect, even in the immediate aftermath of MLB's winter meetings.

Will they soon?

Some factors to consider: Washington's brass says it is fairly happy with its starting pitching depth. Much of the organizational scuttlebutt implies that a middle-of-the-order bat remains the priority, namely at the corners or at designated hitter. And, crucially, the deals that have materialized so far could portend a pricey market for Washington to navigate, even for pitchers who are not considered front-line arms.

In short, these are qualifiers, but they do not mean Washington is entirely out of the starting pitching market. Not when up-and-down seasons from

MacKenzie Gore, Jake Irvin, DJ Herz and Mitchell Parker and their collective 4.19 ERA indicate that a veteran's wisdom could help unlock some upside. Not when Patrick Corbin's six-year, \$140 million contract is off the books and that quartet of young, controllable starters is secured at an inexpensive projected post-arbitration price tag of \$5.4 million. Not when Josiah Gray is rehabbing from Tommy John surgery and is expected to miss, at minimum, most of the season.

And not when Mike Rizzo remains the Nationals' general manager.

"A talented pitcher is always welcome," Rizzo said at the winter meetings. "You can never have enough arms. I think that, in the free agent market, there are several pitchers that can not only take on the rigors of helping us in the rotation but also help us in the leadership portion of the clubhouse."

So while some stars (Blake Snell, Max Fried) and middle-of-the-rotation arms (Alex Cobb,

Matthew Boyd) are off the board, there remains time to pounce. Of the 29 free agent starters projected (via FanGraphs) to be worth at least one win above replacement next season, 17 remain available. A handful could fill that role for Washington.

Constraints, of course, remain a question. During the winter meetings, Rizzo was asked whether Washington's payroll would match or exceed last year's, which ranked 24th in MLB and now sheds over \$40 million with Corbin, right-hander Trevor Williams and reliever Kyle Finnegan departing.

His answer: "Ownership has always given us the resources to be competitive."

The Nationals could follow a modest version of the Kansas City Royals' approach last offseason. After a 106-loss 2023, Kansas City signed veterans Michael Wacha (\$16 million annually) and eventual Cy Young Award finalist Seth Lugo (\$15 million annually). Both were credited, in production and leadership, for expediting the

Royals' rebuild and return to the postseason.

Based on the market so far, a variety of starter archetypes who could command low-to-mid-market money include injury-plagued upside bets (Spencer Turnbull, Mike Clevinger), aging journeymen who each have thrown twice as many innings as Washington's quartet has combined (Lance Lynn, Kyle Gibson and Charlie Morton) and a handful of onetime all-stars looking to recapture that magic (Michael Lorenzen, Martin Pérez).

One other possibility could be a reunion with Williams, who expressed interest in a return after his final start in September. His market could be tough to gauge, given the pros (a 2.03 ERA last year) and cons (a 5.55 ERA the year before, and he made only 13 starts in 2024 because of an elbow injury). But it would make for a simple, clean fit. Williams also has a history in a long relief role and could transition to the bullpen as needed.

And then, of course, there's the

Cade Cavalli quandary. This offseason, Rizzo said Cavalli — the 2020 first-round draft pick who missed all of 2023 and 2024 after undergoing Tommy John surgery and dealing with its ensuing setbacks — would be on an innings limit in 2025 but is no longer in "rehab mode" and will compete for a job in spring training.

But neither Rizzo nor Manager Dave Martinez would commit to Cavalli starting the year in the rotation, which could create a scenario where Cavalli begins the year in the minor leagues. At the winter meetings, Rizzo said the impetus is for Cavalli to "finish the season strong."

Though the organization's highest-upside minor league arms (Jarlin Susana, Travis Sykora and Alex Clemmey) are multiple promotions away from the majors, if the market does prove too expensive for Washington or an injury arises, the Nationals appear prepared to use their internal depth accordingly. Right-hander Brad Lord appears to be the closest to the majors, and the

coaching staff at Class AAA Rochester felt he would have been promoted last season if not for a hand injury in August.

Tyler Stuart, who was acquired from the New York Mets in the Jesse Winker trade at the deadline, also seems a likely candidate to fill in if injuries arise, with Jackson Rutledge and Andry Lara available on the 40-man roster.

At the winter meetings, Rizzo said the Nationals are also considering the trade market as an avenue to acquire starting pitching. Their farm system, after all, is deeper than it was at the start of the organization's rebuild. But the list of teams that are selling starters on affordable contracts is never a lengthy one, particularly before the season has begun. And Washington isn't necessarily champing at the bit to part with its prospect depth.

And so, without unlimited resources in a costly market, Washington is left to hedge.

"We could get a veteran, find somebody," Martinez said. "But we've got some depth."

## Capitals' high-flying offense is beginning to sputter

CAPITALS FROM D1

performance in Dallas, despite an absent finishing touch. In Chicago, Carbery was as visibly disappointed with his team's play as he has been all season after Washington allowed three goals in the third period to lose to the Blackhawks.

"The excuse that I'm sure will be dropped is the travel and that," said Carbery, whose team traveled to Chicago on the morning of the game after getting stuck in Dallas the previous night. "But [we] should still be able to get through that. Just, for whatever reason, didn't have it."

Added defenseman John Carlson: "We weren't our usual selves. If we play even close to how we do with a two-goal lead, I think the game's a lot different. But we didn't, and you leave yourself susceptible for stuff to happen."

Good teams are going to have bad nights. In an NHL season, every team — even the Stanley Cup champion — will turn in a handful of games where it was outplayed by an opponent that is inferior on paper. There is no reason to believe Washington is headed for a major skid after losing two in a row.

"Kind of just slow everywhere on the ice," winger Andrew Mangiapane said. "Got to kind of learn from it. We're a good team when we're playing together as a five-man unit and playing quick."

But while the Capitals are not, at least for now, able to score seemingly at will anymore, getting out of this rough patch before it turns into a significant slide probably will require a return to the tight-checking, defensively committed perform-



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**In losses at Dallas and Chicago, Pierre-Luc Dubois and the Capitals have been heading the wrong way.**

CAPITALS' NEXT THREE		
<b>vs. Carolina Hurricanes</b>		
Friday	7	Monumental
<b>vs. Los Angeles Kings</b>		
Sunday	5	Monumental
<b>at Boston Bruins</b>		
Monday	7	Monumental
<i>Radio: WJFK (106.7 FM), WFED (1500 AM)</i>		

ances that Washington leaned on last season, when the puck never went in easily.

"Maybe it's bearing down a little harder or kind of just taking the goalie's eyes away," winger Taylor Raddysh said. "... Get back to going to the net like we have been all year."

Added defenseman Jakob Chychrun: "We talk a lot about our [offensive-zone] structure. We just need to continue to work on that and find ways to get open for your partner."

The Carolina Hurricanes come to Capital One Arena on Friday for what almost certainly will be an intense, highly competitive matchup between two of the top teams in the Metro. The Hurricanes beat the Capi-

tals in the teams' first meeting Nov. 3, when Washington was playing on the second night of a back-to-back and appeared helpless in the face of Carolina's relentless forecheck.

This time around, both teams will be fully rested. The Capitals will be looking to prove Tuesday's loss in Chicago was a fluke, not an indicator of an impending collapse. The Hurricanes will be a significant test for that determination.

"We've had a lot of history against each other, at least since I've been here," center Nic Dowd said after the loss in November. "It's always a war."

## United bolsters defense by signing a center back

BY STEVEN GOFF

After addressing goalkeeping and attacking voids this MLS offseason, D.C. United on Wednesday turned to the depleted defense by acquiring center back Lukas MacNaughton from Nashville SC.

MacNaughton, 29, comes cheap: United relinquished \$150,000 in general allocation money this year — plus another \$50,000 in 2026, should he meet certain performance thresholds — and becomes responsible for a salary that was just \$102,000 in 2024. He has one year left on his contract.

D.C. General Manager Ally Mackay worked in the Nashville front office when that club acquired MacNaughton from Toronto FC in 2023.

"Lukas is an experienced defender who has impressive defensive awareness and experience in the league," Mackay said in a statement. "We're excited to welcome him to the team and bolster our defensive depth."

United is in dire need of help in central defense after declining to exercise starter Christopher McVey's contract option and reaching a deal in principle to transfer 18-year-old homegrown Matai Akinmboni to English Premier League club Bournemouth, according to three people close to the matter.

Lucas Bartlett will return to anchor the back line. Matti Peltola and Garrison Tubbs — 22-year-olds entering their second season with United — were options last year. United conceded 70 goals in 34 matches, third most in MLS.

MacNaughton began his MLS career with Toronto, starting 20

times in 2022 and twice in 2023 before being traded to Nashville. He started 13 matches in 2023 and began this past season as a regular before suffering a leg injury in April that sidelined him until October.

A Canadian with U.S., Austrian and Belgian ties, MacNaughton played at the University of Toronto and signed in 2019 with Pacific FC of the Canadian Premier League. He is one of the few players to make the jump from the CPL to MLS. He debuted with the Canadian national team in 2022 for his only international appearance.

The trade comes after United rebuilt its goalkeeping corps by signing Jordan Farr (second-flight Tampa Bay Rowdies) and trading for Luis Barraza (New York City FC). According to three people familiar with United's plans, the team is also on the cusp of acquiring Kim Joon Hong, a 21-year-old South Korean who has received national team call-ups after a standout performance at the 2023 FIFA Under-20 World Cup.

Last week, United acquired Japanese central midfielder Hosei Kijima in a trade with expansion San Diego FC. This week, it finalized the signing of Brazilian winger João Peglow from Poland's Radomiak Radom.

MacNaughton and Kijima are close to receiving green cards for permanent residency and will not count against MLS's limit on international players, one person familiar with United's plans said.

United is weighing options in the free agent market and the second stage of the reentry draft Thursday. The college draft will take place Friday, with United holding the No. 10 pick.



# Vick returns to college game as the coach at Norfolk State

Former NFL star is a native of nearby Newport News

BY CINDY BOREN

Michael Vick said he will be named the football coach at Norfolk State, announcing on social media that would be “coming back home” to give coaching a try at the university in south-east Virginia.

The university did not confirm the hiring, but a spokesperson said Tuesday night that while the school could not comment on details regarding candidates until the process is completely finalized, it hoped “to have an official statement in the coming days as the hiring process comes to a close.”

“It’s an honor to announce that I’ll be the new head coach of

Norfolk State University ... looking forward to coming back home,” Vick wrote Tuesday on Facebook.

Vick is from Newport News, Virginia, which is about 30 miles from Norfolk.

A star quarterback at Virginia Tech, Vick led the Hokies to the national championship game as a redshirt freshman in January 2000; they lost to Florida State. That was his only loss in two seasons as a starter for the Hokies, and in 2001 the Atlanta Falcons made him the first Black quarterback to be the No. 1 pick in the NFL draft.

Vick was a three-time Pro Bowl selection in six seasons in Atlanta, leading the Falcons in the 2004 season to the NFC championship game, which they lost to the Philadelphia Eagles. His playing career was derailed by his conviction in a 2007 dogfighting scandal, and he served nearly two years in federal prison.



IAN MADDOX FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Following 13 seasons and four Pro Bowl selections, Michael Vick retired from the NFL in 2017 and has worked as an analyst for Fox.

He was released from prison in 2009 and was given a chance to return to the NFL by Andy Reid, then the coach of the Eagles. Vick spent five seasons in Philadelphia, winning the NFL’s comeback player of the year award in 2010 and securing a fourth Pro Bowl selection.

He then spent one season each with the New York Jets and the Pittsburgh Steelers before retiring in 2017.

In addition to being a Fox analyst, he has been an animal rights activist since then.

Despite his lack of experience as a head coach, he has been exposed to two of the best: Reid and Mike Tomlin in Pittsburgh. In four seasons with Reid, he twice established career highs for passing yards. In 2017, Reid, coaching the Kansas City Chiefs, hired Vick as a training camp intern.

“I think my heart is really into teaching, you know, the game of football,” Vick said in 2017. “I feel

like I’ve learned so much from so many great coaches over the years. I don’t want to bottle up a lot of knowledge, and [I] really can’t relay the messages that I want to relay to a high school kid because ... you don’t have to dumb it down, but you can’t be as complex. And I get that.

“So [at the] collegiate level or professional level, you can express ideas. You can go into detail. You know you can coach hard, and that’s what I want to do.”

During his NFL career, Vick passed for 22,464 yards and 133 touchdowns and rushed for 6,109 yards — a record for a quarterback — and 36 touchdowns.

He will face a challenge at Norfolk State. Each of the Spartans’ past five coaches had over-all losing records, and the school most recently fired Dawson Odums last month after he compiled a 15-30 record over four seasons.

## HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

# Offseason rule changes give wrestlers and coaches much less to grapple with

Emphasis on takedowns, faster-paced matches are welcome developments

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Owen Clayborne’s black wrestling shoes teetered around the circle’s edge during a match in the Fear the Spear tournament at Stafford High last week.

Previously, the Patriot wrestler had to worry whether he was considered inbounds with two “supporting points” within the circle. But after some offseason rule changes, the senior has more confidence knowing he needs just one foot in. With a bit more freedom to move, he maintained control of his opponent and secured a takedown.

In April, the National Federation of State High School Associations announced new rules that increased scoring and refined out-of-bounds regulations.

Coaches and wrestlers agree that the changes increase the pace of matches and emphasize scoring takedowns.

“The new rules push for a more dynamic match,” Clayborne said. “It encourages more action.”

Near-fall scoring also was altered: Wrestlers receive two points for holding a near-fall for two seconds, three points for three seconds, four points for four seconds and five points if a defensive wrestler is injured after the four-point near-fall has been earned. Additionally, wrestlers now earn three points for securing a takedown, up from two.



COURTESY PHOTO

“The new rules push for a more dynamic match,” said Patriot’s Owen Clayborne, who now has more clarity on where he can set his feet.

Patriot Coach Rich Edwards said. “When guys make the jump from high school to compete in college, the closer [the rules are], the easier it makes that transition.”

— *Michael Howes*

### Boys’ hockey

Reid Pehrkon broke the Mid-Atlantic Prep Hockey League career points mark this month, notching his record-breaking 57th against Paul VI. Now the Landon senior is closing in on the goals record, too.

The reigning All-Met Player of the Year has dominated the league since his freshman year, and he entered this season nearing the top of its all-time points, goals and assists lists.

“He’s still far and away the best [player] in the DMV,” Landon Coach Alex Parker said. “There just truly are not any players that come remotely close to his skill level in the league.”

Pehrkon said breaking the points record was special, not solely because of the significance but also because it exemplified his off-ice work. A relatively undersized player, Pehrkon always has relied on his agility. He knew he needed topflight quickness to succeed, so he persisted at deadlifts and leg exercises to build skate speed.

The record-breaking goal put that speed on display: Pehrkon found himself in open ice, deked the goalie and scored on a wrap-around.

“My speed and skating is my greatest asset, and that was really incorporated into that goal,” Pehrkon said. “I’ll probably remember that the rest of my life.

With Pehrkon on the roster, the Bears are MAPHL contenders.

“If I break any more records, great, but I don’t really care,” Pehrkon said. “I’m committed to [Babson College]. I know where I’m going. I don’t have to prove anything else.”

— *Sam Jane*

### Boys’ swimming

With a roster like the one DeMatha has assembled this winter, it can be difficult to temper expectations. Loaded with depth and ripe with talent, the Stags know championship success is possible come in February, when the big meets roll around.

“Our top-level number one guy in each event is really strong, and now we have two or three guys in those events behind them this year,” Coach Tom Krawczewicz said. “The guys are excited. They know they can have a really good

season. ... They’re getting each other going.”

Krawczewicz, who has led DeMatha’s swimming program for more than 30 years, is measuring his own early expectations. With the club swimming season hitting a midwinter lull, the Stags are just beginning to sink their teeth into the high school season. Krawczewicz’s team will travel to the Robert Sawyer Invitational in Greensboro, North Carolina, an event that will help provide more clarity on the Stags’ postseason potential.

“We could have one of our best teams ever, but then some of the other teams could have theirs, too,” Krawczewicz said. “Certainly I’d love to say we’d love to win a WCAC championship and a prep school championship and maybe even a Metros championship, and that’s certainly what [the team is] talking about, but we just have to go out there and top-to-bottom swim fast.”

Leading the charge for DeMatha are seniors Joshua Lopez and Jayson Ross, each of whom has shown marked progress since last winter. Lopez, an All-Met second-team selection in his junior season, is more than two seconds faster in the 100 freestyle and has nearly broken

the 20-second mark in the 50 freestyle. Ross has established himself as one of the top 500 freestyle swimmers in the area.

Those seniors — in addition to a talented group of underclassmen that includes junior Seamus Rooney and sophomore Alex Jungbluth — have the Stags thinking big.

— *Noah Ferguson*

### Girls’ indoor track and field

South County Coach Maurice Hutton said his indoor track team runs the state meet every day at practice. Owning a deep selection of contending runners, the Stallions are up against some of the state’s best each time they touch the track.

The Stallions looked like a title contender Dec. 7 at the Virginia Beast High School Invitational, where they comfortably took the girls’ team title with 103 points, finishing well ahead of second-place Western Branch (59.5). South County runners placed first in seven of the 10 track events.

In three events, the Stallions’ time was among the three fastest in the country this winter. Mian-na Mason, a senior who signed with Virginia, recorded the second-fastest national time in the 60-meter hurdles (8.55 sec-

onds) and the fastest in the 60-meter sprint (7.51). Fellow senior Catalina Sanchious posted the third-fastest time in the 60-meter sprint (7.54). South County also completed the 4x200 relay in 1:39.31, another national best.

“Iron sharpens iron,” Hutton said. “To be able to have that level of competition, every single rep, every single practice, every single day — I think it’s definitely attributed to our success.”

Last year, the Stallions ran into adversity that sidetracked their indoor season. A quad injury in January forced Sanchious to miss most of the year, and she aggravated it at the state meet. Cameron Thompson, now a senior, suffered a back injury last December that kept her from racing for almost a full year.

“More than ever, I think they have a different fire burning inside of them, and they’re really looking to captivate everyone’s attention with what they’re about to do this year,” Hutton said. “I think it’s going to be a special group, and they’re going to do some special things.”

— *Emmett Siegel*

### Girls’ hockey

The St. John’s girls are off to a 5-0 start, with senior captain Dani Maier playing an important role in the Cadets’ success on and off the ice.

Just a few months ago, Maier’s season looked to be in jeopardy after she tore her ACL playing lacrosse in March.

“I was pretty frustrated,” she said. “I tried telling myself it was just twisted and nothing happened, but we did [eventually] find out that it was torn.”

Maier was not expected to be ready for game action until at least January, meaning she would miss the first half of her senior season. But through a determined recovery process — and with the emotional support of her teammates — she was cleared to play a week and a half before the Cadets’ first game in November, two months earlier than expected.

“[Maier] has dealt with injuries throughout her career, and she is probably one of the hardest workers to get back that I’ve ever seen,” St. John’s Coach David Sauer said. “[Now] she’s out there killing it. It looks like she never got injured.”

Maier’s eight goals are tied for third most in the Mid-Atlantic Girls Hockey League and have been crucial in getting the Cadets to the top of the standings.

“I see ourselves getting [even] better as a team,” Maier said, “building more chemistry and ultimately winning the MAGHL and WCAC championships.”

— *Jakob Bowen*

## D.C. BOYS’ BASKETBALL

# ‘The kid was built to be a star’: Cooper becomes Colts’ career scoring leader

COOLIDGE 66, PHELPS 19

BY MATT COHEN

The first play that Coolidge Coach Derrick Washington drew up Wednesday night against Phelps was about the only thing that didn’t go according to script for the Colts.

Knowing senior guard Quintin Cooper was just two points

from the school’s career scoring record, Washington arranged a play on the Colts’ first possession for the Hampton commit to get the milestone out of the way. It didn’t work.

But moments later, Cooper finished a layup in transition after a Coolidge steal to set the record. The Coolidge bench emptied onto the floor for a standing ovation. Play was stopped as the basketball was tossed to Coolidge’s staff — the memento had to be marked for

the occasion — and Cooper took a picture at midcourt with Khalen Cumberlander, a 2012 Coolidge graduate who had held the record with 1,244 points.

Once play resumed, Cooper scored 15 more points to finish with 17 in the Colts’ 66-19 win. Coolidge improved to 6-3; Phelps fell to 0-4.

“A lot of buckets made in two years,” Cooper said. “A short time, a lot of buckets made.”

The fact that it has been just two years for Cooper had Wash-

ington wondering just how wide the gap ultimately could have been between the guard and the rest of the program’s luminaries.

Washington feels lucky he ended up getting Cooper in the first place. He has known Cooper since the player was about 6 and, even then, it was clear he was going to be an elite scorer. Washington believed he was bound to play for a prestigious Washington Catholic Athletic Conference program — many expressed interest — but said Cooper put on

weight during the pandemic and the interest faded.

“He just had the swag and the game to match,” Washington said. “He was a guy who could go get 30 [points] at the age of 10, 11 years old. Every school in our area kept in contact, and they wanted him. The kid was built to be a star. I’m thankful and I’m honored that I was able to get him.”

Cooper played on the junior varsity team in his freshman year and then was injured dur-

ing his sophomore year, when he played varsity. Last season, Cooper averaged more than 30 points and quickly eclipsed 1,000 for his career.

Washington and Cooper soon realized the school’s scoring mark was within reach. Now Cooper has his sights on 2,000, a total that might never be topped. But if someone surpasses it, Cooper said he will take a picture with him at midcourt, too — just as Cumberlander did for him.



## SCOREBOARD

## PRO FOOTBALL

NFL									
NFC									
EAST	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
y-Washington	12	2	0	.857	396	247			
Arizona	9	6	0	.643	369	315			
Dallas	6	8	0	.429	298	380			
N.Y. Giants	2	12	0	.143	208	328			

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	459	282			
Atlanta	7	6	0	.500	293	342			
New Orleans	5	9	0	.357	309	312			
Carolina	3	11	0	.214	247	418			

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
y-Detroit	12	2	0	.857	459	282			
y-Minnesota	12	2	0	.857	369	252			
Green Bay	10	4	0	.714	379	287			
Chicago	4	10	0	.286	266	308			

WEST	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
L.A. Rams	8	6	0	.571	310	338			
Seattle	8	6	0	.571	313	313			
Arizona	7	6	0	.500	314	306			
San Francisco	6	8	0	.429	314	320			

AFC									
EAST	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
z-Buffalo	11	3	0	.786	445	310			
Miami	8	6	0	.571	313	313			
N.Y. Jets	4	10	0	.286	283	325			
New England	3	11	0	.214	238	337			

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
z-Houston	9	5	0	.643	328	300			
Indianapolis	6	8	0	.429	280	329			
Jacksonville	3	11	0	.214	263	377			
Tennessee	3	11	0	.214	254	379			

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
y-Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	336	265			
Baltimore	6	9	0	.464	413	332			
Cincinnati	6	8	0	.429	299	247			
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	239	356			

WEST	W	L	T	PCT.	PF	PA			
z-Kansas City	13	1	0	.929	329	259			
Denver	9	5	0	.643	336	247			
L.A. Chargers	6	8	0	.429	299	247			
Las Vegas	2	12	0	.143	245	376			

y-clinched playoff spot; z-clinched division

**WEEK 16**  
**THURSDAY'S GAME**  
Denver at L.A. Chargers (-2½), 8:15

**SATURDAY'S GAMES**  
Pittsburgh at Baltimore (-6½), 4:30  
Houston at Kansas City (-3), 1

**SUNDAY'S GAMES**  
Philadelphia (-3½) at Washington, 1  
Arizona (-4½) at Carolina, 1

Detroit (-6½) at Chicago, 1  
L.A. Rams (-3) at N.Y. Jets, 1

N.Y. Giants at Atlanta (-7½), 1  
Tennessee at Indianapolis (-3½), 1

Cleveland at Cincinnati (-7½), 1  
Minnesota (-3) at Seattle, 4:05

Jacksonville at Las Vegas (-1½), 4:25  
New England at Buffalo (-14½), 4:25

San Francisco at Miami (-1¾), 4:25  
Tampa Bay (-3½) at Dallas, 8:30

**MONDAY'S GAME**  
New Orleans at Green Bay (-14½), 8:15

**WEEK 17**  
**WEDNESDAY'S GAMES**  
Baltimore at Houston, 4:30  
Kansas City at Pittsburgh, 1

**THURSDAY, DEC. 26**  
Seattle at Chicago, 8:15

**SATURDAY, DEC. 28**  
L.A. Chargers at New England, 1

Denver at Cincinnati, 4:30  
Arizona at L.A. Rams, 8:15

**SUNDAY, DEC. 29**  
Atlanta at Washington, 8:20  
Carolina at Tampa Bay, 1

Green Bay at Minnesota, 1  
Indianapolis at N.Y. Giants, 1

Las Vegas at New Orleans, 1  
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo, 1

Tennessee at Jacksonville, 1  
Miami at Cleveland, 4:05

Dallas at Philadelphia, 4:25  
**MONDAY, DEC. 30**

Detroit at San Francisco, 8:15

**NFL LEADERS**  
Through Monday.

**NFC**

PASSING	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
Goff, DET	440	314	3759	30	10
Smith, SEA	485	339	3623	14	13
Darnold, TB	463	328	3617	32	14
Mayfield, MIN	426	288	3530	29	11
Cousins, ATL	453	303	3508	18	16
Steffard, LAR	446	309	3463	19	7
Purdy, SF	380	247	3174	15	9
Murray, ARI	426	294	3086	15	8
Daniels, WAS	393	277	3045	17	6

**RUSHING**

Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Barkley, PHI	285	168	54	7
Jacobs, GB	265	1147	4.3	38
K.Williams, LAR	280	1121	4.0	30
Robinson, ATL	237	1102	4.7	37
Gibbs, DET	186	1047	5.6	70
Hughard, CAR	202	395	2348	72
A.Jones, MIN	215	979	4.6	41
Conner, ARI	212	973	4.5	53
Kamara, NO	228	950	4.2	64

**RECEIVING**

No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Jefferson, MIN	82	1243	15.2	97
Lamb, DAL	94	1089	11.6	65
St. Brown, DET	95	1056	11.1	66
Smith-Njigba, SEA	85	994	11.7	46
McLaurin, WAS	68	969	14.3	86
A.Brown, CAR	65	906	16.9	67
McBride, ARI	89	938	10.5	37
Landon, ATL	78	919	11.8	31
Nabers, NYG	90	901	10.0	39

**AFC**

**PASSING**

Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
Burrow, CIN	527	361	3977	36
L.Jackson, BAL	404	275	3580	34
Allen, BUF	427	275	3395	25
B.Holmes, KC	402	395	3248	22
Rodgers, NYJ	488	305	3255	23
Stroud, HOU	456	290	3248	17
Nix, DEN	467	297	2972	20
Herbert, LAC	399	255	2959	16
Taguevalia, MIA	395	269	2652	18

**RUSHING**

Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Henry, BAL	254	1474	5.8	87
Pollard, TEN	220	982	4.3	41
Taylor, IND	208	911	4.2	58
Miller, HOU	217	910	4.2	59
Harris, PIT	229	891	3.9	36
C.Brown, CIN	191	832	4.4	40
Cook, BUF	171	828	4.8	65
Dobbins, LAC	158	766	4.8	61
L.Jackson, BAL	117	743	6.4	39

**RECEIVING**

No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Chase, CIN	102	1413	13.9	70
Jedry, CLE	70	1052	15.0	89
Bowers, LAS	90	968	10.8	72
B.Thomas, JAC	64	956	14.9	85
Wilson, NYJ	84	933	11.1	42
Flowers, BAL	66	916	13.9	53
Sutton, DEN	66	878	13.3	37
A.McCoy, LAC	63	873	13.9	61
D.Adam, NYJ	67	860	12.4	41
Pickens, PIT	55	850	15.5	44

**SOCCER**

**English Premier League**

GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Liverpool	15	11	3	1	31	36
Chelsea	16	10	4	2	37	34
Arsenal	16	8	4	2	29	28
Nottingham Forest	16	8	4	4	21	28
Man City	16	8	5	3	28	27
Bournemouth	16	7	4	5	24	25
Aston Villa	16	7	4	5	24	25
Fulham	16	6	6	4	25	24
Brighton	16	6	6	4	26	24
Tottenham	16	7	2	7	36	23
Brentford	16	7	2	7	32	23
Newcastle	16	6	5	5	23	23
A.McCoy, LAC	16	6	5	5	23	23
West Ham	16	5	7	21	29	19
Crystal Palace	16	3	6	17	21	16
Everton	15	3	6	16	21	15
Leicester	16	3	5	8	21	34
Ipswich	16	2	6	8	16	22
Wolverhampton	16	2	3	11	24	9
Southampton	16	1	2	13	11	36

**SATURDAY'S MATCHES**

Aston Villa vs. Man City, 7:30 a.m.

Brentford vs. Nottingham Forest, 10 a.m.

Ipswich vs. Newcastle, 10 a.m.

West Ham vs. Brighton, 10 a.m.

Crystal Palace vs. Arsenal, 12:30

**SUNDAY'S MATCHES**

Everton vs. Chelsea, 9 a.m.

Fulham vs. Southampton, 9 a.m.

Leicester vs. Wolverhampton, 9 a.m.

Man United vs. Bournemouth, 9 a.m.

Tottenham vs. Liverpool, 11:30 a.m.

## PRO BASKETBALL

**NBA**

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

ATLANTIC	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	21	5	.808	—
New York	16	10	.615	5
Brooklyn	10	16	.385	11
Philadelphia	8	16	.333	12
Toronto	7	20	.259	14½

SOUTHEAST	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	17	11	.607	—
Miami	13	11	.542	2
Atlanta	14	13	.519	2½
Charlotte	7	19	.269	9
Washington	3	21	.125	12

CENTRAL	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	23	4	.852	—
Milwaukee	14	11	.560	8
Indiana	15	15	.500	11
Chicago	12	15	.444	11
Detroit	11	16	.407	12

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

SOUTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	18	9	.667	—
Houston	17	9	.654	¼
Dallas	17	9	.654	¼
San Antonio	13	13	.500	4½
New Orleans	5	22	.185	13

NORTHWEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	20	5	.800	—
Denver	14	10	.583	5½
Minnesota	20	11	.560	6
Portland	8	18	.308	12½
Utah	5	20	.200	15

PACIFIC	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	14	11	.560	—
Golden State	14	12	.538	—
L.A. Clippers	15	12	.556	—
L.A. Lakers	14	12	.538	¼
Sacramento	13	14	.481	2

**THURSDAY'S RESULT**

**NBA Cup final in Las Vegas:** Milwaukee 97, Oklahoma City 81

**WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS**  
No games scheduled.

**THURSDAY'S GAMES**

Charlotte at Washington, 7

Oklahoma City at Orlando, 7

Utah at Detroit, 7

Brooklyn at Toronto, 7:30

Chicago at Boston, 7:30

Atlanta at San Antonio, 8

Golden State at Memphis, 8

New Orleans at Houston, 8

L.A. Clippers at Dallas, 8:30

Indiana at Phoenix, 9

New York at Minnesota, 9:30







840

**Trustees Sale - DC**

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**Trustees Sale - DC**

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**Trustees Sale - DC**

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

800 17TH STREET N.W., SUITE 1100

WASHINGTON, DC 20006

PHONE 202.469.5178

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING

WITH LOWER-LEVEL RETAIL

1800 M STREET, NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20036

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:

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.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (the "Real Estate"):

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.

FIXTURES, TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE PROPERTY

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 personality, 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).

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.

CONDITIONS OF SALE:

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.

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.

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.

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.

IMPROVEMENTS:

The Property is believed to be improved by a ten (10) story commercial office building with lower-level retail.

TERMS OF SALE:

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.

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 conveying including, without limitation, (i) examination of title and conveying 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.

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.

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.

For further information regarding the sale and the Property, please contact the offices or visit the website of the Auctioneer.

JUNE L. MARSHALL  
PHILIP T. EVANS,  
Substitute Trustees



Dec 9,11,13,17,19 2024

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SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

1900 LYTTONSVILLE ROAD, UNIT #114

SILVER SPRING, MD 20910

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated March 27, 2018, recorded in Liber 55949, Folio 308 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$151,844.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:15 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and described as Unit 114 as indicated on a Condominium Plat known as "Park Sutton Condominium" and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$22,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 371427-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

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BWW Law Group, LLC

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Rockville, MD 20852

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SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

10014 FOREST VIEW PLACE

GAITHERSBURG, MD 20886

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated January 22, 2021, recorded in Liber 62036, Folio 374 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$179,400.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:17 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$17,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 368199-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479208

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BWW Law Group, LLC

6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101

Rockville, MD 20852

(301) 961-6555

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

1308 MAGNOLIA ROAD

SILVER SPRING, MD 20905

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated July 26, 2007, recorded in Liber 34701, Folio 52, among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$513,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:13 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$41,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 361548-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479206

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BWW Law Group, LLC

6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101

Rockville, MD 20852

(301) 961-6555

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

1569 IVYSTONE COURT

SILVER SPRING, MD 20904

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated May 4, 2006, recorded in Liber 32443, Folio 732 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$332,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:11 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$20,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 120248-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479205

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Montgomery County

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Montgomery County

BWW Law Group, LLC

6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101

Rockville, MD 20852

(301) 961-6555

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

13 STORY DRIVE

GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated June 19, 2013, recorded in Liber 47501, Folio 179 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$249,700.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:09 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$25,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 361282-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479203

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Montgomery County

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6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101

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(301) 961-6555

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE

OF REAL PROPERTY AND

ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON

9600 RIVER ROAD

POTOMAC, MD 20854

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated February 21, 2003, recorded in Liber 23540, Folio 413 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$669,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:07 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$119,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues



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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**908 ERIE AVENUE  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated March 31, 2016, recorded in Liber 51981, Folio 259 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$418,815.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:05 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$39,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 358525-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479200

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Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**2705 NAVARRE DRIVE  
CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated April 15, 2003, recorded in Liber 23814, Folio 679 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$287,900.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:03 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$30,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 353527-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479199

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6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**8712 MANCHESTER ROAD, UNIT #4  
SILVER SPRING, MD 20901**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated September 14, 2005, recorded in Liber 30825, Folio 401, among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$126,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:59 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and described as #8712 Unit 4 of "London Terrace Condominium" and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$6,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 32428-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479196

BWW Law Group, LLC  
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Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**15100 INTERLACHEN DRIVE, UNIT #4-701  
SILVER SPRING, MD 20906**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated January 21, 2016, recorded in Liber 51669, Folio 151 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$397,500.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 2:01 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and described as Unit #4-701, The Greens at Leisure World II, a Condominium and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$16,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 366883-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479198



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6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**9507 VANCE PLACE  
SILVER SPRING, MD 20901**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated October 24, 2014, recorded in Liber 49384, Folio 46 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$342,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:57 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$28,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 370913-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479194

McMichael Taylor Gray LLC  
7470 New Technology Way, Suite P  
Frederick, MD 21703  
470-480-1820

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**9505 CAPE ANNE PLACE  
MONTGOMERY VILLAGE, MD 20886**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated October 17, 2022, recorded in Liber 66476, Folio 337 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$120,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:34 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #09-01510765.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind. The property will be sold subject to a prior mortgage, the amount to be announced at the time of sale.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$13,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 24-000166-02)

Diana Theologou, et al., Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479186

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Montgomery County

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McMichael Taylor Gray LLC  
7470 New Technology Way, Suite P  
Frederick, MD 21703  
470-480-1820

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**9911 GREENEL ROAD  
DAMASCUS, MD 20872**


Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated July 2, 2008, recorded in Liber 35878, Folio 549 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$150,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:30 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #12-03343522.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind. The property will be sold subject to a prior mortgage, the amount to be announced at the time of sale.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$10,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 24-001223-02)  
The property will be sold subject to a 120 day right of redemption by the Internal Revenue Service.

Diana Theologou, et al., Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479184

McMichael Taylor Gray LLC  
7470 New Technology Way, Suite P  
Frederick, MD 21703  
470-480-1820

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**7117 INTREPID LANE  
GAITHERSBURG, MD 20879**


Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated June 1, 2007, recorded in Liber 34659, Folio 594 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$200,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:32 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #01-03265383.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind. The property will be sold subject to a prior mortgage, the amount to be announced at the time of sale.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$25,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 24-000112-01)  
The property will be sold subject to a 120 day right of redemption by the Internal Revenue Service.

Diana Theologou, et al., Substitute Trustees



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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479185

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Montgomery County

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Montgomery County

ORLANS PC  
1602 VILLAGE MARKET BLVD. SE, SUITE 310  
LEESBURG, VA 20175  
703-777-7101

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY**  
7128 Carroll Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Under a power of sale contained in a Deed of Trust from MARIE C. LAMOUR, dated June 6, 2005 and recorded in Liber 30058, folio 733 among the Land Records of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD, default having occurred thereunder (Foreclosure Case docketed as Case No.441043v; Tax ID No.13-01066530 ), the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE, located at 50 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 7, 2025 at 1:30 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD and more fully described in above referenced Deed of Trust.

The property will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any and with no warranty of any kind.

Terms of Sale: A deposit \$50,000.00 will be required at the time of sale, such deposit to be in CERTIFIED CHECK OR BY CASHIER'S CHECK. CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for MONTGOMERY COUNTY. Time is of the essence as to the purchaser. If the purchaser defaults, the deposit shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold at the purchaser's risk and expense. The purchaser waives personal service and accepts service by first class mail and certified mail addressed to the address provided by said Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale for any Motion or Show Cause Order incident to this sale including a Motion to Default Purchaser and for Resale of the Property. In the event of a resale, the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to receive any benefit from the resale, including, but not limited to, additional proceeds or surplus which may arise therefrom. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate pursuant to the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Substitute Trustees. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered at the time of sale or any time prior to settlement or if the settlement is delayed for any reason. In the event that the Secured Party executes a forbearance agreement with the borrower(s) described in the above-mentioned Deed of Trust, or allows the borrower(s) to execute their right to reinstate or payoff the subject loan, prior to the sale, with or without the Substitute Trustee's prior knowledge, this Contract shall be null and void and of no effect, and the Purchaser's sole remedy shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Purchaser shall pay for documentary stamps, transfer taxes and settlement expenses. Taxes, ground rent, water rent, 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, shall be adjusted to the date of sale and assumed thereafter by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale forward. If the Substitute Trustee(s) are unable to convey insurable title for any reason, the purchaser(s) sole remedy in law or equity shall be limited to a refund of the aforementioned deposit without interest. In the event the sale is not ratified for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is the return of the deposit without interest. (File # 14-700002)

JAMES E. CLARKE,  
SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE



300 E. Jones Road  
Hampton Place, Suite 103  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
410.768.9797

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012479169

Rosenberg & Associates, LLC  
4340 East West Highway, Suite 600  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 907-8000  
www.rosenberg-assoc.com

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY**

**11004 PETERSBOROUGH DRIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20852**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust from Alan S. Weiner and Deborah F. Weiner dated December 21, 2005 and recorded in Liber 31598, folio 201 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

**JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 1:45 PM**

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with the buildings and improvements thereon situated in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #04-02681105.  
The property, which is improved by a dwelling, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$88,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of



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**Montgomery County**

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**Montgomery County**

Samuel I. White, P.C.  
448 Viking Drive, Suite 350  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF VALUABLE FEE SIMPLE PROPERTY**  
KNOWN AS  
**11512 Bedfordshire Avenue**  
**Potomac, MD 20854**

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust to DONNA MASTASCUSA, Trustee(s), dated August 7, 2012, and recorded among the Land Records of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, in Liber 44665, folio 017, the holder of the indebtedness secured by this Deed of Trust having appointed the undersigned Substitute Trustees, by instrument duly recorded among the aforesaid Land Records, default having occurred under the terms thereof, and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOCATED AT 50 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850 ON,

JANUARY 6, 2025 at 1:30 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD and described as follows:

SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY AND STATE OF MARYLAND: LOT NUMBERED 10 IN BLOCK 2 IN A SUBDIVISION KNOWN AS "BEDFORDSHIRE", AS PER PLAT RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 86 AT PLAT 9037 AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

[POSITION]THE PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO A PRIOR MORTGAGE. IF AVAILABLE THE AMOUNT WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE TIME OF THE SALE

The property will be sold in an "AS IS WHERE IS" condition without either express or implied warranty or representation, including but not limited to the description, fitness for a particular purpose or use, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, liability, zoning, subdivision, environmental condition, merchantability, compliance with building or housing codes or other laws, ordinances or regulations, or other similar matters, and subject to easements, agreements and restrictions of record which affect the same, if any. The property will be sold subject to all conditions, liens, restrictions and agreements of record affecting same including any condominium and of HOA assessments pursuant to Md Real Property Article 11-110.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of \$20,000.00 PAYABLE ONLY BY certified funds, shall be required at the time of sale. CASH WILL NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF DEPOSIT. The balance of the purchase price with interest at 2.49% per annum from the date of sale to the date of payment will be paid within TEN DAYS after the final ratification of the sale. There will be no abatement of interest for any reason. Adjustments on all taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments will be made as of the date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. There will be no abatement of taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments for any reason. If applicable, condominium and/or homeowner association dues and assessments that may become due after the time of sale will be the responsibility of the purchaser. Title examination, conveyancing, state revenue stamps, transfer taxes, title insurance, and all other costs incident to settlement are to be paid by the purchaser. Time is of the essence for the purchaser, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited, and the property may be resold at risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser and the purchaser agrees to pay reasonable attorneys' fees for the Substitute trustees, plus all cost incurred, if the Substitute Trustee's have filed the appropriate motion with the Court to resell the property. The purchasers waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with such a motion and expressly agrees to The purchaser agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. If the sale is not ratified or if the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey marketable title in accord with these terms of sale, the purchaser's only remedy is return of the deposit.

The sale is subject to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into a repayment agreement, reinstated, or paid off the loan prior to sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sol remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Trustee's File No. (82632)

Robert A. Jones, et al SUBSTITUTION TRUSTEES



**AUCTIONEERS, LLC**  
300 E. Joppa Road  
Hampton Plaza, Suite 1103  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
410-769-9797

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012477197

**TRUSTEE'S SALE**  
**522 Coral Reef Dr, Gaithersburg, MD 20878**

Trustee's Sale of valuable fee simple property improved by premises known as 522 Coral Reef Dr, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. By virtue of the power and authority contained in a Deed of Trust, dated July 14, 2006, and recorded in Liber 32719 at Page 583 among the land records of the County of Montgomery, in the original principal amount of \$65,000.00. Upon default and request for sale, the undersigned trustees will offer for sale at public auction at the Courthouse for the COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, at Judicial Center's Monroe Street Entrance, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on **January 8, 2025 at 1:00 PM**, all that property described in said Deed of Trust including but not limited to:

**Tax ID# 09-02646762**

Said property is in fee simple and is improved by a dwelling and is sold in "as is condition" and subject to all superior covenants, conditions, liens, restrictions, easement, rights-of-way, as may affect same, if any.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of 10% of the sale price, cash or certified funds shall be required at the time of sale. The balance of the purchase price with interest at 7.25% per annum from the date of sale to the date of payment will be paid within TEN DAYS after the final ratification of the sale.

Adjustments on all taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments will be made as of the date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser.

If applicable, condominium and/or homeowners association dues and assessments that may become due after the time of sale will be the responsibility of the purchaser. Title examination, conveyancing, state revenue stamps, transfer taxes, title insurance, and all other costs incident to settlement are to be paid by the purchaser. Time is of the essence for the purchaser, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited and the property may be resold at risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. If the sale is not ratified or if the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey marketable title in accord with these terms of sale, the purchaser's only remedy is the return of the deposit. Trustee's File No. 24-295889.

William M. Savage, et al., Substitute Trustees.

LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP,  
Mailing Address: 10130 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400,  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216  
(410) 769-9797



**AUCTIONEERS, LLC**  
300 E. Joppa Road  
Hampton Plaza, Suite 1103  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
410-769-9797

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012478890

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6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**  
  
**18740 JERUSALEM CHURCH ROAD**  
**PODLESVILLE, MD 20837**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated March 19, 2007, recorded in Liber 34155, Folio 184 and re-recorded in Liber 34198, Folio 648 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$404,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, at the Court House Door, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, on

DECEMBER 27, 2024 AT 1:02 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Montgomery County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$24,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 363181-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



**ALEX COOPER**  
auctioneers  
908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 12,19,26 20240012477882

**TRUSTEE'S SALE**  
**12205 Peach Crest Unit H, Germantown, MD 20874**

Trustee's Sale of valuable fee simple property improved by premises known as 12205 Peach Crest Unit H, Germantown, MD 20874. By virtue of the power and authority contained in a Deed of Trust, dated October 23, 2007, and recorded in Liber 35143 at Page 405 among the land records of the County of Montgomery, in the original principal amount of \$100,000.00. Upon default and request for sale, the undersigned trustees will offer for sale at public auction at the Courthouse for the COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, at Judicial Center's Monroe Street Entrance, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on **January 8, 2025 at 1:00 PM**, all that property described in said Deed of Trust including but not limited to:

**Tax ID# 09-02480138**

Said property is in fee simple and is improved by a dwelling and is sold in "as is condition" and subject to all superior covenants, conditions, liens, restrictions, easement, rights-of-way, as may affect same, if any.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of 10% of the sale price, cash or certified funds shall be required at the time of sale. The balance of the purchase price with interest at 6.625% per annum from the date of sale to the date of payment will be paid within TEN DAYS after the final ratification of the sale.

Adjustments on all taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments will be made as of the date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser.

If applicable, condominium and/or homeowners association dues and assessments that may become due after the time of sale will be the responsibility of the purchaser. Title examination, conveyancing, state revenue stamps, transfer taxes, title insurance, and all other costs incident to settlement are to be paid by the purchaser. Time is of the essence for the purchaser, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited and the property may be resold at risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. If the sale is not ratified or if the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey marketable title in accord with these terms of sale, the purchaser's only remedy is the return of the deposit. Trustee's File No. 22-290466.

William M. Savage, et al., Substitute Trustees.

LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP,  
Mailing Address: 10130 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400,  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216  
(410) 769-9797



**AUCTIONEERS, LLC**  
300 E. Joppa Road  
Hampton Plaza, Suite 1103  
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Samuel I. White, P.C.  
448 Viking Drive, Suite 350  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF VALUABLE FEE SIMPLE PROPERTY**  
KNOWN AS  
**12001 OLD COLUMBIA PIKE UNIT# 514**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20904**

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust to DAVID E. WATERS AND ANTHONY B. OLMERT, SR., Trustee(s), dated October 30, 2018, and recorded among the Land Records of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND in Liber 56857, folio 336, the holder of the indebtedness secured by this Deed of Trust having appointed the undersigned Substitute Trustees, by instrument duly recorded among the aforesaid Land Records, default having occurred under the terms thereof, and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOCATED AT 50 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850 ON,

JANUARY 6, 2025 at 1:30 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD and described as follows:

ALL THAT PIECE OR PARCEL OF LAND LYING AND BEING SITUATE IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND, COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: CONDOMINIUM UNIT NUMBERED 12001-514 IN THE COLUMBIA TOWERS CONDOMINIUM AS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO DECLARATION MADE BY COLUMBIA TOWERS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP, A MARYLAND LIMITED PARTNERSHIP, DATED AUGUST 12, 1975, AND RECORDED AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND IN LIBER 4677 AT FOLIO 70. ET SEQ. AND PURSUANT TO THE PLATS AND PLANS FOR COLUMBIA TOWERS CONDOMINIUM, AS PER PLAT RECORDED IN CONDOMINIUM PLAT BOOK 16 AS PLATS NUMBERED 1591 THROUGH 1604, BOTH INCLUSIVE.

The property will be sold in an "AS IS WHERE IS" condition without either express or implied warranty or representation, including but not limited to the description, fitness for a particular purpose or use, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, liability, zoning, subdivision, environmental condition, merchantability, compliance with building or housing codes or other laws, ordinances or regulations, or other similar matters, and subject to easements, agreements and restrictions of record which affect the same, if any. The property will be sold subject to all conditions, liens, restrictions and agreements of record affecting same including any condominium and of HOA assessments pursuant to Md Real Property Article 11-110.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of \$20,000.00 PAYABLE ONLY BY certified funds, shall be required at the time of sale. CASH WILL NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF DEPOSIT. The balance of the purchase price with interest at 5.5% per annum from the date of sale to the date of payment will be paid within TEN DAYS after the final ratification of the sale. There will be no abatement of interest for any reason. Adjustments on all taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments will be made as of the date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. There will be no abatement of taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments for any reason. If applicable, condominium and/or homeowner association dues and assessments that may become due after the time of sale will be the responsibility of the purchaser. Title examination, conveyancing, state revenue stamps, transfer taxes, title insurance, and all other costs incident to settlement are to be paid by the purchaser. Time is of the essence for the purchaser, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited, and the property may be resold at risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser and the purchaser agrees to pay reasonable attorneys' fees for the Substitute trustees, plus all cost incurred, if the Substitute Trustee's have filed the appropriate motion with the Court to resell the property. The purchasers waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with such a motion and expressly agrees to The purchaser agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. If the sale is not ratified or if the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey marketable title in accord with these terms of sale, the purchaser's only remedy is return of the deposit.

The sale is subject to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into a repayment agreement, reinstated, or paid off the loan prior to sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sol remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Trustee's File No. (83177)

Robert A. Jones, et al SUBSTITUTION TRUSTEES



**AUCTIONEERS, LLC**  
300 E. Joppa Road  
Hampton Plaza, Suite 1103  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
410-769-9797

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 20250012477196

**TRUSTEE'S SALE**  
**7903 Coriander Dr #7903-302, Gaithersburg, MD 20879**

Trustee's Sale of valuable fee simple property improved by premises known as 7903 Coriander Dr #7903-302, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. By virtue of the power and authority contained in a Deed of Trust, dated March 31, 2006, and recorded in Liber 32105 at Page 149 among the land records of the County of Montgomery, in the original principal amount of \$26,250.00. Upon default and request for sale, the undersigned trustees will offer for sale at public auction at the Courthouse for the COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, at Judicial Center's Monroe Street Entrance, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on **January 8, 2025 at 1:00 PM**, all that property described in said Deed of Trust including but not limited to:

**Tax ID# 09-02780894**

Said property is in fee simple and is improved by a dwelling and is sold in "as is condition" and subject to all superior covenants, conditions, liens, restrictions, easement, rights-of-way, as may affect same, if any.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of 10% of the sale price, cash or certified funds shall be required at the time of sale. The balance of the purchase price with interest at 6.00% per annum from the date of sale to the date of payment will be paid within TEN DAYS after the final ratification of the sale.

Adjustments on all taxes, public charges and special or regular assessments will be made as of the date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser.

If applicable, condominium and/or homeowners association dues and assessments that may become due after the time of sale will be the responsibility of the purchaser. Title examination, conveyancing, state revenue stamps, transfer taxes, title insurance, and all other costs incident to settlement are to be paid by the purchaser. Time is of the essence for the purchaser, otherwise the deposit will be forfeited and the property may be resold at risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. If the sale is not ratified or if the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey marketable title in accord with these terms of sale, the purchaser's only remedy is the return of the deposit. Trustee's File No. 23-292633.

William M. Savage, et al., Substitute Trustees.

LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP,  
Mailing Address: 10130 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400,  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216  
(410) 769-9797



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202-900-8595

**TRUSTEES' SALE**  
**RESIDENTIAL DWELLING**  
  
**8511 CUNNINGHAM DRIVE**  
**BERWYN HEIGHTS, MD 20740**

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Second Deed of Trust from Pamela A. Burns to Jung Kim, Esquire and Frances Wilburn, Esquire, Trustees, in trust, for the benefit of Jacknin, LLC, a Virginia limited liability company dated December 14, 2023, recorded among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland at Book 49417, Page 341, default having occurred under the terms thereof and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Trustees, will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on **January 7, 2025 at 11:10 am** the property described in said Loan Documents and more particularly described below.

Lot numbered seven (7) in the Block numbered nineteen (19) in the subdivision known as "CHARLTON HEIGHTS", also known of record as "BERWYN HEIGHTS" as per plat thereof recorded in Plat Book J.W.B. No. 10, Plat 309, re-recorded in Plat Book A, folio 53, one of the Land Records for Prince George's County, Maryland. Being the same property conveyed by deed dated December 30, 1946 and recorded in Liber 892 at folio 462.

The improvements thereon being known as 8511 Cunningham Drive, Berwyn Heights, Maryland 20740.

Tax ID# 21-2419851

The property will be sold subject to a prior deed of trust.


**TERMS OF SALE:** The Property will be sold in "AS IS, WHERE IS" condition, without recourse. Neither the Trustees, the noteholder secured by the Loan Documents, the Auctioneer, nor any of their respective agents, successors or assigns (collectively, the "Selling Parties") make any representations or warranties, express or implied, with respect to the Property, or any tenancies or parties in possession, including without limitation, the description, use, size, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, habitability, 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 and/or the purchaser's successors and assigns may now have or may have in the future relating to the condition of the Property, including but not limited to the environmental condition thereof. The purchaser shall assume all risk of loss or damage to the Property after the time of the foreclosure sale. The Property will be sold subject to all tenancies, parties in possession, conditions, regulations, orders, ordinances and laws, as well as restrictions, judgments, liens, assessments, outstanding taxes and all other charges, utility charges, matters, and agreements of record affecting same, if any, which the successful bidder(s), in addition to paying the bid price, will be required to pay and/or otherwise satisfy. The Property will be sold subject to any building or housing violations, easements, agreements, restrictions, terms, rights of way, filed and unfiled mechanics' and materialmen's liens, covenants, conditions, rights of redemption, and all other encumbrances having priority over the Loan Documents, if any, lawfully affecting the Property whether or not of record, including but not limited to environmental conditions (including without limitation possible wetlands, riparian rights, critical or protected areas, and the presence of protected or endangered species) and all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances and regulations lawfully affecting the Property. All interested bidders are encouraged to contact the appropriate governmental authorities prior to the sale date regarding the permitted uses of the Property and the requirements, if any, for construction, completion and/or development.

The Trustee(s) shall be entitled to remove the Property from sale prior to bidding, and reject any and all bids. A deposit of \$10,000 in the form of certified check or cashier's check shall be paid to the Trustee(s) at the time and place of sale. Whenever the purchaser is also the noteholder secured by the Loan Documents, payment of the required deposit(s) and the purchase price is made by crediting the amount thereof to the indebtedness. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash or certified check at settlement, which shall be no later than fifteen (15) days after final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, unless said period is extended by the Trustees, their successors or assigns, for good cause shown, determined in Trustees sole and absolute discretion, with no obligation to extend, time otherwise being of the essence; otherwise, in addition to other remedies available to the Trustees, whether at law or in equity, the Trustees may, at their election, declare the deposit forfeited and resell the Property at the risk and cost of the defaulting purchaser. The defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profits resulting from any resale of the Property. The purchaser hereby agrees that in the event of any litigation between any of the Selling Parties and the purchaser related to the Property, the purchaser shall immediately pay on demand the reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred by the Selling Parties in such action. Interest at the rate equal to the rate at which interest is currently accruing on the Note, shall be paid on the unpaid purchase price from the date of sale to the date of closing. All outstanding real property taxes, and water rent on an annual basis, including any sanitary and/or county or metropolitan district charges and any other municipal charges, utility charges, whether incurred prior to or after the sale shall be assumed and paid by purchaser. Cost of all documentary stamps, transfer taxes, recordation taxes, (including any agricultural transfer tax), recording fees, document preparation, title insurance and any and all other costs or charges of settlement shall be borne solely by the purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining possession from anyone in possession of the Property. Conveyance of the Property shall be by Trustees' Deed, without covenant or warranty, express or implied, unless otherwise required by statute, court rule or the Loan Documents. In the event the Trustees are unable for any reason to convey title, the purchaser's sole remedy at law or in equity shall be to request and to receive a return of the deposit. Upon a return of the deposit, this sale shall be void and of no effect and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Selling Parties.

This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any oral announcements during the conduct of the sale, constitutes the Trustees' entire terms upon which such premises shall be offered for sale.

All information herein contained is believed to be accurate but is not guaranteed.

Jung Kim, Esquire and Frances Wilburn, Esquire, Trustees



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Piel Law Firm, LLC  
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Towson, Maryland 21204

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY**  
  
**13006 LEDO CREEK TERRACE**  
**BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND 20705**

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Purchase Money Deed of Trust executed by, among others, Jayaya Mwahli, and dated February 27, 2006, and recorded among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland, at Liber 24715, folio 141 (the "Deed of Trust"), the holder of the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust (the "Noteholder") having subsequently appointed Hunter C. Piel and Scott B. Wheat (collectively, the "Substitute Trustees") as Substitute Trustees by instrument duly executed, acknowledged and recorded among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland for the purposes therein contained, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust, the Substitute Trustees will offer for sale at public auction to the highest qualified bidder at the front steps of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, located at 14735 Main Street, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772, on:

**Tuesday, January 7, 2025**  
**at 11:05 a.m.**

ALL OF THAT real property being situate in Prince George's County, Maryland, and the improvements thereon (collectively, the "Property"), in fee simple, being more particularly described in the Deed of Trust, and generally known 13006 Ledo Creek Terrace, Beltsville, Maryland 20705.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit in the amount of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00), payable in cash, certified check, or other form acceptable to the Substitute Trustees, in their sole and absolute discretion, will be required of the purchaser(s) at the time and place of sale. The deposit must be increased to 10% of the purchase price within two (2) business days, and delivered to the office of the Substitute Trustees in the same form as the initial deposit. The balance of the purchase price shall be due in cash or by certified check with interest on the unpaid balance of the purchase price at the rate of ten percent (10%) per annum from the date of sale to and including the date of settlement. In the event the Noteholder, or an affiliate 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. Taxes, water charges, ground rent, if any, and all other municipal charges and liens owed against the Property shall be the sole responsibility of the purchaser(s) and shall be paid for by the purchaser(s) at settlement. In addition, all other charges, expenses and liens owed against the Property including, but not limited to, all condominium fees and expenses and public charges and assessments owed against the Property and payable on an annual basis, such as sanitary and/or metropolitan district charges, if any, shall also be the responsibility of the purchaser(s) and shall be paid by the purchaser(s) at settlement. The Substitute Trustees reserve the right to reject any and all bids, and to extend the time for settlement, if applicable. In the event taxes or other municipal charges owing on or with respect to the Property have been prepaid they shall be adjusted at settlement between the Substitute Trustees and the purchaser(s) to the date of the foreclosure sale.

The Property will be sold in an "AS IS" condition and without any warranties or representations, either express or implied, as to the nature, condition or description of the improvements. In addition, the Property will also be sold subject to all existing housing, building and zoning code violations, subject to all critical area and wetland violations, subject to all environmental problems and violations which may exist on or with respect to the Property, and subject to all matters and restrictions of record affecting the same, if any. The purchaser(s) at the foreclosure sale shall assume the risk of loss for the above-referenced Property immediately after the sale takes place. It shall be the purchaser(s)' responsibility to obtain possession of the Property following ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland.

The Property will be sold subject to all of the following that are not extinguished as a matter of law by the foreclosure sale: all easements, conditions, liens, restrictions, rights of redemption, covenants, encumbrances, ground rents, ground leases, such state of facts that an accurate survey or physical inspection of the Property might disclose, and agreements of record affecting the same, if any.

The purchaser(s) shall pay all documentary stamps, state and local transfer taxes, recordation taxes and fee title examination costs, attorneys' fees, conveyance fees and all other incidental settlement costs. The purchaser(s) shall settle and comply with the sale terms within twenty (20) days following the final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, unless said period is extended by the Substitute Trustees for good cause shown. Time is of the essence.

In the event the purchaser(s) fails to go to settlement as required, in addition to any other legal or equitable remedies available, the Substitute Trustees may, without further order of the court, declare the aforementioned deposit forfeited and resell the Property at the purchaser's sole risk and expense. In such event, the defaulting purchaser(s) shall be liable for the payment of any deficiency in the purchase price, all costs and expenses of both sales, reasonable attorneys' fees, all other charges due, and incidental damages. The parties' respective rights and obligations regarding the terms of sale and the conduct of the sale shall be governed by and interpreted according to the laws of the State of Maryland.

If the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey the Property as described above, the purchaser(s)' sole remedy at law or in equity shall be limited to the refund of the aforementioned deposit, without interest thereon. Upon refund of the deposit to the purchaser(s), the sale shall be void and of no effect, and the purchaser(s) shall have no further claim against the Substitute Trustees or the Noteholder.

The information contained herein was obtained from sources deemed to be reliable, but is offered for informational purposes only. The Auctioneer, the Noteholder and the Substitute Trustees do not make any representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy of this information.

Hunter C. Piel,  
Scott B. Wheat  
Substitute Trustees

For further information, contact:  
Hunter C. Piel, Esquire  
Piel Law Firm, LLC  
502 Washington Avenue, Suite 730  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
(410) 849-4888











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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**6614 HIGHEATE DRIVE  
FORT WASHINGTON, MD 20744**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated February 1, 2011, recorded in Liber 32444, Folio 484 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$184,577.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on


DECEMBER 31, 2024 AT 10:36 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$5,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 367618-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY**

**10201 PINE MEADOWS LANE  
UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust from Lumbus T. Burrell and Fatmata C. Burrell dated January 4, 2007 and recorded in Liber 27093, folio 518 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on

JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 11:15 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with the buildings and improvements thereon situated in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #15-1739945.

The property, which is improved by a dwelling, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$43,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate pursuant to the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date funds are received in the office of the Trustees. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The noteholder shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. There will be no reduction of interest due to overpayment of deposit. Adjustment of all real property taxes (excluding recapture of previously reduced or exempt taxes) and any other public charges or assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer charges, and ground rent to be adjusted to date of sale and paid at execution of the deed, except where the secured party is the purchaser, and thereafter assumed by the purchaser. All due and/or unpaid private utility, water and sewer facilities charges, condo/HOA assessments and Columbia Assoc. assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, are payable by the purchaser without adjustment. Cost of all documentary stamps, transfer taxes, recaptured taxes (including but not limited to agricultural taxes), and settlement expenses shall be borne by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale forward. Additional terms to be announced at the time of sale. If the Trustees are unable to convey good and marketable title, the purchaser's sole remedy in law and equity shall be limited to a refund of the deposit without interest. If the purchaser fails to go to settlement, subject to order of the court, the entire deposit (including any amount received over the advertised deposit amount) shall be forfeited to the Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. 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 and the defaulting purchaser shall be liable to the Trustees and secured party for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred in connection with all litigation involving the Property or the proceeds of the resale. Defaulting purchaser waives personal service of any document filed in connection with such a motion on him/ herself and/or any principal or corporate designee, and expressly agrees to accept service of any such document by regular mail directed to the address provided by said purchaser at the time of the foreclosure auction. Trustees' file number 22-002286-MD-F-1.

Diane S. Rosenberg, Mark D. Meyer, et al., Trustees



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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**8315 GIBBONS DRIVE  
FORT WASHINGTON, MD 20744**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated July 6, 2007, recorded in Liber 30819, Folio 116 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$296,250.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on

DECEMBER 31, 2024 AT 10:32 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$22,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 200595-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**5904 JUSTINA DRIVE  
LANHAM, MD 20706**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated September 19, 2007, recorded in Liber 28807, Folio 1 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$543,750.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on

DECEMBER 31, 2024 AT 10:34 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$27,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 363498-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**12 NOTLEY ROAD  
FORT WASHINGTON, MD 20744**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated September 28, 2006, recorded in Liber 26308, Folio 262 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$544,185.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on

DECEMBER 31, 2024 AT 10:30 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$25,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 361398-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 12,19,26 2024

0012477872

Rosenberg & Associates, LLC  
4340 East West Highway, Suite 600  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 907-8000  
www.rosenberg-assoc.com

**MORTGAGEE'S SALE  
OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY**

**4000 74TH AVENUE  
HYATTSVILLE, MD 20784**

Pursuant to the power of sale contained in a Mortgage from Estate of Frances G. Draughan n/k/a Frances G. McCahon, Estate of William F. Draughan and Estate of Paul A. McCahon, dated May 21, 1998 and recorded in Liber 12204, Folio 200 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, MD, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Attorneys for the Mortgagee will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, 14735 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD, 20772 (Duval Wing entrance, located on Main St.), on

JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 11:17 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with the buildings and improvements thereon situated in Prince George's County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Mortgage, Tax ID #02-0112136.

The property, which is improved by a dwelling, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$16,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate of the Mortgage from the date of sale to the date funds are received in the office of the Attorneys for the Mortgagee. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The mortgage holder shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer charges and ground rent, to be adjusted to date of sale and paid at execution of the deed, except where the secured party is the purchaser, and thereafter assumed by the purchaser. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale forward. Cost of all documentary stamps, transfer taxes and settlement expenses shall be borne by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale forward. Additional terms to be announced at the time of sale. If the Attorneys for the Mortgagee are unable to convey good and marketable title, the purchaser's sole remedy in law and equity shall be limited to a refund of the deposit without interest. If the purchaser fails to go to settlement, the deposit shall be forfeited, to the Attorneys for the Mortgagee for application against all expenses, attorney's fees and the full commission on the sale price of the above-scheduled foreclosure sale. In the event of default, all expenses of this sale (including attorney's fees and the full commission on the gross sale price of this sale) shall be charged against and paid out of the forfeited deposit. The Attorneys for the Mortgagee may then re-advertise and resell the property at the risk and expense of the defaulting purchaser or may avail themselves of any legal or equitable remedies against the defaulting purchaser without reselling the property. 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 and the defaulting purchaser shall be liable to the Attorneys for the Mortgagee and secured party for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred in connection with all litigation involving the Property or the proceeds of the resale. Defaulting purchaser waives personal service of any document filed in connection with such a motion on him/herself and/or any principal or corporate designee, and expressly agrees to accept service of any such document by regular mail directed to the address provided by said purchaser at the time of the foreclosure auction. Attorneys' file number 21-001048-MD-F-1.


Diane S. Rosenberg, Mark D. Meyer, et al.,  
Attorneys for the Mortgagee




908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479304



**Anne Arundel County**



**Anne Arundel County**

BWW Law Group, LLC  
6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**1002 ROSEDALE AVENUE  
GLEN BURNIE, MD 21061**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated October 9, 2020, recorded in Liber 35456, Folio 493 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$95,300.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on


JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:30 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$32,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 372167-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479318

BWW Law Group, LLC  
6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**9 HAMPTON ROAD  
LINTHICUM HEIGHTS, MD 21090**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated September 5, 2006, recorded in Liber 18250, Folio 613 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$290,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on


JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:32 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$27,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 364470-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838  
www.alexcooper.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479319



**Anne Arundel County**



**Anne Arundel County**

BWW Law Group, LLC  
6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**

**1010 GENERALS HIGHWAY  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032**

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated March 31, 2004, recorded in Liber 14778, Folio 143 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$218,100.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on


JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:28 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$17,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 325591-4)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.82




<div>852</div>	<div><b>Anne Arundel County</b></div>	<div>852</div>	<div><b>Anne Arundel County</b></div>
	<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>		
	<div><b>952 PRINCETON TERRACE GLEN BURNIE, MD 21060</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated December 24, 2009, recorded in Liber 21921, Folio 162 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$219,474.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:24 AM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$16,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 367157-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
LICENSE NOS. A000113, A000176, A000177, A000193, A000424, A000479, A000507, A000508	
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Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479314


<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>
<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>
<div><b>3347 OLD LINE AVENUE LAUREL, MD 20724</b></div>

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated June 3, 2016, recorded in Liber 29664, Folio 159 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$206,196.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:20 AM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$20,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 370719-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
LICENSE NOS. A000113, A000176, A000177, A000193, A000424, A000479, A000507, A000508	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479311


<div>852</div>	<div><b>Anne Arundel County</b></div>	<div>852</div>	<div><b>Anne Arundel County</b></div>
	<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>		
	<div><b>221 WEST PASADENA ROAD MILLERSVILLE, MD 21108</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated August 4, 2006, recorded in Liber 18182, Folio 1 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$541,357.50, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on

<b>DECEMBER 31, 2024 AT 9:15 AM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$20,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 356945-2)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
LICENSE NOS. A000113, A000176, A000177, A000193, A000424, A000479, A000507, A000508	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 12,19,26 2024	0012477867


McMichael Taylor Gray LLC 7470 New Technology Way, Suite P Frederick, MD 21703 470-480-1820
<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>
<div><b>1164 RAMBLEWOOD DRIVE ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401</b></div>

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated April 27, 2004, recorded in Liber 14762, Folio 119 among the Land Records of Anne Arundel County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$83,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at the Court House Door, 8 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 9:15 AM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Anne Arundel County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #03-165-03208900.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind. The property will be sold subject to a prior mortgage, the amount to be announced at the time of sale.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$10,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 23-001082-01)  
The property will be sold subject to a 120 day right of redemption by the Internal Revenue Service.

Diana Theologou, et al., Substitute Trustees	
LICENSE NOS. A000113, A000176, A000177, A000193, A000424, A000479, A000507, A000508	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479300


<div>853</div>	<div><b>Calvert County</b></div>	<div>853</div>	<div><b>Calvert County</b></div>
	<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>		
	<div><b>12740 BLAIR ROAD LUSBY, MD 20657</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated February 1, 2018, recorded in Liber 5145, Folio 133 among the Land Records of Calvert County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$284,648.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Calvert County, at the Court House Door, 175 Main St., Prince Frederick, MD 20678, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 1:47 PM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Calvert County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$26,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 342517-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479320


<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>
<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>
<div><b>8225 CEDAR LANE LUSBY, MD 20657</b></div>

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated August 17, 2015, recorded in Liber 4623, Folio 467 among the Land Records of Calvert County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$156,750.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Calvert County, at the Court House Door, 175 Main St., Prince Frederick, MD 20678, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 1:49 PM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Calvert County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$15,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 359602-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479321

<div>853</div>	<div><b>Calvert County</b></div>	<div>853</div>	<div><b>Calvert County</b></div>
	<div>Rosenberg &amp; Associates, LLC 4340 East West Highway, Suite 600 Bethesda, MD 20814 (301) 907-8000 www.rosenberg-assoc.com</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY</b></div>		
	<div><b>1010 GOLDEN WEST WAY LUSBY, MD 20657</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated April 27, 2020 recorded in Liber 5593, folio 146 among the Land Records of Calvert County, MD, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Calvert County, at the Court House Door, 175 Main St., Prince Frederick, MD 20678, on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 1:45 PM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with the buildings and improvements thereon situated in Calvert County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust. Tax ID #01-094556.  
The property, which is improved by a dwelling, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$24,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for Calvert County. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate pursuant to the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date funds are received in the office of the Trustees. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The noteholder shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. There will be no reduction of interest due to overpayment of deposit. Adjustment of all real property taxes (excluding recapture of previously reduced or exempt taxes) and any other public charges or assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer charges, and ground rent to be adjusted to date of sale and paid at execution of the deed, except where the secured party is the purchaser, and thereafter assumed by the purchaser. All due and/or unpaid private utility, water and sewer facilities charges, condo/HOA assessments and Columbia Assoc. assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, are payable by the purchaser without adjustment. Cost of all documentary stamps, transfer taxes, recaptured taxes (including but not limited to agricultural taxes), and settlement expenses shall be borne by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale forward. Additional terms to be announced at the time of sale.

If the Trustees are unable to convey good and marketable title, the purchaser's sole remedy in law and equity shall be limited to a refund of the deposit without interest. If the purchaser fails to go to settlement, subject to order of the court, the entire deposit (including any amount received over the advertised deposit amount) shall be forfeited to the Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. 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 and the defaulting purchaser shall be liable to the Trustees and secured party for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred in connection with all litigation involving the Property or the proceeds of the resale. Defaulting purchaser waives personal service of any document filed in connection with such a motion on him/ herself and/or any principal or corporate designee, and expressly agrees to accept service of any such document by regular mail directed to the address provided by said purchaser at the time of the foreclosure auction. Trustees' file number 23-001126-MD-F-3.

Diane S. Rosenberg, Mark D. Meyer, et al., Trustees	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479301


<div>853</div>	<div><b>Charles County</b></div>	<div>853</div>	<div><b>Charles County</b></div>
	<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>		
	<div><b>9133 GRANITE COURT WALDORF, MD 20603</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated April 15, 2005, recorded in Liber 5211, Folio 273 among the Land Records of Charles County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$382,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Charles County, 200 Charles St., La Plata, MD 20646, (Sale will be held in the breezeway between the Circuit Court and the District Court), on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 3:02 PM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Charles County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$46,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/ or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 361038-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al., Substitute Trustees	
<div><div></div><div>908 York Road • Towson, MD 21204 • 410.828.4838 www.alexcooper.com</div></div>	
Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025	0012479323

<div>855</div>	<div><b>Charles County</b></div>	<div>855</div>	<div><b>Charles County</b></div>
	<div>BWW Law Group, LLC 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 961-6555</div>		
	<div><b>SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON</b></div>		
	<div><b>105 RIVERSIDE RUN DRIVE INDIAN HEAD, MD 20640</b></div>		

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated January 9, 2007, recorded in Liber 6183, Folio 573 among the Land Records of Charles County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$200,000.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Charles County, 200 Charles St., La Plata, MD 20646, (Sale will be held in the breezeway between the Circuit Court and the District Court), on

<b>JANUARY 7, 2025 AT 3:00 PM</b>
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ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Charles County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.  
The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$16,0



856

**Frederick County**  
BWW Law Group, LLC  
6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 961-6555

856

**Frederick County**  
**SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY AND  
ANY IMPROVEMENTS THEREON**  
  
12 SETON PLACE  
EMMITSBURG, MD 21727

Under a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated August 26, 2020, recorded in Liber 14075, Folio 43 among the Land Records of Frederick County, MD, with an original principal balance of \$186,868.00, default having occurred under the terms thereof, the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the Circuit Court for Frederick County, at the Court House Door, 100 W. Patrick St., Frederick, MD 21701, on

JANUARY 3, 2025 AT 12:15 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in Frederick County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.

The property, and any improvements thereon, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

**Terms of Sale:** A deposit of \$17,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price, together with interest on the unpaid purchase money at the current rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note, or any modifications thereto, from the date of sale to the date funds are received by the Sub. Trustees, payable in cash within ten days of final ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court. There will be no abatement of interest due to the purchaser in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. Adjustment of all real property taxes, including agricultural taxes, if applicable, and any and all public and/or private charges or assessments, to the extent such amounts survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer, ground rent and front foot benefit charges, to be adjusted to date of sale and thereafter assumed by purchaser. Purchaser is responsible for any recapture of homestead tax credit. All transfer taxes and recordation taxes shall be paid by Purchaser. The purchaser shall be responsible for the payment of the ground rent escrow, if required. Condominium fees and/or homeowners association dues, if any, shall be assumed by the purchaser from the date of sale. Purchaser is responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property, and assumes risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale. The sale is subject to post-sale audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, this sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. If the purchaser fails to settle within ten days of ratification, subject to order of court, purchaser agrees that property will be resold and entire deposit retained by Sub. Trustees as liquidated damages for all losses occasioned by the purchaser's default and purchaser shall have no further liability. The purchaser waives personal service of any papers filed in connection with its failure to settle within ten days of ratification and expressly agrees to accept service by first class mail at the address provided by the Purchaser as identified on the Memorandum of Sale. The defaulted purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds resulting from said resale even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulted purchaser. Sub. Trustees will convey either marketable or insurable title. If they cannot deliver one or the other, or if ratification of the sale is denied by the Circuit Court for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is return of the deposit without interest. (Matter No. 371701-1)

Howard N. Bierman, Carrie M. Ward, et. al.,  
Substitute Trustees



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www.alexcooper.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

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## The Washington Post

870

**Arlington County**  
**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF**  
3908 Military Road  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Tax Map ID 03-036-279

870

**Arlington County**  
**Under a power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust (the "Deed of Trust") dated June 29, 2023 and recorded on July 5, 2023 as Instrument No. 2023010007587 from Atri Homes, LLC, a Virginia limited liability company, as grantor, to Pardo Drazin Auctioneers LLC ("Trustee"), a Virginia limited liability company, as trustee, for the benefit of WCP Fund I LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, as beneficiary, securing that certain Commercial Deed of Trust Note dated June 29, 2023 in the principal amount of \$1,743,387.50 made by Atri Homes, LLC, a Virginia limited liability company, as maker, payable to the order of WCP Fund I LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, as payee, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust, at the request of the current noteholder, Trustee will sell at public auction at the front entrance of the Circuit Court of Arlington County, Virginia, 1425 N. Courthouse Road, Arlington, Virginia 22201, on**  
  
**DECEMBER 27, 2024 at 9:00 AM**

ALL REAL PROPERTY AND THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON (if any) as well as ALL PERSONAL PROPERTY encumbered by the Deed of Trust (collectively, the "Property").

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of ten (10) per centum of the sale price will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The deposit must be paid by cash or certified funds. The balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash or certified funds within twenty (20) days of the date of sale. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate then applicable to the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust from the date of sale to the date of settlement. The current noteholder, if a bidder, shall not be required to post a deposit or to pay interest. Purchaser shall settle within twenty (20) days of the date of sale. TIME SHALL BE OF THE ESSENCE WITH RESPECT TO SETTLEMENT BY THE PURCHASER. In the event that the purchaser does not settle as required for any reason, the purchaser shall be in default. The defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profits resulting from any resale of the Property, and the deposit shall be forfeited to trustee and all of the expenses of the sale (including attorney's fees and fully the requirement that interest price) shall be charged against and paid out of the forfeited deposit, with any remaining balance of the forfeited deposit applied to the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust. In the event settlement is delayed for any reason, including, but not limited to, exceptions to the sale, bankruptcy filings by interested parties, court administration of the foreclosure, or unknown title defects, there shall be no abatement of interest. Real estate taxes are to be adjusted for the current year to the date of sale and assumed thereafter by the purchaser. Cost of all documentary stamps, recordation taxes, transfer taxes and settlement expenses shall be borne by the purchaser.

The Property will be sold in an "AS IS" and "WHERE IS" physical condition and subject to recorded covenants, conditions, restrictions, agreements, and senior liens, if any, and with no warranties or covenants of any kind.

In the event that Trustee is unable to convey title as aforesaid, the purchaser's sole remedy at law and in equity shall be limited to a refund of the deposit and the sale shall be considered null and void and of no effect.

Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the Property and shall assume the risk of loss or damage to the Property from the date of sale forward.

Trustee reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any and all bids, to withdraw the Property from sale at any time before or at the auction, to extend the time to receive bids, to waive or modify the sale (including attorney's fees and fully the requirement that interest be paid on the unpaid purchase money, and/or to extend the period of time for settlement.

Additional terms may be announced at the sale. Purchaser will be required to execute and deliver to Trustee a memorandum of contract of the sale at the conclusion of the sale.

Pardo Drazin Auctioneers LLC, Trustee

**FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:**  
Russell S. Drazin, Attorney  
4400 Jenifer Street, NW, Suite 2  
Washington, DC 20015  
(202) 223-7900  
www.pardodrazin.com

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012479165

851

**Prince Georges County**  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**  
**BENJAMIN P. SMITH, et al.  
Substitute Trustees  
Plaintiffs**  
**v.**  
**LABADI GROUP HOLDINGS LLC  
Defendant**  
  
**Civil No. C-16-CV-24-004422  
THIRD PARTY SALE**  
  
**NOTICE PURSUANT TO  
RULE 14-305(D)**

851

**Prince Georges County**  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**  
**WILLIAM M. SAVAGE, et al.  
Trustees  
Plaintiffs**  
**vs.**  
**MILDRED Y HATTON  
Defendant(s)  
Mortgagor(s)**  
  
**Civil No. C-16-CV-24-002146**  
  
**NOTICE**

Pursuant to Rule 14-305(d), Notice is hereby given this **27 day of November, 2024**, by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, that the sale of the property mentioned in said Court's order, made and reported by Benjamin P. Smith, a Substitute Trustee herein, will be finally ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **27 day of December, 2024**, provided that the amount of sale to be **\$172,000.00**. The property sold has the following street addresses:

**TaxIDNo. 15-1732965  
9520 Marlboro Pike, Unit 103  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772**

**TaxIDNo. 15-1732973  
9520 Marlboro Pike, Unit 104  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772**

File No. 140205.00004

Mahasin El Amin  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

Dec 5,12,19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012478468

Dec 5,12,19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012478468

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**  
**JASON A. PARDO,  
Substitute Trustee, c/o  
Pardo & Drazin, LLC,  
4400 Jenifer Street, NW, Suite 2,  
Washington, DC 20015,  
Plaintiff,**  
**v.**  
**BEK UNLIMITED LLC  
543 Marshall Choice Drive  
Bowie, MD 20720  
Defendant.**  
  
**Case No. C-16-CV-24-004833**  
  
**Action Involving Real Property  
8817 Jamestown Road  
Hyattsville, MD 20782  
Account No. 16-1811785**  
  
**NOTICE**

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
THE COUNTY OF PRINCE  
GEORGE'S, MARYLAND**  
**WILLIAM M. SAVAGE, et al.  
Trustees  
Plaintiffs**  
**vs.**  
**NATHAN L BURNS  
NICHOLAS L BURNS  
Defendant(s)  
Mortgagor(s)**  
  
**Civil No. C-16-CV-24-002678**  
  
**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby issued by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, this **12 day of December, 2024**, that the sale of the property mentioned in these proceedings and commonly known as **8817 Jamestown Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782**, made and reported by Jason A. Pardo, Substitute Trustee, be ratified and confirmed unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **13 day of January, 2025**, provided, a copy of this Notice be inserted in the Washington Post, once in each of three successive weeks, before the **9th day of January, 2025**. The Report of Sale states the amount of sale to be **\$236,000.00**.

Mahasin El Amin  
Clerk, Circuit Court for  
Prince George's County,  
Maryland


Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479941


Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479941

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851

**Prince Georges County**  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**  
**Brennan Ferguson, et al.  
Substitute Trustees  
Plaintiffs,**  
**v.**  
**Estate of  
Lawrence J. Lynch,  
Defendant.**  
  
**Case No. C-16-CV-24-003212**  
  
**NOTICE**

852

**Anne Arundel County**  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**  
**Keth Yacko, et al.  
Substitute Trustees**  
**Versus**  
**David Nixon, Jr.  
Defendant**  
  
**No. C-02-CV-24-001239**  
  
**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby issued this **Wednesday, December 04, 2024** that the sale of the property in the proceedings mentioned, made and reported by Jennifer Deardorff, Substitute Trustee BE RATIFIED AND CONFIRMED, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **3RD day of January 2025** next. The report states the amount of sale of the property at **608 MILLSHIRE DR, MILLERSVILLE, MD 21108** to be **\$265,451.10**.

Scott A. Poyer  
Circuit Court for  
Anne Arundel County, MD.

Dec 12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012479558

Dec 12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012479558

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**  
**Brennan Ferguson, et al.  
Substitute Trustees**  
**Versus**  
**Estate of Lolita Coley  
Defendant**  
  
**No. C-02-CV-24-001398**  
  
**NOTICE**

William M. Savage, et al.  
Trustee(s)  
Plaintiff(s)

vs.

ESTHER Y ABU  
Defendant(s)  
Mortgagor(s)

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479944

Notice is hereby issued this **Thursday, December 05, 2024** that the sale of the property in the proceedings mentioned, made and reported by John C. Hanrahan, Substitute Trustee BE RATIFIED AND CONFIRMED, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **6th day of January 2025** next, provided, a copy of this Notice be inserted in some newspaper published in Anne Arundel County, once in each of three successive weeks before the **3RD day of January 2025** next. The report states that the amount of sale of the property at **7875 CHALICE ROAD, SEVERN, MD 21144** to be **\$408,000.00**.

Scott A. Poyer  
Circuit Court for  
Anne Arundel County, MD.

Dec 12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012479559

Dec 12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012479559

876

**Loudoun County**  
**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF  
25452 Brickell Drive,  
Chantilly, VA 20152**

876

**Loudoun County**  
**In execution of a Deed of Trust made on or about the principal amount of \$130,000.00 dated November 10, 2020, recorded among the Land Records of the Circuit Court for Loudoun County on July 8, 2021 as Instrument Number: 202108-0074272, the undersigned appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction, at the Main entrance of the courthouse for the Circuit Court of Loudoun County, 18 E Market St., Leesburg, VA 20176 on **January 24, 2025 at 9:00 AM** the property described in said deed of trust, located at the above address and briefly described as: Tax ID Number(s): 128250645000**

Land situated in the County of Loudoun in the State of VA. LOT 37, SECTION (3C), SOUTH RIDING, AS THE SAME IS SHOWN ON A PLAT ATTACHED TO DEED OF BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 1607, PAGE 1262, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

Commonly known as: 25452 BRICKELL DR, CHANTILLY, VA 20152

THE PROPERTY ADDRESS AND TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER LISTED ARE PROVIDED SOLELY FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES. Tax ID: 128250645000.

TERMS OF SALE: A bidder's deposit of \$11,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required in the form of certified or cashier's check. Cash will not be accepted as a deposit. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Trustee may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. The information obtained from a debt collector. This notice is an attempt to collect on a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. (Trustee # 24-008478)

Substitute Trustee: ALG Trustee, LLC C/O Orland PC PO Box 2548, Leesburg, VA 20177 (703) 777-7101 website: www.Orlands.com The Vendor auction.com will be used in conjunction with this sale. Potential Bidders: For sale information, please visit www.Auction.com or call (800) 280-2832.

Dec 5,12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012477125

Dec 5,12,19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012477125

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,  
MARYLAND**  
**CARRIE M. WARD, et al.  
6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Substitute Trustees/Plaintiffs,**  
**vs.**  
**SALLIE P. SHIELDS  
ANTHONY SHIELDS  
(DECEASED)  
4201 Skyline Drive  
Suitland, MD 20746  
Defendant(s).**  
  
**Case No. CAEF18-50767**  
  
**NOTICE**

Mahasin El Amin  
Clerk of the Circuit Court for  
Prince George's County,  
Maryland

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479955

Notice is hereby given this **12 day of December, 2024**, by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, that the sale of the property mentioned in these proceedings and described as **4201 Skyline Drive, Suitland, MD 20746**, made and reported by the Substitute Trustee, will be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the **13 day of January, 2025**, 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 **13 day of January, 2025**. The report states the purchase price at the Foreclosure sale to be **\$275,000.00**.

Mahasin El Amin  
Clerk, Circuit Court for  
Prince George's County,  
Maryland

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479958

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2025

0012479958

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

876

**Loudoun County**  
**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF  
112 Lakeland Lane  
Sterling, VA 20164**

876

**Loudoun County**  
**In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$484,000.00 dated February 24, 2006 recorded among the Land Records of the Circuit Court for Loudoun County on February 27, 2006 as Instrument Number: 20060227-0017924, and rerecorded on March 6, 2009 as Instrument Number 20090306-0012932, the undersigned appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction, at the Main entrance of the courthouse for the Circuit Court of Loudoun County, 18 E Market St., Leesburg, VA 20176 on **January 24, 2025 at 9:00 AM** the property described in said deed of trust, located at the above address and briefly described as: All of Lot 12 of the Subdivision of Section 1-A, RICHLAND ACRES, as shown on a Plat of Subdivision recorded in Deed Book 338 at Page 379, and Plat Book 6 at Page 43, of the Land Records of Loudoun County, Virginia, and as described on the Plat by B.W. Smith & Associates attached to Deed recorded among the aforesaid land records in Deed Book 947 at Page 1082. Tax ID: 01449468000**

TERMS OF SALE: A bidder's deposit of \$13,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required in the form of a certified or cashier's check. Cash will not be accepted as a deposit. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Trustee may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. This is an attempt to collect on a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. (Trustee # 18-800112)

Substitute Trustee: ALG Trustee, LLC C/O Orland PC PO Box 2548, Leesburg, VA 20177 (703) 777-7101 website: www.Orlands.com The Vendor auction.com will be used in conjunction with this sale.

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012477126

Dec 19,26,Jan 2 2024

0012477126

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**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF  
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## The Washington Post

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# LOCAL LIVING



## Home for the holidays

Hollywood pros dish on creating the houses for ‘Home Alone’ and ‘The Holiday’ **PAGE 4**



HOW TO

My countertop is chipped. What’s the best way to repair it?

BY JEANNE HUBER

**Q:** I have a Silestone countertop with a chipped edge. How do I find someone to fix the edge?  
**A:** When a countertop chips or cracks, there are two ways to fix it: Hire a company that specializes in this work, or buy the same type of materials a pro would use and do it yourself. The pro solution, of course, costs more. But it is more likely to result in a repair that blends in visually and can’t be felt when you run your hand over the surface.

Barry Adkins, owner of Fix-It Countertop, which makes home visits in Maryland, D.C., Northern Virginia and central Florida, repairs chips in countertops made of quartz, solid-surface material and natural stone (such as granite). Silestone, along with brands such as Caesarstone and Cambria, is in the quartz category because it consists of quartz crystals and other ingredients in a resin binder. Solid-surface material, such as Corian, has a lower percentage of mineral content.

In all of these cases, Adkins said, his solution is to patch the chip with two-part epoxy designed for countertop repairs — not a general-purpose epoxy you might find at a hardware store. Pros buy supplies at companies that cater to their needs. For repairs on man-made materials, Adkins can type in the manufacturer’s color name and get a patch color that matches the main color of the countertop. There are also epoxy kits with different colorants so he can custom-match colors when a homeowner doesn’t know the brand or color name of a countertop.

Adkins charges a little under \$300 to fix a chip smaller than a dime, plus a little extra for travel in out-of-the-way locations in the company’s service areas. Large repairs, up to the size of a quarter, cost more, in part because he often needs to apply the filler in two or three layers to avoid having it smear across the surface.

Tidy repairs are especially important with man-made countertop materials because they have a subtle texture that resembles a fairly smooth



ISTOCK

While repairing a chipped countertop can be a do-it-yourself project, it’s one that leaves little room for error.

orange peel. Adkins can polish natural stone to make the sheen of a patch blend in, but if he does that with a man-made countertop, the spot looks shiny and becomes even more noticeable.

Homeowners can also buy two-part epoxy repair kits with small amounts of colorants, or kits that use other fillers, such as two-part acrylics and light-cured acrylics. Globalcom tile and granite/marble repair kit, which lists for \$19.99 on Amazon, is a two-part epoxy that comes with black, brown, blue and maroon gel dyes that can be used in combination or alone to get tones from nearly white to very dark.

Given that the homeowner kit is less than \$20, does it make sense to spend more to hire a pro? Adkins says handy, experienced DIYers probably can patch a chip successfully,

but he cautions that, as with anything, there is a learning curve. Especially when a chip or crack is in a prominent place, many homeowners decide it’s better to leave the work to someone who has made hundreds of repairs, rather than use the job as a first-time learning opportunity. “When two-part epoxy dries, it dries hard as stone,” he said, leaving little time for trial-and-error tinkering.

It doesn’t help that many of the kits lack detailed instructions. Amazon sells nearly identical-looking patch kits from three brands: Globalcom, Lanbokit and Govvey, none of which have an online customer-service link or online application instructions other than photos with captions or videos. An Amazon customer-service representative tried to look up contact information but

said the only details he could find were in Chinese characters, which he couldn’t decipher.

Online customer reviews for repair kits back up Adkins’s warning that patching successfully can be trickier than it seems. While many reviewers gave high marks for the results they achieved, those who reported low marks sometimes said their countertops wound up looking worse than before. Common complaints: It was too hard to match the color. The epoxy, especially on an edge chip, was too runny to mold. The countertop got scratched when they used sandpaper, which is included in the kits, to make the patch level.

Adkins said he puts a lot of effort into creating patches that almost disappear. About 90 percent of the quartz countertops he repairs are a slightly off-white shade with

gray veining that mimics Calacatta marble, a natural stone. He stocks up on the perfect colorant for patching that. But when he is patching natural stone, which usually has lots of color variation, or man-made materials that sparkle or have chips of different colors, he often uses clear epoxy, which lets the color of the countertop around the chip show through. But no patch is perfect.

Customers often ask if the patch will be visible. His answer? “Yes, especially by you, the homeowner, because you are seeing me do it. But in most cases, someone who walks into the room for the first time will not see the damage.”

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# The design magic of holiday movie homes



20TH CENTURY FOX/EVERETT COLLECTION

Macaulay Culkin and Joe Pesci in “Home Alone.” Set decorator Eve Cauley used a red and green color scheme to give the home a holiday feel, including in this wallpaper.

BY RACHEL KURZIUS

There's nothing cozier than curling up on a December night and watching a holiday movie. And very often the warmth we associate with our favorite films comes from the homes we see on screen.

While we love the characters, their houses bring their own star power and often provide major plot points: the romantic, dilapidated mansion in “It’s a Wonderful Life”; the over-the-top light display in “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation”; the life-changing home swap of “The Holiday”; and, of course, the iconic brick colonial of “Home Alone.” When the real-life properties featured in these films hit the market, it’s news; tourists still flock to

the Chicago suburb of Winnetka to see the “Home Alone” house.

It’s no accident that these homes continue to loom large in our collective imaginations — the set decorators and production designers working behind the scenes understand that it’s the small details that transform a movie set into a believable, lived-in Christmas home. The people responsible for two classics of the genre, “Home Alone” and “The Holiday,” explain how they made it happen.

## ‘Home Alone’

“Home Alone” — it’s right there in the name. A family leaves a young son behind when heading to France for a Christmas vacation. Kevin at first luxuriates in having the house to himself and

then has to build a set of increasingly intricate booby traps to fell bandits attempting a robbery.

Given the centrality of the home to the plot of the movie, set decorator Eve Cauley, now a professor at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, had her work cut out for her.

“It was a bigger job than most people realize, because we did not film inside the now-famous ‘Home Alone’ house at all,” Cauley writes over email. “What the audience saw as the home’s interior settings were all built sets.” So in addition to breathing life into the set, she also had to ensure that there was continuity between what viewers saw during exterior shots and on set.

“I knew [writer and producer] John Hughes preferred an Ameri-





20TH CENTURY FOX/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Cauley says she puts herself in the characters' shoes when she is filling the set with items beyond what the script includes.**

can, upper middle class traditional look," Cauley writes. "He did not like much aging on furniture or anything else. He liked his audiences to feel entertained when they went to the movies. He wanted to uplift the audience to feel happy after they left the theatre. To me, this was a warm, well-intentioned gift he gave to the world." They discussed an aesthetic resembling Colefax and Fowler, the famed British fabric and wallpaper company, only with a Midwestern flair.

Cauley picked out the wallcoverings, décor, furniture (including upholstery fabric), accessories and everything else that appeared on those sets. As when decorating a real home, she began with the big items — furniture, rugs, lamps. She sketched out the placement of the furniture beforehand "to be sure, for example, that I had place[d] the couch or chair in a position that worked best for director Chris Columbus' blocking with the actors." Then there's a second layer of "smalls."

She savors the third layer, which consists of "tiny details of décor that make a set appear to be real. It may be a pile of mail on a table, socks on the floor in a bedroom, clutter, or a little container of fish food by a fishtank." If there's a bar of soap, Cauley will wear it down so it doesn't look brand new.

Because the "Home Alone" house is full of kids, Cauley's third layer included multiple moments that made it appear like someone started a task, then got distracted before finishing: a wedged screwdriver over the workbench in the basement and a table with scraps of wrapping paper, tape and scissors in the primary bedroom. "Those tiny human-created details with decorating make a place look real to the audience," Cauley says.

Cauley also puts herself in the characters' shoes when she is filling the set with items beyond what the script includes: "I imagine what the inhabitants might have bought, who in the story would have decorated the home or location if it were real, what time period the décor would have been from, gifts they might have received and ... art they may have created and kept in their room. I think of how tall the person who lives in a house is when hanging their art on their walls. I unify it all visually with a color palette that feels appropriate for the story and supports the emotions the screenwriter would like the audience to feel at any given point."

While someone watching the movie will get a yuletide vibe from the house on screen, that person may not realize the full scope of the color scheme. Indeed, the entire place is decked



20TH CENTURY FOX/EVERETT COLLECTION

**John Heard, Catherine O'Hara and others in a scene. Photos and other details enhanced the space.**

out in holiday colors, down to the green countertops and red cookware in the kitchen. "I selected reds, golds and greens in the wallpapers and upholstery, to feel warm to the audience," Cauley says. Meanwhile, scenes taking place elsewhere adopted a cooler color palette. That way, the family reunion at the end in the home felt even warmer.

All of this is happening somewhat below the surface. "I pictured a flip book, where the pages go by very quickly. The colors would need to be strong to be caught by the eye within all the moving frames," she says. So Cauley would have small pops of bright color, like poinsettias. "I

call that 'punctuation' of bright colors within a more muted overall frame of color. It worked. Audiences didn't think about my color palette but felt it."

"I like to keep wallpapers or wall paint colors just a little less intense in color than the costumes, so one's eye is directed to the actors," Cauley says.

And when it came to the exteriors, she paid careful attention to the Christmas lights her crew installed throughout the neighborhood. She varied the colors and sizes for visual interest, and then ensured that "the lights on the main house were shining just a bit brighter than the rest on the street, so the audience's eye (and

the burglars!) would be directed in a subtle way to the main home in the story."

### 'The Holiday'

In "The Holiday," a woman in Los Angeles and a woman in an English village swap homes to avoid a lonely Christmas, and each of them finds love and a deeper sense of meaning in the other's abode.

"My job is not to create ... what your house ideally should look like," says Jon Hutman, production designer for "The Holiday" and a frequent collaborator with filmmaker Nancy Meyers. "I think what I've always been at-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





PHOTOS BY COLUMBIA PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION

The Los Angeles home in “The Holiday” is meant to give a moment of awe.



Cameron Diaz in “The Holiday.” The cottage her character stays in was decorated to be shabby chic.

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tracted to is how people actually live in those spaces.” When he’s scouting a location, he’s delighted if the owner didn’t have time to straighten up. That way, he can see how a living room looks when it’s in use.

Because Meyers is a writer and director, “she has an idea of what these places should look and feel like,” he says. “What I do is I read the script and I say, ‘Okay, what happens here?’” So Hutman sets about conveying those elements of character in the homes. He lets these questions from the characters’ perspective guide him:

“What is this space that I’ve made for myself to inhabit? How does it reflect who I am? And how does it also reflect what I want, what I lack?” That’s especially important in “The Holiday,” when the homes in question have to be stifling for the person who lives there but thrilling to the person vacationing there.

The home that seems to have stuck with people is the cottage in the English countryside. “You know, we actually built that cottage,” Hutman says. Through a National Trust website, Meyers had found a charming cottage in Herefordshire near Wales. “The cottage was so unbelievably teeny

tiny. It was on a big, big estate, and it was four hours from London. There’s no practical way you could bring a crew out there to shoot, so we built our own version of that cottage in Surrey.”

What he sought to translate was that the cottage was a haven: two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs with a staircase in between, all nestled under a tree.

Inside, Hutman decorated it shabby chic and infused it with a specific French blue shade. They had to get the balance right on the eclectic mix of patterns and furnishings. “The idea was, how do you not just furnish but inhabit



Cameron Diaz · Kate Winslet · Jude Law · Jack Black

a film by  
Nancy Meyers  
**the Holiday**  
from the Director of What Women Want and Something's Gotta Give



Two characters switch houses in the movie, so the sets needed to feel lived-in by one character while being a retreat for another.

this place so that she doesn’t look like a little old lady?” Hutman says. It had to look like Iris, the character who lives there, accumulated all of these items over time, rather than purchasing them all at once. He wanted it to reverberate with a “various and eclectic warmth” and show the British affinity for patterns: “They have a real art with pattern on pattern on pattern.”

In one scene from the British plotline, the male love interest’s kids have a gorgeous tent in their bedroom. “That was all very specifically designed and detailed and researched,” Hutman says, and ultimately created with “these antique, like, tablecloths and curtains. And, you know, we get very, very specific, right? And I think it shows.”

Just as a cottage felt true to the British countryside, Hutman had to find the equivalent for Los Angeles. At first, he went down the wormhole of the “streamlined colonial, Paul Williams, classic Hollywood house,” he says. “And somehow it was hard to separate that from, let’s say, ‘The Father of the Bride’ house.” He switched gears to a Spanish-style home and landed on a San Marino house designed by iconic L.A. architect Wallace Neff, who used to live

there himself. The exterior needed to give a moment of awe when the character first arrives.

Compared with the cottage, the interior had a more minimal palette, “which I love,” he says. “The thing that makes Amanda’s house, I believe, young and modern and timeless is that it’s quite minimal.” Indeed, the only thing he finds outdated when he re-watches the movie is the slew of DVDs in the media room. “Obviously, you know, you would scrap the DVDs now,” he says. “But that was the thing at the time.”

Ultimately, it’s all about tying the home itself and the items within back to its inhabitants. “What makes them cozy is not the shopping list of specific pieces and fabrics and art and tchotchkes, you know, stuff,” Hutman says. “It is how those elements reflect the people who live there.”

Hutman knows that the homes have become a major feature of a Nancy Meyers film but says that “the reason that people love and remember those houses is because of the stories that take place in them.”

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# Need a home repair estimate? Brace for old-school sales tactics.

BY RACHEL KURZIUS

“Getting an estimate” is one of those phrases that new homeowners quickly become familiar with, alongside the related questions: “Does insurance cover this?” and “Will that leak go away if I ignore it?” But the process of actually getting an estimate can be far more involved than receiving a straightforward figure.

My own estimate for a new roof earlier this fall became an hours-long proceeding in my living room, complete with slideshows, a dizzying array of prices (all with caveats about differing guarantees), and the salesperson’s mid-pitch exit to his car, he said, to confer with his boss.

He returned with some breaking news: Forget that lowest possible number he had given us, because his boss just told him he could go even lower! But only if we signed the paperwork on the spot. Did we dare forgo such a seemingly good price? Or would we be fools not to get more estimates? And, if we did get more estimates, did that mean we faced more of these dog and pony shows?

For many purchases, the handshake deals of the past have been replaced with the swipe and click of a website. Buying a car, for instance, is often not the same rigmarole that it once was, thanks to more transparent pricing information and online shopping. But the cost of home goods and services still varies quite a bit depending on the house, its location and the timing. (For example, after a hurricane, you’ll probably find higher demand for many home repairs.) That’s why roofers; window, door and floor installers; general contractors; and more still rely on old-school, in-home sales tactics, often with a healthy dose of pressure.

“They want to be in your house talking to you,” says Wayne Johnson, a lecturer at George Washington University who focuses on sales and marketing. They’ll often show you a slideshow and charts or find another way to introduce you to their company, as well as throw around a bunch of different prices — including a significantly lower one if you ink the contract that day. “There always seems to be a sense of urgency, right? The ‘act now’-type approach.”

There’s a reason for this tenacity: The approach has a high success rate. But for consumers caught up in a roller coaster of prices and materials, the experience is anything but fun. Psychologists have suggestions for ways to get off the ride before catching buyer’s remorse. Their main advice is to do research in advance,

so you can better contextualize all of the numbers coming your way. Then take some space if you need to, even if the salesperson is pushing you to sign on the dotted line.

Salespeople start with presentations for a couple of reasons. It can help build trust, first and foremost. But it’s also about explaining why a person should drop many thousands of dollars on an oft-unsexy home project.

“What they’re doing is trying to unpack in a vivid way the financial value of a pretty boring commoditized package,” says Hal Hershfield, a professor of marketing and behavioral decision-making and psychology at UCLA. You might, for instance, be willing to pay more for flooring installation in the moment if it’s billed as being longer lasting than a less-expensive alternative. Or a salesperson may claim the product or service will boost your home’s value. Research can help you evaluate whether these claims are realistic and in line with the broader market.

But the much bigger goal of these pitches is to create urgency by offering a discount for acting on the spot. Often, this involves a dramatic flair. Salespeople will go to their cars or say they’re calling their boss, and come back with an (insert shocked expression here) even better deal. But of course,

there’s a catch: That bargain could disappear if you don’t sign that day.

“Consumers respond emotionally to a sense that things are urgent,” says Margaret Campbell, professor of marketing at the University of California at Riverside. “It raises up your FOMO and your fight or flight motivation and decreases thoughtful consideration because of this need to decide quickly.”

Urgency is one of the classic techniques outlined in American psychologist Robert Cialdini’s quintessential “Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion.” And its use is not limited to home services. Consider Black Friday or, really, any sale.

The thinking “is that I immediately start anticipating the regret I’ll feel if I don’t take the deal,” Hershfield says. “And rather than focus on whether or not this product is actually good for me, now my attention is oriented toward not wanting to miss out on some deal.” Basically, it creates a kind of tunnel vision where the consumer becomes concerned about “the potential loss I’ll sustain in the future if I don’t take the deal now,” he adds. “And so it’s like I almost completely abandon a more rational cost-benefit analysis approach.”

Hershfield experienced this

personally when he called a company to provide an estimate for resurfacing the bathtub in his home. The man offered to knock thousands of dollars off the price to do the work that day, because he was already there with all of the tools. If he had to leave and then return, the price would rise again.

“I was like, ‘I don’t know. I feel like we should do it,’” Hershfield says. “And my wife was like, ‘Let’s pump the brakes for a second. Like, did you want this earlier today?’” She asked him what else they could spend that money on, and they decided to pass. “We didn’t take the deal, and I’m so glad because, like, we ended up knocking the house down like three years later,” he says.

What Hershfield’s wife did in that moment is exactly what consumers ought to do: Take a moment to reorient yourself. Ask for some space and talk to your partner or call a friend to get a different perspective. “And if the salesperson still is pressing you, you might ask yourself how trustworthy they actually are,” he says.

It’s also possible that this high-pressure technique will sour a consumer on the whole interaction. “Consumers might see through that, and it can backfire and lead to distrust of the salesperson,” Hershfield says.

So what should I have done with the roofing salesperson crowing about the incredible price he could offer me for one night only?

“The most savvy way to handle it, is to say, ‘Well, you know, I can’t make a decision of this importance this quickly. So, you know, if I can still get that offer tomorrow, I’ll let you know,’” Campbell says. Give yourself the time to reflect and, ideally, to collect other estimates.

And if they warn you that you’ll lose out on the great deal by waiting a beat, “you say, ‘Okay, then I’m going to take that risk,’” Campbell says. “We have enough competition in the U.S. market that it’s very unlikely that they’re really getting a deal that nobody else is going to be able to offer you and that they won’t honor later.”

Even if there is a possibility that the low price is a one-time arrangement, “another way to look at this is, like, what is it worth to you to have the extra time to know that you made the right decision?” Hershfield says. “Is there a world in which it’s \$300 more next week? And they really don’t come down on that? Well, if they really don’t come down on that, then what you pay those \$300 for is your own ability to say ‘I made a well-informed, thoughtful decision.’”



ILLUSTRATION BY BEA CRESPO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

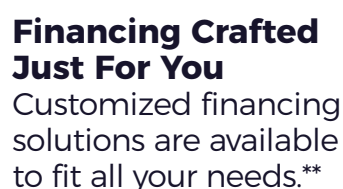




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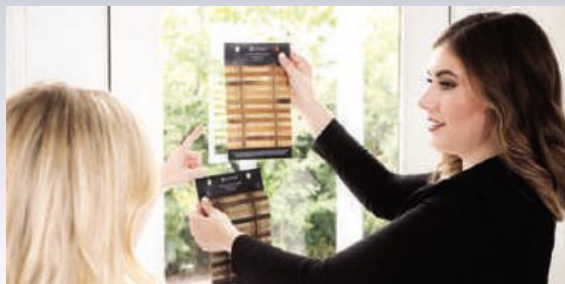


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## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

# 1905 D.C. rowhouse has a modern companion

BY SOPHIA SOLANO

This 1905 end-unit rowhouse, with its red brick facade and bay windows, resembles many of its neighbors on D.C.'s Capitol Hill. But a peep into the alley at 135 13th St. NE reveals something unusual about the property: a modern companion residence, a carriage house that was completed last year and has an exterior of charred wood and weathered steel.

The carriage house was a pandemic project for Ziad Demian, an architect, and his wife, Merrill St. Leger, an urban planner. They bought the property in 2001 and eventually decided that the ample lot and their creative visions pointed to a new use for the

garage site. In late 2020, they began design work to replace the garage with a carriage house that includes a one-car garage.

At the time, the city was encouraging the construction of accessory dwellings. "It made it a no-brainer to actually capture that space and fully develop it," Demian said.

The tricky — and exciting — part of the project was creating a residence that complemented rather than clashed with the neighborhood's historical architecture. The "completely compatible, but completely modern" result — with its charred wood (to strengthen and preserve the surface) and rusting Corten steel (to give it a protective and aestheti-

SEE HOME ON 11



**TOP:** The main house was renovated extensively over the 23 years it has been in the hands of the current owners.

**ABOVE:** The main living area in the carriage house, which opens to a patio, gets plenty of sunlight from floor-to-ceiling windows.

\$3,300,000

135 13th St. NE, Washington, D.C.

**Bedrooms/bathrooms:** 6/7

**Approximate square footage:** 4,520 total

**Lot size:** 2,905 square feet

**Features:** This Capitol Hill property includes two houses. A red brick rowhouse was built in 1905, and there have been extensive renovations. A carriage house, completed last year, has floor-to-ceiling windows, a charred wood and weathered Corten steel exterior and a balcony. The carriage house has a one-car garage.

**Listing agent:** George Olson, Coldwell Banker Realty



## HOME FROM 10

cally pleasing reddish patina)—has been recognized by the American Institute of Architects' D.C. chapter for its integration into a historic district.

"We wanted it to be a demonstrable project that actually showed that you can do something really great, and exciting and architecturally compelling using modern materials in different ways," Demian said.

The nearly 1,500-square-foot carriage house has floor-to-ceiling windows, two bedrooms, main-level living space and a kitchen. It also has two full bathrooms, a powder room, a den or office, a second-floor balcony and space to add an elevator.

The carriage house is currently rented, but Demian said the new owners could use it for family or guests.

Enhanced insulation, moisture-resistant building materials and a rainwater collection system that feeds into the garden make it "maintenance-free" he said. Solar panels on the main house have reduced electricity costs.

"We wanted to have all the amenities that you expect, and the benefit of sustainable solutions and resilient solutions that we as architects and urban planners think about," Demian said.

He and St. Leger, just the third owners of the property, renovated nearly every room in the main house, which was a rooming house when they bought it. The property is on the market now for \$3.3 million.

Over the past 23 years, they installed new floors, windows and bathrooms. They remodeled the kitchen and finished the basement. They also removed walls on the main level so "when you enter, you appreciate the size of the house," Demian said.



TRUPLACE/COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

The carriage house is nearly 1,500 square feet.

The main level of the 3,100-square-foot house has built-in floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, maple flooring and a living/dining area brightened by large windows along the alley. The level above the main level has four bedrooms,

and the lower level has a family room and a guest suite with a full bathroom.

The garden that connects the two houses "evolved over time," St. Leger said. When Demian and St. Leger bought the property,

their two young children benefited most from having an open yard. Later, the couple built a deck off the main house and planted magnolia, redbud and maple trees.

The carriage house project

added a patio, and St. Leger built raised beds and elevated planters for fruits and vegetables.

The property is half a block from Lincoln Park and within walking distance to Eastern Market and Barracks Row.

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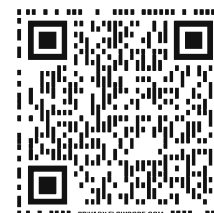
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PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN C TANKERSLEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

BUYING NEW

# Condos made for active seniors near Annapolis

BY AMY WORDEN

After Joan Pinsky’s husband died in the spring of 2023, she was prepared to wait the customary year before making any big life changes. But a billboard on Route 50, near her home in Annapolis, Maryland, caught her eye.

Pinsky stopped by the construction site for the Element at Mill Creek, a 140-unit condominium development for active adults 55 and older, about 5½ miles from downtown Annapolis.

She checked out the floor plans and bought a two-bedroom condo in May 2023. She moved in a year later.

“The most important thing was to stay close to my daughter [in Annapolis] and her family,” Pinsky said. “The location was what drew me to it.”

And she wound up with an

SEE BUYING NEW ON 13



## Element at Mill Creek

54 Old Mill Bottom Rd. N,  
Annapolis, Md. 21409

**Builder:** Christopher Cos.

**Developer:** Elm Street Development

**Type of home:** Condominium

**Prices:** \$472,000 to \$722,000, with some conditional closing cost credits.

**Bedrooms:** 1 to 3

**Bathrooms:** 2 to 3

**Square footage:** 1,076 to 1,853

**Storage:** Units start at \$5,000

**View model:**  
[elementatmillcreek.com](http://elementatmillcreek.com)

**ABOVE:** The living area in the staged two-bedroom unit 212 in the Commodore building.

**LEFT:** The pool table in the Commodore lounge.



## BUYING NEW FROM 12

unexpected benefit, a warm and friendly group of fellow newcomers.

Pinsky, 79, an epidemiologist retired from the National Institutes of Health, and four other buyers — three single women and a man — gathered in an Element model unit in October to talk about their new homes and their camaraderie.

“I’ve made friendships,” Pinsky said. “We do things together, and we help each other out.”

The group, all residents of the Element’s first building, epitomized the description “active seniors.” They were an energetic quintet in running shoes, pleased that they had downsized from single-family houses to condos right off Route 50 in Anne Arundel County, with easy access to Baltimore, Washington and Maryland’s Eastern Shore, as well as Annapolis.

One of the group, Sheryl Gelman, moved to the Element from Tysons Corner in Fairfax County to be closer to her daughter and her daughter’s family.

“The building is amazing, all the amenities,” she said. “I’m having fun with all the people.”

Ample wall space has allowed her to create a gallery for her extensive art collection. “It’s open and airy,” she said.

Gelman decided to take advantage of the newfound camaraderie and launched a Thirsty Thursdays happy hour in the lobby lounge in the group’s building. Another resident, Pat Turner, started a walking club.

Pinsky and other owners said they are looking forward to the 2025 opening of the second phase of the complex, where more amenities will be located. Eventually the complex will include a dog park, a party room, a fitness center, a pool table and a multisport simulator.

Also planned are a walking path through the nine-acre property and a pickleball court designed to minimize noise.

The Element’s three buildings have four levels, all above-ground, with a garage on the first level. The 48-unit Commodore is complete, with most units sold. The 44-unit Banyan, in the second phase, is expected to be done in the spring; more than half of its units were still available in early December. The 48-unit Admiral is expected to open in 2026.

There are nine unit floor plans, most with two bedrooms, two full bathrooms and 1,210 to 1,723 square feet of living space. Some two-bedroom units have dens. One-bedroom units, with about 1,076 square feet, have two full bathrooms and a den. All one-bedroom units in the Com-



PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN C TANKERSLEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



**FROM TOP: A multisport simulator is one of the amenities in the community. The kitchen in unit 212. A bedroom looking out at the balcony at unit 207.**

modore have been sold. The 1,729- to 1,853-square-foot three-bedroom units have either two full bathrooms and a powder room or three full bathrooms.

Most units have nine-foot ceilings (top-floor units have 10-foot-ceilings with “tray” ceilings in some rooms), flex space that can be used as a sitting room, an extra closet, an office or, as one resident put it, a “cloffice” — or a closet and an office. The closets in some floor plans include a side-by-side double walk-in model.

Each unit has a balcony, a stacked full-size washer-and-dryer set and top-of-the-line fixtures. The primary bedroom suites have en suite bathrooms and walk-in closets. Storage units, at additional cost, are provided on the garage level.

When the developer, Elm Street, acquired the property about five years ago, there were two old motels on the site. The

goal was to create an active-lifestyle community for seniors, something that did not exist in Annapolis, said Scott Sealy, sales manager for the Element.

“The market is starved for high-quality active-adult communities,” Sealy said.

Giving a visitor a tour of her condo, with its view of preserved woodland, Pinsky said she’s landed her dream retirement home.

“I am a happy camper,” she said. “I wake up every morning, and I have a smile on my face.”

**Nearby shops, restaurants:** Two supermarkets, Green Valley Marketplace and Graul’s, are within a five-minute drive, as is the Bay Hills Shopping Center, with a Walgreens, a coffee shop, a hair salon, a nail salon and several restaurants.

There is waterside dining nearby at The Point and Cantlers Riverside. The popular Red Hot & Blue barbecue restaurant is across Route 50. Downtown Annapolis, with its historic neighborhoods, boutiques and restaurants, is less than a 15-minute drive.

**Parks and recreation:** The development is expected to have a walking trail through a preserved forested area in the spring. Broadneck Park, less than three miles away, has a playground, a picnic area, a 1.4 mile walking trail, sports fields and a dog park. The nearly 800-acre Sandy Point State Park, at the foot of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, is five miles away. Sandy Point has a mile-long swimming beach, boat launching facilities, fishing and picnic areas.

**Schools:** Windsor Farm Elementary, Severn River Middle, Broadneck High.

**Transit:** The development has easy access to Route 50. The Severna Park Park & Ride, with commuter bus service to Washington, is five miles away.

**Number of units:** 140 units in three buildings when complete. The Commodore building has 10 units available. The 44-unit Banyan is expected to be completed in the spring, and more than half its units were available in early December.

**Fees:** \$210 to \$342 a month. Capital contribution is a one-time fee at settlement and ranges from \$420 to \$684.

**Parking:** Most units have a reserved garage space, but some have a reserved outdoor space. Additional outdoor spaces are available for purchase. Installation of private EV chargers is available for an additional cost.

**Pet policy:** No more than two pets per unit. No size or weight limits on dogs but no nuisance or dangerous pets are allowed. A dog park is being built as part of the development’s second phase, to be completed in the spring.



## ON PARENTING

## My daughters turn everything into a competition, even breakfast

BY MEGHAN LEAHY

**Dear Meghan:** How do I deal with my two kids' insistence that everything is perfectly equal between them? I have two girls, ages 3 and almost 6. For such a long time, my husband and I gave them "the same" thing, age permitting. I would set out the same plate of food, sometimes they were gifted the same toys and they each were read the same book. At the time, the younger one was very easygoing and in awe of her big sister, so it was easy and straightforward.

Now each kid has their own interests, food preferences, different things they want to play with, length of books they want to read and even clothing style differences. This is all great! But despite actually wanting different things, they insist on equality and go to great lengths to claim they got the "better" thing anytime it's different.

This turns into a million fights a day and exasperation for us parents. Just this morning, one girl woke up first and wanted a bagel for breakfast. Then the other woke up and before seeing anything asked for cereal. Then they both are at the table and arguing over who won breakfast. I'm guessing this is something that comes along with sibling territory, but we are at the end of our rope.

— **Tired**

**Tired:** Thank you for your note; you are not alone in struggling with making things equal for your children and the good news is you can stop doing this right now. As in: immediately. As in: yesterday. The sooner you stop creating or abetting any "perceived" equality between your children, the sooner the family can find some harmony.

When children are really little, doing everything "the same" for them makes sense. Why wouldn't you want to streamline your routine and processes? Very young children take all of their cues from their parents, so if Daddy likes to read the same book every night, that is

what the children want to do! The same with food, clothing, bedtime, you name it. It is a beautiful and simple time.

But as children begin to grow — beginning as early as age 2 or 3 — they rapidly differentiate from their parents. The only other time your child will seek to be like someone else is when puberty hits, and they want to be like their peers and friends. Otherwise, it is all aboard the independence train from here on out! And believe me, there isn't a pediatrician or child psychologist who believes it's healthy for siblings (three years apart, no less) to be on the same page with everything. And so, while your children are equal in receiving your love, human needs are never equally met. We want to welcome them to this reality sooner rather than later.

Your girls will continue to grow and change, so the real work here is one of leadership. Don't worry, I am not going to pile on and tell you that you are doing a bad job; you aren't. Instead, I want to empower you to find your boundaries and stick to them in a firm but flexible way.

To begin, both parents need to sit

together and make a list of the hot-button items in the family. Choose *one* of the problems, like breakfast choices, and talk it out. What is easiest for both of you (not the children) every morning? This isn't prison; you can consider their preferences, dietary needs, etc., but the point is that we aren't going to wait for immature people to make better decisions. That first move is up to you. You can create a breakfast schedule with them or they can each choose from two options every morning, but the important thing here is that the adults are running the show, not the children.

When the children get upset about bagels or cereal or whatever other perceived inequality, you simply have to wait it out. They aren't going to starve and the tantrum will eventually pass. The surest way to make all of this worse is to wait for them to agree, to be mature and to be "happy." Don't lecture, don't problem-solve and don't punish; simply hold the boundary and keep the morning moving. It will be pure misery for a couple of days, and then I am hoping it will improve.

Another way to improve these

disagreements is to empower the children to do the work themselves. Teaching them how to pour cereal, clean up and work together (even a little bit) will move them from adversaries to co-conspirators. And while yes, they will still always argue and tussle, there is no reason to assume that they cannot work together. All around the world and in many cultures, very young children are expected to work with each other and for the family. This sense of purpose and significance is one of the most important skills you can help your children develop.

"Hunt, Gather, Parent" by Michaelene Doucleff is an inspirational read for what children and families are capable of, and it will remind you that your children are good and capable of more than you think. I know it is an intense time, but step into your leadership, give them true choices (and allow them to accept the consequences of those choices) and teach them how to contribute for the good of the family. It can be done! Good luck.

Send parenting questions to Leahy at [onparenting@washpost.com](mailto:onparenting@washpost.com).



ILLUSTRATION BY MARÍA ALCONADA BROOKS/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK





ILLUSTRATION BY JOSÉ L. SOTO/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK

# Want your kid to eat healthier? Think addition, not subtraction.

BY ANNIE MIDORI ATHERTON

Oh, to be a parent in the 1980s, when you could blissfully pick up fast food for the family without a thought of the ills of ultra-processed foods. Today, getting dinner on the table can feel far more fraught. It's never been easier to access a variety of foods — or harder to sift through all the conflicting information about what's healthy (and what's pretending to be). Meanwhile, kids are as picky and opinionated as ever.

Complicating matters is the lack of clear consensus about what level of processing makes something “ultra-processed” or harmful. “If it's confusing to scientists, imagine for consumers,” says Marina Chaparro, a registered dietitian and the founder of Nutrichicos, a bilingual pediatric and family nutrition practice. Popular maxims like “No ingredients you can't pronounce” can be a bit oversimplified, Chaparro says — after all, even vitamins used to fortify foods have technical names.

Shifting away from viewing foods as “good” or “bad” is one

simple place to start. “Often we have this mentality of limit or avoid,” Chaparro says. “And instead, I'm like, how can we add some more stuff?” Focus on adding ingredients that will make your child's meal nutritionally denser rather than fighting with them to eat something else entirely. It's also about the child's overall diet. In other words, we don't need to demonize particular foods if we're thinking of the big picture.

Below are tips from nutritionists on ways to make popular dishes healthier for kids.

## Mac and cheese

Parents watching their own carbs and fats might cringe at their kid's love of mac and cheese, but nutritionists say this classic comfort food can be part of a healthy diet. A bevy of brands now offer options that are higher in protein and fiber than traditional kinds. Banza's chickpea pasta has 16 grams of protein per serving (compared with 10 grams in Kraft Mac & Cheese), and Goodles, which is similarly high in protein and fiber, contains vitamins from plants. If you're

making mac and cheese from scratch, look for pasta that incorporates chickpea or pea protein, such as Barilla's Protein+® Pasta.

That said, these options have subtle taste differences that won't suit every kid, and Chaparro doesn't tell people to ban the classic box brands if that's what works for them. Instead, focus on what you can add, such as frozen peas, broccoli, carrots or even ground flaxseeds. Cooking the dish with whole milk or a little olive oil can also help add in healthy fats. Canned pumpkin puree is another easy, healthy addition, says Kacie Barnes, a registered dietitian and founder of the blog Mama Knows Nutrition. She adds a few tablespoons to her recipe for homemade mac and cheese and uses more in a recipe for pumpkin pasta designed for picky toddlers. She also suggests using bone broth in cooking the pasta to add protein.

And while not traditional, kimchi, a popular Korean condiment that's made from fermented cabbage and acts as a natural probiotic, is an increasingly popular topping for mac and cheese. (It can be an acquired taste, but I

can attest that my 3-year-old enjoys a small amount).

## Breakfast and snack bars

A go-to item for many busy parents is a packaged breakfast or snack bar, which can be loaded with sugar. For example, Nature's Bakery strawberry fig bar has 14 grams of added sugar — more than half the daily limit recommended for kids over 2, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. (For kids under 2, the organization recommends avoiding added sugars altogether.)

That doesn't mean bars can't be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet — as long as people understand how similar they are to a cookie. That could mean making sure a kid doesn't get too many of them, or not offering a bar *and* a dessert afterward. Always read the nutrition labels before buying, and look for varieties with low or no added sugars. Having protein or fiber is a plus as well. Once Upon a Farm refrigerated oat bars, for instance, have no added sugar. If you're feeling ambitious, you could also make your own no-sugar-added bars. Barnes has a recipe for baked

oatmeal bars that uses pumpkin spice for flavor, along with a whole crushed banana.

## Dry cereal

As with mac and cheese, the key with dry cereal is looking at the nutrition label on the box and adding other ingredients in the bowl (or on the side) that are high in vitamins, protein and fiber. “If you're avoiding the super-sugary options, it can be nutritious,” Barnes says. “A lot of them are fortified, and that can be a really helpful thing in their overall nutrition, but there are also some good whole-grain options that are lower in sugar.”

Barnes is a fan of plain, old-fashioned Cheerios — something she says she gets pushback for online because parents are so afraid of serving their kids ultra-processed foods and additives. “What people don't realize is that a bowl of original Cheerios is not as different from a bowl of oatmeal as they might think,” Barnes says. “The primary ingredient ... is whole-grain oats.”

While there are a few additives (including vitamins and minerals) and tripotassium phosphate (for texture), “the presence of these additives is not concerning from a health and nutrition per-



# How to make your kids’ food healthier

FOOD FROM 15

als) and tripotassium phosphate (for texture), “the presence of these additives is not concerning from a health and nutrition perspective, but a lot of people worry when they don’t know what

something is or why it’s in their food,” Barnes says.

She also likes Three Wishes cereals. The unsweetened one, made with chickpeas, pea protein and tapioca, is grain-free and zero-sugar and has 8 grams of protein per serving. Even if

your kid refuses to eat a plainer variety of cereal, there are ways to minimize the sugar. Chaparro recommends mixing a favorite cereal with one that is lower in sugar and higher in fiber. For example, blend Wheat Chex and Chocolate Chex, or plain Cheer-

os with Honey Nut Cheerios. Top the bowl with nuts, fruit or seeds to round out the meal. Berries are a classic topping for cereal, and frozen ones are fine — just zap them a few at a time in the microwave. Chaparro likes to add walnuts and ground flaxseeds. “Incorporating that addition is just part of my everyday life.”

## Chicken nuggets

Chicken nuggets are such a common favorite for kids that you’d be forgiven for wanting to pop some in the oven nightly. But frozen nuggets can be high in sodium and saturated and trans fat. Applegate Organics and Earth’s Best are two brands Barnes recommends checking out. Making chicken tenders from scratch and baking them or using an air fryer can allow you to control the fat and salt content (and neither method is much more laborious than assembling frozen ones). Barnes’s recipe for chicken tenders incorporates both breadcrumbs and crushed Fiber One cereal.

For kids who can’t get enough bite-size chicken, Asian seasonings add flavor without drowning the meat in fat. I find that simply splashing a little soy sauce on my kid’s pieces of chicken breast makes her far more inclined to eat it than if it’s served plain.

## Ice cream

TikTok is awash with ice cream alternatives that call for freezing Greek yogurt with various yummy ingredients. One of the desserts Barnes makes most often for her kids is frozen banana bites. Simply break a banana into pieces, add Greek yogurt (plain or vanilla), drizzle in some honey, and blend the whole thing up. Freeze it, and later cut it into little pieces. “My kids really like that,” Barnes says. The ripper and browner the banana, the sweeter it will be. Nutritionist Alissa Steinberg makes Frozen Reese’s Bars by mixing peanut butter and Greek yogurt, dropping dollops on a sheet pan, freezing them and then dipping them in melted chocolate. Other ice cream alternatives incorporate avocado. The beauty of healthier ice cream recipes is that they are very forgiving and customizable.

And there are plenty of ways to make traditional ice cream more nutritious, too. Try fruits such as berries, mango, kiwi and melon, then add some crunch with peanuts, almonds or pistachios, all of which contain vitamins, fiber and healthy fats. By loading up the bowl with whole foods, you can sneakily reduce the amount of ice cream (and, thus, the added sugar) while still serving up a delicious, filling treat.



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