

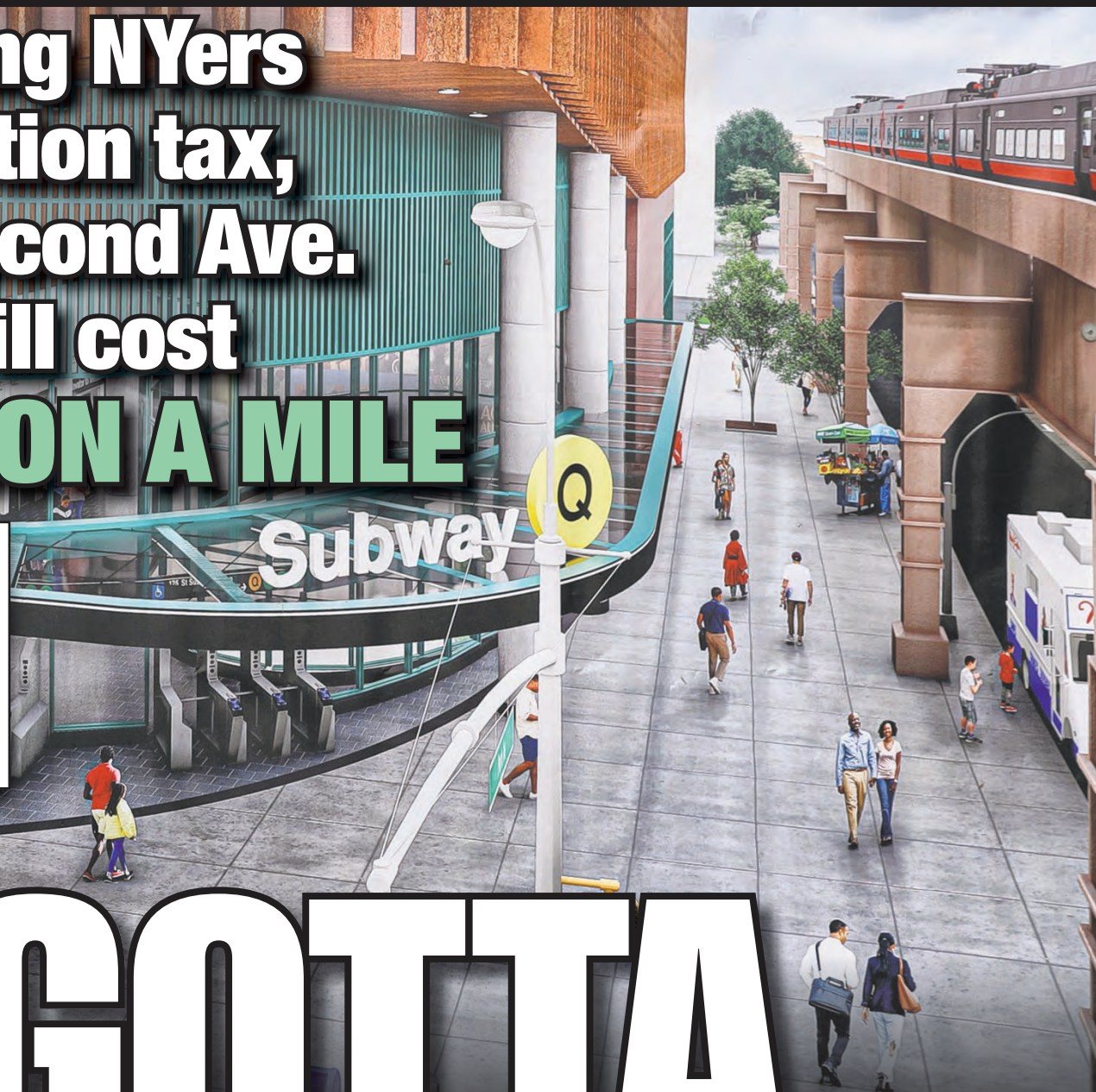


After mugging NYers with congestion tax, MTA says Second Ave. extension will cost **\$4.3 BILLION A MILE**



The money pit that is the MTA got deeper yesterday, as the agency said it needed more than \$240 million for consultants on the Second Avenue subway extension — which will cost an astounding \$7.7 billion to add three stops to the Upper East Side (rendering of one pictured).

PAGES 4-5



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City-killer asteroid to return

We could experience a rock market crash. Asteroid 2024 YR4 won't hit Earth in December 2032, but that doesn't mean we're out of the woods forever.

Researchers warn that the "city killer" space rock or another "extinction"-causing asteroid could approach our planet again in the future, according to the Conversation.

On Feb. 19, asteroid YR4 — between 131 and 295 feet in diameter — had an impact risk of 3.1%, making it the most dangerous space rock since NASA's Center for Near Earth Object Studies Sentry Risk Table began over 10 years ago.

Its collision probability dipped to 0.0017% a week later — effectively rendering us safe for the time being — but the asteroid's unique orbit poses a threat.

YR4 is in a class of asteroids called resonant asteroids, trapped in a trajectory that puts them within close proximity of the Earth every couple years, increasing the likelihood of them hitting home, according to the Daily Galaxy.

If YR4 were to hit, its deep impact would release an energy blast equivalent to 8 megatons of TNT — roughly 500 times the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Ben Cost

Way to glow Neptune pix

Neptune's glowing auroras are captured in the best detail yet by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.

Hints of them were first faintly detected in ultraviolet light during a flyby of the Voyager 2 spacecraft in 1989. Webb captured Neptune's shimmering lights in infrared light, providing direct evidence they exist.

NASA's aurora images, released Wednesday, were published in the journal Nature Astronomy.

Auroras occur when electrically charged particles from space enter and collide with molecules in the atmosphere, creating reactions that emit light. AP

\$2K to save beloved chicken, but she died

SCHOOL OUT OF CLUCK

SQUAWK OF THE TOWN: Kids at PS 107 are mourning the loss of Waffles (inset and below, left) who died at the school's "homestead" (far left).



Ali Annunziato



By NICOLE ROSENTHAL

This chicken is cooked.

Parents in the posh Park Slope neighborhood shelled out more than \$2,000 to cover medical bills for one of their kids' schoolyard chickens — but it died anyway.

Five-month-old hen Waffles died from egg-laying complications after she was rushed to an Upper East Side vet from the "homestead" of Brooklyn's PS 107, with a teacher forking over \$2,100 out of her own pocket to try to save the bird.

"[It's been a] mixed bag," Ali Annunziato told The Post of students' reactions to Waffles' death Wednesday. "Lots of tears in the next class. No tears in the next."

'Easy to hold'

"Some kids were very close to Waffles because she was the easiest chicken to hold," the teacher said. "So she spent most of her days in someone's arms."

Annunziato is hoping to get medical insurance for the other chicks to avoid further shell

shock on any bills. The kids, meanwhile, are coping with the tragedy with a planned mosaic memorial.

A parent had rushed the doomed hen Monday in a Tupperware container to The Schwarzman Animal Medical Center on the Upper East Side. The bird underwent X-rays and other testing.

"I called every avian vet in Brooklyn, and not one person would see a chicken because of bird flu concerns," said the PE teacher, who started the coop this year.

The hen was diagnosed with a prolapsed vent or torn cloaca. It was injected with hormones intended to temporarily stop egg production during healing — which was expected to last three to six months before Waffles went off to the

big coop in the sky Tuesday.

The online fundraiser had netted the teacher \$1,600 of the money she put down.

"Otherwise, it's coming from my paycheck," Annunziato said. "That's a paycheck."

"It takes a village, more so than I thought it would be," Annunziato reflected.

"These parents have really come together and supported."

The attempt to save Waffles is bittersweet. But the teacher hopes there's a lesson in the tragedy.

"It's the social-emotional type stuff, having compassion and sympathy for an animal that's not feeling well," she said of managing the coop.

Waffles' friends Pickle, Stormy, Sunny, Diamond and Pom Pom — all named by different grades at the school — will continue living at the homestead.

Eggs to food bank

Annunziato, who teaches kindergarten through fifth grade at the school, said that PS 107 was the first school she's worked at to approve having chickens.

The new responsibilities include arriving at the school at 5:30 a.m. each day to take care of the flock at the school's "homestead" — a converted garden once infested with rats.

The eggs, which just began to be laid last week, will be donated by the dozen to the Community Help in Park Slope food pantry starting Wednesday.

The community coop — which is also open to students from other area schools — will have a "PS 107 homestead grand opening" celebration on May 10 with the Park Slope Civic Council and local elected officials in attendance.



Ali Annunziato

By HALEY BROWN,
CARL CAMPANILE
and MATT TROUTMAN

The MTA's spending is like a runaway train.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's board rubber-stamped nearly \$250 million Wednesday for consultants in its already colossally pricey, long-delayed Second Avenue subway extension.

The mega-plan's Phase 2 to grow the Q line by 1.8 miles on the Upper East Side is expected to cost \$7.7 billion — or an eye-watering roughly \$4.3 billion per mile — making it one of the costliest subway projects in the world.

The lavish outlay comes as MTA officials plead poverty while pursuing an entirely separate, bank-breaking \$68.4 billion capital plan for 2025-29.

Transit-agency bigs have warned that New Yorkers are in for another "Summer of Hell" without that funding, and the MTA and Gov. Hochul have sparred with President Trump over the need to gouge drivers with \$9 congestion-pricing tolls to pay for subway improvements.

Legions of MTA critics, such as upstate Sen. James Skoufis, have argued the MTA's spending on projects is simply out of control.

"The MTA spends taxpayer dollars with reckless disregard — then turns around and asks the Legislature to bail them out every year," Skoufis said Wednesday.

100 years in planning

Big Apple leaders for nearly 100 years eyed a Second Avenue subway line on Manhattan's East Side, but it only started becoming a reality in 2007, with the ground-breaking on Phase 1 of the project.

It took 10 years, however, for that first extension — which added three stops on the Q line between 63rd Street to 96th Street — to become a reality, finally opening in 2017.

The first phase cost \$4.45 billion — a per-mile cost of roughly \$2.5 billion.

The Second Avenue subway extension's Phase 2 will grow the Q line from 96th Street to East 125th Street and Lexington Avenue, adding three new stations along the way.

The total construction cost for the second phase is projected to be \$6.9 billion, with another \$700 million coming from financing costs, an MTA representative told The Post.

Roughly half the project's cost — \$3.4 billion — will be paid by a grant that had been awarded by the Biden administration, although the funds have yet to be



EPA / MTA (Hochul)

ROUGH RIDE: Extending the Q line up into Harlem will cost \$4.3 billion per mile — using financing that (from near right) then-Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, MTA Chairman Janno Lieber and Gov. Hochul discussed in 2023.



Runaway train

First proposed in 1920, it took nearly a century for the MTA to open Phase 1 of the Q line extension on the Upper East Side. Now the agency wants billions to add three more stops. And who knows if the proposed T Train line south will ever be built.



NY Post Design

Eye-popping contracts that the MTA approved Wednesday:

■ \$186M to companies AECOM and HNTB, two of the largest construction management firms in NY, to oversee construction (up to 91 months, or 7½ years)

■ \$60M to engineering consultants WSP USA Inc. and STV Incorporated for design tweaks

■ Consultants accounted for a whopping 20% of Phase 1's \$4.45B cost, a study found, saying major cities all over the world do this work internally instead, saving money

■ Total cost of Phase 2, which is 1.8 miles and three subway stops: \$7.7B

Amid congest rip-off, \$4.3B per

appropriated, officials said.

MTA Chairman and CEO Janno Lieber defended the project's price tag, arguing the New York City subway system carries as many people as the entire US aviation system every day.

"Nobody complains that the federal government pays a ton to run the air traffic control system, or that it pays a ton to invest in airports when it carries on a daily basis fewer people than the New York City subway system," he told The Post.

MTA board members at their meeting earlier Wednesday unanimously approved two pieces of spending on consultants for Phase 2 of the Second Avenue project:

■ A \$186 million contract with AECOM and HNTB, two of New York's largest infrastructure consulting firms, to oversee Phase 2.

■ \$60 million toward engineering and design firms STV Inc. and WSP USA Inc. Those firms' total design-services contract for the project has now ballooned to

\$255 million, up from the original \$120 million, records show.

'Efficient' spending

Lieber defended hiring consultants as "efficient" for "big projects" such as the Second Avenue subway, arguing the MTA would otherwise have to temporarily hire and fire in-house employees.

But Transport Workers Union President John Samuelson blasted the \$186 million consultant contract as part of the problem.

"Save money? Baloney," he said. "This is Janno's profit-making consultant contractor swamp."

The funds should instead be "invested in the workforce to move the MTA forward," Samuelson said, claiming Lieber has "deliberately diminished the in-house capacity and created this swamp of outside contractors."

Pricey consultants have been blamed for much of the massive cost for the Second Avenue Subway's first phase.

The MTA spent \$656 million

NEWEST MTA TRAIN HEIST



mile for Second Ave. subway extension

on consultants to design and engineer that phase, twice as much as it cost to actually dig the subway tunnel, NYU researchers found in a 2023 study.

The cost of the beginning phase was between eight and 12 times more expensive than comparable projects in Italy, Turkey and Sweden, the study found.

MTA officials such as Lieber have argued a better measure of project's cost effectiveness is looking how much it costs per rider.

The Second Avenue subway

project's per-rider cost is estimated at \$62,500 for Phase 2, in the middle of the pack worldwide, officials contended.

John Kaehny, executive director of government-accountability group Reinvent Albany, argued the MTA's highest priority should be replacing the subway system's 100-year-old electrical systems and signals.

He did defend the \$186 million contract as "reasonable" because it's aimed at cutting down the overall cost.

"There were billions in cost overruns for the first leg of the Second Avenue subway and LIRR East Side Access," he said. "They were disasters."

Straphangers stunned

Some Big Apple subway riders along the Q line Wednesday said they still don't understand the sky-high costs.

"The stations are nice, and I know that costs money, but it doesn't cost \$3 billion," said med-

ical tech Luis Correia, 41, of East Harlem.

"I'm like a lot of people who use this line — we're excited by the extension because I live in East Harlem and it will save me a lot of time in my commute every day. But the fact that the fare keeps going up because the MTA is spending hundreds of millions to pay off unions or whatever they're doing is really aggravating."

Upper East Side resident Peter Pagnotto, 49, said he favors ex-

panding the Q line but the cost arguably cancels out the benefits.

"You feel like you're being suckered," he said. "I just feel like this MTA and all these agencies involved with these kinds of projects are all deadlocked and it's impossible to fix them because they're too big. I'm honestly amazed that they're even able to handle making a Phase 2, with all their problems."

Additional reporting by Reuven Fenton

hbrown@nypost.com

Notes stashed in ‘CEO killer’s socks



MESSAGE ‘PASSED’: Luigi Mangione (above) opted not to wear socks that were later found to be concealing notes (right).

By BEN KOCHMAN

A secret admirer of Luigi Mangione snuck a heart-shaped note to him in a pair of argyle socks he was allowed to bring to his latest circus-like court appearance, a new legal filing reveals.

“Luigi, we are rooting for you! Keep your head held high and know there are thousands of people wishing you luck,” read the notes, which were “secreted” in cardboard that the pair of fresh socks were wrapped around, according to a filing Wednesday from Mangione’s lawyers.

The note was signed “K/Free Luigi.”

But the accused killer — and heartthrob to his legions of googly-eyed groupies — refused to wear the socks at the February hearing because he felt they “didn’t look good,” the court docs from the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office state.

Prosecutors also revealed new details about Mangione’s arrest at an Altoona, Pa., McDonald’s — including that the suspected assassin was carry-

ing four zip-ties, a roll of black duct tape and a blue Polaroid camera when cops nabbed him.

Law enforcement recovered personal grooming equipment in fashion-conscious Mangione’s backpack as well, the filings released Wednesday show.

The Manhattan DA’s Office pushed back on Mangione’s claims of unfair treatment, noting he’s actually getting “special treatment” by being allowed to

change out of jail garb for court appearances.

Court officers uncovered the love note — and a second hidden note addressed to “Joan” — inside a bag of clothing provided by Mangione’s defense counsel ahead of his Feb. 21 hearing, according to the filings.

“Thank you so much for trusting me and helping me navigate this entire disservice,” said the message to Joan. “You are amazing and I am grateful!”

Prosecutors did not reveal the Joan in question.

A p.r. pro, Joan Vollero, has been working as a spokeswoman for Mangione’s legal team. She declined to comment when asked Wednesday if the note was addressed to her.

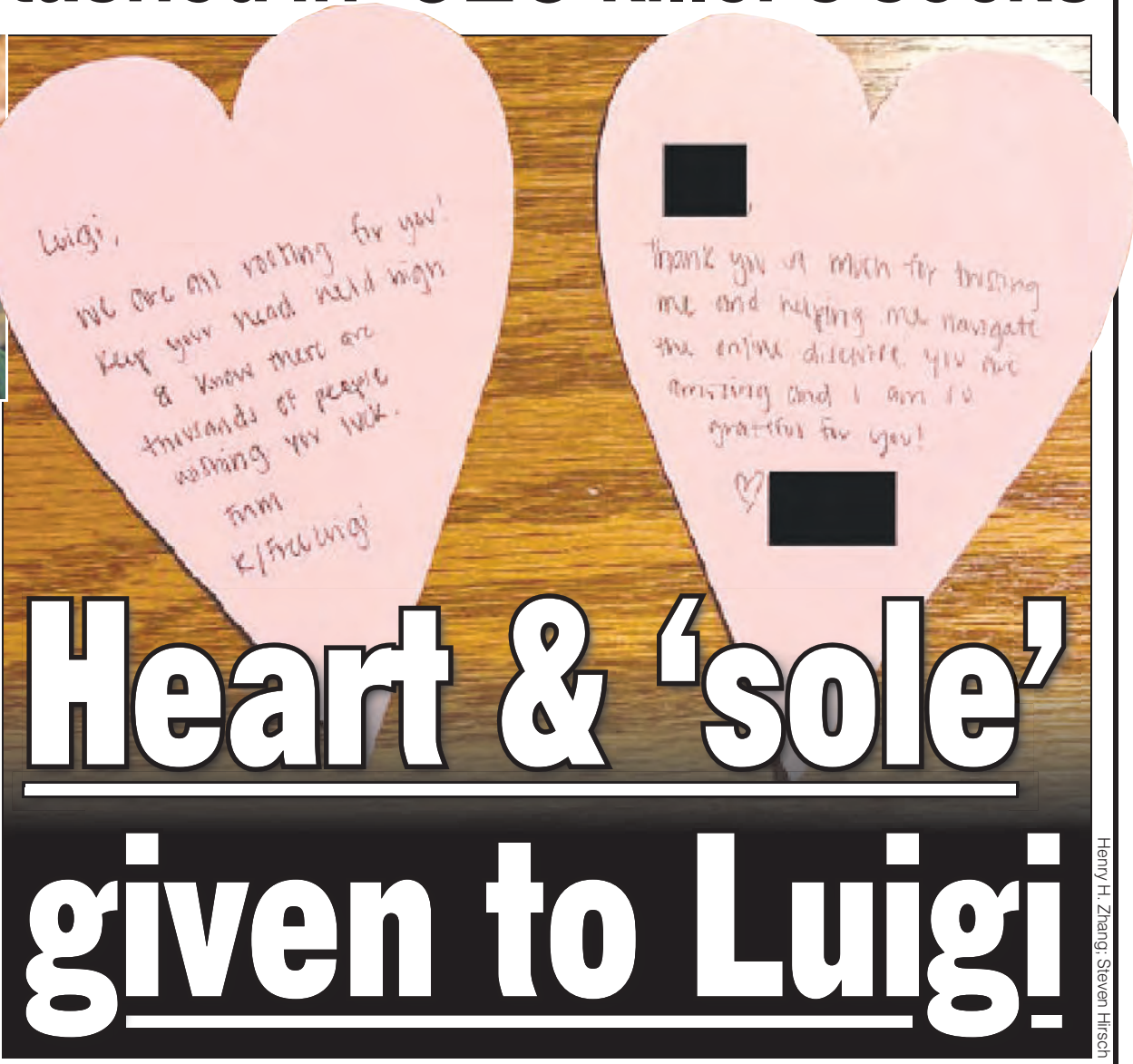
Mangione’s lawyers claimed ignorance.

“In the haste of the situation, the defense inadvertently did not see that there were two heart-shaped notes,” they wrote in a fil-

ing Wednesday night. “This was obviously inadvertent as one of the ... notes was not even addressed to Mr. Mangione.”

The DA “ostensibly realized the innocent nature of this event ... as they did not bother to alert the Court at the time,” it said.

Mangione has pleaded not guilty to charges that he killed UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson on a Midtown sidewalk Dec. 4.



Heart & ‘sole’ given to Luigi

Henry H. Zhang; Steven Hirsch

Albany nearing school cell ban

Lawmakers in both houses of the state Legislature are getting behind Gov. Hochul’s proposal to restrict kids’ phone use during the school day.

The Senate had previously shown some slight disagreement with the governor’s plan over whether schools should have some leeway to allow students to use phones during the school day, for instance during recess or in between classes.

“The majority of the members are more comfortable with a bell-to-bell approach,” state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Westchester) revealed to reporters Wednesday.

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx) suggested that his chamber was largely in agreement that the policy should be bell-to-bell.

“The conference is probably much closer on bell-to-bell,” he said Tuesday.

Under Hochul’s proposal, school districts would have to develop a plan that prohibits students from using devices like phones from “bell-to-bell.” The governor included a pot of \$13.5 million to help schools implement the requirement.

“I think we’re going to come out with something that puts kids first, that doesn’t make teachers enforcers,” Senate Education Committee Chair Shelley Mayer (D-Westchester), told The Post.

“I have a lot of admiration for school districts that have tried to do this on their own and I’m confident we’ll come out with a very good result,” Mayer said. *Vaughn Golden*

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■ Evening Win-4 Wed.: 7847

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■ Lotto Wed.: 29, 30, 31, 41, 44, 50; Bonus: 58

■ Pick-10 Wed.: 16, 22, 23, 24, 28, 33, 34, 36, 41, 44, 46, 54, 56, 58, 64, 65, 68, 70, 74, 80

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■ Powerball Wed.: 5, 20, 29, 39, 53; Powerball: 6; Power Play: x3

NEW JERSEY

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Pick-4 Wed.: 2128; Fireball: 9

Cash-5 Xtra Wed.: 16, 19, 26, 31, 45; Xtra: 3

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TRACY VALLERAND
Anguish over son's life.

Birth of rage at 'abuser' of her son

WATERBURY, Conn. — The biological mother of the man who says he was held captive for 20 years came forward Wednesday to blast the alleged wicked stepmother who is accused of abusing her son.

Tracy Vallerand also tried to explain why she gave up her son shortly after he was born.

"I don't hate people at all," Vallerand said of Kimberly Sullivan. "This one, I hate."

Sullivan, 56, had a brief hearing that ended before she could even enter a plea on the cruelty and kidnapping charges she faces. She is out on \$300,000 bail after she was accused of forcing her stepson to live in an 8-foot-by-9-foot room that was locked from the outside.

Vallerand, 52, was in court with her own daughter, Heather Tessman, for the hearing.

She told reporters that she gave up her son when he was just 6 months old and left the boy's father, Kraigg Sullivan, to raise him with his new wife.

"Things didn't work out between the two of us, and I was thinking that I was giving my son a better chance at a full life. If I had known ... what ... I just can't fathom it," Vallerand said, according to NBC Connecticut.

After the hearing, Sullivan's attorney, Ioannis A. Kaloidis, said the proceedings had been continued to Friday because the state wants to put her under electronic monitoring.

"I understand the whole world has jumped on those allegations and has already convicted my client," he said. *Kevin Sheehan and Steve Janoski*

\$\$-GRUB LANDLORD



BITTER TASTE: Restaurateurs Manon Olivon and hubby François-Tanguy came to Manhattan to open a Soho eatery (above). But after his mysterious death back in France, their NY landlord played hardball on the lease.

Stiffs widow of 200G after death of chef husband

By LISA FICKENSCHER

A French chef mysteriously died last month after he and his wife plunked down more than \$200,000 to open their dream restaurant in New York City, and now a heartless landlord is refusing to refund the family's lifesavings, The Post has learned.

François-Tanguy Olivon and wife Manon had planned on moving with their young children from France to open Chez Fanfan in the trendy SoHo neighborhood.

That was after selling their restaurant in Saint-Brieuc, Brittany, last year.

The couple had forked over a \$166,000 deposit and \$47,500 for two months rent for January and February to Robert Moskowitz, owner of New York-based Only Properties LLC, Manon told The Post.

But before they could open the brasserie at 510 Broome St., François-Tanguy disappeared during a vacation in the south of France after making a frantic call to his wife at 1 a.m. Feb. 22, according to

local media reports.

"He was shouting at me for help, to come and get him right away," Manon said at the time, according to media reports. She never again got to speak to her husband.

A passerby later reported seeing him on the night he disappeared wearing a "completely torn" T-shirt. CCTV captured him falling off a bridge in the French city of Bayonne. His body was pulled from the Adour River 12 days later.

The heartbroken widow informed Moskowitz of the tragedy in a March 1 letter, asking that he return at least a portion of her lifesavings.

Plea falls on deaf ears

"Today I am not writing to a landlord — I am writing to a man. A man who, I hope, can look beyond clauses and figures and understand that sometimes life puts us through unimaginable trials that we cannot face alone," she wrote.

Moskowitz, however, refused to

return any of the cash. Instead, Only Properties' lawyer played hardball, threatening to hold the penniless widow accountable for the entire 10-year lease — which would total \$3 million — unless she signed a "surrender agreement."

"Refusing to sign the surrender agreement will not result in a return of your security deposit, but it will result in you being held fully responsible for all of the obligations set forth in the parties' lease agreement," Only Properties attorney Nicole Wankine wrote in the March 3 letter to Manon.

Manon ended up signing the surrender agreement.

"I don't have anything," Manon told The Post in an email. "I don't have a house anymore because we sold it a while ago to move to New York. I no longer have a car either. I no longer have a job because my husband and I have sold our ... restaurant in Brittany."

She has started a GoFundMe campaign to help with her expenses. It had raised just \$550 as of Wednesday.

Moskowitz via his lawyer declined to comment.

"This scenario is highly unusual," said New York restaurant leasing attorney Jeff Margolis, adding that Soho is a hot real-estate market where it shouldn't be difficult to attract other tenants.

"There are a lot of landlords out there who would like to be helpful ... and not take that cavalier or draconian position."

The landlord, he added, could have said, "We are going to hold this money but let's see if we can find another tenant quickly and give back some of the security deposit."

Experts noted Moskowitz did nothing illegal in retaining the deposit and rent payments.

Still, other contractors who worked with the Olivons to open Chez Fanfan said they forgave their fees after the tragedy.

"I waived my legal fee," liquor-license attorney Max Bookman told The Post, adding "you don't collect money from a widow whose husband just died."

lfickenscher@nypost.com



Provided by Manon Olivon

OPERATION OVERSHARE

Undeniably a massive breach

‘PEOPLE GO

By JOSH CHRISTENSON,
DIANA GLEBOVA,
STEVEN NELSON and CHRIS NESI

IT is undeniable, or at least it should be, that “information providing advance warning that the US or its allies are preparing an attack” is to be classified as “top secret.” That is what is mandated by the government’s own Classification Guide (section 3.4.3), which is promulgated by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. I don’t see how the Trump administration, or anyone else, could credibly contend that Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s texts on an unclassified Signal communications chain did not contain such advance warnings.

This is not a matter of the righteousness of the strikes. The Houthis are Iran’s proxies. Their piracy and missile strikes have devastated shipping commerce in the Red Sea while ratcheting up Iran’s ongoing, multifront war against Israel. It was a worthy military operation, and Secretary Hegseth, his administration colleagues, and President Trump deserve credit for carrying it out.

They have begun to restore deterrence after four years of Biden administration passivity, which is vital for American interests.

Unconscionable blunder

But the blunder of discussing the details on a Signal group chat that is not authorized for the communication of national defense information — to say nothing of top secret intelligence — was an unconscionable security breach.

Under Executive Order 13256, which has controlled classification determinations for decades, information is “top secret” if its “unauthorized disclosure . . . reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security.”

Obviously, the unauthorized disclosure of an imminent combat



ANDREW C. MCCARTHY

operation could tip off the enemy and place American pilots, sailors, and soldiers in exceptionally grave danger. It could lead to mission failure, which itself could have catastrophic ramifications.

The fact that a disaster did not occur this time does not excuse the breach. On that score, it is remarkable how administrations of both parties retreat to the same positions in such scandals. The offending officials implausibly deny that they have illegally transmitted defense secrets and incoherently add that they did not, in any event, intend any harm to national security.

This was exactly the tune sung by President Barack Obama and his top aides during Hillary Clinton’s email scandal.

Bipartisan recklessness

On the other hand, the party out of power is quick to demand that the malfeasant officials be summarily dismissed and that the Justice Department file felony charges — a posture about which they somehow develop amnesia when their side is back in charge and similarly reckless.

The Republicans who zealously rebuked Clinton are now either mum or rallying to the defense of Hegseth and the Trump administration.

I like Pete Hegseth. That said, it was reckless to disseminate information about imminent combat ops over a non-approved chat app.

Trouble comes to every administration. The question is whether leaders make it better or worse. Suffice it to say the Trump administration is not making this one better. The result is that the value of a crucial operation against the Houthis, an American enemy, is being lost.

Andrew C. McCarthy is a former federal prosecutor.

WASHINGTON — Security experts have sounded off on Signal-gate, saying President Trump’s closest advisers just walked him “off the plank” with the “really scary” group-text slipup — which was revealed in far greater detail Wednesday by The Atlantic.

The newly released messages show Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth giving National Security Adviser Michael Waltz and other top US officials — as well as Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg — a blow-by-blow account of the March 15 attack on Houthi terrorists in Yemen.

“This was the Secretary of Defense relaying operational information regarding our ongoing actions against a foreign adversary,” Dan Meyer, a partner at Tully Rinckey specializing in national security issues, told The Post.

“It’s operational data. It’s about an ongoing mission. It was classified, and it doesn’t have to be marked. It doesn’t have to say ‘secret’ or ‘top secret’ on it. It was classified,” he said. “[It’s] really scary . . . The consequences for American pilots could have been catastrophic.”

The fiasco — the first major scandal of the second Trump administration — has sparked bipartisan concern about information security and the judgment of some of the country’s top-ranking national security and defense officials.

Goldberg was somehow included in the high-level Signal group chat — titled “Houthi PC small group channel” — with Hegseth, Waltz and more than a dozen other officials including Vice President J.D. Vance, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe.

On Wednesday, the magazine published additional snippets of the message chain, in which Hegseth relayed the mission details in excruciating detail, down to the timing of the strikes and the type of weapons being used.

“TIME NOW (1144et): Weather is FAVORABLE. Just CONFIRMED w/CENTCOM we are a GO for mission launch,” Hegseth wrote.

“1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package),” Hegseth continued. “1345: ‘Trigger Based’ F-18 1st Strike Window Starts (Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so



Reuters

Security experts blast Don team for war plan leak

SHOULD BE ON TIME — also, Strike Drones Launch (MQ-9s).”

Hegseth also wrote in the Signal thread that at 2:10 p.m., “more F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package).”

“1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier ‘Trigger Based’ targets),” he added.

‘Sensitive and classified’

Michael Pastor, a New York Law School professor specializing in cybersecurity, said the errant texts constitute a shocking breach of security protocols.

“Those of us who are in the cybersecurity community — we don’t tend to shock easily . . . I’m floored by what I’m seeing here. The individuals on this chat . . . these are the people who we expect to have the most sensitive and classified and important information of anyone in government,” he said.

“I don’t know if we can grasp the extent of the potential harm here . . . What you have here is a leak of sensitive and classified information to a non-government entity. People go to jail for that.”

Meanwhile, Trump, Waltz, Hegseth and other officials dismissed the leak as a “hoax” by the media

OPERATION OVERSHARE

TO JAIL FOR THAT'



Pete Hegseth
TEAM UPDATE:

TIME NOW (1144et): Weather is FAVORABLE. Just CONFIRMED w/ CENTCOM we are a GO for mission launch.

1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)

1345: "Trigger Based" F-18 1st Strike Window Starts (Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so SHOULD BE ON TIME) — also, Strike Drones Launch (MQ-9s)

1410: More F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package)

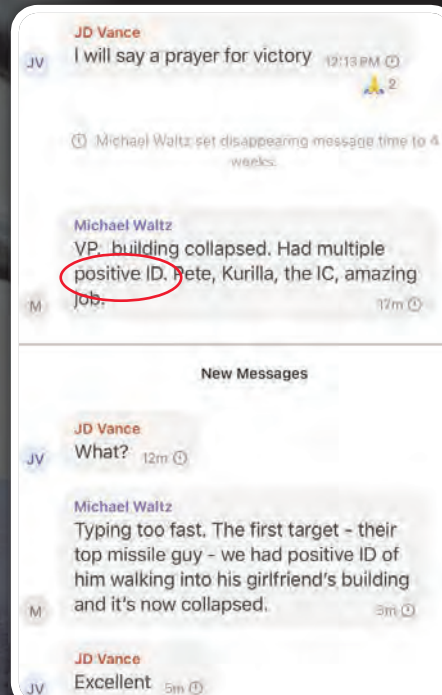
1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier "Trigger Based" targets)

1536: F-18 2nd Strike Starts — also, first sea-based Tomahawks launched.

'TRIGGER BASED':
Sensors used to confirm ID of target

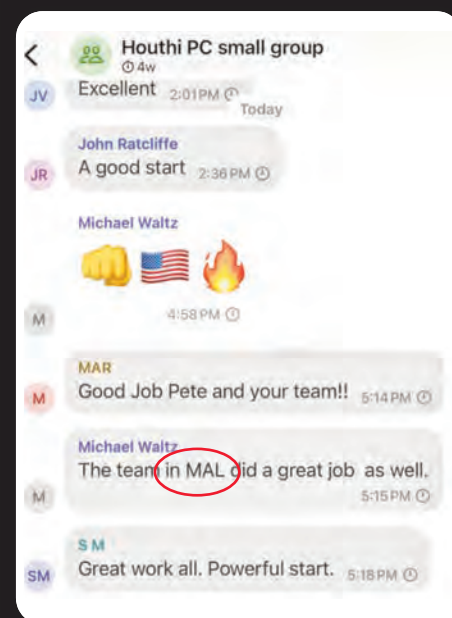
STRIKE DRONES ON TARGET: Drones bomb target

SEA-BASED TOMAHAWKS: Cruise missiles fired from at least one submarine



POSITIVE ID: Terrorist's ID confirmed

BLOW-BY-BLOW BLOWUP:
Text messages from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth detailing planned airstrikes on Houthi rebels in Yemen were revealed by The Atlantic magazine Wednesday — after their top editor was accidentally added into the chat.



MAL: Mar-a-Lago

Leavitt: Atlantic ed a 'hoax' perp

WASHINGTON — White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt attacked Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg Wednesday as the "discredited" perpetrator of a "hoax" — while President Trump referred to the controversy over a leaked Signal text chain about airstrikes on Yemen as a "witch hunt."

"This is the same Jeffrey Goldberg who infamously lied about weapons of mass destruction to get us into the Iraq War, which cost trillions of dollars and thousands of American soldiers," Leavitt said in the briefing room.

"How else has Goldberg discredited himself?" the press secretary asked. "... By peddling the 'Russia, Russia,

Russia' hoax that tried to hijack President Trump's first term, by inventing the 'suckers and losers' hoax to help Joe Biden in the 2020 election, by peddling a hoax about President Trump involving Gold Star families to help Kamala Harris in the 2024 election, which our campaign at the time vigorously denied. Jeffrey Goldberg didn't care."

"The real story here is the overwhelming success of President Trump's decisive military action against Houthi terrorists," Leavitt concluded.

Hours later, Trump also downplayed the outcry, saying in the Oval Office: "It's a witch hunt. I wasn't involved with it."

Steven Nelson and Ryan King

and insisted no sensitive national security materials were disclosed.

"The press up-plays it. I think it's all a witch hunt, that's all," Trump told reporters Wednesday. "Hegseth is doing a great job, he had nothing to do with it."

And Trump suggested the Signal platform may be "defective."

"I don't know that Signal works. I think Signal could be defective, to be honest with you," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

"It could be a defective platform, and we're gonna have to find that answer."

Waltz, who has denied knowing how Goldberg was added to the

group chat, insisted the disclosures didn't amount to anything significant.

"No locations. No sources & methods. NO WAR PLANS. Foreign partners had already been notified that strikes were imminent. BOTTOM LINE: President Trump is protecting America and our interests," Waltz wrote on X.

In a similarly worded post, Hegseth, a former Fox News contributor, added: "We will continue to do our job, while the media does what it does best: peddle hoaxes."

Meyer believes the buck must stop with Hegseth.

"The secretary of defense should

have known better, not only because he's the secretary of defense, but he's a veteran. He has been trained in this already," Meyer said. "All these people have walked the president off the plank," he thundered. "He deserves better from his advisers."

Mississippi Republican Sen. Roger Wicker, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, requested the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General launch an expedited investigation into the Signal chat.

Additional reporting by Caitlin Doornbos, Priscilla DeGregory, Emily Crane and Ryan King

FIRST 100 DAYS

Tariff-ic car deal

By STEVEN NELSON

President Trump announced a 25% tariff on foreign-made cars Wednesday, saying it would boost domestic manufacturing.

Trump, 78, announced the move in the Oval Office, saying “this is gonna lead to the construction of a lot of plants” to build cars domestically.

“We’ll effectively be charging a 25% tariff, but if you build your car in the United States, there is no tariff,” he said.

White House staff secretary Will Scharf announced the action was projected to raise \$100 billion in revenue, although analysis has suggested it may also sharply reduce import volume.

A US International Trade Commission report last year found that “[a] new 25% tariff on U.S. imports from outside of North America would reduce vehicle imports by 73.9%, increase average prices of vehicles in the United States by 5.0%, and increase variable profits from domestic production by 5.2%”

‘This is permanent’

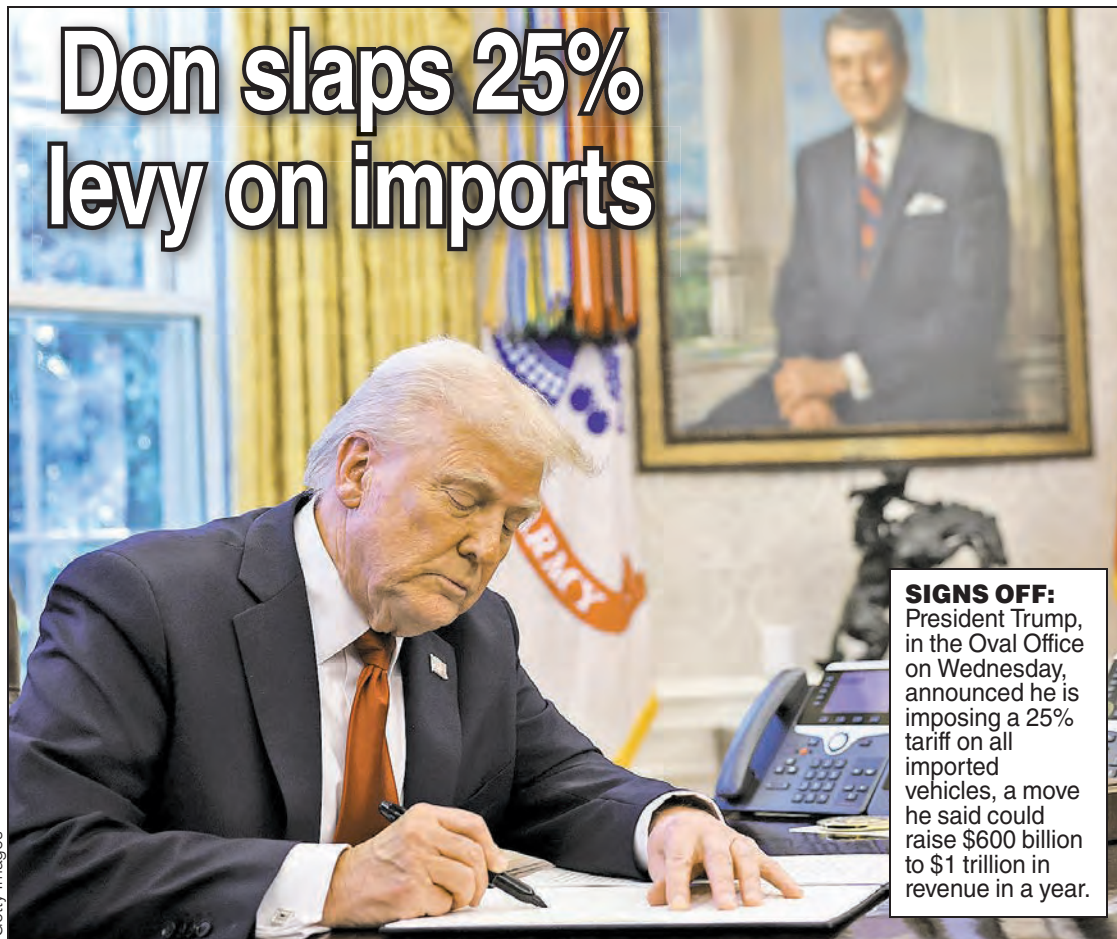
Trump did not indicate any carve-outs for Canadian and Mexican vehicle imports, meaning that the impact may be even greater than the trade commission report projected.

The president said that car companies with manufacturing plants in the US already are “thrilled” about the new duty, which he said would take effect April 2, remain in effect for at least the remainder of his term, and be layered on top of existing tariffs.

“Oh, this is permanent, yeah, 100%,” Trump confirmed.

“I think ultimately we could probably have anywhere from \$600 billion to \$1 trillion [that]

Don slaps 25% levy on imports



will be taken in over a relatively short term period, meaning a year from now, but starting right away, starting right away, I think we’ll go from 600 to a trillion within two years,” he said.

“This is a very simple system, and the beauty of the 25 — it’s one number ... And that number is going to be used to reduce debt greatly in the United States and to build things and reduce taxes. Basically, I view it as reducing taxes and also reducing debt.”

Trump earlier this month slapped 25% tariffs on imports from China, Canada and Mexico over fentanyl smuggling and illegal immigration, but he temporarily exempted most imports from America’s neighbors.

Last month, he imposed a stiffer 25% tariff on steel and aluminum, without exceptions for major importers that previously were in effect.

Trump plans to unveil a raft of “reciprocal” tariffs April 2 to

penalize imports from nations with higher levies on US imports and those with high nontariff barriers to trade, although he said Wednesday he would be more “lenient” than expected. He also has teased plans to tariff lumber, pharmaceuticals, computer chips and copper.

Although critics have argued that the tariff policies can increase consumer costs, Trump has pointed to low inflation during his first term, when he adopted some tariffs.



KATHERINE MAHER
NPR exec in DC Wednesday.

NPR fess in failure to report on Hunter

NPR on Wednesday finally admitted that it made a mistake in failing to promptly cover the Hunter Biden laptop scandal — as the left-leaning broadcaster fights to keep its federal funding.

The mea culpa by NPR CEO Katherine Maher came during intense questioning from Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) and other Republican legislators in a congressional subcommittee hearing regarding the broadcaster’s perceived bias in its coverage.

“I do want to say that NPR acknowledges we were mistaken in failing to cover the Hunter Biden laptop story more aggressively or sooner,” Maher said.

GOP lawmakers are keen on slashing federal funds to both NPR and PBS due to their left-leaning editorial bent. Most of the funding for both organizations is distributed through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which was allocated \$535 million for fiscal year 2024–25.

NPR receives less than 1% of its annual budget directly from federal government grants — though its member stations depend heavily on public funding.

Mahe’s admission corroborates claims made by former NPR editor Uri Berliner, who left the publicly funded outlet last year and criticized his former bosses for ignoring The Post’s exclusive reporting about Hunter Biden’s laptop before the 2020 election.

Ariel Zilber

Moscow monkey wrench in sea truce

Russian President Vladimir Putin is yet again going back on his word on a cease-fire with Ukraine by demanding Western sanctions be lifted before a maritime truce in the Black Sea could begin.

President Trump, whose team helped secure the truce, said Russia appears to be trying to delay the

end of the war after the Kremlin announced the extra conditions and attacked the coastal Ukraine city of Mykolaiv.

“I think that Russia wants to see an end to it, but it could be they’re dragging their feet,” Trump told Newsmax.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused

Moscow of trying to warp the limited cease-fire deal.

“We see how the Russians have already started to manipulate. They are already trying to distort the agreements,” Zelensky said.

Russia and Ukraine agreed Tuesday to end combat in and around the Black Sea, US officials

said, sparking hope for a wider cease-fire.

But like with the previous cease-fire barring attacks on energy facilities, Russia immediately went back on its word and launched a drone attack on Mykolaiv.

Moscow now claims the truce will begin only once the European Union re-

vokes sanctions on state agricultural bank Rosselkhozbank and restores access to the SWIFT international payment system.

The EU is likely to reject Moscow’s demands, the BBC reported, but US officials said they were “looking at” the possibility in order to secure the truce.

Ronny Reyes

**La La
has us
feline
groovy**

LaLa Anthony / Instagram

Trump hotel door 'killed my mom'

A 78-year-old woman died after she was "violently ejected" from a revolving door at the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas, according to a lawsuit.

Diana Truschke's son hit the Trump chain with the wrongful-death lawsuit last week after the woman died from injuries allegedly sustained while staying at the hotel.

The San Francisco woman was allegedly struck from behind as she tried to exit the hotel in March 2023, says the suit obtained by KSNV.

"As a result, Ms Truschke was violently ejected from the revolving door, causing her to be thrown several feet, ultimately falling to the sidewalk on her face," the suit said.

The tumble caused her to suffer severe and permanent injuries, the suit said.

She died months later in October 2023 "due to complications from her injuries," the suit said.

Emily Crane

La La Anthony is looking pretty purrfect in this skintight, leopard-print cat suit, matching gloves and sexy pumps on her Insta, where fans went wild, calling her a goddess and leaving red-hot fire emojis.

MEGA'S BALL\$Y CHANGE

\$5 tix price, bigger pots

By ISABEL KEANE

Becoming a multimillionaire will soon cost a prettier penny as the price of a Mega Millions ticket will more than double from \$2 to \$5.

The boost is part of a plan to revamp the game and increase cash payouts, the company announced Tuesday.

The so-called "new version" of the lottery game will offer bigger prizes for all winners starting April 8. The final drawing under the current rules will be April 4.

In addition to larger payouts for both the massive jackpots and the lesser prize winners, the lowest prize will now be at least double the cost of the ticket, officials said.

The company also says the revamped game will bring better odds of winning, and larger, faster-growing jackpots.

Increased lesser wins

"Beyond big jackpots, players told us they want bigger nonjackpot prizes and that's exactly what this new game delivers," said Joshua Johnston, lead director of the Mega Millions Consortium.

Since the new game assigns players a random multiplier, "players who had won \$2 in the old game will now take home \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25 or \$50 under this game," Johnston said.

"Those who had won \$500 under the old rules will now take home \$1,000; \$1,500; \$2,000; \$2,500 or \$5,000 in this new game.

"Nonjackpot prizes at every level are going up by 2X to 10X," Johnston added.

Mega Millions said the new rules improve the odds of winning the jackpot from 1 in 302,575,350 to 1 in 290,472,336 due to the removal of one gold Mega Ball from the game. The new version will have 24 instead of 25 Mega Balls, officials said.

Better odds

The overall odds of winning any prize will improve to 1 in 23 from 1 in 24, officials added.

The increased ticket cost is only the second time prices for the game have risen in its 20-year history.

"Unless someone wins the jackpot on the April 4, 2025, drawing, the jackpot from the current game will roll into the new game and continue to grow with ticket sales from the new game," the release said.

Since the game launched in 2002, seven jackpots of \$1 billion or more have been won in seven states and over 1,200 players have become millionaires, the company said.

The largest jackpot was for \$1.602 billion in 2023. The next four were: \$1.537 billion, \$1.348 billion, \$1.337 billion and \$1.269 billion.

ikeane@nypost.com

The MTA's great train 'robber'

A longtime MTA worker was arrested Tuesday after allegedly swiping nearly \$206,000 from a transit-agency counting room, authorities said.

Metro-North Railroad cashier Tom Shabani, who worked in White Plains, was charged with second-degree grand larceny in the six-month scheme that began in September and ran through March 12.

Shabani, whose job was to handle money received from ticket vending machines, allegedly took the hundreds of thousands of dollars and used the cash for personal purposes, the federal complaint states.

David Propper

Noem's tour of hellhole

By ALEX OLIVEIRA

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem arrived in El Salvador on Wednesday to tour the notoriously hellish prison housing alleged gang members deported by the Trump administration, and she's expected to ask the Central American country's president to make more room.

Noem, 53, arrived at the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT), where 250 suspected Tren de Aragua and MS-13 gang members were shipped from the US by President Trump earlier this month.

They joined 15,000 inmates already held at the lockup known for deliberately dehumanizing conditions intended to serve as the ultimate deterrent in El Salvador's years-long battle against gang violence.

There she viewed rows of tattooed inmates standing obediently along the bars of their massive but crammed cells and got a glimpse of the arsenal of heavy weaponry — including assault rifles — the prison's army of guards uses to maintain order.

"No one expects that these people can go back to society and behave," said Gustavo Villatoro, El Salvador's minister of justice and public security, as he led Noem on a tour through the sweltering prisoner barracks, according to a press pool report.

Several of the inmates Noem was shown were the suspected gang-



TAT'S HORRIBLE: Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in front of inmates at El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center on Wednesday.

AFP/Getty Images

Infamous El Salvador prison

bangers Trump shipped south, and like the rest of the prisoners, they stood silent in their uniforms of white T-shirts and shorts.

'ICE Barbie'

True to her nickname — ICE Barbie — Noem put her flowing hair on display under her Immigration and Customs Enforcement baseball hat as she was led through the facility.

After the tour, Noem was to meet with Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele and was expected to discuss increasing the number of US deportees bound for CECOT, Fox News reported.

Her visit to El Salvador is the first stop in a three-day tour of Latin American countries to discuss organized crime that's been spilling beyond their borders and pouring into the US. She is ex-

pected to travel to Colombia next and then Mexico, where she'll meet with each nation's president.

"We are in several other countries around the world with a message right now that's saying if you are thinking of coming to America illegally, don't do it. You are not welcome," she said Monday.

Noem's tour flies in the face of efforts back home to block Trump's deportations to CECOT, which he initiated after invoking the 1798 Alien Enemies Act to drag the alleged gangbangers out of the country without a trial.

The wartime act dates to an 18th-century naval conflict and allows the president to deport non-citizens without the due process typically required. It was last used in World War II to hold Japanese and German Americans in internment camps.

Since Trump declared Tren de

Aragua a terrorist organization in January, it allows him to use the Alien Enemies Act against them.

On 14-day hold

But within hours of the flights departing for CECOT, a federal judge blocked the order and placed a 14-day hold on its use.

The White House ignored that order, arguing that since the planes were already in the air and over international waters, it had no bearing on the operation.

As Noem arrived in El Salvador, a federal appeals court upheld the block in a 2-1 vote.

"Nazis got better treatment under the Alien Enemies Act than has happened here," Judge Patricia Millett said during a heated hearing.

Trump has vowed to fight the block to get his way.

Feds giving cops immig kids' sponsor info

The US agency responsible for unaccompanied migrant children will be able to share the immigration status of the kids' sponsors with law enforcement under the Trump administration, a move that officials say will protect kids from trafficking and exploitation.

The Office for Refugee Resettlement, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services that cares for the migrant children until they can be released, will also be allowed to deny a sponsor based solely on their immigration status, ac-

cording to a notice published in the Federal Register.

A shocking report released in August found that 32,000 children who authorities released into the US with hearing dates later failed to show up in court. The 14-page report tracked

a period from October 2018 to September 2023.

The change under President Trump nixes a Biden-era regulation that prohibited the agency from sharing immigration information and comes after HHS announced it would investigate thousands of cases of

migrant children who may have ended up in the hands of sexual predators and human traffickers.

As of May 2024, 291,000 unaccompanied children had arrived in the US and were released without immigration-court dates, the report said. *Jennie Taer*

Adams pressed on \$81M

WASHINGTON — A powerful Republican House committee chairman fired off a letter Wednesday to Mayor Adams demanding a "full accounting" of the more than \$81 million in taxpayer funding doled out last year to shelter city migrants.

House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Mark Green (R-Tenn.) told Adams his panel "is concerned" that the funding was "approved under the Biden-Harris administration without proper oversight of the recipients and their programs," according to a copy of the letter that The Post exclusively obtained.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency funding was frozen last month.

"Let's be clear: New York City only used FEMA funding to help shelter and service thousands of migrants entering our shelter system every week, after being left largely on our own to deal with a national humanitarian crisis," Liz Garcia, deputy press secretary for the mayor, told The Post.

"The \$80 million that FEMA approved, paid, and then rescinded is the bare minimum our taxpayers deserve."

Josh Christenson

Mortgage spigot off

The Trump administration will no longer allow illegal migrants to receive Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgages, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Scott Turner announced Wednesday.

"Today, HUD terminated Biden's taxpayer-backed FHA mortgages for illegal aliens," Turner wrote on X.

A HUD official informed FHA-approved mortgage lenders Tuesday the agency will also no longer consider any "non-permanent resident" eligible for the government-backed, low-income home loans. *Victor Nava*



JESSICA ABER
Died of "natural causes."

Ex-US att'y had epilepsy

Former US Attorney Jessica Aber, who handled high-profile cases involving the CIA and Russia, suffered from epilepsy, her family said days after her tragic death.

Aber, 43, "suffered from epilepsy and epileptic seizures for many years," her family said in a statement Wednesday.

A day earlier an autopsy revealed she appeared to have died from natural causes. An official cause of death is pending.

Virginia police said Tuesday they "found no evidence suggesting that her death was caused by anything other than natural causes."

Aber was found in her Virginia home Saturday morning by police responding to a 911 call about an unresponsive woman. Her family said she died in her sleep.

People with epilepsy are at risk of seizures that can lead to asphyxiation or heart problems, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say.

Alex Oliveira

HARRY'S CHARITABLE GIVING UP

FALLING OUT: Prince Harry has resigned from Sentebale after its chair, Dr. Sophie Chandaoka (below), sued the organization.

By NICKI COX

Prince Harry shockingly stepped down from an African charity he co-founded, as the group's chair said she was facing "misogynoir" — prejudice against black women — over the debacle.

The Duke of Sussex and his co-founder, Prince Seeiso of Lesotho, issued a joint statement Wednesday announcing their "devastating" decision to resign because of chairwoman Dr. Sophie Chandaoka's "untenable" leadership.

The two, who created Sentebale in 2006 to help young people affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis, quit in solidarity with members of the board of trustees who were at odds with Chandaoka.

After the announcement, Chandaoka slammed Harry and Seeiso for pushing a "victim narrative."

Chandaoka, a Zimbabwe-born lawyer, told The Times of London that she was a "whistleblower" for bullying and misogyny within the organization.

'Victim card'

"Everything I do at Sentebale is in pursuit of the integrity of the organization, its mission, and the young people we serve. My actions are guided by the principles of fairness and equitable treatment for all, regardless of social status or financial means," Chandaoka said in a statement.

"There are people in this world who behave as though they are above the law and mistreat people, and then play the victim card and use the very press they disdain to harm people who have the courage to challenge their conduct."

The trustees wanted Chandaoka to step down — with many apparently upset about her decision to

move Sentebale's fundraising operation to Africa — prompting her to file a lawsuit against the organization in England's High Court.

Chandaoka suggested to The Times that Sentebale was nothing more than a "vanity project" for Harry, Seeiso and the trustees — but not for her.

"Discerning readers will ask themselves: why would the chair of the board report her own trustees to the Charity Commission? Why would the High Court . . . accept her application?" she asked.

"Because beneath all the victim narrative . . . is the story of a woman who dared to blow the whistle about issues of . . . abuse of power, bullying, harassment, misogyny, misogynoir and the cover-up that ensued."

'Heartbroken'

In their shock announcement, Harry and Seeiso said, "With heavy hearts, we have resigned from our roles as patrons . . . in support of and solidarity with the board of trustees who have had to do the same."

"It is devastating that the relationship between the charity's trustees and the chair of the board broke down beyond repair, creating an untenable situation."

Harry, 40, and Seeiso, 58, insisted that the trustees "acted in the best interest of the charity in asking the chair to step down . . . In turn, she sued the charity."

Harry and Seeiso — who launched the charity in honor of their mothers, Princess Diana and Queen Mamohato Bereng Seeiso — said they were "truly heartbroken" to leave their roles.

"What's transpired is unthinkable. We are in shock that we have to do this," they said.



Prince exits group he co-founded in spat with its chair

Post office worker 'rape' rap White mob 'beats' black teen

Three postal workers allegedly dragged an unconscious co-worker into the back of a mail truck where one attempted to rape the incapacitated woman during a 2023 work party, according to a new indictment.

Daniel Jean, 38; Kirt Acala, 38; and Edward Chou, 40, have been indicted in the alleged sexually motivated kidnapping of their colleague — with Jean addi-

tionally facing rape charges — which occurred during an after-work birthday party on June 8, 2023, in the East Village, according to the indictment Wednesday.

The victim told cops she felt woozy and lost consciousness during the celebration at the 14th Street post office where they worked — as the suspects allegedly set upon her.

The victim said she was

molested by Jean in the post office, then, with the help of Chou and Acala, dragged into the back of a mail truck, the indictment stated.

"We take investigations and prosecutions of sexual violence extremely seriously and have the survivor-centered services and resources to help those who have been sexually assaulted," Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said. *Shane Galvin*

Two white teens have been charged with throwing a banana and shouting racial slurs at a black teenager before pummeling him with their pals inside a Brooklyn subway station Monday morning, police said.

The 16-year-old victim was walking in the Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue station when a group of nine teens attacked him during a hate-filled robbery at

around 8 a.m., police said.

The crazed mob chucked a banana at him, called him the N-word and then kicked and punched him before snatching one of his shoes on the mezzanine level inside the station, cops said.

The teen refused medical attention at the scene, but later went to NYC Health + Hospitals-South Brooklyn Health for head injuries.

Video of the assault was

posted on Instagram briefly before it was taken down, sources said.

Charges against the 14-year-old and 16-year-old were pending Wednesday night.

The other assailants, all believed to be teenage boys, have yet to be caught.

The NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force is investigating the incident. *Joe Marino*

and Steven Vago

ISRAEL UNDER ATTACK

HATE FOR HAMAS



BRAVE SOULS: Defiant Palestinian civilians who have lived through the Gaza War pin the blame Wednesday on the terrorists who brought on Israeli retaliation.

Reuters

Columbia prez got pressure from WH

Columbia's interim president was reportedly pushed by the Trump administration to publicly double down on her commitment to enforcing a mask ban and other policy changes following reports she privately downplayed the anti-Israel crackdown to faculty.

Katrina Armstrong, the interim head of the embattled university, had released a public statement Tuesday conceding she regretted "any confusion" and insisted that the Trump-ordered policy changes were "real."

But the clarification came only after the White House got involved and urged her to reaffirm her commitment to the deal, The Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

The about-face came after the Ivy League president was reported to have assured faculty over the weekend there was no mask ban in place — even though the school had insisted to the Trump administration that it would be implementing one.

"I regret any confusion and inconsistent statements and want to make sure our position is clear as we go forward," Armstrong said in the statement seeking to clarify her position.

"Let there be no confusion: I commit to seeing these changes implemented, with the full support of Columbia's senior leadership team." *Emily Crane*

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
and RONNY REYES

Gaza civilians slam 'mobster' terrorists

An angry Palestinian protesting Hamas rule in Gaza condemned the Oct. 7 massacre and joined calls for Hamas to leave the territory as the rare demonstrations carried on for a second day inside the enclave.

Saeed, a 27-year-old Gaza resident and one of hundreds protesting the terrorist group's brutal rule, said he supports the calls to exile Hamas, which he accused of plunging his people into despair when carrying out the 2023 terrorist attack in Israel.

"Oct. 7 backfired on Hamas and backfired for all of our people,"

Saeed told The Post. "We want to see peace and opportunity."

The large-scale protests in Gaza erupted Tuesday as crowds of people took to the streets in northern Gaza, which has seen the most devastation and a lack of humanitarian aid during the war.

Saeed, who did not want his last name published for fear of being targeted by Hamas, said hunger

continues to run rampant in Gaza as Hamas pillages what little aid comes through the border.

"They can come into our homes and steal our food or money without any repercussions," Saeed said. "They kill families in our neighborhoods like mobsters just to show their strength, even though it's down to 30 to 40% of what it was pre-Oct. 7."

While similar protests have generally been sparse since the war began, Palestinian outrage reached a boiling point Tuesday as hundreds took to the streets in Beit Lahia to condemn the end of the ceasefire with Israel as they demanded Hamas release the hostages and exit Gaza for good.

Rare occurrence

Protests in Gaza are a rare occurrence given Hamas' proclivity to crack down on any criticism.

The demonstrations continued on Wednesday, with Hamas operatives reportedly assaulting protesters.

'Pro-terror' student arrested

Immigration agents snatched a Tufts Ph.D. candidate from Turkey off the street in Boston after the Trump administration "terminated" her student visa over her alleged "activities in support of Hamas," the Department of Homeland Security said Wednesday.

Rumeysa Ozturk, a Co-

lumbia University graduate, was "ambushed" by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents while leaving her off-campus apartment for dinner Tuesday with her friends, according to her attorney, Mahsa Khanbabai.

DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said in an X post that Ozturk's visa

"is a privilege not a right," adding that "glorifying and supporting terrorists who kill Americans is grounds for visa issuance to be terminated."

McLaughlin didn't point to any specific evidence of Ozturk's alleged terrorism support, but in 2024, Ozturk cowrote an op-ed in the Tufts student newspa-

per that criticized Tufts' response to anti-Israel protests and called for the university to divest from the Jewish state.

Khanbabai has filed a petition with a federal court in Massachusetts requesting Ozturk's release.

Ozturk was studying child and human development. *Jennie Taer*



DETAINED: ICE agents (right) take away Rumeysa Ozturk (above) in Boston Tuesday.



Miranda Devine

mdevine@nypost.com

THERE'S no getting around the fact that Signal-gate was a blunder.

In soccer terms, it was an own goal, a totally unnecessary screw-up that set back the Trump team.

But the team is still winning and the opposition is still in total disarray and fighting among themselves.

Let's hope lessons have been learned.

It's hard to believe that, of all the people on planet Earth, it was Jeffrey Goldberg, America's most rabidly anti-Trump journalist, who could have been "inadvertently" patched into a sensitive Signal group chat of the national security Cabinet discussing sensitive plans for military strikes against the Houthis in Yemen.

But that's what President Trump's National Security Adviser Mike Waltz is telling us.

He claimed Tuesday he has "never met, don't know, never communicated with" the Atlantic editor-in-chief. Of course, swampy Washington quickly unearthed a photo of Waltz standing right in front of Goldberg in the French Embassy in 2021 at an event for French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy that was billed as a "conversation" between Goldberg and Lévy.

Waltz probably meets a lot of swamp-dwellers, since wife Julia Nesheiwat is a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council, and he has told Trump it was "one of his people" who added Goldberg to the Signal chat group.

One of the screenshots Goldberg published in The Atlantic shows it was Waltz's Signal account — tagged as "Admin" that sent him a Signal invite on March 11, and then added him to the "Houthi PC small group" on March 13.

Waltz has told reporters he accepts "full responsibility" for the error and admitted he "built the [Signal] group."

Fox News' Laura Ingraham asked the perfect question of Waltz Tuesday: "How did a Trump-hating editor of the Atlantic end up on your Signal chat?"

No conspiracy theorist

"I'm not a conspiracy theorist," said Waltz, before suggesting that Goldberg's number may have somehow appeared in his or a staffer's contacts list attached to someone else's name. "You got somebody else's number on someone else's contact, so of course I didn't see this loser in the group. It looked like someone else ... Now, whether he did it deliberately or it happened in some other technical way is something we're trying to figure out."



FACING DEMOCRATIC FIRE: Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe stand up to questions from Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee Wednesday.

That's not as crazy as it sounds. It happened to me last week when I received a call from someone named Mike but it was mislabeled on my phone with the name of a different Mike, causing a moment of confusion. Syncing errors with Apple contacts have been reported in Apple forums and tech articles for years.

But it doesn't explain how Goldberg's number got on Waltz's (or his staffer's) phone. Waltz must have checked the contact list and should know whether the unknown number on the group chat was associated with another name.

That much doesn't need an Elon Musk forensic deep dive.

But something doesn't add up, and you can't blame the Trump administration for being paranoid after all the Deep State ops against the president in his first term. This smells a lot like the Russia hoax,

the Steele Dossier, the phony impeachment, the Dirty 51, etc.

One thing is for sure, Trump won't sacrifice Waltz to appease the media after the ambush in his first term of Gen. Michael Flynn, his first national security adviser.

The president has learned that you never give an inch to the forces of darkness, because they are insatiable. They'll never stop.

So he is standing by Waltz, calling him a "good man [who has] learned a lesson."

He's lost their trust

It's fair to say, however, that Waltz's colleagues will never trust him again. He's embarrassed them all.

It's because of him that Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe were sitting ducks in back-to-back con-

gressional hearings this week as hungry Dems took potshots at them.

But Trump is right. The US mission to attack the Iran-backed Houthi rebels and open the Red Sea shipping lane to restore safety for international cargo has been "unbelievably successful," he told reporters Wednesday.

That's the point. For Democrats to be hyperventilating about operational security and intelligence failures is laughable considering what they allowed without complaint under Joe Biden. From the Chinese spy balloons that cruised unmoored across the country to the bungled withdrawal from Afghanistan that needlessly killed 13 US service members, delivered billions of dollars of military equipment to the Taliban and emboldened America's enemies, the Democrats have no moral high ground.

In any case, Goldberg and his fellows in the Resistance media have over-egged the pudding so much, they have destroyed their own credibility.

Here are some of the most egregious beat-ups:

■ Steve Witkoff: Trump's Middle East envoy did not participate in the group chat while he was in Russia, as has been claimed. "I only had with me a secure phone provided by the government for special circumstances when you travel to regions where you do not want your devices compromised," Witkoff said in response to charges that he had allowed his phone to be compromised. He only read the Signal chat when he returned to the US. That line of attack seems to be kaput.

■ Signal: One of the most secure messaging apps in the world, it uses end-to-end encryption that ensures secrecy, doesn't store message content on its server and collects no user content. And as Ratcliffe and Gabbard pointed out in their testimony, it comes "pre-installed on government devices," as was the case in the Biden administration. Gabbard said the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency in December advised "highly targeted individuals" in the government to protect themselves using Signal for conversations. But Signal is not perfect, as the current mess reveals. "It could be a defective platform," says Trump.

A line not to cross

■ Classified information: Waltz at one point told other chat members to look at information on the "high side," a classified server, indicating a line the Signal conversation should not cross. That's not to say that what Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth wrote to his colleagues about imminent timings of drone attacks didn't qualify as classified information, but it's not the huge deal Goldberg claimed. No sources, methods or locations.

■ Goldberg's ethics: Anyone who buys Goldberg's narcissistic self-assessment that he behaved ethically and patriotically is deluded. It's one thing for him to watch the group chat to figure out what was happening but he lurked around for days, knowing he wasn't supposed to be listening in. He still would have had a story if he had done the ethical thing and identified himself. If I, or any other journalist at this newspaper, were caught doing the same to the Biden administration, praise is the last thing that would have been heaped on us.

In the end, the Trump team has lost some bark but as the president knows better than anyone, what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger.

HIPSTERS SLAM NEW BUILDS

By HALEY BROWN
and ANTHONY BLAIR

Insufferable liberal activists were mocked as “gentrifiers complaining about gentrification” following a series of cringey campaign videos that included one hipster whining about affordability while wearing a pricey designer sweatshirt.

In a roundly ridiculed ad supporting progressive City Council member Christopher Marte, several trendy young progressives bemoaned the construction of new homes on the Lower East Side, as one of them wore a Balenciaga sweatshirt that retails for \$1,150.

The activists accused so-called pro-development “YIMBYs” — short for “Yes In My Backyard” — of pushing poorer people out of the neighborhood.

But the video’s cross-section of hipsters slamming the construction of new housing — at a time when New York City’s rents have hit record highs — came off as tone deaf to many.

“Incredible video of gentrifiers complaining about gentrification,” one user wrote.

“A dude wearing a \$1,250 Balenciaga sweatshirt complaining about the city selling out by building affordable housing for seniors is just perfect,” another added.

“These people want an art student ethnostate and until we understand that, their politics aren’t going to make sense,” a third wrote.

Another pointed out that some of the activists appeared to be recent arrivals, with one seemingly having a strong British accent.

“The whole ‘I have a British accent and I’m in America telling you not to build,’ thing,” one X user said.



BAD LOOK: Videos from Youth Against Displacement knock pro-development forces for pushing new construction on the Lower East Side, though New York City rents rose 5.6% since December 2023.



Instagram/@youth_against_displacement

Cringe vids for council pol

New York City rents rose 5.6% since December 2023 while rental rates in other top cities decreased during the same time period, according to the latest Realtor.com report released in January.

‘Struggling to afford rent’

One of the videos, shared on Instagram by the group Youth Against Displacement, raged against the building of One Manhattan Square, an 80-story skyscraper constructed on the site of

a former Pathmark grocery store in Two Bridges in 2019.

Another female activist wearing a red beanie and a military green coat claimed students aren’t gentrifying the Lower East Side, then asked New Yorkers to vote for Marte, in a second video.

“If you’re a student or a young worker and you’re living in New York City, you’re probably also struggling to afford your rent. You are not a gentrifier. You are not supporting developers, but you know who are? The YIMBYs,” the

unidentified woman said.

Mayor Adams blamed the “NIMBY” (“Not In My Backyard”) movement last year for standing in the way of a rezoning plan he said could lead to needed housing.

The confusing campaign videos for Marte went super viral, racking up more than 11 million views on X, with users blasting Youth Against Displacement (YAD) for playing identity politics.

Marte’s campaign and YAD did not respond to requests for comment.

Suit to stop Adams’ ‘City of Yes’ plan

Dozens of lawmakers, residents and community groups are suing the Big Apple over its controversial “City of Yes” housing plan — in a move to overturn Mayor Adams’ marquee initiative.

A 60-page lawsuit filed late Tuesday in Staten Is-

land Supreme Court argues the Adams administration and the City Council skipped environmental reviews required by city and state laws for the ambitious plan, which aims to build 80,000 new housing units across the five boroughs over 15 years.

“The City of Yes, the city Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning completely abrogated all the terms of the environmental laws of the state of New York,” attorney Jack Lester said at a news conference on the steps of City Hall announc-

ing the suit.

A City Hall spokesperson responded to the suit, calling the program “the most pro-housing zoning proposal in New York City history” and “game changing work.”

“When it comes to housing, there will always be

those who say, ‘Not in my backyard,’ but we stand by the city’s thorough and transparent review process and will address any lawsuit when it is received,” the spokesperson said.

Craig McCarthy,
Georgett Roberts
and Peter Senzamici

City bills focus on scourge of sheds

They’ve had enough of this shed.

Big Apple lawmakers announced a series of bills Wednesday to get tough on the city’s scaffolding scourge that sees the unsightly structures stay up for years at a time.

The City Council’s five bills would speed up how quickly the sidewalk sheds need to come down and offer more visibly pleasing design options, with more color choices instead of the “ugly” scaffolding locals are used to.

“New York City is taking the historic measure to shed the sheds,” Council member Keith Powers (D-Manhattan), lead sponsor of the bills, said — adding that the structures have been “casting a shadow over our city for far too long.”

The new legislation is part of a long-running push — well documented by The Post — to overhaul archaic laws that have allowed for scaffolding to stay up far longer than necessary.

Under the reforms, sidewalk-shed permits for façade repairs would be cut from one year to three months — unless the structure is needed because of building renovations or new construction.

The inspection cycle would also be delayed for any new building from five to nine years, according to one proposed new bill.

The reforms would also set different inspection standards based on the age of the building.

The changes call for the Department of Buildings to offer up new shed designs to raise ceiling heights and give more color options beyond the “ugly hunter green,” Powers said.

Meanwhile, another bill — sponsored by Erik Botcher (D-Manhattan) — would double the required number of lighting fixtures under the sheds.

Reuven Fenton, Craig McCarthy and Emily Crane

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Billie 'plays' with Wolff in NYC

Page Six®

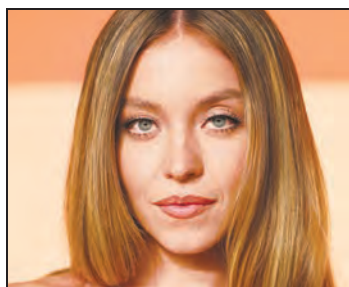
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Feta Day for Cats

BILLIONAIRE couple **John** and **Margo Catsimatidis** celebrated Greek Independence Day Tuesday when Mayor **Eric Adams** honored Margo at City Hall. The Catsimatidis clan then jetted to the White House to join 200 prominent Greek Americans for an annual celebration, where President **Trump** "gave a glowing shout-out to John, Margo and their [daughter **Andrea**], the Manhattan GOP chair," said a source. The president also called the couple's 77 WABC radio "the biggest station in New York." On Sunday, John and Margo will lead the annual Greek Independence Day Parade down Fifth Avenue aboard the WABC float, and we hear many of New York's mayoral hopefuls will be out in force.



Sydney nups nix

SYDNEY Sweeney and fiancé **Jonathan Davino** have called off their wedding as the couple faces "major issues" in their relationship, a source told Us Weekly. "Sydney [above] and Jonathan have been having major issues but are not fully split," the insider said Wednesday. "Things are not great right now, but they aren't throwing in the towel yet. They are working on their relationship but have called off the wedding for now." Sweeney fueled the rumors on Tuesday when fans noticed the "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" star deleted a picture of the businessman from her Instagram.

AMID intensifying rumors that old pals **Billie Eilish** and musician and former child actor **Nat Wolff** are a couple, Page Six hears the pair were "very affectionate" while hitting up New York gay bars.

The couple hit the town on Tuesday night, starting off the evening by watching their pal **Andrew Scott's** buzzy one-man show "Vanya" at the Lucille Lortel Theatre.

Then they did the rounds in the East Village, we hear, starting out at **Alan Cumming's** Club Cumming and finishing up at neighborhood mainstay the Phoenix.

We're told that when they arrived at Club Cumming, they waited in the car for about 20

minutes for a group of five friends — including "Fleabag" star **Scott** — to arrive before going inside.

A source told us that later, at the Phoenix, "they were playing pool and were affectionate." The spy even claimed they overheard Wolff telling a patron that he and the "Bad Guy" singer were an item.

Rumors about them dating have been swirling for months. Nat, 30, and his brother **Alex Wolff** — co-stars on the Nickelodeon show "The Naked Brothers Band" — opened for Eilish on much of the US leg of her "Hit Me Hard and Soft" tour last fall. (The show heads to Europe next month.)

Buzz about them dating grew louder last week when they were spotted quietly leaving the iHeartRadio Music Awards in LA. A source close to Eilish, however, insists, "They are close friends. Nothing more. Billie is affectionate with all of her friends."

The crew rolled with a few security guards and were driven from place to place, we're told.

Eilish, 23, has previously been linked to musicians **Brandon "Q" Adams** and **Jesse Ruth-erford** and actor **Matthew Tyler Vorce**.

She has said that she's attracted to men and women.

A rep for Eilish did not comment.



Billie Eilish looks "Happier Than Ever" on a night out in the Village with singer Nat Wolff, sparking romance rumors.

TheImageDirect.com

Melania impress'd

ALEC Baldwin claims **Melania Trump** loves his **Donald Trump** impressions on "Saturday Night Live" — and thinks they "exactly" capture her husband. Baldwin claimed at a recent 92nd Street Y event that former Trump press secretary **Sean Spicer** spilled backstage at the Emmys one year. "Spicer — maybe he had a couple drinks . . . he says to the people at 'SNL,' 'Melania watches the show every Saturday night. And she points at the TV and says, 'That's what he's like! That is what he's like! Exactly! Alec Baldwin is exactly like Donald!'" Baldwin told the crowd, "It made sense! She loves when they give it to him, you know what I mean?"



Jewelry box witness

KIM Kardashian will testify against the Parisian underground gang accused of coordinating her infamous 2016 robbery, TMZ reported yesterday. The Skims founder (above) is set to travel to France in May to take the stand nearly 10 years after being robbed in her apartment at the Hôtel de Pourtalès in Paris. Kardashian was bound, gagged and held at gunpoint as five masked thieves stole \$10 million worth of jewelry, including a \$4 million ring. Kardashian got from then-husband **Kanye West** earlier that year. Suspects were arrested as long ago as January 2017, and after a lengthy investigation, 12 were charged in 2021. Their jury trial starts next month.

Friars reunite for yuks, pasta and Sinatra

THE famed, defunct Friars Club is back — sort of. Former members had a reunion at Patsy's Italian Restaurant near their former HQ, and they vowed to keep the tradition going. The four-hour dinner included performances by crooners **George Pettignano**, **Jenna Esposito** and **Sal Viviano**, who closed the night by performing Frank Sinatra songs. "The Friars are at Patsy's! Finally, we're back! 55th Street to 56th Street," Viviano said referring to the club's former home, which shut in 2022 amid a debt crisis. Between sets, Viviano cracked jokes. While searching for his

drink, he quipped, "One day I put my drink down and someone put their teeth in it." The crowd yelled back: "That's a Friar joke!" **Regina DeCicco**, a warm-up comic for "The View," hosted the evening that also included **Ralph Compagnone** and **Julie Budd**, who arrived with copies of her new CD "Remembering . . . Mr. Sinatra." The evening ended with Viviano and the crowd singing Ol' Blue Eyes' "My Way." We hear they plan to make it a quarterly meetup.

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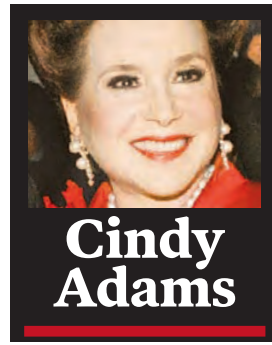
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Scene's all about Dem



Cindy Adams

LEST you have wondered where everyone is: Remember the name **Andrew Yang**? He once ran — or at least walked quickly — for mayor of New York City. And where New York City is

these days? Who knows. Yang was in Silver Towers on the West Side. Whilst our current mayor Hizzoner **Adams** partook as usual at his fancy club Zero Bond. He recently inhaled boiled chicken and sweet potato fries. Dropped none of it on his — for reasons unknown — fourth suit of the day. **LeBron James** who for his own reasons is blowing a forklift of C-notes to glam up a who cares 1967 Cadillac. He plans to show it off soon. Why? No idea. I also had a 1967 Cadillac. Two dents later I got rid of it.



Dia Dipsapili/Getty Images

Tiff's big fashion set

WAIT. More. Funny lady **Tiffany Haddish**, with newish book "I Curse You With Joy," is coming here for Fashion Group International's Rising Star Awards luncheon. They design shmattas. She emcees. April 16 on Park Avenue. Fashion bigs **Fern Mallis** and **Reem Acra** are presenters. Everyone dresses up for this, then schleps home and puts on yoga pants.

Comedian **Tiffany Haddish** will host an NYC fashion event next month.

Admin works

RESULTS. First month in. While **Biden** frequents his toilet, illegal migrant crossings down 93%. Canada and Mexico beefed up border security. Hostages freed in Gaza, Venezuela, Russia. Blatant corruption exposed by husky Musky.

Skit to snit

JERRY Seinfeld's kid recently pranked daddy but it didn't go over well. The daughter **Sascha** is a budding hopeful. A someday-to-be columnist, someone like ... perish the thought *me*. She used an app to FaceTime Dad. To make it seem she was kidnapped and possibly ransom was involved. Jerry freaked *but* it was a joke. Some sort of brilliantly fabulous for some reason gag. Realizing it was maybe

the first joke he did not find very funny, he ordered her to appear. In the flesh. She appeared. At a certain place. On the Upper West Side. Listen, could be an episode for some future "Kid of Seinfeld" episode.

He'll be back

COMES now another episode. The venue? NYC Mandarin Hotel. At Columbus Circle. At an elevator. There flexing the remainder of his muscles hulked **Arnold Schwarzenegger**. And there also stood two women. And there was this avid deep conversation. And there stood our star. Our former ex excellency the honorable former head of state chatting animatedly with them. And they had no effing idea who he was. None. I think they figured he was a muscular **Brad Pitt**.

Shore tunes

WAIT. More revelations. 10 top music acts to headline summer in the Hamptons. At Canoe Place. On Montauk Highway. **Matthew Kristan**, its GM: "Last summer's sold-out **Jeff Goldblum** showed a premium entertainment demand." Starts June 8. With the Gipsy Kings, **Trevor Hall**, **Rufus Wainwright**. Historic landmark, after an extensive restoration, it's now a premier destination for live entertainment. Lucille Ball once played there. But not lately. NYC'S having such a lousy p.r. slide that even government buildings are bracing for attacks. The Statue of Liberty just got fitted for a bulletproof bra. **Only in New York, kids, only in New York.**

SCOTT: I'LL TOP CUOMO

Upbeat in mayoral bid

By CRAIG MCCARTHY
and CARL CAMPANILE

Scott Stringer says he has a very particular set of skills: taking down ex-governors.

The mayoral hopeful (right) pitched himself as the sole candidate who can dethrone powerhouse front-runner Andrew Cuomo — since he's defeated a former governor once before.

"This is my specialty, I save people from former governors," the former city comptroller assured The Post editorial board during a sit-down Wednesday.

"You just got to let me be me," Stringer said optimistically.

The former state assemblyman has been lagging in the polls, but he remained hopeful during the one-hour interview that his campaign would finally get off the ground in the coming weeks — with just three months to go until the heated Democratic primary.

Stringer, who was the first Dem candidate to announce a challenge to Mayor Adams early last year, compared the tough race to his first campaign for city comptroller.

The then-Manhattan



SCOTT STRINGER
First to challenge Adams.

borough president knee-capped ex-Gov. Eliot Spitzer's bid to return to public life in 2013. Spitzer had resigned in disgrace five years prior amid a prostitution scandal.

The June 24 Democratic mayoral primary, however, promises to be a much stiffer race, with 10 people vying for the nomination and Cuomo dominating the field even before he officially entered the race March 1.

"We have a crisis of leadership, a crisis of management and it didn't start with Eric Adams, it started with [his predecessor] Bill de Blasio and I know that because my job as comptroller was to hold him accountable," Stringer said.

Ex-gov leads Dem poll

Ex-Gov. Andrew Cuomo holds a commanding lead in the Democratic primary race for New York City mayor while Democratic Socialist Zohran Mamdani has surged into second place in a poll released Wednesday.

Cuomo is supported by 38%, followed by Mamdani with 10%, incumbent Eric Adams with 8%, city Comptroller Brad Lander and state Sen. Jessica Ramos with 6% each and former Comptroller Scott Stringer with 5%, the Emerson College-Pixll-The Hill survey found.

Carl Campanile

PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARINGS TO BE HELD IN PSC CASES 25-E-0072, 25-G-0073 – CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY OF NEW YORK, INC. FOR ELECTRIC AND GAS SERVICE

Consolidated Edison Company of New York (Con Edison) filed amendments to its electric and gas tariff schedules on January 31, 2025, proposing to increase its annual electric and gas delivery revenues for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2026. Con Edison proposes to increase its electric delivery revenues by approximately \$1.6 billion (an 11.4 percent increase in total revenues or 18.0 percent increase in base delivery revenues), and its natural gas delivery revenues by approximately \$440 million (a 19.1 percent increase in total revenues or 25.1 percent increase in base delivery revenues).

The actual bill impacts of these proposed changes on any particular customer class will vary based upon revenue allocation and rate design.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that **virtual public statement hearings** will be held before Administrative Law Judges James A. Costello, Tara A. Kersey and Nicholas Planty, on:

DATE: **Tuesday, April 8, 2025**

TIME: **1:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M.**

DATE: **Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

TIME: **1:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M.**

A more comprehensive notice that contains further information on how to attend the hearings electronically is available at <https://dps.ny.gov/calendar>, where you should click on the **"View DPS Calendar Listings"** button, locate and click on the Con Edison virtual public statement hearings scheduled on April 8 and 9, 2025, and click on the **"READ THE NOTICE"** button.

Any person wishing to provide a public statement at a virtual public statement hearing must register one day in advance of the hearing.

To register electronically: Registration information for participants who would like to provide a statement and will log in to a hearing electronically may be found at <https://dps.ny.gov/calendar>, where you should click on the **"View DPS Calendar Listings"** button, locate and click on the Con Edison virtual public statement hearings scheduled for April 8 and 9, 2025, and click on the **"REGISTER"** button.

To register by phone: Any participant who is not able to log in to a hearing electronically may participate by phone. Call-in participants who would like to provide a statement must register to do so in advance by calling **1-800-342-3330**, where they should follow prompts to the appropriate hearing and provide their first and last name, address, and phone number.

On the appropriate date and time of a hearing, all call-in users should dial
1-929-251-9612 and enter:

Access Code: **(2831 112 4529)** and Password: **27780176**
for the April 8, 2025, 1:00 P.M. hearing;

Access Code: **(2830 387 4809)** and Password: **27780530**
for the April 8, 2025, 5:30 P.M. hearing;

Access Code: **(2827 268 0674)** and Password: **27745901**
for the April 9, 2025, 1:00 P.M. hearing; and

Access Code: **(2820 054 8649)** and Password: **27745905**
for the April 9, 2025, 5:30 P.M. hearing.

Each public statement hearing will be held open until everyone who has registered to speak has been heard or other reasonable arrangements to submit comments have been made.

CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY OF NEW YORK, INC.

Rhapsody in blue

County major crime drops

Data from the Nassau County police shows a big drop in crimes to start 2025.

Records indicate that major crimes in Nassau fell more than 25% in the first two months of 2025, a dramatic year-over-year improvement that law-enforcement officials say reflects efforts to keep their communities safe.

The NCPD, which tracks seven major crime categories — murder, rape, robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny and grand theft auto — reported 710 major crimes so far this year, compared to 951 during the same period in 2024.

“Nassau County is the safest county in America thanks to the men and women of our police department, corrections officers, probation officers and my no-nonsense approach to law and order,” County Executive Bruce Blakeman said.

For the second year in a row, the county recorded zero murders during the first two months of the year.

Robberies took one of the biggest dives from 2024, with commercial robberies also dropping 25% — from 32 to 24 — while other robberies, such as those in public spaces, were cut by more than half, from 47 to 23.

Residential break-ins were also slashed in half, with just 29 reported so far this year, and businesses or other nonresidential spots saw similar relief, with those incidents dropping from 87 to 45.

Grand larceny, the county’s most common major crime, is now on the decline with more than 100 fewer cases compared to this time last year.

Assaults also trended down from 69 to 57, a solid drop that signals fewer violent confrontations turning serious. *Brandon Cruz*



PARTY PLANNERS: Nassau officials salute injured hero cop Ken Baribault and announce a fete for the Police Department’s 100th anniversary.

Parade for Nassau cops’ 100th ann’y

By BRANDON CRUZ
and JORGE FITZ-GIBBON

Nassau County is so pumped to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its Police Department that they’re even inviting “the 51st state,” aka Canada, and Mexico to the party.

County Executive Bruce Blakeman announced plans for the April 27 bash by honoring an injured county cop, promising a massive parade and “a super block party,” with invitations going out to departments in all 50 states and neighboring nations to the north and south.

“We only do big things here in Nassau County,” Blakeman said. “We have invited every police department motorcycle unit in the United States to come to this parade so that we can celebrate together and make it the biggest police motorcycle parade in the history of the United States.

“And if any want to come from our 51st state of Canada or from

south of the border in Mexico, we’ll be happy to have them as well,” he said, referencing an idea floated by President Trump to annex Canada.

The announcement came as Blakeman honored Detective Ken Baribault, who was severely injured in an on-duty crash a decade ago, presenting the veteran cop with the first 100th-anniversary ceremonial bar that will be worn by all members of the department.

County cops will also wear a “100 years” patch on their uniforms.

“You are somebody that has epitomized what it means to be a Nassau County police officer with your strength, with your courage, with your dedication to the department,” Blakeman told Baribault.

“And all the members of the department and all the members of Nassau County love you, support you and we stand behind you,” he added.

The celebration will shut down much of Wantagh State Parkway, with antique squad cars, a helicopter flyover, horses, a pipe band and lots and lots of motorcycles, a department tradition.

‘Exciting thing’

“One hundred years ago, on April 16, this department started with 55 patrolmen, half of them on motorcycles,” Nassau Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said Wednesday.

“The entire strip will be closed down, and we’re gonna say thank you to the men and women who serve,” Ryder said. “In my eight years as commissioner, this is one of the most exciting things I’ve done.”

The top cop said the celebration will be entirely funded through donations, but that didn’t stop Democrats from claiming Blakeman is withholding funding from their districts.

“Nassau County’s police officers are among the most highly trained and professional in the country, and they deserve to be honored for 100 years of dedicated service,” Nassau Democratic Legislator Seth Koslow said in a statement to The Post Wednesday.

“But if County Executive Blakeman has the time and resources to throw a parade, why is he still withholding millions of dollars in lifesaving equipment for police, firefighters and EMS in Democratic-led districts?” Koslow added.

“You can’t claim to back the blue while playing politics with their safety. Celebrations are nice, but funding first responders should be a priority every single day, not just when there’s a stage and a spotlight.”

The parade is scheduled to kick off at 2 p.m. April 27, with a block party to follow at 3 p.m.

The rain date is May 4, county officials said.

bcruz@nypost.com

STEP UP TO PLATE



WINNERS! Chef Christian Petroni shows off a dessert in a preview of foods offered at Yankee Stadium, including sushi stop Bondi (above) and goodies from star chef Marcus Samuelsson (inset).

Stadium food lineup features heavy hitters

By ROB LEDONNE

Take me out . . . to eat!
It used to be that baseball fans were content to munch on peanuts and Cracker Jacks at the ballpark. This year, however, hungry Yankees gamegoers can also feast on lobster flown in from Maine.

While ominous news about the upcoming season might leave a foul taste ahead of Opening Day on Thursday — Gerrit Cole's season-sidelining surgery, for one — an unveiling of new stadium sustenance revealed no shortage of comforting foods to soothe fans.

Along with your starting team of hot dogs and chicken buckets, there will be bites that knock it out of the park à la Aaron Judge, courtesy of all-star city chefs like David Chang, Bobby Flay and Marcus Samuelsson.

In addition to his acclaimed Big Apple restaurants like Red Rooster Harlem and Hav & Mar in Chelsea, Samuelsson is also behind fried chicken outfit Streetbird, a stadium mainstay.

Streetbird cooked up a footlong ballpark frank to beat them all: Meet The Birddog, a whopper of a wiener topped with fried chicken

tenders, garlic aioli, pickles and cheese sauce.

Biting into it is an explosion of texture: crunchy chicken, savory cheese and cool pickles, all letting the hot dog itself enjoy the renewed attention. Just keep a napkin handy to help tame the unique creation.

"Obviously, the game is at the center, but part of the whole experience of coming to the stadium is trying all different foods," Samuelsson told The Post. "There's this rivalry as to what stadium has the best food, and we obviously feel we have that."

For 2025, the Bronx Bombers teamed up with Manhattan sushi chain Bondi for fresh sashimi and rolls.

Big spenders in the exclusive Legends Suite seating area can even devour a lobster roll featuring crustaceans from The Pine

Tree State, doused in lemon aioli and presented on top of a toasted bun.

Brooklyn Dumpling Shop also joins the roster this year, delivering dumplings stuffed with Wagyu beef as well as both Buffalo and Kung Pao chicken. The spicy mayonnaise adds a delectable kick.

'A dream'

Caribbean Food Delights, the NY-based Jamaican food company that traces its roots to its Bronx-founding in 1978, was also brought up to the big leagues for the 2025 season.

"We've been trying to get a kiosk here for 20 years," said CEO Sabrina HoSang Jordan. "It's a dream as an owner of a food company to be involved."

Yankee fans will have a chance to try CFD's original Jamaican beef patty, as well as a stuffed Ja-

maican beef patty with a cilantro lime slaw and slathered and brought to life in a citrusy lime and sweet jerk barbecue aioli.

Another new addition will be chunky cookies from non-profit bakery Sweet P, which trains and employs adults with disabilities. Sugar fiends will be in heaven thanks to the company's combination brownie-cookies, a thick Frankenstein of both desserts.

"We get pitched new companies a lot," Mike Foster, who serves as the director of premium services at the Bronx stadium's Legends Suites, told The Post. "It's a non-stop process, so we're constantly planning."

Besides longstanding associations with local icons like Nathan's, Sabrett and Upper East Side butcher shop legend Lobel's, the stadium also has a close relationship with Bronx-born chef and Food Network personality Christian Petroni.

For 2025, Petroni teamed up with longtime Williamsburg Italian bakery Fortunato Brothers to offer a tiramisu — served, suitably, in a plastic, navy blue Yankees hat bowl.



TRIPLE PLAY: From top, lobster rolls, Jamaican patties and dumplings all await the fans at Yankee Stadium when the 2025 baseball season opens today.

With Castro's revolution turned rancid,



MARTIN GURRI

CUBA just endured a nationwide blackout of the electric grid, lasting for days — the third such disaster in six months. The population has succumbed to despair.

“There are no words to describe this,” a young Cuban YouTuber exclaimed. “This is hell.”

Yet the blackout scarcely made the news. Journalists and intellectuals have fallen out of love with Cuba, so nobody is asking the obvious question: How can any government allow such a humanitarian horror to continue?

Let me try to answer that question.

I was born on the island long ago, when it was a happier place. My childhood was spent in a sub-tropical garden ringed by the best beaches in the world.

Havana, my hometown, boasted magnificent colonial buildings from the time when the Spanish treasure fleet would rendezvous in the city's protected harbor before sailing to Seville.

The island, though not wealthy, was prospering. Hard as it is to believe, at the time of my birth Cuba's GDP per capita exceeded that of Japan.

The Cuban people, then as now, were pushy, loud, friendly and funny. I am reminded of the type whenever I visit Israel — only Cuba, back then, had better food and way better music than Israel ever did.

Politics swallowed isle

This picture of paradise was spoiled by a tragic flaw all too familiar to those who have lived in Latin America: Politics swallowed and destroyed everything else.

Cuban democracy was shaky and corrupt — but it turned out to be infinitely preferable to the succeeding alternatives.

In 1952, the military, led by Fulgencio Batista, overthrew the elected government. Since that fatal event, the Cuban people have remained unfree.

On New Year's Day of 1958, Batista took his family, friends and bags of money on a plane and fled to the Dominican Republic. A motley crew of revolutionaries with big beards and olive-green fatigues, commanded by the 33-year-old Fidel Castro, was now in charge.

Castro fought Batista as a democrat but ruled Cuba for 50 years as a Marxist-Leninist “maximum leader.”

And here is a spoiler alert: It's this strange and unnatural system, with its predictable consequences, that has driven Cuba and the Cubans into the abyss.

Marxism-Leninism combines a utopian idealism with the most brutal and rigid control over private life — even private thoughts — ever attempted by the state.

In theory, it aims to eliminate all oppression and exploitation, give to each person his or her due, and guide humanity from the “realm of necessity” to the “realm of freedom,” as Karl Marx put it.

The practice fell short of the ideal.

More than 60 million human beings were murdered by the state in the Soviet Union, many of them in Siberian labor camps — the infamous “Gulag Archipelago.” At least 45 million starved to death during China's insane attempt to industrialize on Marxist principles, the “Great Leap Forward.”

Many, even today, fall passionately in love with the ideals and consider the killing fields to be a mere glitch in the matrix.

Those who have lived through the nightmare and survived know better.

Utopian nightmare

At the heart of the Marxist-Leninist system was the Communist Party, made up of people who considered themselves to be uniquely perceptive, capable of decoding the future course of history — the “vanguard” of the human race.

Party members grasped reality. Everyone else stumbled along in a fog of false consciousness, working against their own best interests.

To achieve utopia, therefore, the Party had to be treated like a kind of infallible pope and obeyed explicitly on every aspect of life from the cosmic to the mundane — or else.

This radical form of elitism demanded a complete monopoly over information, for the best of motives: The public would otherwise be bamboozled by fake news.

“What they call a free press in the United States is nothing more than the freedom of the rich to deceive the poor,” Castro once said.

Batista, the right-wing thug, censored the press. Castro, like all Marxists, believed the press could only be free when it was totally under his control. He demolished the lively Cuban media, including newspapers, radio and TV, and substituted a Party media that was deadly dull but ideologically pure.



AFP via Getty Images

HAVANA NIGHTS: Cubans are left to light their own way on a street (above) during a general blackout in Havana on March 14, a persistent problem for the poor communist nation descended from revolution (right). Ever since military leader Fulgencio Batista (near inset) fled with his tail between his legs in 1958, the twisted vision of Fidel Castro (far inset) has descended the island into a permanent state of collapse, now typified by Cubans chatting outside on the street at night (opposite page, last October) amid nationwide blackouts.



I remember the death of freedom of the press in Cuba. In theory at least, it wasn't done out of a mania for control. It was a kindness. We, the public — ordinary people — lacked the historical wisdom to parse the disinformation fed to us by “the rich.”

Castro and the Party knew best. The massive Marxist-Leninist state needed to crush every particle of independent thought in us to protect us from ourselves.

I also remember the feeling of the totality of the state like a pounding migraine that never went away.

If you picked up the phone, revolutionary slogans started pouring out before you could dial. If you turned on the TV, it was an interminable Castro speech. If

you looked out the window, you saw a billboard with more slogans or a ramshackle militia post.

At Catholic school — I left Cuba shortly before they were closed forever — you were taken to Communist parades.

Perpetual dread

There was no escape. Those who have experienced totalitarianism know that it isn't really a form of government: It's an emotion, a perpetual sense of dread.

The reason for all this assertiveness was found in the utter failure of the human race to live up to the Marxist-Leninist program, which promised to fix whatever ailed us and achieve perfection at the end of history.

Alas, humanity has always been a disappointment to enlightened Marxists. It keeps deviating from the road to utopia due to primitive motives — love of family, say, or a yen for personal freedom, or simply a sense of fun.

The more frequently the public strayed from the true path, the more rules, regulations and punishments that were imposed as a corrective. In Cuba, as in every communist country, the prodigious energies of the state ultimately focused round the clock on two basic tasks.

The first was telling the masses how to think and act — hence the pervasive, migraine-inducing propaganda and speechifying.

The second was spying on everyone and everything, high and

this 'utopia' can't even keep lights on

CUBA LOST IN 'DARK AGES'



low, to ensure they thought and acted the correct way.

A hyper-regulated society can function only on a basis of total surveillance and betrayal. At the heyday of the system, anyone — a family member, a friend, a random stranger — could be a snitch.

Normal social bonds quickly dissolved in an acid bath of suspicion.

What if your spouse wishes to

punish you for misbehaving?

What if your child blurts out something at school?

You learned to live in the silent prison of your own solitude, trusting no one.

That was proper and right. The single bond needed in a Marxist society was that of obedience to the Party.

The Cuban security apparatus was wonderfully effective. Dissidents who made too much noise

were mobbed, beaten, jailed and on occasion killed. This was done, as Voltaire would say, to encourage the others.

Yet the most unique aspect of life under Marxism-Leninism wasn't political but economic.

The state owned everything. For decades, Castro treated the island as his personal playground, which he enjoyed, no doubt, as a foretaste of the utopian future.

Cubans worked for the state, bought their necessities from the state, lived in state-owned dwellings. Individual possessions amounted to scarcely more than a toothbrush — and that was purchased from the state.

Given these conditions, no one had any incentive to produce anything — and logically enough, as a consequence, nothing was produced.

My prosperous paradise became The Land That Time Forgot. Famously, many cars in Ha-

vana are still from the capitalist 1950s. The wonderful old buildings are collapsing on the heads of passers-by — sometimes, whole families die in these disasters.

That seems almost too trite as a metaphor for the entire Cuban economy.

Economy in collapse

Sugar production, which Cuba once dominated globally, has crumpled like the old edifices: from 8 million tons in 1989 to a mere 160,000 tons last year — a 98% freefall. Today, Cubans must import their sweeteners.

From milk to antibiotics — items exempted from the US government's embargo — important goods are unavailable for love or money. It's not an economy of scarcity but of bare survival.

Cubans spend most of their time and all their ingenuity on

two activities: standing in line for some rare product and scheming how to flee the country.

By far the most prolific export item from Cuba is Cubans.

In 2016, after all the drama of the Cold War, Fidel Castro died in the quiet comfort of his bed. His brother Raul, now 93, will soon join him in dialectical-materialist heaven.

The system, having somehow failed to reach perfection, is now in its dotage. The brave ideals are gone, and all that's left is the true spirit of the thing: will to power.

Late-stage communism tends to fall back on archaic forms: Revolution ends with devolution.

The North Koreans are ruled by a dynasty of divine emperors. The Chinese Communist Party hardened into an aristocracy of princelings.

Cuba today resembles the plot of "Godfather II," only with a trick ending: The rebels have become the mafia.

Party before country

The Party matters less than the family business — with the Castros of the lesser generations impersonating the Sopranos as bourgeois racketeers. The once-mighty Marxist-Leninist state has withered to a criminal organization. Party grandees are just thieves who send dirty money overseas for insurance, just in case.

Meanwhile, the economy has sunk to whatever misery must be endured below the level of "collapse."

It's the dark ages, literally: The blackouts go on for days, so that food spoils in the fridge and old people must sleep outdoors, among the mosquitos, because the elevators to their apartments aren't working.

Those who can are leaving the island in record numbers — 10% of the population fled in the last two years alone. But with the Trump administration's hard line on immigration, the outward-bound stampede will be barred at the gates.

That's how this system, so admired by intellectuals, so often praised as a superior alternative to our way of life, comes to an end: with rank corruption at the top and wild desperation at the bottom.

When I recall the lovely garden of my childhood, I feel unutterably sad.

But every day, really every instant, I feel an immense gratitude for my American existence, because I consider the fate of the poor Cubans and I think: there, but for the grace of God and the wisdom of my parents, go I.

Wizard of Schnozz

By MCKENZIE BEARD

She has a nose for bad news. Scottish woman Joy Milne claims she can sniff out whether someone has Parkinson's disease before the symptoms appear.

People even mail her their T-shirts, hoping she can do a long-distance diagnosis.

The 75-year-old former nurse told *The Telegraph* she no longer opens the packages herself, but for over a decade, she has been using her remarkable nose to assist scientists. Now, they are on the brink of a medical breakthrough that could make early Parkinson's diagnosis a reality.

An estimated 1 million Americans are living with Parkinson's disease, and nearly 90,000 new cases are diagnosed each year — making it the second most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's.

The debilitating condition slowly ravages the brain, often damaging nerve cells for years, or even decades, before symptoms surface. As it progresses, patients encounter a range of challenges, from uncontrollable shaking and muscle stiffness to slow, labored movements and difficulty with balance.

While there's no cure for Parkinson's, experts stress that early diagnosis is key. Timely intervention with medications and lifestyle changes can help manage symptoms and, in some cases, slow the progression of the disease.

Detected hubby's scent

Milne first noticed her unusual talent when her late husband, Les, began emitting a peculiar musky odor. Initially, she brushed it off, thinking it was simply sweat or bad breath. But nearly a decade later, Les was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

At first, Milne didn't think much of her heightened sense of smell, which stems from an inherited condition known as hyperosmia. But, during a Parkinson's patients



Parkinson's sniffer keys early test to ID disease

SCENTSATIONAL: Joy Milne's rare ability to tell if someone has Parkinson's, based on their scent, has helped doctors devise a skin-swab test they hope to make available soon to diagnose the disease.

Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

support group years later, she noticed that the same strange scent was present in others.

"By the time I left, I could tell you who had Parkinson's, who did and who didn't," Milne told *Sky News*.

This sparked a light-bulb moment for Milne, who had a medical background and recognized the significance of her discovery. She reached out to Tilo Kunath, a Parkinson's researcher at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, offering her extraordinary nose to assist in early detection of Parkinson's.

To test her claim, researchers presented Milne with a collection of T-shirts that had been worn overnight — some by Parkinson's patients, others by healthy people — and asked her to sort them into two piles.

"She was incredibly accurate," Tilo told NPR.

Milne correctly identified every shirt, with one exception — she mistakenly placed a control shirt in the Parkinson's group. But nine months later, the wearer of that shirt was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Helps researchers

"Our early results suggested that there may be a distinctive scent that is unique to people with Parkinson's," Tilo said in a press release from the University of Edinburgh.

"If we could identify the molecules responsible for this, it could help us develop ways of detecting and monitoring the condition," he added.

In the years since, Milne has been collaborating with researchers, including Perdita Barran at the University of Manchester in En-

gland, to develop a tool for the early detection of Parkinson's.

Scientists believe that the scent Milne can detect may be linked to a chemical change in skin oil, known as sebum, which is triggered by the disease.

Thanks to Milne's remarkable nose, Barran told *The Telegraph* that she is now "very close" to creating a noninvasive skin-swab test that could help diagnose Parkinson's years before symptoms appear, as well as monitor its progression.

"Not only is the test quick, simple and painless, but it should also be extremely cost-effective because it uses existing technology that is already widely available," Barran said.

She expects the test to undergo early clinical trials at Manchester's Wythenshawe Hospital later this year.



JASMINE CROCKETT
Mocked GOP gov's disability.

Abbott's whack at Dem hate

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott hit back at left-wing Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas) after she mocked his use of a wheelchair, claiming the Democrats have "nothing to sell but hate."

The firebrand Texas lawmaker was slammed after she branded Abbott "Governor Hot Wheels" during a Human Rights Campaign dinner Saturday in LA.

Abbott, who has used a wheelchair since 1984 when a tree fell on his back in a freak accident, brushed aside Crockett's nasty jibe in an appearance on Fox News' "Hannity" late Tuesday.

"It's another day and another disaster by the Democrats," he told host Sean Hannity. "The reality is they have no vision, no policy. They have nothing to sell but hate, and Americans are not buying it. It's one reason why Texas is going to remain red."

Crockett, 43, insisted Tuesday that her remarks had nothing to do with Abbott's disability.

"I wasn't thinking about the governor's condition — I was thinking about the planes, trains, and automobiles he used to transfer migrants into communities led by Black mayors," she wrote on X. *Anthony Blair*

Boy, 16, is fatally shot

A 16-year-old boy was shot dead during a brawl in Queens Wednesday, cops said.

The teen just stepped off a bus when he got into a fight with an apparent armed rival in the vicinity of Jamaica Avenue and 172nd Street in Jamaica around 2:20 p.m., according to the NYPD.

The suspect, who was wearing a black vest over a

gray hoodie and a mask, then shot him in the chest before fleeing, sources told *The Post*.

The wounded teen stumbled across the street and collapsed, where cops found him in a pool of blood.

He was rushed to Jamaica Hospital Medical Center but could not be saved. The shooter remained at large. *Amanda Woods & Joe Marino*

Qns. break-in brutes bag \$1M

A vicious group of home invaders bound two women with tape and made off with more than \$1 million in jewelry, clothes and bags in a heist at a Queens home, as children slept inside, cops and sources said Wednesday.

A 53-year-old nanny had just put the kids to sleep and was taking out the trash

outside the home on Mayfair Road near 116th Street just after 7:30 p.m. March 19 when she spotted five men getting out of a white sedan, the sources said.

She rushed back into the house on the tree-lined Kew Gardens block, but it was too late, the sources said.

The five brutes sprinted

up behind her and barged into the home, where one of them pushed her to the floor and held her down, according to the sources.

They bound the nanny with tape and did the same to another woman, 36, who was also inside the home, according to police.

Then they rummaged

through the premises, scooping up jewelry, handbags, bikinis and other clothes worth \$1,105,000, according to cops and sources.

The crew fled and hopped into a white 2021 Toyota RAV4 with a sixth man inside, police said. No one was hurt.

Joe Marino and Amanda Woods

‘Slay try’ doc said ‘friendly’

Co-workers of the Maui doctor who allegedly tried to murder his wife by shoving her off a Hawaii vista and beating her with a rock said they are shocked by the frightening allegations against the anesthesiologist — whom they described as “friendly” and “quiet.”

Gerhardt Konig, 46, is accused of trying to push his wife, Arielle, off a popular hiking trail close to the Pali Lookout area on Oahu after she reportedly refused to take a picture of him. He was stopped before he could throw his wife over the cliffside, the Honolulu Police Department said.

Fellow medical professionals at Maui Memorial Medical Center — where Konig worked as an independent contractor — described him as “friendly” and “quiet,” reported Island News.

Konig, who is originally from Pittsburgh, has since been suspended from working at the hospital.

Arielle, 36, a successful nuclear scientist who married Konig in 2018, was also allegedly hit in the head with a rock multiple times.

She was rushed to the hospital on Monday in critical condition with head and facial injuries. Konig was arrested Monday evening and faces attempted murder charges. *Anthony Blair*

Kosovo to boost arms

Kosovo plans to boost its defense spending by 60% over the next four years and to focus on acquiring Black Hawk helicopters and building plants to produce ammunition and drones, Prime Minister Albin Kurti said Wednesday.

Kurti has repeatedly argued for increased defense spending to counter any potential threat from neighboring Serbia, which still considers Kosovo part of its territory.

“In the next mandate, we will allocate [\$1.08 billion] for our army,” Kurti told a cabinet meeting, up from \$673 million over the previous four years. *Reuters*

Model says she nearly passed out

By DAVID PROPPER

One of Andrew Tate’s girlfriends has accused the self-proclaimed misogynist of choking her so hard during rough sex at the Beverly Hills Hotel that she later alerted authorities, according to a report.

Bri Stern alleged to Beverly Hills police that the sexual assault took place two weeks ago and that she nearly passed out from the violent encounter, TMZ reported, citing sources with direct knowledge of the incident.

Tate (inset), who is facing human trafficking charges in Romania, allegedly started choking Stern during sex on March 11, but when she told him to stop as it got rougher, he ignored her pleas, the outlet reported.

As she continued to struggle, Tate allegedly became more violent and Stern nearly lost consciousness, TMZ reported.

The alleged attack only stopped after the sex was over.

After Tate, 38, fell asleep, Stern went to the bathroom and took photos of her injuries, according to TMZ, which obtained photos showing the bruising on the side of her face.

‘Post-concussive’

Stern went to a New York City hospital two days later after flying to the Big Apple for work and was diagnosed as “post-concussive,” according to another photo obtained by the outlet.

She said she only filed a police report after Tate and his 36-year-old brother Tristan left the country over the weekend for a Monday check-in with authorities in Romania that is tied to their criminal case, according to the outlet.

The check-in with police in Bucharest complied with a judicial control requirement in their case.

Stern and Tate started dating last June after meeting in Romania, where she had been on a modeling job, sources told TMZ. He alleg-

edly had been verbally abusive in the months since, they added, but the alleged choking assault was the first time he got physical with her.

Purported texts between the two that were obtained by TMZ show Tate claiming he wants to beat or hit her numerous times.

‘Not been convicted’

TMZ obtained a photo Tate snapped with Ye, formerly Kanye West, the day before the alleged incident — the same day his ex-wife

Kim Kardashian pulled the daughter they share out of the rapper’s recording studio because the Tate brothers were also invited to hang with him.

The Tate brothers were arrested in 2022 and indicted last year on charges that they took part in a criminal ring that lured

women to Romania, where they were allegedly sexually exploited. Andrew Tate is also facing rape charges.

But both siblings have denied all charges and have not been convicted of any crimes.

“I’m a free person who has not been convicted of anything,” Andrew Tate said outside the police station in Voluntari, Romania.

The former kickboxer with a huge social media following also vowed to “comply with all judicial authorities everywhere around the world because I’m completely innocent.”

The brothers were forced to stay in Romania because of the criminal accusation until a few weeks ago when a travel ban was lifted and they reached the US.

A Bucharest court in December ruled the case against the two men couldn’t go to trial because of legal and procedural irregularities by prosecutors. The case, however, remains open.

Andrew Tate has also been accused of sexual violence and physical abuse by four women in civil lawsuits brought in the UK.

The Post has reached out to Beverly Hills police. *With Wires*

BRUISED: Bri Stern claims social media influencer Andrew Tate ignored her pleas to stop choking her during rough sex at the Beverly Hills Hotel two weeks ago.



TATE ‘IN SEX CHOKER’

Mex jails US couple over charge dispute

A Michigan couple’s spring-break vacation quickly turned into a nightmare when they were hauled away to a maximum-security prison for allegedly disputing credit-card charges at a resort after touching down in Mexico.

Grandparents Christy and Paul Akeo arrived at an air-

port in Cancun on March 4 when they realized that notices had been placed on their passports as they went through customs, Christy’s daughter, Lindsey Hull, wrote in a Facebook post on Monday.

The couple was arrested on outstanding criminal fraud charges and have

been held without bond in a foreign prison for the past 23 days.

Hull claimed that her mother and stepfather were arrested in “retaliation” for challenging charges made on their American Express credit card by the Palace Co., a luxury, all-inclusive vacation brand with resorts

in Mexico and Jamaica owned by Palace Resorts.

The couple had a time-share membership with the vacation company and disputed charges totaling \$117,000 from Palace Resorts on their credit card around three years ago.

After months of challenging the charges, American

Express sided with the couple, the money was returned to the Akeos and their membership with the Palace Co. was canceled.

Since the incident, the Akeos have returned to Cancun multiple times over the past few years and had never run into trouble until recently. *Richard Pollina*

Instagram / @thebriestern

» KNOW THE SIGNS OF GENETIC TESTING SCAMS «

- Cheek swab tests that go by the names of Cancer, DNA, Dementia, Parkinsons, or Autoimmune screenings.
- Companies that say testing is FREE, but if you don't qualify you could end up paying \$9,000 - \$11,000 out of pocket.
- Your MSN or EOB will show charges for genetic tests you did not approve.
- Companies that request your Medicare number at community events like health fairs, senior centers, malls, or parking lots.

IMPORTANT

Always check with your doctor before any tests or screening. If you are contacted by anyone who offers a cheek swab test, call the NYS Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at 800-333-4374.



Supported by grant number 90MPPG01701, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living

www.nysenior.org

Yank-kid fight

Doc's bid to save Brett's son

By JARED DOWNING and JORGE FITZ-GIBBON

QUEPOS, Costa Rica — The doctor whose team treated the son of former New York Yankee Brett Gardner at a high-end resort revealed that medics fought frantically to save the 14-year-old boy's life — but could not revive him.

Dr. Kevin Gannon, who runs Manuel Antonio Urgent Care near the Costa Rica resort where Miller Gardner died, told The Post that the teen was unresponsive when doctors arrived on Friday morning, as he raised questions about what may have caused the boy's sudden death.

"From what we encountered there, we could not verify a cause of death," Gannon said. "To us it was

very confusing.

"We responded to a minor without vitals," he added. "We tested him for cardiac arrest and performed CPR for more than 30 minutes. There was not really much we could significantly do."

'So much BS'

Gannon said the Gardeners had all vomited after getting sick following the dinner the previous night.

But he said he did not believe that either food poisoning or an allergic reaction was responsible for Miller's death.

"There's so much BS going around," the doctor said. "Some people are saying it was anaphylactic shock from food he ate. But I will say it is very, very rare for a patient to eat food and go that long

without a reaction. Usually it's right away."

Brett and Jessica Gardner and their two sons were vacationing at the Arenas Del Mar Beachfront & Rainforest Resort at Manuel Antonio National Park when Miller was reportedly treated by hotel doctors for food poisoning, according to Costa Rican police.

Police initially believed the teen died from asphyxiation due to food poisoning, but ruled out that he choked to death after an initial examination over the weekend.

Brett Gardner, 41, was an outfielder with the Yankees for his entire 14-year big-league baseball career, and was a member of the team's 2009 World Series championship team.

jdowning@nypost.com

Post Weather Report

Thursday

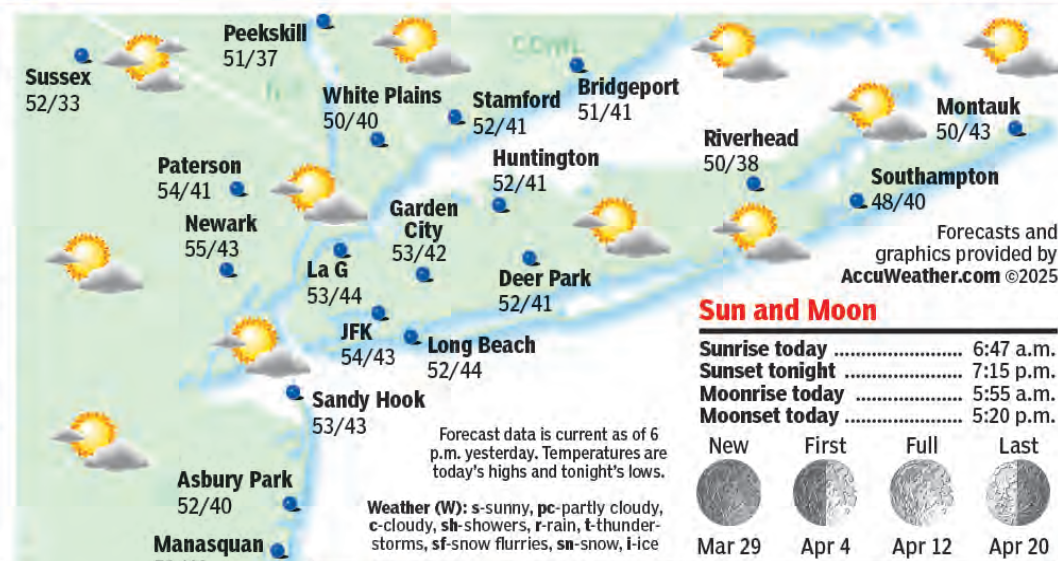
Today: Partly sunny and breezy. High 50 to 56.
Tonight: Partly cloudy with a shower. Low 39 to 45.
Saturday

Breezy and warmer. High 73 to 79.
Evening
Overcast. Low 49 to 55.

Friday

Tomorrow: Warmer with more clouds than sun. High 57 to 63.
Tomorrow night: A couple of late-night showers. Low 49 to 55.
Sunday

Cooler. High 55 to 61.
Evening
Cloudy and mild. Low 53 to 59.



Almanac

YESTERDAY'S CONDITIONS AT CENTRAL PARK THROUGH 6PM

Temperature
High: 53, Low: 40, Mean: 47
Departure from Normal
Yesterday: +1 degrees
Precipitation
Yesterday: trace, Month: 4.21",
Year: 7.42", Normal year to date: 10.45"
Heating Degree days yesterday18
Total for the month (normal)493 (599)
Total since July 1 (normal)3753 (3982)
Last season to date3402
Wind Chill (at noon yest.) 44
UV Index (for Thu.) 5 (Moderate)
Humidity (at noon) 39%

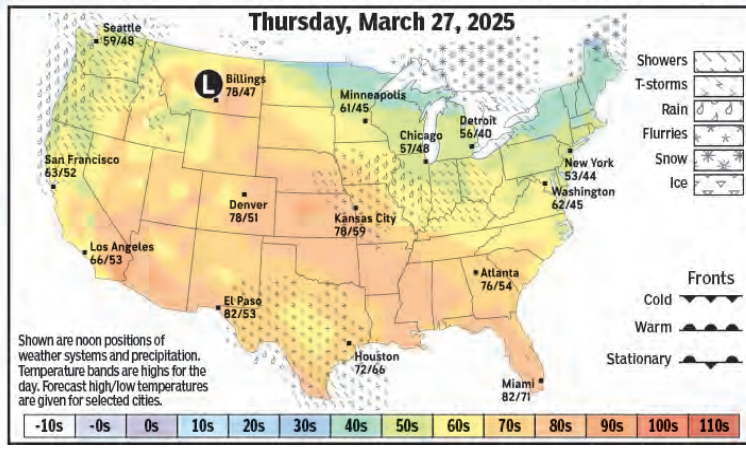
SNOW
Yesterday 0.0"
Month to date (normal) 0.0" (4.6")
AQI rating: (for Thu.)Moderate

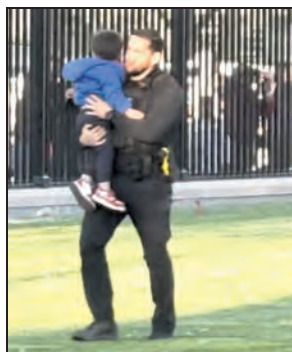
AccuWeather Visit AccuWeather.com

New York Tides	TODAY		TOMORROW	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
High Tide for	6:43a	7:09p	7:31a	7:55p
Coney Island	6:47a	7:10p	7:36a	8:00p
Fire Island	10:31a	10:52p	11:17a	11:35p
Hempstead	10:28a	10:50p	11:16a	11:35p
Huntington	6:27a	6:53p	7:15a	7:39p
Jones Inlet	7:57a	8:20p	8:41a	9:05p
Montauk Point	10:34a	10:55p	11:20a	11:37p
Port Washington	6:47a	7:13p	7:35a	7:59p
Sandy Hook				

Regional cities	TODAY		TOMORROW	
Albany	49/35/pc		54/37/c	
Danbury	51/36/pc		59/47/c	
Glens Falls	48/31/pc		48/31/pc	
Gr Barrington	48/32/pc		53/41/c	
Kingston	53/31/pc		56/41/c	
Liberty	44/28/pc		51/39/pc	
Monticello	45/31/pc		50/43/pc	
Newburgh	52/36/pc		57/47/c	
Poughkeepsie	52/35/pc		57/45/c	
Saratoga Springs	49/34/pc		50/33/pc	
Stroudsburg	53/37/pc		58/47/c	
Torrington	49/33/pc		53/42/pc	
Syracuse	50/33/pc		49/40/c	

World cities	TODAY		TOMORROW	
Athens	67/52/c		67/54/s	
Baghdad	86/60/pc		89/62/s	
Beijing	56/37/c		51/30/pc	
Berlin	56/33/pc		63/38/s	
Cairo	97/78/pc		90/58/s	
Dublin	61/41/r		50/37/sh	
Geneva	56/35/pc		58/41/pc	
Hong Kong	81/73/sh		80/61/t	
Jerusalem	85/63/pc		84/57/pc	
Kabul	53/31/s		52/35/pc	
London	63/46/pc		56/37/sh	
Madrid	61/38/s		66/39/s	
Mexico City	78/52/s		79/52/s	
Montreal	46/26/pc		35/23/pc	
Moscow	46/40/sh		53/38/pc	
Paris	60/39/pc		59/41/r	
Rio de Janeiro	84/73/s		84/73/s	
Rome	60/49/sh		65/48/c	
Sydney	79/69/c		77/70/c	
Tokyo	71/61/pc		79/50/c	





W. House breach is kid stuff

WASHINGTON — A child slipped through fencing outside the White House Wednesday and was intercepted by Secret Service officers.

Agency spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi said the young trespasser squeezed through the fence on the North Lawn around 6:30 p.m., about an hour after President Trump announced planned auto tariffs from the Oval Office.

"Officers quickly reunited the child with their parents without incident," Guglielmi said in a social media post.

Video posted on social media shows an armed officer (above) carrying a young child wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt across the lawn before handing off the child to another officer.

In April 2023, a toddler squeezed through the metal fencing, also on the North Lawn, and was reunited with his parents, who were briefly questioned. *AP*

French fowl on the mend

France said Wednesday its poultry flocks will be allowed outdoors again after a lull in bird-flu infections that the government attributed to vaccination programs.

France in 2023 became the world's first large poultry exporter to launch a nationwide vaccine campaign against highly pathogenic avian influenza, or bird flu, as it sought to curb the virus that has ravaged poultry flocks worldwide and spread to other species, including humans.

The country requires vaccination of farm ducks, which are particularly vulnerable to bird flu. *Reuters*

Abuse & excess at top city eateries: book

CHEFS LEFT A BAD TASTE



Bloomberg via Getty Images

FOOD FOR AUGHTS: In her memoir, Hannah Selinger (below) recalls the madness of working for famed Chef David Chang (above) in the aughts.

By HAILEY EBER

In 2008, Hannah Selinger was a 27-year-old working as a beverage director at Momofuku — David Chang's of-the-moment restaurant empire that at that point included the raucous Noodle Bar, trendy Ssam Bar and fine-dining Ko — when her boss called her into a private meeting.

Momofuku's then-director of operations sat at her desk, leaning back in a chair and kicking up his Converse All-Star sneakers on some of her papers.

"Are you a chef-f-ker?" Selinger recalls him asking in her new book, "Cellar Rat: My Life in the Restaurant Underbelly" (Little, Brown and Co., out now). "You know, when I hired you, I got a call about you."

In her memoir, Selinger paints a brutal portrait of her life working at some of the city's trendiest restaurants during the aughts.

It was a particularly exciting time for dining in NYC — rock-star chefs such as Chang, Mario Batali (Babbo)

and Marc Forgione (Forge) mixed Michelin-quality food with downtown cool — but the scene was fraught with misogyny, abuse and excess.

'Bomb about to go off'

Writing about working at Ssam Bar in the late aughts, Selinger, now 44, says: "That was joy, it was power. It was information, it was sex, it was buzz, it was a feeling so distinct and alive that I couldn't help wanting it again and again.

"The party never ended at Momofuku. 'Turn the music UP,' David Chang liked to say when walking into the dining room."

But there were also ugly lows.

She recalls Chang flying off the rails, screaming, "Who the f-k do you think you are?" or "I will f-king scalp you."

"A bomb was always about to go off, or a bomb had always just gone off," she writes. "His temper was riotous, his outbursts contagious."

Chang has said he can't

recall these incidents, but "they are entirely consistent" with his behavior at the time and that he is sorry. He declined to comment further.

Selinger also takes to task Christina Tosi, the wildly successful Milk Bar founder who then worked as Momofuku's pastry chef. She alleges that Tosi helped propagate the "chef-f-ker" rumor and created a petty high-school atmosphere, pointedly baking birthday cakes for seemingly everyone but her.

The "chef-f-ker" label sprang from an encounter with pastry chef Johnny Iuzzini, when he was a brash, Ducati-riding dessert wunderkind at Jean-Georges, where Selinger had scored a two-week internship as a sommelier.

On her first or second day, Iuzzini grabbed her from behind, she alleges, and invited her to a club.

They eventually ended up at his barebones apartment. Selinger asserts that she consented to sex but not the already-recording camera. "If you don't want your face in it, you can put a pillowcase over your head," Selinger recalls him saying, still holding the camera.

Iuzzini admitted he had a "personal relationship" with Selinger

in a statement to The Post, but said "there are many details in her story that are completely false."

In 2017, he was accused of sexual harassment and abuse by four former employees. At the time, he said some allegations were "inaccurate" but that he was "deeply sorry to those who felt hurt."

Iuzzini had been set to be a judge on "The Great American Baking Show," but ABC pulled the show after the allegations.

Disposable staff

Despite her negative experiences, Selinger, now based near Boston and working as a writer, insists there's a lot she cherishes about her time in hospitality.

"I still love restaurants and I love dining out," Selinger said.

She just wishes those in leadership positions would treat their employees better instead of like easily disposable at-will help.

"So much of the accountability that so many of us have hoped for ... has simply not arrived," she writes. "We have watched Mario Batali walk out of courtrooms, ready to start anew. We have watched David Chang accept corporate deal after corporate deal."



MISSING GIs DEAD



DANGEROUS GROUND: Military exercises in 2024 at a training range in Pabrade, Lithuania, the region in which four Army soldiers died this week.

By ANTHONY BLAIR

Four US Army soldiers have died in Lithuania after they disappeared on a training site while on maneuvers just miles from the border, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said on Wednesday.

The four soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, based out of Fort Stewart, Ga., were last seen alive on Tuesday riding an armored vehicle during tactical training exercises at a military site near the city of Pabrade, in eastern Lithuania.

The base is about six miles from the border with Belarus — a staunch Russian ally, and comes at a time of rising tensions in the region.

Lithuania's military has not confirmed the details, but local media reported that the four may have drowned after their M88A2 Hercules armored vehicle became trapped in swampy terrain.

Rutte said he had received word of the deaths and extended his

thoughts and prayers to their families and the United States.

"This is still early news so we do not know the details," he told reporters while on a visit to Poland's capital, Warsaw. "This is really terrible news and our thoughts are with the families and loved ones."

Last week, Lithuania announced it was mining its borders with Russia and Belarus, joining its neighbor Poland in stepping up its defenses in the face of the ongoing war in Ukraine and fears of Russian incursion into NATO territory.

The Army has not yet released any statement on the soldiers' deaths, but earlier expressed thanks to Lithuania's armed forces for helping with the search and rescue mission.

"I would like to personally thank the Lithuanian Armed Forces and first responders who quickly came to our aid in our search operations," Lt. Gen. Charles Costanza, V Corps commanding general, said in a statement. "It's this kind

of teamwork and support that exemplifies the importance of our partnership and our humanity regardless of what flags we wear on our shoulders."

The 1st Armored Brigade was one of the earliest units deployed to NATO's eastern flank in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Tough terrain

The unit returned to Europe in January to start another nine-month rotation, Stars and Stripes reported.

Units within the brigade train in difficult, often-boggy conditions in Lithuania, Poland, and other parts of the Baltic countries.

The four soldiers were traveling in the recovery vehicle when they disappeared at around 7 p.m. local time on Tuesday, according to Lithuanian media reports.

A major search and rescue operation was deployed involving troops

from Lithuania and other NATO nations, as well as Lithuanian Air Force helicopters and the country's State Border Guard Service, Lithuanian outlet Delfi reported.

The operation, with help from Lithuania's Fire Protection and Rescue Department, had narrowed the search to a possible location as of Wednesday, a press release from the Lithuanian military said.

"The possible location of the incident has been identified, and search and rescue is underway," Lithuanian military spokesman Major Gintautas Ciunis told the Elta news agency.

Lithuania's armed forces are yet to confirm the deaths but issued a statement thanking the US for its support in the region.

Roughly 16,000 US troops are deployed in the Baltic region, including 14,000 in Poland, 1,000 in Lithuania and 700 in Estonia, according to data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

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Dad bust in teen's rape, slay

A 13-year-old Ohio girl was discovered slain, raped and with her hands severed inside an abandoned home, and police shot and arrested her "animal" father — who had appeared on TV to raise awareness about her disappearance — the next day.

Keimani Latigue's mutilated body was found in a burned-out house in Toledo on Monday, six days after her family reported her missing in what one cop described as "one of the most horrific cases I've ever heard."

"This is an absolute animal that came into our town," Columbus Police Lt. Brian Steel told WCMH TV.

Steel said Keimani, who was just days from her 14th birthday, was found with her hands removed and her head nearly chopped off on the second floor of the vacant home. Authorities also determined the teenager had been raped.

An autopsy on Tuesday confirmed she died of multiple "incised wounds of the neck," according to the coroner's office, WTVG reported.

A spokesperson for Toledo Public Schools said Keimani was due to be presented with a kindness award this week and had been on the honor roll.

Patrick Reilly

Airport siege in Sudan war

The Sudanese army is encircling Khartoum Airport, two military sources told Reuters on Wednesday, as it battles to oust its rival, Rapid Support Forces, from a last foothold in the capital, though the war looks far from over.

The army seized the presidential palace in downtown Khartoum last Friday, an important symbolic advance after two years of a conflict splitting the massive nation into rival zones of control.

The war has driven some 12.5 million people from their homes, many of them seeking refuge in neighboring countries. *Reuters*

Naked gal flies off the handle at airport

A distressed woman stripped down to her birthday suit and allegedly assaulted airport workers in a viral freak-out caught on camera.

Samantha Palma allegedly stabbed two people with a pencil and bit a restaurant manager while parading

around in the buff during a "manic episode" at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport on March 14, TMZ reported.

The wild woman, who called herself the goddess Venus, allegedly stabbed a manager of an airport restaurant in the head and face

with his own pencil as he tried to subdue her, according to the report. She is also accused of biting him on the forearm, breaking the skin and causing bruising.

Video of the incident circulating on social media shows the full spectrum of Palma's erratic behavior —

including her breaking a display television, throwing water in the air, moving her hips suggestively, and prancing about maniacally as travelers gawked and recorded with their cellphones.

At one point, a woman offered her a coat, causing the

naked lady to squeal and run away, shouting "F--k you!" to random individuals.

Once in custody, Palma admitted to cops that she neglected to take her medication that day, although police did not specify the medicine. *Shane Galvin*

Raw Wounds

Cuomo *still* won't accept his COVID failure

ON Sunday, I wept with relatives of those who perished from COVID in New York nursing homes. Five years after former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's notorious directive of March 25, 2020, the pain I experienced as a nursing-home physician taking care of sick and dying COVID patients is still raw.

Like those families, I become furious every time I hear Cuomo claim he was simply following federal guidelines when he sent scores of infectious COVID patients from hospitals into nursing homes — and that therefore, all objections to his order are politically motivated. I know he's wrong. I helped sound the alarm as soon as he issued it.

As Cuomo campaigns to become New York City's next mayor, he's blaming his order on guidelines from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that were meant to help nursing homes manage individual patients suspected of having

ELAINE HEALY

COVID. The guidance said that staff should use gowns, gloves, masks and face shields when giving care, and should not mix new patients admitted from hospitals with pre-existing residents. That was it.

But Cuomo's Health Department, which regulates the homes, twisted those guidelines: Instead, Albany ordered the mass transfer of infected COVID patients from hospitals into nursing homes as an officially sanctioned response to the pandemic — something CMS never said. The state Health Department's "must comply" order bullied homes into admitting thousands of contagious patients from hospitals — not only patients that the homes had previously transferred out for acute care, but many others too.

In truth, the March 25 memo actually violated the CDC standards for responding to a respiratory pandemic. These rules explicitly said that the role of nursing homes during a pandemic surge situation is to take in uninfected patients from hospitals — those recovering from surgery or a stroke, for example — so the hospitals could manage contagious patients.



Gregory P. Mango

Fury: Protesters denounced Cuomo's COVID directive this week.

Nursing homes were supposed to remain "clean," under the CDC's recommendations, never the recipients of the infected.

That's why Cuomo's refusal to accept blame for his nursing-home COVID debacle so enrages us. His claim that his nursing-home directive followed CDC and CMS standards is an insulting attempt to veil his failure to prepare and execute a pandemic hospital plan.

And while Cuomo says only his political enemies object to the March 25 order, the reality is that nursing-home doctors like me, stunned by its recklessness, were the first to call him out — on March 26. That's when the national organization of nursing-home medical directors issued a statement calling New York's policy "over-reaching, not consistent with science . . . and beyond all, not in the least consistent with patient safety principles."

Cuomo's directive continues to cause pain and suffering to this day — not only for the grieving family members of those who perished, but also for heroic nursing-home staffers now reliving those terrible days.

Front-line nursing-home caregivers witnessed death on a scale matched only on the battlefield or in a mass-casualty event. Unlike our counterparts in the hospitals, however, nursing-home staffers often had long-standing, close relationships with the residents they watched die, causing wounds that are still unhealed.

The pandemic took a dreadful physical toll on us, too. By the end of 2020 more than 1,250 nursing-home staffers perished

from COVID-19 nationwide, mainly certified nursing assistants — a shocking statistic that remains barely acknowledged, because the fatal illness they contracted on the job is not tallied by the Labor Department.

Working as a nursing-home CNA back then was the most hazardous occupation in America. So many deaths in any other sector would have sparked a huge outcry and demands for reform. Yet barely a whisper was heard as these devoted professionals quietly continued to care for their residents, adding to the trauma of those who remain.

This milestone five-year anniversary gives us a chance to transform these painful experiences into opportunities to grow and heal. While most of society has moved on from the pandemic, nursing homes are still experiencing COVID outbreaks which, while not as severe as in 2020, constantly derail their ability to function.

Their staffs have been depleted, and their morale is waning. Let's recognize their courage and compassion as they continue their vocation of care for the elderly.

And New Yorkers, as you choose your next mayor, scrutinize this episode carefully. Andrew Cuomo's order — and all the excuse-making and finger-pointing that has followed — demonstrates the former governor's lack of preparedness, judgment, honesty, integrity and empathy.

Elaine Healy, MD, is a board-certified nursing home medical director.

FAST TAKES

Mideast desk: America's Hamas Helpers

A new lawsuit reveals "a fair amount of evidence" that groups like Students for Justice in Palestine "aren't merely pro-Hamas in outlook but that they coordinate their messaging and actions with Hamas," thunders Commentary's Seth Mandel. SJP posted "We are back!!" on its long-dormant Instagram three minutes before the butchery began; other groups "named in the suit also echoed Hamas's public pronouncements." "The examples are endless," and the claims of material support for terror "will be adjudicated in court" where "the defendants and their supporters will argue that these groups' actions are permitted under the law." But "whatever happens in the courtroom, this lawsuit should be required reading for all the reporters, pundits, activists, and politicians who have so shamelessly whitewashed anti-Semitism in America since Oct. 7."

Media watch: Inflammatory, Anti-Cop Coverage

"There was virtually no chance for a conscientious New Yorker to get an accurate story about the" incident last year when police shot Derrell Mickles after he brandished a knife in the subway "if their media diet consisted of The New York Times, public radio" and social media, moans Mike Pesca at The Free Press. The Times' coverage insisted "it was a story about a fare evader who happened to have a knife, rather than about an aggressive knife-wielder who happened to be evading a fare." Meanwhile, WNYC wrongly reported that it was legal for Mickles "to carry the knife he had," though that was "demonstrably false." Sadly, "the inherent bias of the legacy media," make it tough to get "accurate reporting on important issues . . . like whether the police did their jobs appropriately."

From the right: Hope in Cuomo's 'Homeless' Past

In 1986, Andrew Cuomo founded HELP USA to enable homeless families to "transition out of homelessness through a combination of intermediate-length shelter stays and a service-rich environment," recalls City Journal's Stephen Eide. But now, running for mayor, Cuomo must face the challenges wrought by his "misguided mental-health policies" as governor. He should adopt Mayor Adams' "mental-health policy" approach and "embrace his [own] old conception of the continuum of care and transitional-housing programs." By rejecting the "current Housing First regime," Cuomo "can credibly make the case for quality transitional services that emphasize values such as work and sobriety." "Long political histories create baggage for candidates, as Cuomo well knows — but they can also offer opportunities."

Conservative: Don's Distracting Impeach Push

President Trump's call to impeach Judge James Boasberg for blocking his bid to deport Tren de Aragua gangsters hands the prez's "enemies a stick they can use to beat him," laments The Wall Street Journal's William McGurn. It also "distracts from a constitutional argument, of which Mr. Trump has the better side." It's "overreach" for judges to prevent Trump from "implementing the policies he was elected on." And it's not "a new problem." In 2018, "Justice Clarence Thomas said the court had a constitutional obligation to take on the federal judiciaries' increasing resort to nationwide injunctions." Ultimately, the Supreme Court will decide the TdA case, and Trump "has the friendliest Supreme Court in decades, and a credible constitutional case." Best he "stick to it."



Jeb Boasberg

Campus beat: Stealth Schemes To Save DEI

After the feds froze \$175 million in the University of Pennsylvania's funds "for violating gender anti-discrimination policies," reports Paul de Quenoy at Chronicles, "an internal message informed the faculty that despite the new requirements 'a familiar and dedicated team' staffing its newly created 'Office of Equal Opportunity and Engagement' will essentially continue its old DEI work under a new name." Similar resistance comes at Columbia University, trying to save its own federal funding even as its "sprawling, DEI-infused infrastructure accommodates large numbers of potentially bad actors." "If real institutional reform is to be achieved," Team Trump must crack down. "The bar to recover those funds must be set very high and watched for years to come." — *Compiled by The Post Editorial Board*

Express Train to 'Hell'

As MTA officials beg Team Trump and New York lawmakers for billions to keep the trains running and fund \$68 billion in capital projects, the agency is moving ahead with plans to shell out \$7.7 billion to extend the 2nd Avenue subway.

What kind of management is that? Insanely, this 29-block, 1.8-mile extension, from 96th to 125th Street in Manhattan, is to cost \$4.3 billion per mile, more than any other subway build-out in history. And cost overruns would push the bill even higher.

No matter: On Wednesday, the MTA board greenlighted nearly a quarter-billion bucks just for consultants for the project — two firms to oversee construction, another for design tweaks.

Agency officials just last week warned the City Council that, absent more funding, straphangers may soon face repeated subway breakdowns, delays and derailments — as during 2017's "Summer of Hell."

"Many components are falling apart and need to be replaced or preserved," warned MTA Co-Chief Financial Officer Jai Patel. "If we don't do this critical work, it's not an ex-

aggeration that we will be looking at another 'Summer of Hell.'" Then it's *criminal* to spend a dime on a new project that will siphon cash from "this critical work."

Look: Then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo's 2016 rush to get Phase 1 done (so he could ride the first 2nd Avenue train by New Year's Day) led directly to the original "Summer of Hell" months later.

New Yorkers spend a fortune on mass transit, some \$20 billion just to run the system — yet the MTA's always pleading for new cash: more payroll tax surcharges, congestion-pricing tolls, fare hikes (it's going up to \$3 in August).

Priorities, people: It'd be great to extend the subway from Harlem to Manhattan's southern tip. But not at \$4.3 billion a mile, with scarce dollars needed elsewhere.

Whatever cash can be scraped together must go to keep the trains running smoothly — without constant breakdowns and delays.

That means repairing and replacing failing signals, tracks and the rolling stock. Any drive for any new project is begging for fresh hell, and maybe not just a *summer* of it.

End the Delusions on Iran

In Senate hearings Tuesday on major threats to US security, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard voiced a shameful oxymoron: While "Iran's enriched uranium stockpile" has hit "unprecedented" levels for a state lacking nuclear weapons, the US Intelligence Community "continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon."

Huh? You jack up your supply of enriched uranium for only one reason: to make nukes. Heck, even President Barack Obama premised his disastrous 2016 Iran deal on the idea that *the regime wanted nukes*.

Yet the official IC denialism goes back to the George W. Bush folks, who in 2007 declassified a National Intelligence Assessment questioning (despite all appearances) if Iran was actually trying to build a nuclear weapon. It continued under Obama, too, with an update to that NIA saying the same.

No, it's not impossible that a country

would head-fake with pointless stockpile buildups as a bluff, but that's not what's happening here. Iran wants nukes to bolster its drive toward regional hegemony and make the regime harder to overthrow.

And it's willing to put its economy through the sanctions meatgrinder to get them — strong proof of sincerity.

The US intel community can deny the obvious, but why is Gabbard — who was supposed to be a *skeptic* of the establishment — playing mouthpiece for that denial?

Her boss, President Trump, has made a point of saying Iran "cannot have a nuclear weapon. Has she (or her IC minions) even reviewed the *Israeli* intelligence on this?"

The president will devise his own strategy to deal with Tehran; whether aggressive (like his first-term posture, as it should be) or more conciliatory, it'll proceed with zero regard for this IC fantasy about Iran's intentions.

Deathwish Democrats

Nearly five months since their epic defeat last November, Democrats all across America are only getting nuttier.

Here in Gotham, City Councilman and comptroller-hopeful Justin Brannan (D-B'klyn) wants to divest city pensions of Tesla stock. *Not* because it's a bad investment, but because "Musk is deadly for democracy."

That is: Screw the retired cop or teacher seeing good returns, and/or the taxpayers who'll have to make good if the fund falls short; screw the green-car movement Tesla supercharged: Elon baad!

Such posturing, instead of delivering for normal people, is just what voters revealed they *don't* want.

Yet Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), oblivious to how her party took a drubbing over its

migrant madness, recently blathered at an anti-Trump rally that the prez should deport his wife, Melania.

Waters *apparently* meant to knock Donald Trump for being a critic of birthright citizenship, yet only managed to prove she understands neither birthright citizenship (Melania, born in Slovenia to Slovenian parents, doesn't have it) *nor* the voters.

Then there's rising Democratic star Rep. Jasmine Crockett of Texas, who called Gov. Greg Abbott "Governor Hot Wheels" as a dig this week. Yes, she mocked him for *being in a wheelchair* — and did it at a Human Rights Campaign gala, no less.

The idiocy is good news in just one way: Dems' refusal to learn the lessons of 2024 bodes even larger losses in 2026.

Pentagon's Signal Scandal: Crisis or Honest Mistake?

THE ISSUE: Top government officials including a journalist in a group chat discussion about war plans.



•President Trump has consistently chosen the least qualified candidates for the most critical roles in government, with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth a prime example. ("Trumpies Own This Snaflu," Editorial, March 26).

So it's no surprise that a major security breach occurred — where sensitive war plans about military strikes in Yemen were shared in a group chat, and no one even realized the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic was included.

We need a defense secretary with the skills and knowledge to manage the largest workforce on the planet and ensure the safety of all Americans. Instead, we have someone learning on the job. If he doesn't get up to speed quickly, lives will be at risk.

Bob Bascelli, Seaford

•You can't just gloss over a serious security error by saying, "I take responsibility," like National Security Adviser Mike Waltz did.

He should be fired to show that such breaches have consequences and that President Trump has no patience for this kind of incompetence. One would think that war plans should be classified, yet this discussion was not. Who is responsible for that?

Rob Feuerstein
Staten Island

•The Trump administration should acknowledge the mistake and focus on moving forward. This incident shouldn't be a long-term issue — except for Democrats, who have nothing better to do than burn Teslas.

Do you really think people will have trouble trusting Trump on national security because of

this? Compared to former President Joe Biden, it's not even close.

I don't want to hear anything from Democrats about national security when they essentially lied to the American people for years about the president's mental acuity. If that's not the biggest national security issue of our lifetime, I don't know what is.

Kevin Curtin
Point Pleasant, NJ

•The unmistakable conclusion from the Signal-chat scandal is that Trump's security advisers are indifferent and careless when it comes to the safety of American pilots flying combat missions over Yemen. This alone would keep me up at night wondering how protected my family really is.

Even worse, Trump claims he knew nothing about this colossal security failure. That only adds to my anxiety. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping must be popping the champagne right now.

Ron Spurga, Manhattan

•In response to anti-DEI orders from Donald Trump, the Defense Department at least briefly erased thousands of web pages dedicated to historical events such as the

Holocaust and the "Never Forget" terrorist attacks of 9/11.

In light of the recent Signal scandal, which potentially compromised national security, perhaps this administration should focus on a different kind of DEI: Dangerous, Erroneous Incompetence. Trump officials exemplified this during the recent Signal leak.

Vin Morabito
Scranton, Pa.

•The Signal app mishap was embarrassing, but it was nothing more than that. Signal is a secure communication tool government officials have used in the past.

The inclusion of a reporter in the chat was an accident, likely a slip of the finger, and an unfortunate but unintentional mistake by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. Thankfully, none of the content compromised national security. Everyone has sent an email or message to the wrong person at some point. I once mistakenly sent a personal message to my dentist — an embarrassing moment, but ultimately harmless.

Phil Serpico, Queens

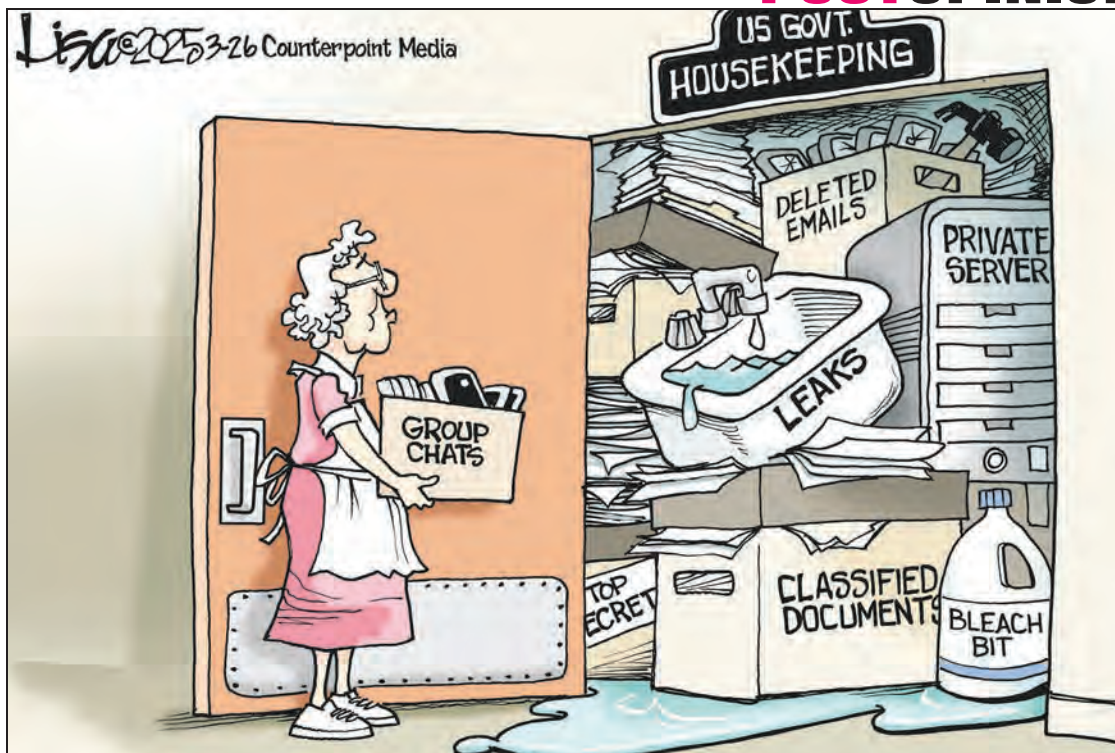
•When a colossal security failure occurs — like including a journalist in what should have been a classified discussion of military plans — Trump's response is to attack.

Yet his animus toward left-leaning media has nothing to do with the fact that high-ranking officials failed to recognize they were engaging in a security breach.

Louis J. Maione
Manhattan

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Don Can Tame the MTA

How to slay the insatiable money monster

“OUTRAGEOUS!” was Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy’s response Tuesday to Gov. Hochul’s plea for a dramatic hike in federal subsidies for the ailing MTA.

“The MTA is running a deficit thanks to NY’s financial mismanagement, and they already receive billions in federal funding,” he scolded the governor on X. “The federal government is not a blank check.”

The spending showdown presents a golden opportunity to finally rein in the MTA’s insatiable appetite for uncontrolled spending — if Trump takes up a plan already proposed in Albany. Trump has made it his goal to vanquish the congestion-pricing program that is punishing commuters with \$9 daily fees to drive into Manhattan.

Hochul claims that congestion pricing will fund \$15 billion in MTA projects over the next several years, including phase 2 of the Second Avenue subway, subway-station accessibility improvements, electrification of the North Hudson line, and purchase of new LIRR train cars and locomotives.

But that’s just a slice of the record-breaking \$64.8 billion five-year capital plan she and the MTA are pursuing, some of which, they hope, will come from Washington. Trump won’t hand over even a fraction of such largess without something in return — and dropping congestion pricing, already a political anchor for Hochul, should only be part of the deal.

Before any outlay of federal aid,

he should get Hochul to place the MTA under a financial control board — like the one that helped save New York City from bankruptcy in the 1970s. State Sen. Dean Murray (R-Suffolk) has already introduced a bill to impose such a board on the MTA, in response to a proposal from our Center for Cost Effective Government.

What good is a one-shot infusion of aid, however generous, if out-of-control spending makes it obsolete after the first year? Control boards come with the authority to rescind onerous contract provisions and inefficient rules and regulations

STEVE LEVY

that otherwise could only come about through collective bargaining. They can put the brakes on excessive borrowing, review and approve all expenditures, and take part in labor negotiations.

Control boards have been used to revive ailing cities from Stockton, Calif. to Detroit, Mich. In New York state, Erie and Nassau counties turned to control boards when they were on the precipice of financial collapse.

The MTA is crying out for such oversight. This is an agency that lost an estimated \$690 million in unpaid bus and subway fares alone in 2022 alone, while compensating engineers and conductors \$283,000 annually and awarding \$10,000-per-month pensions.

More than 1,100 employees dou-

bled their salaries that year as the agency’s overtime bill skyrocketed to nearly \$1.3 billion. One MTA employee once racked up \$344,000 in annual overtime.

All this inefficiency has led to a budget gap of \$2.5 billion — and no end of rider complaints and service delays. The MTA has proved that it has a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

But without an independent control board to keep a tight leash on its accounts, it won’t be long until state leaders come back to taxpayers, riders and motorists to seek yet more fees and taxes to keep the agency afloat.

However logical, it’s unlikely that the state will establish a control board without substantial federal prodding. Likewise, the Trump administration will be rightly hesitant to provide more cash without a long-term plan to get a handle on the agency’s spending.

Trump’s opposition to the congestion pricing plan may not survive ongoing court challenges. But he may be willing to provide a one-shot funding infusion to the struggling MTA in exchange for a long-term plan to streamline the agency and its finances, along with an end to the hated midtown toll.

If so, Duffy can realize his goal of controlling MTA costs, Hochul can receive a revenue lifeline — and beleaguered taxpayers and motorists may finally see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Former Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy is director of the Center for Cost Effective Government.

In Dems’ Civil War One Side Is Doomed

In the last few days we’ve heard what sound like the opening salvos of a Democratic Party civil war. After losing two of the last three presidential elections to Donald Trump, self-reflection is sorely needed — and some are at least feigning an interest in such an effort.

On his new podcast, California Gov. Gavin Newsom is sniping at the progressive shibboleths he once promulgated so proudly. In the Senate, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer rejected calls from his left flank to shut down the federal government rather than let a Republican-backed funding bill pass.

And across the country, swing-state lawmakers like Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin are trying to tell constituents that the hysterical far-left approach to fighting Trump just hasn’t worked. “What have they actually done?” Slotkin asked last week after a voter implored her to “resist” like Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Meanwhile, Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez are crisscrossing the country to expound a very different explanation of the Democrats’ woes — and to promote a very different corrective. Sanders had harsh words for the Democrats this month, calling the party “heavily dominated by the billionaire class, run by consultants who are way out of touch with reality.”

AOC, too, slammed her party at a Las Vegas rally last week. “We need a Democratic Party that fights harder for us,” she complained.

So which is it? Do Democrats need to lurch even further to the left in the name of “fighting Trump” — or is that what’s consigned them to their unenviable position?

Available evidence suggests it’s the latter. Polls ahead of November’s presidential election found that 47% of likely voters believed 2024 Democratic nominee Kamala



ISAAC SCHORR

gistic champion: Trump.

Worse yet, the nature of the Democrats’ messaging makes it nearly impossible for them to walk back any of their unpopular ideas. They were on the right side of history, they declared, when they manufactured a crisis at the southern border.

They were on the right side of history when they insisted that not only could men become women, such men must be allowed to compete in women’s sports and enter their most intimate spaces. They were on the right side of history when they proposed a massive wealth transfer to their voter base in the form of a student loan “forgiveness” program, and on and on.

‘Democrats’ messaging makes it nearly impossible for them to walk back. ’

Harris was “too liberal or progressive,” while just 6% said she wasn’t “liberal or progressive enough.”

That hasn’t changed in the months since: A new survey released by Echelon Insights this month revealed that 42% of Democrats think the party should move “to the center” — and only 20% want it to move “to the left.”

But just because the answer is obvious doesn’t mean party leaders will recognize as much. They’re all but certain to do the opposite.

Today’s Democratic Party is built on the proposition that it stands on the right side of history, pushing humanity toward progress while battling backward, bigoted opponents. For a long time, that messaging has served as a powerful recruitment tool, particularly for younger, idealistic Americans searching for meaning — and for an easier path into elite progressive-dominated political, media and academic circles.

But now we see the drawbacks to this smug self-conception. Over the long term, it has spawned a radicalization that first offended the sensibilities of the median voter, then pushed them into the arms of a pu-

To propose moderation now is to betray a righteous cause — and to shatter the self-image that provides meaning to so many in the Democratic activist class.

That’s why the mainstream Biden campaign gave way to the militantly leftist Biden administration. That’s why pugnacious Texas Rep. Jasmine Crockett is being hailed as the future of the party.

And if you parse the moderates’ words carefully, you’ll find that theirs isn’t an ideological objection to the progressives’ vision, but a tactical one.

“My district is very different than Alexandria’s district,” Slotkin said soothingly last week, immediately after belittling AOC’s lack of anti-Trump accomplishments. “So I don’t fault her for doing what she thinks is right for them.”

Schumer, for his part, has lashed out at fellow Dems like Nancy Pelosi only to cling to his personal power — not to set his party on a fresh course.

So if the much-anticipated Democratic civil war breaks out at all, there’s no question about who will prevail: One side has already laid down their arms.

The Post Puzzle Page

SCRABBLE® G R A M S

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E1U1Y4R1Q10T1W4

E1I1K5R1W4B3S1

A1A1E1Y4L1R1D2

E1I1B3R1M3L1C3

RACK 1

RACK 2

RACK 3

RACK 4

Triple Word Score

1st Letter Double

PAR SCORE 160-170
BEST SCORE 246

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SOLUTION

RACK 1 = 21

RACK 2 = 98

RACK 3 = 61

RACK 4 = 66

TOTAL 246

SCRABBLE G R A M S

Y4I1K5R1W4B3S1

E1I1B3R1M3L1C3

E1I1K5R1W4B3S1

E1I1B3R1M3L1C3

TODAY'S ANSWER

SCRABBLE G R A M S

Y4I1K5R1W4B3S1

E1I1B3R1M3L1C3

E1I1K5R1W4B3S1

E1I1B3R1M3L1C3

PAR SCORE 160-170

1st Letter Double

Directions: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7 Letter words get 50 point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE players Dictionary, 4th Edition.

Bridge

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ Q 10 8 2

♥ K 8 3

♦ A Q 7

♣ Q 7 2

WEST

♠ A J 4

♥ J 10 9 7 5

♦ J 3 2

♣ 8 4

EAST

♠ 6

♥ A Q 6 2

♦ K 10 8 6 5

♣ 9 5 3

SOUTH

♠ K 9 7 5 3

♥ 4

♦ 9 4

♣ A K J 10 6

North

1 ♣

2 ♠

East

Pass

Pass

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

West

Pass

All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ J

Word Force

GROWLING

From the word or phrase above, form **AT LEAST 9** five-letter words, without using more than one form of the same word. For example, drink or drank (not both).

ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S POST
Yesterday's word:

CARMINE

anime crime nacre
cairn manic nicer
crane mince ramen
cream miner

Wonderword

How to play: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **Circle their letters only. Do not circle the word.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

AFRICAN CARACALS

Solution: 5 letters

P E N I N S U L A N N A V A S

A O I N N N O C T U R N A L O

K R G D M E D I U M O G E A L

I A E I F D T H S I E H I I

S N R A O E I T S L K O A R T

T G I R R E O I I R C K B O A

A E A A E P V T A K L R I T R

N P T H S S Y C S I L A T I Y

I O R A T E S P A G C P A R E

A L E S R A E T L N R C T R L

T E S P G C A T S S I A A E I

N T E A I E C N U O P N S T T

U N D E M I W S T R I P E S P

O A S W A L C A R N I V O R E

M A M M A L S P R E D A T O R

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Agility, Antelope, Canine, Carnivore, Cats, Claws, Coat, Desert, Forest, Grass, Habitat, Hooks, India, Kitten, Madagascar, Mammals, Medium, Mountain, Nigeria, Nocturnal, Orange, Pakistan, Park, Peninsula, Pounce, Predator, Prey, Reptile, Sahara, Savanna, Sleet, Solitary, Species, Speed, Spots, Stripes, Swim, Tail, Territorial, Vision
Yesterday's Answer: Miniature
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POST SUDOKU

To solve a Su Doku, you must put a number from 1 to 9, in each empty box.

Each number must appear once in each horizontal row, as well as in each vertical column and in each of the 3-by-3 grids.

Impossible? Not once you get the hang of it. Tips and in depth strategies at

www.SudokuWiki.org

PLAY MORE GAMES!

NYPOST.COM/GAMES

Solutions on Page 39

© Syndicated Puzzles

Very Easy #6,865

8			2		3		4	1
4		1	7			3		8
	5			8				
9	4		1					
	8	5				6	2	
					5		1	4
				1			6	
5		4			7	9		2
2	3		8		9			7

Difficult #6,655

	2	7					6	
		4	7		2			
		9			1		7	
	3			6			9	
			9		8			
	6			3			4	
			1			3		
			8		5	9		
	4					8		

Quick Crossword

- Across**
- Hurtful remark
 - Can't help but
 - Get smart with
 - Cookie with a Dirt Cake flavor
 - Two twos, say
 - Miller option
 - Director Preminger
 - One-hit-wonder by the New Zealand band OMC
 - Collect
 - "Just tell me the answer"
 - Twiddled one's thumbs
 - Advil target
 - Online convos
 - Title theme song of a 1985 John Hughes film
 - Egg cells
 - Mosul's country
 - Broke bread
 - Tom Jones classic that accompanied the Carlton dance on "Fresh Prince"
 - Island garland
 - Steak sauce brand
 - Cryptology org.
 - ELO hit from the album "Face the Music"
 - Texting segue
 - "Dateline NBC" anchor Lester
 - Cruise stopover
 - Snoopy alter ego
 - "Cabaret" director
 - Figures on right-hand pages, or an apt title for this puzzle
 - "Ferrari" actor Driver
 - Wrath
 - Lifts, as spirits
 - Sounds from a comedy club
 - Russian refusal
 - Far from shore
 - Duration

- Down**
- Bae
 - Objet d'
 - Return like for like
 - Child of the 1950s
 - Sounds of derision
 - Mill. addresses
 - Tool that can make music
 - Fibulae neighbors
 - Where the x-axis and the y-axis cross

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14												
17												
20												
23												
26												
29												
32												
35												
38												
41												
44												
47												
50												
53												
56												
59												
62												
65												
68												
71												

- Serb or Croat
- Put on TV
- Play lightly
- Trickles
- Metal in pennies
- Introduce to the mix
- Jima
- New Jersey athlete
- Pleasingly tangy
- Packed theater letters
- Monopoly token that replaced the iron
- de cologne
- Snarled
- Pitcher of milk?
- Family girl
- Eggy drink
- Arles article
- 18-wheeler
- Play, or part of a play
- Commandment start
- iRobot vacuum
- Nearly entirely
- Analyzes chemically
- 50 ABBA singer Ulvaeus
- "While I'm young!"

ORBS	BERET	GATA
BELT	AGATE	ARMS
IDEA	ROYAL	FLUSH
TOWN	HIS	ALBEE
ALTO	TREATS	
MAKEUP	MIRROR	
ALIEN	NEO	YEAR
ASS	EMPLOY	APPE
MOSS	ADE	LOTS
POTATO	FARMER	
CANAPE	HOWDY	
ALONE	WHIR	EDAM
PEDICURIST	RUSE	
EXES	MELT	USES
RASH	ANTES	PTAS

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER
(C) 2025 Tribune Media Services
52 Trivial Pursuit piece
56 Tech review site
57 Boot company since 1863
58 Mount of Greek myth
60 Volkswagen model until 2016
62 Alias letters
63 AOL alternative

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Stocks slide

Stocks ended sharply lower on Wednesday, dragged down by losses in Nvidia and Tesla, as investors awaited long-promised US tariffs on autos. The Nasdaq plummeted more than 350 points, or 2%.

Vax tip probe

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan are probing a tip from British drug-maker GSK alleging Pfizer delayed announcing the success of its COVID vaccine in 2020 until after that year's election, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Bottled up

Italian wine and spirits exports to the US are stalling due to the uncertainty over possible tariffs that President Trump could impose in the coming weeks, trade group Federvini said.

Coke raided

Coca-Cola bottlers were among the non-alcoholic drinks companies raided by European Union antitrust regulators on March 10. The raids occurred in several countries.

Chewy stuck

Shares of Chewy slipped 1.1% despite the pet-products retailer beating fourth-quarter earnings estimates. The stock is flat this year after influential trader Keith Gill, a.k.a. Roaring Kitty, dumped his stake.

Sources: Reuters, Dow Jones, AP

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TIK CLOSER TO DEAL

US team, J.D. in bid to keep Tok alive



THE long-awaited deal to save TikTok from being banned from US app stores is ticking down to completion, On the Money has learned.

An investor group working with Vice President **J.D. Vance** has the contours of a deal in place to rescue the popular short-video app from extinction, sources close to the situation said.

Vance is Trump's White House point man in saving TikTok from a ban that under law is set to go into effect April 5 if the app doesn't divest from its Chinese ownership over concerns that the ruling Communist Party uses the platform to spy on US citizens.

The deal announcement will also likely include a grace period of some type — 30 days or possibly longer — for the team to iron out details, the source said.

Safe in cloud

Under the scenario now being discussed, **Larry Ellison's** tech giant Oracle would safeguard the app in its cloud, while TikTok's Chinese parent ByteDance would take a minority position in a new US majority-owned company, people with direct knowledge of the dealmaking said.

Large US-based institutions that already have an ownership stake in ByteDance, outfits like General Atlantic and Susquehanna, will form the majority of the ownership team, a move designed to address the US-control stipulations in the law, the sources added.

"We feel good we can get this thing done next week," said a person with

It could h-app-en

'We feel good we can get this thing done next week'
— A person with direct knowledge of the negotiations



Vice President J.D. Vance is working with US ByteDance stakeholders to create a US-controlled TikTok spinoff company that will meet demands that the video-sharing app divest from Chinese owners.

direct knowledge of the negotiations. A press rep for Vance and a TikTok spokesman had no comment.

People close to the deal talks caution that the transaction isn't finalized and could be scuttled or significantly altered. That said, one big hurdle has already been overcome: **Tom Cotton**, the powerful GOP senator from Arkansas and a proponent of a TikTok ban, is telling people he will stand down at least for the immediate future

and allow the White House to develop a deal structure that complies with ban legislation that he has long favored, people with knowledge of the matter tell On the Money.

The way the TikTok ban law — signed by former **President Joe Biden** and upheld by the Supreme Court — is written, the company must remove any trace of Chinese control. But the president, in this case **Donald Trump**, has some discretion in deter-

mining if any deal meets those requirements.

Despite the progress, the new US-led investor group and Vance are grappling with the potential massive civil liabilities that under the legislation could be imposed on investors if courts rule that any circumvention violates the law's provisions to prevent the Chinese from controlling the company in any way, including through its all-important algorithm.

Another complicating matter is the deal's current structure that includes TikTok's Chinese-made algorithm, the technology that gives the app its secret sauce of providing an endless supply of user videos based on personal preferences, but critics say, is also the tool used by the Chinese government to engage in espionage.

Some of the new equity investors have discussed a White House indemnification over this liability because of the existence of the Chinese algo and its potential legal ramifications. Others say the new ownership will eventually have to create its own algorithm to stay within the law's parameters.

Tariff lure for ByteDance pact

President Trump said Wednesday he would be willing to reduce tariffs on Beijing to get a deal done with TikTok's Chinese parent, ByteDance.

ByteDance faces an April 5 deadline to find a non-Chinese buyer for TikTok or face a ban.

In the latest twist over the fate of the popular short-video app, Trump said he was willing to ex-

tend the deadline if an agreement over the social-media app was not reached.

"With respect to TikTok, and China is going to have to play a role in that, possibly in the form of an approval, maybe, and I think they'll do that. Maybe I'll give them a little reduction in tariffs or something to get it done," Trump told reporters. *Reuters*

Politico big quits over coverage

A Jewish board member at Politico's German publisher, Axel Springer, resigned Wednesday, just days after publicly accusing the US media outlet of "one-sided Hamas support."

Martín Varsavsky, an Argentine entrepreneur who has served on the supervisory board of the German media conglomerate since 2014, criticized Politico's journalistic integrity in a post on the social-media platform X.

"Regarding Politico, I find their news coverage not aligned with my own ethical standards. USA has changed, Germany has changed, hopefully so will Politico," Varsavsky (right) wrote on X.

He also claimed that Politico engaged in "one-sided Hamas support" following its publication of an Associated Press story on Israeli airstrikes in Gaza last week.

In addition to his recent remarks, Varsavsky, who describes himself

as a friend of Elon Musk, had previously accused journalists at Axel Springer of being "woke" in a since-deleted post on X.

The media giant faces a delicate balancing act amid escalating tensions between Politico and the Trump administration.

Recently, President Trump instructed officials to terminate government subscriptions to Politico. Reps for Axel Springer declined to comment. *Ariel Zilber*



X to see ad-rev growth

Elon Musk's X is on pace for its first year of advertising-revenue growth since the billionaire took over Twitter, as his ties to the White House help boost business, according to a report.

X is projected to generate \$1.31 billion in US advertising sales in 2025, up 17.5% from the year before, according to Emarketer, Bloomberg reported.

Its global ad sales are estimated to hit \$2.26 billion this year, up 16.5%, Emarketer says.

"Some of the spending growth is really being driven by fear as we've seen some of the big advertisers return in an effort to curry favor with the Trump administration," Jasmine Enberg, principal analyst at Emarketer, told Bloomberg.

X's business is still smaller than it was before Musk's acquisition.

The company reported advertising revenue of \$4.5 billion in 2021, its final full year as a public company.

Many advertisers fled X after Musk dismantled its content regulation team and pledged to make the site a "free speech" platform.

Enberg also said some advertisers may be returning to X out of fear of legal action, after Musk sued major advertisers like Lego and Nestlé, accusing them of an advertising boycott campaign.

Taylor Herzlich

Fund woke-up call

Bill would strip politics from pension managers

By JAMES FRANNEY

A Republican congressman aims to curb so-called "woke investing" by forcing pension funds to focus purely on profits, even as a conservative group accused pension managers of "playing politics" with Americans' savings.

Rep. Andy Barr (Ky.) is to introduce a bill to force retirement funds to concentrate on maximizing returns rather than environmental, social and governance targets, more commonly known as ESG.

The law, dubbed the Ensuring Sound Guidance Act, would not ban the investments outright, but would demand that firms disclose any difference in fees and returns between an ESG-linked fund and a rival index.

"American investors deserve financial advice based on sound economic principles, not political

Barr-gaining power

GOP Rep. Andy Barr (right) of Kentucky wants to replace "environmental, social and governance" goals in pensions with "Ensuring Sound Guidance" with a bill that would require managers to drop the "woke" investing demanded by some (below) or disclose differences in fees and returns with non-woke indexes.



Getty Images

agendas," Barr told The Post.

"The Ensuring Sound Guidance Act protects retail investors and retirement savers by reaffirming that financial advisers must prioritize financial

returns, not ESG trends.

"This legislation is about keeping politics out of your portfolio and restoring the fiduciary responsibility that is essential to investor trust and long-term economic growth."

Barr's bid to move against ESG was blocked during the previous administration after then-President Joe Biden vetoed a draft law that had been passed in both the House and the Senate.

The measures, which proponents claim are aimed at promoting social good, became a lightning rod earlier in the 2024 presidential campaign.

One-time contenders Vivek Ramaswamy and Ron DeSantis both lambasted the policies as being bad for American investment portfolios.

Barr's draft legislation came amid the publication of a report by the conservative-leaning Unleash Prosperity that was co-authored by ex-President Trump adviser Steve Moore. The study, obtained by The Post, accused state pension funds nationwide of "playing politics with worker pensions."

Sources close to Barr, a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, said the draft text was expected to be published late Wednesday.

jfranney@nypost.com

\$1B Family Dollar buy OpenAI 'solvent' by '29

Dollar Tree agreed Wednesday to sell its Family Dollar division to a group of private-equity firms in a deal valued at about \$1 billion.

The acquisition by a consortium of companies that includes Brigade Capital Management and Macellum Capital Management confirms an earlier report from The Wall Street Journal.

The decision to sell Family Dollar comes as part of Dollar Tree's stra-

tegic efforts to streamline operations and enhance profitability under new leadership.

Dollar Tree shares rose 3.1% to \$69.21 but are down more than 7% this year.

Dollar Tree originally acquired Family Dollar in 2015 for \$9 billion. However, since that acquisition, Family Dollar has struggled with profitability amid heavy investment requirements. *Ariel Zilber*

Sam Altman's OpenAI is not expecting its cash flow to turn positive until 2029, Bloomberg News reported Wednesday.

The San Francisco-based ChatGPT owner is grappling with significant costs from chips, data centers and talent needed to develop cutting-edge AI systems, the report said.

By 2029, OpenAI expects its revenue will surpass \$125 billion. Fueled by the strength of its paid AI soft-

ware, OpenAI forecast to more than triple its revenue to \$12.7 billion in 2025, the report said.

In September, Reuters reported that OpenAI was anticipating its revenue would surpass \$11.6 billion in 2025, citing sources, adding that its revenue in 2024 would touch \$3.7 billion, a figure corroborated by Bloomberg.

OpenAI didn't respond to a request for comment. *Reuters*

Tesla to sell Saudis cars

Tesla will start sales in Saudi Arabia next month, it said Wednesday, signaling CEO Elon Musk and the kingdom have healed a rift that dates back to the billionaire's short-lived bid in 2018 to take the company private.

The dispute started when Musk tweeted in 2018 he had "funding secured" to take Tesla private after a meeting with Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund.

That tweet eventually led to a lawsuit from investors when a bid failed to materialize. *Reuters*



CHARLIE JAVICE
Accused of faking numbers.

JPMorgan fraud trial out to jury

A Florida woman deployed a “brazen fraud” to sell her student-aid startup to JPMorgan Chase for \$175 million after dramatically exaggerating its customer base, a prosecutor told jurors Wednesday in a criminal trial’s closing argument.

Assistant US Attorney Nicholas Chiuchiolo urged a Manhattan federal court jury to convict Charlie Javice and another former top executive at her company, which operated under the name Frank, of conspiracy and fraud charges.

Defense attorney Jose Baez urged an acquittal of his 32-year-old client, calling the proof “incredibly flawed.” He urged the jury to “look at evidence, lack of evidence and the conflict of the evidence” to exonerate Javice.

Chiuchiolo said Javice, who was arrested in April 2023 and is free on bail, sought to sell the company in 2021 when it had about 400,000 customers, claiming it had over 4.25 million clients.

Javice, who was on the Forbes 2019 “30 Under 30” list, did not testify during the five-week trial. AP

\$TREET WINDFALL

Record \$47.5B bonus pool up 34% from last year

By JAMES FRANEY

Wall Street’s bonus pool hit a record high last year — with bankers on average raking in an eye-popping windfall of \$244,700 on top of their salaries — as stock trading roared back to life.

Data released by New York state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli found that financiers saw the annual number swell to a whopping \$47.5 billion in its first major surge since the coronavirus pandemic.

That is up 34% from last year’s bonus pool of \$35.4 billion and the highest number since records began in 1987.

The survey said payouts have soared as New York’s banks finally bounce back from a lull that had followed a COVID-era boom in public offerings made through shell companies known as SPACs, or special-purpose acquisition companies.

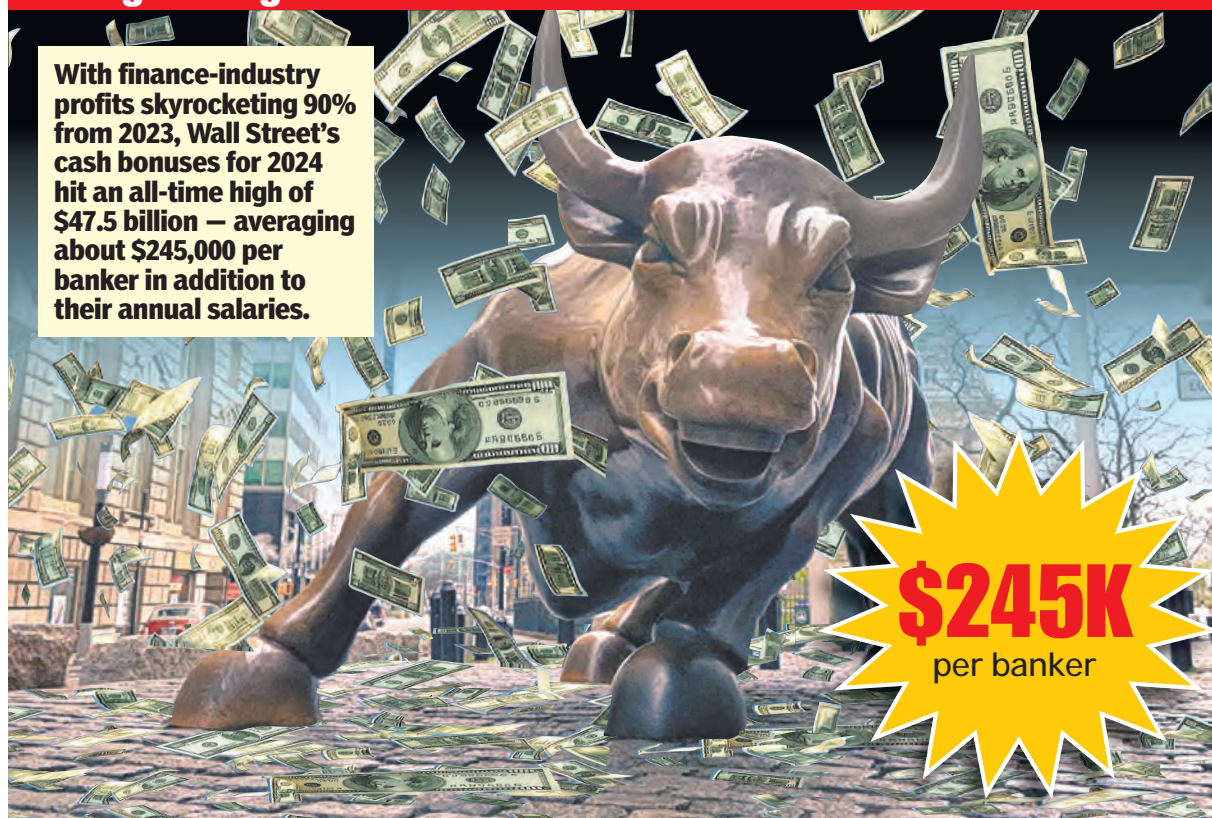
The survey pointed out that profits for the city’s finance industry “rose by 90% in 2024” driven by stronger trading and underwriting revenue, although some dealmaking — particularly IPOs — continued to sag.

“The record-high bonus pool reflects Wall Street’s very strong performance in 2024,” DiNapoli said. “This financial market strength is good news for New York’s economy.”

But in a thinly veiled dig at President Trump’s tariff

Rolling in dough

With finance-industry profits skyrocketing 90% from 2023, Wall Street’s cash bonuses for 2024 hit an all-time high of \$47.5 billion — averaging about \$245,000 per banker in addition to their annual salaries.



Shutterstock/AdobeStock

trade war, DiNapoli warned that the trend could quickly be reversed this year.

“Increasing uncertainty in the economy amid significant federal policy changes may dampen the outlook for parts of the securities industry in 2025,” the Democrat added.

DiNapoli’s estimates focus exclusively on cash bonuses rather than deferred

compensation such as stock options.

Jobs hit peak

The boost in profits also saw Wall Street job numbers reach their “highest annual level in nearly three decades.”

The comptroller said there were 201,500 people working in the New York finance industry, up from

198,400 the year prior and exceeding the previous peak seen in 2000.

DiNapoli added that Wall Street accounted for 19% of the entire state of New York’s tax collection, and a total of 7% of the city’s revenue year, underlining the industry’s importance to the Big Apple.

Financial-services firms are also responsible for a greater share of new leas-

ing activity in the city since the pandemic and have helped drive the development of new property, the survey added.

It cited JPMorgan Chase’s move to bring staffers back to the office at a new 60-story headquarters building in Midtown as further boosting economic growth in New York City.

jfraney@nypost.com

W’mart ‘hides’ eggs

Walmart is touting its Easter 2025 promotion as cheaper than in 2024 — even though its meal kit is missing a key component: eggs.

The retailing giant features a yearly Easter promotional-meal kit with several ingredients advertised as those needed for a holiday feast. This year’s meal includes ham, russet potatoes, corn on the cob and a cream cake, serving eight people for less than \$6 per

person — lower than the price of 2024’s meal, it said.

Notably absent from this year’s kit, however, are eggs, a key part of last year’s offering, which are substantially pricier than a year ago as a result of shortages due to the bird-flu outbreak that has forced a massive culling of herds.

The 2024 kit had 15 items, including the ingredients for deviled eggs, with a promotional image displaying a

box with 18 large brown eggs. That kit served up to 10 people at an average cost of less than \$8 per person, the retailer said.

“The items in the [2025] basket are based on some of the most popular Easter meal items,” a Walmart spokesperson said. “This year we did not include ingredients that are typically already found in one’s pantry, like salt, pepper, butter, milk and eggs.” Reuters



Donald W. Schuster passed away on February 14, 2025.

Born April 28, 1950 as an only child to parents Kathryn Schuster and Frederick Schuster... loved by G-d, his father and his mother. Donald was a previous Bronxville resident and served as an elder at the reformed church. In school, Donald graduated at the top of his class at Syracuse University, and later became the press secretary to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller. Afterwards, Donald went on to work for top private institutions in finance and public relations. In the last 15 years of his life, he lived quietly in Colonial Heights, Yonkers. During this period, Donald suffered two heart attacks, with the last one requiring him to move to several local nursing homes for rehabilitation, where he deteriorated further. He then ended up in the ICU at Phelps hospital in Tarrytown NY, where medical professionals did their best to save him. Donald will be missed and remembered as smart, witty, well spoken, kind, and responsible, despite at times being unhappy. Although he was misunderstood by few, Donald loved and missed his son Charles dearly. His dying wishes were to tell his story and to be urned with his mother at the reformed Church of Bronxville’s columbarium. Donald will be remembered and truly missed.

NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF SALE OF COOPERATIVE APARTMENT SECURITY BY VIRTUE OF A DEFAULT

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: By virtue of a default under a Security Agreement dated August 18, 2004, executed by ASHA RUBIN ("Debtor"), as assigned to CITIMORTGAGE, INC. ("Secured Party"), said Secured Party, by Auctioneer(s): John William O'Keefe, Terence Gee or Stephan G. Marcelin, will conduct a public sale of the security consisting of 250 shares of stock of 409 Edgecombe Avenue Housing Development Fund Corporation ("Corporation"), and all right, title, and interest in and to a Proprietary Lease between said Corporation and Debtor for the apartment known as **409 Edgecombe Avenue, Apt 4D, New York, NY 10032**, together with all fixtures and articles of personal property now or hereafter affixed to or used in connection with said apartment on **April 2, 2025 at 1:00 PM**, at the Portico of the New York County Courthouse, 60 Centre St, New York, NY 10007, in satisfaction of an indebtedness in the unpaid principal amount of \$171,742.17, plus interest, late fees, attorney fees, maintenance in arrears, and all other advanced charges. The apartment is sold "AS IS" AND POSSESSION TO BE OBTAINED BY THE PURCHASER. Said sale is subject to residency requirements of the Corporation, payment of all sums due, if any, to 409 Edgecombe Avenue Housing Development Fund Corporation and the consent if necessary, of said Corporation; any existing tenancy; payment of all expenses and fees of the secured party with respect thereto; terms of sale and auctioneer's fees; flip-tax; State, City, and County transfer tax. The Secured Party reserves the right to bid.

Terms: an official bank or certified check made payable to **Stern & Eisenberg, P.C.**, as attorneys for the Secured Party for ten (10%) percent of price bid. No cash accepted. Balance shall be due within thirty (30) days.

ATTORNEYS FOR SECURED PARTY:
Stern & Eisenberg, P.C.
20 Commerce Drive, Suite 230, Cranford, NJ 07016, and
1131 Route 55, Suite 1, Lagrangeville, NY 12540
P. 516-630-0288
F. 732-726-8719

Dated: February 28, 2025

Firm File No. NY202300000455-2

EMPLOYMENT

PROFESSIONAL

Banco Santander, S.A. (NY, NY) seeks VP, Sr. Supervisor, Audit. Reqs MS in Acctng, Actuarl Sciences, Math-matics or Finance +3yrs exp in offrd pos or Sr Anlyst, Modl Rsk Audit. All reqd exp mustv incld orvseeing intrnl audit rrvws & actvities for bank incl audit planning, field wrk & rrvws, testng & wrk paper prep, excutng cntrl dsgn & oprating effctvns testng, writing cmprhnsv audit rptres & prfmg post-audit follow-up; examining biz recrds, fincl statemts & othr fincl info; idntfyng, assessng & mitgatng rks by applyng knwldg of relvant regs, indstry stndrds & acctng prncpls; adhmng to Int'l Prfssnl Practces Fmwk of Inst of Intrnl Auditors; usng data anlytics tools MS Office Ste (Word, Excl, Out-look, PP), MySQL & Pythn to anlyze lrg datasets for pattrns, anomalies or areas of cncnr; & leading, guidng & training team of auditors, & assngn tasks & respsblts to team membs based on their strngths. Role entails hybrd wrk w/ time spltd btwn wrking in NYC offc & flexibly to telecommt from anothr US locatn. #LI-DNI Sal-ary \$143,750-\$180,000/yr. Email rrs to dsebock@santanderconsumerusa.com. Ref #193.

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NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

**QUEENS COUNTY
NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**
TIP-TOP BRAIN #2 LLC. Filed with SSNY on 03/14/25. Office: Queens County. SSNY designated as agent for process & shall mail copy to: 2141 48th Street, Astoria, NY 11105. Purpose: Any lawful.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
Notice of Formation of Luma Paint and Carpentry LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/09/2025. Office location: Suffolk County. SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Cristian Navarro Castro: 5 Faith Drive Hampton Bays, NY 11946. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
Notice of Formation of TE PKW LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/20/2025. Office location: New York County. SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to Thomas Campbell: 1350 Avenue of the Americas, Fl. 2, New York, NY 10019. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**NASSAU COUNTY
PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND
NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Nassau County Office of Community Development
1 West Street, Suite 365
Mineola, New York 11501
Jeffrey Clark
Tel. (516) 571-1916

These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the Nassau County Office of Community Development.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about [4/15/2025 (at least one day after the end of the comment period)] the Nassau County Office of Community Development will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of Federal funds under Title I, Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 118-42, as amended, to undertake a project known as 241 Shore Road for the purpose of the acquisition of an existing three-family house that is ready for immediate rental, no physical alterations or repairs are needed. This house consists of three separate apartments: two two-bedroom units and one three-bedroom unit. The apartments will be offered at affordable rates, prioritizing individuals with varying disabilities. \$1,330,000 (total project cost) in HOME-ARP funds is being requested for proposed acquisition of the three-family house. This project is fully funded by HOME -ARP funds.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Nassau County Office of Community Development has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at Nassau County Office of Community Development, 1 West Street, Suite 365, Mineola, NY 11501, where the ERR is available for review and may be examined or copied weekdays 9 A.M to 4:45 P.M. If copying is requested, a nominal fee may be required.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to the Nassau County Office of Community Development. All comments received by [4/12/2025 (16 days after date of publication)] will be considered by the Nassau County Office of Community Development prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Nassau County Office of Community Development certifies to HUD that Jeffrey Clark, in his capacity as Executive Director consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the Nassau County Office of Community Development to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will accept objections to its release of fund and the Nassau County Office of Community Development certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Nassau County Office of Community Development; (b) the Nassau County Office of Community Development has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD at CPDRROFNVC@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Jeffrey Clark
Executive Director

NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF SALE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in New York, by virtue of certain Event(s) of Default under that certain Pledge and Security Agreement dated as of September 19, 2023 (the "**Pledge Agreement**"), executed and delivered by Angelique Lillan Jackson (the "**Pledgor**"), and in accordance with it rights as holder of the security, Nextres, LLC (the "**Secured Party**"), by virtue of possession of that certain Share Certificate held in accordance with Article 8 of the Uniform Commercial Code of the State of New York (the "**Code**") and by virtue of those certain UCC-1 Filing Statement made in favor of Secured Party, all in accordance with Article 9 of the Code, Secured Party will offer for sale, at public auction, (i) all of Pledgor's right, title, and interest in and to the following: 344 Harlem Born LLC (the "**Pledged Entity**"), and (ii) certain related rights and property relating thereto (collectively, (i) and (ii) are the "**Collateral**"). Secured Party's understanding is that the principal asset of the Pledged Entity is that certain fee interest in real property commonly known 344 West 121st Street, New York, New York 10027 (the "**Property**"). Maltz Auctions ("**Maltz**"), under the direction of Richard B. Maltz or David A. Constantino (the "**Auctioneer**"), will conduct a public sale consisting of the Collateral (as set forth in Schedule A below), via virtual bidding, on **April 10, 2025 at 12:30pm**, in satisfaction of an indebtedness in the approximate amount of **\$812,000.00**, including principal plus interest, and reasonable fees and costs, plus default interest through April 10, 2025, subject to open charges and all additional costs, fees and disbursements permitted by law. The Secured Party reserves the right to credit bid. Online bidding will be made available for pre-registered bidders via Maltz's online bidding App available for download in the App Store or on Google play and via desktop bidding at remotebidding.maltzauctions.com. **Bidder Qualification Deadline:** April 9, 2025 by 4:00 pm. Executed Terms & Conditions of Sale along with ten (10%) of Bidders intended bid amount (to be submitted via wire transfer) are required for consideration by any interested party and submitted directly to Maltz. Requests for wiring instructions should be sent to **rmaltz@maltzauctions.com**.

SCHEDULE A

Pledged Interest
PLEDGOR <i>Angelique Lillan Jackson</i>
ISSUER 344 Harlem Born LLC, <i>a New York limited liability company</i>
INTERESTS PLEDGED <i>100% membership interest</i>
<i>The UCC1 was filed on January 15 2025 with the Secretary of State of the State of New York under the Filing No. # 202501150019789.</i>
VALLEY LAW PLLC Attn: Erick R. Valley, Esq. <i>Attorneys for Secured Party</i> 6851 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 165 Syosset, New York 11791 (516) 386-3900

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clloyd@nypost.com

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Wednesday: Tuesday 2:30PM
Thursday: Wednesday 2:30PM
Friday: Thursday 2:30PM
Saturday: Friday 2:30PM
Sunday: Friday 2:30PM

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NEWYORKPOST

Classified Employment Listings

AL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Yankees	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Baltimore	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Boston	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Tampa Bay	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Toronto	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Chicago	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Cleveland	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Detroit	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Kansas City	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Minnesota	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Athletics	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Houston	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Seattle	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Texas	—	—	0-0	0	—	0-0	0	0	0

***WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Thursday

Milwaukee at **Yankees**, 3:05
Mets at Houston, 4:10
Baltimore at Toronto, 3:07
Boston at Texas, 4:05
Cleveland at Kansas City, 4:10
L.A. Angels at White Sox, 4:10
Minnesota at St. Louis, 4:15

Detroit at L.A. Dodgers, 7:10
Athletics at Seattle, 10:10
Friday
Mets at Houston, 8:10
Colorado at Tampa Bay, 4:10
Baltimore at Toronto, 7:07
Boston at Texas, 8:05
Athletics at Seattle, 9:40
Detroit at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10

NL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Atlanta	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Miami	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Mets	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Philadelphia	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Washington	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Cincinnati	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Milwaukee	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Pittsburgh	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
St. Louis	—	—	.000	0	—	0-0	0	0	0
Chicago	0	2	.000	1	—	0-2	0	0	0-2

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Los Angeles	2	0	1.000	—	—	2-0	0	0	2-0
Arizona	—	—	.000	1	—	0-0	0	0	0
Colorado	—	—	.000	1	—	0-0	0	0	0
San Diego	—	—	.000	1	—	0-0	0	0	0
San Francisco	—	—	.000	1	—	0-0	0	0	0

***WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Thursday

Milwaukee at **Yankees**, 3:05
Mets at Houston, 4:10
Philadelphia at Washington, 4:05
Atlanta at San Diego, 4:10
Pittsburgh at Miami, 4:10
San Francisco at Cincinnati, 4:10
Minnesota at St. Louis, 4:15
Detroit at L.A. Dodgers, 7:10

Cubs at Arizona, 10:10
Friday
Mets at Houston, 8:10
Colorado at Tampa Bay, 4:10
Pittsburgh at Miami, 7:10
Atlanta at San Diego, 9:40
Cubs at Arizona, 9:40
Detroit at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10

Stars 4, Oilers 3

Dallas	1	3	0	4
Edmonton	0	0	3	3
First Period: 1, Dallas, Johnston 27 (Harley, Benn), 14:26. Penalties: Hintz, DAL (Hooking), 7:55; Dumba, DAL (Interference), 10:47; Arvidsson, EDM (High Sticking), 15:59.				
Second Period: 2, Dallas, Robertson 30 (Hintz, Rantanen), 5:01. 3, Dallas, Robertson 31 (Hintz), 10:42. 4, Dallas, Robertson 32 (Hintz, Harley), 15:30 (pp). Penalties: Robertson, DAL (High Sticking), 8:32; Bouchard, EDM (Slashing), 13:33; Nurse, EDM (Interference), 15:20; Bichsel, DAL (Tripping), 20:00.				
Third Period: 5, Edmonton, Perry 16 (Henrique, Walman), 9:30 (pp). 6,				

Edmonton, Henrique 10 (Bouchard, Perry), 13:54 (pp). 7, Edmonton, Hyman 26 (Bouchard, Ekholm), 18:35. **Penalties:** Bichsel, DAL (Slashing), 9:26; Dadonov, DAL (Hooking), 12:18; Steel, DAL (Interference), 12:34; Walman, EDM (Roughing), 12:34.

Shots on Goal: Dallas 5-14-5—24. Edmonton 14-13-18—45.

Power-play opportunities: Dallas 1 of 3; Edmonton 2 of 6.

Goalies: Dallas, Oettinger 34-15-3 (45 shots-42 saves). Edmonton, Pickard 17-7-1 (3-3), Edmonton, Skinner 24-18-4 (21-17).**A:** 18,347 (18,641). **T:** 2:35.

Referees: Garrett Rank, Francois St. Laurent. **Linesmen:** Steve Barton, Ryan Daisy.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE									
Atlantic	W	L	OL*	Pt	GF	GA			
Toronto	43	25	3	89	231	210			
Florida	43	25	3	89	229	193			
Tampa Bay	41	25	5	87	251	192			
Ottawa	37	28	5	79	204	203			
Montreal	33	28	9	75	211	234			
Detroit	33	32	6	72	205	227			
Boston	30	34	9	69	192	242			
Buffalo	29	35	6	64	220	246			
Metropolitan	W	L	OL*	Pt	GF	GA			
x-Wshingt	47	15	9	103	259	184			
Carolina	43	24	4	90	228	191			
Devils	38	28	7	83	219	193			
Islanders	32	29	10	74	195	214			
Rangers	34	32	6	74	214	216			
Columbus	32	29	9	73	225	233			
Pittsburgh	29	33	11	69	214	267			
Philadelphia	28	36	9	65	202	254			

WESTERN CONFERENCE									
Central	W	L	OL*	Pt	GF	GA			
x-Winnipeg	49	19	4	102	249	172			
Dallas	46	21	4	96	241	185			
Colorado	44	25	3	91	244	206			
Minnesota	40	27	5	85	196	204			
St. Louis	38	28	7	83	224	209			
Utah	32	28	11	75	203	216			
Nashville	27	36	8	62	182	229			
Chicago	21	42	9	51	196	259			
Pacific	W	L	OL*	Pt	GF	GA			
Vegas	43	20	8	94	242	191			
Los Angeles	40	21	9	89	206	178			
Edmonton	41	25	5	87	232	207			
Vancouver	34	26	12	80	206	219			
Calgary	34	25	11	79	186	206			
Anaheim	31	32	8	70	194	223			
Seattle	30	36	6	66	216	236			
San Jose	19	42	9	47	182	259			

OL*: Lost in OT (for 1 point)
x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division
z-clinched conference

Wednesday

Devils 5, Chicago 3
Vancouver 5, **Islanders 2**
Anaheim 6, Boston 2
Dallas 4, Edmonton 3

Thursday

Montreal at Philadelphia, 7pm
Ottawa at Detroit, 7pm
Pittsburgh at Buffalo, 7pm
Utah at Tampa Bay, 7pm
Washington at Minnesota, 7:30pm
St. Louis at Nashville, 8pm
Dallas at Calgary, 9pm
Edmonton at Seattle, 10pm
Los Angeles at Colorado, 10pm
Toronto at San Jose, 10:30pm

Friday

Devils at Winnipeg, 8pm
Rangers at Anaheim, 10pm
Montreal at Carolina, 7pm
Utah at Florida, 7pm
Vancouver at Columbus, 7pm
Vegas at Chicago, 8:30pm

Saturday

Islanders at Tampa Bay, 2pm
Devils at Minnesota, 6pm
Rangers at San Jose, 10:30pm
Buffalo at Philadelphia, 1pm
St. Louis at Colorado, 4:30pm
Vegas at Nashville, 6:30pm
Columbus at Ottawa, 7pm
Toronto at Los Angeles, 7pm
Boston at Detroit, 8pm
Calgary at Edmonton, 10pm
Dallas at Seattle, 10:30pm

LPGA Tour Schedule

Jan. 30-Feb. 2 — Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions (A Lim Kim)
Feb. 6-9 — Founders Cup (Yealimi Noh)
Feb. 20-23 — Honda LPGA Thailand (Angel Yin)
Feb. 27-March 2 — HSBC Women's World Championship (Lydia Ko)
March 6-9 — Blue Bay LPGA (Rio Takeda)

Devils 5, Blackhawks 3

Devils	2	2	1	—	5
Chicago	1	1	1	—	3
First Period: 1, Devils, Bastian 4 (Hughes, Tatar), 6:23. 2, Devils, Meier 23 (Hughes, Mercer), 6:50 (pp). 3, Chicago, Bertuzzi 20 (Levshunov, Donato), 9:06 (pp). Penalties: Maroon, CHI (High Sticking), 6:45; Nemec, NJ (Interference), 8:59.					
Second Period: 4, Devils, Palat 14 (Bratt), 3:14 (sh). 5, Chicago, Mikheyev 17 (Foligno, Teravainen), 5:26. 6, Devils, Mercer 16 (Hughes, Bratt), 11:01 (pp). Penalties: Haula, NJ (Tripping), 1:46; Slaggert, CHI (Roughing), 10:37.					
Third Period: 7, Chicago, Nazar 7 (Levshunov, Bedard), 17:10. 8, Devils, Noesen 20 (Hischier), 19:47 (en). Penalties: None.					
Shots on Goal: Devils 7-7-6—20. Chicago 5-6-13—24.					
Power-play opportunities: Devils 2 of 2; Chicago 1 of 2.					
Goalies: Devils, Markstrom 23-14-6 (24 shots-21 saves). Chicago, Knight 15-13-1 (19-15). A: 17,813 (19,717). T: 2:25.					
Referees: Trevor Hanson, Jean Hebert. Linesmen: Jonathan Deschamps, Brad Kovachik.					

Canucks 5, Islanders 2

Vancouver	0	3	2	—	5
Islanders	0	2	0	—	2
First Period: None. Penalties: None.					
Second Period: 1, Vancouver, Sherwood 16 (Hughes, Hronek), 2:39. 2, Islanders, Cizikas 6 (Pageau), 2:39. 3, Islanders, Cizikas 3 (Cizikas), 9:00. 4, Vancouver, Raty 3 (M.Petterson, Sherwood), 13:59. 5, Vancouver, Forbort 2 (DeBrusk, Suter), 19:37. Penalties: Horvat, NYI (Tripping), 4:35; Duclair, NYI (Roughing), 7:28; M.Petterson, VAN (Roughing), 7:28.					
Third Period: 6, Vancouver, Blueger 8 (Garland, O'Connor), 1:05. 7, Vancouver, Sherwood 17 (O'Connor, Suter), 18:08 (en). Penalties: Hughes, VAN (Tripping), 6:20; Suter, VAN (Hooking), 15:19.					
Shots on Goal: Vancouver 5-13-7—25. Islanders 10-11-7—28.					
Power-play opportunities: Vancouver 0 of 1; Islanders 0 of 2.					
Goalies: Vancouver, Demko 8-6-3 (28 shots-26 saves). Islanders, Sorokin 27-21-6 (19-15). A: 15,254 (17,113). T: 2:28.					
Referees: TJ Luxmore, Jon McIsaac. Linesmen: Derek Nansen, Bryan Panchic.					

Ducks 6, Bruins 2

Boston	0	1	1	—	2
Anaheim	1	3	2	—	6
First Period: 1, Anaheim, Carlsson 17 (Killorn, Helleson), 17:33 (sh). Penalties: Khusnutdinov, BOS (Holding), 14:10; Nesterenko, ANA (Tripping), 16:33.					
Second Period: 2, Anaheim, Nesterenko 4, 13:58. 3, Boston, Pastrnak 35 (Geekie, Lindholm), 16:20 (pp). 4, Anaheim, LaCombe 13, 17:57. 5, Anaheim, Gauthier 14 (Killorn), 18:45. Penalties: Carlsson, ANA (Holding), 9:43; Callahan, BOS (High Sticking), 13:58; Terry, ANA (High Sticking), 14:56; Anaheim bench, served by Zegras (Roughing), 14:56; Vatrano, ANA (Misconduct), 14:56; Trouba, ANA (Tripping), 19:41.					
Third Period: 6, Anaheim, Carlsson 18 (LaCombe), 4:02. 7, Anaheim, McTavish 19, 12:25. 8, Boston, Geekie 26 (Zacha), 12:46. Penalties: Harkins, ANA (Fighting), 4:12; Callahan, BOS (Fighting), 4:12; Peeke, BOS (High Sticking), 9:19.					
Shots on Goal: Boston 5-4-16—25. Anaheim 15-12-10—37.					
Power-play opportunities: Boston 1 of 5; Anaheim 0 of 3.					
Goalies: Boston, Korpisalo 10-9-3 (37 shots-31 saves). Anaheim, Gibson 11-10-2 (25-23). A: 16,387 (17,174). T: 2:29.					
Referees: Cody Beach, Graham Skilliter. Linesmen: Tyson Baker, James Tobias.					

WTA Money Leaders

Through Tuesday	
1 Madison Keys	\$2,379,924
2 Iga Swiatek	\$1,560,061
3 Aryna Sabalenka	\$1,456,805
4 Coco Gauff	\$1,373,731
5 Mirra Andreeva	\$1,098,920
6 Elena Rybakina	\$1,010,313
7 Paula Badosa	\$838,256
8 Amanda Anisimva	\$749,925
9 Karolina Muchova	\$731,940
10 Jelena Ostapenko	\$719,149

Yonkers entries for Thursday

FIRST: Mile pace; \$14,000; cond				
1	Samhara N (SZeron)	2-5-6	5-2	
2	Kingsville (GBrennan)	1-3-7	2-1	
3	Speed Man N (JBartlett)	1-5-8	9-5	
4	Masons Delight N (YGingras)	7-7-8	10-1	
5	UndrthsouthrnsN(Plchnce)	8-2-3	20-1	
6	Bettor B Sirius (JStrattton)	3-1-3	20-1	
7	Movin' On Up (ASiegelman)	7-3-5	20-1	
8	SouthbeachHanover(BHllnd)	3-2-8	15-1	
SECOND: Mile trot; \$35,000; Invitational				
1	Swans Eye (BHolland)	6-5-3	12-1	
2	Pc Free Wheeling (JStrattton)	2-3-1	5-1	
3	Keg Stand (JBartlett)	3-1-3	2-1	
4	Southwind Coors (SZeron)	4-2-1	5-1	
5	Tipsy Moni (YGingras)	1-1-1	5-2	
6	BenjaminHanover (GBrennn)	8-1-1	5-1	
THIRD: Mile pace; \$13,000; claiming				
1	Hurrikane Hunter (JBartlett)	1-4-1	3-1	
2	Monaco Hanover (JMarohn)	5-2-8	12-1	
3	The Will To Play (GBrennan)	7-1-4	12-1	
4	Lyons Benjamin (BHolland)	7-7-3	7-2	
5	Ricardoshlyshally (JStrattton)	4-2-8	4-1	
6	Metaman (YGingras)	4-3-2	7-2	
7	Funky Bunch (SZeron)	8-7-3	20-1	
8	Sip Of Bourbon (MKakaley)	3-2-7	8-1	
FOURTH: Mile trot; \$22,000; cond				
1	Mississippi Storm (BHolland)	4-4-4	7-2	
2	Brookview Darius (JMarohn)	1-1-2	4-1	
3	Get It (GBrennan)	6-3-2	10-1	
4	Instatop Yankee (SZeron)	8-3-2	8-1	
5	Sea Can (JMarohn)	1-2-9	10-1	
6	Uppercut (JStrattton)	4-5-2	10-1	
7	Lucky Mum N (ASiegelman)	5-7-1	15-1	
8	Resolve To Win (JBartlett)	1-1-5	7-2	
FIFTH: Mile trot; \$13,100; Naada				
1	Beerthirty K (PMinore)	8-6-7	2-1	
2	Alexander (ABeltrami)	2-4-3	6-1	
3	Velocipator (CKeim)	6-2-4	9-2	
4	Love This Bar (BBaker)	1-3-2	5-1	
5	Fanatic (NSherridan)	6-5-X	3-1	
6	CallMeThefireman(JClbrese)	7-4-6	20-1	
7	Raceace (JLee)	4-1-3	20-1	
8	Hobbs (VStrattton)	3-7-4	20-1	
SIXTH: Mile trot; \$13,100; Naada				
1	Limerence (DAnderson)	1-8-3	6-1	
2	All Rise (ABeltrami)	5-5-3	3-1	
3	AwolHanover(Resnenweaver)	6-9-8	12-1	
4	Hunters Gal (JSlendorn)	5-10-2	10-1	
5	Fashion Cantab (JCalabrese)	6-6-3	8-1	

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE					
Atlantic	W	L	Pct.	GB	
x-Boston	54	19	.740	—	
KNICKS	45	27	.625	8½	
Toronto	26	47	.356	28	
Philadelphia	23	50	.315	31	
NETS	23	50	.315	31	
Southeast	W	L	Pct.	GB	
Atlanta	35	37	.486	—	
Orlando	35	38	.479	½	
Miami	31	41	.431	4	
Charlotte	18	54	.250	17	
Washington	16	56	.222	19	
Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	
y-Cleveland	58	14	.806	—	
Indiana	42	30	.583	16	
Detroit	41	32	.562	17½	
Milwaukee	40	32	.556	18	
Chicago	32	40	.444	26	

WESTERN CONFERENCE					
Southwest	W	L	Pct.	GB	
Houston	47	26	.644	—	
Memphis	44	28	.611	2½	
Dallas	35	38	.479	12	
San Antonio	31	40	.437	15	
New Orleans	20	53	.274	27	

Northwest	W	L	Pct.	GB	
z-Oklahoma City	60	12	.833	—	
Denver	46	28	.622	15	
Minnesota	41	32	.562	19½	
Portland	32	41	.438	28½	
Utah	16	57	.219	44½	

Pacific	W	L	Pct.	GB	
L.A. Lakers	44	28	.611	—	
L.A. Clippers	41	31	.569	3	
Golden State	41	31	.569	3	
Sacramento	35	37	.486	9	
Phoenix	35	38	.479	9½	

x-clinched playoff spot

y-clinched division

z-clinched conference

Wednesday

Clippers 126, **Knicks** 113
Toronto 116, **Nets** 86
Washington 119, Philadelphia 114
L.A. Lakers 120, Indiana 119
Denver 127, Milwaukee 117
Boston 132, Phoenix 102

Thursday

Dallas at Orlando, 7pm
Indiana at Washington, 7pm
San Antonio at Cleveland, 7pm
Atlanta at Miami, 7:30pm
L.A. Lakers at Chicago, 8pm
Memphis at Oklahoma City, 8pm
Houston at Utah, 9pm
Portland at Sacramento, 10pm

Friday

Clippers at **Nets**, 7:30pm
Knicks at Milwaukee, 8pm
Cleveland at Detroit, 7pm
Charlotte at Toronto, 7:30pm
Golden State at New Orleans, 8pm
Phoenix at Minnesota, 8pm
Utah at Denver, 9pm
Saturday
Nets at Washington, 7pm
Sacramento at Orlando, 5pm
Miami at Philadelphia, 7:30pm
Boston at San Antonio, 8pm
Dallas at Chicago, 8pm
Indiana at Oklahoma City, 8pm
L.A. Lakers at Memphis, 8pm

Clippers 126, Knicks 113										
L.A. Clippers										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Leonard	40:38	10-18	5-5	2-10	7	3	27			
Powell	31:04	7-12	1-2	0-1	2	4	19			
Zubac	30:31	7-15	4-6	4-10	2	2	18			
Dunn	28:52	3-8	2-2	0-3	6	4	9			
Harden	36:46	8-16	7-8	1-6	6	3	29			
Bogdanovic	18:13	2-5	0-0	0-0	2	1	4			
Jones Jr.	17:50	5-8	1-1	2-6	0	1	12			
Batum	17:38	2-2	0-0	0-1	0	1	6			
Simmons	16:11	1-4	0-0	2-8	2	2	2			
Brown	0:45	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Eubanks	0:45	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Mills	0:45	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	240:00	45-88	20-24	13-45	27	21	126			

Percentages: FG .511, FT .833. **3-point goals:** 16-30, .533 (Harden 6-9, Powell 4-5, Batum 2-2, Leonard 2-6, Jones Jr. 1-3, Dunn 1-5). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Team turnovers:** None. **Blocked shots:** 8 (Batum 2, Harden 2, Zubac 2, Jones Jr., Powell). **Turnovers:** 5 (Harden 2, Zubac 2, Powell). **Steals:** 4 (Powell 2, Zubac 2). **Technical:** None.

Knicks										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Anunoby	37:28	11-17	3-3	2-5	3	0	28			
Hart	33:34	3-9	1-3	1-5	6	3	7			
Towns	38:37	11-20	8-10	1-14	4	2	34			
Bridges	39:56	7-16	2-2	0-4	9	2	17			
Payne	18:15	6-9	0-0	0-2	0	0	15			
Shamet	19:24	2-5	0-0	1-2	2	3	6			
Kolek	18:30	0-3	0-2	1-1	7	2	0			
Robinson	12:47	0-0	0-0	0-2	1	1	0			
Wright	12:00	0-1	0-0	0-0	3	1	0			
Achiuwa	7:58	2-3	2-2	1-3	0	0	6			
Beauchamp	0:45	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Watson	0:45	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	240:00	42-84	16-22	7-38	35	14	113			
Percentages: FG .500, FT .727. 3-point goals: 13-34, .382 (Towns 4-7, Anunoby 3-5, Payne 3-6, Shamet 2-5, Bridges 1-5, Kolek 0-2, Hart 0-4). Team rebounds: 9. Team turnovers: 1. Blocked shots: 1 (Robinson). Turnovers: 9 (Towns 4, Bridges 2, Anunoby, Kolek, Payne). Steals: 4 (Towns 2, Anunoby, Bridges). Technical: None.										
L.A. Clippers				20	34	40	32	—126		
Knicks				33	22	29	29	—113		
A: 19,812 (19,812).										

Lakers 120, Pacers 119

L.A. Lakers										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Hachimura	27:54	4-5	2-2	0-4	1	2	14			
L.James	37:45	4-12	5-5	3-13	7	1	13			
Hayes	18:12	6-6	1-3	0-2	7	1	13			
Doncic	37:58	11-21	6-7	0-7	7	2	34			
Reaves	36:12	8-16	7-7	1-4	5	3	24			
Finny-Smith	31:04	4-7	0-0	0-3	1	4	11			
Vincent	22:07	2-6	0-0	0-1	0	2	6			
Vanderbilt	16:05	0-1	0-0	2-6	3	4	0			
Goodwin	7:18	1-4	0-0	2-2	1	1	2			
Knecht	5:23	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	3			
Totals	240:00	41-79	21-24	8-43	26	12	120			

Percentages: FG .519, FT .875. **3-point goals:** 17-38, .447 (Doncic 6-10, Hachimura 4-4, Finney-Smith 3-5, Vincent 2-5, Knecht 1-1, Reaves 1-8, Goodwin 0-1, Vanderbilt 0-1, L.James 0-3). **Team rebounds:** 1. **Team turnovers:** 1. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Doncic, Finney-Smith, Hayes). **Turnovers:** 14 (Reaves 4, Doncic 3, Finney-Smith 2, Goodwin, Hachimura, Hayes, L.James, Vincent). **Steals:** 5 (Finney-Smith 2, L.James, Reaves, Vincent). **Technical:** None.

Indiana										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Nesmith	20:34	5-9	0-0	0-1	2	3	13			
Siakam	35:39	6-12	3-4	3-6	2	1	15			
Turner	35:05	6-9	0-0	0-12	1	4	16			
Haliburton	31:44	7-16	1-1	0-0	18	2	16			
Nembhard	39:18	6-9	3-3	3-7	3	0	16			
Mathurin	30:07	7-16	7-8	0-5	2	1	23			
Toppin	18:58	4-7	0-1	1-2	0	1	10			
McConnell	11:57	2-6	0-0	0-1	2	1	5			
Walker	7:51	1-2	2-2	0-2	1	2	5			
Sheppard	6:56	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0			
Bryant	1:48	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	240:00	44-87	16-19	7-36	31	16	119			
Percentages: FG .506, FT .842. 3-point goals: 15-36, .417 (Turner 4-5, Nesmith 3-6, Mathurin 2-5, Toppin 2-5, McConnell 1-1, Walker 1-1, Nembhard 1-2, Haliburton 1-9, Sheppard 0-1, Siakam 0-1). Team rebounds: 7. Team turnovers: 1. Blocked shots: 4 (Siakam 2, Haliburton, Turner). Turnovers: 9 (Haliburton, Mathurin, McConnell, Nembhard, Nesmith, Sheppard, Siakam, Turner, Walker). Steals: 9 (Nesmith 3, Haliburton 2, McConnell, Nembhard, Siakam, Turner). Technical: Nesmith, 7:17 second.										
L.A. Lakers	28	40	27	25	—	120				
Indiana	33	22	37	27	—	119				
A: 17,274 (20,000).										

Raptors 116, Nets 86										
Toronto										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Barnes	28:10	6-17	3-3	2-7	5	0	15			
Barrett	28:21	5-13	4-5	1-6	5	2	15			
Robinson	24:05	10-14	2-2	2-12	3	4	23			
Shead	24:24	2-8	1-2	2-5	8	3	7			
Walter	29:31	4-14	2-2	1-2	6	3	11			
Battle	24:30	2-5	2-2	2-10	0	2	8			
Mogbo	23:55	1-10	6-6	6-7	5	4	16			
Agbaji	21:31	5-8	0-0	1-8	2	1	12			
Swider	19:42	3-7	0-1	0-3	0	2	7			
Lawson	15:51	1-6	0-0	0-3	0	1	2			
Totals	240:00	43-102	20-23	17-63	34	22	116			
Percentages: FG .422, FT .870. 3-point goals: 10-33, .303 (Battle 2-3, Agbaji 2-5, Shead 2-5, Robinson 1-1, Barrett 1-4, Swider 1-4, Walter 1-5, Barnes 0-1, Mogbo 0-1, Lawson 0-4). Team rebounds: 8. Team turnovers: 1. Blocked shots: 3 (Barnes, Mogbo, Robinson). Turnovers: 12 (Barnes 4, Barrett 2, Mogbo 2, Robinson 2, Agbaji, Shead). Steals: 5 (Shlead 3, Mogbo, Swider). Technical: None.										

Nets										
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts			
Clowney	27:52	1-9	2-2	1-5	2	3	5			
Williams	26:54	4-14	3-3	1-6	1	1	13			
Claxton	29:12	10-14	2-4	6-11	1	2	22			
K.Johnson	28:13	2-10	4-5	0-2	5	8	8			
Russell	25:07	2-8	0-0	0-5	2	2	5			
Wilson	26:40	3-7	4-4	0-4	0	3	10			
Watford	26:26	4-8	1-1	0-4	3	2	9			
Whitehead	25:17	3-10	0-0	0-2	1	2	9			
Lewis	24:19	2-7	0-0	2-4	1	1	5			
Totals	240:00	31-87	16-19	10-43	16	21	86			
Percentages: FG .356, FT .842. 3-point goals: 8-41, .195 (Whitehead 3-9, Williams 2-9, Lewis 1-3, Clowney 1-6, Russell 1-7, Watford 0-1, Wilson 0-2, K.Johnson 0-4). Team rebounds: 7. Team turnovers: 1. Blocked shots: 9 (Claxton 5, Clowney, K.Johnson, Watford, Wilson). Turnovers: 19 (Clowney 4, Russell 4, Claxton 3, Lewis 3, Wilson 2, K.Johnson, Watford, Whitehead). Steals: 7 (Clowney 2, K.Johnson, Lewis, Watford, Whitehead, Williams). Technical: None.										
Toronto			32	30	31	23	—	116		
Nets			18	27	23	18	—	86		
A: 16,413 (17,732).										

Nuggets 127, Bucks 115

Milwaukee							
	Min	FG	FT	O-Rb	A	PF	Pts
Kuzma	36:00	3-10	4-6	2-7	4	2	10
Prince	32:41	6-9	0-0	0-0	5	0	15
Lopez	38:06	12-17	0-0	5-7	3	3	26
K.Porter Jr.	29:40	5-15	2-2	0-7	8	1	12
Trent Jr.	34:21	5-15	2-2	0-4	0	1	16
Green	34:13	5-9	0-0	1-5	5	2	15
Rollins	18:20	7-9	1-3	0-1	3	4	17
Connaughton	16:39	3-5	0-0	0-8	2	1	16
Totals	240:00	46-89	9-13	8-39	30	14	117
Percentages: FG .517, FT .692, 3-point goals: 16-37, .432 (Green 5-9, Trent Jr. 4-11, Prince 3-4, Rollins 2-3, Lopez 2-5, Kuzma 0-1, K.Porter Jr. 0-4). Team rebounds: 2. Team turnovers: None. Blocked shots: 6 (Lopez 3, Kuzma 2, Connaughton). Turnovers: 11 (K.Porter Jr. 4, Kuzma 3, Green 2, Lopez, Trent Jr.). Steals: 4 (Rollins 2, Lopez, Prince). Technical: None.							

SPORTS SHORTS

NHL: Devils earn road win over Blackhawks

Luke Hughes had three assists, **Jesper Bratt** chipped in with two and the Devils ended their three-game losing streak with a 5-3 win over the Blackhawks in Chicago. **Nathan Bastian, Timo Meier, Ondrej Palat, Dawson Mercer** and **Stefan Noesen** scored for the Devils. **Nico Hischier** extended his point streak to eight games with an assist on Noesen’s empty-net goal.

NBA: James’ heroics lifts Lakers at buzzer

LeBron James had a buzzer-beating tip-in to cap a 10-point fourth quarter, **Luka Doncic** scored 34 points and the Lakers beat the Pacers 120-119 in Indianapolis. James extended his NBA-record streak of 10 or more points to 1,283 games — barely, by finishing with 13 points and 13 rebounds. ● In Denver, **Nikola Jokic** had 39 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his first game back in nearly two weeks from an iniured left ankle to lead the Nuggets to a 127-117 victory against the Bucks.

● In Phoenix, **Kristaps Porzingis** scored 30 points as the Celtics beat the Suns 132-102 for their seventh straight win.

MLB: Mariners’ Raleigh signs big exten\$ion

Catcher **Cal Raleigh** and the Mariners finalized a \$105 million, six-year contract on Wednesday. Raleigh’s deal supersedes a \$5.6 million, one-year agreement on Jan. 9 that avoided salary arbitration.

● Red Sox manager **Alex Cora** said that newly acquired free agent **Alex Bregman** will play third base this season, with incumbent **Rafael Devers** moving to designated hitter.

NCAA: Illinois State captures CBI title

Caden Boser scored 20 points as Illinois State won their first postseason title with a 79-68 win over Cleveland State in the CBI Tournament championship game held in Daytona Beach, Fla. ● VCU has hired Bryant’s **Phil Martelli Jr.** as its new men’s basketball coach. The Rams announced the hiring Wednesday, coming less than a week after **Ryan Odom** left to take over at Virginia.

NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament

SPOKANE 1
Spokane, Wash.
Regional Semifinals
Friday
UCLA vs. Mississippi, 10pm
NC State vs. LSU, 7:30pm
Regional Championship
Sunday
UCLA-Mississippi winner vs. NC State-LSU winner, TBA
SPOKANE 4
Spokane, Wash.
Regional Semifinals
Saturday
Southern Cal vs. Kansas St., 8pm
UConn vs. Oklahoma, 5:30pm
Regional Championship
Monday
Southern Cal-Kansas St. winner vs. UConn-Oklahoma winner, TBA
BIRMINGHAM 2
Birmingham, Ala.
Regional Semifinals
Friday
South Carolina vs. Maryland, 5pm
Duke vs. North Carolina, 2:30pm
Regional Championship
Sunday
South Carolina-Maryland winner vs. Duke-North Carolina winner, TBA
BIRMINGHAM 3
Birmingham, Ala.
Regional Semifinals
Saturday
Texas vs. Tennessee, 3:30pm
TCU vs. Notre Dame, 1pm
Regional Championship
Monday, March 31
Texas-Tennessee winner vs. TCU-Notre Dame winner, TBA
FINAL FOUR
At Amalie Arena
Tampa, Fla.
National Semifinals
Friday, April 4
TBD vs. TBD, TBA
TBD vs. TBD, TBA
National Championship
Sunday, April 6
Semifinal winners, 3pm

Tennis

Miami Open
At Hard Rock Stadium; Miami
Gardens; Purse: \$9,193,540; Surface: Hardcourt outdoor; (seedings in parentheses):
Men's Singles - Round of 16
Arthur Fils (17), France, def. Alexander Zverev (1), Germany, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.
Men's Singles - Quarterfinals
Grigor Dimitrov (14), Bulgaria, def. Francisco Cerundolo (23), Argentina, 6-7 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3).
Women's Singles - Quarterfinals
Alexandra Eala, Philippines, def. Iga Swiatek (2), Poland, 6-2, 7-5.
Jessica Pegula (4), United States, def. Emma Raducanu, Britain, 6-4, 6-7 (3), 6-2.
Men's Doubles - Quarterfinals
Lloyd Glasspool and Julian Cash (6), Britain, def. Yuki Bhambri, India, and Nuno Borges, Portugal, 7-6 (1), 3-6, 10-8.
Mate Pavic, Croatia, and Marcelo Arevalo-Gonzalez (1), El Salvador, def. Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni (7), Argentina, 4-6, 7-5, 10-8.
Michael Venus, New Zealand, and Nikola Mektic (5), Croatia, def. Evan King and Christian Harrison, United States, 6-4, 3-6, 10-7.
Women's Doubles - Quarterfinals
Diana Shnaider and Mirra Andreeva, Russia, def. Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, and Peyton Stearns, United States, 5-7, 6-3, 10-4.
Xinyu Jiang, China, and Fang-Hsien Wu, Taiwan, def. Zheng Saisai and Wang Xinyu, China, 6-3, 6-4.

Crown Basketball Tournament

All games in Las Vegas
First Round-Monday
Utah vs. Michigan St., 3pm
G. Washington vs. Boise St., 5:30pm
Nebraska vs. Ariz. St., 8:30pm
Georgetown vs. Wash. St., 11:30pm
First Round-Tuesday, April 1
DePaul vs. Cincinnati, 3pm
Oregon St. vs. UCF, 5:30pm
Colorado vs. Villanova, 8:30pm
Tulane vs. USC, 11pm

NIT

National Invitational Tournament
Wednesday
Chicago
Loyola Chicago 72, Kent St. 62
Irvine, Calif.
UC Irvine 81, UAB 77, OT
Semifinals- Tuesday
At Hinkle Fieldhouse-Indianapolis
North Texas vs. UC Irvine, 7pm
Chattanooga vs. Loyola Chicago, 9:30pm
Championship
Thursday, April 3
Semifinal winners, 9pm

NCAA D1 Hockey Tournament

MANCHESTER REGIONAL
Manchester, N.H.- First Round
Friday
Boston College (26-7-2) vs. Bentley Falcons (23-14-2), 2pm
Providence (21-10-5) vs. Denver (29-11-1), 5:30pm
Championship- Sunday
TBD vs. TBD, TBA
FARGO, N.D.- First Round
Thursday
W. Michigan (30-7-1) vs. Minnesota State Mavericks (27-8-3), 5pm
Minnesota (25-10-4) vs. UMass (20-13-5), 8:30pm
Championship- Saturday
TBD vs. TBD, TBA
ALLENTOWN REGIONAL
Allentown, Pa.- First Round
Friday
Maine (24-7-6) vs. Penn St. (20-13-4), 8:30pm
UConn (22-11-4) vs. Quinnipiac (24-11-2), 5pm
Championship- Sunday, March 30
TBD vs. TBD, TBA
TOLEDO REGIONAL
Toledo, Ohio- First Round
Thursday
Michigan St. (26-6-4) vs. Cornell (18-10-6), 5:30pm
Bentley (21-13-2) vs. Ohio St. (24-13-2), 2pm
Championship
Saturday
TBD vs. TBD, TBA

PGA Tour Schedule

March 27-30 — Texas Children's Houston Open, Houston
April 3-6 — Valero Texas Open, San Antonio
April 10-13 — Masters Tournament, Augusta, Ga.
April 17-20 — RBC Heritage, Hilton Head, S.C.
April 17-20 — Corales Puntacana Championship, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
April 24-27 — Zurich Classic of New Orleans, New Orleans
May 1-4 — THE CJ CUP Byron Nelson, McKinney, Texas
May 8-11 — Truist Championship, Philadelphia
May 8-11 — ONEflight Myrtle Beach Classic, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
May 15-18 — PGA Championship, Charlotte, N.C.
May 22-25 — Charles Schwab Challenge, Fort Worth, Texas
May 29-June 1 — the Memorial Tournament presented by Workday, Dublin, Ohio
June 5-8 — RBC Canadian Open, Alton, Ontario
June 12-15 — U.S. Open, Oakmont, Pa.
June 19-22 — Travelers Championship, Cromwell, Conn.
June 26-29 — Rocket Classic, Detroit
July 3-6 — John Deere Classic, Silvis, Ill.
July 10-13 — Genesis Scottish Open, North Berwick, United Kingdom
July 10-13 — ISCO Championship, Louisville, Ky.
July 17-20 — The Open Championship, Portrush, United Kingdom
July 17-20 — Barracuda Championship, Truckee, Calif.
July 24-27 — 3M Open, Blaine, Minn.
July 31-Aug. 3 — Wyndham Championship, Greensboro, N.C.
Aug. 7-10 — FedEx St. Jude Championship, Memphis, Tenn.

CBI

Championship - Wednesday
Illinois St. 79, Cleveland St. 68
All games at Daytona Beach, Fla.

Sally Brompton Daily Horoscope

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS AT SALLYBROMPTON.COM

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 20)
You have no intention of just sitting there while others say things about you that are simply not true. You may be a nice guy by nature but sometimes you have to show you have a nasty side too. Make sure the world gets the message.

♉ TAURUS (April 21-May 21)
Something you discover about a friend will shock you today but after you think about it a bit you will have to admit the signs were there all along but you did not want to acknowledge them. Next time, accept what your eyes and ears tell you.

♊ GEMINI (May 22-June 21)
As values planet Venus moves back into the career area of your chart today this is probably not the best time to make a major change. Leave things as they are for now and trust that when the time comes to act the universe will guide you.

♋ CANCER (June 22-July 23)
The answer to a problem that has been confusing you for ages will pop into your head today and you will kick yourself for not having been able to work it out earlier. Don't be too hard on yourself though - you're not the only one to overlook the obvious.

♌ LEO (July 24-Aug. 23)
The best way to deal with a money issue of some kind is to leave it alone and let it sort itself out. With Venus and Mercury going through their retrograde phases any changes you make now may have to be changed back again later on.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)
Do whatever it takes to stay on good terms with everyone you

interact with, be they loved ones, work colleagues or even total strangers. If you offer them a smile instead of a frown they will be encouraged to smile too, and that's a wonderful thing.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)
Venus, your ruler, moves back into the work area of your chart today, which suggests you will need to retrace your footsteps and fix something you got wrong a while ago. It's probably not a serious mistake but you can't just leave it as it is.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)
Your enthusiasm for a project may have gone off the boil in recent days but that may just be the universe's way of telling you it needs to simmer for a while. Forget about it for now and be ready to come back to it early

next month.
♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
Anyone who tries to push you into doing something against your will is going to regret it in a big way. As one of the zodiac's Fire signs you know how to bite as well as bark and won't hesitate to bare your teeth over the next 24 hours.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
You won't solve an emotional problem by running away from it but you might solve it by facing up to facts and then working out what your next move should be. Capricorn is supposed to be a practical sign, so make a stand and make it right.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

As retrograde Venus moves into the financial area of your chart today it will become apparent that you have miscalculated your purchasing power. Like it or not you are going to have to make cutbacks, starting with what you spend on other people.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
If one area of your life seems to have slowed down to the extent that it has almost stopped you should take that as a sign that you have been doing something wrong. Think about what that might be and then hit the Reset button.

BIRTHDAY THURSDAY
Allow your imagination to guide you this year but make sure that the conscious part of your mind remains in control. If you give your daydreams and fancies a free hand they could lead you in directions that may not be in your long-term interests.

The *POST* Line

MLB Opening Day

Thursday		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
YANKEES	\$130-155	Brewers
ASTROS	\$110-130	Mets
Orioles	-105-115	BLUE JAYS
RANGERS	-105-115	Red Sox
Phillies	\$145-175	NATIONALS
REDS	-110-110	Giants
Pirates	\$130-155	MARLINS
ROYALS	\$110-130	Guardians
Angels	\$125-150	WHITE SOX
Braves	\$110-130	PADRES
Twins	-105-115	CARDINALS
DODGERS	\$140-165	Tigers
D'BACKS	\$110-130	Cubs
MARINERS	\$145-175	Athletics
Friday		
RAYS	\$165-200	Rockies

College Basketball NCAA Women's Tournament

Friday		
Favorite	PTS	Underdog
Duke	5.5	North Carolina
South Carolina	17.5	Maryland
Lsu	3.5	Nc State
Ucla	8.5	Ole Miss

Saturday

Notre Dame	6.5	Tcu
Texas	8.5	Tennessee
UConn	14.5	Oklahoma
Usc	1.5	Kansas St.

All games at neutral sites

College Hockey NCAA Men's Tournament

Thursday		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
Boston Univ.	\$118-140	Ohio St.
W. Michigan	\$225-275	Minnesota St.
Michigan St.	\$240-295	Cornell
Minnesota	\$155-190	UMass

All games at neutral sites

NHL

Thursday		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
Canadiens	-105-115	FLYERS
SABRES	\$120-145	Penguins
LIGHTNING	\$165-200	Utah
Senators	\$105-125	RED WINGS
Capitals	\$135-160	WILD
Blues	\$115-135	PREDATORS
Stars	\$120-145	FLAMES
AVALANCHE	\$125-150	Kings
Oilers	\$100-120	KRAKEN
Maple Leafs	\$220-275	SHARKS

NBA

Thursday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Pacers	11 (238)	WIZARDS
CAVALIERS	13.5 (237.5)	Spurs
MAGIC	7 (219)	Mavericks
HEAT	1 (228)	Hawks
THUNDER	10 (242)	Grizzlies
Lakers	3.5 (238.5)	BULLS
Rockets	12.5 (227.5)	JAZZ
KINGS	5.5 (226)	Blazers

Home team in CAPS

College Basketball NCAA Men's Tournament

Thursday		
Favorite	PTS	Underdog
Duke	9.5	Arizona
Texas Tech	5.5	Arkansas
Alabama	5.5	BYU
Florida	6.5	Maryland

Friday		
Houston	8.5	Purdue
Auburn	9.5	Michigan
Tennessee	4.5	Kentucky
Michigan St.	3.5	Ole Miss

All games at neutral sites

STITCHES

Get off to an Amazin' start

Hey listen, I'm as surprised as you are. Elon Musk (Department of Government Efficiency) demanded I name five things I've done this week. Told him I haven't done anything in four months, but somehow this musketeer slipped through the cracks and is back to take a crack at the 2025 MLB season.

Time to catch up. Donald Trump sent Kamala Harris home. Joe Biden pardoned everyone but Dolly Parton before he went home. Los Angeles burned. So did Teslas across the country. The Department of Education is on the way out. MSNBC's Joy Reid is already out ...

Sorry hold on, I'm getting a text. Nah, spam. Details about how the U.S. is

going to attack the Houthis in Yemen. ... Where were we?

The Gulf of Mexico is now the Gulf of America. The Panama Canal is the U.S. Canal. The Eagles won the Super Bowl. Barron Trump grew 2 feet. Tracy Morgan puked on the MSG floor during a Knicks game, and Snow White wants to "Free Palestine!"

+\$

And away we go! Is Juan Soto the missing piece in the Mets' championship puzzle? Will former Yankees reliever Clay Holmes' first start since 2018 be worth the wait? Are the DisAstros finally done? Play \$50 on the Mets.

stitches@nypost.com

Pitching Form

		(Game time)		2025		*REC	'24 vs OPP		CAREER vs OPP	LAST 3 STARTS IN '24		
		W-L	ERA	W-L	ERA		W-L	ERA		W-L	IP	ERA
Brewers	Peralta (R)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0-0	1-1	15.1	2.35
Yankees	Rodon (L)	(3:05pm)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1-1	2-0	16.2	2.16
Mets	Holmes (R)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0-0	0.0	0.00
Astros	Valdez (L)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	0-0	5.79	2-0	1-1	19.0	2.37
Twins	López (R)	—	—	—	—	—	1-0	0.00	3-2	0-2	16.0	6.19
Cardinals	Gray (R)	(4:15pm)	—	—	—	—	0-1	7.50	2-5	1-0	18.2	2.89
Tigers	Skubal (L)	—	—	—	—	—	0-0	3.00	0-0	2-0	18.0	1.00
Dodgers	Snell (L)	(7:10pm)	—	—	—	—	—	—	0-2	3-0	17.0	0.53
Orioles	Eflin (R)	—	—	—	—	—	1-1	5.79	3-3	0-1	17.1	3.12
Blue Jays	Berrios (R)	(3:07pm)	—	—	—	—	0-0	2.77	10-1	1-2	16.0	4.50
Red Sox	Crochet (L)	—	—	—	—	—	0-1	4.50	0-1	0-1	12.0	0.75
Rangers	Eovaldi (R)	(4:05pm)	—	—	—	—	0-1	9.00	3-1	1-0	18.2	4.82
Guardians	Bibee (R)	—	—	—	—	—	2-0	4.09	2-0	1-1	19.2	2.75
Royals	Ragans (L)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	0-1	6.23	0-2	0-0	19.0	1.42
Angels	Kikuchi (L)	—	—	—	—	—	0-1	3.00	2-2	1-1	19.0	1.89
White Sox	Burke (R)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	0-0	0.00	0-0	2-0	16.0	1.69
Athletics	Severino (R)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-2	1-1	16.0	5.62
Mariners	Gilbert (R)	(10:10pm)	—	—	—	—	1-1	2.41	3-1	2-1	17.0	3.18
Phillies	Wheeler (R)	—	—	—	—	—	2-0	2.29	14-15	1-1	20.1	2.21
Nationals	Gore (L)	(4:05pm)	—	—	—	—	1-1	3.42	1-4	2-0	19.0	0.47
Braves	Sale (L)	—	—	—	—	—	2-0	0.75	4-0	2-0	17.0	1.59
Padres	King (R)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-1	17.0	1.59
Pirates	Skenes (R)	—	—	—	—	—	1-0	1.50	1-0	1-1	13.0	0.69
Marlins	Alcantara (R)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	0-0	0.00	1-0	1-2	20.1	4.43
Giants	Webb (R)	—	—	—	—	—	0-1	2.57	2-2	1-1	15.0	3.60
Reds	Greene (R)	(4:10pm)	—	—	—	—	1-0	0.00	2-0	1-1	14.0	1.29
Cubs	Steele (L)	—	0-1	11.25	—	0-1	0-1	9.64	0-2	0-1	10.2	5.91
D'Backs	Gallen (R)	(10:10pm)	—	—	—	—	1-0	0.00	3-1	2-0	16.0	4.50

* REC: Won-lost record of pitcher's team in games he has started.

MLB

Odds to win 2025 World Series

TEAM	ODDS	TEAM	ODDS	TEAM	ODDS	TEAM	ODDS
Dodgers	+240	Rangers	22/1	Royals	40/1	Athletics	200/1
Braves	+900	Diamondbacks	30/1	Brewers	50/1	Nationals	200/1
Yankees	+900	Cubs	30/1	Rays	50/1	Angels	250/1
Phillies	11/1	Tigers	30/1	Blue Jays	66/1	White Sox	500/1
Mets	12/1	Twins	30/1	Reds	80/1	Rockies	500/1
Orioles	16/1	Padres	30/1	Giants	80/1	Marlins	500/1
Red Sox	18/1	Mariners	30/1	Pirates	125/1		
Astros	18/1	Guardians	35/1	Cardinals	125/1		

Odds to win AL East

TEAM	ODDS
Yankees	+145
Red Sox	+250
Orioles	+300

Odds to win NL East

TEAM	ODDS
Braves	+115
Phillies	+200
Mets	+230

Number of AL East teams to make playoffs

NUMBER	ODDS
One	+700
Two	+115
Three	+145
Four	12/1

Number of NL East teams to make playoffs

NUMBER	ODDS
One	+600
Two	-125
Three	+170
Four	60/1













Regular-season home run leader

PLAYER	ODDS	PLAYER	ODDS
Aaron Judge	+260	Fernando Tatis Jr.	18/1
Shohei Ohtani	+500	Matt Olson	20/1
Kyle Schwarber	11/1	Juan Soto	30/1
Brent Rooker	14/1	Kyle Tucker	35/1
Pete Alonso	16/1	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	35/1
Yordan Alvarez	16/1	Anthony Santander	40/1

Regular-season strikeout leader

PLAYER	ODDS	PLAYER	ODDS
Paul Skenes	+300	Zack Wheeler	13/1
Garrett Crochet	+550	Logan Gilbert	18/1
Tarik Skubal	+650	Cole Ragans	22/1
Jacob deGrom	+800	Hunter Greene	25/1
Dylan Cease	10/1	Corbin Burnes	25/1
Blake Snell	11/1	Chris Sale	30/1

Home Team Lineups							
	HOME	AWAY					
	TODAY March 27	FRI March 28	SAT March 29	SUN March 30	MON March 31	TUE April 1	WED April 2
	Milwaukee 3:05 ESPN WFAN 660 AM/ 101.9 FM	NO GAME	Milw. 1:05 YES WFAN	Milw. 1:35 YES WFAN	NO GAME	Ariz. 7:05 YES WFAN	Ariz. 7:05 Prime Video WFAN
	Houston 4:10 SNY WHSQ 880 AM	Hou. 8:10 Apple TV+ WHSQ	Hou. 7:15 Fox WHSQ	NO GAME	Mia. 6:40 SNY WHSQ	Mia. 6:40 SNY WHSQ	Mia. 4:40 SNY WHSQ
	NO GAME	Milw. 8:00 MSG WEPN	NO GAME	Port. 6:00 MSG WHSQ	NO GAME	Phila. 7:30 MSG WHSQ	Clev. 7:00 MSG ESPN WHSQ
	NO GAME	LAC 7:30 YES WFAN	Wash. 7:00 YES WFAN	NO GAME	Dal. 8:30 YES WFAN	NO GAME	NO GAME
	NO GAME	Ana. 10:00 MSG2 WEPN	SJS 10:30 MSG WEPN	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME	Minn. 7:00 MSGSN TNT WEPN
	NO GAME	NO GAME	T.B. 2:00 MSGSN WRHU WRCN	Car. 5:00 MSGSN WRHU WRCN	NO GAME	T.B. 7:30 ESPN+ WRHU WRCN	NO GAME
	NO GAME	Wpg. 8:00 MSGSN	Minn. 6:00 MSGSN	NO GAME	Minn. 7:00 MSGSN	NO GAME	NO GAME
Saturday		Saturday		Friday			
	New England Revolution 2:30 p.m. Apple TV+		Atlanta United 7:30 p.m. Apple TV+		Houston 8:00 p.m. NWSL+		

Today's Sports on the Air			
MLB	3:05 p.m.	Brewers at Yankees	ESPN, WFAN (660 AM/101.9 FM)
	4:10 p.m.	Mets at Astros	SNY, WHSQ (880 AM)
	7 p.m.	Tigers at Dodgers	ESPN
	10 p.m.	Cubs at Diamondbacks	MLBN
	7 p.m.	Mavericks at Magic	NBATV
NBA	10 p.m.	Kings at Avalanche	ESPN
NHL	7 p.m.	BYU vs. Alabama	CBS
NCAA Sweet 16	7:30 p.m.	Maryland vs. Florida	TBS
	9:30 p.m.	Arizona vs. Duke	CBS
	10 p.m.	Arkansas vs. Texas Tech	TBS
Golf	4 p.m.	PGA Tour: The Houston Open, 1st Round	Golf
	7 p.m.	LPGA Tour: The Ford Championship, 1st Round	Golf
	3:30 a.m. (Fri.)	DP World Tour: The Indian Open, 2nd Round	Golf
	1 p.m.	Miami Open: ATP Quarterfinal, WTA Semifinal	Tennis
Tennis	7 p.m.	Miami Open: ATP Quarterfinal, WTA Semifinal	Tennis
	7 p.m.	Stanford at Virginia	ACCN
College Baseball	8 p.m.	Florida at Ole Miss	ESPNU
	9 p.m.	Mississippi State at LSU	SECN
College Hockey	2 p.m.	Regional Semifinal: Boston University vs. Ohio State	ESPNU
	5 p.m.	Regional Semifinal: Minnesota State vs. Western Michigan	ESPNU
	8:30 p.m.	Regional Semifinal: Minnesota vs. UMass	ESPN2
Horse Racing	Noon	FanDuel Racing	MSGSN
College Lacrosse	6 p.m.	Women: Michigan at Ohio State	BTN
Figure Skating	8 p.m.	Women: North Carolina at Northwestern	BTN
Rugby	3 p.m.	ISU: 2025 World Championships	USA
	8 p.m.	ISU: 2025 World Championships	USA
Rugby	4:55 a.m. (Fri.)	NRL: Brisbane at Dolphins	FS2

ODDS & ENDS

OPENING DAY Thursday Brewers at Yankees	
RUNLINE	ODDS
Brewers +1.5	-175
Yankees -1.5	+145
TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 8	-102
Under 8	-118
FIRST 5 INNINGS MONEYLINE	ODDS
Brewers	+115
Yankees	-145
FIRST 5 INNINGS TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 4.5	+100
Under 4.5	-130
TO HIT A HOME RUN	ODDS
Aaron Judge	+200
Rhys Hoskins	+450
Paul Goldschmidt	+525
William Contreras	+525
Austin Wells	+575
Jazz Chisholm Jr.	+600
Jasson Domínguez	+675
Jackson Chourio	+675
Cody Bellinger	+700
Ben Rice	+700
Christian Yelich	+725
FIRST INNING RUN?	ODDS
Yes	+105
No	-135
BREWERS TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 3.5	-110
Under 3.5	-115
YANKEES TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 4.5	+115
Under 4.5	-150

Mets at Astros	
RUNLINE	ODDS
Mets +1.5	-210
Astros -1.5	+170
TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 8	-105
Under 8	-130
FIRST 5 INNINGS MONEYLINE	ODDS
Mets	+100
Astros	-125
FIRST 5 INNINGS TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 4	-120
Under 4	-110
TO HIT A HOME RUN	ODDS
Yordan Alvarez	+340
Mark Vientos	+475
Christian Walker	+475
Pete Alonso	+500
Francisco Lindor	+500
Juan Soto	+525
FIRST INNING RUN?	ODDS
Yes	+100
No	-130
METS TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 3.5	-130
Under 3.5	-102
ASTROS TOTAL RUNS	ODDS
Over 3.5	-145
Under 3.5	+110

BET SMART

Start early on your Master plan



DON'T DELAY, ACT NOW! Ludvig Aberg, last year's Masters runner-up, is available now at 15/1, just below the biggest names on the odds board. Michael Leboff advises backers to grab that number now, because it is sure to drop.

By MICHAEL LEOFF

This year's Masters feels wide open. Scottie Scheffler is still the consensus favorite, but the defending champion and two-time winner is not off to a flying start (relative to his standards) in 2025.

Rory McIlroy could close as a co-favorite if he backs up his win at The Players Championship with a strong showing in Houston this weekend, but everybody knows the pressure that the Northern Irishman will be under as he continues his quest for his first Green Jacket.

The chasing pack behind Scheffler and McIlroy features the ascending Ludvig Aberg, two-time major champion Collin Morikawa, and LIV stalwarts Jon Rahm and Bryson DeChambeau, but they, too, have questions to answer as we head down Magnolia Lane.

Scheffler and Rahm have combined to win the past three Masters, but this year is setting up for chaos.

With that in mind, here are a few early thoughts and predictions to get bettors set up for the biggest betting event on the golf calendar.

Ludvig Aberg will be the trendiest bet on the board

The 25-year-old Swede is now firmly on every golf fan's radar, has a win this season (The Genesis), and was the runner-up at Augusta last year.

With Scheffler and McIlroy both sitting in the single digits, bettors looking for juicier odds will skip right to Aberg at 15/1.

If you're someone with any interest in backing Aberg, you may want to consider getting in on him before the

money starts to show up in a couple of weeks.

LIV Golfers will be great value plays

Things are not going well for LIV these days. The novelty seems to have worn off, ratings are low, and talks with the PGA Tour seem to have soured. That may not seem as if it should impact the betting market, but it does matter.

Every time the two tours are reunited at a major, it seems as if bettors are hesitant to back the renegades, which causes their numbers to drift.

Brooks Koepka, Joaquin Niemann, and Sergio Garcia are all in good form right now and will likely be offered at a discount compared to comparable players that ply their trade on the main circuit.

Keegan Bradley is worth a bet right now

Bradley often flies under the radar in deep fields.

Currently sitting at 160/1 at FanDuel, Bradley is behind the likes of Max Greyserman, Lucas Glover, and Rasmus Hojgaard on the betting board.

That seems a bit mad, considering Bradley is in solid form and has been one of the more consistent golfers over the past two seasons.

The St. John's alum has two top 10 finishes and has yet to miss a cut in 2025, and he's won two tournaments in the past two years.

Bradley hasn't come close to contending at Augusta in his career, but he's finished inside the top 25 in each of the past two iterations and has eight years of experience playing in the Masters.

Bettors tend to look for form, experience, and the ability to handle big moments when betting the Masters.

Bradley ticks each of those boxes.

Getty Images



TAKE YOUR PICK

ON THEIR RADAR: Baylor guard VJ Edgecombe could be available for the Nets should they end up with a lottery pick that is somewhere in the 4-9 range. Should the Nets finish the season with the fifth-worst record, they'd have a 10.5 percent chance at the No. 1 pick. Getty Images

By BRIAN LEWIS

In a Nets season that's all about the rebuild, they are all but assured of their first lottery pick in a decade and a half. And Wednesday they beaten by fellow tanking rival Toronto in a game with all sorts of lottery implications.

The Nets and Raptors are both hoping for the coveted top pick and generational talent Cooper Flagg, but in one of the deepest drafts in recent memory, there are a host of other elite talents that could potentially become the foundation of a roster.

And games like Wednesday's were vital in jockeying for position.

With the loss, the Nets kept pace with the 76ers — who lost to the Wizards — for fifth in the lottery odds, and the seventh-place Raptors now trailing them by three games.

As a refresher, drawings will be conducted May 12 for the top four picks. The fifth-worst record would give the Nets a 10.5 percent chance at Flagg and 42.1 percent odds of a top four pick. At sixth, those would fall to nine and 37.25 percent, seventh to 7.5 and 31.9. That's presuming there are no ties, which would skew the odds.

With the lottery's fifth seed, the

Draft options deep as Nets jostle with Raptors for lottery position

Nets would have almost no chance to actually pick there, their likeliest landing spot either seventh (26.7) or sixth (19.6).

At sixth, their likeliest draft slot would still be picking seventh (29.8), but this time followed by eighth (20.55). And if they "fall" to seventh, picking eighth would become by far their most probable outcome (34.1), followed by seventh (19.7) or even ninth (12.9), a tough pill for such a lost season.

Though picking in the 4-9 range won't net them Flagg or Rutgers' Dylan Harper (or likely even RU's Ace Bailey), there is talent to be had — more than in almost any season in recent memory.

"I'll put VJ Edgecombe and Tre Johnson in that mix. Those guys are great," longtime 76ers scout Michael VandeGarde told The Post. "[My fifth pick] would be Tre Johnson. You could change the order between two dudes, but I'd be ecstatic about them. ... Then there's a massive drop-off after those five."

Jonathan Givony of ESPN is regarded the gold standard of draftniks, and his updated "big board" has Edgecombe, Johnson, Illinois' Kasparas Jakucionis, Oklahoma's Jeremiah Fears, Duke's Khaman Maluach, teammate Kon Knueppel and Maryland's Derik Queen in the 4-10 slots.

Edgecombe, a 6-foot-5 freshman, went to Long Island Lutheran. He's got an explosive vertical leap and electrifying first step. He's a disruptive defender with questions about his offense. Edgecombe took over late in Baylor's NCAA tourney opening win over Mississippi State, and had 16 points and six boards vs. Duke. Johnson has improved his shooting as the season went on.

"Edgecombe is one of the freakiest athletes I've ever seen in my life, and he's put together a string [down the stretch] where he's just been playing his ass off," VandeGarde told The Post.

Johnson, who just turned 19, might be the most gifted pure scorer in the

draft. Like a taller (6-6) version of Cam Thomas, he both takes and makes tough shots. Texas went just 19-16 and lost in the first round, but Johnson had 23 points in that loss, going 4-for-7 from deep. He averaged 19.9 points on 39.7 percent from 3 and is even a competent passer, though a poor defender.

"Tre Johnson's been unbelievable. Every night he comes to play and every night he puts up numbers. He can score at all three levels," VandeGarde told The Post. "He's not a freak athlete, but he's got good length, good size. He's been an absolute stud everywhere he's been at every age. I really like that kid."

Jakucionis is a big 6-6 point guard who still needs to cut down his turnovers (six in each of his past four games) and become a more consistent shooter (24. percent in his past 10). His worst game came matched up against Harper, but just 18 with size and playmaking chops, he has scouts intrigued.

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Brooklyn eaten alive by Raptors

By BRIAN LEWIS

This was one for the tank brigade. In a game with all kinds of draft implications, the Nets got routed 116-86 by fellow lottery laggards Toronto before a crowd of 16,413 at Barclays Center on Wednesday night.

The Nets never led and trailed by as many as 32, dominated by ball pressure.

The Nets (23-50) kept pace with the tanking 76ers for fifth in the lottery odds, and moved three games "ahead" of the seventh-place Raptors.

RAPTORS	116	Boxscore
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Playing without Cam Thomas, Cam Johnson and Day'Ron Sharpe, Nic Claxton led the way with 22 points and 11 rebounds. But the Nets had little offense, shooting just 35.6 percent and 8-for-41 from deep.

The Nets were outscored a staggering 30-7 off turnovers.

"Even though we sit here at 23-50, we understand what we're trying to build, and what we're trying to work towards. And it ain't gonna happen overnight," Trenderon Watford said. "Obviously we don't want to be this team that gets smashed by 30. But we know what we've got to do. And we don't want to be this team. So we've just gotta lock in these next nine games and work towards what we're trying to do. We've been a team that formed an identity all season, so we can't let that slip just because we got nine games left."

"So we've just got to be who we've been this whole season and win or lose we can't go out like we went out [Wednesday]."

Despite a sore wrist, Noah Clowney stepped into the lineup in place of Johnson, and had just five points on 1-for-9 shooting, including 1-for-6 from deep.

"He was not comfortable. He was shooting with his wrist taped. He was getting frustrated and I'm asking him to not be frustrated," coach Jordi Fernández said.

Center Orlando Robinson had 23 points and 12 rebounds for the Raptors (26-47), who had six scorers in double figures.

Brooklyn allowed eight unanswered points to fall behind 26-12 with two minutes left in the first quarter.

Dariq Whitehead (nine points), recalled from G-League Long Island, hit a 3-pointer to pull Brooklyn within 32-26.

But the Nets fell behind 93-68 on a free throw by Scottie Barnes (15 points, seven rebounds and five assists). Toronto's lead reached 32 points in the fourth quarter.

Ben here before

Simmons in N.Y. for first time since end of his disastrous B'klyn tenure

By JARED SCHWARTZ

Los Angeles air and sunshine must be healing. Ben Simmons is finally at peace.

Now with the Clippers, he returned and played in New York — scoring two points, grabbing eight rebounds and handing out two assists in his team's 126-113 win over the Knicks at the Garden on Wednesday night — for the first time since he was bought out of his contract and waived by the Nets.

"Feels like home, honestly," Simmons told The Post about the Clippers. "I never really felt like New York was home for me. Being in LA, I feel like me as a person, it's my kind of scenery or environment to be in. I think I thrive in situations like that. It was a blessing and a great experience to be in New York and experience being in New York City, there's no city in the world like it. But I'm happy where I'm at, I love being in L.A."

Simmons, still just 28, agreed to have his contract bought out in February and subsequently signed with the Clippers to end his disastrous tenure in Brooklyn. The Nets acquired him in 2022 as part of the blockbuster that sent James Harden to the 76ers, but he was hardly available due to various injuries and struggles when he was on the court.

In two-plus seasons with the

Nets, Simmons played just 90 total games and averaged 6.5 points, 6.3 assists and 6.2 rebounds per game. The Nets paid him roughly \$124 million for that production.

After a few weeks away from the Nets and with the Clippers, how does he reflect on his tenure in Brooklyn?

"Just pushing through injuries, honestly," Simmons said. "The last three and a half years, that's been the reality. Every summer's been a rehab summer. I had surgeries the last two, three years. I was resilient, I stuck with it, stayed to the rehab and just pushed through every situation I had."

"I think you learn a lot about yourself and who you are as a person. It's a part of the game, it's a part of life, everyone goes through things. You just gotta push through it and get through it and stay focused. I think for me, it's just been a great experience in terms of just learning and just being professional."

Simmons is confident all the injuries are behind him.

"I haven't had a summer where I could really work on my game and just work on my body without having to rehab a specific thing," Simmons said. "I think for right now, it's just maintaining and pushing through and staying on top of everything until we get to the postseason. But this summer will be huge for me, knock on

wood, I'm going in healthy and I'll have the whole summer to work on my game and my body the whole time and get to where I actually want to be."

He's played 10 games with the Clippers, and entered Wednesday averaging 4.4 points, 3.6 assists and 4.1 rebounds in 17.9 minutes per game, though he did miss seven games with a balky knee.

Simmons also went from a lottery team in the Nets to a team in playoff contention in the Clippers, who entered Wednesday seventh in the West.

"For a long journey of my career, that's what I was used to — going to the playoffs and chasing a ring and trying to get that," Simmons said. "I think it's a great environment to be in, great group of guys, great coaches, great ownership. I think everyone cares and the important thing is we're trying to win a championship. That's all I care about — just winning. I don't care about stats or anything like that."

"I think [my role] is growing. Being out a few games with my knee, just building my minutes back up and doing what I can do on the floor, whether it's pushing the ball, pushing the tempo, playing point guard. Then defensively, being that guy that can get stops and contribute to the defensive side."

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SIM' IN CITY: Ben Simmons goes up for a shot as Mitchell Robinson defends on Wednesday night at the Garden.

What a Payne! Knicks lose another point guard

By JARED SCHWARTZ

The Knicks are running out of point guards.

Cam Payne, who was starting his third straight game with Jalen Brunson (ankle) and Miles McBride (groin) both sidelined, exited the 126-113 loss to the Clippers on Wednesday night at Madison Square Garden with a right ankle sprain. Payne had sparked a hot Knicks start offen-

sively, scoring 15 points before his injury.

It left rookie Tyler Kolek as the only healthy true point guard available. He played 19 minutes — tied for a season high — and recorded seven assists, though he did not score.

"You just gotta be ready to go when your number is called," Kolek said. "You don't wish for these circumstances, for guys to get hurt. You always wish

KNICKS NOTES

for opportunity, but you don't want to see it come at the expense of other guys. Just gotta be a professional and be ready to go no matter what my role is, whether I'm out there starting or out there cheering my guys from the bench."

Little-used Delon Wright also saw more action as a result of the injuries, playing 12 minutes — his most since the Knicks acquired him from the Bucks ahead of the trade deadline. He did not score and had three assists in the loss.

"Just next guy get in there," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "I thought Tyler played well in the first half. And then Delon, who's the next guy, get in

and get the job done. That's a big part of your approach, your team's approach. I think there's going to be adversity. You have to be mentally tough. You have to be able to get through that. You have to stay disciplined."

"I knew it would be a challenge. [The Clippers are] playing really well. They're fresh, two days of rest. I knew we would

have to be at our best. We're more than capable of getting that done."

► **Mitchell Robinson** returned Wednesday after missing Tuesday's win over the Mavericks, as he's not yet playing back-to-backs since returning from his foot injury.

He played just 13 minutes, though, and did not score. He had two rebounds and an assist.



REUNITED

Former Scarlet Knights Omoruyi, Mag square off tonight in Sweet 16

WHEN THE NCAA Tournament brackets were released, both players' eyes lit up.

Then came the cell phone calls and texts.

"See you soon," both Cliff Omoruyi and Mawot Mag said to each other of a potential Sweet 16 date at the Prudential Center for the two former Rutgers players who transferred out of Jersey before last season.

"We chatted and said, 'See you in the Sweet 16,'" Omoruyi said Wednesday. "I was excited when I saw the brackets, but I knew we had to win to get here."

There, of course, was work that needed to be done both by Omoruyi and Alabama and by Mag and BYU.

Alabama, a No. 2 seed in the East region, needed to get by Robert Morris and Saint Mary's to get to the Sweet 16. And BYU, a No. 6 seed, had to defeat VCU and Wisconsin to stamp its ticket to Newark.

So, on Thursday at 7:09 p.m. at Prudential Center, Omoruyi and Alabama will play Mag and BYU for a berth in the Elite Eight.

It'll be a fun moment for the two of them, who were roommates at Rutgers, but a bittersweet one for Rutgers.

The punch in the gut for Scarlet Knights fans will come from watching the two play on Thursday night while wondering what might have been for Rutgers this past season had Omoruyi and Mag stayed.

Without those two players, both rim-protecting defensive stalwarts, Rutgers struggled to a

15-17 season of massive underachievement considering it had two of the top recruits in the country in Ace Bailey and Dylan Harper.

Omoruyi and Mag played four years at Rutgers and made it into the NCAA Tournament twice, making it to the second round in 2020-21 and falling in the First Four in 2021-22. Rutgers went 16-12 the first year with them (2020-21),

then 18-14, 19-15 and finally 15-17 last season before they both left for greener pastures of NIL money in this new age of college sports where players go to the highest bidder, just like in pro sports.

Omoruyi, who averaged 10.4 points and 8.3 rebounds per game for Rutgers last season, was paid about \$200,000 in his fourth season there, according to NJ.com. That pales in comparison to SEC power Alabama, which is believed to be paying him close to \$1 million this season, according to NJ.com.

Omoruyi used some of that money to buy his mother a house in their native Nigeria.

"She's happy and she's happy for me," Omoruyi said. "I just want to win and better myself. I was able to use the NIL money to help my family."

Omoruyi averaged 7.9 points and 6.7 rebounds per game for Alabama this season.

Mag, who averages 5.8 points and 2.1 rebounds, got off

to a slow start with BYU, starting only one of the first 12 games, but has started the past 14 and become a defensive force for the Cougars.

It was his defensive stop of

Wisconsin star John Tonje with 13.5 seconds remaining and BYU leading 91-89, forcing Tonje into an airball, that clinched the win that sent them to the Sweet 16.

"He's brought a lot of toughness, a lot of experience and a great attitude," Mag's BYU teammate Dallen Hall told The Post on Wednesday. "He's a guy who didn't play [a lot] in the first 12 games of the season when he was expecting to play, but he never put his head down. He never spoke bad about the team or his teammates."

"He brought it every single day, worked his tail off. Now he's in the starting lineup, and he's been a huge piece of why we're winning games. That kind of character you can't find in a lot of places. A lot of guys would have quit in his spot, but he stayed the course."

"He's the ultimate teammate and the ultimate team player."

BYU's Richie Saunders, who's Mag's roommate on the road, recalled Mag staying after practice, taking extra shooting and giving the starters defensive looks even though he was barely getting any minutes.

"He hung in there and didn't get frustrated," Saunders told The Post. "But his work ethic and his drive did not change at all when he wasn't playing."

Mag recalled the early part of the season as "definitely tough," adding, "I just stayed the course, stayed in the gym and just waited for my turn. I didn't sulk. I tried to be a good teammate. When my name got called, I was ready for it."

Now the two former Scarlet Knights get to play each other for the biggest stakes of their lives.

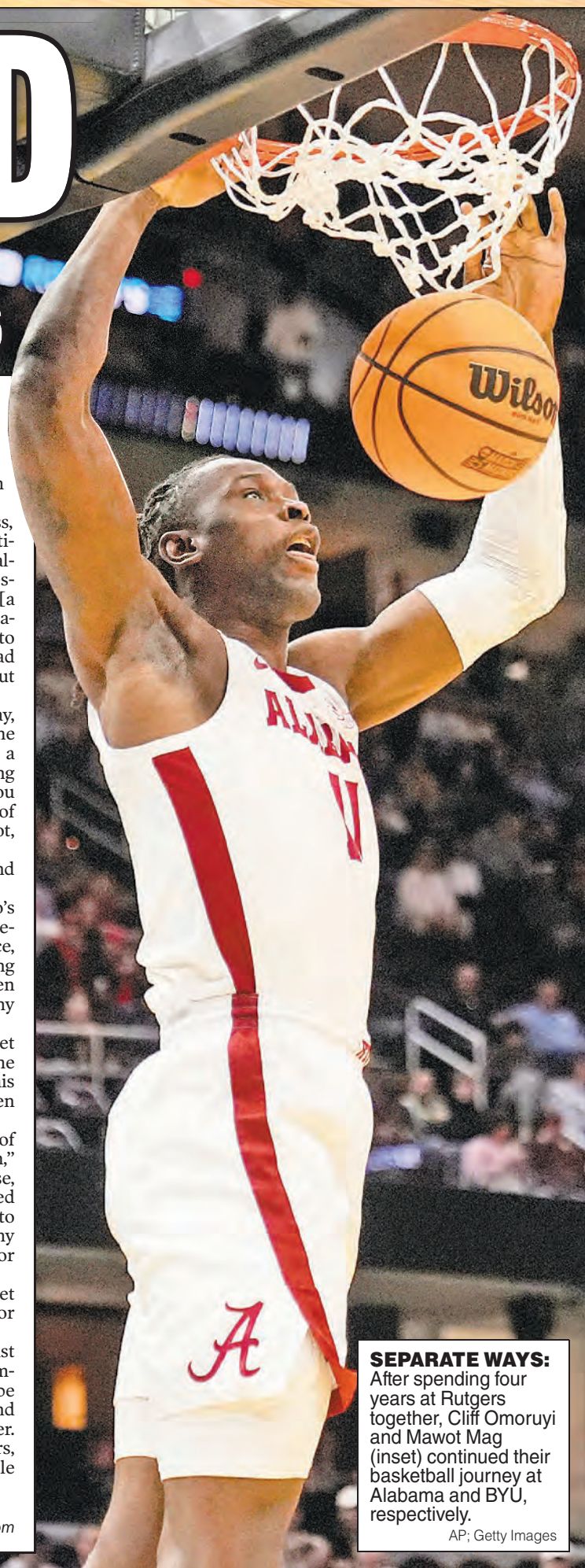
"I'm excited to play against him," Mag said. "Not many teammates get that opportunity to be with each other for four years and then play against each other. When we both came to Rutgers, we were young and we left a little grown up."

And wealthier.

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Mark Cannizzaro



SEPARATE WAYS:

After spending four years at Rutgers together, Cliff Omoruyi and Mawot Mag (inset) continued their basketball journey at Alabama and BYU, respectively.

AP; Getty Images



By HOWIE KUSSOY

BYU produced one of the most legendary plays in NCAA Tournament history, courtesy of Danny Ainge's coast-to-coast game-winning layup in the 1981 Sweet 16. The Cougars gave us Jimmer Fredette (JimmerMania!), one of college basketball's most popular stars of the century.

Soon, BYU basketball may be bigger than ever before.

The Cougars entered this season without an NCAA Tournament win in 13 years, with only a pair of Sweet 16 appearances in program history and without head coach Mark Pope, who left for Kentucky.

BYU was projected to finish ninth in the Big 12 preseason poll, introducing new head coach Kevin Young — who was 17 years removed from his last college job.

"Once I started really to think about it," Young said early this season, "I kind of relished the thought of being able to take a program ... and try to move the needle to a place it's never been to."

Young, 43, had been the highest-paid assistant coach in the NBA, spending four seasons with the Suns after three seasons with the 76ers, earning the endorsements of Kevin Durant, Devin Booker and Chris Paul. Young, who previously spent nine years coaching in the G-League, had interviewed for head coaching jobs with at least nine NBA teams. An offer was likely inevitable.

Instead, Young, a Utah native and member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, brought the pros to Provo.

Young signed Russian star Egor Demin, a potential lottery pick. He added Kanon Catchings, another next-level talent, to a program which hasn't had a player drafted since 2011. Young hired an NBA strength coach, nutritionist and director of analytics, along with multiple G-League coaches.

"I think when you can say, 'This is how we stop Damian Lillard' ... that gives them the right eyes," Young said.



Cougars are ready to pounce

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH: BYU coach Kevin Young — a longtime NBA assistant coach — has the Cougars program on the upswing in his first season, with the team in the Sweet 16 and a stacked recruiting class for next year. *Imagn Images*

"Style of play, shot diet, things like that, I think that's probably where you see a lot of what you do similar to some NBA operations. ... In terms of recruiting, I kind of planted a flag when I got the job and said I wanted to make BYU the best place in college basketball to help guys get to the league."

Young has built an offense that ranks among the most efficient and explosive in the nation, leading No. 6 BYU (26-9) to 11 wins in their past 12 games, entering Thursday's Sweet 16 matchup with No. 2 Alabama (27-8) at Prudential Center.

"It's been awesome because every play he runs works," said fifth-year sen-

ior Trevin Knell. "He's a super-competitive dude. He's also super humble. He's always asking us for different advice with the college aspect. ... We all have trust in him."

Young brought BYU back to prominence. The school's wealthy NIL backers could ensure the coach keeps the Cougars there, most recently landing a commitment from AJ Dybantsa, the top 2026 prospect in the 2026 NBA Draft, who commanded a reported \$7 million.

"Who wouldn't want to play for an NBA coach that has already been there?" Knell said. "Who really wouldn't want to be at BYU?"

Bay Area was 'Golden' gate for Fla. coach

By JANIE MCCAULEY

SAN FRANCISCO — Todd Golden knows he might need to leave NCAA Tournament tickets for a couple of VIPs, his special longtime mentors and former coaches at nearby Saint Mary's College.

That's just how it can work sometimes come March when you're the youngster and part of a coaching tree with extra-long limbs.

While Randy Bennett and Kyle Smith were both busy monitoring the transfer portal Wednesday for potential additions to their respective teams — Smith just completed his first season as

Stanford's head coach — Golden got to work at Chase Center preparing top-seeded Florida for a Sweet 16 matchup against Maryland.

It certainly felt like reunion day at Chase Center. As the Gators took the practice floor, Golden said a quick hello to Smith, who sat along one baseline catching up with Golden's father, Scott — and former NBA coach P.J. Carlesimo stopped to chat them up, too.

"This is why he is the way he is," proud dad Scott said, referring to all of those who influenced his son's cross-country journey from San Francisco to Gainesville. "It's been beyond surreal,

the year they've had. This year's been beyond belief. Hopefully it keeps on going."

Golden has provided his players with some glimpses into what his life looked like here. He served as an assistant to Smith at the University of San Francisco before replacing him as head coach in 2019 when Smith took over at Washington State — the step that ultimately led Smith back to the Bay Area and the Stanford job last spring.

The Gators visited iconic Crissy Field along San Francisco's waterfront Wednesday morning to see the Golden Gate Bridge in all its splendor.

After practicing in Golden's old gym at USF in what he called "a full-circle moment," they managed to get their large group into Golden's favorite Original Joe's in the North Beach neighborhood for dinner Tuesday night. The coach had prime rib because "being here in San Francisco you can't go wrong."

The Gators (32-4) hope to make it an extended stay by getting through No. 4 seed Maryland (27-8) on Thursday. Florida, which ended UConn's bid for a third straight NCAA championship in the second round, is seeking its first Final Four berth since 2014. — AP

In hog heaven! Go with Calipari, surging Arkansas

YOU disappoint me, Cal. Kimmel and Colbert were sitting right there.

Arkansas (+5.5) over Texas Tech: The Red Raiders have the higher seed. The Razorbacks have more talent, momentum and belief. The only double-digit seed left in the field can't be viewed that way, far removed from months of underachieving, awkwardness and a shorthanded rotation. John Calipari is back in the Sweet 16 for the 16th time, facing off with a coach (Grant McCasland) with three career NCAA Tournament wins. With Boogie Fland back, and NBA-level size and athleticism, the Hogs have no ceiling. A third straight outright upset could be in the cards.

Maryland (+6.5) over Florida: The top seed barely survived its second-round matchup with UConn, allowing 14 offensive rebounds and 32 points in the paint, while committing 12 turnovers and missing 12 free throws. The Gators could face similar problems against the Terps, who have the size to cause problems inside and force turnovers at a higher rate than all but one team left in the tournament. Maryland made headlines with Derik Queen's buzzer-beater, but it very quietly makes its biggest statements on defense, ranking sixth nationally in efficiency. The Terps, who led the Big Ten in scoring margin, have only suffered two losses since Feb. 7, both coming on buzzer-beaters against Sweet 16 teams (Michigan State, Michigan). None of their eight losses this season has come by more than six points. The Terps' overreliance on their starters may be their downfall, but the Gators may not be able to take advantage of the weak bench, ranking 185th in the nation at drawing fouls.

Duke (-9.5) over Arizona: Ride the Blue Devils



HOWIE HOOPS
Throughout March Madness, The Post's Howie Kussoy will provide his plays of the day.

(23-12 against the spread as a favorite) until they give you reason not to. In a November matchup between the teams, Duke shot under 43 percent from the field, committed 14 turnovers and had only two players score in double figures — and won by 14, holding the Big 12's top-scoring offense to 55 points. Yes, Duke has Cooper Flagg, but also a pair of other projected lottery picks (Kon Knueppel, Khaman Maluach), who have Duke on pace to capture its first national championship in a decade.

Byu (+5.5) over Alabama: Two of the best offenses in the nation will welcome a shootout. But the Cougars come in hotter, having won 11 of their past 12 games — the Tide lost five of nine entering the NCAA Tournament — owning the nation's top-rated offense in the past month. BYU is built for a 40-minute sprint, running an 11-man rotation, which shoots better than 37 percent from 3, led by leading-scorer/sharpshooter Richie Saunders. The Cougars' top pro prospect, Egor Demin, will benefit from the fast-paced game most of all. In crawls against the elite defenses, the Russian freshman struggled with pressure. In a shootout against Wisconsin in the second round, Demin was incredibly efficient, producing 11 points, eight assists and eight rebounds, with one turnover. Alabama's defense won't offer much resistance.

This season: 20-21
2011-24 record: 378-340-12

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RARE AIR

Despite Bird comparisons, Flagg stays focused on his own game

THE mere mention of his name makes the hearts of basketball junkies and old-timers and NBA general managers flutter.

Legendary Celtics GM Red Auerbach had the foresight to draft Larry Bird in 1978 even though he knew he would have to wait a year to sign him, and there isn't any doubt that he would have waited a year for Cooper Flagg.

By no means is this saying that Cooper Flagg is The Next Larry Bird.

There is no Next Larry Bird, even if Jim Boeheim has told us: "To me he's almost Bird-like."

Never mind that Cooper Flagg growing up watched videos of Bird, and is also 6-foot-9 and The Great White Hype.

Cooper Flagg is The First Cooper Flagg, and that's all he aspires to be.

Says Cooper Flagg: Thanks for the compliments, but I'm Cooper Flagg.

"I don't really have too much to say on how I compare to him or not," Flagg said on Wednesday before No. 1 Duke's East Regional showdown Thursday night against No. 4 Arizona at Prudential Center in Newark. "I don't really compare myself to anybody."

"I just try to be my own player."

And that's all he should keep trying to be. Because it's plenty good enough.

Cooper Flagg: Freshman phenom who plays for Big, Bad Duke. The Maine Event. Only months from realizing his NBA dream, confirmed by Duke coach Jon Scheyer in case there was a shred of doubt, and the surefire first overall pick.

"Cooper is about to move on with something incredibly special with the next step he's going to go after this," Scheyer said.

Flagg had mentioned weeks ago that he just might want to remain in Durham, but no one should have taken him seriously.

"I think he has a chance to be one of the greats to ever play the game," Fox and NBC Sports broadcaster John Fanta told The Post. "When talking with evaluators and scouts, they say at worst, he's a No. 2 on a top-tier NBA team. At best, he's a top five player in the league for 15 years."

"I think he's got a mix of Kevin Durant ... some prime Tracy McGrady, all rolled into one monster of a player. I called him games at Peach Jam when he was in high school. And when I sat

down, you know you are surrounded by greatness when someone walks in the room without touching a basketball and there is an aura about them. He carries that vibe. The whole neighborhood down in Augusta for Peach Jam was in the gym a good hour before he even walked in, waiting for him — the same year that LeBron [James] was coaching his son. Everybody was there for Cooper Flagg."

His teammates love Cooper Flagg. Scheyer loves Cooper Flagg. Just a typical selfless, fun-loving 18-year-old who hasn't let success spoil him.

"The maturity is beyond his years," Fanta said. "You could tell that all the values that he learned in small-town [Newport] Maine translate to everything about him. But make no mistake about it — he's a killer."

Not Bird. Almost Bird-like.

"I think he does have some Bird in him," Fanta said. "He's got this throwback feel to him where the game goes to the style that he plays. He's like a maestro in the way that he approaches a game and Bird was like that. Bird always dictated the terms of a game. That's the same thing with this kid. I think Larry was a better shotmaker than Cooper is currently. I want to continue to see Cooper's shot-making [48.8 percent] climb there. But the ability to make shots off the dribble, find moves in a game that I think he finds sometimes on the fly in a game. Larry Bird was a winner. Cooper Flagg's the epitome of a winner at his age."

"This kid never stops competing. He's not out to just win the game. He's out to bury you every possession."

Whether Flagg (18.7 ppg, 7.5 rebounds, 4.2 assists, 1.3 blocks, 1.4 steals) has the ball — or they have the ball.

"His length, and then his instincts, he closes that window quick when somebody does have an opportunity," Scheyer said. "I think it's let us to really protect our rim well, but it also creates some turnovers and steals to lead to easy opportunities which is important for our team. We have a bunch of guys that are versatile. Nobody more than him. The thing he's done great this year though is guard the ball. So he's a guy that can guard 1 through 5."

He is The Next Cooper Flagg.
steve.serby@nypost.com



HIGH PRAISE: Duke star Cooper Flagg, expected to be the No. 1 pick in the 2025 NBA Draft, has drawn comparisons to Hall of Fame Celtics star Larry Bird (inset). "I don't really compare myself to anybody," Flagg said. "I just try to be my own player."

Getty Images; AP; Imagn Images



REMEMBER ME? Caleb Love beat Duke as a member of North Carolina in the Final Four three years ago. Now at Arizona, he'll hope to do it again in the Sweet 16 on Thursday.

AP

By HOWIE KUSSOY

Pervis Ellison still hits Duke fans hard, nearly four decades after keeping Coach K from his first title. Scotty Thurman took the knife in the 1994 national championship game. Richard Hamilton relegated the '99 Blue Devils team to one of the greatest to never win it all.

Caleb Love handed Duke perhaps its most painful loss of all. And he could soon add another to the list.

In Thursday's Sweet 16 matchup in Newark, the North Carolina guard turned Arizona star will face Duke for the 10th time in his career. It will be Love's first matchup against Duke in the NCAA Tournament since giving the Tar Heels their biggest win of college basketball's biggest rivalry, ending Mike Krzyzewski's career at the 2022 Final Four.

After putting up 29 points and nine rebounds in a second-round win against Oregon, Love was asked about the upcoming battle between No. 4 Arizona (24-12) and No. 1 Duke (33-3). Love gathered his thoughts, building anticipation through silence. He smiled knowingly, biting his tongue and betraying the feelings so clearly written across his face.

Love hurts: Duke faces off with former Tar Heels rival

"I didn't want to give them no fuel or bulletin board material," Love said Wednesday. "I just wanted to focus on what this group's got to do and not give them anything that they can feed off of."

He didn't need to say a word to attract the attention of the opponent or the ire of its fan base.

Love was a freshman when he scored 25 points in a win during his first visit to Cameron Indoor Stadium. He went for 22-5-5 in Coach K's final game on Duke's campus.

Then, Love scored 28 points to lead the eighth-seeded Tar Heels to an upset of the top-seeded Blue Devils in the rivals' only Final Four matchup. Love, who hit three free throws in the game's final seconds, made the most devastating shot of the 265 games played in the series, hitting a 3-pointer to put North Carolina up by four with 25 seconds remaining, preventing Krzyzewski from going out on top like John Wooden.

"I just think that me not being afraid of the moment and me trying to impose my will is kind of like St. Louis swagger to the game," Love said. "I'm not afraid of anything, anybody. I think just me channeling that, my inner St. Louis in me."

Love, who transferred to Arizona after three seasons in Chapel Hill, picked up his fifth win against Duke last season, leading the Wildcats to a win at Cameron after hitting four clutch free throws and delivering the game-winning assist.

Last season, he was named Pac-12 Player of the Year. This season, he led the Wildcats in scoring (16.8 points), adding 4.4 rebounds, 3.5 assists and 1.2 steals, while earning First Team All-Big 12 honors.

"He can hit shots at any time," Duke coach Jon Scheyer said. "He's somebody that's not afraid. He's a really good player, so that challenge is there for our guys ... I think

his game has grown. He's the same player in terms of how he scores and all that. He's just better at everything."

He still believes that every shot will go in, that no shot is a bad shot. It has allowed him to devastate Duke on multiple occasions. It also cost North Carolina a championship, when Love shot 5 of 24 from the field in the title game against Kansas. It accelerated Arizona's exit from last year's NCAA Tournament, when Love shot 5 of 18 in the Sweet 16 loss to Clemson.

It helped Duke secure a 69-55 win at Arizona on Nov. 22, when Love was held to eight points, hitting 3-of-13 shots.

"Listen, Caleb is really a dynamic player," Arizona coach Tommy Lloyd said. "I'm comfortable when the ball is in his hands. Not that I expect perfection, but I know he has the ability to make things happen."

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STORM OUT OF THE BLOCKS

Johnnies land Arizona St. shooter as Pitino gets off to quick start remaking roster

By ZACH BRAZILLER

Rick Pitino is off to a fast start as he looks to reload following St. John's best season in 25 years.

Four days after their season ended in the second round of the NCAA Tournament, the Johnnies moved onto the offseason with a bang.

The Red Storm landed a high-ceiling wing they believe will help them immediately next year.

Joson Sanon, a former top 25 prospect coming out of Vermont Academy, told The Post he has committed to play for St. John's next season.

"It wasn't too hard of a decision to make," he said in a phone interview. "The thing that stands out is hard work. [Pitino] actually pushes you to work hard. I want to show him I'm the hardest-working player he's ever coached."

Sanon later added: "I just feel like it's a great spot for me. They [need shooting help] and I feel like I'm a good shooter, and a good scorer in general."

There was a relationship in place. St. John's did recruit Sanon last year, bringing him in on an un-

official visit for its win over Georgetown at the Garden last March.

This commitment came together quickly. On Tuesday night, Sanon had a Zoom call with the entire St. John's staff and made his decision. There was no interest in prolonging the process.

"In the basketball world it is very captivating what Coach Pitino has built in a short amount of time with St. John's — with all the moving parts in the transfer portal we decided to waste no time in solidifying a spot for Joson on a platform in New York City playing for one of the most legendary coaches of all time," his agent, Derek Malloy of Lift Sports Management, said.

St. John's sees Sanon as a starter on next year's team, and someone who can play multiple positions. In his lone year of college at Arizona State, the 6-foot-5 freshman showed flashes of immense potential.

He averaged 11.9 points and 3.4 rebounds across 29.3 minutes in 27 games. Most notably, the Fall River, Mass., native shot 36.9 percent from 3-point range on 4.5 attempts per game, a point of em-

phasis for Pitino and Co. in the coming weeks.

Sanon started and finished well. In between, he battled an ankle injury. Early in the season, Arizona State coach Bobby Hurley called him "the best shooter" he's ever coached.

"He's a breakdown guard," a Division I coach familiar with Sanon said. "He's similar to Deivon Smith as far as getting downhill, getting to his shot, being able to play when you have a few seconds left on the shot clock."

Sanon grew up close to Providence, and there was some thought the Friars could be in the mix. That didn't transpire. A game at Amica Mutual Pavilion against his new Big East rival is already something that he is excited about.

"That's what I'm looking forward to, too," Sanon said. "I don't live too far from Providence. I know they're going to be screaming my name. That sounds pretty fun."

Sanon is the first piece of what could be many additions. Kadary Richmond, Deivon Smith and Aaron Scott are out of eligibility and it is uncertain if Big East

Player of the Year and leading scorer RJ Luis Jr. will be back. He is planning to test the NBA Draft waters before opting to use his final year of eligibility. St. John's will look to build around Zuby Ejiofor, who is expected to return.

The Red Storm are already eyeing an impact forward to play next to the junior star. Providence's Bryce Hopkins is visiting this weekend, according to a source.

Hopkins only appeared in three games this past season after tearing his ACL the previous year. When healthy, the 6-foot-7 Hopkins is an impact player.

St. John's believes Sanon can be one as well. He's a tantalizing prospect who thinks joining Pitino will help him reach his potential.

"Just the opportunity to play for him made a lot of sense," Sanon said. "He just said he's not going to bulls—t me, he's going to push me through some of the stuff I don't do very well. He's going to push me to work hard."

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Joson Sanon

Rodón adds sinker to arsenal, aims to be less predictable

By GREG JOYCE

Carlos Rodón spent most of March pitching on back fields before finally returning for his Grapefruit League send-off last Friday.

When he did, the Yankees Opening Day starter unveiled a little pet project that may or may not be part of his game this season: a sinker.

Rodón only threw four in his spring finale against the Tigers, according to Statcast, but it could be another pitch that helps get batters off his bread-and-butter pitches.

"Just another wrinkle to his arsenal — not being as predictable with just the four-seam and slider," pitching coach Matt Blake said this

week. "Obviously added the changeup and the curveball last year. Looking at adding a one-seam to his mix and see where it goes."

Clarke Schmidt also tweaked his sinker this offseason to become a one-seam fastball, but the unveiling of his in real games won't come until April as he begins the season on the injured list to build up his pitch count.

Rodón, meanwhile, will get the first crack at the Brewers on Thursday at Yankee Stadium following a spring in which his changeup looked like more of a consistent weapon than it was last season.

"More confident in it, throwing it

YANKEES NOTES

in more situations," Blake said. "Just not letting people lean on the fastball as much, trying to avoid slug with him."

Last season, opponents hit .262 with a .514 slugging percentage off Rodón's four-seam fastball — less than ideal for a pitch he still threw 49.3 percent of the time. But that usage was down from where it was during a rocky first year in pinstripes (60.3 percent) as he began to expand his arsenal.

"I felt like I settled in last year," Rodón said. "Made every start. Performance-wise, I wish I could have

been a little better, especially in the postseason. But I feel comfortable where I'm at and I'm just going to go out there and make my starts."

➤ A few of the newest Yankees were looking forward to their first Opening Day in The Bronx.

"I think Thursday is going to be electric," **Cody Bellinger** said. "For myself, every Opening Day, I always get those jitters and goose bumps and nerves. It's probably going to be a whole other level in The Bronx. So, excited to be part of it."

Max Fried, who will start Game 2 on Saturday, was planning on soaking in the environment on Thursday.

"It'll be fun to be able to sit there and enjoy it like everyone else," Fried said.

➤ The Yankees will hold a moment of silence pregame Thursday for **Miller Gardner**, the 14-year-old son of **Brett Gardner** who passed away last week on a family vacation.

Andy Pettitte will throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

➤ Barring a late external move, Gomez and **Brent Headrick** appear to have won the last two spots in the bullpen after the Yankees optioned **Yerry De Los Santos** to Triple-A on Wednesday.



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PLAYING OFF

DOWN BUT NOT OUT: Igor Shesterkin is squashed by Edmonton's Viktor Arvidsson in a recent game at the Garden. Shesterkin is the rare Blueshirts player who has been performing well lately. Outside of the goalie, the team looks slow and disinterested — not at all like a club trying to fight its way into the playoffs — writes Larry Brooks.

Getty Images



LOS ANGELES — Regarding the Rangers, who have just 10 games to play, which means they still have 10 games to play.

1. Because that's what it looks like on the ice, correct, that these final weeks have just become a chore. There is no evidence whatsoever that this disappointing group is engaged in a playoff pursuit.



Larry Brooks

On the contrary, if the Rangers are still in this despite the worst of intentions, it is only because they are being dragged into the fight, even literally, by Igor Shesterkin.

The starts have been horrific in three of the past four games, starting with the Flames at the Garden on March 18. Urgency has been absent.

After getting one shot in the first period against the Canucks on Saturday at the 5:16 mark (from Matt Rempe), the Rangers got shots from the outside from Will Borgen at 2:24 and from Brennan

Rangers don't look like team making a postseason push

Othmann at 3:46 for the grand total of two against the Kings in Tuesday's opening period.

The Rangers — off on Wednesday before Thursday's practice in advance of their matchup against the Ducks and Jacob Trouba on Friday — look like a veteran group that knows in its bones that it is not capable of duplicating last year's run or the run from three years ago, so why bother?

The observation may be an insult to their pride and even professionalism, but that's what it looks like. It looks like they're tired of underachieving, tired of attempting to explain it, tired of themselves, pretty much tired of the whole thing.

2. The Rangers, I have been saying for years, think that they are more talented than they really are. The Rangers, I have been saying for years, think they are faster than they really are.

Their self-image is warped. The Rangers are, at best, a middle-of-

the-road skill team. The Rangers are, at best, a middle-of-the-road speed team.

There was the time when, say, Mats Zuccarello and Derick Brassard would drive you crazy with their east-west mentality, but at least they could get it done. This group doesn't have them, and this group doesn't have that.

The Rangers need to accept the fact they are going to need to play meat-and-potatoes hockey in order to succeed. I'm not talking about these final 10 games. I am not expecting a conversion of biblical proportions.

I am talking about the part of the group that will be here next season, and I am talking about the hierarchy and general manager Chris Drury, who has the obligation to bring blue-collar workers back into the mix.



forecheck. This was a point of emphasis.

I think he might have been confused.

Seriously, I've never seen a team put so little pressure on opposing defensemen. Must be a day at the beach.

At the other end, the same mistakes game after game.

4. I've had my quibbles with Shesterkin here and there, allowing a few too many game-deciding marginal goals.

And those critical questionable ones — about a handful — kind of dilute the overwhelming analytics in his favor. What's a bad one worth in contrast to a half-dozen high-danger saves?

But since 4 Nations, in which he has started 15 of the club's 17 games, Shesterkin is the singular reason the Rangers are not sleeping with the Flyers, I mean fishes.

His mentality has been unwavering.

And extremely impressive.

5. There is not a chance in the world Carson Soucy will partner with Adam Fox next season, so maybe it would make some sense for Laviolette to give Braden Schneider a look on the left with No. 23.

Schneider has stagnated this season. If there have been any "Baby Troubs" hits, I've missed them. He hasn't picked up a fighting major since the 2022-23 playoffs. His play has been erratic.

But Schneider was outstanding opening the season on his off-left side with Trouba for the first seven games. He seemed comfortable. It seemed like he would be an option to succeed Ryan Lindgren.

The Rangers are going to need a partner for Fox. Wouldn't it be nice to know if the 23-year-old could fill that spot instead of having to go out and sign an overpriced veteran free agent for up to \$8 million per?

That's what I'd sure do.

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The stakes on Wednesday night were aptly laid out by Hudson Fasching after the Islanders finished their morning skate.

"For a while, we've been telling ourselves, 'Hey, we're not out of this, we're not out of this,'" Fasching said. "Now it's like, all right, we're officially in this now."

Yes they are and Wednesday was when the Islanders could have finally laid down a long-awaited symbolic marker in this playoff race, with the team knowing ahead of time that a win would — at least temporarily — put them above the Canadiens for the last wild-card spot in the East.

CANUCKS 5
ISLANDERS 2 **Summary**
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The Islanders are very much in this. But the aftermath of Wednesday's game, a 5-2 loss to the Canucks, felt like so many other times this year when they looked down and out of it.

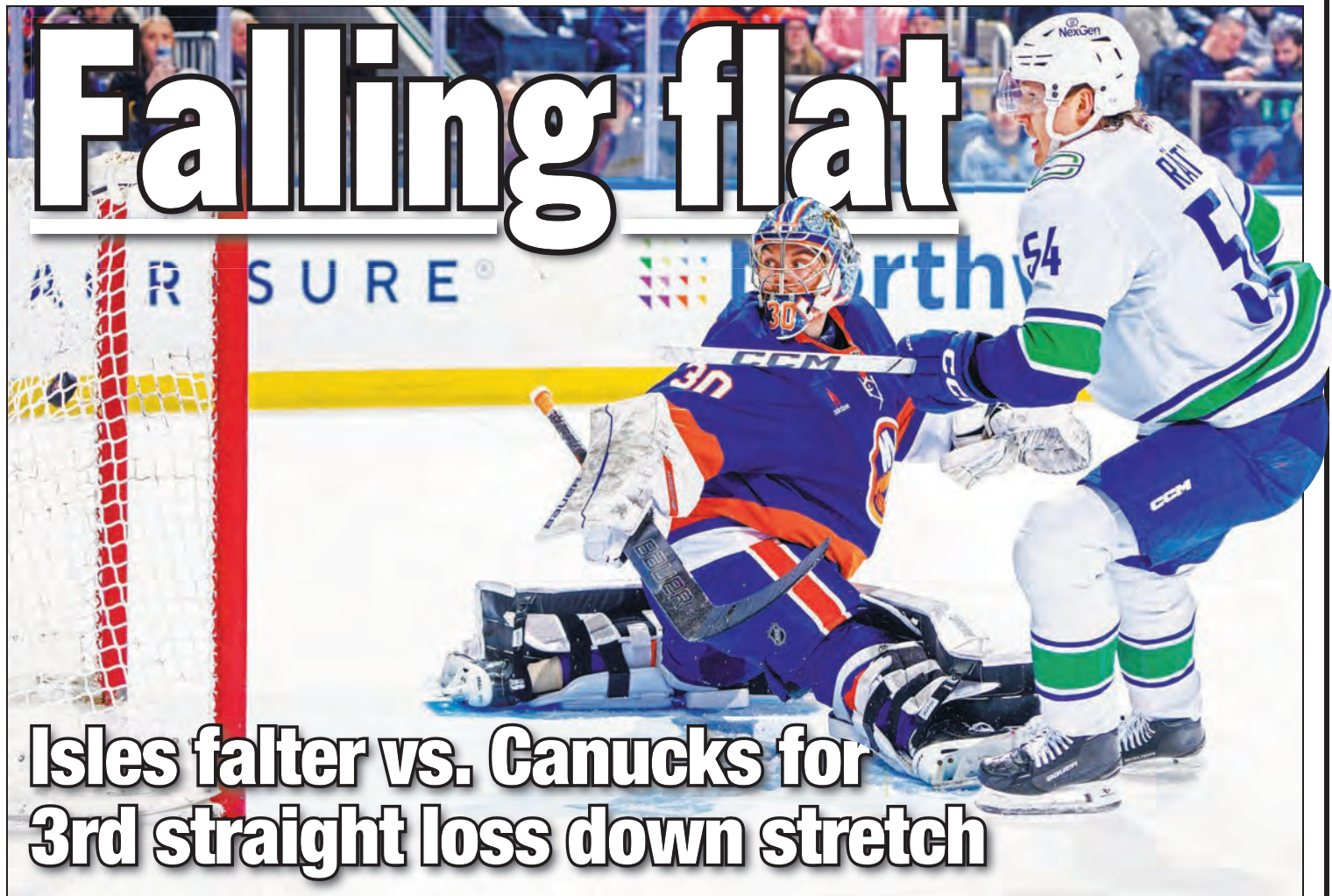
"We can play better," Max Tsyplovsky said. "Today's not our day."

A homestand that started with triumphant vibes last Thursday ended on a three-game losing streak in three games the Islanders led, Ilya Sorokin getting pulled after allowing four goals on 19 shots and the Islanders' power play looking as terrible as it has all season.

So not only were the Islanders missing the mental boost that would have come with seeing themselves in a playoff spot for the first time since Nov. 19. They are staring down the barrel of a tough weekend back-to-back in Tampa and Carolina needing to put their momentum back together again.

Comparatively speaking, it is of some help that every other team in the chase is going through it right now. The Islanders are not being judged against the almighty, they are being judged against Montreal, the Rangers, Columbus and Detroit.

At an earlier point in the season, Wednesday's loss would have been easily hand-waved. The Islanders played well for long stretches in the first two periods of this game, they ran into a red-hot Thatcher Demko in Vancouver's net and couldn't re-



Falling flat

Isles falter vs. Canucks for 3rd straight loss down stretch

LOOK OUT! Ilya Sorokin, who was pulled from the game after giving up four goals on 19 shots, watches as Aatu Raty scores during the second period of the Islanders' 5-2 loss to the Canucks on Wednesday.

Getty Images

cover momentum after the Canucks got things rolling.

Indeed, that was more or less the message from coach Patrick Roy afterward.

"We had our chances and we didn't bear down and they did," Roy said. "I feel like that was the difference after the second period and the third was the same thing. ... Thought it was a hard-fought game where there wasn't much for either team."

That's not wrong, only this is Game 71 of the season, and no one cares if you ran into a hot goalie. More than that, as well as Demko played, the Islanders can look to

themselves for failing to find the right play on a number of odd-man rushes in this one, and for losing hold of the game after taking a 2-1 lead in the second.

In his first game at UBS since being included in the Jan. 2023 deal for Bo Horvat, Aatu Raty got things moving for Vancouver by tipping Marcus Pettersson's shot past Ilya Sorokin to tie the game at two at 13:59 of the second.

An Islanders lapse in concentration with 23 seconds to go in the period allowed Derek Forbort a look off the rush, on which the defenseman promptly put the Ca-

nucks up 3-2 going into the third.

That was one Sorokin should have stopped. So was Teddy Blueger's look from the left circle just 1:03 into the third — and after it went in to extend Vancouver's lead to 4-2, Roy gave his goalie the hook. By then, the urgency had all but left the Islanders.

"I didn't change him because he had a bad game. I changed him because sometimes it's good to change the momentum of the game," Roy said. "I was hoping it would create a spark."

"Maybe I played not perfect, but [the last two goals were] good shots," Sorokin told The Post. "I try

to do what I do. But sometimes it doesn't work."

There were chances to get back into this game, namely two power plays in the third period. But the Islanders' power play is going through a dreadful spell at the moment, even by the standards of the league's 32nd-ranked group at five-on-four, and could barely cobble together zone entries — let alone start a comeback.

Shortly after the Islanders' last unsuccessful power play, Kiefer Sherwood's empty-netter sealed the result at 5-2. Opportunity lost. To Florida the Islanders go.

Fasching still looking for his first goal of the season

By ETHAN SEARS

ISLES NOTES

Hudson Fasching can only laugh about it.

After all, his lack of goal scoring this season is not exactly for lack of chances. Individually, Natural Stat Trick has credited him with six high-danger scoring chances in his past two games alone. Since being put on a line with Casey Cizikas and Pierre Engvall, the trio has been one of the Islanders' most productive.

And still, going into his 32nd

game of the season on Wednesday night against the Canucks, Fasching was one of just three forwards in the NHL with over 30 games played this season and zero goals.

"At some point, too, you have to just let go of it and laugh at yourself a little bit. It's comical, almost, how many chances I've had and been unable to get them to go," said Fasching, who was back in for Wednesday's 5-2

loss to Vancouver after missing Monday's loss to the Blue Jackets with illness. "I just gotta try to not take it as seriously as I have been. Definitely was gripping the stick too tight there for a while. So I think just relaxing and trying to be as calm around the net as I can is my solution."

As a bottom six player who has been in and out of the lineup all year, no one is expecting Fasching to put up a haul of points. The 19 he scored in 2022-23, when he joined the Islanders as a

call-up midyear, were a career high in the NHL, and the only time he's scored more than five goals.

Fasching himself knows that better than anyone. He also knows that zero is a lot different than even three or four, from a mental standpoint if nothing else.

"I mean, it sucks. Let's call a spade a spade here," Fasching said. "It's not fun. To go this far into the year and not have a goal as a forward is definitely challenging."

"But at the end of the day, I

feel like I've played well throughout the rest of my game. I have to find solace with that a little bit. Have to relax and honestly, not think about it as much as probably the best solution, which is easier said than done at times. Just relax when I get a scoring chance and not be trying to grip my stick too tight and just enjoy every opportunity."

► **Jean-Gabriel Pageau** missed some of the third period after taking a puck to the face, but returned to

finish the game.

► Coach **Patrick Roy** said that as far as he knew, there was no communication between the NHL and the Islanders regarding the goalie interference call at the end of regulation on Monday night.

► **Adam Boqvist** returned to being a healthy scratch after Fasching was back in the lineup after recovering from the illness that kept him out on Monday.

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RUSS READY TO

By PAUL SCHWARTZ

Vet QB 'excited' to kick off Giants tenure

If this is indeed the case, Russell Wilson is in the right place.

"Sometimes I love the underdog mentality," the new Giants quarterback said Wednesday, not long after signing. "That's kind of been my approach every day of my life. I don't know, maybe being 5-[foot]-11, I don't know what it is, and people telling you [that] you can't do something, I love challenges. I love adversity. I love all that stuff."

Well then, Wilson is going to love getting hooked up with the Giants. He will be an underdog. There will be no shortage of people telling him what he cannot do. There will be challenges and there will be adversity.

There will be all that stuff. He is now the bandleader and a face of a franchise that is coming off a brutal 3-14 season and seemingly locked in quarterback purgatory, forced to bring in a 36-year-old who is on the downside of what had been an exceptional career.

The Giants signed Wilson to a one-year deal worth a guaranteed \$10.5 million, with incentives built in that top out at \$21 million. He now leads an eclectic quarterback room — with newly signed Jameis Winston (two years, \$8 million) and returning Tommy DeVito on the roster, and most likely a rookie selected at some point in next month's draft.

Last year, Wilson considered signing with the Giants, but they told him Daniel Jones was the starter. A year later, Jones is gone and Wilson moves in.

"I expect to be the starter and come in here and be ready to rock and roll every day," he said. "To be able to lead, I think this team's really looking for someone to lead them in every way."

Wilson was the third choice. The Giants tried to get Matthew Stafford in a trade with the Rams, then tried to lure Jets castoff and future first-ballot Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers. Eventually, the Giants got tired of waiting for Rodgers to make up his mind.

"Aaron Rodgers is a tremendous football player. He's done some amazing things in this league," Wilson said. "I've been fortunate to be able to do some great things, too. Really, what I'm focused on is right now and what we can do here."

"Also, too, along the way is finding a place that will continue to believe in you."

The Steelers stopped believing in Wilson after one season.

Wilson has to prove the serious downturn his career has taken — a



A MAN ABOUT TOWN: New Giants quarterback Russell Wilson, after being introduced earlier Wednesday on a Zoom call (below), visited the Garden with wife Ciara to watch the Knicks host the Clippers.

Jason Szenes; X/@SNYGiants



Incentives: Playoffs and snaps

Russell Wilson's one-year Giants contract comes with \$10.5 million in guaranteed money and the chance to earn \$10 million more in incentives.

On Tuesday, those incentives became clearer and are based on two things — winning and playing time.

NFL Network's Ian Rapoport reported that \$7.5 million of the incentives are based on playing time, performance and playoffs.

The other \$3 million is contingent on wins and him playing more than half the offensive snaps.

As it stands, Wilson, 36, is Big Blue's new starting quarterback after agreeing to the one-year deal on Tuesday.

The Giants signed Jameis Winston earlier this month — presumably to be the backup — and re-signed Tommy DeVito, who was an exclusive rights free agent. — Andrew Battifarano

plummet, really — is not a portent of things to come. So much of the Wilson File feels as if it was unearthed from a bygone era, an earlier time when he ruled the earth before this current period, when he is trying to stave off extinction. All those accolades and exploits seem so long ago. The Giants are his fourth team in the past five years. His record as a starter since 2021 is 23-32.

Wilson sidestepped a question

about the decline in his game as adroitly as he used to evade would-be tacklers.

"You never feel like you do enough unless you win it all," he said. "That's how I've always felt. I've had some amazing years and different things along the way, but anytime you don't win it all as a competitor, as a warrior, you want to be able to say you won it all and did it that year."

There is certainly a chance the

Giants use the No. 3 pick in the draft on a quarterback — Shedeur Sanders is the likely choice, if he is on the board, with Cam Ward expected to go No. 1 to the Titans. Wilson does not sound as if mentorship is high on his list.

"If we draft a quarterback we'll make sure that he does everything he can to be ready to go and be prepared for this mentality," Wilson said. "But for me, it's about the process of winning. I'm focused on

winning and what I can do as the quarterback of the New York Giants to help us win."

Clearly, Wilson did his homework. He rattled off name after name of Giants players. He was teammates in Denver with Giants tight ends Chris Manhertz and Greg Dulcich. He called Malik Nabers, his new top target, "this freak of an athlete." Wilson called his new head coach, Brian Daboll, "one of the most competitive guys" and mentioned Daboll's five Super Bowl rings from his time with the Patriots and one national championship at Alabama.

"He's been around greatness, he knows what it looks like, he knows what it sounds like," Wilson said. "This guy's been a Coach of the Year, it wasn't that long ago."

Wilson won the 2014 Super Bowl at MetLife Stadium with the Seahawks, and seeing that building last week when he visited and again on Wednesday stirred something in him.

"It makes you feel some type of way," Wilson said. "It makes you get excited about the possibilities of what this team can do."

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COOK

Wilson: WR Nabers ‘fired up’ to make connection

By PAUL SCHWARTZ

They have already spoken. Soon enough, the Giants need their star wide receiver, Malik Nabers, and their new quarterback, Russell Wilson, to turn their words into action and exploits.

After a sensational rookie season spent getting the ball thrown to him by Daniel Jones, Drew Lock and Tommy DeVito, perhaps Nabers will be able to reach an even higher level working with Wilson and his penchant for connecting deep down the field with his targets.

Nabers in his NFL debut season had 109 receptions for 1,204 yards and seven touchdowns, at times admittedly frustrated when the ball did not come his way, and the losses (14 of them) piled up. Now Nabers has a new guy tasked with getting the ball to him.

“He’s an explosive athlete,” Wilson said Wednesday. “Just his ability to make plays. I love Malik, man. Just watching him, his personality on the field, his demeanor. I watched this one clip — I was watching a bunch of plays of him — and he caught this one catch against the Commanders on a shallow cross on a third down and he cut back inside, got another extra 20 yards. Got hit pretty good, he kind of laid the boom or vice versa, and he got up right away and just was celebrating, excited about the first down, and then moved on to the next play.

“The competitor, the warrior that he is, there are a lot of guys like that. That same play I noticed that Theo [Johnson] was blocking down the field and making a huge block. Those kinds of things are what championship football looks like. Obviously, look, [Nabers] catches that screen against the Colts and takes it 80 yards, 70 yards, that’s pretty special. There are only so many human beings in the

world who can do that, and he is one of them.”

Wilson was exaggerating a bit — the Nabers screen against the Colts went for 59 yards — but his point about Nabers’ big-play ability is accurate. Wilson comes to a team that finished 31st in the NFL in scoring (16.1 points a game) and 28th in passing offense. He is on the scene to help with all of that. At 36 years old, the Giants do not expect him to be a miracle worker, but they do need far more efficiency and moxie than the decrepit quarterback play they received in 2024.

A brief conversation with Nabers has the 21-year-old “fired up,” Wilson said.

Wilson crossed paths at the Giants facility with Jalin Hyatt, the unproductive 2023 third-round pick, and said, “I just think he’s a guy that’s been untapped in terms of what he knows he’s capable of.” Wilson sounded eager to throw to Darius Slayton “and his ability to get down the field and make plays” and gushed about Wan’Dale Robinson’s versatility.

“He’s like a running back, every time he touches the ball he’s hard to tackle, his ability to make people miss, his ability to get away from guys and his escapability,” Wilson said. “I’ve played with some guys like that before.”

This was an impressive grasp of his new personnel, but that is not surprising with Wilson. No one has ever accused him of shirking when it comes to preparation.

“I’m kind of a film rat,” he said. “I’ve watched a lot. I’ve watched pretty much every catch of each guy. I’ve watched a lot of highlights of them. Just really you get engulfed in it because it’s everything. If you really want to win, it’s gotta be your lifestyle. It’s gotta be — every morsel of your body and your being, it’s got to be about winning and what that looks like.”



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Malik Nabers

Imagn Images

JAM PACKED:
OG Anunoby can't stop the Clippers' Ivica Zubac from slamming home an emphatic dunk to seal the Knicks' 126-113 loss at the Garden on Wednesday. Jason Szenes

Knicks collapse in second half as L.A. latest playoff-bound team to win at MSG



CLIP OF THE ICEBERG

By JARED SCHWARTZ

The angst had dissipated somewhat in recent days. But it came roaring back as Madison Square Garden turned into Madison Square Square Harden on Wednesday night.

After two games breezing past lowly opposition in the Wizards and shorthanded Mavericks, the Knicks stepped back up in weight class Wednesday night. And they failed yet another test against teams in playoff contention, falling 126-113 to the Clippers.

They fell to 5-5 without Jalen Brunson, with their five wins coming against sub-.500 teams. It continues a worrying season-long inability to beat quality foes, which has only been exacerbated without Brunson.

The Knicks are now 11-18 against teams over .500, compared to 34-9 against teams under that mark.

Wednesday's loss also cost them a chance to clinch a playoff berth.

Harden turned back the clock and torched the Knicks for 29 points and 10 assists, including scoring 11 straight Clippers points late in the third quarter. It sparked a 16-6 run for Los Angeles, taking a tied game to a double-digit lead entering the fourth quarter.

"It's tough," Josh Hart said of the third-quarter run. "We started off playing well, got the ball moving. That team's playing extremely well right now. You've got to give them credit. They started knocking down shots and really dictated the pace. Give them credit. We knew this was going to be a tough one."

Kawhi Leonard took it from there, scoring the first 10 Clippers points of the fourth quarter to increase the Los Angeles lead to 18. He finished with 27 points, seven assists and 10 rebounds. Norman

CLIPPERS 126
KNICKS 113 **Boxscore**
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Powell chipped in 19 points as well.

The Clippers also hurt the Knicks on the offensive glass, recording 13 offensive rebounds to the Knicks' seven. They turned that into 19 second-chance points compared to nine for the Knicks. The Knicks turned the ball over 10 times, which the Clippers converted into 18 points. The Knicks scored just nine points off five Clippers turnovers.

"I thought we had good movement, we had the 35 assists, and the turnovers weren't high," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "But the points we gave up off the turnovers were [high]. ... When you're

shorthanded, that's probably the difference in the game. Our margin of error is small. We gotta play extremely hard and smart, but those hustle points are huge."

Karl-Anthony Towns did everything he could to keep the Knicks in it, following up his triple-double showing with 34 points and 13 rebounds. Hart was much quieter than his own triple-double on Tuesday, recording seven points, six assists and six rebounds.

And the Knicks offense struggled when Cam Payne exited with a left ankle sprain, leaving Tyler Kolek as the only healthy true point guard available with Miles McBride still sidelined due to a groin contusion. Payne had gotten off to a red-hot start before his injury with 15 points. It prompted more playing time for Kolek, but he did not score, though he had seven assists. He was hunted on the defensive end, however. Little-

used Delon Wright also saw more minutes than usual, though he did little with it, also failing to score.

Kolek pointed to himself for the third-quarter run.

"I feel like I just gotta be better getting us organized," Kolek said. "They kept coming at that high two-man game, putting me in the action, I gotta be better defending that. We went to a show [defense], I was getting out there and split a couple of times, they just were getting loose for 3s. Definitely gotta be better on that end."

The Knicks' lack of depth, which has been a season-long theme, was exposed as well. The Clippers outscored the Knicks 24-12 in bench points.

After a bit of respite, all the season-long concerns surrounding the Knicks reemerged. They only have 10 games left before the playoffs to fix them.

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More Knicks / P. 45

I UNDERSTAND there's an ongoing rift between James Dolan and Adam Silver. I get it. But every day, the commissioner should be rooting for the Knicks.

And not just because of their market appeal and ratings potential.

If you remember from Silver's crusade to complete the media rights deals prior to last season, the commish and NBA pushed the idea that load management doesn't work. The context was that players weren't playing enough.

For years.

The deeper context was that the media companies want star players on their broadcasts, and the league never wants to cut into the revenue stream of an 82-game schedule. Instead, games were added for the play-in tournament and NBA Cup.

Cha-Ching.

With the media rights deals signed and sealed, we're predictably hearing less about DNPs from the NBA. But injuries, tanking and rest days — often masked in misleading official injury reports — are as rampant as ever.

Except, of course, at MSG.

Here, the anger is directed at the best players being on the court too much. Here, as everywhere Tom Thibodeau roams the sideline, the debate is whether his starters are worn down or careening toward catastrophic injury. Everybody has an opinion on Thibs' minutes distribution, and Mikal Bridges, the NBA's iron man, gave it credence recently by lob-

Minute details

With so much angst over resting players, Thibs' iron men should be celebrated

bying publicly for a smaller piece.

The irony of the Thibs narrative is that his starters are logging heavy minutes because they're healthy. OG Anunoby, who has spent much of his career on the injury report, is on pace for career highs in games played and minutes. Given Anunoby's lengthy history, I've been waiting for the twist or strain. It hasn't happened, knock on wood.

Put another way: Anunoby has never been as durable as this first full season under Thibodeau, the supposed breaker of bodies. And with the notable exception of last season, the Knicks have been healthy since Thibs took over in 2020.

The only big injury during this campaign was to Jalen Brunson, who was averaging fewer minutes than most of the starters and sprained his ankle on a drive. Cam Payne, the backup guard who has played sparingly all season, then sprained his ankle in Wednesday's



Stefan Bondy

126-113 loss to the Clippers on a similar awkward landing in the paint.

Not exactly wear-and-tear stuff.

Karl-Anthony Towns is on pace for his most games since 2017-18, also when Thibodeau was his coach in Minnesota. So if his top players aren't actually getting injured — especially compared to the rest of the NBA — what exactly is the problem? Fans and some members of the media are acting like store owners worried about a lawsuit — 'Don't run, you could get hurt!'

Meanwhile, absences are abundant around the league.

Luka Doncic? Won't make the 65-

game threshold for postseason award eligibility.

Ja Morant? Won't make it.

Victor Wembanyama? Won't make it.

Kawhi Leonard? Won't make it.

Zion Williamson? Won't make it.

Jimmy Butler? Won't make it.

Joel Embiid? Won't make it.

Tyrese Maxey? Won't make it.

Dame Lillard? Won't make it.

Kyrie Irving? Won't make it.

LaMelo Ball? Won't make it.

Anthony Davis? Won't make it.

Paul George? Won't make it.

Paolo Banchero? Won't make it.

Franz Wagner? Won't make it.

De'Aaron Fox? Won't make it.

Immanuel Quickley? Won't make it.

Brandon Ingram? Won't make it.

Maybe that's all Thibodeau's fault. Or maybe injuries aren't prevented by playing less. Jayson Tatum was third in the league in minutes per game last season and he carried that into an NBA championship.

"There's a lot of things that go into it," Thibodeau said Wednesday. "You go into the season with the understanding of what it's going to take for the season. You have to have a mental discipline to get through all the things that may happen."

There are two legitimate knocks on Thibodeau. The first is his play-off record, which stands at an unimpressive 37-48 without a conference finals appearance since 2011. That's a topic for another column and not, as some have pontificated, related to minutes loads during the regular season.

The other is not understanding the thresholds of garbage time. Lately, it appears assistant Rick Brunson has helped with that issue by reminding Thibodeau to empty the bench when there's no doubt about the result.

But trying to win every night? That's a redeeming quality and something Silver should celebrate since he's never going to do the smart thing and reduce the 82-game schedule. It's better than the impact of Gregg Popovich's approach.

By turning tanking and load managing into a title-winning formula, the Spurs man did more harm to the NBA product than any coach in history. Now everybody does it because it's the easy way out for executives and players and even coaches. If you can't sell wins in the NBA, you have to sell hope.

And hoping is easier than doing.

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OPENING DAY 2025



By DAN MARTIN

HOUSTON — Clay Holmes opened the season last year in Houston.

That's about the only similarity from then to now.

Since that Opening Day with the Yankees against the Astros, he's switched uniforms and jobs in about as stark a way as possible.

No longer is Holmes the Yankees closer.

Instead, he's a key part of the Mets rotation.

"It's an interesting feeling," Holmes said Wednesday at Daikin Park. "Opening up here is like déjà vu, but a lot is different: a new team, new role ... I get to start, something I've always wanted to do."

And the Mets have a lot riding on the right-hander, who signed a three-year, \$38 million contract to join their rotation after pitching out of the bullpen for nearly his entire major league career.

That first game in Houston last season was something of a sign of things to come for Holmes, who gave up three hits before barely escaping with a save thanks in part to Juan Soto throwing out Mauricio Dubón at the plate to prevent the tying run from scoring.

The Yankees ended up sweeping the four-game set at then-Minute Maid Park and they were off to the races.

Holmes picked up the save in three of those games, but ultimately lost the closer job later in the season.

Still, he knows how important these types of games can be to a team with lofty aspirations.

"That series felt like a playoff series," Holmes said of the initial set in Houston. "I remember people talking about it afterwards, saying there's no easing into the season. It's full bore. It's good to get a little jump start. It's what you sign up for, the baseball you want to play, whether it's March, April or Octo-



GETTING THE NOD TODAY: Clay Holmes will be the Opening Day starter for the Mets when they take on the Astros in Houston this afternoon. With several Mets starters beginning the season on the injured list, Holmes will have a big opportunity early on this season. *Imagn Images*

ber. You want these games to be exciting and to mean a lot."

There will be no shortage of that for the Mets this season.

Holmes will be a significant part of that, especially in the early part of the regular season, with Sean Manaea (oblique) and Frankie Montas (lat), as well as Paul Blackburn, opening on the injured list.

He is hoping to follow in the

footsteps of other relievers like ex-Yankee teammate Michael King, as well as current Red Sox Garrett Crochet, who left the bullpen for the rotation and found success.

Asked about his goals, Holmes said, "For me, let's get through five starts and see where we're at. It's one start at a time with this being so new. It's been a while since I've done this."

He and the Mets will measure

his early results and see if his new routine needs any tweaking.

Holmes said he's received pointers from King. Holmes, with hopes of being a starter, used to watch King take meticulous scouting reports in the bullpen. Holmes also has gotten tips from Crochet, who relies more on his elite arsenal.

"Everybody's a little different and has a different set of challenges," Holmes said.

Now armed with a changeup and cutter, Holmes is set to test himself against the Astros.

"I went into spring training knowing they had a chance to be weapons to get outs," Holmes said. "Now, I trust the contact a little more. [Pitching in] spring was able to do that for me. I was able to get some outs with those pitches."

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Blackburn to begin season on 15-day IL

By DAN MARTIN

HOUSTON — The Mets' Opening Day roster is complete.

Instead of heading to the bullpen, Paul Blackburn will start the season on the 15-day injured list with right knee inflammation, president of baseball operations David Stearns said Wednesday.

The injury occurred after Blackburn's most recent spring training outing,

METS NOTES

when he reported soreness in the knee the two days following his appearance. The right-hander received an injection in the knee and won't throw for 7-10 days, but Stearns said he expects him back before the end of April.

That means three potential pieces of the rotation will open the year on the IL, although there is opti-

mism Sean Manaea (oblique) and Frankie Montas (lat) are headed in the right direction, with Manaea already back in a throwing program and a recent MRI exam of Montas' injury showing "good healing," meaning he could begin throwing soon.

With Blackburn out, both Max Kranick and Huascar Brazobán were informed they would be on the Opening Day roster.

And on the position

player side, Luisangel Acuña got the final spot, a source confirmed.

Initially, Stearns said they would wait until Thursday's noon deadline to determine the last spot, but they informed Acuña he was on the roster.

Acuña could potentially start at second base on Thursday against Houston lefty Framber Valdez.

Brett Baty will likely play regularly at second in the absence of Jeff McNeil (ob-

lique), whose injury is now asymptomatic.

► **Hayden Senger's** feel-good story is nearly complete, as the catcher was informed he will be on the Opening Day roster, as well.

Senger, who turns 28 next week, has played 402 minor league games, but took advantage of the opportunity presented by **Francisco Alvarez's** fractured hamate bone that

will knock him out in the early going.

► The Mets will honor **Ed Kranepool** with a uniform patch of his No. 7 jersey number this season, the team announced Wednesday.

Kranepool, a member of the franchise's Hall of Fame, died in September at 79.

Kranepool's family will be honored prior to the home opener at Citi Field on April 4.



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OPENING DAY 2025



JUAN IN A MILLION\$

Cohen on landing Soto: 'You've got to reach for something special'

HOUSTON — Exactly one year after Juan Soto came to this very city to start what would be a mostly triumphant but decidedly truncated Yankees career, he arrived as a Met, the highest-paid player ever, and with a contract 15 times longer.

Which wasn't a surprise to many who foresaw Mets owner Steve Cohen's resolve and largesse winning the big free agent prize. But it was to Cohen himself, who lived the drawn-out drama. Not once but twice Cohen figured he was out of the running.

The first time occurred at the first of three rounds of bidding, when the Mets offered about \$492 million — \$41M a year for 12 years. That figure came from Mets' metrics and models, and didn't seem unreasonable considering all-everything Shohei Ohtani's heavily deferred \$700M deal was worth around \$465M. Fairly, too, multiple teams started in that same neighborhood, with the surprising Blue Jays taking an early monetary lead.

Anyway, Cohen was surprised when Soto's agent Scott Boras called to say he wasn't in the ballpark. After 24 hours to recover, reflect and revise, Cohen called back, promising to do better, and keeping the Mets among the final five, with also the Red Sox, Dodgers and Yankees.

"It's not how you start. It's how you finish," Cohen declared by phone to The Post. (Cohen couldn't make it here for Opening Day on Thursday; he's having a shoulder procedure.)

Cohen resolved then to ditch the projections of his "baseball people" and stay in the ballgame — a pressurized, month-long competition that ended when he beat out

the Yankees with the record \$765M contract that included a \$75M signing bonus and a luxury suite.

"I had to adjust my thinking," Cohen said.

He adjusted it, and adjusted it yet again.

"I adjusted my thinking multiple times in a relatively short period of time," Cohen said.

Meantime, the reserved, almost reclusive Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner made what's described as an excellent presentation, and the Yankees also bid aggressively, finishing only \$5M behind the Mets (but for one more year, and without awards bonuses or a suite). Cohen correctly calculated the Yankees were the main threat.

Some Cohen allies predicted early on he'd "do whatever it takes," and his aggressiveness certainly was a factor. But there's more to it.

"Sometimes," Cohen said, "you've got to reach for something special."

For Cohen, Soto was his holy grail.

"You've just got to watch him hit," Cohen gushed. "The way he hits is just amazing. ... It looks different."

Cohen's final offer gave the Mets a chance but didn't guarantee anything. It's hard to imagine Soto swapped city teams because they bid almost one percent higher.

So what was it?

Could it have been the emphasis on family that Cohen and Co. portrayed? Cohen asked father-in-law

Ralph, 92 and a lifelong Mets fan, to fly to their first meeting. Soto's family, including a baseball team of nine uncles, dubbed the Supreme Court of Soto, did seem to have sway.

Was it the suite Cohen gave away without flinching while the Yankees felt they couldn't do it since homegrown greats Aaron Judge and Derek Jeter only got discounted suites?

Folks close to Soto suggest that while the awards bonuses weren't a serious issue, it's nice to have the extras most stars enjoy. It's a Yankees policy not to offer award bonuses.

It's nice to have the \$75M signing bonus in one lump sum, too, which gives him a record \$126M 2025 payday.

Could it have been the Mets' extra meeting? Word is, they were only granted a second meeting because the first one, at Cohen's Beverly Hills abode, was cut short. Still, the Yankees wondered, questioning later why the Mets got two meetings.

As it turned out, Cohen came away from that second surprise confab at his Boca Raton estate more negative than ever. Soto's camp was peppering the Mets with difficult questions regarding the team's direction and how Soto might be surrounded in light of the Yankees having Judge to protect him.

Afterward, Cohen asked Mets team president David Stearns what he thought, and Stearns guessed the Mets had a 15-20 per-

cent chance. Cohen said then that he thought that was optimistic.

"I thought it was zero," Cohen said.

They didn't know this, but Soto was very impressed by both Mets leaders. And in reality, Cohen's answers to the Soto camp might have been exactly what Soto wanted to hear.

The Yankees spend significantly and consistently, but more judiciously, and their secondary plans probably seemed comparatively limited had Soto stayed. Cohen made no promises, but Soto could project Cohen might compromise to bring back Pete Alonso, which he did to run his payroll to \$330M — \$29M over the "Steve Cohen" tax threshold.

Cohen's responses might be what inspired Soto to surprise folks by suggesting the Mets have a better short-term prognosis than the Yankees, even with their 27 World Championships and 32 straight winning seasons. In the end, maybe it's a combo of all/most of the above that caused Soto to surprise Cohen with his choice. The guess here is we may never know for sure.

The best thing for Mets fans to do now: Just enjoy the surprise gift of an all-time great hitter.

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Jon Heyman



OPENING DAY 2025

**AMONG THE BEST:**

With their surprising run to the NLCS last season, along with the addition of Juan Soto (left) after Steve Cohen's (inset) aggressive pursuit, Francisco Lindor, Pete Alonso and the Amazin's aren't going to be sneaking up on anyone this season.

By DAN MARTIN

HOUSTON — The waiting is just about over.

After the Mets delighted their fans with an unexpected run to the NLCS a year ago, they've only increased expectations following an offseason in which they signed Juan Soto to the largest contract in MLB history — beating out the Yankees in the process — and seem set up to be one of the serious threats to the Dodgers in the National League.

No, they don't have the colossal spotlight on them like Los Angeles will after a World Series win and yet more roster building with the additions of Roki Sasaki and Blake Snell, among others, but the Mets certainly won't be able to sneak up on anyone like they did last season.

To the Mets, though, their goals have remained the same. "Last year, we knew we had a good team," Carlos Mendoza said on the eve of his second Opening Day as Mets manager. "This year, it's the same.

Surprising '24 brings Amazin' expectations

[There's] a lot more noise now from outside — and rightfully so — because of what happened in the offseason, with Soto being one of them, but we've got to take it one day at a time, continue to improve, go out there and compete. We know we've got a good team, but it's not gonna be easy. We're excited and ready for [Thursday]."

But even Mets players acknowledged last year that their play improved when they talked in May about not worrying about the standings after getting off to a terrible start.

This time around, if they start off 0-5 or are 11 games under .500 in early June, there figures to be chaos in Queens.

Still, president of baseball operations David Stearns reiterated the mentality hasn't been altered since when he arrived prior to last year.

"From an expectation standpoint, I know that's a big discussion, we had pretty high ex-

pectations last year," Stearns said as the Mets held a workout at Daikin Park on Wednesday. "I don't know if it necessarily feels all that different. I know there's more attention [and] maybe that's a little different, but we expected a lot of ourselves last year and expect a lot of ourselves this year."

They'll start it off with a three-game series at Daikin Park, with three more against the Marlins in Miami.

Mendoza experienced this type of pressure when he was on Aaron Boone's coaching staff in The Bronx and Soto did, as well, in his lone season with the Yankees last year.

Clay Holmes brings similar experience with him to the Mets after three-plus seasons pitching out of the Yankees bullpen before he signed as a free agent to start for the Mets.

Holmes said there's "definitely" a similarity to the pressure the Mets are facing this

year to what he felt with the Yankees.

"You can feel the excitement for the Mets and definitely expectations," said Holmes, who will get the ball for Thursday's Opening Day in his first start since 2018.

"The payroll and players and talent we have here, things come with that," Holmes said. "The most important thing you can feel is how close people are in the locker room, the coaches and players. There are expectations, sure, but there's a lot of accountability, too."

And that begins for real on Thursday.

"There's a standard we're trying to set here," Holmes said. "It's fun to be a part of that. To go into the season knowing you have a real shot to win a championship is what you want to play for. We all feel that and know that. It's a responsibility we're happy to have."

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Projected lineups

METS



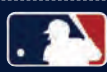
- 1 SS Francisco Lindor**
.273 AVG., 33 HR, 91 RBI
- 2 RF Juan Soto**
.288 AVG., 41 HR, 109 RBI
- 3 1B Pete Alonso**
.240 AVG., 34 HR, 88 RBI
- 4 3B Mark Vientos**
.266 AVG., 27 HR, 71 RBI
- 5 LF Brandon Nimmo**
.224 AVG., 23 HR, 90 RBI
- 6 DH Starling Marte**
.269 AVG., 7 HR, 40 RBI
- 7 CF Jose Siri**
.187 AVG., 18 HR, 47 RBI
- 8 C Luis Torrens**
.229 AVG., 3 HR, 15 RBI
- 9 2B Luisangel Acuña**
.308 AVG., 3 HR, 6 RBI
- P RHP Clay Holmes**
3-5, 3.14 ERA, 1.30 WHIP

ASTROS



- 1 LF Jose Altuve**
.295 AVG., 20 HR, 65 RBI
- 2 3B Isaac Paredes**
.238 AVG., 19 HR, 80 RBI
- 3 DH Yordan Álvarez**
.308 AVG., 35 HR, 86 RBI
- 4 1B Christian Walker**
.251 AVG., 26 HR, 84 RBI
- 5 C Yainer Diaz**
.299 AVG., 16 HR, 84 RBI
- 6 SS Jeremy Peña**
.266 AVG., 15 HR, 70 RBI
- 7 RF Cam Smith**
.313 AVG., 7 HR, 24 RBI*
- 8 2B Mauricio Dubón**
.269 AVG., 4 HR, 47 RBI
- 9 CF Jake Meyers**
.219 AVG., 13 HR, 61 RBI
- P LHP Framer Valdez**
15-7, 2.91 ERA, 1.11 WHIP

* Minor league statistics


OPENING DAY 2025


A CHANGE OF SEASON



This Yankees team looks a whole lot different from last Opening Day

THE pitcher who started Opening Day for the Yankees last year will start Game 2 against them this year. The guy who closed for the Yankees on Opening Day in Houston last year will start Opening Day for the Mets in Houston this year.

Are you following the bouncing ball?

Because the Yankees seem to have more similar problems than similar players from Opening Day last season.

Gerrit Cole is again on the injured list to begin. Oswaldo Cabrera is once more the opening third baseman in what is beginning to feel like the Hex of Josh Donaldson for the position. The roulette wheel has landed on Jasson Domínguez as the seventh different player to start the opener in left field in the past seven years.

For a team that actually won the American League title, the Yankees sure have changed in pursuit of ending the third-longest championship drought (15 years) in franchise history. The only Yankees who will start in the same positions Thursday against Milwaukee ace Freddy Peralta as the last opener are Cabrera and shortstop Anthony Volpe, while Aaron Judge will move from center to right.

Much of the face-lift was about the NCAA-esque one-and-done by Juan Soto (talk about big NIL money) and the Yankees' Plan B once the lefty star accepted the Mets' record 15-year, \$765 million bid. The alterations included trading 2024 Opening Day starter Nestor Cortes, who will start Game 2 for the Brewers, for closer Devin Williams. Clay Holmes had Williams' job to

open last year and recorded a save in Game 1 against the Astros. He will start against them this year, again in Houston. Thus, the Mets with Soto and Holmes will have nearly as many players who were part of the Yankee opener last year as the 2025 Yankees.

It underscores the opening theme music for these Yankees — have they done enough to replace Soto? And Cole? And possibly Giancarlo Stanton?

The last two teams standing from 2024 will begin 2025 with the most players on the IL (11). All 11 for the champion Dodgers are pitchers, but they knew during the offseason about most of them and made themselves more bulletproof by signing Roki Sasaki, Blake Snell, Tanner Scott and Kirby Yates. The Dodgers did this by increasing their payroll to a record luxury-tax projection of \$400 million-plus.

The Yankees kept their payroll mostly static and spread their post-Soto dollars around, notably on Max Fried — who will oppose Cortes in Game 2 — Cody Bellinger and Paul Goldschmidt. But they never solved third. The revelation that Stanton is out until, well, who knows when with twin tennis elbows only heightened what already was worry against lefty pitching — hello there, Mr. Cortes and your funky motions.

Yet none of this is as concerning as the rotation. Cole might have missed 2½ months to begin last year, but Luis Gil pitched like the reigning AL Cy Young winner in his absence. Now Cole is out for the year and Gil (lat) for at least 2½ months. That deepens the burden for

Fried, Opening Day starter Carlos Rodón and Marcus Stroman. So that is a new guy, a guy they never have fully trusted and a guy they tried to trade all offseason.

And those are the surer things.

Are the Yankees really going to receive Gil-like out-of-nowhere magic two years straight, this time from Will Warren? Is Carlos Carrasco, who turned 38 last week, really going to discover a fountain of youth after producing a 6.18 ERA the past two years combined, by far the worst among those with 40-plus starts?

Clarke Schmidt is due back in two weeks from the IL, but the depth remains an uninspiring who's who of Erick Leal, Brandon Leibrandt and Allan Winans. Thus, if the Yanks do not get 100-plus starts from Fried, Rodón, Stroman and Schmidt, the playoff road gets murkier. Who falls out of the race and makes starters available? The Padres with Dylan Cease and Michael King?

Or maybe it will be the Yankees. There is a team good enough to match 94 wins from last season. And one that wins far fewer because the worst outcomes arise at third base, against lefties, by relying on unproven players and overreliance on Judge. But nothing is more worrisome than the quality and quantity of the rotation as this season begins.

You could convince me that Thursday is the start of something special for these Yankees, or one start after another off the cliff.

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More Yanks / P. 50



WHO'S LEFT? With Nestor Cortes on the Brewers, Clay Holmes starting for the Mets and Luis Gil out til at least June, the Yankees go into Opening Day with as many players on the field from last year's Opening Day Yankee roster as the Mets.

Getty Images; Corey Sipkin; AP

Cody
Bellinger


Bellinger sees no reason to pull for Stadium's sake

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

There might not be a major leaguer who can relate with the roller coaster that Cody Bellinger has ridden.

The Yankees center fielder has been arguably the best player in baseball, the National League MVP in 2019. He was arguably the worst regular in baseball in 2021-22, when he combined for a .611 OPS that was the second worst in baseball among players with at least 800 plate appearances. He bounced back the past two seasons and has settled in as an above-average, if not quite elite, contributor.

Beginning Thursday in The Bronx against the Brewers, his journey takes him to a new home that on paper fits him perfectly and

a new team for which he looms as perhaps the biggest wild card.

"He's been really dialed in, it seems like, from jump," manager Aaron Boone said of Bellinger, who likely will be his Opening Day center fielder and the No. 3 hitter who provides Aaron Judge protection.

Bellinger had an excellent spring in which he hit .400 with three home runs and a 1.124 OPS. Over the years, the lefty swinger has made consistent adjustments trying to find a swing and swing approach that works. There might have been reason for Bellinger to tweak his cut again entering this year, when he will be playing half his games in a ballpark that is built for a lefty hitter like him.

But no, Bellinger said this spring, he has not reconfigured

his stroke to try to take full advantage of the short, Yankee Stadium porch. When his natural swing is going right, he said, his batted balls tend to go to the right, too.

"The second you start trying to pull, [it is] bad news, in my opinion," Bellinger said during camp. "Put my swing on the inside part of the baseball, and good things happen."

Good things tend to happen for lefty hitters who pull the ball at Yankee Stadium, although it will be curious to see which version of Bellinger steps into the box.

Bellinger pulled the ball most often in 2022 (47.2 percent), a final, lost season with the Dodgers in which he hit .210 with 19 home runs.

He rebounded the following two seasons with the Cubs and both

looked more healthy and a bit different: He made much more contact (striking out just 15.6 percent of the time) while his power and exit velocity dipped (averaging 22 homers per season).

This spring, for what little it is worth, Bellinger carried over his contact skills while lifting his exit velocity. Boone and Bellinger agreed it is a good start and one that doesn't yet mean much.

Still, there is intrigue whenever a lefty hitter who does his best work pulling pitches arrives at the Stadium, which Jazz Chisholm Jr. knows well.

"If your swing automatically goes that way, like how Bellinger's is, nothing for him to tweak," Chisholm said.

msanchez@nypost.com

NY Post: Charles Wenzelberg

New York Yankees™

CALENDAR DAY

SAT. | MAR. 29 | 1:05 PM



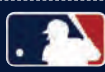
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OPENING DAY 2025



Montefiore Einstein

Official Hospital of the New York Yankees

Projected lineups

YANKEES



- 1 C Austin Wells**
.229 AVG, 13 HR, 55 RBI
- 2 RF Aaron Judge**
.288 AVG, 58 HR, 144 RBI
- 3 CF Cody Bellinger**
.266 AVG, 18 HR, 78 RBI
- 4 1B Paul Goldschmidt**
.245 AVG, 22 HR, 65 RBI
- 5 2B Jazz Chisholm Jr.**
.256 AVG, 24 HR, 73 RBI
- 6 SS Anthony Volpe**
.243 AVG, 12 HR, 60 RBI
- 7 LF Jasson Domínguez**
.179 AVG, 2 HR, 4 RBI
- 8 DH Ben Rice**
.171 AVG, 7 HR, 23 RBI
- 9 3B Oswaldo Cabrera**
.247 AVG, 8 HR, 36 RBI
- P LHP Carlos Rodón**
16-9, 3.96 ERA, 1.22 WHIP

BREWERS



- 1 RF Jackson Chourio**
.275 AVG, 21 HR, 79 RBI
- 2 C William Contreras**
.281 AVG, 23 HR, 92 RBI
- 3 LF Christian Yelich**
.315 AVG, 11 HR, 42 RBI
- 4 1B Rhys Hoskins**
.214 AVG, 26 HR, 82 RBI
- 5 SS Joey Ortiz**
.239 AVG, 11 HR, 60 RBI
- 6 DH Eric Haase**
.273 AVG, 5 HR, 14 RBI
- 7 CF Sal Frelick**
.259 AVG, 2 HR, 32 RBI
- 8 3B Vinny Capra**
.111 AVG, 0 HR, 0 RBI
- 9 2B Brice Turang**
.254 AVG, 7 HR, 57 RBI
- P RHP Freddy Peralta**
11-9, 3.68 ERA, 1.22 WHIP

DAWN OF A NEW DAY

By GREG JOYCE

One hundred and forty eight days after the World Series came crashing down on them in brutal fashion at E. 161st St. and River Ave., the Yankees will begin anew on Thursday.

With some new faces in tow, one big one gone, too many already hurt, a fair share of them hairy faced and a handful of young ones being asked to shoulder a bigger responsibility, a fresh season awaits the Yankees as they try to rewrite the script with a better ending.

"Excited about the group," Aaron Judge said on Tuesday in Miami before the Yankees flew home to face the Brewers on Thursday afternoon.

"Like I've been saying all camp, the injuries are tough, especially the big guys that got hit. But it's a good opportunity for a lot of the young guys to step up and show us what they got and make a name for themselves. I'm excited to see the new guys but also the guys who have been here two or three years now and kind of time for them to establish themselves."

That group includes 25-year-old Austin Wells, who is entering his first year as the team's full-time catcher, and its leadoff hitter at that; 24-year-old Anthony Volpe, who



GROWTH SPURT: The Yankees will take the field Thursday for Opening Day needing young players such as Austin Wells (left) and Anthony Volpe to take the next step in their development.

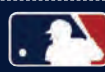
Robert Miller; Imagn Images (2)

is heading into Year 3 still trying to answer the question of what kind of offensive player he will be; and 22-year-old Jasson Domínguez, whose talent is undeniable but who has yet to show it over the course of a full big league season because of injuries.

"I think it's all about them," Judge said. "They've put in a lot of hard work, all the way back to '23, when they got called up. Didn't make the postseason, made it a longer offseason, those guys have been working their tails off all offseason, all year,

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OPENING DAY 2025



The fix is internal at third base, left field

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

A busy Yankees offseason included adding a potential ace in Max Fried (who has essentially replaced Gerrit Cole), replacing Anthony Rizzo with Paul Goldschmidt, replacing right fielder Juan Soto with center fielder Cody Bellinger to push Aaron Judge to right, and replacing Clay Holmes with Devin Williams.

The Yankees did not pull the trigger in landing external replacements in two notable spots: left field and third base.

When the curtain goes up Thursday in The Bronx, where they chose inaction will take center stage.

Jasson Domínguez is expected to be the club's seventh different Opening Day starting left fielder in the past seven years, and Oswaldo Cabrera likely will get the nod at third base as the team's confidence in its youth will receive its first test.

Domínguez flunked his first test in left field — he looked lost last September, which ensured Alex Verdugo was the left fielder for October — but an offseason and spring training of reps at the spot has brought more confidence to the 22-year-old top prospect and his team.

There were issues early during the Grapefruit League season, when he misplayed a few balls, but those lowlights were gone over the last few weeks of play.

"I think the work we're seeing is mostly really good," manager Aaron Boone said of Domínguez, who, against Brewers righty Freddy Peralta, figures to follow Giancarlo Stanton, Brett Gardner, Clint Frazier, Joey Gallo, Cabrera and Verdugo as the most recent Opening Day left fielders. "I think his routes have been good lately — real direct routes. And when he does that, you see the speed, and he's able to really eat up ground that most guys that play out there don't.

"And then it's just completing plays ... I feel like that continues to improve."

It is possible more growing pains will surface during the season, but it is also possible Domínguez's bat can compensate for deficiencies. One of the most hyped prospects of all time has a solid defensive reputation and excellent speed, but the potential in his bat is what makes the Yankees salivate.

"He's got that capability," Boone said after a Domínguez spring homer. "I think he's got the ability to control the strike zone, hit with power to all places."

Cabrera's bat is a more significant question.



JASSON DOMÍNGUEZ
Set to start in left field.

The Yankees are entrusting the heavy side of a third base platoon to a former super-utility player who posted a .643 OPS in 827 plate appearances over his first three seasons. But the 26-year-old switch-hitter is stronger from the left side, closed last season strong (.776 OPS in his final 42 games) and had a nice spring.

Cabrera outplayed his competition during camp, during which DJ LeMahieu went down immediately and Oswald Peraza did little with his bat. The in-season competition, though, could be steeper as the Yankees decide whether to stick with a platoon or upgrade externally.

"He's a good player, he's obviously a really good defender," Boone said of Cabrera. "It's finding that next level of consistency at the plate to earn more and more reps over there, more and more regular playing time. We've seen flashes of that throughout his career. We've seen flashes of that in spring training.

"It really comes down to continuing to do a better job of really controlling the strike zone to another level. If he does that, confident he'll be a productive player for us, especially in and around the bottom of the order."

When the Yankees see lefty Nestor Cortes on Saturday, they will have a choice to make. If Peraza — who has no more minor league options — is still with the team, he could get a look, though righty-hitting utilityman Pablo Reyes had a solid camp.

"I think we'll be all right," Boone said of the third base plan.

— Additional reporting by Greg Joyce
msanchez@nypost.com

Yankees counting on youngsters to fill void left by injuries and loss of Soto

and especially this past offseason to get to this point and make a name for themselves. I'm excited."

They, at least, were always part of the plan.

Joining them in the youth movement are a pair of 26-year-olds: Ben Rice, who is expected to get a large chunk of the DH at-bats in Giancarlo Stanton's injury absence, and super-utilityman Oswaldo Cabrera, who for the second straight start of the season finds himself as the club's most regular third baseman because of an injury to DJ LeMahieu.

And then there is the 25-year-old Will Warren, who begins the season as the No. 4 starter after injuries to Gerrit Cole, Luis Gil and Clarke Schmidt. He will be trying to show he is more refined after learning from a rocky six-game introduction to the big leagues last season.

Of course, it's not all spring chickens around these parts. The Yankees are also banking on the 37-year-old Paul Goldschmidt to have a bounce-back season at first base and the 38-year-old Carlos Carrasco to show his terrific spring was not a flash in the pan, at least until Schmidt gets back around mid-April, if everything goes right.

"I think it's understanding that it takes ev-

erybody," said Cody Bellinger, still only 29, who was part of the pivot along with Goldschmidt, Max Fried and Devin Williams after the Yankees lost Juan Soto to the Mets.

"People in this room that don't even know they're going to help are probably going to help at some point this season."

And so the AL East champs will begin their quest to defend that title, though the franchise's ultimate goal is never that small. Thanks in part to a nightmare fifth inning against the Dodgers last October in Game 5, the last game held at Yankee Stadium before Thursday, the championship drought is now up to 16 years and counting.

"I'm excited about a lot of people that have kicked the door in and created a little bit of an opportunity for themselves to be, to varying degrees, real contributors for our club," manager Aaron Boone said Tuesday. "In a couple days, we get to start finding out. But you're never a finished product.

"We'll make a lot of Opening Day, and who's there and who's in the lineup. You'll look up in the middle of the season and things have a way of working themselves out and changing. That's all part of it. But I feel like our guys are ready to go."

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Lions Gate via Everett

STREAM IT OR SKIP IT

"**Den of Thieves 2: Pantera**" (Netflix) is an enjoyable lark populated with characters who are more tangible than the usual genre dudes and dames, thus making their implausible adventures feel a little more plausible. The movie holds us in the moment, which is all we could ask for. **OUR CALL: STREAM IT**

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and films, visit
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**WHAT TO
WATCH.
WHEREVER
YOU WATCH**



Netflix via Everett

WHAT TO WATCH

"**Survival of the Thickest**" remains a hopeful beacon of light even in its second entry. Comedian **Michelle Buteau's** (left) Netflix comedy is back with a new season, following Mavis Beaumont as she builds her career as a freelance stylist while juggling her love life.

Anthony Michael Hall talks the 'sad twist' in 'Reacher's Season 3 finale

By SAMANTHA NUNGESSER

AFTER eight episodes of shocking plot twists, nail-biting fight scenes, and a whole lot of Alan Ritchson's abs, "**Reacher**" Season 3 has finally come to an end — and DECIDER recently caught up with actor Anthony Michael Hall, who joined the third installment of the hit Prime Video series, to break down that enthralling season finale.

****Spoilers ahead for "Reacher" Season 3.****

Hall plays Zachary Beck, a wealthy gunrunner hiding behind the guise of his Maine-based rug-importing business. When the evil Julius McCabe (Brian Tee) takes over his shipping routes — and, ultimately, his life — Beck knows early on that there's no way of getting out of his situation alive. At the same time, his awkward son Richard (Johnny Berchtold), whose ear had been hacked off by McCabe in a gruesome attempt to gain leverage over Beck, yearns for a relationship with his estranged father — even going as far as to hunt down an old cap gun Beck owned as a child to gift him for his birthday.

But just as quickly as this father-son duo begins to make amends,

Center: Olivier Richters (right) and Anthony Michael Hall (far right) in "Reacher" Season 3. Below: Sonya Cassidy (left) and Alan Ritchson (right).



Jasper Savage/Prime



Prime

your desk constantly for different projects, so what was it that made you say yes to this one?

ANTHONY MICHAEL HALL:

Well, thank you, Samantha, it's great to be with you ... It's great to be here at Decider. You know what? This came about because I actually connected with Nick Santora, the great creative showrunner, and he's a brilliant guy. He's a guy that started out as a lawyer and very much like David Kelly, created an incredible life for him-

self as a showrunner and executive producer.

So, Nick was kind enough to take a meeting with me and he told me that they had me in mind in the writers room to play the part. And then I did a customary screen test anyway. And it went from there. And it was a great opportunity. So I went last summer to Toronto. And then we had the actor strike, of course. And then that put like a four-month block in there. And so we resumed in November and we

shot until [the] beginning of last summer. So it was the show that took a year to make, pretty much. But it was a great experience.

As we know, so much of your early Hollywood career was rooted in comedy. Do you enjoy getting to play darker roles like the one you play in "Reacher?"

I do. When I was growing up, Samantha, a lot of my favorite actors still are, like, Jack Nicholson or even Christopher Walken, people that could go light to dark. But it's also, I think, important to inject some humor into the character. So when I play villains, it is a lot of fun. You can kind of just really go for it and let it all hang out and then hopefully insert some humor and some lighter moments too.

In the season finale, your character is unfortunately shot and killed. Can you walk us through what that looked like behind the scenes?

Oh, interesting. Right, with the gun. It's a sad twist, right? Because it's the gun he kept from childhood and then he winds up meeting his own demise. But I think it's beautiful because in a classical drama, there's always a death. So the fact that he dies for his son essentially is really powerful. And another scene that really came to mind was that sort of Russian roulette scene. That was intense. We had to work hard on that — all of us, the whole crew. I always look at it like just a crew. No cast and crew. It was all of us in there doing that very intense scene. And it was a night shoot. So [there were] additional challenges to really keep the energy up. But there's some powerful scenes. I hope audiences enjoy it and appreciate it.

TRENDING NOW

Caleb Ellsworth-Clark (left) has been tapped to replace Erik Per Sullivan as Dewey in the upcoming "**Malcolm in the Middle**" revival. Series stars reprising their roles in the project include Frankie Muniz, Bryan Cranston, Christopher Masterson, Jane Kaczmarek, and Justin Berfield.



Andrew Johnson

WHAT'S NEW

ON MAX

"**Paul American**," a reality series following brothers **Jake** and **Logan Paul** (right).

ON PRIME VIDEO

"**Holland**," a thriller starring Nicole Kidman.



Courtesy of Max

What's on Tonight



SUPERHERO

Spider-Man 3: 4:10 p.m. on FREFRM. Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst. Peter Parker's life becomes dark when an unknown substance attaches itself to him.



DRAMA

Any Given Sunday: 7 p.m. on VH1. Al Pacino, Cameron Diaz. An aging quarterback is injured during a game and replaced by an enthusiastic backup.



ADVENTURE

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: 8:34 p.m. on USA. Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint. Harry prepares for a possible encounter with a convict.

Thursday March 27, 2025

Evening	SP	C	F	6:30pm	7:00pm	7:30pm	8:00pm	8:30pm	9:00pm	9:30pm	10:00pm	10:30pm	11:00pm	11:30pm		
2	WCBS	2	2	2	CBS Evening News	2025 NCAA Basketball Tournament: Regional Semifinal: BYU Cougars vs Alabama Crimson Tide. Live.				2025 NCAA Basketball Tournament: Regional Semifinal: Arizona Wildcats vs Duke Blue Devils. Live.						
4	WNBC	4	4	4	NBC Nightly News	News 4 New York at 7	Access Hollywood	Suits: L.A.: He Knew (R)		Suits: L.A.: Batman Returns (R)	Suits: L.A.: You're on Your Own (R)		News 4 New York at 11	(11:35) Tonight Show		
5	WNYW	5	5	5	(6:00) 6 O'Clock News	Extra (R)	TMZ	Next Level Chef: The Menu		(9:02) Farmer Wants a Wife: Date Our Man	The 10 O'Clock News		Good Night New York	Family Feud (R)		
7	WABC	7	7	7	ABC World News	Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	9-1-1: Disconnected		Doctor Odyssey: Sophisticated Ladies	Grey's Anatomy: Ridin' Solo		News	(11:35) Kimmel Live		
9	WWOR	9	9	9	True Crime News	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	The News on My 9		Dateline: The Phony Rockefeller	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	Dateline: The Target			
11	WPIX	11	11	11	(6:00) PIX11 News at 6	Sports Nightly	The Big Bang Theory	Police 24/7: Naked Aggression		Crime Nation: The (Almost) Perfect Crime	PIX11 News at Ten		Paid Program	Seinfeld: The Fix-Up		
13	WNET	13	13	13	BBC News America	The PBS News Hour		Leonard Cohen: Live in Dublin			Get Good with Money with Tiffany Aliche		Amanpour and Company			
21	WLIW	21	21	21	(6:00) News	Nature: Grizzly 399: (R)		NOVA			Operation		Stories	BBC News	The Day	
25	WNYE	25	22	25	Report	Great Conversations		Food.	Potluck	Actors	Feet	Global Health Frontiers		Artbound		
31	WPXN	31	3	531	Chicago PD	Chicago P.D.		Chicago P.D.: Fight		Chicago P.D.: New Life		Chicago P.D.		Chicago P.D.: Escape		
41	WXTV	41	6	41	Noticiero	La rosa de Guadalupe		Papás por conveniencia		Las hijas de la señora		Juegos de Amor y Poder		Noticias	Noticiero	
47	WNJU	47	16	12	Noticias	La Casa de los Famosos		(7:58) La Casa de los Famosos: All-Stars		La Jefa		Noticiero		Noticias		
55	WLNY	55	10	10	Conners	Man	Man	News 8pm		48 Hours: The Eye Drop		Judge Judy	Judge Judy	Neighbor.	Neighbor.	
A&E		46	46	181	First 48 (R)	The First 48: Username		The First 48		Accused: Guilty or		Accused: Pocketknife		(11:04) The First 48 (R)		
AMC		54	43	231	(5:00) Den of Thieves (2018, Action)	★★★		The Shawshank Redemption (1994, Drama)		Tim Robbins. R ★★★★★				The Sixth Sense (1999)		
BET		37	54	270	(5:30) Fences (2016, Drama)	Denzel Washington, Viola Davis. ★★★★★½			For Better	For Better	Payne (R)	Assisted	Martin	Martin		
BBCAM		71	101	189	(6:00) The Silence of the Lambs (1991, Thriller)	★★★★		Field of Dreams (1989, Fantasy)		Kevin Costner. PG ★★				Silence of the Lambs R		
BRAVO		18	44	185	Sthn Charm	Southern Charm (R)		Southern Charm: Reunion Part 1			Top Chef: Served Cold		Southern Charm: Reunion Part 1 (R)			
CNBC		15	24	102	Money	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		
CNN		78	25	100	(6:00) Lead	Erin Burnett OutFront		Anderson Cooper 360°		The Source with Kaitlan		CNN NewsNight		Laura Coates Live		
COM		45	50	190	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	Daily Show	Family Guy		
DIS		49	31	250	Big City (R)	Big City (R)	Big City (R)	Primos (R)	Primos (R)	Miraculous	Miraculous	ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES	Jessie	Jessie	
DSC		66	27	120	Contraband	Contraband (R)		Contraband (R)		Contraband: Magazines		Contraband: Cocaine (R)		Contraband (R)		
E!		24	51	196	(6:00) Yes Man	(2008, Comedy) Jim Carrey. PG-13 ★★		Superbad (2007, Comedy) Jonah Hill. R ★★★★★½				E! News		Second Act		
ESPN		28	36	70	Baseball	MLB Baseball: Detroit Tigers at Los Angeles Dodgers. Live.					NHL Hockey Live.					
ESPN2		29	35	74	Sports	The Point	Featured	Update	College Hockey: 2025 NCAA Championship: Regional Semifinal			SportsCenter				
FBN		43	106	117	Bottom	Kudlow (R)		Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	
FNC		44	26	118	Spc. Rpt.	The Ingraham Angle		Jesse Watters Primetime	Hannity		Gutfeld!		Fox News @ Night			
FOOD		50	97	164	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	
FREFRM		38	49	199	Alice (2016)	Pirates of the Caribbean: On		Stranger Tides (2011, Adventure)		Johnny Depp. ★★		How I Escaped My Cult		The 700 Club (R)		
FS1		400	99	83	Speak Live.	Greatest Races		Indycar NICS Racing: Thermal Replay.		UEFA		Harvick's		Greatest Races		
FX		10	40	53	Free Guy	Black Panther (2018, Action)		Chadwick Boseman. PG-13 ★★			Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022) PG-13 ★★½					
HALL			191	240	A Winning Team (2023) Nadia Hatta.		Mystery 101: Playing Dead (2019) Jill Wagner. ★★			Golden		Golden	Golden	Golden		
HGTV		64	98	165	(6:00) 100 Day Home (R)	Hunters (R)		Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	Hunters International		Hunters (R)	Hunters (R)	
HIST		40	47	128	Am. Picker	American Pickers (R)		Swamp People (R)		(9:02) Swamp People (R)		(10:05) Swamp People (R)		(11:05) Swamp People (R)		
ID		23	171	123	Disappear.	Disappeared (R)		Death by Fame (R)		American Monster (R)		American Monster (R)		American Monster (R)		
LIFE		62	45	140	The Rookie	The Rookie: Free Fall		The Rookie: Impact		The Rookie: Night		The Rookie: The Bet		(11:03) The Rookie		
MeTV		33	33	3	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy	Andy	Hillbillies	Pyle	Hogan	Hogan	Burnett	P. Mason	
MSG		27	87	78	MSG Shorts	Athletes Unlimited Women			Athletes Unlimited Women			Athletes Unlim.				
MSG Plus		48	88	80	(12:00) FanDuel	Racing Live.			Mega Fights: Marcos Rene Maidana vs Erik Morales			Fight Sports: EFC 387 (R)				
MSNBC		14	23	103	Ari Melber	MSNBC Prime		All in with Chris Hayes		Rachel Maddow		Lawrence O'Donnell		The 11th Hour		
MTV		20	53	210	Catfish (R)	Teen Mom: Next (R)		Teen Mom: Next Chapter		Teen Mom: Next (R)		Help! Secret: Ashley (R)		Ridiculous	Ridiculous	
NATGEO		65	162	121	Treasures	Lost Treasures (R)		Lost Treasures (R)		Lost Treasures (R)		Lost Treasures (R)		Lost Treasures (R)		
NICK		6	121	252	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	
OWN		173	180	145	Hoarding	Hoarding: Buried Alive		Hoarding: Buried Alive		Hoarding: Buried Alive		Hoarding: Buried Alive		Hoarding: Buried Alive		
PARMT		36	56	54	Men	Men		The Departed (2006, Crime) Leonardo DiCaprio. R ★★★★★							American S	
SNY		26	60	77	MLB Game	Post Game	Baseball	MLB Baseball: New York Mets at Houston Astros from Daikin Park. Replay.					Sports Live.	Sports Live.		
SYFY		17	48	180	(6:25) Journey 2: The Mysterious Island (2012) PG ★★				Eternals (2021, Action) Gemma Chan. PG-13 ★★½							
TBS		8	39	52	NCAA Pre-Game Live.		2025 NCAA Basketball: Maryland Terrapins vs Florida Gators.				2025 NCAA Basketball: Regional Semifinal Live.					
TCM		82	41	230	The Queen (1968)		The Thomas Crown Affair (1968) Steve McQueen. ★★			Gambit (1966, Comedy) Shirley MacLaine. NR ★★						
TLC		52	28	139	Baldwins	Natalia Grace: Nightmare		Natalia Grace		Natalia Grace		Natalia Grace		Girls Who Don't Age (R)		
TNT		3	37	51	Rampage	Aquaman (2018, Action) Jason Momoa. PG-13 ★★				Avengers: Infinity War (2018) Robert Downey Jr. ★★★★★½						
TVLAND		85	34	241	(6:24) Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	(9:20) Loves Raymond	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Queens	Queens		
USA		16	38	50	(5:00) Harry Potter & Hallows 1 (2010)		Figure Skating: Pairs' Free Skate - Boston, MA Live.								Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011)	
VH1		19	52	217	Wild N Out	A League of Their Own (1992, Comedy) Tom Hanks. PG ★★				The Matrix (1999, Science Fiction) Keanu Reeves. R						
WE		59	42	149	S.W.A.T.	S.W.A.T.: The B-Team		S.W.A.T.: Fallen		S.W.A.T.: Pride		S.W.A.T.: Jack		S.W.A.T.: Cash Flow		
YES		53	89	76	Postgame	Yankees Classic Taped.		History of the: 1957-1979		Yankees	Sportico	Postgame Replay.		Postgame Replay.		
HBO		511	301	400	(6:21) Celtics City (R)		Righteous	Flow (2024) PG			The White Lotus: Denials		(10:35) Sing Sing (2024, Drama) R			
MAX		531	371	420	(6:13) What's Your Number? (2011) ★★½		Birds of Prey: And the (2020) R ★★		(9:49) Knight and Day (2010, Action) Tom Cruise. ★★½		Tom Cruise. ★★½		Iron Claw R			
MGM Plus		595		395	(5:15) Mission: Impossible Dead (2023)		The Bodyguard (1992, Romance) Kevin Costner. ★★½				(10:10) Titanic (1997, Romance) Leonardo DiCaprio.					
PARSHO		551	321	365	Bad Moms (2016, Comedy) Mila Kunis.		Yellowjackets: Croak		Edge of Tomorrow (2014) Tom Cruise. PG-13 ★★½			Slingshot (2024) R ★★½				

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The Best Sports In Town


N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg
Corey Sippling/Getty Images (2)


OPENING ACTS

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METS 
ASTROS
4:10 P.M., SNY



BREWERS 
YANKEES
3 P.M., ESPN

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