

TELEVISION

'Andor' back, taking 'Star Wars' to new and rebellious places
Page 14



MILITARY

Sergeant sentenced for selling defense info to Chinese agent
Page 3



MILITARY

Vance toasts troops during pit stop at Ramstein Air Base
Page 7

Pistons and Tigers take baton in Detroit's pro sports revival » Page 32

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CONTINGENCY EDITION

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025

Free to Deployed Areas

Trump asks court to keep trans troops ban, for now

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to allow enforcement of a ban on transgender people in the military, while legal challenges proceed.

Without an order from the nation's highest court, the ban could not take effect for many months, Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote, "a period far too long for the military to be forced to maintain a policy that it has determined, in its professional judgment, to be contrary to military readiness and the nation's interests."

The high court filing follows a brief order from a federal appeals court that kept in place a court order blocking the policy nationwide.

At the least, Sauer wrote, the court should allow the ban to take effect nationwide, except for the seven service members and one aspiring member of the military who sued.

The court gave lawyers for the service members challenging the ban a week to respond.

Just after beginning his second term in January, Trump moved aggressively to roll back the rights of transgender people. Among the Republican president's actions was an executive order that claims the sexual identity of transgender service members "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness.

In response, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a policy that presumptively disqualifies trans-

SEE TRANS ON PAGE 7



ALEXANDER KUBITZA/U.S. Navy

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth delivers remarks to troops, faculty and staff at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., on Wednesday. Hegseth marked his 100-day tenure atop the Pentagon promoting his successes and ignoring calls for his resignation.

Hegseth marks 100 days

Defense secretary touts record, dismisses critics in fiery address

By MISSY RYAN
The Washington Post

The Trump administration is transforming military culture and remaking the U.S. posture overseas, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Wednesday, marking his 100-day tenure atop the Pentagon with a defiant, expletive-laden address that was both an exhortation of his critics and a dismissal of Democrats' calls to resign.

Speaking to troops at the Army War College, Hegseth touted changes he said were necessary to bring the military in line with President

"We are laser-focused on our mission of warfighting."

Pete Hegseth
Defense secretary

Donald Trump's "America First" agenda, including an end to diversity initiatives, an overhaul of personnel regulations and an intensi-

fied campaign against Iran-linked militants in Yemen. He also mounted a pointed counterattack at a moment when his judgment is under scrutiny over his handling of sensitive information, his abrupt firing of a spate of experienced officers, and upheaval among his closest aides.

"The media likes to call it chaos," Hegseth said of his record since taking over in January. "We call it overdue."

"That means no more social engineering. No

SEE DAYS ON PAGE 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Pastor calls for ‘full Target boycott’ over DEI concerns

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The pastor of a Georgia megachurch who led a nationwide 40-day “fast” boycott of Target stores over the retail chain’s commitment to diversity initiatives is now calling for that effort to continue as a “full Target boycott.”

The Rev. Jamal Bryant said this week the Minneapolis-based retailer has not met all of the boycott effort’s demands. Among them: Restoring its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion princi-

ples and pledging money to Black-owned banks and businesses.

Target announced in January that it would phase out a handful of DEI initiatives, including a program designed to help Black employees build meaningful careers and promote Black-owned businesses. Conservative activists and President Donald Trump have sought to dismantle DEI policies.

Bryant is the pastor of one of the South’s largest churches, New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Stonecrest, Ga., just outside At-

lanta. The 40-day “fast” of Target stores coincided with the beginning of Lent on March 5, and other faith leaders endorsed the protest.

“Until Target comes to the table with serious, concrete proposals to meet our four demands, we will remain in this posture,” Bryant said on a website dedicated to the boycott effort.

In a statement Wednesday, Target said, “we have an ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming environment for all team members, guests, and suppliers.”

EXCHANGE RATES			
Military rates			
Euro costs (April 25)	0.86	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8263
British pound (April 25)	\$1.30	Thailand (Baht)	33.47
Japanese yen (April 25)	138.00	Turkey (NewLira)	38.3193
South Korean won (April 25)	1392.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Commercial rates		INTEREST RATES	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769	Prime rate	7.50
Britain (Pound)	1.3312	Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Canada (Dollar)	1.3859	Federal funds market rate	4.38
China (Yuan)	7.2870	3-month bill	4.32
Denmark (Krone)	6.5622	30-year bond	4.83
Egypt (Pound)	50.9593		
Euro	0.8791		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7590		
Hungary (Forint)	358.04		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6353		
Japan (Yen)	142.50		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3066		
Norway (Krone)	10.3956		
Philippines (Peso)	56.37		
Poland (Zloty)	3.75		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7509		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3119		
South Korea (Won)	1435.75		

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY
IN STRIPES

American Roundup 21

Comics 22-23

Crossword 22-23

Faces 20

Opinion 24

Sports 25-32

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MILITARY

Parents of soldier who died by suicide sue US

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The parents of a 19-year-old soldier who died by suicide in 2021 say in a recently filed lawsuit that he faced months of threats, retaliation and bullying after objecting to getting the COVID-19 vaccine, court records show.

The suit alleges that the Army didn't protect Pfc. Noah Samuel-Siegel from a toxic commander and purposefully obscured the circumstances behind his death, including withholding information about his mental health.

He was stationed at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, at the time of his death.

Margaret and Yehonatan Samuel-Siegel filed the complaint against the United States in federal court in New Jersey on April 16. It contends that the Army intentionally and negligently caused them emotional distress.

They are seeking \$1 million in damages and want the military to reform how it addresses suicide prevention and post-death investigations, the couple said in a statement Wednesday.

"Noah enlisted to serve his country — not to be bullied to death," they said. "The Army's toxic leadership put Noah at risk. The Army then ignored protocols that could have saved him. The Army failed Noah, and then us, at every turn."

The Justice Department, which typically handles lawsuits filed against the federal government, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

On Nov. 8, 2021, Samuel-Siegel was found dead in a closet in his barracks room, about a-day-and-a-half after he was estimated to have killed himself, the lawsuit states.

He had been in the Army for less than two years.

He had voiced objection to the COVID-19 vaccine shortly after an August 2021 Pentagon order mandating all service members be inoculated against the virus, according to the lawsuit.

After he refused to follow an order to be vaccinated the following month, his company's commanding officer singled him out with a campaign of harassment and retaliation, the lawsuit states.

For example, the complaint says he was given a general officer memorandum of reprimand, or GOMAR, in October 2021 for not having received the vaccine.

He also subsequently was given nonjudicial punishment, including extra work hours, for a fender-bender accident that had happened months earlier, according to the lawsuit.

At the same time, the commanding officer initiated involuntary separation orders against him even though the Defense Department had not yet authorized the action, the lawsuit states.

In the suit, Margaret and Yehonatan Samuel-Siegel say the Army's actions after their son's death compounded their grief.

They accuse the Army of obstructing the internal investigations, withholding information and issuing conflicting findings.

They also say the service omitted or distorted key facts during an official briefing to them of the command investigation into the cause of their son's suicide, according to court records.



MARGARET AND YONI SAMUEL-SIEGEL
Pfc. Noah Samuel-Siegel died by suicide in November 2021 while stationed at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

Two days before submitting the complaint in New Jersey, Samuel-Siegel's parents filed a separate lawsuit in federal court in Colorado seeking to force the Defense Health Agency to rule on an appeal of their \$1 million medical malpractice claim.

That litigation stems from their argument that Army medical personnel didn't intervene after Samuel-Siegel displayed clear warning signs of suicidal ideation, according to the statement.

"These lawsuits are not just about accountability for Noah's death," Carol Thompson, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney for the Samuel-Siegels, said in the Wednesday statement.

"It's about demanding systemic change in how the military addresses mental health, bullying and truth-telling to grieving families."

Earlier this month, the Pentagon began reaching out to an estimated 8,700 service members who were involuntarily separated for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine to let them know they are eligible for reinstatement.



U.S. AIR FORCE

The B-21 Raider is unveiled during a ceremony in Palmdale, Calif., Dec. 2, 2022.

Northrop Grumman cuts earnings outlook over B-21

Bloomberg

Northrop Grumman Corp. reported first-quarter profit that missed analysts' expectations and cut its earnings forecast for the year as costs mounted for its next-generation B-21 stealth bomber.

The shares fell on Tuesday after Northrop said per-share profit declined by 47% in the first quarter, primarily due to new loss provisions tied to the B-21.

Northrop, which for 2023 took a nearly \$1.6 billion pretax charge on the program, added \$477 million to the tally, as manufacturing costs rose and the company invested in its production systems to speed the program's ramp-up.

For all of 2025, Northrop slashed its outlook for operating income by as much as \$600 million. Adjusted earnings per share will be in a range of \$24.95-\$25.35, down from a prior forecast of \$27.85 to \$28.85. The outlook is "well below" estimates of Jefferies analyst Sheila Kahyaoglu, she said in a research note.

First-quarter revenue declined 7% to \$9.47 billion, Northrop said. The shares slid 8.9% in premarket U.S. trading.

Northrop's B-21 is the successor to the blended-wing B-2 stealth bomber that's now three decades old. The next-generation version is undergoing flight tests; the loss recognized on Tuesday was tied to five low-rate initial production options.

Northrop reported earnings on the same day as Lockheed Martin Corp., the world's biggest defense contractor. The maker of the F-35 fighter jet maintained its full-year outlook for earnings per share of \$27 to \$27.30, and net sales in a range of \$73.75 billion to \$74.75 billion.

Defense companies have outperformed the broader market since President Donald Trump unleashed sweeping tariffs against most U.S. trading partners.

Still, U.S. defense companies aren't immune to the turmoil caused by Trump's bid to upend the decades-old global trade order.

Sergeant gets 7 years for selling military secrets to Chinese agent

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

A 25-year-old Army sergeant was sentenced Wednesday to seven years in prison for selling classified military information about weapons, aircraft and tactics to an individual believed to be affiliated with the Chinese government, the Justice Department announced that day.

Korbein Schultz, of Wills Point, Texas, pleaded guilty in August to conspiring to collect and transmit national defense information, unlawfully exporting controlled information to China and accepting bribes in exchange for sensitive U.S. government information.

Schultz, an intelligence analyst with the 506th Infantry Battalion who had a top-secret clearance, was sentenced in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee.

He was paid \$42,000 for passing on information from 2022 until his arrest in March 2024 at Fort Campbell, Ky., according to the DOJ.

Schultz's motive for selling secrets was apparently not limited to simply making money.

He at one point told his handler that he "wished he could be Jason Bourne," according to the indictment filed March 6, 2024.

Schultz and his Chinese contact had attempted to expand their espionage ring by recruiting one of Schultz's friends, an Army intelligence analyst assigned to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the news release states.



Schultz

The information he sold, according to the indictment, included:

- His Army unit's operational order before it deployed to Eastern Europe in support of NATO operations.
- Lessons the Army learned from the Ukraine-Russia conflict that would be applicable in the defense of Taiwan in the event of an attack by China.
- Technical manuals for the HH-60 helicopter, F-22A fighter jet and intercontinental ballistic missile systems.
- Details on U.S. military exercises in South Korea and the Philippines.
- Information on U.S. military satellites and missile defense systems such as the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD.
- Tactics for countering drones in large-scale combat operations.

The Chinese handler had initially contacted Schultz through an internet platform that connects freelancers with clients, the news release states.

The contact claimed to be with a geopolitical consulting firm, according to the DOJ. As the relationship progressed, the handler pressed harder for sensitive and classified information, while offering higher payments for such materials than for open-source information.

"Protecting classified information is paramount to our national security, and this sentencing reflects the ramifications when there is a breach of that trust," Brig. Gen. Rhett Cox, head of Army Counterintelligence Command, said in the release.

"This soldier's actions put Army personnel at risk placing individual gain above personal honor," he said.

MILITARY

Two Marines on Okinawa accused of assault

**By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Two U.S. Marines have been accused of sexually assaulting women in separate incidents on Okinawa earlier this year, according to Japanese police — the latest in a string of similar cases stirring public discontent on the island.

Okinawa Prefectural Police forwarded both cases to the Naha Public Prosecutors Office on April 7, a police spokesman said by phone Thursday.

In the first case, a Marine in his 20s was suspected of sexually assaulting a woman older than 20 in January, the spokesman said.

Prosecutors on Thursday decided against formal charges, without stating a reason, the Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper reported that afternoon.

In the second case, a Marine in

his 20s is suspected of sexually assaulting a woman older than 20 and injuring a second woman, also older than 20, in March, the spokesman said.

Both Marines are under U.S. administration, he added without elaborating. He declined to provide further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Some Japanese government officials may speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

The Marine Corps is cooperating with police investigators, Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman 1st Lt. Grant Hoel told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday.

Both incidents occurred on a U.S. base in the central part of Okinawa, according to the Ryukyu Shimpo report, citing unnamed officials.

The Marine in the March incident is accused of sexually as-

saulting a Japanese civilian employee in an on-base bathroom, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported Thursday, citing unnamed sources involved in the investigation. The second woman was injured while trying to help the employee, the report said.

Another unidentified Marine “heard the victim in distress and rushed to assist, preventing possible further action by the alleged perpetrator,” Hoel wrote in a subsequent email. The accused Marine is confined in the Camp Hansen brig, he added.

Hoel declined to provide further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

“We will work closely with our Japanese allies to ensure U.S. personnel maintain the highest standards of behavior and conduct in support of our mutual security,” he said.

The latest cases follow contin-

ued public outcry over a U.S. airman’s December conviction for sexual assault of a minor, and two unrelated sexual assault cases still pending against U.S. service members.

Senior Airman Brennon R.E. Washington was convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor in 2023. He was sentenced to five years in prison with labor and has appealed the verdict.

In the other cases, two Marine lance corporals are awaiting trial in Japanese courts — one is charged with sexual assault and the other with attempted sexual assault.

In response to those allegations, U.S. Forces Japan imposed new liberty restrictions in October, barring U.S. troops from off-base drinking establishments between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

On Friday, representatives of U.S. commands joined Okinawa

police and government officials for a joint patrol of a nightlife district outside Kadena Air Base — the first such patrol on the island since 1974, according to prefectural police.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki on Wednesday called on the U.S. military to educate its personnel and further tighten liberty restrictions, according to a statement emailed Thursday by a prefectural spokeswoman.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan George Glass said he is “deeply concerned” about the incidents, according to a news release Wednesday from the U.S. Embassy Tokyo.

“We deeply value the ties of trust and friendship we have built over many decades with our Japanese hosts, and I am committed to doing everything I can to prevent actions that may jeopardize these bonds,” he said.

Navy ends search for sailor reported missing during stop on Guam

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy has suspended its nearly weeklong search for a sailor assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz who was reported missing Saturday.

The active search was officially called off at 9 a.m. Thursday, after U.S. and civilian agencies looked for 120 hours and covered more than 14,000 square miles offshore, Carrier Strike Group 11 said in a news release that day.

The Navy did not identify the sailor in the release, citing its next-of-kin notification policy. The Guam Police Department on Saturday identified him as Gabriel D. Holt when it sought the public’s help.

Navy policy calls for withholding identifying information until 24 hours after notification of an individual’s next of kin. The Navy lists the sailor as “whereabouts unknown,” the release states.

A strike group spokesperson did not respond to multiple emails this week seeking additional information, including the circumstances of the sailor’s disappearance.

Holt was last seen at 11:57 p.m. Friday between Hotel Nikko and Gun Beach, a distance of about 220 yards, the police department said on its official Instagram ac-



Holt

count. Police described him as 6 feet tall, 192 pounds with brown hair and brown eyes, and last seen wearing a white tank top, green shorts and gray shoes.

The USS Nimitz was in Guam for a scheduled port visit as part of what is likely the aircraft carrier’s last deployment.

Police spokeswoman Berlyn Savella confirmed by email Thursday that “collaborative efforts within local and federal agencies have ceased” but Guam police consider the case open.

Military assets involved in the search included crews from U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 from Guam; a Navy P-8 Poseidon aircraft from Task Force 72 at Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan; and Guam-based 45-foot response boats and the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Oliver Henry, according to the release.

Guam Fire Rescue’s coast and offshore teams also assisted, the strike group said.

Savella encouraged anyone with information about Holt’s whereabouts to contact the police department.

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard on Saturday suspended its weeklong search for a local man who went missing offshore on a recreational fishing trip.

The search for Jeffrey Hattori, 58, concluded Saturday after the Coast Guard, Guam Fire Rescue and the Navy covered more than 120,000 miles looking for him after he disappeared April 12.



BILL TIERNAN/TNS

Thom Metz of Virginia Beach plays along with other members of the Tidewater Pipes and Drums in February 2024 at Scope in Norfolk, Va.

Military tattoo to hail 250th year of Army, Navy and Marine Corps

By COLIN WARREN-HICKS
The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

All good American patriots know the Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776.

But not as well known is that the Continental Congress, foreseeing war on the horizon in 1775, authorized the creation of an army, a navy and a landing force for the fleet.

This year, the Virginia Arts Festival’s presentation of the 2025 Virginia International Tattoo will honor the 250th anniversaries of the U.S. Army, Navy and Marine

Corps.

The traditional military-style tattoo, a musical event with military and civilian bands performing tightly choreographed celebrations of patriotism, began Thursday and runs through April 27 at Scope arena in Norfolk.

Over a dozen U.S. bands will be joined by two performance groups from Australia; His Majesty the King’s Guard Band and Drill Team from Norway; the Japan Air Self-Defense Force Central Band; the Major Sinclair Me-

morial Pipe Band of Northern Ireland; and the Royal Canadian Air Force Pipes and Drums. A second Canadian group, Delta Police Pipe Band, was scheduled but canceled its performance. Scott Jackson, event director and producer, told The Virginian-Pilot that the pipe band did not provide a reason.

The stories of the U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps will be woven into the performance and include scenes spotlighting bands from each branch, he said.

MILITARY

US, Philippine fighters train to sink warships

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines — U.S. and Philippine multirole fighterjets are preparing to destroy warships during annual drills in the Philippines, amid rising tensions with Beijing in the South China Sea.

Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornets and Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons — deployed from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and Misawa Air Base in northeastern Japan — are participating in Balikatan, annual combat drills that began Monday and run through May 9.

The exercise brings together approximately 9,000 American and 5,000 Filipino troops in what officials describe as a “full battle test” for island defense.

“This year’s Balikatan will showcase a full battle test, the purposeful integration of real-world security situations relevant to the region with live, virtual and constructive training,” the head of Marine Corps Forces Pacific, Lt. Gen. James Glynn, said at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, according to a Naval News report Tuesday.

The drills take place amid sporadic confrontations between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards in the contested South China Sea. The two sides have repeatedly clashed over competing territorial claims in the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone.

Air Force F-16s have trained regularly in the Philippines in recent years, said Lt. Col. Josh “Vegas” Plocinski, commander of Misawa’s 14th Fighter Squadron.

“One of the bigger aspects we will be going to focus on in Balikatan is maritime strike,” he told Stars and Stripes on Thursday at Clark.

The squadron has deployed a dozen F-16s and 400 airmen to Clark. They will use modified 2,000-pound GPS-guided bombs during maritime strike missions, Plocinski said.

Maritime strike isn’t the Hornets’ primary mission, but it’s within their capability, said Marine Aircraft Group 39 commander, Col. Jeremie “Hank” Hester, an AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter pilot who is overseeing nearly 1,000 Marines during the exercise.



An F/A-18 Hornet with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 taxis during a Balikatan drill at Clark Air Base, Philippines, on Thursday.

The Marines, deployed from California, are operating from facilities spread from northern Luzon to Palawan, he said.

Eight Hornets from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 are at the base. Also in the Philippines are six MV-22B Ospreys from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 364 at

Camp Pendelton, Calif., Hester said.

The Philippine air force has previously used its FA-50s — South Korean-made supersonic jets — at Balikatan. During the 2023 drills, an FA-50 successfully launched a missile strike on a mock target vessel, according to the state-run Phi-

lippine News Agency.

Manila is preparing to upgrade its fighter fleet. In March, the U.S. Department of Defense approved a \$5.58 billion sale of 20 Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 70/72 fighters — 16 single-seat C models and four dual-seat D models.

The Block 70/72 is an advanced fourth-generation fighter but lacks the stealth capabilities of fifth-generation aircraft like the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has invested heavily in bolstering the Philippines’ military structure. Billions of dollars have gone toward modernizing runways and support facilities at Cesar Basa Air Base, just south of Clark and home to the Philippines’ 5th Fighter Wing, which flies the FA-50.

F/A-18s and F-16s are versatile fighters capable of air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, said Ralph Cossa, former president of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii.

“They would be good for defending or attacking islands or ships at sea, as well as land-based targets,” he told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday.

Soldier pleads to killing taxi driver during attempt to desert

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — A soldier pleaded guilty Wednesday at his court-martial to killing a cab driver during his attempt to desert the Army and avoid conviction on child rape charges.

Pvt. Jonathan Kang Lee, 26, faced a possible maximum penalty of life in prison without parole for killing Nicholas Hokema, 34, of Tumwater, Wash.

Under a plea agreement, Lee admitted his guilt in exchange for a sentence of life with the possibility of parole. He also pleaded guilty to desertion, resisting arrest, and two specifications of failure to obey a lawful order.

Lee was previously convicted of rape and sexual abuse of his stepdaughters.



Army Pvt. Jonathan Kang Lee is led into court at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., on Wednesday.

tary judge, asked Lee whether he had stabbed Hokema to death.

“There was a lot of blood,” Lee said. “I didn’t think he would live.”

Lee’s admission of guilt for the first time publicly provided details of the events in January 2024 when Lee deserted from the Army and avoided capture for 12 days.

Lee, then a specialist with the 201st Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade at Lewis-McChord, was facing a Jan. 16 court-martial appearance for the rape and sexual abuse of his stepdaughters, who were at the time 8 and 4 years old.

Under Army policy, he was not in pre-trial detention but restricted to the base and ordered to report daily to an officer.

On Jan. 14, Lee drove away from Lewis-McChord in a white 2011 Honda Pilot SUV.

“I was going to commit suicide or desert,” Lee told the judge.

He said his vehicle broke down and he paid a tow truck to take it away. He then got into a red taxi driven by Hokema.

Lee said he planned to have Hokema drive him to a bus stop because he was running low on money. He said he began feeling ill in the cab and told Hokema to drop him off at the Westfield Southcenter shopping mall in Tukwila, south of Seattle.

Security camera footage of the mall parking lot at about 4 a.m. on Jan. 15 showed Hokema and Lee struggling and Lee stabbing Hokema before dumping the driver’s body in the parking lot and stealing and fleeing in his 2012 Toyota Camry taxi, prosecutors said.

Lee initially said he intended to brandish his knife and get Hokema to “back off” in a dispute over how much fare that Lee owed.

But Lee admitted in court that he stabbed Hokema in the chest, then stabbed him in the neck or head as he slumped over the car’s middle console.

“I killed him,” Lee said. “I did not think he was going to kill or seriously hurt me. He was unarmed and just wanted to get his change back.”

Lee was discovered missing at Lewis-McChord, and the Army Criminal Investigation Division put out a “be on the lookout” bulletin to law enforcement in the region near

the base.

In the early hours of Jan. 15, police in Tukwila responded to a report of a body in the parking lot of the mall. They found Hokema fatally stabbed.

On Jan. 19, with Lee still at large, a court-martial panel at Lewis-McChord found him guilty of child rape and sexual abuse charges. He was sentenced to a maximum of 64 years in prison and demoted to private.

Hokema’s taxi was found abandoned in Redmond, north of Seattle, on Jan. 26. Army CID agents went to a nearby apartment that they believed was rented by Lee’s girlfriend.

Lee said when the agents came to the door, his girlfriend warned him and he hid behind a bed in the upstairs bedroom.

Lee jumped from a second-story window, and wrestled with the agents, grabbing for one officer’s handgun. Lee was knocked to the ground, handcuffed, and taken away, according to Army CID.

Having been convicted of the child rape and sexual abuse charges, he was confined to the Northwestern Joint Regional Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison at Lewis-McChord.

At the time of his arrest, Tukwila police considered Lee a “person of interest” in Hokema’s death. He was named a suspect in March. In September, the Army charged Lee in Hokema’s killing.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers called witnesses as part of the sen-

tencing process to testify about the impact of the case and their relationships with Hokema or Lee.

Nicole Sharkody said she and Hokema had lived happily together with their two cats and a dog. When he failed to come home from his nighttime job as a taxi driver, she left a note on the refrigerator whiteboard telling him to call her as soon as he got home.

Local police told her to come in and file a missing person report. When she arrived at the station with her mother, they were ushered to a room where an officer told them Nick was dead.

The news “shattered, shattered” her life, Sharkody said.

Lee told the court of his violent childhood in Virginia, where he said he was beaten by his father, mother and older brother.

“I joined the Army to get away from home,” he said.

Lee said a deployment to Afghanistan had given him a purpose but “almost every aspect of my life was spiraling” when he came back to the U.S. in 2019.

It was then that he abused his stepdaughters, which led to his first court-martial, his 2024 desertion, and the killing of Nicholas Hokema.

After the sentencing, Lt. Col. Sean Fitzgibbon, the chief prosecutor at the trial, said the life sentence was a just outcome.

“While nothing the court can do will bring Mr. Hokema back, hopefully this sentence will allow for some closure for his friends and family,” he said.

MILITARY

DODEA included in Trump order on discipline

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

U.S. public schools, including those operated by the Defense Department on bases stateside and abroad, are being told by the White House to rework discipline policies that it says are based on racial considerations rather than behavior.

The mandate came in an executive order signed Wednesday by President Donald Trump and titled “Reinstating Common Sense School Discipline Policies.”

A provision applying to Department of Defense Education Activity schools gives the Pentagon chief 90 days to “issue a revised school discipline code that appropriately protects and enhances the education of the children of America’s military-service families.”

Trump’s order asserts that schools have become more dangerous by letting some student misconduct slide to avoid racial inequity in discipline numbers.

Having a disparate number of Black or Latino students suspended versus white students, for instance, could have led to scrutiny by the federal government and a loss of federal funds under the guidance of previous administrations, according to the White House.

The federal government “will no longer tolerate known risks to children’s safety and well-being in the



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Students head to class at a Department of Defense Education Activity school in Germany in 2024. An executive order signed Wednesday by President Donald Trump directs U.S. public schools, including those operated by DODEA, to end discipline policies based on racial considerations and instead make student behavior the standard.

classroom that result from the application of school discipline based on discriminatory and unlawful ‘equity’ ideology,” the order states.

DODEA is reviewing the order and and “will implement all appro-

priate actions” once it receives direction from the Defense Department, an agency spokeswoman said in a statement Thursday.

The order cites a 2018 report from the Federal Commission on

School Safety that found “schools ignored or covered up — rather than disciplined — student misconduct in order to avoid any purported racial disparity in discipline numbers that might catch the eye of the federal government.”

At issue in the new Trump administration order is the restoration under former President Joe Biden of federal guidance saying that racial discrepancies in school discipline could be grounds for punishment.

A joint letter from the Justice and Education departments in 2014 told schools they could lose federal funding if the disciplinary policies were deemed to violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

That portion of the law bars discrimination by federal funding recipients.

The Biden administration’s 2023 guidance “effectively reinstated the practice of weaponizing Title VI to promote an approach to school discipline based on discriminatory equity ideology,” the executive order states.

It directs the education secretary to issue new guidance within 30 days to local and state educational agencies regarding school discipline.

And within 60 days, the department must coordinate with governors and state attorneys general on

how to prevent racial discrimination in school discipline, according to the order.

In addition, the White House wants an analysis of the nature and consequences of all discipline-related investigations in American education since 2009 under Title VI. The order did not specify the significance of 2009 as a starting point.

Schools across the United States have reported increased behavioral issues since the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a July 2024 report by the National Center for Education Statistics.

In May 2024, 80% of public school leaders reported that they agree or strongly agree with the statement, “The COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects continue to negatively impact the behavioral development of students at my school,” according to the report.

Also in 2024, The Associated Press reported that suspension rates for Black students had dropped in the past decade, but it found that large disparities still exist after reviewing discipline data in key states.

In California, for example, the suspension rate for Black students fell from 13% in 2013 to 9% a decade later, but that was still three times higher than the suspension rate for white students, according to the AP report.

Days: ‘Hegseth’s doing a great job for Donald Trump,’ Democratic lawmaker says

FROM PAGE 1

more climate change worship. No more electric tanks. No more gender confusion. No more pronouns. No more excuses. No more quotas. No more woke b----- that undermines commanders and command climates,” he said. “We are laser-focused on our mission of warfighting.”

Hegseth visited the Army site in rural Pennsylvania as he took the unusual step of using official Pentagon social media to amplify messages of support for him remaining in his job, promoting praise from Republican allies including Vice President JD Vance, Donald Trump Jr. and Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla. Numerous Democratic lawmakers and at least one Republican have suggested he step down following revelations that he repeatedly circulated advance attack plans — which former defense officials say would be highly classified in most circumstances — in a commercial messaging app.

Another official Pentagon account, meanwhile, posted a clip of White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt affirming to reporters that Trump retained confi-

dence in Hegseth and denouncing a “smear campaign” against him.

The former Fox News host and Army National Guard officer was narrowly confirmed in January following a bruising confirmation process that aired allegations of heavy drinking and poor management, along with the disclosure that he paid a settlement to a woman who accused him of sexual assault. At the time, he vigorously denied any wrongdoing and sought to bat away the allegations by labeling them “anonymous smears,” a phrase he has revived in recent days as he has campaigned to remain in Trump’s good graces.

In his remarks Hegseth repeated his long-standing criticism of the military’s system for evaluating physical fitness and eligibility for combat roles. Before being tapped by Trump, Hegseth argued forcefully for scrapping policies that for a decade have permitted women to serve in all ground combat roles if they can meet standards for those jobs.

Since taking office he has mischaracterized the military’s dual-track system for fitness and occupational standards, in which

troops’ physical fitness standards have been adjusted for age and gender, but where separate occupational standards for different military jobs, including ground combat positions, are gender-neutral. This week, the Army announced changes to its physical fitness rules, including the introduction of a gender-neutral fitness standard for troops serving in 21 combat jobs.

“To be the world’s most lethal and effective fighting force, you have to trust that the warrior alongside [you in] battle, or the troops fighting in the unit that many of you will leave are capable, truly physically capable, of doing what is necessary under fire,” he said. “They need to be fit, not fat, sharp, not shabby. ... That’s why we’re reviewing how the department has maintained standards in the past, especially the four years, and whether those standards have dropped, formally or informally.”

Military officials argue that standards have not been lowered to allow women to serve in front-line or any other units.

Since taking office Hegseth has authorized a number of other per-

sonnel-related moves, ordering a purge of military websites and training of references to gender and ethnicity, seeking to bar transgender troops — a move now blocked by courts — and unceremoniously firing numerous senior officers, many of them women, people of color or individuals elevated under President Joe Biden. Among them was Air Force Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown Jr., the second African American officer to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Hegseth cited what he described as a “recruiting renaissance,” attributing recent improvements to the Trump administration’s agenda even though it’s not yet clear whether that data reflects shifting views about the military among young Americans or changes made to the recruiting process during the previous administration. He highlighted the military’s expanding role in seeking to deter migrants at the southern border, along with the administration’s bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen and its efforts to pressure European allies to take greater responsibility for securing the Continent,

potentially with diminished American help.

Hegseth also referenced his relationship with Trump as media reports suggest the White House could be searching for a new Pentagon chief. He offered a brief impersonation of the president, who he said warned him in making the offer for the Pentagon job: “ ‘Pete, you’re going to have to be tough as s---,’ ” Hegseth said.

“Boy, he was not kidding on that one,” Hegseth added. “And that’s fine.”

While some Democrats are calling for Hegseth to go, others predicted that a dismissal would be unlikely. Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said recent events had proved that Hegseth lacked the experience to effectively lead the Pentagon but that Trump prized loyalty over other characteristics.

“So, no, I don’t expect Trump to fire Pete Hegseth. Pete Hegseth’s doing a great job for Donald Trump,” Smith told MSNBC. “He’s just jeopardizing the national security of the American people, which we all ought to be concerned about.”

MILITARY

VP Vance pours out praise, beer at Ramstein

By ZADE VADNAIS
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Vice President JD Vance toasted U.S. service members with a beer stein in hand during a visit Thursday to this major military transportation hub.

Accompanied by his wife and children, Vance served beers to service members to show his appreciation during a brief refueling layover at the installation.

The stop was part of his family's return from a weeklong trip to Italy and India that began late last week.

The family also toured a C-130 and spent time speaking with several dozen airmen, soldiers and Space Force guardians while at the installation.

The hangar hosting the event buzzed with excitement as music played and service members chatted while eagerly awaiting Vance's arrival.

Hot dogs, fresh popcorn and a variety of cold drinks added to the festive mood.

Gen. James Hecker, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe — Air Forces Africa, greeted the Vance family on the flight line upon their arrival.

When the vice president stepped into view, service members welcomed him with cheers and pre-poured beers in hand, courtesy of the USO.

Brig. Gen. Adrienne Williams, the 86th Airlift Wing commander, welcomed the vice president and his family with a commemorative beer stein bearing the wing's insignia.

Vance used the stein to offer a toast in honor of the Ramstein troops.

"To the airmen of this base and all of our troops serving overseas, God bless you guys," he said.

"We know that military service, especially at the level you guys do

it, is an incredible sacrifice," he said.

"We're grateful to you guys. We're thankful for what you do, and as a small token of appreciation, I'm going to serve you some beers," he added.

He then manned a nearby beer tap, topping off drinks and spending the better part of an hour chatting with service members, thanking them personally and posing for photos.

"I was one of the first in line," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Killebrew, a cyber technician with USAF-AFACRICA's directorate of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

"He's been in our shoes before, so he understands what it means to sacrifice for your country," he said.

"This was a really exciting experience for me and my troops to meet someone so high up in our chain of command," he added.



ZADE VADNAIS/Stars and Stripes

Vice President JD Vance speaks with a U.S. service member during a visit to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, April 24, 2025. Vance raised a toast to service members and then offered them beer.

VA launches task force targeting anti-Christian bias

By LINDA F. HERSEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is establishing a task force with the goal to identify and eliminate anti-Christian discrimination at the agency.

The task force will collect reports from employees on actions and activities that are deemed "hostile" to Christian views and values, according to an internal memo that VA Secretary Doug Collins, a pastor and Air Force Reserve chaplain, sent to employees.

Collins wrote in his email that the creation of the task force aligns with President Donald Trump's executive order on Feb. 6 to end the "anti-Christian weaponization" of the federal government and protect religious freedom.

Employees are asked to report other workers by name along with their concerns about discriminatory actions to a dedicated email: Anti-ChristianBiasReporting@va.gov, according to the me-

mo.

"Submissions should include sufficient identifiers such as names, dates and locations," Collins wrote.

Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill., chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, said he applauded "President Trump and Secretary Collins for rightfully continuing our efforts to root out any form of religious discrimination at VA. In return, we will ensure that every veteran and the VA employees that serve them are treated with dignity."

But Democratic lawmakers were quick to criticize the task force as not based on fact and warned it will elevate one religious faith above others.

"It raises the specter of dividing the veteran community and favoring some religions over others," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., the top Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "Since our nation's birth, vet-

erans have fought and died to preserve our freedoms — including to live free from religious intolerance or interference by government."

Blumenthal said all veterans regardless of their religion deserve equal respect.

"Secretary Collins continues to demonstrate that his mission at VA is not to serve all veterans or lead all employees — just those who share his ideological views," said Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., the top Democrat on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Army veteran Kirt Love of Texas, who advocates for disabled veterans with the VA, said he has concerns about interjecting religion into the work of the VA.

"This is a bad joke. It's a step backward for the VA. The Trump administration wants to impose its religious beliefs on others. The VA should not be promoting or giving preference to one religious group," said Love, a disabled com-

bat veteran who served from 1988 to 1992 with deployments to Iraq and Germany.

Collins wrote in the memo that he launched the task force as part of a review of the Biden administration's treatment of Christians.

The VA is seeking reports of "any retaliatory actions taken or threatened [against workers] in response to abstaining from certain procedures or treatments (for example: abortion or hormone therapy)," he wrote.

Since Collins took over as VA secretary, he has phased out hormone therapy and other medical treatments for transgender veterans.

The new VA task force is similar to a task force that the Justice Department formed in February that Trump directed by executive order for addressing anti-Christian discrimination at federal agencies. Collins is a member of that task force, along with other Cabinet members.

"Secretary Collins is carrying out President Trump's political agenda at the expense of VA's core mission," Takano said about the new VA task force. "VA has a sacred duty to every veteran and employee, regardless of their religion, race, gender, sexual orientation or identity."

Civil liberty groups warned the VA task force and executive order are veiled attempts to promote religious intolerance and undermine civil liberties.

Rachel Laser, chief executive officer of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said if the Trump administration "cared about religious freedom and ending religious persecution, he'd be addressing the antisemitism in his inner circle, anti-Muslim bigotry, hate crimes against people of color and other religious minorities."

"Instead, he's abolishing federal programs and protections that address those wrongs," she said.

Trans: Multiple courts currently hearing, ruling on cases over troop ban

FROM PAGE 1

gender people from military service.

But in March, U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin Settle in Tacoma, Wash., ruled for several long-serving transgender military members who say that the ban is insulting and discriminatory and that their firing would cause lasting damage to their careers and reputations.

The Trump administration offered no explanation as to why

transgender troops, who have been able to serve openly over the past four years with no evidence of problems, should suddenly be banned, Settle wrote.

The judge is an appointee of Republican President George W. Bush and is a former captain in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

In 2016, during Barack Obama's presidency, a Defense Department policy permitted transgender people to serve openly in the

military.

During Trump's first term in the White House, the Republican issued a directive to ban transgender service members, with an exception for some of those who had already started transitioning under more lenient rules that were in effect during Obama's Democratic administration. The Supreme Court allowed it to take effect. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, scrapped it when he took office.

The rules the Defense Depart-

ment wants to enforce contain no exceptions. Sauer said the policy during Trump's first term and the one that has been blocked are "materially indistinguishable."

Thousands of transgender people serve in the military, but they represent less than 1% of the total number of active-duty service members.

The policy also has been blocked by a federal judge in the nation's capital, but that ruling has been temporarily halted by a fed-

eral appeals court, which heard arguments on Tuesday. The three-judge panel, which includes two judges appointed by Trump during his first term, appeared to be in favor of the administration.

In a more limited ruling, a judge in New Jersey also has barred the Air Force from removing two transgender men, saying they showed their separation would cause lasting damage to their careers and reputations that no monetary settlement could repair.

IMF chief urges resolution to trade tensions



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP
International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaks Thursday at a news conference in Washington.

By PAUL WISEMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The head of the International Monetary Fund urged countries to move “swiftly” to resolve trade disputes that threaten global economic growth.

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said the unpredictability arising from President Donald Trump’s aggressive campaign of taxes on foreign imports is causing companies to delay investments and consumers to hold off on spending.

“Uncertainty is bad for business,”

she told reporters Thursday in a briefing during the spring meetings of the IMF and its sister agency, the World Bank.

Georgieva’s comments came two days after the IMF downgraded the outlook for world economic growth this year. The 191-country lending organization, which seeks to promote global growth, financial stability and to reduce poverty, also sharply lowered its forecast for the United States. It said the chances that the world’s biggest economy would fall into recession have risen from 25%, to about 40%.

Georgieva warned that the economic fallout from trade conflict would fall most heavily on poor countries, which do not have the money to offset the damage.

Since returning the White House in January, Trump has aggressively imposed tariffs on American trading partners. Among other things, he’s slapped 145% import taxes on China and 10% on almost every country in the world, raising U.S. tariffs to levels not seen in more than a century. But he has repeatedly changed U.S. policy — suddenly suspending or altering the tariffs —

and left companies bewildered about what he is trying to accomplish and what his end game might be.

Trump’s tariffs — a sharp reversal of decades of U.S. policy in favor of free trade — and the resulting uncertainty around them have caused a weeklong rout in financial markets. But stocks rallied Wednesday after the Trump administration signaled that it is open to reducing the massive tariffs on China. “There is an opportunity for a big deal here,” U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Wednesday.

Man is charged with arson after allegedly sparking fire in NJ

By MIKE CATALINI
Associated Press

A man set a bonfire using wooden pallets in New Jersey’s Pine Barrens and left them without fully extinguishing the blaze, sparking a quick-moving wildfire with smoke affecting air quality in the New York City area, authorities said Thursday.

Authorities arrested the 19-year-old from Waretown, N.J., and charged him with arson and aggravated arson in the fire that’s still burning in southern New Jersey that they described as started with “an improperly extinguished bonfire.”

Prosecutors said there’s no attorney listed for him.

It’s peak forest fire season in the vast pine wilderness that covers more than 1 million acres — an area roughly as large as the Grand Canyon — and firefighters are contending with low humidity and the aftermath of a monthslong drought in the region.

Though large tracts of the Pine Barrens are uninhabited, New Jersey is the nation’s most densely populated state and officials have warned the fire could threaten developments nearby. The fire had

grown to more than 23 square miles on Thursday, approaching what officials believe to have been the largest wildfire in the state in the last two decades.

Authorities had said there were no injuries or deaths in the fire, but a commercial building and some vehicles had been destroyed. About 5,000 people had been evacuated but were permitted to return home on Wednesday, officials said.

“This is still a very active fire,” Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette said Wednesday. “As we continue to get this under full control the expectation is that the number of acres will grow and will grow in a place that is unpopulated.”

The effects of the fire are beginning to be seen beyond the state.

Higher-than-normal pollution levels were expected Thursday in New York City, Rockland and Westchester counties, and in Long Island’s Nassau and Suffolk counties, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation advised Wednesday. The fire is roughly 54 miles south of New York City.



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION/AP
Smoke fills the sky from a wildfire in Lacey Townships, N.J., on Tuesday.

It said “going indoors may reduce exposure” to problems such as eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath. The Ocean County Sheriff’s Office in New Jersey also cautioned early Thursday about air quality, saying “smoke will continue to permeate the area.” It said emergency personnel will be on site for the next few days.

In New York, dry conditions across the state are resulting in a “high” fire danger rating in several regions including New York City, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, Capital Region, and portions

of the North Country, the state air quality advisory said. The rest of the state is at a moderate or low level of fire danger.

Officials said the fire is believed to be the second-worst in the last two decades, smaller only than a 2007 blaze that burned 26 square miles.

Acting New Jersey Gov. Tahesha Way declared a state of emergency Wednesday and officials said they’ve contained about 50% of the wildfire. Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat, is on an official visit in Poland for a Holocaust memorial. He’s due to fly back home on Friday.

Video released by the state agency overseeing the fire service showed billowing white and black clouds of smoke, intense flames engulfing pines and firefighters dousing a charred structure.

The Pine Barrens sit between Philadelphia to the west and the Atlantic coast to the east. The region, with its quick-draining sandy soil, is in peak forest fire season.

The trees are still developing leaves, humidity remains low and winds can kick up, drying out the forest floor.

Dick Durbin of Illinois, Senate’s No. 2 Democrat, won’t seek reelection

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois said Wednesday he will not seek reelection in 2026, ending his more than four-decade career representing Illinois and accelerating a generational shift in Senate Democratic leadership where he has long held the No. 2 position.

Durbin, 80, is in his fifth Senate term and was first elected to the House in 1982. His decision not to run will set off a scramble for his

Senate seat in solidly Democratic Illinois and for his leadership position in Washington as many in the party agitate for a new and more aggressive approach to confronting Republican President Donald Trump in his second term.

“The decision of whether to run has not been easy,” Durbin said in a video posted to X. “I truly love the job of being a United States senator. But in my heart I know it’s time to pass the torch.”

Durbin served seven terms in

the House before succeeding his mentor, Paul Simon, in the Senate in 1996. Durbin has been the No. 2 Senate Democrat since 2005. From that post, he helped shape the career of an up-and-comer from Illinois, Barack Obama, who was only four years into his first term in the Senate when he was elected president.

Obama said in a post on X after Durbin’s announcement that “I would not have been a United States Senator — and certainly

would not have been President — had it not been for Dick’s support.”

As the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee during Democratic President Joe Biden’s term, Durbin led the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson in 2022. He also organized the Democrats’ pushback when Trump and Senate Republicans pushed through the confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett in late 2020.

Durbin is part of a Senate leadership team that has been in place for almost two decades, alongside the current Senate Democratic leader, New York’s Chuck Schumer, 74, and the late Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, who retired in 2017 and died in 2021. The race for Durbin’s No. 2 spot is likely to be seen as an early test for who could eventually replace Schumer as younger members of the caucus have eyed a new generation of leaders.

NATION

International students pile up wins in court

By KATE BRUMBACK
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Anjan Roy was studying with friends at Missouri State University when he got an email that turned his world upside down. His legal status as an international student had been terminated, and he was suddenly at risk for deportation.

“I was in literal shock, like, what the hell is this?” said Roy, a graduate student in computer science from Bangladesh.

At first, he avoided going out in public, skipping classes and mostly keeping his phone turned off. A court ruling in his favor led to his status being restored this week, and he has returned to his apartment, but he is still asking his roommates to screen visitors.

More than a thousand international students have faced similar disruptions in recent weeks, with their academic careers—and their lives in the U.S. — thrown into doubt in a widespread crackdown by the Trump administration. Some have found a measure of success in court, with federal judges around the country issuing orders to restore students’ legal status at least temporarily.

In addition to the case filed in Atlanta, where Roy is among 133 plaintiffs, judges have issued temporary restraining orders in states including New Hampshire, Minnesota, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin. Judges have denied similar requests in some other cases, saying it was not clear the loss of status would cause irreparable harm.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last month the State Department was revoking visas held by visitors who were acting counter to national interests, including some who protested Israel’s war in Gaza and those who face criminal charges. But many affected students said they have been involved



STEVEN SENNE/AP

A pedestrian walks along a path on the campus of Brown University in Providence, R.I., in 2020.

only in minor infractions, or it’s unclear altogether why they were targeted.

The attorney for Roy and his fellow plaintiffs, Charles Kuck, argued the government did not have legal grounds to terminate the students’ status.

He speculated in court last week the government is trying to encourage these students to self-deport, saying “the pressure on these students is overwhelming.” He said some asked him if it was safe to leave their homes to get food, and others worried they wouldn’t receive a degree after years of work or feared their chances of a career in the U.S. were shot.

“I think the hope is they’ll just leave,” Kuck said. “The reality is these kids are invested.”

An attorney for the government, R. David Powell, argued the students did not suffer significant

harm because they could transfer their academic credits or find jobs in another country.

At least 1,190 students at 183 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or their legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records. The AP is working to confirm reports of hundreds more students who are caught up in the crackdown.

In a lawsuit filed Monday by four people on student visas at the University of Iowa, attorneys detail the “mental and financial suffering” they’ve experienced. One graduate student, from India, “cannot sleep and is having difficulty breathing and eating,” the lawsuit reads. He has stopped going to school, doing research or working

as a teaching assistant. Another student, a Chinese undergraduate who expected to graduate this December, said his revoked status has caused his depression to worsen to the point that his doctor increased his medication dosage. The student, the lawsuit says, has not left his apartment out of fear of detention.

Roy, 23, began his academic career at Missouri State in August 2024 as an undergraduate computer science student. He was active in the chess club and a fraternity and has a broad circle of friends. After graduating in December, he began work on a master’s degree in January and expects to finish in May 2026.

When Roy received the university’s April 10 email on his status termination, one of his friends offered to skip class to go with him to the school’s international services of-

fice, even though they had a quiz in 45 minutes. The staff there said a database check showed his student status had been terminated, but they didn’t know why.

Roy said his only brush with the law came in 2021, when he was questioned by campus security after someone called in a dispute at a university housing building. But he said an officer determined there was no evidence of any crime and no charges were filed.

Roy also got an email from the U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh telling him his visa had been revoked and that he could be detained at any time. It warned that if he was deported, he could be sent to a country other than his own. Roy thought about leaving the U.S. but decided to stay after talking to a lawyer.

Anxious about being in his own apartment, Roy went to stay with his second cousin and her husband nearby.

“They were scared someone was going to pick me up from the street and take me somewhere that they wouldn’t even know,” Roy said.

He mostly stayed inside, turned off his phone unless he needed to use it, and avoided internet browsers that track user data through cookies. His professors were understanding when he told them he wouldn’t be able to come to classes for a while, he said.

After the judge’s last order Friday, he moved back to his apartment. He learned Tuesday his status had been restored, and he plans to return to class. But he’s still nervous. He asked his two roommates, both international students, to let him know before they open the door if someone they don’t know knocks.

The judge’s restoration of his legal status is temporary. Another hearing scheduled for Thursday was to determine whether he keeps that status while the litigation continues.

Palestinian student remains in detention in Vermont

By AMANDA SWINHART
Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. — A large crowd of supporters and advocates gathered outside a Vermont courthouse Wednesday to support a Palestinian man who led protests against the war in Gaza as a student at Columbia University and was arrested during an interview about finalizing his U.S. citizenship.

Mohsen Mahdawi, a legal permanent resident for 10 years, was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on April 14. He made an initial court appearance Wednesday during which a judge extended a temporary order keeping Mahdawi in Vermont and scheduled a hearing

for next week. Mahdawi’s lawyers say he was detained in retaliation for his speech advocating for Palestinian human rights.

“What the government provided thus far only establishes that the only basis they have to currently detaining him in the manner they did is his lawful speech,” attorney Luna Droubi said after the hearing. “We intend on being back in one week’s time to free Mohsen.”

In court documents, the government argues that Mahdawi’s detention is a “constitutionally valid aspect of the deportation process” and that district courts are barred from hearing challenges to how and when such proceedings are

begun.

“District courts play no role in that process. Consequently, this Court lacks jurisdiction over Petitioner’s claims, which are all, at bottom, challenges to removal proceedings,” wrote Michael Drescher, Vermont’s acting U.S. attorney.

According to his lawyers, Mahdawi had answered questions and signed a document that he was willing to defend the U.S. Constitution and laws of the nation. They said masked ICE agents then entered the interview room, shackled Mahdawi, and put him in a car.

“What we’re seeing here is unprecedented where they are so hellbent on detaining students from good universities in our

country,” attorney Cyrus Mehta said. “These are not hardened criminals. These are people who have not been charged with any crime, they have also not been charged under any of the other deportation provisions of the Immigration Act.”

Mahdawi is still scheduled for a hearing date in immigration court in Louisiana on May 1, his attorneys said. His notice to appear says he is removable under the Immigration and Nationality Act because the Secretary of State has determined his presence and activities “would have serious adverse foreign policy consequences and would compromise a compelling U.S. foreign policy interest.”

Last month, Secretary of State

Marco Rubio said the State Department was revoking visas held by visitors who were acting counter to national interests, including some who protested Israel’s war in Gaza and those who face criminal charges.

According to the court filing, Mahdawi was born in a refugee camp in the West Bank and moved to the United States in 2014. He recently completed coursework at Columbia and was expected to graduate in May before beginning a master’s degree program there in the fall.

As a student, Mahdawi was an outspoken critic of Israel’s military campaign in Gaza and organized campus protests until March 2024.

A dozen states sue over tariffs

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A dozen states sued the Trump administration in the U.S. Court of International Trade in New York on Wednesday to stop its tariff policy, saying that the policy is unlawful and has brought chaos to the American economy.

The lawsuit said the tariff policy that has been put in place by President Donald Trump has been subject to his “whims rather than the sound exercise of lawful authority.”

It challenged Trump’s claim that he could arbitrarily impose tariffs based on the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The suit asks the court to declare the tariffs to be illegal and to block government agencies and its officers from enforcing them.

A message sent to the Justice Department for comment was not immediately returned.

The states listed as plaintiffs in the lawsuit were Oregon, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York and Vermont.

In a release regarding the lawsuit, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes called Trump’s tariff scheme “insane.”

She said that the policy was “not only economically reckless — it is illegal.”

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong said that “Trump’s lawless and chaotic tariffs are a massive tax on Connecticut families and a disaster for Connecticut

businesses and jobs.” The lawsuit maintained that only Congress has the power to impose tariffs and that the president can only invoke the International Emergency Economic Powers Act when an emergency presents an “unusual and extraordinary threat” from abroad, which they claim is not the case for the current tariff plans.

“By claiming the authority to impose immense and ever-changing tariffs on whatever goods entering the United States he chooses, for whatever reason he finds convenient to declare an emergency, the President has upended the constitutional order and brought chaos to the American economy,” the lawsuit said.

Last week, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, separately sued the Trump administration in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of California over the tariff policy, saying his state could lose billions of dollars in revenue as the largest importer in the country.

White House spokesperson Kush Desai responded to Newsom’s lawsuit, saying that the Trump administration “remains committed to addressing this national emergency that’s decimating America’s industries and leaving our workers behind with every tool at our disposal, from tariffs to negotiations.”

The policy has been in flux over the past few months, between a 90-day pause and changes to rates, causing widespread confusion and large market fluctuations.

US filings for jobless benefits inch up

U.S. applications for jobless benefits rose modestly last week as businesses continue to retain workers despite fears of a possible economic downturn.

Jobless claim applications inched up by 6,000 to 222,000 for the week ending April 19, the Labor Department said Thursday.

That’s just barely more than the 220,000 new applications analysts forecast.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are considered a proxy for layoffs and have mostly stayed in what is considered to be a healthy range between 200,000 and 250,000 over the past few years.

The four-week average of appli-

cations, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, ticked down by 750 to 220,250.

The total number of Americans receiving unemployment benefits for the week of April 12 declined by 37,000 to 1.84 million.



A hiring sign is displayed in Prospect Heights, Ill.



Elizabeth Mahon, owner of baby store Three Littles, unpacks strollers and other inventory ordered by customers ahead of tariff-driven price increases at her Union Market location in Washington, on April 16.

Most Americans expect higher prices as a result of tariffs

BY JOSH BOAK
AND AMELIA
THOMSON-DEVEAUX
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans’ trust in President Donald Trump to bolster the U.S. economy appears to be faltering, with a new poll showing that many people fear the country is being steered into a recession and that the president’s broad and haphazardly enforced tariffs will cause prices to rise.

Roughly half of U.S. adults say that Trump’s trade policies will increase prices “a lot” and another 3 in 10 think prices could go up “somewhat,” according to the poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About half of Americans are “extremely” or “very” concerned about the possibility of the U.S. economy going into a recession in the next few months.

While skepticism about tariffs is increasing modestly, that doesn’t mean the public is automatically rejecting Trump or his approach to trade. However, the wariness could cause problems for a president who promised voters he could quickly fix inflation.

Three months into his second term, Trump’s handling of the economy and tariffs is showing up as a potential weakness. About 4 in 10 Americans approve of the way the Republican president is handling the economy and trade negotiations.

Matthew Wood, 41, said he’s waiting to see how the tariffs play

out, but he’s feeling anxious.

“I’m not a huge fan of it, especially considering China and going back and forth with adjustments on both ends,” said Wood, who lives in West Liberty, Ky., and is unemployed. “Personally, it hasn’t affected me as of yet. But, generally, I don’t know how this is going to come to an end, especially with the big countries involved.”

Still, Wood said he changed his registration from Republican to independent, having been turned off by Trump’s attitude and deference to billionaire adviser Elon Musk. Wood voted for Trump last year and said he’s willing to give the president until the end of the year to deliver positive results.

About half of U.S. adults, 52%, are against imposing tariffs on all goods brought into the U.S. from other countries. That’s up slightly from January, when a poll found that 46% were against tariffs. Driving that small shift largely appears to be adults under age 30 who didn’t previously have an opinion on tariffs.

Not quite 100 days into Trump’s second term in the White House, people around the country are bracing for possible disruptions in how they spend, work and live. The U.S. economy remains solid for the moment with moderating inflation and a healthy 4.2% unemployment rate, yet measures such as consumer confidence have dropped sharply.

Trump has used executive actions to remold the global economy. He’s imposed hundreds of billions of dollars a year in new im-

port taxes — albeit partially suspending some of them — launching a full-scale trade war against China and pledging to wrap up deals with dozen of other countries that are temporarily facing tariffs of 10%. Financial markets are swinging with every twist and turn from Trump’s tariff pronouncements.

Many Americans are not convinced this is the right approach. About 6 in 10 say Trump has “gone too far” when it comes to imposing new tariffs, according to the poll.

Stocks are down this year, while interest charges on U.S. government bonds have climbed in ways that could make it more costly to repay mortgages, auto loans and student debt.

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults are “extremely” or “very” concerned about the cost of groceries in the next few months, while about half are highly concerned about the cost of big purchases, such as a car, cellphone or appliance. Less than half are highly concerned about their ability to purchase the goods they want — a sign of the economy’s resilience so far.

Retirement savings are a source of anxiety — about 4 in 10 Americans say their retirement savings are a “major source” of stress in their lives. But fewer — only about 2 in 10 — identify the stock market as a major source of anxiety.

“This whole tariff war is just a losing situation not only for the American people but everybody worldwide,” said Nicole Jones, 32. “It’s revenge — and everybody’s losing on it.”

WORLD

China launches 3 astronauts to switch crew on its station

Associated Press

JIUQUAN, China — China has launched three astronauts into space to replace the crew on the Chinese Tiangong space station, marking a further step in the country’s ambitions for a crewed mission to the Moon and explore Mars.

The Shenzhou 20 spaceship took off as planned atop China’s workhorse Long March 2F rocket at 5:17 p.m. local time. It will reach the Tiangong about 6.5 hours later.

The rocket lifted off from the launch center in Jiuquan, on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China. The spaceship will remain in space before returning the current crew.

The Tiangong, or “Heavenly Palace,” space station has made China a major contender in space, especially since it was entirely Chinese-built after the country was excluded from the International Space Station over U.S. national security concerns. China’s space program is controlled by the People’s Liberation Army, the military branch of the ruling Communist Party.

The Shenzhou, or “Celestial Vessel,” 20 mission is commanded by Chen Dong, who is making his third flight. He is accompanied by fighter pilot Chen Zhongrui and engineer Wang Jie, both making their maiden voyages, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

French student is arrested after fatally stabbing another

Associated Press

PARIS — A high school student stabbed four other students at his school in western France on Thursday, killing at least one and injuring three others before being arrested, police said.

The reason for the stabbing was unclear.

The student stabbed four people with a knife during a lunch break at the private Catholic Notre-Dame-de-Toutes-Aides High School in Nantes near France’s Atlantic coast, a national police official said.

Teachers subdued him, and he was later taken in by police, the official said.

Students at the school told French media at the scene that the suspect had sent an email with unspecified grievances to all students just before the attack.

The school confined the students inside for hours while police secured the site and carried out questioning and worried parents waited outside, according to French media. Police and armed forces surrounded the area.

Education Minister Elisabeth Borne and Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau arrived at the school later in the day. Borne said that she wanted to show “solidarity with victims and the school community.”

In rare criticism, Trump urges Putin to ‘STOP!’ after Kyiv hit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump on Thursday offered rare criticism of Vladimir Putin, urging the Russian leader to “STOP!” after a deadly barrage of attacks on Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital.

“I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform. “Lets get the Peace Deal DONE!”

Russia struck Kyiv with an hours-long barrage of missiles and drones. At least 12 people were killed and 90 were injured in the deadliest assault on the city since July.

Trump’s frustration is growing as a U.S.-led effort to get a peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia has not made progress.

Trump lashed out at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday and accused him of prolonging the “killing field” by refusing to surrender the Russia-occupied Crimean Peninsula as part of a possible deal. Russia illegally annexed that area from Ukraine in 2014.

Zelenskyy has repeated many times during the war that began when Russia invaded in February 2022 that recognizing occupied territory as Russia’s is a red line for Ukraine. Zelenskyy noted Thursday that Ukraine had agreed to a U.S. ceasefire proposal 44 days ago as a first step to a negotiated peace, but that Moscow’s attacks had continued.

Trump’s criticism of Putin is notable because Trump has repeatedly said Russia, the aggressor in the conflict, is more willing than Ukraine to get a deal done.

“I thought it might be easier to deal with Zelenskyy,” Trump told reporters Wednesday. “So far it’s been harder, but that’s OK. It’s all right.”

In his dealings with Zelenskyy and Putin, Trump has focused on which leader has leverage. Putin has “the cards” and Zelenskyy does not, Trump has said repeatedly. At the same time, the new Republican administration has taken steps toward a more cooperative line with Putin, for whom Trump has long shown admiration.

Trump planned to meet later Thursday with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre to discuss the war in Ukraine, U.S. tariffs and other issues. Norway, a member of NATO and strong supporter of Ukraine, shares a roughly 123-mile border with Russia.

The White House announced Tuesday that Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, would visit Moscow this week for a new round of talks with Putin about the war. It would be their fourth meeting since Trump took office in January.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth met on Thursday with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who also planned talks with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Trump’s national security adviser, Michael Waltz. Leaders from the 32-member alliance are set to meet in the Netherlands in two months. Trump has pushed them to significantly step up defense spending.

In 2023, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine entered its second year, they agreed that all allies should spend at least 2% of gross domestic product on their military budgets. Estimates in NATO’s annual report released Thursday showed that 22 allies had reached that goal last year, compared with a previous forecast of 23.

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LIFESTYLE



JOSHUA BRIGHT/For The Washington Post

The original Hard Rock Cafe in London, which opened in 1971, is shown above. U.S. expats — Peter Morton, whose father co-founded the Morton’s the Steakhouse chain, and Isaac Tigrett, who would go on to marry Ringo Starr’s ex-wife — shared a mutual hankering for ground beef patties and rock music.

Hardcore for Hard Rock

Superfans see the cafés — more than 150 around the world — as a testament to the enduring powers of music idolatry, American roadside diners and logo tees

By ANDREA SACHS
The Washington Post

Beneath the gift shop of the original Hard Rock Cafe, staff members lead daily tours of the Vault, a space the size of a walk-in closet that guards some of the chain’s most vaunted treasures. Inside, there’s the harpsichord played by the Beatles, Bo Diddley’s cigar box guitar, a bustier from Madonna’s era of traffic cone tops. At the restaurant across the street, diners eat cheeseburgers alongside Jimi Hendrix’s maracas, Keith Richards’ pink Fender Stratocaster and a pair of glittery sunglasses immortalized on the cover of Elton John’s chart-topping album “Caribou.”

Over at Table 61, where Princess Diana once dined with her young princes, a small plaque honors a duo with no musical gifts to speak of. “To Dave & Val, legends among our patrons!” the sign reads. “This booth is dedicated to your enduring friendship.”

Dave and Val Harvey, a married couple from Middlesex, England, have been Hard Rock regulars since the mid-1980s. First once a month, then every Saturday, now every other weekend. They always sit at the four-top table sandwiched between Roger Daltrey’s “Tommy” outfit and Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham’s kit. Dave, who has eaten thousands of meals here, has a standing order: cheeseburger, fries and vanilla ice cream.

The “Hard Rock Harveys,” who held their wedding reception at the now-closed Hard Rock Cafe Maui, are

members of an extraordinary fan club whose travel and dining plans revolve around the temple to music deities and nacho plates. With more than 150 cafés in more than 70 countries, devotees of the brand can turn their hobby into a lifelong pursuit. Last year, for Dave’s 70th birthday, the London staff presented the Harveys with the engraved plate.

“When we walked through the door of the London café for the first time, I said, ‘Yeah, this is for me,’” said Dave, a retired bus mechanic who sports a Hard Rock Cafe tattoo on his arm. “It’s the whole thing: the music, the food, the people, the memorabilia.”

More than a half-century since its debut, the rockin’ burger joint stands as a testament to the enduring powers of rock idolatry, American roadside diners and logo tees. Name a cultural capital or tourist haven — Osaka, Budapest, New Delhi, Lisbon, Bali, Cape Town, La Paz — and you’ll find people happily chewing on burgers and mooning over used instruments and worn costumes, seemingly in defiance of the local cuisines, museums and archaeological sites.

Other theme establishments have fumbled or failed. Fashion Cafe completely shut down; the celebrity-backed Planet Hollywood downsized to only four restaurant locations, including the recently reopened Times Square site. Meanwhile, Hard Rock International has experienced its

SEE DINER ON PAGE 13



Dave Harvey, who has been a Hard Rock regular with his wife Val since the mid-1980s, shows off his Hard Rock Cafe tattoo. They held their wedding reception at the now-closed Hard Rock Cafe Maui.



The “Hard Rock Harveys” even have a plaque dedicated to them at Table 61 of the London café.

LIFESTYLE

Diner: Academic describes brand’s popularity, longevity as function of ‘eatertainment’

FROM PAGE 12

own ebbs and flows, changing ownership four times, most recently to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, in 2007.

Yet the iconic brand, recognizable by a logo with a retro font transposed on a yellow disk that evokes an abstract cheeseburger, is everywhere. New restaurants, hotels, casinos, souvenir shops and live-music venues are coursing through the pipeline, including cafés in Madrid and Itapema, Brazil, and on Tejon reservation land in California. Every day around the world, tourists pour out of the cafés and retail stores, brandishing the logo with sports team pride.

The appetite for Hard Rock Cafe, apparently, is insatiable.

The opening act

The first Hard Rock was established in 1971 by a couple of U.S. expats, Peter Morton, whose father co-founded the Morton’s the Steakhouse chain, and Isaac Tigrett, who would go on to marry Ringo Starr’s ex-wife.

The pair of young entrepreneurs shared a mutual hankering for ground beef patties and rock music. After importing the classic American-style diner, they waited for the British invasion to arrive. It did.

“These two guys open a restaurant introducing the American hamburger to London, which then was still new,” said Ken Kerrigan, a New York University instructor who specializes in corporate branding. “They had this novelty, but they also tapped into the ethos of rock ‘n’ roll.”

Rebellion, freedom, iconoclasm — with a side of fries.

Like the music in its name, Hard Rock built mass appeal. According to James Russell-Jones, the general manager in London who started his career with the company as a busboy, quality hamburgers were unusual on that side of the Atlantic. Hard Rock Cafe, he said, helped upend England’s conservative cuisine and culture. The unpretentious food and communal spirit of rock music brought a wider group of diners to the table. Its motto — “Love All, Serve All” — summed up its egalitarian philosophy.

“We opened the first classless restaurant. It didn’t matter who you were. You came in through the same door,” said Rita Gilligan, 84, one of the café’s first hires, who retired only a couple of years ago. “The billionaire, the bellman, the baker, the banker: They all sat together.”

Five decades later, step inside

the Las Vegas location and not a whole lot has changed. The third-largest café (after Orlando and New York City) commands a prime location on the Strip, its three stories overlooking the street carnival below. Inside, LL Cool J raps; outside, an Elvis impersonator croons.

One late morning last March, a line started to form by the hostess station. Arkim and Kayla Hinds stopped by on their way to bed. The married couple from the Bronx were wearing the same clothes from the previous night, a lack of sleep creasing their faces.

“Every time I come to Vegas, I have to come here,” said Arkim, a bus driver who has visited the Nevada city about 25 times.

Kayla, who works for the New York City parks department, had lobbied for breakfast at Denny’s. Once the bottomless mimosas started flowing, she switched allegiances. At a nearby table, two friends from the United Kingdom were chipping away at a mound of pancakes and an omelet as thick as a platform heel.

“We’re all about the food,” said Emma May Down, a sales manager who was unaware of the music connection.

In every Hard Rock location, whether you are dining in Orlando, Suriname or Kathmandu, the menu is consistent. In addition to the burgers, the nachos, baby back ribs and milkshakes are menu stalwarts.

“When you’re in a strange place, you know you’re going to find other people who share that same interest,” said Amanda Belarmino, an assistant professor of hospitality management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Before he worked for the company, Hard Rock International Chairman Jim Allen visited a café in South Africa during his honeymoon with his first wife, satisfying the couple’s craving for “good old-fashioned American food and a cold Budweiser beer.” Allen said the chain offers more than familiarity, however.

“We’re not McDonald’s,” he said. “We’re an experience.”

Branding and marketing experts agree that the Hard Rock Cafe can’t exist on food alone. Kerrigan, the instructor who is also a lead singer in a hard rock cover band, cites online reviews that rank it slightly better than Applebee’s. He pegs its longevity and popularity to what he calls “eatertainment.”

“Hard Rock latched their brand onto what it means to rock,” Kerrigan said. “You’re



ANNIKA WEERTZ/For The Washington Post

Andreas Buergelt (inset), who has visited more than 400 Hard Rock locations and is still “collecting” cafés, displays his large collection of keepsakes in what he calls the “Hard Rock Way — Vault.”

great, and you’re rebellious, and you’re different, and you’re changing things.”

Founders Morton and Tigrett, who embodied the rocker look with flowing locks, didn’t set out to collect costumes and instruments. It was serendipity.

Eric Clapton, a former regular of the London café, donated a red Fender guitar that, once installed, would act as a “reserved” sign for his favorite bar stool. Shortly after, Pete Townshend sent the restaurant one of his guitars with a note that read, “Mine’s as good as his! Love, Pete.” Both still hang over the bar.

The dueling guitars spawned the world’s largest private collection of music memorabilia. The more than 88,000 items span decades of music history and represent genres including heavy metal, pop, grunge, rap, R&B, blues, country and Milli Vanilli.

Collecting cafés, T-shirts and 10,000 pins

Some travelers “collect” Hard Rock Cafes as they would countries, U.S. states or national parks. Andreas Buergelt, a bank adviser from Germany, is one of the most accomplished.

In 2016, he embarked on a jaunt that would rival Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour: 25 Hard Rocks in nine Asian countries over 16 days. In November, he clinched his 400th café, at the grand opening of the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Bristol, Va. In January, during a spin through Latin America, he increased his tally by 16. In September, he will add China and Mongolia to his life list.

“There are Starbucks collec-

tors, but it’s not the same,” said Buergelt, 50, who was serenaded by a Madrid Hard Rock hotel manager and feted on his latest birthday by café employees at Changi Airport in Singapore.

Buergelt, like many other pilgrims, doesn’t just accrue visits. He has been amassing keepsakes, such as uniforms, logos, carpets and two decades’ worth of managers’ signatures, since he bought his first T-shirt at the Berlin café in 1993. In his home, he displays the relics in what he calls the “Hard Rock Way — Vault.”

“One room is not enough,” he said of an exhibit space that encompasses an entryway, staircase, bathroom, mail room and laundry room.

Similar to music fans, café enthusiasts want to own a piece of their idols. The Rock Shop, which can be attached to the café or stand alone, feeds the fervor with T-shirts, key chains, magnets and pins, shiny objects that have produced a community as serious about collecting as numismatists.

The original pin was a gift from Tigrett to Gilligan, whose likeness has appeared on subsequent pieces. Today, servers wear lanyards laden with pins, which they often swap with customers and employees from other locations.

“I will never take them off,” said Rita Neves Martins, who works in the Amsterdam Rock Shop. “I wear them very proudly, especially the Rita pin.”

The trinkets range from common to rare. There are standard ones sold in every gift shop as well as ones designed for a specific city, as part of a series or for

a special event or commemoration. Pins created for a café’s grand opening, said avid collector Lou Nuccio, are highly coveted.

Nuccio purchased his first pin at the Hard Rock Cafe in Manhattan, which opened in 1984, the same year he graduated from high school in New Jersey. Years later, when he took his kids to Orlando, Disneyland and Honolulu, he’d squeeze in a visit to a Hard Rock Cafe, too. Now he owns nearly 10,000 pins.

“It was easy because Hard Rock Cafes were strategically placed by all these vacation-type cities,” said Nuccio, director of operations at a technology company. “So when my kids were younger, we gravitated toward those places.”

In the past few years, Nuccio, who runs a pin-trading Facebook page with more than 27,000 followers, has been reining in his hobby. He said he has become more selective, fully aware that, if he’s not careful, he could be one of those parents “who leaves a whole bunch of boxes of metal for their kids to try to sell.”

In London, the Harveys also have thousands of pins, in addition to scores of Hard Rock Cafe artifacts displayed in their home, like a private museum. They have been slowly giving away items, but, Dave lamented, “the trouble is, we have so much stuff.”

To ensure a good home for the remainder of their collection postmortem, they included instructions in their will. The mementos, including the table plaque, will go to the London café and be distributed among the staff.

TELEVISION

Setting the scene for revolution in ‘Andor’

Creator Gilroy, actor Luna discuss the new season of the ‘Star Wars’ series

By ANDREW DALTON
Associated Press

The Disney+ series “Andor” returned Tuesday for its second and final season with a three-episode premiere and the weight of the “Star Wars” galaxy seemingly on its shoulders.

But creator Tony Gilroy says he and his collaborators felt little pressure from Disney and Lucasfilm as they sought to tell the story of a growing revolutionary resentment against the Galactic Empire and the birth of the Rebel Alliance leading up to the events of the 2016 film he scripted, “Rogue One.”

“We took no creative notes on this show,” Gilroy, whose deep screenwriting résumé also includes four films in the “Bourne” franchise and 2007 Oscar nominee “Michael Clayton,” which he also directed. He told The Associated Press that “I’ve never had this much freedom before, even in final-cut films that I worked on. The latitude was astonishing.”

The forthcoming season, whose production was delayed by Hollywood’s 2023 strikes, is coming with high expectations from fans who have been disappointed in other recent “Star Wars” TV offerings, with no new movies released in the franchise in six years.

Revolution through the eyes of regular people

The new episodes trace how the spark lit in Diego Luna’s Cassian Andor in the 2022 first season spreads through the galaxy. And they do it with characters and arcs rarely found in this realm before.

“This second season, it’s about all the layers, and the social and political climate that needs to happen for a revolution to erupt, for a rebellion to exist,” Luna said. “The universe of ‘Star Wars’ never stopped to tell the story of these regular people that becomes crucial for the history that we know.”

Gilroy drew inspiration from a broad range of historical and fictional sources.

“Who’s ever going to get another chance to do another 1,500 pages on revolution again, with this much money and this much muscle, and everything else?” he said.

Epic scope, private conversations

But as epic as the story is, its most essential moments are marked by intimate, one-on-one conversations.

“I start small,” Gilroy said. “I work teaspoon by teaspoon.”

That includes a season-opening scene that starts with Cassian giving a young imperial mechanic the courage to help him in a major heist. He sells her on the ecstatic feelings of destiny that rebellion can bring.

“It’s quite beautiful and idealistic also, like a revolution has to be. It’s a great reminder of how romantic the idea of



“We took no creative notes on this show. I’ve never had this much freedom before, even in final-cut films that I worked on. The latitude was astonishing.”

Tony Gilroy
“Andor” creator



PHOTOS BY REBECCA CABAGE, INVISION/AP

Creator Tony Gilroy and actor Diego Luna pose for portraits April 15 in Los Angeles to promote “Andor.” The second and final season of the series premiered Tuesday.

revolution is,” Luna said.

Cast members say it can feel revolutionary working for Gilroy, who passes on the same freedom to them that Disney

gives to him. They’re never kept in the dark with the sort of script-rationing and secret-keeping that are the norm in major franchises.

“He doesn’t believe in withholding information as power,” said Adria Arjona, who plays Andor’s partner, Bix Caleen. “Before I read Episode 1, I knew the end. It’s just unheard-of.”

Her character’s arc in particular brings real-world elements including addiction and even darker forms of trauma unlike anything “Star Wars” has shown before.

Stretching the ‘Star Wars’ canon

Gilroy said he didn’t have to fight over the galaxy’s canon at all. He had to get used to certain elements when he first worked within the franchise — no paper, no hinged doors, no knives, for example. But it’s not necessarily held as sacred.

“I’ve seen canon stretch so much,” he said. “It was really tight on ‘Rogue.’ But a lot of things have changed since then.”

The overall direction of the show was basically determined when work began on the series five years ago.

“I know what I’m doing with Cassian,” Gilroy said. “I know that the first year is the making of a revolutionary and the road to Damascus; that’s the first year. I know I’m leading to ‘Rogue’; I know where he’s gonna end up.”

Other elements, like the route Mon Mothma (Genevieve O’Reilly) takes from respectable senator to leader of the rebellion, were not predetermined. They were discovered in the writing and in the performances.

Her early-season path includes a wedding ceremony full of rituals — and dances — new to “Star Wars” that Gilroy invented out of whole cloth. He said one of the pleasures of getting to make something so large and sprawling is that he has gotten to use nearly every writing thought he has had.

“All I did for five years was just max out my imagination,” Gilroy said.

Season 1 characters return, ‘Rogue One’ characters emerge

Mothma is among the “Rogue One” characters who appeared in the first season and return for the second, along with Forest Whitaker’s radical rebel Saw Gerra, who this season gives a spine-tingling call to arms that is teased in the trailer: “Revolution,” he preaches to an underling, “is not for the sane!”

Season 2 also sees the emergence of some “Rogue One” characters for the first time in the TV series, including Andor’s droid sidekick K-250, played by Alan Tudyk, and Death Star builder Orson Krennic, played by Ben Mendelsohn.

Luna took special pleasure in the return of Tudyk and his robot who speaks with no filter.

“I had so much fun playing with him, and having him back means a lot,” he said.

The first three episodes gel to form what’s basically a 2½-hour movie, with Cassian stuck among rival rebel factions, Bix living in a farming community amid an imperial crackdown and Mon Mothma having to play the patrician matriarch at her daughter’s wedding, before all three are pulled in new directions.

The entire series has been planned in those kinds of clusters.

“We really think of it that we made eight movies in five years,” Gilroy said.

MOVIES



NETFLIX/AP photos

“Bullet Train Explosion,” a reimagining of the 1975 Japanese film “The Bullet Train,” is based on the premise of a bomb going off if the train slows down below 62 mph.

A different train of thought

Netflix reboot of 1975 film about a bomb onboard a Japanese Shinkansen focuses on workers, not the bomber

By YURI KAGEYAMA
Associated Press

The high-speed bullet train says Japan as much as Godzilla, sushi and Mount Fuji. And it takes center stage in Shinji Higuchi’s new film, “Bullet Train Explosion,” which premiered on Netflix Wednesday.

Higuchi, the director of the 2016 “Shin Godzilla” (or “New Godzilla”), has reimagined the 1975 Japanese film “The Bullet Train,” which has the same premise: A bomb will go off if the train slows down below 100



Higuchi

kph (62 mph.) That original movie also inspired Hollywood’s “Speed,” starring Keanu Reeves, which takes place mostly on a bus.

Higuchi recalls being fascinated growing up by the aerodynamically shaped bullet trains as they roared by, almost like a violent animal. To him, as with many Japanese, the Shinkansen — as the trains are called in Japan — symbolize the nation’s efforts to become “top-rate,” superfast, precise, orderly and on time.

“It’s so characteristically Japanese,” Higuchi said in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday. “To complete



The realism of “Bullet Train Explosion” was achieved by a combination of computer graphics and miniature train models, built to one-sixth the size of the real thing. A huge LED wall was also used on the set to project visuals of landscapes as seen from the train window, and those shots were juxtaposed with footage shot on a real train.

your work, even if it means sacrificing your personal life, is like a samurai spirit living within all Japanese.”

The film’s realism was achieved by a smooth combination of computer graphics and miniature train models, built to one-sixth the size of the real thing.

A huge LED wall was used on the set to project visuals of passing landscapes as seen from the train window, and those shots were juxtaposed seamlessly with footage shot on a real train.

The explosions are strangely exhilarating, and beautifully depicted with scattering sparks and smoke.

Higuchi stressed that the film-

makers were careful to make sure the criminal act, as depicted, is not physically possible today.

He said “Bullet Train Explosion” marked a challenging departure from his past movies that were about heroes and monsters.

“I examined the question of evil, and how we pass judgment on a person,” he said.

“That’s what my predecessors did as directors before me: try to show what happens if you commit evil,” he added. “And I tried to give my answer.”

One departure from the original, which starred the late Ken Takakura as the bomber, is that Higuchi chose to focus on the train workers.



Tsuyoshi Kusanagi portrays a dedicated Shinkansen worker in “Bullet Train Explosion.” East Japan Railway Co., which operates the train featured in the film, helped teach the actors how to simulate its workers and their mannerisms.

Tsuyoshi Kusanagi, formerly a member of boys’ band Smap who portrayed a transgender woman in Eiji Uchida’s “Midnight Swan,” is convincing as a dedicated Shinkansen worker.

“I always have fun working with the director,” Kusanagi said of Higuchi at a Tokyo premiere earlier this week. “I’ve loved him for 20 years.”

Kusanagi starred in “Sinking of Japan,” Higuchi’s 2006 science-fiction thriller about a natural catastrophe that threatens Japan’s very existence.

East Japan Railway Co., formed after the national railway was privatized, which operates the bullet train featured in Hi-

guchi’s reboot, gave full support to the film. It allowed the use of real trains, railway facilities and uniforms and also helped train the actors to simulate its workers and their mannerisms.

The bullet trains have long been a symbol of the blossoming of Japan’s modern economy and peaceful culture in the decades following World War II.

The first leg, connecting Tokyo with Osaka, opened with much fanfare in 1964. The system now connects much of Japan, from the northernmost main island of Hokkaido through southwestern Kyushu. The train featured in Higuchi’s work connects Tokyo with northern Aomori.

MUSIC

Ready for a comeback

R&B star Keri Hilson’s new album, ‘We Need to Talk,’ marks her return to music after a 15-year absence

By Gary Gerard Hamilton
Associated Press

The last time Keri Hilson put out an album, Barack Obama was in the second year of his first term as U.S. president, the iPad was released and Instagram was brand new.

“On some days, I’m like, that was just a blink away. But for the most part, yeah, it feels like a long time because I’ve been waiting. I felt stagnant, I felt stuck for a while, and conflicted,” the two-time Grammy-nominated artist said. “I’m very much approaching this like I’m starting over because that’s how it feels to me. I’ve lived nine lives since I last released ... I’m a whole different person.”

Hilson, the 42-year-old R&B star known for late 2000s hits like “Knock You Down,” featuring Kanye West and Ne-Yo, and “Pretty Girl Rock,” released “WE NEED TO TALK: LOVE” on April 18. It’s her third album, following 2010’s “No Boys Allowed,” and is the first of a trilogy set for release this year. Led by the sultry single “Bae,” the nine-track album delves into romance and introspection.

“I feel resolved, both with the art and with-in about stepping back into the light. So, I think that resolve kind of had to be found before I felt confident enough to release the body of work and also unleash myself to the world again,” explained Hilson, who said she’s never stopped recording. “There were songs in my past that I felt were political moves, songs I didn’t really love that I had to sing ... I didn’t want to feel like that this time around.”

The disappearance

One of those songs was a leaked remix to her popular 2009 single “Turnin Me On” featuring Lil Wayne, which peaked at No. 15 on the Billboard Hot 100. Lyrics included

SEE HILSON ON PAGE 17

Keri Hilson poses for a portrait on April 8 in New York.

GARY GERARD HAMILTON/AP



MUSIC REVIEW

Hilson: Singer embarked on journey of healing during break from business

FROM PAGE 16

a diss fans perceived to be aimed at Beyoncé.

Hilson, who had yet to drop her introductory album, “In a Perfect World...,” which debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard Top 200 and No. 1 on Top R&B albums, claimed that she was forced to sing the lines, “She can sing / But she need to move it to the left, left,” assumed to reference Beyoncé’s “Irreplaceable.” She says she was threatened her album might not be released if she refused.

Hilson recently trended on social media following an interview with iHeartMedia’s “The Breakfast Club” after recalling the incident. While she has talked about it several times in the past, during that interview, the singer publicly named those involved, including producer Polow Da Don who she was signed to. She did not name singer-songwriter Ester Dean. However, after social media users tagged Dean in posts, she later identified herself.

The ending of a decadelong relationship, a lack of control over her career and the intense, never-ending backlash from the BeyHive triggered depression and led to her retreat from music.

The comeback

During her time away, the Georgia native embarked on a journey of healing that included therapy, journaling and spiritual retreats.

“There were some perspectives that I needed to uncover ... untruths, beliefs that I kind of picked up or inherited about myself,” said Hilson, who shifted to acting.

Her comeback has included very selective press, avoiding what she describes as “new media” outlets such as social media-driven platforms, saying monetization can reward the promotion of gossip or incentivize the creation of lies. The salacious blog culture of the 2010s was a driving force in fanning the flames of her perceived beef with Beyoncé, who has never publicly commented on the situation.

Hilson “can definitely operate and navigate within the realm of R&B. She has a fan base,” said Keithan Samuels, founder of the popular website RatedRnB.com. “Her core fan base has matured ... she can navigate within this new era of R&B where there’s a lot of diversity and sound.”

The music

Crafted with unofficial writing camps and records created throughout the years, “WE NEED TO TALK: LOVE” finds



GARY GERARD HAMILTON/AP

“I just control what I can control ... I control what I allow to bring me up or down. These are realizations that I’ve had since I’ve been away. I feel unburdened ... I’m not projecting too much of the past onto now, and all of that is freeing.”

Keri Hilson

Hilson delivering vulnerable and flirty lyrics over a wide range of R&B sounds. Writing on all but one song, she avoided current R&B trends that developed during her absence, citing individuality as a key to her early success. She also believes algorithms have created a culture of musical homogeny, rather than

creativity.

There are quintessential “Ms. Keri Baby” songs like the fun, Pop&B styled “Somethin (Bout U),” but there’s also the introspective “Naked (Love),” and “Say It,” in which she expresses, “I won’t say I love you / ‘til you say you love me.”

“I’m very ‘girl boss’ in my life, right? When it comes to relationships, I prefer to be a lady. I prefer to be approached. ... I prefer for the man to say ‘I love you’ first. I just prefer for a man to lead,” said Hilson. “I’m really a damsel — without the distress.”

The bedroom mood is set on the sexy slow jam “Scream,” while the bright “Whatever” floats with beautiful stacked harmonies.

“I feel like it’s something I would have written for Whitney. And I actually wrote a song for Whitney that she never was able to record,” said Hilson, who began her career as an in-demand writer whose credits include songs for Chris Brown, Mary J. Blige, Jennifer Lopez and Britney Spears. “This reminds me of a Whitney Houston record, where I think she would be now.”

Samuels of RatedRnB.com says this project is evident of the newfound control Hilson has over her career.

“It’s definitely not, to me, an attempt to have this commercial comeback ... it feels more personal,” said Samuels. “The other two albums, I feel like were more catered to what was current then.”

The freedom

Hilson says she’s still open to writing for other artists and giving away songs that may not fit her current musical era. She also has a new Lifetime movie, “Fame: A Temptations Story,” co-starring Keshia Chanté, which premieres Saturday. Hilson says acting is now an equal part of her career.

Though Hilson may be cautiously re-emerging musically, fans are welcoming her return. After The Breakfast Club interview, fans flooded her with sympathy and positivity, possibly due to a combination of her finally telling her side of the story in detail, as well as the passing of time. Some fans said they forgot about the incident or were too young to know about it.

“I just control what I can control ... I control what I allow to bring me up or down. These are realizations that I’ve had since I’ve been away,” said Hilson. “I feel unburdened ... I’m not projecting too much of the past onto now, and all of that is freeing.”



Paramount+

Willie Nelson, above, performs a full album of influential country artist Rodney Crowell’s songs on “Oh What a Beautiful World.”

Nelson pairs perfectly with Crowell’s catalog

BY STEVEN WINE
Associated Press

It’s fun to hear Willie Nelson sing such words as “ninja,” “fish-monger” and “absinthe,” which are among the many pleasures found in the songbook of influential country songwriter Rodney Crowell.

“Oh What a Beautiful World” is Nelson’s latest album devoted to the songs of a specific songwriter, and in Crowell, he’s interpreting a kindred spirit. While Crowell has a slightly different lyric vocabulary, both are Texans with a deep love of Hank Williams.

The pairing — great songs and a great singer — works beautifully. The album’s April 25 release comes just in time for Nelson’s 92nd birthday on April 29.



Willie Nelson

Oh What a Beautiful World (Sony Legacy)

He has long sounded ageless, but more than ever, Nelson sings like a sage. His reedy tenor can be a little whispery, but he displays surprising vocal range. His relaxed, conversational delivery is filled with warmth and wisdom. He’ll start a phrase late, end it early and make it seem perfect.

When he reminisces about childhood on “Banks of the Old Bandera” — originally recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker — Nelson sounds just like he did in 1976, the year the song was written. Other material ranges from “Shame on the Moon,” a 1982 pop hit for Bob Seger, to

Crowell’s overlooked gem “She’s Back in Town.”

Also included are tunes that have been recorded by Tim McGraw (“Open Season On My Heart”) and Keith Urban (“Making Memories of Us”) and a folksy ballad co-written with Guy Clark (“Stuff That Works”).

Longtime Nelson collaborator Buddy Cannon produced the record, and the backing musicians provide graceful, tasteful support. Nelson’s beloved guitar Trigger plays a significant role, including on a careening, don’t-try-this-at-home solo on the title cut, a duet with Crowell.

Also among the highlights is “The Fly Boy & The Kid,” a prayerlike shuffle with playful lyrics that Nelson leans into. He’s equally frisky doing roadhouse blues on “She’s Back in Town,” while elsewhere the mood tends toward contemplative. “The days go by like flying bricks,” Nelson sings on the handsome ballad “Open Season On My Heart.”

More than any other song in the set, “Still Learning How to Fly” seems as if it was written for Nelson. Nearing the end of the album — Nelson’s 154th, according to Texas Monthly’s herculean ranking of his prolific discography — he sings:

“I’ve got a past that I won’t soon forget / And you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

He sounds as if he means it.

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CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

BOTH SIDES NOW
BY JOHN KUGELMAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

John Kugelman, of Gainesville, Va., is a software engineer and musician. This is his ninth Sunday Times crossword. Its unusual 22x21-square grid (one column wider than usual) was designed to accommodate some 22-letter theme answers. The cheeky echo between 62- and 72-Across was intentional on John's part. It made me smile. — W.S.

ACROSS

1 Front-runners at the Iditarod?

9 Discreetly acknowledges

15 Antidepressant type, in brief

19 One end of a headphone cable

21 Peter of “The Lion in Winter”

22 Namely

23 Popcorn and pretzels at a parade?

26 Manages

27 Platforms for politicians, say

28 Dr. Wilson’s department on “House”

29 Fitting

30 Fig. that never starts with 666

31 Young DC Comics sidekick with a lightning bolt on his chest

35 Mideast grp.

36 Keep rhythm, in a way

39 Missing people?

40 Farewell

42 Someone who might excel at a Bible trivia game?

48 Biked past, say

49 “Never mind that”

50 Mock

53 Bonobo relative

56 Newcastle ninny

57 “The X-Files” org.

60 “The ____ Show” (12x platinum 2002 album)

62 1982 Benjamin Hoff best seller on Eastern philosophy, with “The”

66 Monopoly token retired in 2013

67 Tools of the trade?

71 Lead-in to complete

72 Little tipple, cutesily

73 Spill the tea

74 Org. that’s usually inactive in the summer

75 Beach day bummer

76 Meanies

79 “Midnight Cowboy” nickname

80 Motto that derives from the Latin for “always faithful”

84 Cleans up after a dirty guest?

86 Police interrogator or priest?

92 Gallup’s bailiwick

93 Linear algebra array

94 Retail magnate James Cash ____

96 Airport alternative to MDW

97 “Groundhog Day” plot device

100 Famous flautist

102 Number of times lightning struck Apollo 12 on its way to the moon

103 Certain dance partner

106 Final Four, e.g.

108 “Bloody” queen of England

110 Angry words at a school assembly?

115 Expert

116 “Well, ____ here!”

117 Many-time role for Robert Downey Jr.

118 Capone’s foiler

119 Way out there

120 Bill Gates gave six of them between 2009 and 2015

20 Leveled, for short

22 “General” of takeout

24 Canon competitor

25 Member of a conference, maybe: Abbr.

30 Zipped

32 Prefix with bel

33 Promote excessively

34 Suburb north of Boston

37 Third-largest tech hub in North America

38 Penitent person

39 Give excessive praise

40 Plugging away

41 Not dis

43 Small time?

44 Texter’s “Not gonna lie”

45 Bad way something might go

46 404 Not Found, e.g.

47 Cartoon witch with a crush on Popeye

50 Précis

51 “Not interested”

52 Part of a 15th-century trio

54 Easy target

55 Bouquet

57 Poet with four Pulitzers

58 First name of Russia’s first president

59 Creative motivation, in online slang

61 Title for Marie Tussaud

63 Research on a political rival, for short

64 Michigan J. ____, Warner Bros. character with a top hat and cane

65 Container for alms

66 “God does not approve!”

68 Bloods’ West Coast rival

69 Food stickers?

70 Zombie-to-be

75 Members of the “third team,” jocularly

77 Wearer of pointy shoes

78 “Told you so!”

80 Show with a 50th anniversary celebration in 2025, familiarly

81 Coleridge’s “The ____ of the Ancient Mariner”

82 Filly or colt

83 Digging

85 “Monday Night Football” broadcaster

86 Wear down

87 Items being replaced

88 Flourish

89 More mature

90 Being prosecuted

91 Second-largest tech hub in North America

92 Common recyclable

95 Snatches, comic-book style

97 Tic follower

98 Country that fully encloses two others

99 Social movement of 2017

100 Turn

101 All together

104 Sports standouts, for short

105 “i” completer

107 Word, in French

108 Sail holder

109 “____ girl!”

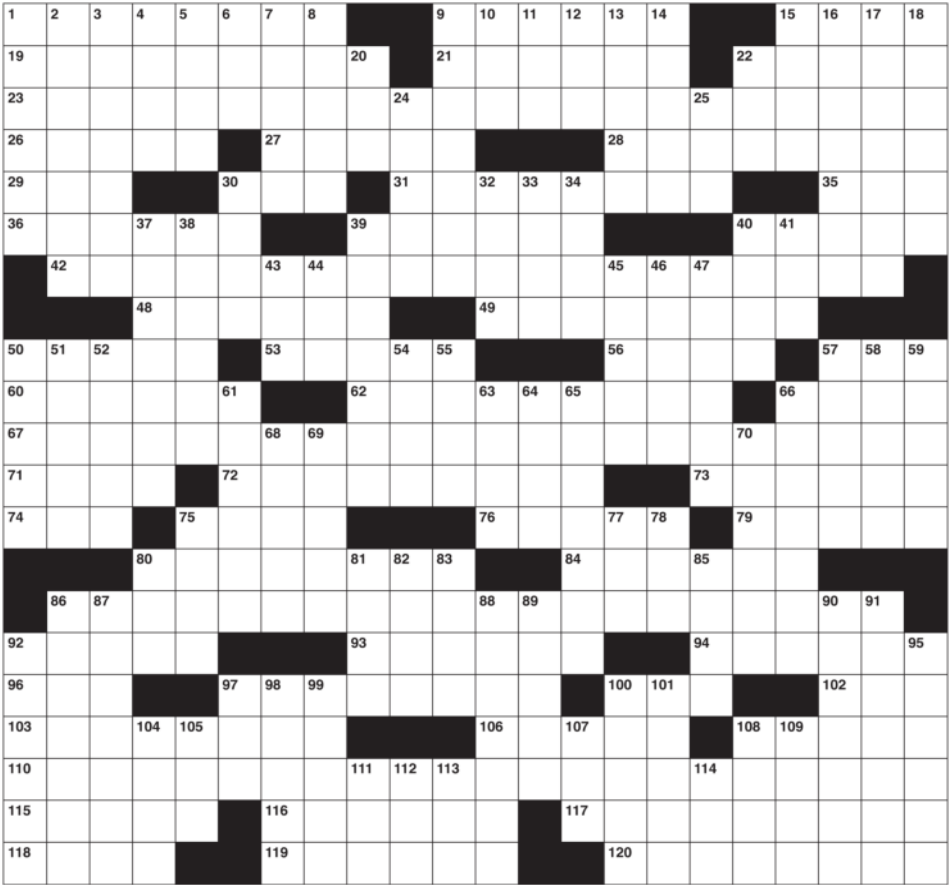
111 H+ or OH-

112 Green-lit

113 Never, in Nuremberg

114 Dancer Charisse of old Hollywood

Online subscriptions: Today’s puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year).



GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



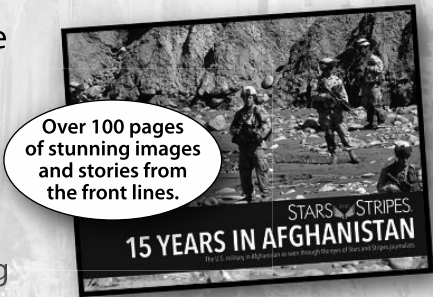
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FACES

Wyle says his mother, a nurse, had ‘PTSD reaction’ to ‘The Pitt’

Los Angeles Times

Noah Wyle, star of the hit medical drama “The Pitt,” is no stranger to sporting a stethoscope around his neck, and neither is his mother.

Wyle famously starred in “ER” for much of the series’ 15-season run before stepping into his role as Dr. Michael Robinavitch, or Dr. Robby, on the new Max drama. Although she had seen him in the emergency room in hundreds of episodes of the former series, Wyle’s mother, a former orthopedic and operating room nurse, said watching him on “The Pitt” hit her harder.

Speaking on Monday’s episode of NPR’s “Fresh Air,” Wyle recounted a recent conversation with his mother in which she told him “The Pitt” feels more “real” than “ER” did. That sense of realism comes from the show’s structure — 15 episodes that each depict an hour of an emergency room shift in real time.

Wyle’s mother, Marjorie, told her son that she was watching an episode in which his character begins listing off the people who died in his care, ultimately reaching an emotional breaking point, Wyle said.

He recounted her saying to him,



Max/TNS

Noah Wyle stars as Dr. Michael Robinavitch on “The Pitt.”

“I think I had my own PTSD reaction. I suddenly remembered everybody. I remembered the 4-year-old. I remembered the pregnant woman with the baby. I remembered the gang member that I tried to keep alive by squeezing two units of blood.” He said she was teary-eyed as she spoke to him.

He described their conversation as “this lovely, sort of cathartic and catalytic moment” that allowed him to reflect on the pain his mother has endured during her career as a nurse that’s spanned more than 35 years.

“The Pitt” has been renewed for a second season.

‘Stans,’ documentary about Eminem superfans, to open London SXSW fest

The Detroit News

A documentary about Eminem superfans is set to open the inaugural SXSW London festival, organizers have announced.

“Stans,” named for Eminem’s 2000 hit about an obsessed fan, is set to premiere on June 2. According to the film’s synopsis, it follows “not just Eminem’s artistic trajectory, but that of his most loyal superfans ... offering an entertaining and vibrant look at the modern nature of fandom and how social media has irrevocably changed the relationship between artists and their audience.”



Eminem

“Stans” is directed by Steven Leckart and marks his feature documentary debut. The project was announced last year.

“Stan” is the third single released off Eminem’s blockbuster 2000 album “The Marshall Mathers LP.” In the wake of the song’s success, “stan” has become shorthand for fans of any artist, and is used as a verb to describe one’s actions when celebrating an artist or their work.



Amy Sussman, Getty Images/TNS

Jelly Roll, shown Jan. 30, says he wants to show people that change and rehabilitation are possible.

Redemption for Jelly Roll

Singer recommended for pardon in Tennessee for pre-fame crimes

By August Brown
Los Angeles Times

The Tennessee Board of Parole has recommended country singer Jelly Roll for a pardon for his pre-fame criminal convictions.

Nashville Sheriff Daron Hall announced Tuesday: “A year ago, I wrote [Gov. Bill Lee] asking for a full Pardon for Jason “Jelly Roll” Deford..... today the Board unanimously recommended his Pardon. It’s now in the hands of our Governor.”

The Board of Parole is “responsible for reviewing all clemency requests (pardons, commutations, and exonerations) and submits non-binding recommendations to the Governor for his consideration,” it said in an announcement of the hearing.

According to the Associated Press, the singer (born Jason DeFord) told the board, “I want to be an inspiration for people who are now where I used to be — to let them know that change is truly possible. One of the reasons I’m asking for your recommendation ... is because I’m looking to take my message of redemption ... [across] the rest of the world.”

The singer has been open about his arrests for drug crimes and other offenses, including a conviction for aggravated robbery at 16 where he was charged as an adult. He earned a GED diploma in prison and later became a country superstar, despite the issues his convictions presented for getting a passport and touring internationally.

Jelly Roll previously testified in front of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs to advocate for the Fentanyl Eradication and Narcotics Deterrence (FEND) Off Fentanyl Act.

“I was a part of the problem. I am here now, standing as a man that wants to be a part of the solution,” he told the Senate.

“Why do we not have more programs focused on rehabilitation instead of discipline?” the singer told The Times in 2023. “It just shows how bad we’ve done on educating Americans on the disease of addiction and on what Big Pharma is doing to us in allowing these labs to create fentanyl.

“We’ve gotten so far away from compassion,” he adds. “That’s scary.”

Coogler, feeling the love for ‘Sinners,’ gives it back in moving letter

By Alexandra Del Rosario
Los Angeles Times

As Ryan Coogler basks in the critical and commercial triumphs of his latest film, “Sinners,” he turns a mirror back on the people who helped make that success possible.

Coogler, who brought Marvel’s “Black Panther” movies to life, said in a letter shared to Instagram on Tuesday that he has “eternal gratitude” for the moviegoers who supported the vampire horror, which landed in theaters April 18. “My heart is bursting with it,” he wrote.

The “Fruitvale Station” filmmaker dedicated more than half of his letter — which



Coogler

he wrote on a typewriter and posted to the movie’s Instagram page — to audiences who committed to seeing “Sinners” in theaters. He acknowledged the fans who saw the film in “different formats,” those who adjusted their schedules to see the movie and others who praised “Sinners” in their inner circles.

“I had the gift of the opportunity of making a film inspired by my family and my ancestry but it was always a film that we wanted to make for audiences, in theaters,” he continued. “We always had our minds on

you, the audience, and felt a deep responsibility to entertain you, and move you in the way only cinema can.”

“Sinners,” written and directed by Coogler, features longtime collaborator Michael B. Jordan as a pair of twins returning to their Mississippi hometown, where supernatural evils wait in the night. The Warner Bros. Pictures release opened strongly at the Easter weekend box office, earning \$45.6 million and exceeding expectations.

Amid “Sinners” theatrical rollout, Coogler wrote simply, “I believe in cinema.”

“I believe in the theatrical experience. I believe it is a necessary pillar of society,” he added. “It’s why me and so many of my col-

leagues have dedicated our lives to the craft. We don’t get to do what we do if you don’t show up.”

Coogler also devoted his letter to how filmmaking has allowed him to “dream, find a career, and build a more sustainable life.” He said he will thank supporters by continuing “to mine my personal human experience and relationship for more stories.” He wrote: “To see your response to the film has reinvigorated me and many others who believe in this artform.”

“Sinners” is now in theaters and also stars Hailee Steinfeld, Jack O’Connell, Wunmi Mosaku, Jayme Lawson, Omar Miller, Miles Caton and Delroy Lindo.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Khalil is denied release before birth of his child

NY NEW YORK — The wife of detained Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil accused federal immigration officials of purposely denying a request for her husband to attend the birth of their first child in order to make the family suffer.

Noor Abdalla said in a statement that she had to give birth to a baby boy on Monday without her husband by her side. She said ICE had declined a request to grant Khalil temporary release from a detention center in Louisiana so he could travel to New York for the birth of the baby.

Khalil is a legal permanent U.S. resident and graduate student who served as spokesperson for campus activists last year during large demonstrations at Columbia against Israel's treatment of Palestinians and the war in Gaza.

The federal government contends Khalil is a national security risk.

EPA chief demands that Mexico stop sewage flow

CA SAN DIEGO — The head of the Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday that Mexico must stop the flow of billions of gallons of sewage and toxic chemicals from Tijuana that has polluted the Pacific Ocean off neighboring Southern California, closing beaches and sickening Navy SEALs who train in the water.

Lee Zeldin made the demand during an Earth Day trip to the California-Mexico border, where he toured a plant in San Diego County that treats the sewage as a secondary facility and flew along the frontier to see the Tijuana River.

Zeldin said that his agency will present Mexico a to-do list of projects to resolve the decades-long environmental crisis, but he stopped short of specifying how the Trump administration would hold Mexico accountable if it does not act.

Alicia Bárcena, Mexico's Environment and Natural Resources secretary, said her country also wants to resolve the problem. She met with Zeldin the previous evening and said they made progress in finding solutions.

FAA finds safety concerns in review at Vegas airport

NV LAS VEGAS — A federal review of helicopter safety around some of the busiest U.S. airports, prompted by the deadly midair collision in January between a passenger jet and Army helicopter in Washington, D.C., revealed dangerous flying conditions at the Las Vegas airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday the potential for a collision between air tour helicopters and planes at Harry Reid International Airport led the agency to make immediate changes to flying rules. In the first three weeks after implementation



JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP

Checking out the cascade

Kids lie on the edge of a fountain at Rockefeller Plaza, on Tuesday, in New York.

the number of collision alerts for planes dropped 30%.

The FAA said after the collision between an American Airlines jet and an Army Black Hawk helicopter in January, which killed 67 people, that it planned to use artificial intelligence to dig into the millions of reports it collects to assess other places with busy helicopter traffic. The FAA's acting administrator, Chris Rocheleau, said Las Vegas quickly became a concern once the agency dug into the data because agreements with helicopter operators there didn't clearly define vertical and lateral separation requirements when helicopters were approaching the airport. And air traffic controllers in the tower weren't issuing traffic advisories between returning helicopters and airplanes.

Governor reopens his fire-damaged residence

PA HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro reopened the governor's official residence to the public Tuesday for an Easter egg hunt barely a week after an alleged arsonist's fire tore through one of its wings and said he will begin sleeping there again soon.

"I'm not going to live in fear," Shapiro told reporters after the annual Easter egg hunt held for children on the west lawn of the residence along the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg.

Large waste disposal bins sat on

the east side of the residence while workers cleared out the fire-damaged rooms. Plywood covered broken windows on the three-story brick Georgian-style residence built in the 1960s.

Cody Balmer, 38, is accused of scaling the nearly 7-foot iron security gate, crossing the grounds and smashing windows with a hammer, igniting two glass bottles filled with gasoline and crawling inside before slipping off into the night minutes later. The rooms he allegedly lit ablaze were where Shapiro's family had held a Passover Seder just hours earlier.

Nation's capital weighs layoffs with budget in limbo

DC WASHINGTON — Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser tried to keep the focus on a groundbreaking ceremony for a new mixed-used development. But she couldn't help fielding a string of questions about the budget crisis hanging over the nation's capital city.

Asked Monday about the risk of layoffs and furloughs, she said: "We're hoping that we don't get to that stage. If it comes to that, I can assure employees that they will be treated fairly ... and I want to emphasize to them that this is not something that the D.C. government has done wrong and is not a case where we don't have the money."

Bowser and the District of Columbia Council are scrambling to

address the crisis created by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. When Congress recessed April 10, it adjourned without addressing a \$1.1 billion hole in the city's 2025 budget that was created when the House eliminated a little-known provision in a budget resolution.

The Senate proposed a simple fix that was publicly endorsed by President Donald Trump. But the House failed for three weeks to bring the fix up for a vote.

Guidance on dealing with ICE draws GOP backlash

WI MADISON — Guidance from the Democratic governor of Wisconsin's administration to state employees about what to do if immigration officials or other federal agents show up at their workplace drew fire Monday from Republicans, who said it was in defiance of the law and President Donald Trump.

The memo from Gov. Tony Evers' administration sent last week comes as Trump's administration has ramped up efforts to deport people living in the country illegally, setting off a string of lawsuits and resistance among Democrats.

Anne Hanson, deputy secretary at Evers' Department of Administration, said in the email to state employees that the guidance was sent after receiving questions about how to respond if Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents or other federal agents show up at their

workplace.

The memo advises state employees not to answer questions from agents, not to give them permission to enter nonpublic areas and not to give them access to paper files or computer systems without first talking with an attorney.

Lottery Commission exec resigns amid scrutiny

TX AUSTIN — The executive director of the Texas Lottery Commission has resigned, the latest shake-up at the state's retail gambling enterprise amid multiple investigations into jackpots in 2023 and earlier this year totaling nearly \$200 million, and calls from some lawmakers to shut it down.

The lottery announced Ryan Mindell's resignation on Monday without comment. A former deputy director and operations director at the lottery, Mindell had held the top job for only about a year following the abrupt resignation of his predecessor.

He leaves as the agency faces at least two investigations ordered by Gov. Greg Abbott and state Attorney General Ken Paxton into the integrity of the lottery prizes, and how the state handled the introduction of courier companies that buy and send tickets on behalf of customers online.

The companies and lottery officials have denied wrongdoing.

From wire reports

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

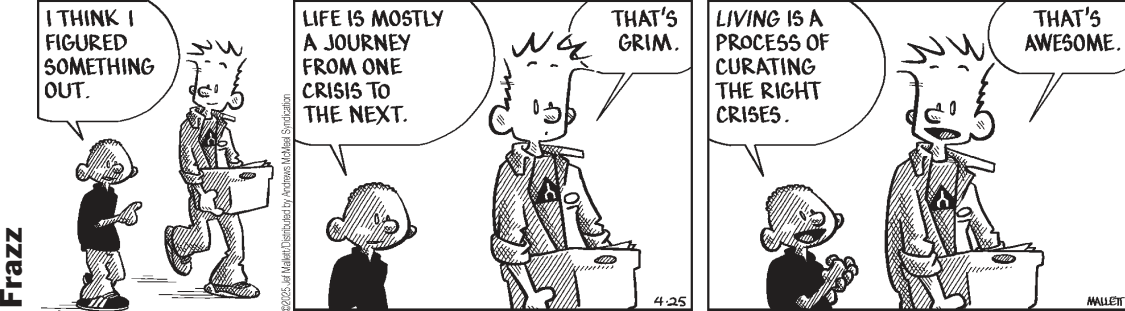
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48	49	50	51							52		
53						54				55		
56						57				58		

- ACROSS
- DOWN
- 28 Chemical suffix
- 30 Lab eggs
- 31 Grammy-winning "Ctrl" singer
- 32 Make lace
- 33 Istanbul honorific
- 36 Lure
- 37 Trust
- 40 Author Dahl
- 42 "Nyad" actress Foster
- 43 Battery part
- 44 Noble gas
- 45 Pronto
- 46 "Insecure" star Rae
- 48 CIA forerunner
- 49 Solemn pledge
- 50 Before
- 51 Numbered rd.
- 1 Soccer —
- 4 Recipe abbr.
- 7 Calf-length skirts
- 12 Chest-beating beast
- 13 Rowing need
- 14 Software customers
- 15 That ship
- 16 Spends the night
- 18 Joan of —
- 19 Locations
- 20 Milk, in Montmartre
- 22 PBS funder
- 23 Evict
- 27 "Psst!"
- 29 Awakens rudely
- 31 Laundry woe
- 34 "Fences" actress Davis
- 35 Capital of Croatia
- 37 "The Big Bang Theory" role
- 38 Slightly
- 39 "— you serious?"
- 41 Trojan War hero
- 45 Garlicky mayo
- 47 Inseparable
- 48 Lingers too long
- 52 Mafia boss
- 53 In a way, slangily
- 54 — Alamos
- 55 Altar words
- 56 Use a broom
- 57 "CSI" find
- 58 Poetic dusk
- 1 Taj —
- 2 Puccini piece
- 3 "Thank you, Henri"
- 4 Pitch
- 5 Lustrous
- 6 Babble
- 7 Touse
- 8 Equi-
- 9 "The Newsroom" actor Patel
- 10 Rage
- 11 Lith., once
- 17 Calendar quota
- 21 Base before home
- 23 Mystical board
- 24 GI entertainers
- 25 Cardinal cap letters
- 26 PreCheck org.

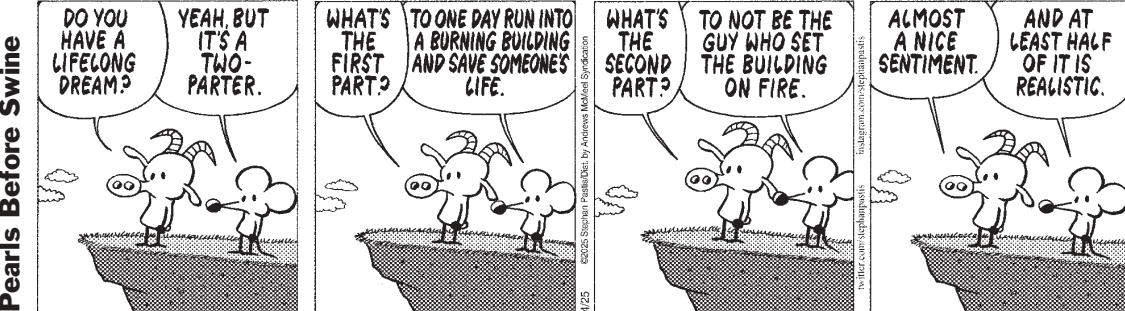
Answer to Previous Puzzle

W	A	D		F	A	U	N		S	T	A	N
E	V	E		L	I	S	A		H	E	M	O
D	E	R	A	I	L	E	D		I	R	A	S
	E	A	R		D	I	G	N	I	T	Y	
R	E	L	A	T	E		R	I	D			
E	L	I		Y	A	K		L	I	C	I	T
A	B	C	S		T	E	A		G	Y	R	O
P	A	T	O	N		Y	D	S		L	O	T
			G	O	B		S	E	R	I	N	S
P	I	L	G	R	I	M		L	O	N		
S	H	U	I		L	A	V	E	N	D	E	R
A	O	N	E		L	Y	I	N		E	N	C
S	P	A	R		Y	O	D	A		R	D	A

Frazz



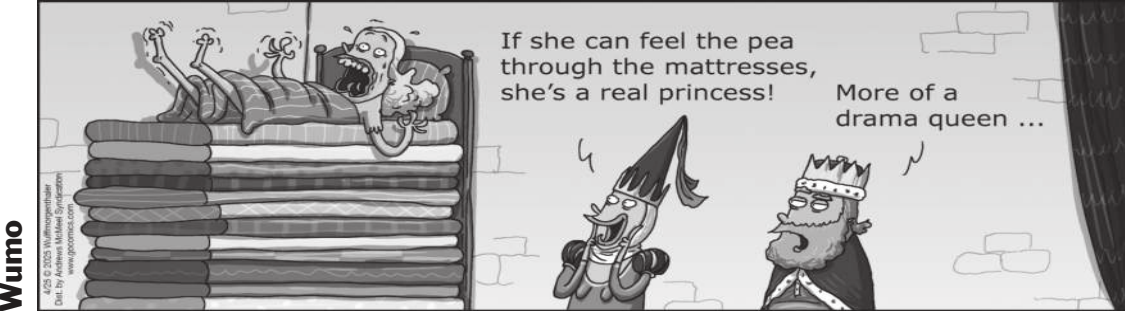
Pearls Before Swine



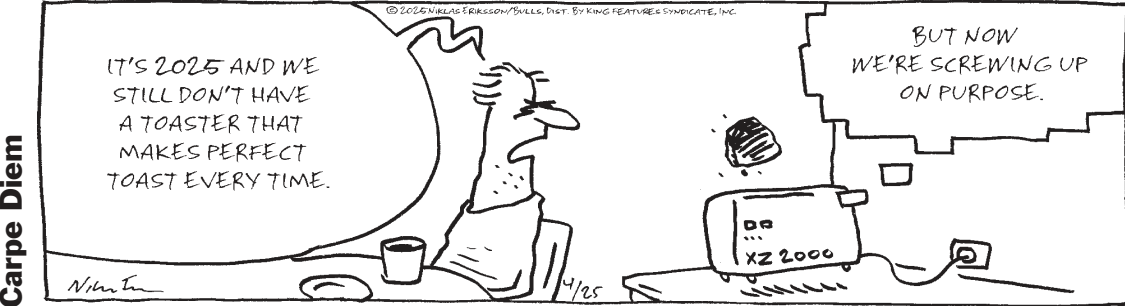
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



4-25 CRYPTOQUIP

TVSGYCRG SGA FTESAQMAE

GTM FEYJAQ CL ZHSG SGTS

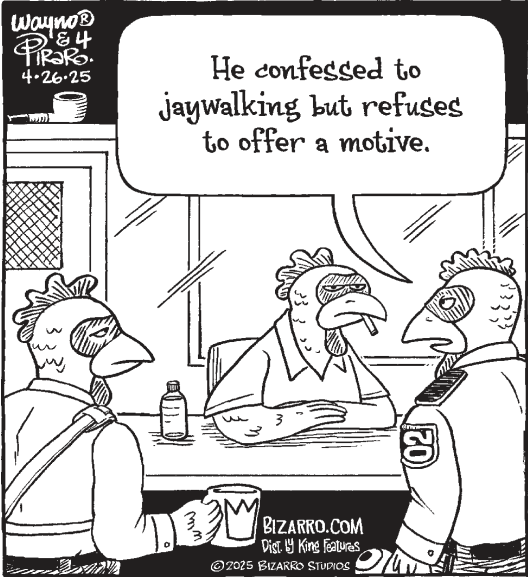
KAVVYZ, GA JALS TXJHQR

GAE KYE TQYSGAE XGYS.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT KINDS OF FRUITS ARE THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER AS BEERMAKING INGREDIENTS? BREW-BERRIES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals H

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19					20				
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23	24	25			26				27	28	29	
30				31				32				
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			36			37						
38	39	40				41			42	43	44	
45					46				47			
48					49				50			
51					52				53			

ACROSS

- 1 Scribble (down)
4 Body powder
8 Blacken on a grill
12 Martian mover
13 Athletic shoe brand
14 Volcanic flow
15 Pester
16 Property claim
17 Has bills
18 Fight ender, most likely
21 Longing
22 Succor
23 Moon-related
26 JFK info
27 Actor Gibson
30 Muscat's land
31 Poseidon's realm
32 Microwaves
33 Inlet
34 Ann Patchett's "— Canto"
35 Sensational
36 "You've got mail" co.
37 Bud
38 Fruity rum cocktail
45 Slimming surgery, briefly
46 Cartoonist Addams, familiarly
47 Mine yield
48 Pt. of U.S.A.
49 Prefix with conference

- 50 Rowing need
51 Luke's teacher
52 Waterston and Raimi
53 USSR spy org.

DOWN

- 1 Rubbish
2 In the blink — eye
3 Takeout request
4 Chatterbox
5 Par — (airmail stamp)
6 Stead
7 Bach's "Coffee —"
8 Sun block?
9 Actress Goldie
10 With (Fr.)
11 Impetuous
19 Printer's blue
20 Entertainer Zadora

- 23 Arcing tennis shot
24 Ms. Thurman
25 Opposing vote
26 Snaky fish
27 Scratch the surface?
28 Prefix with center
29 Leary's drug
31 Chooses
32 Bantu speaker
34 Droid
35 Expires
36 2024 Best Picture winner
37 Sacred song
38 Theater production
39 Wheels of fortune?
40 Mimicked
41 Mother of Zeus
42 Cranny
43 Rocky outcrop
44 Basil or thyme

Answer to Previous Puzzle

M	O	M		T	S	P		M	I	D	I	S
A	P	E		O	A	R		U	S	E	R	S
H	E	R		S	T	A	Y	S	O	V	E	R
A	R	C		S	I	T	E	S				
L	A	I	T		N	E	A		O	U	S	T
				H	E	Y		R	O	U	S	T
S	T	A	I	N				V	I	O	L	A
Z	A	G	R	E	B		R	A	J			
A	T	A	D		A	R	E		A	J	A	X
				A	I	O	L	I		O	N	E
O	V	E	R	S	T	A	Y	S		D	O	N
S	O	R	T	A		L	O	S		I	D	O
S	W	E	E	P		D	N	A		E	E	N

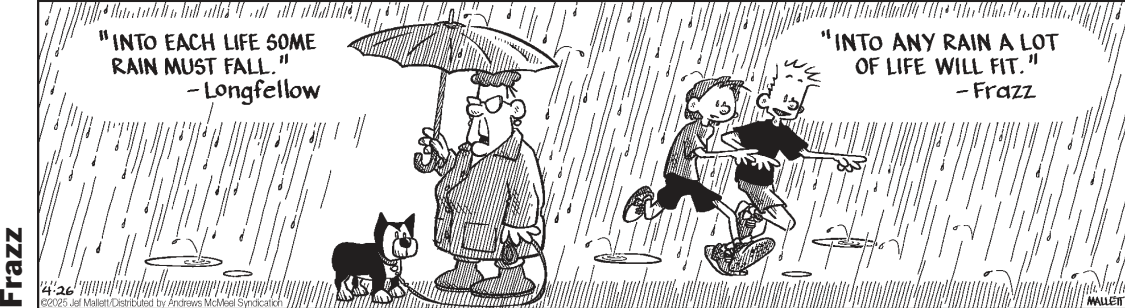
4-26

CRYPTOQUIP

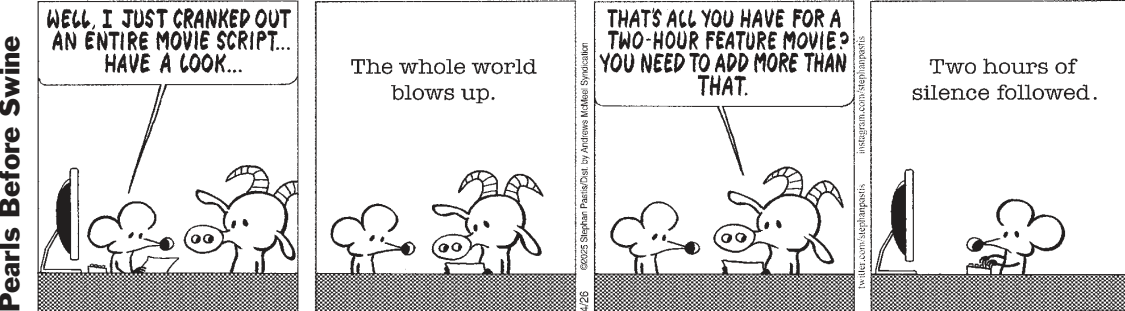
U W Z M P X E Y C Z D V P C S P M P K
B P W K B M W Y K D C G K B K G K Y O J W X O
P E D K U L Y Q X W V Z B W Z C M B
P W B C K Y O : B W S Q M W J K Y .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ALTHOUGH THE BARTENDER HAD BROKEN UP WITH THAT FELLOW, HE KEPT ASKING HER FOR ANOTHER SHOT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals G

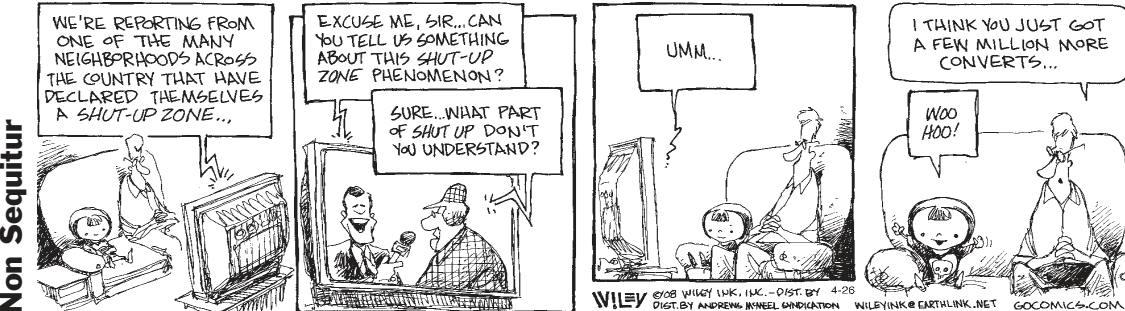
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



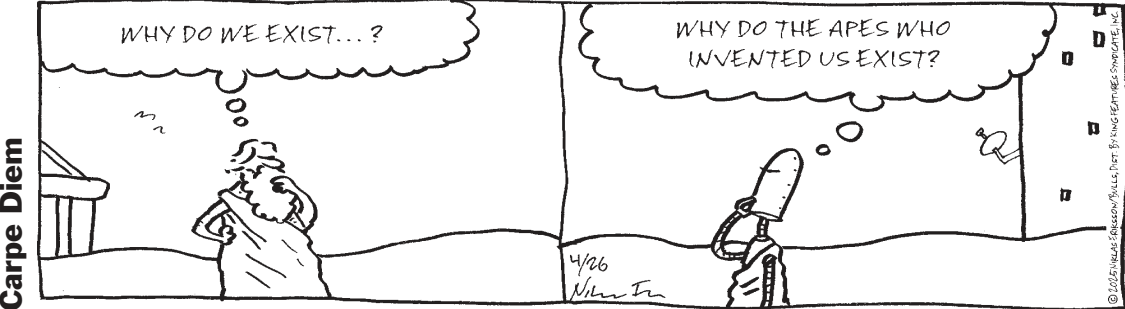
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



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OPINION

It’s time for age limits for members of Congress

By NATHAN L. GONZALES
CQ-Roll Call

In a country bitterly divided on virtually everything, from the major to the mundane, there’s one issue that could unite Republicans and Democrats: age limits.

An uncomfortable conversation about the acuity of aging politicians, from Republicans Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Thad Cochran of Mississippi to Democrats Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia and Dianne Feinstein of California, has only been magnified by former President Joe Biden’s years in office and former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s closing time on Capitol Hill. Then there’s former Texas Rep. Kay Granger, now 82, who was discovered by The Dallas Express staying at an assisted living facility toward the end of her House term as she dealt with what was later reported as “dementia issues.”

San Francisco Democrats made news recently over a proposed resolution to call politicians in California to voluntarily retire at an age to be determined later. But the country and Congress should consider something more permanent, specific and restrictive.

You can’t do that

One of the first criticisms of any suggestion about age limits on elected officials is usually discrimination — the idea that you can’t discriminate against candidates based on their age. But the Constitution already does so, with age minimums.

Members of the House have to be 25 years old, (Article 1, Section 2, Clause 2 of the Constitution). Members of the Senate have to be 30 years old (Article 1, Section 3, Clause 3). And presidents have to be 35 years old (Article 2, Section 1, Clause 5). So the age discrimination argument shouldn’t even be a part of the conversation.

Considering the general bias toward the perceived wisdom of the Founding Fathers, a critic could say that the framers who included an age minimum would have included age maximums if they had wanted. But life expectancies were considerably different more than 200 years ago.

The average life expectancy was closer to 40 years in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. And even though the first six presidents served into their mid-to-late 60s, the Founding Fathers couldn’t have fathomed elected officials serving into their 80s and 90s. At 81, Benjamin Franklin was 15 years older than any other signer of the Constitution. Today, he wouldn’t rank among the top 10 oldest members of Congress.

It won’t be easy

At a time when Congress can barely agree on a framework for when to reach an agreement, passing a constitutional amendment seems particularly ambitious. A constitutional amendment must first be approved by a two-thirds vote of both chambers of Congress and ratified by three-fourths of the states with an up-or-down vote in each legislative chamber.

There’s been only one constitutional amendment passed in the past 50 years. The 27th Amendment, first submitted in 1789, was ratified in 1992 and effectively said that any raise Congress votes to give itself can’t take effect until after the next election so constituents can decide whether they deserve it. (The 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age to 18 years, passed in



JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., shown in 2023, said Wednesday he will not seek reelection in 2026. He is 80 years old.

1971.)

There could be some initial pushback from Republicans because age limits might be seen as a shot at the current 78-year-old resident of the White House and his ability to do the job. And there’s the challenge of asking current members of Congress to limit their own tenures in Congress. So there might have to be some sort of provision to grandfather in (or, in some cases, to great-grandfather in) sitting lawmakers to exempt them from the new restrictions.

That would leave us waiting a long time for the fruits of such an effort to be seen. But that doesn’t mean it’s not a worthwhile endeavor.

While longtime incumbents often rouse strong feelings of loyalty and deference, it’s hard to imagine that lawmakers who work beside elderly colleagues believe it’s in the best interest of their constituents and the country for them to serve into their golden years.

What’s my age again?

A considerable majority of Americans are open to this idea. More specifically, 82% of Republicans and 76% of Democrats support a maximum age limit for elected officials, according to a 2023 Pew Research Center poll.

But landing on a specific maximum age might be more difficult than the daunting task of passing a constitutional amendment: 85 years old? 80?

For some reference points, senators in Canada, who are appointed and not elected, have a mandatory retirement age of 75. In the Catholic Church, only cardinals younger than 80 can participate in a papal conclave to choose the next pope. Just 1% of S&P 1500 companies have a CEO age 78 or older, which is interesting considering the gravity of work lawmakers have to do on Capitol Hill.

The average age for an S&P 1500 CEO is 58, which is close to the median age of a House member (57.5) in the 119th Congress, according to Pew. The median age for a senator is 64.7. But that masks some of the oldest members, including Iowa’s Chuck Grassley (91), Vermont’s Bernie Sanders

(83), McConnell (83), Maine’s Angus King (81), Connecticut’s Richard Blumenthal (79), Vermont’s Peter Welch (77), Hawaii’s Mazie Hirono (77) and Oregon’s Ron Wyden (75).

Idaho’s Jim Risch (81), Massachusetts’ Ed Markey (78) and Rhode Island’s Jack Reed (75) have announced they’ll seek reelection in 2026. New Hampshire’s Jeanne Shaheen (78) bowed out recently and will soon be joined in retirement by Dick Durbin (80) of Illinois.

In the House there are 41 members age 75 or older, with Dina Titus of Nevada and Don Beyer of Virginia joining them in the next couple of months. The eldest members include Harold Rogers of Kentucky (87); Maxine Waters (86), Nancy Pelosi (85), Doris Matsui (80) and John Garamendi (80) of California; Steny Hoyer of Maryland (85); Jim Clyburn of South Carolina (84); Danny Davis (83) and Jan Schakowsky (80) of Illinois; John Carter of Texas (83); Frederica Wilson of Florida (82); Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut (82); Virginia Foxx of North Carolina (81); Emanuel Cleaver II of Missouri (80); and Bonnie Watson Coleman of New Jersey (80).

Critics of age limits might say that institutional knowledge is important to a functioning Congress. But how’s that working out? Elderly wisdom doesn’t seem to be helping smooth things along these days. And there are plenty of members younger than 70 who know how things work.

Of course, the precise amendment language would have to be worked out, perhaps by focusing on age when taking office. An official age 70 or older can’t be sworn in, for example.

That benchmark would have affected only three presidential inaugurations: Joe Biden in 2021 (78) and Donald Trump in both 2017 (70) and 2025 (78). It would have kept West Virginia Republican Jim Justice, 73, out of the Senate, and it would shake up next year’s Senate race in Maine, which features GOP Sen. Susan Collins, 72, and potentially Democratic Gov. Janet Mills, 77. Former North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, who hasn’t ruled out a Senate run next year, would be 69 in January 2027 if he happened to run and win.

Forced retirement

Rather than a constitutional amendment, some folks plan to use elections to force elderly members into retirement.

Democratic National Committee Vice Chair David Hogg committed to spending \$20 million through his outside group, Leaders We Deserve, to help younger, progressive challengers win primaries against older incumbents in safely Democratic districts. And younger primary challengers have already popped up this cycle against Pelosi, Schakowsky, Georgia Rep. David Scott (79) and others.

Going by history, most of these efforts will fall short. And some people will deem it a vote of confidence in the elderly and a refutation of young people. But in reality, it will have more to do with the powerful advantages of incumbency, including name ID and fundraising.

Considering the huge hurdles to be overcome, I realize that this column might have been written in vain. But if a C paper written by a 19-year-old college student could propel the 27th Amendment to be ratified after 200 years, then there’s a chance the country could finally get it right on age limits.

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball American League

ATHLETICS — Selected the contract of 1B Nick Kurtz from Las Vegas (PCL). Recalled RHP Grant Holman and LHP Hogan Harris from Las Vegas. Optioned INF Max Muncy and LHP Jacob Lopez to Las Vegas. Placed RHP Jose Leclerc on the 15-day IL.

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Sent LHP Trevor Rogers to Chesapeake (EL) on a rehab assignment.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with C Omar Narváez on a minor league contract.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Acquired 2B Rowdy Jordan from the New York Mets.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Selected the contract of RHP Carl Edwards Jr. from Salt Lake (PCL). Recalled RHP Victor Mederos from Tri-City (NL). Designated RHP Ian Anderson for assignment. Optioned RHP Michael Darrell-Hicks Salt Lake.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned INF Jorbit Vivas to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Selected the contract of RHP Casey Lawrence from Tacoma (PCL). Optioned RHP Sauryn Lao to Tacoma. Transferred OF Victor Robles from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

TEXAS RANGERS — Placed SS Corey Seager on the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of INF Nick Ahmed from the ACL Rangers. Designated LHP Walter Pennington for assignment.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with RHP Connor Overton on a minor league contract.

National League

ATLANTA BRAVES — Transferred SS Nacho Alvarez Jr. from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Jesse Chavez from Gwinnett (IL). Optioned RHP Nathan Wiles to Gwinnett.

CHICAGO CUBS — Agreed to terms with SS Nicky Lopez to a one-year, major league contract. Selected the contract of LHP Drew Pomeranz. Optioned RHP Gavin Hollowell to Iowa (IL). Transferred LHP Justin Steele to the 60-day IL. Designated INF Gage Workman for assignment.

COLORADO ROCKIES — Reinstated OF Brenton Doyle from the bereavement list. Optioned OF Zac Veen to Albuquerque (PCL). Sent LHP Evan Justice outright to Albuquerque.

MIAMI MARLINS — Sent LHP Patrick Monteverde outright to Jacksonville (IL).

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Reinstated INF/OF Weston Wilson from the 10-day IL. Designated 2B Kody Clemens for assignment.

BASKETBALL

Women's National Basketball Association

INDIANA FEVER — Signed G Bree Hall to a rookie scale contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

DETROIT LIONS — Released QB Jake Fromm.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Waived CB Na-Jee Thompson with a failed physical designation and OL Trevor Reid with a non-football injury.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Exercised the fifth-year option on WR Chris Olave.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Waived DL Cameron Young.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Reassigned RW AJ Spellacy to Rockford (AHL) from Windsor (OHL).

LOS ANGELES KINGS — Reassigned G Pheonix Copley to Ontario (AHL). Recalled G Carter George from Ontario.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

AUSTIN FC — Acquired F Robert Taylor via a trade with Inter Miami CF in exchange for \$450,000 in 2025 General Allocation Money (GAM), \$250,000 in 2026 GAM, and a conditional \$50,000 in 2027 GAM.

CHARLOTTE FC — Acquired M Jahkeele Marshall-Rutty from Montreal in exchange for \$100,000 in 2025 general allocation money (GAM).

HOUSTON DYNAMO FC — Signed F Toyosi Olusanya to a two-year contract that includes 2027 and 2028 club options.

SPORTING KANSAS CITY — Signed F Santiago Munoz to a one-year contract by loan from LIGA MX side Santos Laguna that includes a purchase option.

LAFC — Acquired MF Frankie Amaya on loan from Toluca FC (Liga MX) through 2025.

REAL SALT LAKE — Acquired F William Agada from Sporting Kansas City in exchange for \$500,000 in 2025 general allocation money (GAM).

SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES — Acquired M Noel Buck from New England in exchange for \$600,000 cash.

ST. LOUIS CITY SC — Acquired F Xande Silva from Atlanta in exchange for \$250,000 in general allocation money (GAM). As part of the deal, Atlanta will retain Silva's special discovery tag, while St. Louis will retain Silva's full 2025 salary budget charge.

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Charlotte FC	6	2	1	19	16	7
Cincinnati	6	2	1	19	13	11
Inter Miami CF	5	0	3	18	13	6
Columbus	5	1	3	18	12	7
Philadelphia	5	3	1	16	16	9
Nashville	4	4	1	13	12	11
Orlando City	3	2	4	13	15	12
Chicago	3	3	3	12	16	15
New York	3	3	3	12	10	9
NYC FC	3	4	2	11	11	13
New England	3	4	1	10	6	7
Atlanta	2	4	3	9	11	16
D.C. United	2	4	3	9	11	19
Toronto FC	1	4	4	7	8	13
CF Montréal	0	6	3	3	4	13

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	6	1	2	20	17	6
Austin FC	5	3	1	16	7	8
Minn. United	4	1	4	16	11	7
Portland	4	2	3	15	16	13
Colorado	4	2	3	15	13	13
San Diego FC	4	3	2	14	15	12
LAFC	4	4	1	13	13	14
Seattle	3	3	3	12	12	11
FC Dallas	3	3	3	12	10	11
San Jose	3	5	1	10	19	17
Real Salt Lake	3	6	0	9	8	14
St Louis City	2	4	3	9	5	6
Sporting KC	2	6	1	7	15	19
Houston	1	4	4	7	8	14
LA Galaxy	0	6	3	3	6	16

Sunday's games

St Louis City at Los Angeles FC

Portland at LA Galaxy

Saturday, May 3

Nashville at Atlanta

New England at Toronto FC

Charlotte FC at Columbus

Colorado at D.C. United

New York at Miami

Philadelphia at CF Montréal

Minnesota at Austin FC

Orlando City at Chicago

FC Dallas at San Diego FC

Real Salt Lake at Vancouver

Houston at Los Angeles FC

Portland at San Jose

St Louis City at Seattle

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	5	0	0	15	12	1
Orlando	4	1	0	12	11	2
Washington	4	1	0	12	7	3
Gotham FC	2	2	2	8	9	8
Portland	2	2	2	8	7	6
Angel City	2	1	2	8	7	8
San Diego	2	2	1	7	9	8
Bay FC	2	2	1	7	5	5
Seattle	2	2	1	7	5	5
Houston	1	3	1	4	4	8
Utah Royals FC	1	3	1	4	4	8
Louisville	1	3	1	4	3	9
Chicago	1	4	0	3	3	11
North Carolina	0	3	2	2	3	7

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Tuesday's game

Portland 4, Gotham FC 1

Friday's games

Utah Royals FC at Houston

Angel City at Orlando

Saturday's games

Gotham FC at Washington

Kansas City at North Carolina

San Diego at Chicago

Seattle at Bay FC

Sunday's game

Louisville at Portland

Friday, May 2

Louisville at Houston

Angel City at Washington

Kansas City at Seattle

Saturday, May 3

Orlando at Portland

North Carolina at Utah Royals FC

NFL DRAFT

Cousins factoring in Falcons' plans

Atlanta has just five picks and could include QB in trade as it looks for pass rush help in draft

By CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

ATLANTA — The status of quarterback Kirk Cousins remains a backdrop to the Atlanta Falcons' plans for the NFL draft after he surprised some observers by reporting for the first day of the team's voluntary offseason program.

Falcons general manager Terry Fontenot said Wednesday he was not surprised Cousins was present for Tuesday's first day of the off-season program.

"I wouldn't say a surprise," Fontenot said. "This is a voluntary thing. Whether a player comes or doesn't come we have a lot of good professionals who we know are going to take care of their bodies, including Kirk."

Fontenot has said the team is comfortable in having Cousins, 36, remain with the team as the backup to starter Michael Penix Jr., the team's 2024 first-round pick. Coach Raheem Morris said the team is open to listening to trade offers.

At the NFL meetings in Palm Beach, Fla., this month, Morris said the Falcons "still feel very strongly about Kirk being our backup quarterback."

Morris also acknowledged Cousins would like an opportunity to start, even if for another team.

"We won't hold him back if opportunity presents itself," Morris said. "He's made it clear he'd like to be a starter."

There has been speculation the Falcons could cut Cousins, who signed a four-year, \$180 million contract last March that included \$100 million guaranteed. Cousins led the Falcons to a 6-3 start last season but lost his job after struggling with interceptions.

Any team expecting Cousins to be released would be less likely to make a trade offer for the veteran. Cousins' presence at the first day of the offseason program supports the team's stance that he remains in the plans for the 2025 season and will not be released.

Fontenot refuted a report the Falcons were asking any team trading for Cousins to pick up \$20 million of his remaining guaranteed salary.

"We haven't put a number on it," Fontenot said. "We wouldn't share specific conversations, but to answer your question we wouldn't put a specific number on it."

The Falcons could have saved a \$10 million roster bonus by releasing Cousins. Instead, he is guaranteed \$27.5 million, plus the \$10 million bonus, in 2025.

The Falcons were 1-2 with Penix as the starter for an 8-9 final record. They have only five picks in the NFL draft, including the No. 15 overall selection in Thursday night's first round.

Atlanta added depth at quarterback this week by signing Easton Stick, a fifth-round draft pick by the Los Angeles Chargers in 2019. Stick played in only six games in six seasons.

Stick joins Emory Jones on the depth chart behind Penix and Cousins.

The Falcons could be interested in including Cousins in a draft-day trade as they look for pass rush help. They have the No. 46 overall pick in the second round and one pick in the fourth round.

"We're going to do what's best for this football team, whether that's a trade or whatever it is," Fontenot said when asked about his interest in trading Cousins.



Quarterback Kirk Cousins surprised some observers by reporting for the first day of the team's voluntary offseason program.



Defensive lineman Ahmed Hassanein stretches at the scouting combine in February. Hassanein was a ranked Crossfit athlete in Egypt when he decided to try football, which led him to play at Boise State.

These guys show atypical paths can still lead to draft

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Former Virginia safety Jonas Sanker took a somewhat unconventional path to this week's NFL draft.

He initially drew the interest of college scouts while playing high school basketball in Charlottesville, Va., but then emerged as a star in eight-man football.

Sanker's rapid ascension from fast-break-style prep games to college captain to the cusp of a pro career sounds more like Hollywood, but Sanker has made it this far with hard work.

"I tried to make the most of it and then the transition to college is a little bit of a learning curve," he said, describing the move from his high school's narrower field to a regulation-sized college field. "But I was willing to learn."

Sanker fine-tuned his skills in a game that features three fewer players on offense and defense, everyone is an eligible receiver and the potential for high-scoring games is a constant. This version is attractive to schools that lack enough bodies to be competitive in the traditional 11-man style of football.

And with concussion concerns growing and the number of players declining, more schools seem to be opting for a game that typically produces fewer injuries because there are fewer interior line collisions. It also appears to be opening another door to the NFL.

If Sanker makes a roster this fall, he will join a short list of eight-man alums who have played in the NFL since 2017 that includes Bills offensive tackle Spencer Brown, recently retired Cowboys linebacker Leighton Vander Esch, and running back Tarik Cohen.

Finding players who haven't taken the traditional journeys is hardly a new phenomenon in a



Jonas Sanker played at Virginia after a high school career spent playing eight-man football. There was a learning curve in college, but he became a team captain.

world that rewards creativity, athleticism and innovation.

Former receiver Bob Hayes joined the Dallas Cowboys after winning the 100-meter dash at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Renaldo Nehemiah, a world-record hurdler, played three seasons with San Francisco in the 1980s.

Australian kickers and punters, common in college football, are dotting the NFL landscape, too. And position players are now being found more routinely in Europe and Africa.

This year's draft class follows the trend.

Tight end Elijah Arroyo of Miami faced a different kind of adjustment after playing six seasons of football in Mexico, where he learned how to play the game with a Spanish playbook.

When his family moved back to Texas while he was in high school, Arroyo found himself competing against bigger, stronger, more polished opponents while learning the playbooks in English.

"I feel like the sport of football

in Mexico grew a lot throughout my years there," he said. "I learned the game in Spanish first, which was pretty cool, and then I came back over and I realized how similar things were. It's still the same sport, it's still football."

This year's most unique story may come from defensive end Ahmed Hassanein, who went from football novice at age 16 to two-time all-conference selection at Boise State.

He moved to Egypt with his father at age 6 and used sports as an outlet to help guide him through his parents' separation. Hassanein tried ping pong, jujutsu and basketball before thriving at CrossFit, which focuses on high-intensity, functional movements that constantly vary.

It was a perfect introduction for him to the skills he'd need later when, after a decade, his brother, a semi-pro player in Austria, broke the silence and convinced Hassanein to give American football a shot. Now the guy who was Egypt's No. 1 CrossFit athlete, ranked No. 10 in Africa, is just a few days from finding out where he'll land in the NFL.

"I didn't know what I was doing at the beginning," Hassanein said. "One day I didn't even know what the NFL was. One day I was watching Aaron Donald play and I was like, what high school does he go to. My brother was like, 'Bro, that's the NFL'. I was like, 'The NFL? What's that?'"

He certainly knows now. And from Egypt to North America, football fans are likely to get to know their stories, too.

"It's a little overwhelming at first, but, you know, just meeting so many people and just, really taking everything in, it's cool to just be here," Sanker said. "So I'm grateful for the opportunity and looking to make the the most of it."

NFL DRAFT

Some prospects face long road ahead

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

The NFL draft is the culmination of a lifelong dream for many college players who've envisioned hearing their names called by Commissioner Roger Goodell since they were kids.

They've made plenty of sacrifices and spent hundreds of hours practicing on the field, exercising in the weight room and studying film. They've dealt with injuries — some had to overcome significant ones — and battled adversity along the way.

And the journey is just beginning, especially for the players who aren't picked in the first round and don't get a guaranteed multiyear contract.

Prospects had to turn it up a notch in the months leading up to this week's draft. From training for the scouting combine to preparing for pro days, interviewing with coaches and visiting teams, the process can be overwhelming.

Washington State wide receiver Kyle Williams, USC center Jonah Monheim and Colorado State wideout Tory Horton, who are represented by Excel Sports Management, have spent months getting ready for the big day by training at the agency's performance center in Irvine, Calif.

They'll likely have to wait until the second or third day to hear their names called in Green Bay, but the round doesn't matter because getting the opportunity is the main goal.

"This is something that I've been chasing since I was a kid and not too many people get this opportunity, so the fact that I'm in this position and I have this chance, I'm just taking every moment with a breath and I'm not taking anything for granted," Williams said. "I've been putting in a lot of work, a lot of countless hours, sleepless nights, and you never know what's gonna come out of this. You just put in the work and pray for the best. So just knowing that this could become a reality, it's something that I still can't believe and then once my name gets called, I'm just gonna have to take it all in and just really understand that this is the real thing."

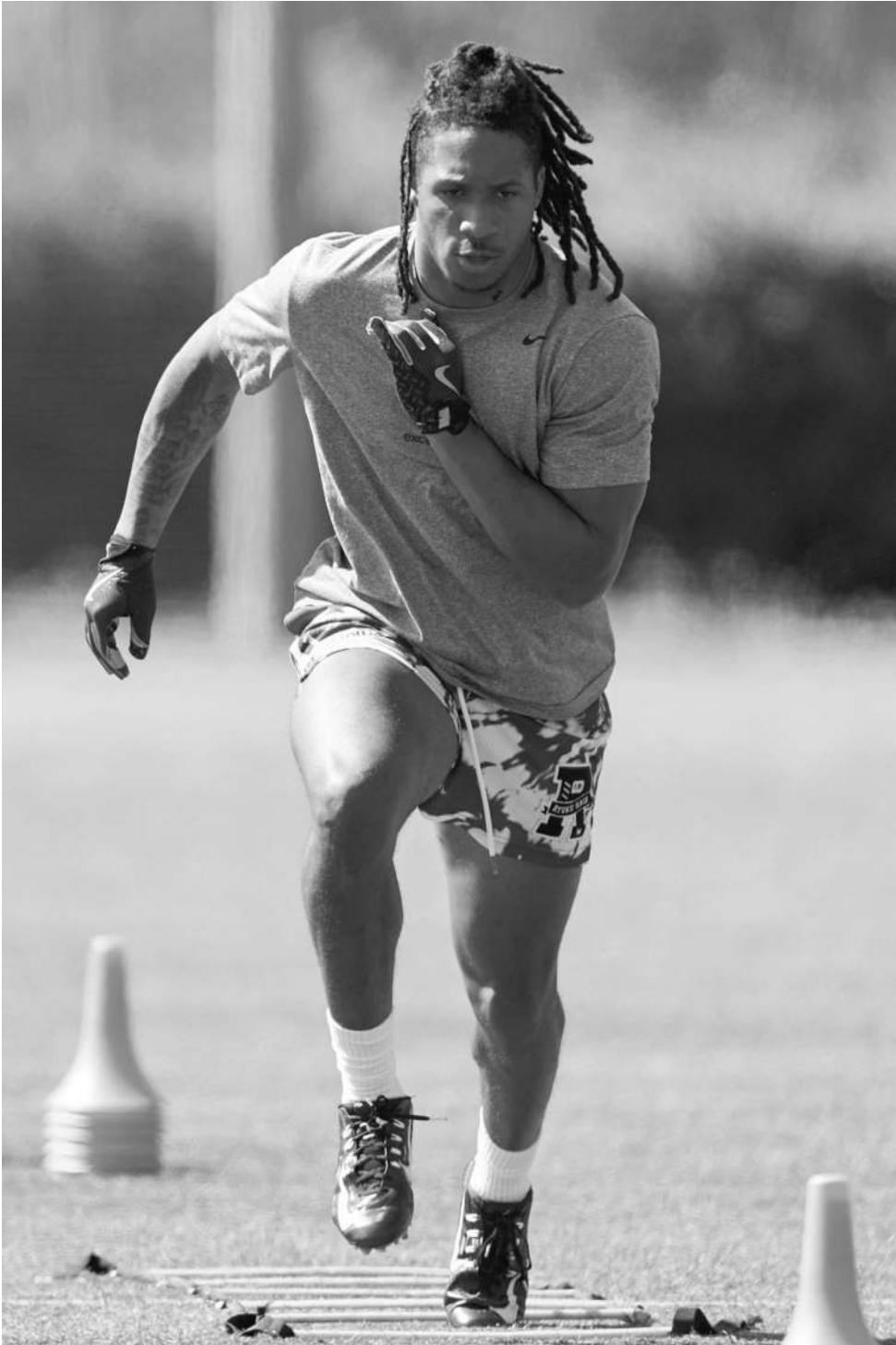
Williams, who is projected to be a second-round pick, ran a 4.4, 40-yard dash at the combine. He's a proven deep threat who can line up at any of the wide receiver spots.

A quarterback in high school, Williams caught a career-high 70 passes for 1,198 yards and 14 touchdowns last season. He had 10 catches for 172 yards and a TD in the Holiday Bowl.

For Williams and many others like him, the NFL is a way to make a better life, not just for himself but also his family. That's a lot of pressure. Williams embraces it.

"It would mean the world," Williams said about getting drafted. "Just take a lot off my mom. I can help my family, my siblings. It gives them motivation to keep going and just to know that dreams do actually come true. Living in a society where a lot of people shy (away) from their dreams just to have this opportunity and get drafted is just like a dream come true."

Horton recorded 1,000 yards receiving as a junior and senior and used his COVID eligibility to stay in school and play an extra year in 2024. A knee injury forced him to miss the second half of his fifth season but he's healthy and ready to go. Horton is pro-



Kyle Williams works out at Lake Forest Sports Park in Lake Forest, Calif., on March 21. The wide receiver, who caught 70 passes for 1,198 yards and 14 TDs for Washington State last season, is projected to be a second round pick in the NFL draft.



Wide receiver Tory Horton, who used his COVID eligibility to play a fifth season at Colorado State last year, is projected to go in the third or fourth round.



GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

USC offensive lineman Jonah Monheim, shown at the scouting combine March 1 in Indianapolis, could have a tough path to the NFL. If the center is drafted, it will likely not be before the fifth round.

jected to be picked in the third or fourth round.

"The whole process itself is a bit of a grind, but all the work from the Pop Warner days to middle school to the high school days and just the adversity that you're always facing within life and just the game of football itself, it kind of all plays out," Horton said. "It kind of molds you and builds you to being that better person, that better version of yourself. And just having a little bit of that weight off of your shoulders from finishing school and only focusing on the sport that you love to do, I feel like that's something that kind of helps out quite a bit for me. And I kind of just dedicated my entire time to football and just enjoying my life of studying and just dreaming and playing ball."

Monheim's path could be even tougher. He's projected to go anywhere from the fifth round or later, with some draft analysts predicting he might have to sign with a team as an undrafted free agent.

"It would mean everything," Monheim said about getting drafted. "I can't wait for whatever opportunity presents itself. Obviously I've been training for that moment and I'll be ready for it and it'd be an awesome moment for my family, for myself, for my coaches, everyone that's been a part of this process along my whole life."

"It's another step on the road in my football journey. It's taken a lot to get to this point, a lot of people pouring into me, a lot of work so you know it's good to be here and it's just another step in the road."

Oregon offensive lineman Josh Conerly Jr. spent 2½ months training at Excel's facilities. His stock soared after a standout performance against Penn State's Abdul Carter in the Big Ten championship, and he could end up giving Goodell a hug on stage Thursday night.

Conerly's daily training routine started with running in the morning, followed by position drills, film sessions and offensive installs. After lunch, it was time in the weight room and then two or three hours of recovery.

"They take care of us like no other," Conerly said about Excel's staff. "I'm a big tub guy, so I enjoy being in the hot tub, cold tub, sauna, red-light therapy. I like doing all those little things. It has my body feeling the best probably than it's ever felt."

The time is now for Williams, Horton, Monheim, Conerly and hundreds of other prospects. The next step is hearing their name called at the draft and then making a name for themselves in the NFL.

"The whole process itself is a bit of a grind, but all the work from the Pop Warner days to middle school to the high school days and just the adversity that you're always facing within life and just the game of football itself, it kind of all plays out,"

Tory Horton
former Colorado State wide receiver

MLB

Majors-best Mets sweep Phillies

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press
NEW YORK — Sometimes the short, soft hits make the big difference.

His playing time limited this season, Starling Marte stepped to the plate with the chance to give the New York Mets a 4-3, 10-inning win Wednesday, a three-game sweep of the Philadelphia Phillies, an unbeaten homestand and a five-game NL East lead over their rival.

His bat shattered against Jordan Romano’s curveball. “Like in 1,000 pieces,” Marte later said through a translator. He sprayed the ball 192 feet into center field. Cal Stevenson charged but could only get to it after three bounces.

“It’s the randomness of the game,” Phillies manager Rob Thomson said.

Pete Alonso, who was on second base, slid across home plate head-first ahead of the throw.

“That’s why you run like hell and slide just in case,” Alonso said.

After wasting an early two-run lead, the Mets extended their winning streak to seven and finished the second-longest unbeaten homestand in team history at 7-0. The Mets have the best record in the major leagues at 18-7 and are 12-1 at home for the first time.

“This is a really tight-knit group because there’s so many guys here from the year before where its like we have experience together, we have continuity,” Alonso said. “And then the guys that were added, just kind of — not just talent-wise, but personality-wise, they just kind of gelled right in. It’s like we’ve been playing together for years.”

Philadelphia (13-12) has lost four straight. Last October, the Mets beat the Phillies in a four-game NL Division Series.

“We have to be better,” Phillies star Bryce Harper said. “As a team we’ve got to really understand what we want to do, how we want to do it.”

There was a miniseries of drama, with a play at the plate, a balk that wasn’t, a 10th-inning, bases-loaded jam escape and an All-Star closer revealing one of his legs inexplicably was longer than the other.

Brett Baty, faced with possible demotion to the minors if Jeff McNeil was activated from the injured list Friday, put the Mets ahead in the second inning with his first home run since last May 25, a two-run drive off Zack Wheeler in the right field second deck.

Johan Rojas and Trea Turner tied the score in the fourth with



SETH WENIG/AP

Mets catcher Hayden Senger, right, tags out the Phillies’ Nick Castellanos as he tries to score during the eighth inning on Wednesday. New York capped an unbeaten homestand with its seventh straight win.

RBI singles against David Peterson.

Juan Soto prevented the go-ahead run from scoring in the eighth inning. Nick Castellanos tried to score from second on Max Kepler’s two-out single that went off the glove of diving second baseman Luisangel Acuña and into right. Soto’s one-hop throw to rookie catcher Hayden Senger was slightly to the first-base side. Senger snagged the ball, lunged across the plate and tagged Castellanos, who slid feet first.

Senger had no idea where the

“This is a really tight-knit group because there’s so many guys here from the year before where its like we have experience together.”

Pete Alonso

runner was, then looked at his mitt after the tag to make sure the ball was there.

“He could have been halfway down the line, and I’d look like an idiot diving towards the plate,” Senger said.

Thomson called for a video review, but plate umpire Mark Wenger concluded the manager signaled past the 15-second limit.

Castellanos put the Phillies ahead 3-2 with a one-out RBI single in the 10th off All-Star closer Edwin Díaz, who left with a left hip cramp after his first pitch to J.T. Realmuto. Umpires at first signaled a balk for a third disengagement from the pitching rub-

ber, then called off the penalty after deciding Díaz stepped off because he was hurt.

“My hip got locked up. So I started walking, tried to maybe loosen it up,” Díaz said.

Mets athletic training staff had worked on Díaz on Tuesday when the pitcher complained his right leg suddenly was longer than his left.

“That’s normal?” Díaz remembered asking the trainer. “He said, ‘No,’ so he fixed my hips right away.”

Thomson came onto the field trying to get the balk restored.

“That’s a play that I’ll have to remember to tell our pitchers: Step off third time,” he said. “Call the trainer. He’ll take you out. We’ll put somebody else in.”

Max Kranick (2-0), who had thrown 36 pitches in Monday’s series-opening 5-4 win, was summoned to take over with a 1-0 count, walked Realmuto with

three straight balls and gave up Alec Bohm’s single that loaded the bases. Then he retired Bryson Stott and Kepler on short flyouts.

“Today was definitely a little bit different,” Kranick said.

Alonso retied the game with a one-out RBI double in the bottom half off Jordan Romano (0-1), his NL-best 26th RBI, Brandon Nimmo was intentionally walked, Mark Vientos struck out and Marte singled.

“Obviously with the circumstances that I’m currently in,” the 36-year-old, two-time All-Star said, “it feels really good to see the team smile and to come together in a win like that.”

Leaders

American League

Batting—Judge, New York, .415; Goldschmidt, New York, .383; Aranda, Tampa Bay, .344; Kwan, Cleveland, .337; Ja.Wilson, Athletics, .337; Springer, Toronto, .333; Andujar, Athletics, .319; McKinstry, Detroit, .311; Bregman, Boston, .310; Story, Boston, .309.

Runs—Judge, New York, 23; Soderstrom, Athletics, 19; Buxton, Minnesota, 18; Ju.Rodriguez, Seattle, 18; Kwan, Cleveland, 17; Rice, New York, 17; Torkelson, Detroit, 17; Bregman, Boston, 16; Mullins, Baltimore, 16.

RBI—Judge, New York, 26; Torkelson, Detroit, 21; Mullins, Baltimore, 19; Soderstrom, Athletics, 19; Bregman, Boston, 19; Manzardo, Cleveland, 18; Arozarena, Seattle, 17; Trout, Los Angeles, 16; Raleigh, Seattle, 16.

Home Runs—Soderstrom, Athletics, 9; Raleigh, Seattle, 9; Trout, Los Angeles, 8; Manzardo, Cleveland, 7; Chisholm, New York, 7; Torkelson, Detroit, 7; Judge, New York, 7; Rooker, Athletics, 7.

Stolen Bases—Giménez, Toronto, 8; Mangum, Tampa Bay, 8; Arozarena, Seattle, 7; Ja.Duran, Boston, 7; Meyers, Houston, 7; Robert, Chicago, 7; Witt, Kansas City, 7.

ERA—Mahle, Texas, 0.68; Crochet, Boston, 1.13; H.Brown, Houston, 1.16; Fried, New York, 1.42; Bubic, Kansas City, 1.45; Bassitt, Toronto, 1.88; Mize, Detroit, 2.22; Flaherty, Detroit, 2.63; L.Gilbert, Seattle, 2.63; Eovaldi, Texas, 2.64.

Strikeouts—Rodón, New York, 45; Ragans, Kansas City, 42; L.Gilbert, Seattle, 41; Crochet, Boston, 35; Bassitt, Toronto, 34; Flaherty, Detroit, 34; Bubic, Kansas City, 33.

National League

Batting—Donovan, St. Louis, .356; W.Smith, Los Angeles, .350; Turang, Milwaukee, .350; Alonso, New York, .341; Naylor, Arizona, .341; J.Lee, San Francisco, .333; Tatis, San Diego, .333; K.Ruiz, Washington, .325; Carroll, Arizona, .323; Frelick, Milwaukee, .318; Ozuna, Atlanta, .318.

Runs—Tucker, Chicago, 25; Turang, Milwaukee, 24; Ohtani, Los Angeles, 23; Tatis, San Diego, 23; Carroll, Arizona, 21; Crow-Armstrong, Chicago, 21; Happ, Chicago, 21; J.Lee, San Francisco, 21.

RBI—Flores, San Francisco, 27; Alonso, New York, 26; Tucker, Chicago, 25; T.Hernández, Los Angeles, 22; E.De La Cruz, Cincinnati, 22; Suzuki, Chicago, 20; Chourio, Milwaukee, 20; Yelich, Milwaukee, 19; Lowe, Washington, 19; Perdomo, Arizona, 19; Edman, Los Angeles, 19; Carroll, Arizona, 19.

Home Runs—Wood, Washington, 8; Tatis, San Diego, 8; Edman, Los Angeles, 8; Mervis, Miami, 7; Flores, San Francisco, 7; Schwarber, Philadelphia, 7; Carroll, Arizona, 7; Tucker, Chicago, 7.

Stolen Bases—On.Cruz, Pittsburgh, 11; Crow-Armstrong, Chicago, 10; E.De La Cruz, Cincinnati, 10; V.Scott, St. Louis, 8; Turang, Milwaukee, 8.

ERA—Yamamoto, Los Angeles, 0.93; Ty.Megill, New York, 1.10; Pivetta, San Diego, 1.20; Parker, Washington, 1.39; Heaney, Pittsburgh, 1.72; Webb, San Francisco, 1.98; Luzardo, Philadelphia, 2.08.

Strikeouts—Wheeler, Philadelphia, 50; Gore, Washington, 45; Webb, San Francisco, 44; Meyer, Miami, 41; Yamamoto, Los Angeles, 38; Luzardo, Philadelphia, 36; F.Peralta, Milwaukee, 36; Greene, Cincinnati, 35; C.Holmes, New York, 34.

Scoreboard

American League East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	10	.600	—
Boston	14	12	.538	1½
Toronto	12	13	.480	3
Tampa Bay	10	14	.417	4½
Baltimore	9	14	.391	5

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	15	10	.600	—
Cleveland	14	10	.583	½
Kansas City	10	14	.417	4½
Minnesota	9	15	.375	5½
Chicago	5	19	.208	9½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	14	10	.583	—
Houston	13	11	.542	1
Seattle	13	11	.542	1
Los Angeles	11	12	.478	2½
Athletics	11	13	.458	3

National League East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	7	.720	—
Philadelphia	13	12	.520	5
Miami	11	13	.458	6½
Washington	11	13	.458	6½
Atlanta	10	14	.417	7½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	16	10	.615	—
Milwaukee	13	12	.520	2½
Cincinnati	12	13	.480	3½
Pittsburgh	10	15	.400	5½
St. Louis	10	15	.400	5½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Diego	17	8	.680	—
Los Angeles	16	9	.640	1
San Francisco	16	9	.640	1
Arizona	14	10	.583	2½
Colorado	4	18	.182	11½

Wednesday's games

Detroit 6, San Diego 0
N.Y. Yankees 5, Cleveland 1
Washington 4, Baltimore 3
Seattle 8, Boston 5
Houston 3, Toronto 1
Minnesota 6, Chicago White Sox 3
Pittsburgh 3, L.A. Angels 0
Athletics 5, Texas 2
Tampa Bay 7, Arizona 6, 11 innings
Atlanta 4, St. Louis 1
Cincinnati 5, Miami 2
N.Y. Mets 4, Philadelphia 3, 10 innings
Chicago Cubs 7, L.A. Dodgers 6
San Francisco 4, Milwaukee 2
Colorado at Kansas City, ppd.

Thursday's games

Chicago White Sox at Minnesota
Seattle at Boston
Colorado at Kansas City, 2
Baltimore at Washington
Pittsburgh at L.A. Angels
Tampa Bay at Arizona
Texas at Athletics
Milwaukee at San Francisco

Friday's games

Baltimore (Young 0-0) at Detroit (Mize 3-1)
Toronto (Berríos 1-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Carrasco 2-1)
Boston (Houck 0-2) at Cleveland (Lively 1-2)
Houston (Wesneski 1-1) at Kansas City (Lugo 1-3)
L.A. Angels (Hendricks 0-2) at Minnesota (Woods Richardson 1-2)
Miami (Quantrill 1-2) at Seattle (Gilbert 1-1)
Tampa Bay (Baz 2-0) at San Diego (King 3-0)
Chicago White Sox (Burke 1-3) at Athletics (Severino 1-3)
Texas (Eovaldi 1-2) at San Francisco (Verlander 0-1)
Philadelphia (Walker 1-1) at Chicago Cubs (Rea 0-0)
N.Y. Mets (Senga 3-1) at Washington (Irvin 2-0)
Milwaukee (Patrick 1-1) at St. Louis (Liberatore 1-2)
Cincinnati (Abbott 2-0) at Colorado (Freeland 0-4)
Atlanta (Sale 0-2) at Arizona (Gallen 1-3)
Pittsburgh (Skenes 2-2) at L.A. Dodgers (Yamamoto 3-1)

Saturday's games

Toronto at N.Y. Yankees
Baltimore at Detroit
L.A. Angels at Minnesota
Chicago White Sox at Athletics
Texas at San Francisco
Boston at Cleveland
Houston at Kansas City
Tampa Bay at San Diego
Miami at Seattle
Milwaukee at St. Louis
Cincinnati at Colorado
N.Y. Mets at Washington
Philadelphia at Chicago Cubs
Atlanta at Arizona
Pittsburgh at L.A. Dodgers

NHL PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

First Round

Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Florida 1, Tampa Bay 0
Tuesday: Florida 6, Tampa Bay 2
Thursday: at Tampa Bay
Friday: at Florida, **AFN-Sports2, 7 p.m.**
Saturday CET, 3 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday, April 28: at Florida
x-Wednesday, April 30: at Tampa Bay
x-Friday, May 2: at Florida
x-Sunday, May 4: at Tampa Bay
Washington 2, Montreal 0
Washington 3, Montreal 2, OT
Wednesday: Washington 3, Montreal 1
Friday: at Montreal, **AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m.**
Saturday CET, 9 a.m. Sunday JKT
Sunday: at Montreal, **AFN-Sports2, 12:30 a.m. Monday CET, 8:30 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Wednesday, April 30: at Washington
x-Friday, May 2: at Montreal
x-Sunday, May 4: at Washington
Carolina 2, New Jersey 0
Carolina 4, New Jersey 1
Tuesday: Carolina 3, New Jersey 1
Friday: at New Jersey
Sunday: at New Jersey, **AFN-Sports2, 9:30 p.m. Sunday CET, 5:30 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Tuesday, April 29: at Carolina
x-Friday, May 2: at New Jersey
x-Sunday, May 4: at Carolina
Toronto 2, Ottawa 0
Toronto 6, Ottawa 2
Tuesday: Toronto 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Thursday: at Ottawa
Saturday: at Ottawa, **AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m.**
Sunday CET, 9 a.m. Sunday JKT
x-Tuesday, April 29: at Toronto
x-Thursday, May 1: at Ottawa
x-Saturday, May 3: at Toronto
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Dallas 2, Colorado 1
Colorado 5, Dallas 1
Dallas 4, Colorado 3, OT
Wednesday: Dallas 2, Colorado 1, OT
Saturday: at Colorado, **AFN-Sports2, 3:30 a.m. Sunday CET, 11:30 a.m. Sunday JKT**
Monday, April 28: at Dallas
x-Thursday, May 1: at Colorado
x-Saturday, May 3: at Dallas
Los Angeles 2, Edmonton 0
Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 5
Wednesday: Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 2
Friday: at Edmonton, **AFN-Sports2, 4 a.m. Saturday CET, Noon Saturday JKT**
Sunday: at Edmonton, **3:30 a.m. Monday CET, 11:30 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Tuesday, April 29: at Los Angeles
x-Thursday, May 1: at Edmonton
x-Saturday, May 3: at Los Angeles
Vegas 1 Minnesota 1
Vegas 4, Minnesota 2
Tuesday: Minnesota 5, Vegas 2
Thursday: at Minnesota
Saturday: at Minnesota, **AFN-Sports2, 10 p.m. Saturday CET, 6 a.m. Sunday JKT**
Tuesday, April 29: at Vegas
x-Thursday, May 1: at Minnesota
x-Saturday, May 3: at Vegas
Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 0
Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3
Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1
Thursday: at St. Louis
Sunday: at St. Louis, **AFN-Sports2, 7 p.m. Sunday CET, 3 a.m. Monday JKT**
x-Wednesday, April 30: at Winnipeg
x-Friday, May 2: at St. Louis
x-Sunday, May 4: at Winnipeg

ROUNDUP

Thompson dazzles late as Capitals go up 2-0 on Canadiens

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Connor McMichael and Dylan Strome scored a minute apart early in the second period, Logan Thompson made some spectacular stops among his 25 saves and the Washington Capitals beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-1 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the teams’ best-of-seven first-round series.

Thompson was at his best in the third, notably robbing Josh Anderson of what would have been the tying goal on a 2-on-0 break-away with 10:59 left, then later getting his stick on a deflection by Christian Dvorak. Fans chanted “L-T! L-T!” and gave the goaltender a standing ovation in honor of his performance in just his second game back from injury.

“He shut the door when we needed it most,” Strome said. “He was unbelievable, especially in the last five minutes.”

Until that point, Thompson did not have much work to do as his teammates outshot



Nick Wass/AP

Caps goaltender Logan Thompson makes a save against the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday night in Washington.

Montreal 18-8 in the second when Washington tilted the ice toward Sam Montembeault. McMichael added his second into an empty net with 1.1 seconds left.

Seguin lifts Stars in overtime

Dallas overcomes late double-minor, beats Colorado to take 2-1 lead in first-round series

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — Tyler Seguin scored at 5:31 of overtime after Dallas killed a late double-minor penalty, and the Stars beat Colorado 2-1 in Game 3 on Wednesday night in a contest that featured the return of Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog.

Dallas took a 2-1 lead in the first-round series with its second straight overtime victory. The Stars have led for only 1:02 in regulation so far.

Game 4 is Saturday night in Denver.

Seguin knocked the puck past Mackenzie Blackwood off a feed from Mason Marchment. It was Marchment who was sent off for four minutes in the final minute of regulation for a high-stick that caught Brock Nelson in the face.

“We did a lot of really good things,” Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. “Our penalty killing has been one of the best in the league the last three years. We felt confident into the overtime that we could get the job done. And if we did, I think there was a good feeling that we were going to win the game.”

“Knowing Mason and how he was feeling about that penalty, you couldn’t have written a better script for how it ended.”

Seguin had his second career OT playoff goal. His first was in 2012 with Boston.

“Good feeling,” Seguin said. “There’s so much more tonight than that goal. It’s the penalty kill, it’s the details of the game of what the guys did. ... I was just the beneficiary of it. Collectively, just a great road win by the guys.”

Stars defenseman Esa Lindell made a key play in overtime when he deflected a shot by Artturi Lehkonen down low.

Jamie Benn tied it midway through the third period for Dallas. Jake Oettinger stopped 27 shots.

Valeri Nichushkin scored in the first period for Colorado, and Mackenzie Blackwood made 26 saves.

The late score spoiled the return of Landeskog, who was greeted with cheers and chants by the amped-up crowd in his first NHL appearance since June 26, 2022, when he and the Avalanche beat Tampa Bay to capture the Stanley Cup. Landeskog has been sidelined because of a chronically injured right knee.

It was 1,032 days since his last Avalanche game. He became the fifth player in NHL history — a minimum of 700 games played — to return to his team after 1,000 or more days without a contest, according to NHL Stats.

It was an emotional lead-up to the game for Landeskog, too. There were the ovations by the crowd, and chants of “Landy, Landy, Landy.” There were signs all over the arena, including one held up by his kids that read, “So proud of you Daddy!”

“That was as close as I got to losing it during warmup, when I looked over at that and seeing their big, smiling faces,” Landeskog said about his family. “They’ve probably been thinking that I’ve been lying this whole time that I play hockey.”

“They were 1 and 2 when I last played and now they’re 5 and 4.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Dallas Stars center Tyler Seguin reacts after scoring the winning goal in overtime of Game 3 of the first-round playoff series against the Colorado Avalanche on Wednesday night in Denver.

They’re growing up. We’ve got another one on the way coming this summer. It just puts it in perspective how much time has passed. It’s very special.”

Landeskog played more than 13 minutes and had a team-leading six hits.

“Felt great in all areas tonight in

terms of being back,” Landeskog said. “Very special night regardless of the outcome.”

The Avalanche finished 0-for-6 on the power play. Asked what needed to better with the skater advantage, Avalanche coach Jared Bednar simply said, “everything.”

McMichael and Strome turned the tide in favor of the Capitals, who after an uneven start looked every bit like the top team in the Eastern Conference and one of the best in the NHL this season. They controlled the puck for long stretches and got to the middle of the ice in front of Montembeault easily and with little resistance from a smaller and less experienced opponent.

Montembeault, like in Game 1, was arguably the Canadiens’ best player, turning aside 29 of the 31 shots he faced, including Anthony Beauvillier on a quality scoring chance in the first and Nic Dowd on a short-handed odd-man rush in the second. Cracking him twice allowed Washington to take control of the series.

“It was a tight game, but, yeah, a huge win,” Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin said. “They play hard, we play hard. It’s the playoffs. All the small details gonna count.”

Kings 6, Oilers 2: Adrian Kempe had two third-period goals and two assists, captain

Anze Kopitar added a goal and three assists, and host Los Angeles routed Edmonton to seize a 2-0 lead in their first-round series.

Quinton Byfield and Andrei Kuzmenko scored for the second straight game, and Brandt Clarke scored his first playoff goal to begin an overwhelming performance by second-seeded Los Angeles.

The Kings blew a four-goal lead before winning Game 1, and they let a three-goal lead slip to 3-2 early in the third period of Game 2 before seizing control with three goals in less than five minutes while chasing goalie Stuart Skinner.

Game 3 is Friday night in Edmonton.

Leon Draisaitl and Viktor Arvidsson scored for the Oilers, but the defending Western Conference champions’ endemic defensive struggles couldn’t be covered up by the brilliance of Draisaitl and Connor McDavid, who was held scoreless.

Darcy Kuemper made 24 saves for the Kings.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Brown has 36 as Celtics top Magic

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

BOSTON — As it became evident that All-Star Jayson Tatum would have to sit out Game 2 of the Celtics’ first-round playoff series against the Orlando Magic, Jaylen Brown wanted Boston coach Joe Mazzulla to know something.

“He came in saying he was going to do everything it takes to win,” Mazzulla said.

Brown came through on that promise. And his teammates followed his lead.

Brown had 36 points, 10 rebounds and five assists, Kristaps Porzingis returned to the game after getting a bloody gash to the forehead and finished with 20 points, and the Celtics beat the Magic 109-100 on Wednesday night.

Boston took a 2-0 series lead while playing without Tatum, who has a bone bruise in his right wrist and missed a playoff game for the first time in his career.

“Obviously, JT is the offensive leader, and we play off of him,” Brown said. “But any given night I can rise to the occasion.”

Boston led by 15 points in the second half, then held off a late push by Orlando. The Celtics hit 12 3-pointers and went 25 of 33 from the free-throw line. Derrick White and Brown had 17 of Boston’s 28 points in the final period; White finished with 17.

“He was leading us on both ends,” Porzingis said of Brown. “He was being JB.”

“You just trust that mindset, really the warrior mentality that he has,” Mazzulla said. “He can

take it to another level mentally and physically.”

Paolo Banchero led the Magic with 32 points and nine rebounds. Franz Wagner scored 25 points.

“They came out of the locker room and went on a run. We had trouble coming back from that,” Banchero said.

Game 3 is Friday night at Orlando.

Tatum had not missed a playoff game in his eight seasons with Boston. He injured his wrist in Game 1 after landing awkwardly following a flagrant foul by Kentavious Caldwell-Pope.

Clad in street clothes, he joined his team prior to tipoff and sat at the end of the bench.

Mazzulla characterized Tatum’s status as day to day.

Caldwell-Pope was booed nearly every time he touched the ball in the aftermath of his Game 1 foul on Tatum, which the Celtics’ Al Horford later characterized as excessive.

Tempers flared between Caldwell-Pope and Horford when their feet got tangled up and and sent both crashing to the floor at the 4:42 mark of the second quarter.

Brown then exchanged words with Caldwell-Pope. Referees reviewed the play and determined it was a common tripping foul on Caldwell-Pope.

Then, late in the third quarter, Porzingis went to the locker room with a gash to his forehead but returned in time to shoot a pair of free throws after taking an elbow from Goga Bitadze. The play was reviewed and upgraded to a flagrant foul on Bitadze.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown, left, goes up for a shot while being pressured by Orlando Magic guard Cory Joseph on Wednesday night in Boston. The Celtics won 100-109 without the injured Jayson Tatum to take a 2-0 lead in the first-round playoff series.

Scoreboard

First Round

Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
Eastern Conference
New York 1, Detroit 1

New York 123, Detroit 112
Detroit 100, New York 94
Thursday: at Detroit
Sunday: at Detroit, AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.
Sunday CET, 3 a.m. Monday JKT
Tuesday, April 29: at New York
x-Thursday, May 1: at Detroit
x-Saturday, May 3: at New York

Cleveland 2, Miami 0

Cleveland 121, Miami 100
Wednesday: Cleveland 121, Miami 112
Saturday: at Miami, AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.
Saturday CET, 3 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday: at Miami
x-Wednesday, April 30: at Cleveland
x-Friday, May 2: at Miami
x-Sunday, May 4: at Cleveland

Indiana 2, Milwaukee 0

Indiana 117, Milwaukee 98
Tuesday: Indiana 123, Milwaukee 115
Friday: at Milwaukee
Sunday: at Milwaukee
x-Tuesday, April 29: at Indiana
x-Friday, May 2: at Milwaukee
x-Sunday, May 4: at Indiana

Boston 2, Orlando 0

Boston 103, Orlando 86
Wednesday: Boston 109, Orlando 100
Friday: at Orlando, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.
Saturday CET, 9 a.m. Saturday JKT
Sunday: at Orlando, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.
Monday CET, 9 a.m. Monday JKT
x-Tuesday, April 29: at Boston
x-Thursday, May 1: at Orlando
x-Saturday, May 3: at Boston

Western Conference

Golden State 1, Houston 1

Golden State 95, Houston 85
Wednesday: Houston 109, Golden State 94
Saturday: at Golden State, AFN-Sports 2:30 a.m. Sunday CET, 10:30 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday: at Golden State
Wednesday, April 30: at Houston
x-Friday, May 2: at Golden State
x-Sunday, May 4: at Houston

Denver 1, L.A. Clippers 1

Denver 112, L.A. Clippers 110, OT
L.A. Clippers 105, Denver 102
Thursday: at L.A. Clippers
Saturday: at L.A. Clippers, AFN-Sports, 12 a.m. Sunday CET, 8 a.m. Sunday JKT
Tuesday, April 29: at Denver
x-Thursday, May 1: at L.A. Clippers
x-Saturday, May 3: at Denver

Oklahoma City 2, Memphis 0

Oklahoma City 131, Memphis 80
Tuesday: Oklahoma City 118, Memphis 99
Thursday: at Memphis
Saturday: at Memphis, AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. Saturday CET, 5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT
x-Monday: at Oklahoma City
x-Thursday, May 1: at Memphis
x-Saturday, May 3: at Oklahoma City

Minnesota 1, L.A. Lakers 1

Minnesota 117, L.A. Lakers 95
Tuesday: L.A. Lakers 94, Minnesota 85
Friday: at Minnesota, AFN-Sports, 3:30 a.m. Friday CET, 11:30 a.m. Friday JKT
Sunday: at Minnesota, AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. Sunday CET, 5:30 a.m. Monday JKT
Wednesday, April 30: at L.A. Lakers
x-Friday, May 2: at Minnesota
x-Sunday, May 4: at L.A. Lakers

Revival: Resurgence has brought positive change to city, too

FROM PAGE 32

The Lions, a league laughingstock for generations, won a franchise-record 15 games last season one year after earning two playoff victories in one postseason for the first time since winning the 1957 NFL title. A year ago, Detroit drew the largest crowd to attend the NFL draft.

The Tigers closed last season with a 31-13 surge to end a decade-long postseason drought and won a series in the playoffs for the first time since 2013.

Picking up where they left off last year, the Tigers are leading the AL Central with a 15-10 record.

The Tigers had the day off Thursday, and manager A.J. Hinch, American League Cy Young Award winner Tarik Skubal and Torkelson said they planned to be in the Little Caesars Arena crowd with most of the team for Game 3.

“I love where Detroit sports is at,” Hinch said.

“It’s a blast being a part of a number of

teams who are bringing thrilling sports moments to this city. The city deserves it. The fan base deserves it.

“These experiences stand out, especially here in Detroit because of how cool a sports town this is.”

When people tune in to watch Games 3 and 4 or visit, they will see a city on the rise.

There are new hotels, high-end restaurants and bars along with a skyscraper that is nearing completion. The long-abandoned Michigan Central Station has undergone a renovation to transform the 18-story, 113-year-old train depot from an eyesore into a gem.

And now, the Pistons are part of the feel-good story.

“The way this city is reacting, it means a lot because all the stuff we do for the community is so much better when you win,” Pistons owner Tom Gores said. “It just really means a lot to see it all — kids, grown adults getting excited.

“We represent a comeback.”



KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI/AP

Quarterback Jared Goff led the Detroit Lions to a franchise-record 15 wins last season, a year after winning two playoff games in one postseason for the first time since 1957.

NBA PLAYOFFS



Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell shoots over the Heat's Haywood Highsmith during Game 2 of their first-round series on Wednesday.

Mitchell scores 30, Cavs hold off Heat

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Donovan Mitchell delivered when the Cleveland Cavaliers needed him most.

After the Miami Heat seized momentum and appeared on the verge of possibly tying the series, Mitchell took over. He scored Cleveland's next eight points and the Cavaliers held on for a 121-112 victory on Wednesday night for a 2-0 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

"I love the fact the game happened like this. We had to really find a way as a group and then we responded," said Mitchell, who led Cleveland with 30 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter. "I kept trying to find the mismatch and make a play."

It was the 27th career playoff game with at least 30 points for Mitchell, who also had six rebounds and six assists.

"He's a superstar for a reason. It's kind of like there is nothing you can do in the NBA sometimes when someone is hitting tough shots like that," said Miami's Davion Mitchell, who scored 18 points.

The Cavaliers had a 19-point lead with under 3 minutes remaining in the third quarter before the Heat made their run to get within 105-103 lead with 3:11 left.

Mitchell responded on the ensuing trip by driving and making a step-back floater to put the Cavs up by four.

After Jarett Allen made a steal on a bad pass by Miami's Nikola Jovic, Mitchell buried a 3-pointer

to give momentum back to the Cavaliers, along with some breathing room.

"I'm proud of the guys for holding our composure. It helps when you have Donovan Mitchell. It was one of those superstar takes over games," coach Kenny Atkinson said.

The top-seeded Cavaliers set an NBA playoff record with 11 3-pointers in the second quarter and had 22 for the game, tied for sixth most. Evan Mobley had 20 points and Darius Garland 19 for Cleveland.

Tyler Herro scored 33 points for Miami, which hosts Game 3 on Saturday afternoon.

"We lost the game. I don't think there are any moral victories, to be honest. We can't have lapses where we're not fully engaged," Herro said. "We've got to get that cleaned up or we'll be down 3-0."

Miami had a 16-7 lead before the Cavs rallied and went up 25-24 at the end of the first quarter.

Cleveland took control with a 17-4 run that included five 3-pointers, with two apiece by Max Strus and Sam Merrill.

De'Andre Hunter's dunk with 2:33 remaining in the third quarter gave the Cavaliers a 93-74 advantage before the Heat made their charge with 10 straight points. That started a 25-8 run that saw the Heat get within a basket. Davion Mitchell scored 12 during the rally, with five points apiece by Herro and Nikola Jovic.

"We knew it was going to be a full game. When they threw that punch in the fourth quarter I think everyone locked in," Mobley said.

Rockets tie series; Butler injury big blow to Warriors

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — In his playoff debut last weekend, Jalen Green admitted that playoff jitters got the best of him.

"The lights were bright, the crowd was here, the court looked huge," he said. "So I couldn't really get a chance to settle in. My legs was a little shaky."

Things were much different Wednesday night.

Green made eight 3-pointers and scored 38 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a 109-94 victory over the Golden State Warriors in a testy matchup to even the first-round Western Conference series at one game apiece.

"I feel like I did a good job of answering back," he said. "From the beginning my whole mindset from today was to go in and be aggressive and get back to being myself."

The seventh-seeded Warriors never led and played short-handed for most of the night after Jimmy Butler left with a pelvis contusion after a hard fall on a foul late in the first quarter.

Green, the No. 2 pick in the 2021 draft, rebounded from a flop in his playoff debut, when he scored just seven points on 3-of-15 shooting, with a dominant Game 2.

His eight 3-pointers were two more than the No. 2-seeded Rockets made on 6-of-29 shooting in a 95-85 Game 1 loss.

Alperen Sengun had 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Rockets. Tari Eason had 14 points off the bench.

Coach Ime Udoka raved about the combination of Green and Sengun.

"When they're both rolling, we're hard to beat," he said.

Game 3 is Saturday night at Golden State.

Stephen Curry had 20 points and nine assists for the Warriors and become the 11th player in



Rockets guard Jalen Green reacts after scoring against the Warriors in Game 2 of their first-round playoff series on Wednesday. Green made eight 3-pointers and scored 38 points after a dud in Game 1.

NBA history to reach 4,000 career playoff points. He finished the night with 4,017.

"He did a great job," coach Steve Kerr said. "We just didn't have enough tonight."

Houston led by 20 with about 10 minutes left before the Warriors used a 9-0 run, with two 3s from Quinten Post, to get within 11. Jalen Green was called for a flagrant foul on Draymond Green at the end of that run after he flailed an arm into his face.

The Rockets then used an 8-0 spurt, highlighted by a step-back 3 from Green, to extend the lead to 99-80 with 5½ minutes remaining. Draymond Green received a technical foul in that stretch for arguing with officials and Eason received one for throwing a towel in an "unsportsmanlike manner."

The loss of Butler, acquired from Miami in a February trade,

was a huge blow to the Warriors after he had 25 points, seven rebounds and six assists in the series opener.

Kerr said it's too soon to speculate about the availability of Butler for Game 3. He was to have an MRI on Thursday.

Butler was injured when Amen Thompson was pushed into his legs as he jumped to try to grab a rebound. Both players crashed to the court in the collision.

"Hopefully Jimmy will be able to play," he said. "But if not we have to go through our options and put together a plan."

On top of Butler's injury, the Warriors were also hampered by Brandin Podziemski's stomach ailment.

He missed most of the first half dealing with the problem and was scoreless in 14 minutes after scoring 14 points in Game 1.



The Warriors' Jimmy Butler writhes in pain after an injury during the first quarter against the Rockets on Wednesday. His status for Game 3 on Saturday is uncertain.

SPORTS



Seguin lifts Stars to 2-0 lead
Dallas defeats Avs in OT after killing late double-minor » **NHL playoffs, Page 29**



ANGELINA KATSANIS/AP

Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham goes up for a basket in Game 2 of a first-round NBA playoff series against the Knicks on Monday in New York. The Pistons won the game, ending a league-record 15-game playoff losing streak dating back to 2008.

Pistons, Tigers take the baton in Detroit's pro sports renaissance

BY LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

DETROIT

With the Lions, Tigers and Pistons — oh my — the Motor City finally has some winners to cheer for in the pro leagues.

“There’s definitely a buzz,” suddenly slugging first baseman Spencer Torkelson said Thursday after Detroit beat the San Diego Padres 6-0 to win a three-game series. “Winning is contagious, just like hitting is contagious.”

“When you see another team in the city doing well and grinding and showing heart and working their butt off to obtain success,



PAUL SANCYA/AP

The Detroit Tigers' Trey Sweeney, left, and Spencer Torkelson celebrate a victory at home on April 6. The Tigers lead the AL Central after 25 games.

that motivates you even more to get the job done because you see how well this city rallies behind guys and teams.”

The Red Wings, historically the most successful franchise in Michigan, are mired in a franchise-record, nine-year playoff drought.

That fact is not spoiling the party this spring in the Motor City.

The Pistons, led by guard Cade Cunningham, will host the New York Knicks in Game 3 of their first-round series that is tied at one game apiece on Thursday night, when Little Caesars Arena will be the home of a playoff game for the first time since it opened in 2017.

“Last time I was in the playoffs with Detroit, we were in Auburn Hills,” said forward Tobias Harris, who was drafted by the Pistons in 2011 and chose to return as a free agent last summer in one of the pivotal moments of the team’s unprecedented turnaround.

Before beating the Knicks in Game 2 and ending a league-record, 15-game playoff losing streak, the Pistons had not won a postseason game since the 2008 Eastern Conference finals at the Palace of Auburn Hills, where the franchise won NBA championships in 2004, 1990 and 1989.

SEE REVIVAL ON PAGE 30

Brown shoulders the load for Celtics without Tatum

» **NBA playoffs, Page 30**