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September 18, 2024
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Daily News Briefing

(In coordination with the Office of Public Affairs)

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IN THE NEWS

Continued Reporting: Second Trump Assassination Attempt

Florida Will Launch Criminal Probe Into Apparent Assassination Attempt of Trump

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Richer, Matat) reported that on Tuesday, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that Florida law enforcement officials will launch their own criminal investigation into the apparent assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump that will run parallel to the federal probe. The governor said Florida prosecutors will pursue the most serious charges available under state law, including attempted murder, in the state-level investigation into Ryan Wesley Routh, who was charged Monday with federal firearms offenses. The article noted that it's not uncommon for state and federal law enforcement agencies to run simultaneous investigations into crimes, as states may be able to bring charges that are unavailable at the federal level — and vice versa. Routh is charged at the federal level so far only with gun crimes, but additional charges are possible as DOJ prosecutors seek an indictment from a grand jury. Prosecutors will often quickly bring the first charges they can and then add more serious charges later as the investigation unfolds. The article quoted Attorney General Merrick Garland, who, during an event at the DOJ, stated, "We will spare no resource in this investigation." [NPR](#) (09/17, Allen) added that DeSantis questioned whether the DOJ, which is prosecuting Trump on election interference and the mishandling of classified documents, can handle Routh's prosecution fairly and transparently. "In my judgment," DeSantis said, "it's not in the best interest of our state or our nation to have the same federal agencies that are seeking to prosecute Donald Trump leading this investigation, especially when the most serious straight-forward offense constitutes a violation of state law, but not federal law," DeSantis says Routh could be charged with attempted murder under state law, a crime which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. There is no comparable federal statute for attempted murder. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (09/17, Barber, Ferek) reported that Attorney General Merrick Garland said Tuesday the DOJ would "spare no resource" in investigating Sunday's apparent assassination attempt on Donald Trump in Florida, with national-security prosecutors heavily involved in the criminal inquiry. Garland's remarks suggest the DOJ could pursue more serious charges than the two initial firearms violations the 58-year-old suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, is facing following his arrest Sunday in South Florida. The article pointed out that the FBI was also still awaiting information from several companies it contacted about Routh's cell phones and social media accounts, an official said. The FBI is hoping the inquiries will shed light on Routh's motives as well as his movements in the hours and days before the incident. So far, investigators have gleaned little from Routh, who invoked his right to a lawyer during questioning.

What's Known About Ryan Wesley Routh, Trump Assassination Attempt Suspect in Florida

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Licon, Weissert) specified that Routh previously expressed strong support for Ukraine and had a history of run-ins with law enforcement. The article stated that Routh's political affiliations appear

inconsistent, with past support for both Democratic and Republican candidates, and he was previously convicted of possessing a weapon of mass destruction. [CBS News](#) (1) (09/17, Breen, Schechter) added that on Tuesday, agents with the FBI and Homeland Security Investigations raided Routh's home on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. According to the article, Sarah Rice, an FBI spokesperson on the scene, described the federal activity as "court authorized." The article detailed that Routh's most recent address is listed in Hawaii, but he spent most of his life in North Carolina, according to property records. Routh owned Camp Box Honolulu, a shed-building company, according to his LinkedIn profile. The article mentioned that records show Routh's issues with the law go back to the 1990s and include lesser charges of writing bad checks. But in 2002, the article continued, he was charged with possession of a weapon of mass destruction, a felony, according to North Carolina Department of Corrections records. In another incident, he was charged with misdemeanors, including a hit-and-run offense, resisting arrest, and a concealed weapons violation, the records show. The article noted that a review of Routh's social media shows his pro-Ukraine views seeped into his public statements as well. Routh was passionate about supporting Ukraine, even traveling overseas in hopes of fighting in the country's war against Russia in 2022. [Newsweek](#) (09/17, O'Driscoll) revealed that a Florida judge has unsealed an FBI agent's description of the investigation into the latest Donald Trump assassination attempt. The affidavit shows that police officers rushed a witness to the scene of Ryan Routh's arrest. According to the article, the witness confirmed that he was the same man they saw fleeing the scene of an alleged assassination attempt on Donald Trump.

FBI Official Leading Trump Assassination Probe Accused of Anti-Trump Bias

[The Washington Times](#) (09/17, Pickett) alleged that the senior FBI official leading the investigation in Florida of the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump expressed rabid hatred of Trump and retaliated against FBI personnel who supported the former president, whistleblowers say. According to the article, Jeffrey Veltri, Special Agent in Charge, was ordered by superiors to scrub his social media accounts of anti-Trump vitriol before he was promoted last year to head the Miami field office, an FBI whistleblower reported to Congress last year. Veltri is now leading the FBI's investigation into Sunday's assassination attempt on Trump, the second in two months. The FBI denies asking Veltri to erase social media posts.

Was Ryan Routh on FBI's 'Radar' Before Arrest?

Another [Newsweek](#) (09/17, Norton) article clarified that while Routh has been known to the FBI, claims of being on its radar since 2019 may be misleading without further information. The article detailed that Jeffrey Veltri, Special Agent in Charge of the Miami field office, said at a news conference Monday that the Bureau was tipped off that Routh was a "felon in possession of a firearm." "In following up on the tip, the alleged complainant was interviewed and did not verify providing the initial information," Veltri said. "The FBI passed that information to local law enforcement in Honolulu." The investigation was then closed due to lack of additional information. The article explained that in a statement, the FBI listed historical charges and convictions Routh received, including multiple felony charges for stolen goods between 1997 to 2010 and his charge and conviction in North Carolina in 2002 for possession of a weapon of mass destruction. While it's true, the FBI was made aware of Routh in 2019 and made efforts to investigate a complaint about him, since the matter was passed to other law enforcement and the probe closed, suggesting that he has been on their radar or suggestions that he was being watched is misleading.

Task Force on Trump Assassination Attempts Will Probe Second Effort

[The Hill](#) (09/17, Beitsch, Brooks) reported that House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) said a task force assembled to review the assassination attempt against former President Trump will be expanded to include a second incident from over the weekend. "We have a responsibility here in Congress to get down to the bottom of this, to figure out why these things are happening and what we can do about it," Johnson told reporters Tuesday. The bipartisan Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump had already requested a briefing from the FBI on the second assassination attempt. [Reuters](#) (09/17, Sullivan, Coster, Reid, et. al.) disclosed that the Secret Service is currently facing significant staffing shortages, operating with about 400 fewer agents than authorized, which has raised concerns about their ability to ensure adequate security. Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe acknowledged the high-stress levels among agents, stating, "We are redlining them," and expressed his shame over security lapses during past incidents, emphasizing the urgent need for increased resources to prevent future threats. [NBC News](#) (09/17, Wong, Kapur, Thorp) reported that Congress is considering boosting funding for the Secret Service after what the FBI called an apparent second attempt on former President Donald Trump's life in 10 weeks. Leaders of both parties and top appropriators say one possibility is to attach emergency funding for the Secret Service to a short-term funding bill that Congress must pass by Sept. 30 to avert a government

shutdown. [The Guardian](#) (09/17, Tait) reported that the Secret Service did not search the perimeter of the golf course where a suspect lurked for nearly 12 hours in the apparent hope of killing Donald Trump, the agency has admitted. The article elaborated that the revelation has increased the pressure on an organization that was already under intense scrutiny over alleged security failures surrounding a similar attempt on the ex-president's life two months ago and has raised questions over whether it is adequately funded.

Additional reporting was provided by [CBS News](#) (2) (09/17, Video), [Politico](#) (09/17, Leonard), [Fox News](#) (09/17, Markowitz), [ABC News](#) (09/17, Hutchinson), [BBC News](#) (09/17, Cursino), [The Hill](#) (2) (09/17, Irwin), [Newsweek](#) (3) (09/17, Stanton), the [New York Times](#) (1) (09/17, Cohen), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (09/17, Podcast), [WTVD \(ABC-11\)](#) (09/17, Staff), the [New York Post](#) (1) (09/17, Crane), the [New York Post](#) (2) (09/17, Vago, Oliveira), [USA Today](#) (09/17, Hudnell), and [WPEC \(CBS-12\)](#) (09/17, Cardenas).

The FBI Is Investigating Suspicious Packages Sent to Election Officials in More Than 15 States

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Ballentine, Leblanc) and the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Vazquez, Gardner) reported that the FBI and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service are investigating the origin of suspicious packages sent to or received by elections officials in more than 15 states. The articles explained that there had been no immediate reports of injuries and that whether any packages contained hazardous material is unclear. According to articles, the recent packages were sent to Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, and Rhode Island election officials. Additionally, a package was delivered to Mississippi on Monday, and the Connecticut Secretary of State's office reported that the FBI had intercepted a package. According to agency spokesperson Kristen Setera in Boston, the FBI is collecting packages, some of which contain unknown substances. The story was also reported on by [ABC News](#) (09/17, Bruggeman), [Axios](#) (09/18, Falconer), [BBC](#) (09/17, Yousif), [CBS News](#) (09/17, Watson, Triay), [NBC News](#) (09/17, Kosner, Winter, Gregorian, et al.), [Reuters](#) (09/17, Ward), [UPI](#) (09/17, Heuer) and the [Washington Examiner](#) (09/17, Knox).

Fake Kamala Hit-And-Run Story Is the Work of Russian Propaganda Group, Microsoft Says

[Reuters](#) (09/17, Bing) reported that a recent investigation by Microsoft revealed that a false claim circulating on social media about Kamala Harris leaving a 13-year-old girl paralyzed after a hit-and-run in San Francisco in 2011 is linked to a Russian disinformation campaign, specifically from a Kremlin-aligned group known as Storm-1516. According to the article, this operation fabricated a video and created a fake news outlet, KBSF-TV, to spread the claim. Microsoft noted that "many entities within the pro-Russian ecosystem advanced the video and its claims," indicating a coordinated effort to amplify the false narrative. The article added that the report highlights Russia's increasing attempts to influence U.S. politics ahead of the November presidential election, aiming to deepen political divisions. The article noted that additionally, the DOJ recently filed money-laundering charges against employees of Russian state media for attempting to manipulate election-related content.

Russian Disinformation Peddlers Are Targeting Harris-Walz Campaign With Fake Videos, Microsoft Says

[NBC News](#) (09/17, Collier, Zadrozny) reported that on Tuesday, Microsoft said that Russian disinformation peddlers are producing videos targeting the Harris-Walz campaign with false and disparaging claims. The article detailed that Microsoft said that at least three Russian disinformation actors have been working to denigrate the Harris-Walz campaign. One is a "marketing" firm that the DOJ indicted this month, while Microsoft identified the other two only by pseudonyms. The article specified that Intelligence officials have consistently said that Russia prefers candidates who don't seek to undermine its invasion of Ukraine. Harris has said she would continue to support the Biden administration's arms support for Ukraine. The article continued that officials have said that Iran, in contrast to Russia, aims to hurt Trump and his chances in the election. The FBI and other agencies said in August that Iran was behind an operation that hacked Trump's campaign and tried to share stolen documents with some American journalists through an online persona, though so far, those documents have not been published. The article noted that the DOJ plans to file charges over that operation. Iranian authorities have denied interfering in the election. The article underscored that the U.S. intelligence community believes that China, another country often accused of influence operations, aims to destabilize U.S. belief in the democratic process and influence the outcome of smaller races but does not plan to support either Trump or Harris this year.

The Microsoft report released by the [Microsoft Threat Analysis Center](#) (9/17, Watts) explained that the shift to focusing on the Harris-Walz campaign reflects a strategic move by Russian actors aimed at exploiting any perceived vulnerabilities in the new candidates. The report emphasized that as we inch closer to the election, we should

expect Russian actors to continue to use cyber proxies and hacktivist groups to amplify their messages through media websites and social channels geared to spread divisive political content, staged videos, and AI-enhanced propaganda. The report pointed out that Russia and Iran are not the only nation-states using influence operations to influence the election. A Chinese-linked influence actor Microsoft tracks as Storm-1852 successfully pivoted to short-form video content that criticizes the Biden administration and Harris campaign before some of its assets disappeared from social media following reports of its activity. The report concluded that collectively, these three nation states — Iran, China, and Russia — demonstrate the complexities of foreign interference that the US faces and the need for the public to remain vigilant against these evolving threats. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Swenson), [The Record](#) (09/17, Greig), [Bloomberg](#) (09/17, Bleiberg), [Nextgov](#) (09/17, Dimolfetta), [NPR](#) (09/17, Bond), [Politico](#) (09/17, Miller), [The Hill](#) (09/17, Suter), [Axios](#) (09/17, Sabin), [CNN](#) (09/17, Lyngaas), and the [Washington Post](#) (09/17, Menn).

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COUNTERTERRORISM

U.S. Dealing with ‘Heightened Threat Environment’

[ABC News](#) (09/17, Barr) reported that Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas stated that the U.S. is facing a "heightened threat environment," particularly in light of an apparent second assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump, which the FBI is investigating. According to the article, Mayorkas highlighted the dual threat from foreign terrorists and homegrown extremists, noting that individuals are being radicalized online by ideologies of hate and anti-government sentiments. The article noted that previously, Director Wray emphasized the urgency of the situation, stating he sees "blinking red lights everywhere" regarding terror threats. Following a recent assassination attempt on Trump, the Department of Homeland Security and FBI issued warnings about potential retaliatory attacks related to the upcoming 2024 election. The article mentioned that Director Wray has indicated that threats from domestic violent extremists and foreign terrorist organizations have reached an unprecedented level. Additionally, the intelligence community is vigilant about foreign actors, particularly Russia, China, and Iran, attempting to sow division in the U.S. ahead of the election. The article noted that lawmakers stress the importance of federal agencies remaining alert to these threats and foreign influence operations.

Continued Reporting: Man With Ties to Iran Pleads Not Guilty in Assassination Plot Against U.S.

Politicians

[The Epoch Times](#) (09/17, Phillips) provided continued reporting on Asif Merchant, a Pakistani national with alleged ties to Iran. The article explained that Merchant has pleaded not guilty to charges of attempting to arrange a murder-for-hire and plotting terrorism against current or former U.S. officials. According to the article, he was detained pending trial after federal prosecutors revealed that he came to the U.S. to recruit individuals for his scheme and mentioned high-level officials, potentially including former President Trump, as targets. An FBI affidavit indicated that Merchant expressed intentions to steal documents and organize protests related to his plot, which an FBI agent characterized as consistent with operations directed by a foreign adversary. The article added that Director Wray described the plot as "straight out of the Iranian regime's playbook," emphasizing that such foreign-directed threats to U.S. officials are taken seriously and will be addressed with the full resources of the FBI. The article continued that Director Wray reaffirmed the Bureau's commitment to protecting Americans from terrorism, highlighting the national security risks posed by such plots. The [Washington Examiner](#) (09/17, Cordi) quoted Attorney General Merrick Garland, who stated that, "The Justice Department will not tolerate Iran's efforts to target our country's public officials and endanger our national security," adding that, "As these terrorism and murder-for-hire charges against Asif Merchant demonstrate, we will continue to hold accountable those who would seek to carry out Iran's lethal plotting against Americans."

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COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

Continued Reporting: DOJ Announces Five Cases Tied to Disruptive Technology Strike Force

[The Epoch Times](#) (09/17, Yang) provided continued reporting on the charges against Chinese national Jia Wei. The article specified that the charges were unsealed on September 17, alleging he unlawfully accessed U.S. communications networks to steal proprietary information for Chinese entities, specifically tied to the Chinese

Communist Party's People's Liberation Army (PLA). According to the article, the indictment claims that Wei and his co-conspirators hacked an American company shortly after it sued a Chinese competitor for trade secret theft, obtaining sensitive documents related to military and civilian communication devices. The article highlighted that Director Wray has identified CCP-backed cyber attacks as a significant threat to national security, noting that PLA hackers have been implicated in numerous high-profile breaches, including the 2017 Equifax hack and the ongoing "Volt Typhoon" campaign targeting critical U.S. infrastructure. The article noted that if convicted, Wei faces severe penalties, including up to 20 years for wire fraud and additional charges related to computer intrusions and identity theft. [Security Week](#) (09/17, Arghire) added that on Monday, charges against Song Wu, who remains at large, were announced by the DOJ. The article explained that Wu allegedly created email accounts posing as US-based researchers and engineers and used them to send spear-phishing messages to NASA, Air Force, Navy, Army, and FAA employees. The article noted that according to the indictment, Song also targeted individuals working at major research universities across the U.S., as well as employees at private companies in the aerospace sector. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted Executive Assistant Director Robert Wells of the FBI's National Security Branch, who stated that, "It's no secret that the threats we face today are more complex and severe than ever before," continuing that, "The best way – and the only way – we can stay ahead of current and emerging threats is by working together. With these indictments, the Disruptive Technology Strike Force is an excellent example of the power of partnerships in practice." [FedScoop](#) (09/17, Alder) and [Security Affairs](#) (09/17, Paganini) also provided continued reporting.

Walz Appointee With Apparent CCP Ties Could Expose Potential Veep's National Security Weakness, Lawmaker Says

[Fox News](#) (09/17, Creitz) reported that Minnesota Governor Tim Walz is under congressional scrutiny for his connections to Chinese entities, with Rep. James Comer requesting information from Director Wray in August regarding Walz's interactions with "Chinese entities and officials" amid concerns about "elite capture" by China. The article explained that the controversy escalated after it was revealed that Walz appointed Chang Wang, a member of China's third-largest political party, to a state council, prompting Comer to declare Walz's relationships with Chinese officials a "national security threat." The article revealed that Comer criticized the FBI for failing to provide requested information about any warnings regarding CCP influence operations related to Walz, calling their silence "inexcusable." The article underscored that the ongoing investigation reflects broader concerns about foreign influence on U.S. officials, echoing similar past issues involving other political figures and the FBI's role in addressing such threats.

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CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Ex-Officer Testifies Against His Former Colleagues in Tyre Nichols's Death

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Sainz) reported that a former Memphis police officer testified Tuesday that he punched a "helpless" Tyre Nichols at least five times while two colleagues held his arms and said, "hit him," then lied to his supervisor about their use of force in a beating that proved fatal. According to the article, Emmitt Martin III testified that he was at the traffic stop on Jan. 7, 2023, when Nichols was pulled over and yanked from his car. Nichols fled, and Martin said Tadarrius Bean and Justin Smith gave chase and were punching the 29-year-old man without their handcuffs out when Martin caught up with them. The article stated that Bean, Smith and Demetrius Haley have pleaded not guilty to charges that they deprived Nichols of his civil rights through excessive force and failure to intervene, and obstructed justice through witness tampering. The four men, along with Desmond Mills Jr., were fired after Nichols' death. The beating was caught on police video, which was released publicly. The officers were later indicted on the federal charges. Martin and Mills have taken plea deals and are testifying against their former colleagues. The five officers were part of the Scorpion Unit, a team of officers tasked with finding drugs, illegal guns and violent criminals. The unit was disbanded after Nichols' death. The [New York Times](#) (09/17, Cochrane), [Washington Post](#) (09/17, Klemko), [NBC News](#) (09/17, Byrd, Hampton), [ABC News](#) (09/17, Negussie), [Newsweek](#) (09/17, Impelli), and [New York Daily News](#) (09/17, Assuncao) also reported on the story.

U.S. Court Upholds British Socialite Ghislaine Maxwell's Sex Trafficking Conviction

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Staff Writer) reported that a U.S. court on Tuesday upheld disgraced British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell's conviction on sex trafficking charges for helping the late financier Jeffrey Epstein

abuse underage girls. According to the article, Maxwell's lawyers had argued that her convictions violated an agreement Epstein reached with federal prosecutors 15 years ago in which he agreed to plead guilty to sex crimes and his co-conspirators were granted immunity. The lawyers also said some of the charges were brought after the statute of limitations had expired, and alleged judicial errors during her trial and sentencing. But a three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York rejected all of those arguments. The article mentioned that Maxwell, 62, was found guilty in December 2021 of luring young girls to Epstein so he could molest them, between 1994 and 2004. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison in June 2022. Epstein sexually abused children hundreds of times over more than a decade, exploiting vulnerable girls as young as 14. Prosecutors said Maxwell, his longtime companion, helped him and made the abuse possible. The [Telegraph](#) (09/17, Staff Writer), [BBC](#) (09/17, Walsh), the [Guardian](#) (09/17, Betts), [ABC News](#) (09/17, Katersky), [Fox News](#) (09/17, Whitten), [Independent](#) (09/17, Marcus), [Reuters](#) (09/17, Stempel), the [Times](#) (09/17, Ensor), and the [New York Daily News](#) (09/17, Wilkinson) also reported on the story.

Continued Reporting: Schools Reopen as Search for Suspect in Kentucky Interstate Shooting Enters 11th Day

[ABC News](#) (09/17, Hutchinson) reported that schools in a Kentucky county reopened Tuesday under heavy police guard for the first time since a massive search was launched for a suspect in an interstate shooting that injured five people 11 days ago. As the suspect, 32-year-old Joseph Couch, remained on the loose Tuesday, the Laurel County Public Schools reopened campuses to its nearly 9,000 students. The school district said in a statement that the reopening plan "prioritizes the safety of our students and staff." According to the article, Tuesday's search for Couch continued to focus in the thick woods of the Daniel Boone National Forest, according to the Kentucky State Police. Both state and federal teams have combed through at least 28,000 acres of the more than 700,000-acre national forest, but have yet to find any sign of Couch, officials said. The article noted that the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service are assisting in the search. The [Lexington Herald-Leader](#) (09/17, Ward), [WLWT \(NBC-5\)](#) (09/17, Hamrick), [WDKY \(Fox-56\)](#) (09/17, Hantla), and [WHAS \(ABC-11\)](#) (09/17, Magin, Hardwitt) also reported on the story.

Continued Reporting: Honduran Illegal Immigrant Suspected of Kidnapping Another Illegal Immigrant

The [Epoch Times](#) (09/17, McLaughlin) reported that a Honduran national living illegally in New Mexico was indicted in Los Angeles on Sept. 16 for allegedly helping to kidnap a Guatemalan man, who was also living illegally in the country, and demanding ransom from his family living in Southern California. Darwin Jeovany Palma Pastrana, 30, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was charged with one count of conspiracy, one count of kidnapping, one count of interstate communication involving a ransom demand, and one count of making a threat. According to the article, a federal grand jury returned the indictment against Palma and co-defendant Eduar Isrrael Saucedá Nuñez, 25, another Honduran national also illegally living in New Mexico, on Sept. 4. The indictment alleges the two men conspired with others to kidnap and hold for ransom migrants who were illegally crossing into the United States from Mexico. The article stated that federal prosecutors say once the migrants were in the United States, they were driven to stash houses in Phoenix, El Paso, Texas, and Albuquerque. After arriving at the houses, their cell phones were allegedly seized. Law enforcement found 57 migrants in the stash house in Albuquerque, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted Akil Davis, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office, who said, "Everyone in this country who is a victim of a serious crime is protected by U.S. law and this case is no exception, the exploitation of vulnerable individuals and their families will be fully investigated by the FBI and its law enforcement partners. Eduar Isrrael Saucedá Nuñez is still wanted for this crime, and we ask that anyone with information as to his whereabouts to contact the FBI or the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate." The release noted that this matter was investigated by the FBI's San Gabriel Valley Safe Streets Task Force (SGVSSTF), which is comprised of agents and officers with the FBI, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department – Major Crimes Bureau/Prison Gang Unit and Custody Investigative Services/Operation Safe Jails, the Pomona Police Department, the El Monte Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The Pomona Police Department is the sponsoring agency of the SGVSSTF and has been the headquarters for the task force since its inception in 2008.

Continued Reporting: New FDNY Chief's Ties to China Emerge Amid Federal Probe Into Foreign Influence on New York Officials

The [New York Post](#) (09/17, Vincent) reported that the New York Fire Department's new chief's ties to China are coming to light against the backdrop of a federal investigation into foreign influence on the city's officials. FDNY Commissioner Robert Tucker was previously head of a private security firm where one of the clients was a

billionaire who once admitted to feds he worked for Chinese intelligence, according to reports. According to the article, while in that role, Tucker also approved an email putting forward ex-golf club hospitality worker Lin Gui'an for a top position in the New York Police Department, which he eventually got. Lin's links to the Chinese Communist Party were exposed by the Post last week. Before joining the FDNY, Tucker was boss of T&M USA LLC, a Manhattan-based global private investigations firm that once counted controversial Chinese billionaire Miles Guo as a client. Guo — also known as Guo Wengui and Miles Kwok, among other names — was convicted in a billion-dollar fraud scheme in Manhattan federal court in July. He faces decades in jail when sentenced in November. The article noted that Guo, a pal of former President Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon, admitted to having worked for China's Ministry of State Security, but also claimed to be a victim of CCP harassment, according to the New Yorker. His lavish apartment at the Sherry Netherland by Central Park was wired for sound to record his visitors, according to sources. A mysterious fire broke out while FBI agents searched that apartment last year. Authorities are investigating whether the blaze was sparked remotely, according to reports. T&M began working for Guo in 2017, according to Chinese-language media and court documents. The article mentioned that in March 2022, an email including Lin's resume was sent by a personal assistant at T&M, with Tucker copied, to then-NYPD Deputy Commissioner Edward Caban. The FDNY denied the commissioner had vouched for Lin, with a spokesperson saying: "Commissioner Tucker was not involved in any way and made no such recommendation." Caban rose to become NYPD commissioner last summer, but resigned last Thursday following an FBI raid on his home two weeks ago. Lin was hired in 2022 to fulfill a non-uniform position and quickly rose through the ranks, despite his limited police experience. Within a year, he became assistant general director of the Police Commissioner Liaison Unit, where he was described as Caban's "right hand." Lin, who was born in Fujian province in China, was previously vice chairman of the New York City-based Fujian Changle Nanxiang Benevolent Association for 12 years beginning in 1994, a year after he arrived in the US, according to Chinese-language media reports. The [Rolling Stone](#) (09/17, Ramirez) also reported on the story.

Mississippi High Court Rejects the Latest Appeal by a Man on Death Row Since 1994

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Pettus) reported that the Mississippi Supreme Court has denied the latest appeal by a man who has been on death row for 30 years after he was convicted of killing two college students. The decision could clear the way for the state to set an execution date for Willie Jerome Manning, but his attorney said Tuesday that his legal team will seek a rehearing. The court's majority wrote in a 5-4 ruling Monday that Manning "has had his days in court." Dissenting justices wrote that a trial court should hold a hearing about a witness who wants to recant his testimony against Manning, 56, who has spent more than half his life in prison. The article added that Manning's attorneys have filed multiple appeals since he was convicted in 1994 on two counts of capital murder in the December 1992 killings of Mississippi State University students Jon Steckler and Tiffany Miller. Their bodies were found in rural Oktibbeha County, and Miller's car was missing. The car was found the next morning. Prosecutors said Manning was arrested after he tried to sell items belonging to the victims. Krissy Nobile, Manning's attorney and director of the Mississippi Office of Capital Post-Conviction Counsel, said Tuesday that the justices' majority ruling ignores "newly discovered evidence with the recantation of several key witnesses," including one who said in a sworn statement that she was paid \$17,500 for fraudulent testimony. The article noted that in 2013, shortly before Manning was scheduled to be executed, the DOJ said there had been errors in FBI agents' testimony about ballistics tests and hair analysis in the case. Manning's attorneys asked the Mississippi Supreme Court to stop the lethal injection, and justices voted 8-1 to delay the execution to allow the testing of evidence. Manning's attorneys asked an Oktibbeha County circuit judge for permission to send items to a more specialized lab. The judge denied that request, and the ruling was upheld by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2022.

A Woman Found Dead in 1991 in an Illinois Cornfield Is Identified as Being From the Chicago Area

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Staff Writer) reported that a person found dead in an Illinois cornfield in 1991 has been identified as a Chicago-area woman more than a decade after authorities began re-examining the cold case. An investigation relying on a posthumous DNA sample led to the identification of Paula Ann Lundgren last week. Now authorities hope they can piece together more details about her life and the circumstances of her death. Over the years, numerous authorities have tried to identify the woman. According to the article, her body was exhumed in 2013 to obtain DNA and employ investigative methods not in use in the early 1990s. In 2019, a professor at Illinois Valley Community College used investigative genetic genealogy to produce a list of the woman's possible living relatives. The LaSalle County coroner's office went through the list for years trying to find a match before involving the FBI in February. In July there was a break in the case. The article quoted Coroner Rich Ploch, who

said, "We have limited resources, so the FBI agreed to provide further assistance with the case that eventually led to a living relative, that person's DNA was confirmed as a match to Paula." Lundgren, who had lived primarily in the Chicago area, would have been 29 when a farmer found her body in September 1991 in a cornfield in northern Illinois' LaSalle County, authorities said. The coroner's office determined at the time that the woman had died from cocaine intoxication. Her unidentified body was eventually buried in an Ottawa cemetery with a headstone reading, "Somebody's Daughter, Somebody's Friend." The LaSalle County sheriff's office said now that Lundgren's identity is known the agency hopes "new leads can be developed as to how she came to be in the cornfield."

D.C. Council Votes to Disband Trayon White's Committee, Begins Probe

The [Washington Post](#) (09/17, Flynn) reported that the D.C. Council on Tuesday voted to disband the youth affairs committee chaired by Council member Trayon White Sr. (D-Ward 8) after his arrest last month on federal bribery charges, and began its own investigation into the allegations — which could lead to White's possible removal from the council. The article added that it was the council's first meeting since the explosive accusations from the FBI that White agreed to accept roughly \$156,000 in bribes in exchange for using his influence as a council member to try to secure lucrative contracts for an associate, who was working as an informant for federal officials. White pleaded not guilty last week. According to the article, the contracts at the center of the bribery case were for violence-intervention work at two agencies — including the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, of which White had oversight as chairman of the Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs. Given that leadership role, Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) sought to disassemble the committee and put all agencies under the entire council's purview instead.

Tennessee Official and Executive Accused of Rigging a Bid on a \$123 Million Contract Are Charged

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Loller) reported that a former Tennessee prison official and a former executive at a private contractor have been charged with conspiracy to obstruct justice and commit perjury after they were accused of rigging a bid on a \$123 million contract, federal prosecutors announced Tuesday. In a lawsuit filed in 2020, Tennessee-based prison contractor Corizon claimed the Tennessee Department of Correction's former chief financial officer, Wesley Landers, sent internal emails related to the behavioral health care contract to former Vice President Jeffrey Wells of rival company Centurion of Tennessee. Centurion won the contract, and Landers got a "cushy" job with a Centurion affiliate in Georgia, according to the lawsuit, which was settled in 2022. A statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Tennessee announced on Tuesday criminal charges against Landers and Wells. A DOJ [press release](#) noted that this case was investigated by the FBI, Memphis Field Office, and Nashville Resident Agency.

Two Students Arrested After FBI Flagged Threats Made Toward Ohio Schools

[WBNS \(CBS-10\)](#) (09/17, Staf Writer) reported that two juveniles were arrested after allegedly making threats to schools in Fairfield County. The FBI notified the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office on Monday about a potential online threat to Fairfield Union Local Schools, according to Sheriff Alex Lape. During its investigation, the sheriff's office identified two juvenile suspects from the school district. The juveniles were arrested and taken to the Fairfield County Multi-County Juvenile Detention Center. [Axios](#) (09/17, Buchanan) also reported on the threats plaguing Ohio.

Frontier Airlines Passenger Assaults Flight Attendants, DOJ Alleges

[CBS News](#) (09/17, Castaneda) reported that a California man is facing federal charges after allegedly causing a violent disturbance and assaulting flight attendants on a Frontier Airlines flight from Orange County bound for San Francisco. The U.S. Attorney's Office from the Central District of California said in a press statement Thursday that 30-year-old Charles Angel Salva of Fremont was arrested Wednesday after his flight from John Wayne Airport in Santa Ana was diverted to Ontario International Airport shortly after takeoff. The article stated that according to a federal complaint, as the plane was climbing, flight attendants noticed oxygen masks had dropped from the overhead compartment above one of the seat rows; they found that a passenger, identified as Salva, had his hand in the overhead compartment. A passenger told flight attendants that Salva appeared claustrophobic and had pulled the oxygen mask down, getting his hand stuck in the compartment, the complaint alleged. One of the flight attendants noticed Salva looked to be in distress and he began yelling obscenities, also saying "we are all going to hell," and "this airplane is going down," the complaint said. The flight attendant said Salva began violently grabbing at passengers and then ran to the rear of the plane where the attendant tried to enlist the help of other passengers to restrain him, according to the complaint. As the flight attendant and others tried to restrain Salva, he allegedly grabbed the lanyard around the flight attendant's neck and tried to choke her with it, the complaint said. A second

flight attendant also tried to restrain Salva, and according to the complaint. The article noted that the FBI and the Ontario Police Department were investigating the case.

A Porn Actress Had Her Photos Used To Extort As Many As 60 Kids On Instagram And Kik

[Forbes](#) (09/17, Brewster) reported that on Tuesday, Instagram announced it was going to set teenager accounts to private by default. According to the article, a recent sextortion case on the platform, one of many to have plagued Instagram over recent years, highlights why Meta has felt the need to lock down accounts owned by younger users. The article added that a Virginia man was charged in May this year with carrying out a sextortion campaign over Instagram and Kik Messenger, using a real-life porn actress' photos to trick as many as 60 victims into sharing nude images, previously-unreported court records show. Gary Owens Jr. has pleaded not guilty to the charges, which allege he grabbed online photos of the porn star, who now lives in Florida, and convinced victims he was a real young teenage woman named Jessica Lincon who wanted to engage in a sexual relationship with them. The government did not say why Owens was doing it other than to trick victims into producing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) for him. The article stated that after the cops searched Owens' iPad, they discovered Google searches for the adult entertainment actress and evidence he'd visited porn sites to view images of the porn star, as well as hundreds of photos and videos of her undressed or performing sex acts. Investigators also found over 900 images of "males in some stage of undress or engaged in a sex act," according to a search warrant. The article mentioned that the government gathered evidence indicating Owens operated his sextortion campaign from 2021 through to 2024. In its criminal complaint against the defendant, the government said it had identified 13 minors as definitive victims, but said "there are at least 51 additional potential victims that have not yet been fully identified." In the search warrant, filed after the complaint, the FBI said it had identified more than 30 minor victims and was continuing to investigate.

Florida Man Downloaded Videos of Child Sexual Abuse Material From Dark Web

The [Herald](#) (09/17, Moore) reported that a Florida man is charged with possession of child sexual abuse material after investigators say he downloaded images from the "dark web." Christopher David Clark, 52, is facing charges after the FBI searched his home and found an external hard drive with multiple images of child sexual abuse material, the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida announced Tuesday. The article stated that in May, an investigation revealed an internet account that was "part of an online community of individuals who regularly send and receive" child sexual abuse materials anonymously on an encrypted dark web platform, according to an arrest record. Investigators say the user requested suspected child sexual abuse material "on multiple occasions." Investigators say the IP address was connected to a one-bedroom apartment in Bradenton where Clark lived alone. When the FBI executed a search warrant on Clark's home, they say agents discovered more than 40 electronic devices, including computers, cell phones and external hard drives. A preview of an external hard drive revealed multiple images of child sexual abuse material, prosecutors say.

Update on North Carolina Girl Who Vanished Over Two Decades Ago

[Newsweek](#) (09/17, Sundel) reported that North Carolina officials now believe that Asha Degree, who was 9 years old when she went missing over two decades ago, was killed. Degree went missing from her home in Shelby in February of 2000. According to the article, investigators with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and the FBI executed search warrants at multiple properties in the county on Monday. The article mentioned that a construction crew discovered two sealed black plastic bags along Highway 18 near Morganton seventeen months after Degree was reported missing. Investigators said the contents of the bags included Degree's backpack and clothing. Two of the items in the garbage bags were determined to have "evidentiary results" with DNA samples. The DNA connected to two people. The article added that one result was Russell Underhill, who died in 2004. The other piece of evidence was a hair stem on Degree's shirt, which connected to a daughter of Roy Dedmon. Officials determined that Degree "is a victim of homicide, with her body concealed," because no one has had contact with her since her disappearance. The warrant refers to Roy Dedmon and wife Connie Dedmon as "suspects." The Dedmons' three daughters were not listed as suspects. The article stated that investigators found that Underhill was under the care of Roy Dedmon at the time of the alleged crime.

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CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

Speedy Trial Granted for South Carolina Man Charged in Jan 6. Capitol Riots

[WPDE \(ABC-15\)](#) (09/17, Brown) reported that a federal judge has approved a speedy trial for Jason Barrett, charged in connection with the January 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, following his arrest by FBI agents two weeks ago. According to the article, the charges included assaulting police officers and obstructing law enforcement, with an affidavit detailing Barrett's participation in the riot, including grabbing an officer from behind and throwing a police helmet. The article detailed that the FBI identified Barrett through social media, and his involvement is highlighted by footage showing him at the front of the mob as they breached the Capitol grounds.

Oregonian Pleads Guilty on Jan. 6 Charges, Washington Man Is Sentenced

[Oregon Public Broadcast \(OPB\)](#) (9/17, Staff) reported that two men from the Pacific Northwest, Andy Steven Oliva-Lopez and Benjamin John Silva, are facing legal consequences for their roles in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack. The article specified that FBI investigations led to Oliva-Lopez's guilty plea for assaulting officers by spraying them with bear spray during the riots, while Silva was sentenced for obstructing law enforcement, participating in a push against police at the Capitol. The U.S. Attorney's Office noted that over 1,500 individuals have been charged in connection with the Capitol breach, which interrupted the electoral vote count. [KIRO \(CBS-7\)](#) (09/17, Staff) added that Silva will serve 24 months of supervised release, including four months of home confinement, and was ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution in addition to the prison sentence. [KGW \(NBC-8\)](#) (09/17, Xiaoshi DePaola) and [KPTV \(FOX-12\)](#) (09/17, Staff) also reported on the story.

Two Men Arrested in Northwest Ohio for Connections to Jan. 6 Insurrection

[WTVG \(ABC-13\)](#) (09/17, Staff) reported that two men from northwest Ohio, Todd Michael Bills and Richard Gutowski, have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the January 6, 2021, Capitol riots. According to the article, the FBI utilized cellphone tracking and Google Maps to confirm Bills' presence at the Capitol, where he reportedly climbed scaffolding and breached police lines; he faces four federal charges, with his case being transferred to D.C. federal court. The article noted that Gutowski self-reported to the FBI about his actions during the riot, admitting to trespassing inside the Capitol, and he is currently facing five federal charges.

DOJ Wants Four Years in Prison for Pastor Who Used Bullhorn to Incite Mob on Jan. 6

[WUSA \(CBS-9\)](#) (09/17, Fischer) reported that William Dunfee, an Ohio pastor identified as a "ground commander" during the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot, faces a recommendation of four years in prison for his actions. The article explained that the FBI linked Dunfee to the riot through his company-branded jacket, noting that he led chants, urged rioters to breach police barricades, and was involved in organizing attacks on law enforcement. According to the article, during the chaos, he was quoted saying, "We want Donald Trump... Give us Trump or give us our house!" and celebrated the disruption of the electoral certification by exclaiming, "Hallelujah! Mission accomplished!"

Montana Man Convicted in Jan. 6 Insurrection Speaks to '60 Minutes'

[Ravalli Republic](#) (09/17, Drake) reported that Jerod Hughes, an East Helena man convicted for his role in the January 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, expressed his belief in a stolen election during a recent "60 Minutes" interview, framing his actions as patriotic. The article added that he and his brother pleaded guilty to obstruction of an official proceeding, with Hughes acknowledging his involvement by saying, "I share some of the responsibility of what happened that day," and admitting he shouldn't have yelled at police officers. According to the article, U.S. Attorney Matthew Graves noted that the prosecution focused on individuals who entered the Capitol and engaged in violent behavior, emphasizing that 1,000 defendants have been convicted, with ongoing FBI efforts to identify additional suspects.

Continued Reporting: West Virginia Man Indicted for Actions During January 6 Capitol Breach

[WOWK \(CBS-13\)](#) (09/17, Meffert) reported that Kevin G. Moore, a Logan County man, faces multiple charges, including conspiracy to impede officers, related to his actions during the January 6, 2021, Capitol breach. According to the article, the FBI's Pittsburgh and Washington Field Offices are investigating the case, which reveals that Moore and his co-defendant allegedly used Facebook Messenger to plan their involvement in the riot. The article noted that the U.S. Attorney's Office reported that over 1,504 individuals have been charged in connection with the Capitol breach, with ongoing investigations into additional suspects.

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OTHER FBI NEWS

FBI Agents Visit Home of New Hampshire Libertarian Party Member After Post About Harris

[WMUR \(ABC-9\)](#) (09/17, Mitropoulos) reported that the FBI has responded to a social media post by a member of the New Hampshire Libertarian Party that referenced killing Vice President Kamala Harris. The FBI visited the home of Jeremy Kauffman, a member of the Libertarian Party who has acknowledged that the state party was behind the original post on X. The article added that Kauffman shared a video on his own X account of two FBI agents asking to speak with him. The two left after going back and forth with Kauffman for a few minutes. The initial post that apparently sparked the FBI visit was made over the weekend and said that anyone who murders Harris would be an "American hero." The post was later deleted, with the New Hampshire Libertarian Party saying it "did not want to break the terms of the website we agreed to." [Time](#) (09/17, Ewe), [Newsweek](#) (09/17, Nicholls), [Daily Mail](#) (09/17, Hammer), and the [New York Sun](#) (09/17, McCaughey) also reported on the story.

Hundreds of Homes Near Houston Still Under Evacuation Orders as Pipeline Fire Burns for Second Day

The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Lozano, Murphy) reported that a pipeline fire that erupted in a suburban Houston neighborhood burned throughout a second day and into the night Tuesday with still no definitive word on when the blaze would finally go out, when nearby residents may be able to return home or why a car drove through a fence and hit a valve before the destructive explosion. The article stated that over 36 hours after the blast — which shot towering flames like a blowtorch above the suburbs of Deer Park and La Porte — authorities have provided few details about the circumstances leading up to the explosion. Investigators said it happened after the driver of a sport utility vehicle went through a fence near the Walmart and struck an above-ground valve. As of Tuesday evening, authorities had not still not identified the driver or said what happened to them. The article mentioned that Deer Park officials have said police and FBI agents found no preliminary evidence to suggest the explosion of the pipeline, which carried natural gas liquids, was a coordinated or terrorist attack. In a statement Monday night, the city said it "appears to be an isolated incident" but officials have not provided details on how they came to that conclusion. [CNN](#) (09/17, Chavez, Boyette, et al.), [KHOU \(CBS-11\)](#) (09/17, Villarreal), [Fox News](#) (09/17, Sorace), [USA TODAY](#) (09/17, Cervantes), [Newsweek](#) (09/17, Impelli), and the [Los Angeles Times](#) (09/17, Lozano, Murphy) also reported on the story.

Baltimore Bridge Victims' Families Filing Suit to Prevent Shipowner From Shirking Legal Liability

[Fox News](#) (09/17, Dorgan) reported that families of some of the immigrant workers who died when a cargo ship plowed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore in March are expected to announce Tuesday that they will take legal action to hold the owners of the vessel legally liable for the deadly collapse, according to a report. The families of three of the six victims will be asking a federal court to prevent Grace Ocean Private Limited, a Singapore-based company which owns the Dali, from escaping legal liability with regard to the maritime disaster. According to the article, in April, Grace Ocean Private Limited and Synergy Marine Pte Ltd., as manager of the Dali, filed a petition for exoneration from or limitation of liability in the federal district court in Maryland over the deadly incident. The Dali lost power on two occasions when it was little more than half a mile from the bridge in the early hours of March 26, which ultimately led the 117,000 ton vessel to slam into a main support pier on the bridge, causing part of the 47-year-old structure to collapse into the water within seconds. The [Associated Press](#) (09/17, Skene) reported that several other interested parties, including city officials and local businesses, have already filed opposing claims accusing the companies of negligence. Preliminary findings from a National Transportation Safety Board investigation show that the Dali experienced a series of electrical issues before and after leaving the Port of Baltimore. The ship was destined for Sri Lanka when it experienced a power blackout and lost steering at the worst possible moment. The article mentioned that the FBI launched an investigation into the circumstances leading up to the crash.

Democrat Operative Fished for Oppo Research in Antisemitic, Lewd Text Messages, House Republican Charges

[Fox News](#) (09/17, Colton) reported that several Republican members of Congress are accusing a liberal political action committee of impersonating a GOP staffer to extract potentially damaging information from elected officials and raise funds for Democrats — with one text exchange that targeted a female lawmaker including antisemitic and sexist language. According to the article, Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, (R-FL), said she received a text this summer from a person posing as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's chief of staff. Before long, however, the individual launched into personal attacks, denigrating Luna as a "fake" Jew and making lewd comments about her. Luna says she's currently facing a different harassment campaign, too, as her re-election bid comes down to its final weeks. She revealed the bizarre details about the opposition research scheme when Fox News Digital inquired about the other allegations.

A person posing as Abbott's new chief of staff in July attempted to set up a phony phone call between Luna and Abbott regarding Luna's re-election effort, according to screenshots of a text conversation. The article added that Luna said she believes the scheme was concocted by a liberal PAC that has targeted fellow lawmakers, including Colorado Republican Rep. Lauren Boebert. The article mentioned that Luna said she contacted the FBI, local sheriff's office and police regarding the threatening messages. The sheriff's office confirmed that it is investigating the matter. The FBI said when asked about the matter that under DOJ policy, it "can neither confirm nor deny the existence of a specific investigation," as the agency cannot "comment on complaints or tips we may or may not receive from the public."

FBI in Search of Vendors for Facial Recognition Capabilities

[ExecutiveGov](#) (09/17, Henry) reported that the FBI is conducting market research to identify qualified sources that can provide advanced facial recognition technology for its law enforcement operations. According to the article, FRT enables the development of investigative leads and detection of relevant case information, which could prove critical to catching perpetrators and mitigating threats, the agency said Monday. Through the request for information, the FBI wants to hear from parties with existing open-source and publicly available face image repositories and functioning FR capabilities to search the same database. The article stated that the potential vendors should also ensure they can deliver the required capabilities in a software-as-a-service package. The FBI envisions that open-source FRT would support its mission of safeguarding national security, protecting the American people and upholding the Constitution. The data gathered through the RFI will inform the Bureau's acquisition approach for an upcoming solicitation. [Biometric Update](#) (09/17, Burt) also reported on the story.

Continued Reporting: AI, The Workplace And Inclusion: Insights From Altman, Gates And Oprah

[Forbes](#) (09/17, Cox) reported that Oprah Winfrey had a challenging assignment with her recent "AI and the Future of Us" TV special. She had to help a broad TV audience understand complex technology, reveal and clarify how the technology would impact her audiences' day-to-day lives, and spark curiosity that could help the audience prepare for a fantastic yet scary future world. The show did a great job explaining some of the fundamentals of AI. However, Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, the first interview guest, offered few specifics about the future impact of AI. Microsoft founder Bill Gates provided more specific answers on that subject later in the show. According to the article, the overall show itself was more inclusive than AI. There was a definite mix of AI advocates, critics, and those in the middle. In addition to technology leaders like Altman and Gates, Oprah interviewed Tristan Harris and Aza Raskin from the Center for Humane Technology, Director Wray, YouTuber Marques Brownlee, chaplain Kaiser Aslam, and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist and essayist Marilynne Robinson.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Hezbollah Pagets Explode in Apparent Attack Across Lebanon

[Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#)

Brazil Court Drops a Suspect in Amazon Slayings of a British Journalist and an Indigenous Advocate

[Associated Press](#)

Arrests Across Australia as Federal Police Target Secret Ghost App Allegedly Used by Criminals

[Associated Press](#), [The Epoch Times](#), [The Guardian](#)

The Rape Trial in France of 51 Men, Explained

[New York Times](#)

An Al Qaeda Affiliate Claimed Attacks in Mali. What Does It Want?

[New York Times](#)

At Least 30 Killed as Factions of the Sinaloa Cartel Clash in Northern Mexico

[Associated Press](#)

Casualties in Myanmar Push Southeast Asia's Death Toll From Typhoon Yagi Past 500

[Associated Press](#)

North Korea Fires Short-Range Ballistic Missiles for Second Time in a Week

[Reuters](#)

Released Russian Dissident Kara-Murza Visits U.S. Congress

[Reuters](#)

In Egypt, Blinken to Discuss Bilateral Ties, Gaza Ceasefire

[Reuters](#)

Venezuela Arrests Fourth U.S. Citizen This Month

[Reuters](#)

Biden Calls on Sudan's Warring Parties to Re-Engage in Negotiations

[Reuters](#)

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OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Sean Combs Is Denied Bail on Sex Trafficking and Racketeering Charges

[New York Post](#), [New York Times](#), [ABC News](#), [Fox News](#), [Washington Post](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#)

House Passes \$3B Veterans Funding Patch as Republicans Scoff at Massive VA Shortfall

[Politico](#)

Senate Hearing Focuses on Rise of Reported Hate Crimes

[WHTM \(ABC-27\)](#), [WIFR](#)

Senate Republicans Block I.V.F. Protection Bill a Second Time, Breaking With Trump

[New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#)

Violent Threats and Attacks Escalate Tensions in Trump-Harris Race

[Washington Post](#)

Speaker Johnson Takes Another Crack at Spending Bill Linked to Proof of Citizenship for New Voters

[Associated Press](#)

Federal Reserve Is Set to Cut Interest Rates for the First Time in Four Years

[Associated Press](#)

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BIG PICTURE

New York Times

- Exploding Pagers Targeting Hezbollah Kill 11 and Wound Thousands
- Secret Service Told Trump It Needs to Bolster Security if He Keeps Golfing
- What We Know About the Deadly Floods in Central Europe
- Instagram, Facing Pressure Over Child Safety Online, Unveils Sweeping Changes
- China's 'Silver Economy' Is Thriving as Birthrate Plunges

Wall Street Journal

- Exploding Pagers Kill Nine, Hurt Thousands In Lebanon
- Harris and Trump Proposals Add to Soaring Federal Debt
- JPMorgan In Talks On Deal For Apple Credit Card
- Diddy' Combs Faces Trafficking Charges
- First 'Golden Bachelorette' Wants a Man Who Grocery Shops

Washington Post

- Pagers Explode in Mass Attack

- Threats Push Race Into New Territory
- Boar's Head Plant Closure Jolts a Tiny Virginia Town
- Indictment Against Combs Spans Length of Career
- Inside the Tech Industry's Backbone

ABC News

- Sean 'Diddy' Combs Charged With Racketeering, Sex Trafficking Offenses; At Least 9 Dead After Pagers Explode Across Lebanon; Springfield, Ohio, Schools Open With Increased Security Amid Threats.

CBS News

- Hundreds of Pagers Explode in Lebanon and Syria; World War I Memorial Unveiled in Washington, D.C.

NBC News

- Sean 'Diddy' Combs Charged With Sex Trafficking, Racketeering After Arrest; Trump Thanks Officers, Blames Democrats After Apparent Assassination Attempt; Harris Blasts Trump's 'Hateful Rhetoric' During Rare Interview.

Fox News

- Trump Shares Details Surrounding Second Alleged Assassination Attempt; Kamala Harris Calls Donald Trump After Assassination Attempt to 'See if He Was Okay'; We're Not Torn Apart by Differences; We're Torn Apart by Contempt: Tim Shriver.

CNN

- Hezbollah Vows Retaliation Against Israel for Deadly Pager Explosions; Sean 'Diddy' Combs Denied Bail and Will Remain in Federal Detention, Judge Rules

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WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

White House

President Biden

- 10:00 AM: The President receives the President's Daily Brief
- 1:00 PM: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre
- 5:00 PM: The President hosts a reception in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month to honor the contributions of the Latino community to the United States

Vice President Harris

- No events scheduled.

US Senate

- [Business meeting to continue to consider S.4667, to amend title 31, United States Code, to establish the Life Sciences Research Security Board, S.4373, to provide for congressional approval of national emergency declarations, S.4495, to enable safe, responsible, and agile procurement, development, and use of artificial intelligence by the Federal Government, S.4675, to require the United States Postal Service to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Postal Regulatory Commission before implementing any network changes, S.4630, to establish an interagency committee to harmonize regulatory regimes in the United States relating](#)

to cybersecurity, S.4654, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to allow Indian tribal governments to directly request fire management assistance declarations and grants,... – 10:00 AM – Host: Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

- Hearings to examine America's regional commissions, focusing on sharing best practices in regional and economic development. – 10:00 AM – Host: Environment and Public Works
- Business meeting to consider S.2695, to amend the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act to provide for advancements in public safety services to Indian communities, S.3857, to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, S.4442, to amend the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010 to make improvements to that Act, and S.4505, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of Ohkay Owingeh in the Rio Chama Stream System, to restore the Bosque on Pueblo Land in the State of New Mexico; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the nomination of Patrice H. Kunesh, of Minnesota, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.. – 10:00 AM – Host: Indian Affairs
- Business meeting to consider S.4776, to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2025 through 2029, S.4762, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize programs and research relating to autism, S.4755, to reauthorize traumatic brain injury programs, and other pending calendar business. – 10:00 AM – Host: Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- Hearings to examine aviation cybersecurity threats. – 10:00 AM – Host: Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Hearings to examine the macroeconomic of potential tax reform in 2025. – 2:00 PM – Host: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Hearings to examine keeping kids learning in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. – 2:00 PM – Host: Intelligence
- Hearings to examine streamlining and coordinating support for rural small businesses. – 2:30 PM – Host: Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Hearings to examine current and future VA budget challenges, focusing on providing for veterans. – 3:00 PM – Host: Veteran's affair

US House of Representatives

- Markup: the Full Committee to Consider the Following: 1 H.R. 3642 the Executive Branch Accountability and Transparency Act of 2023; 2 H.R. 9598 the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2024; 3 H.R. 9592 the Federal Register Modernization Act; 4 H.R. 5300 the GAO Inspector General Parity Act; 5 H.R. 9597 the Federal Acquisition Security Council Improvement Act of 2024; 6 H.R. 9596 the Value Over Cost Act; 7 H.R. 9595 the Federal Improvement in Technology F – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Oversight and Accountability
- Hearing: Holding the SBA Accountable: Testimony from Small Business Administrator Guzman. – 10:00 AM – Host: Host: Committee on Small Business
- Markup: 29 measures; General Services Administration Capital Investment and Leasing Program Resolutions; and other matters cleared for consideration. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
- Hearing: Hearing Entitled: Dazed and Confused: Breaking Down the SEC's Politicized Approach to Digital Assets – 10:00 AM – Host: Host: Committee on Financial Services
- Hearing: Oversight Hearing: Inspectors General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Department of Transportation and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation Amtrak. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Appropriations

- Markup: Committee on Energy and Commerce Markup – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: "Examining the Biden-Harris Attacks on Tipped Workers". – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Education and the Workforce
- Hearing: A Country Without Borders: How the Biden-Harris Open Borders Policies Have Undermined Our Safety and Security. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Homeland Security
- Hearing: Great Power Competition in the Indo-Pacific. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Hearing: Oversight of Homeland Security Investigations. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on the Judiciary
- Hearing: Examining VAs Challenges with Ensuring Quality Contracted Disability Compensation Examinations – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Veteran's affair
- Hearing: Legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 1479 Rep. Ciscomani Chiricahua National Park Act; H.R. 1504 Rep. Horsford Apex Area Technical Corrections Act; H.R. 8931 Rep. Stefanik To redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park; H.R. 8946 Rep. Matsui Reversionary Interest Conveyance Act; H.R. 9159 Rep. Lawler Appalachian Trail Centennial Act; H.R. 9492 Rep. Valadao To amend Public Law 99-338 with respect to Kaweah. – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: Continuity of Congress: Preparing for the Future by Learning from the Past.– 12:00 PM – Host: Committee on House Administration
- Hearing: Investing in a Healthier America: Chronic Disease Prevention and Treatment – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Ways and Means
- Hearing: Hearing Entitled: Protecting Americans' Savings: Examining the Economics of the Multi-Billion Dollar Romance Confidence Scam Industry – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Financial Services

Cabinet Members

- **Secretary of State Blinken** is on travel to Egypt from September 17-19, 2024.
- Secretary of State Blinken meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo, Egypt. at 9:00 AM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken meets with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo, Egypt. at 11:00 AM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken participates in the U.S.-Egypt Strategic Dialogue in Cairo, Egypt at 11:45 AM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken participates in a joint press availability with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo, Egypt at 12:50 AM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken participates in a working lunch with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo, Egypt at 1:35 PM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken holds a meet and greet with employees and families of U.S. Embassy Cairo in Cairo, Egypt at 3:30 PM (LOCAL).
- **Secretary of Education Cardona** will attend the White House's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration. at 4:45 PM ET.

Visitors

- No events scheduled.

General Events

- Brooking Institution: Strategies for people to protect themselves from disinformation – Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 10:00 AM. Disinformation thrives in a toxic political environment that exists not only in the United States but around the world. Falsehoods are made possible by rapid advances in digital technology and organized networks that seek to shape national discussions. In their new book, “Lies That Kill: A Citizen’s Guide to Disinformation,” Brookings Senior Fellows Elaine Kamarck and Darrell West analyze disinformation using case studies in the areas of election integrity, climate change, public health, and race relations. They outline how our political, social, and economic environment makes disinformation believable to large numbers of people and easy to disseminate through social media and mainstream media outlets while offering solutions to reduce disinformation risks. On September 18, join Governance Studies at Brookings for a discussion with Elaine Kamarck and Darrell West about their new book, “Lies That Kill.” Viewers can submit questions for speakers by emailing events@brookings.edu or via Twitter at [@BrookingsGov](https://twitter.com/BrookingsGov) by using #LiesThatKill.
- Brooking Institution: Mobilizing the market: The barriers to financing a more scalable climate response – Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 2:00 PM. Building a more sustainable and resilient American economy will cost trillions of dollars. Despite bold pledges around climate investment and the acknowledged need to help more people and places, U.S. public policy is not doing enough to unleash private investment to advance critical environmental and social goals. National, state, and local stakeholders must realistically confront what’s holding back climate investment at the speed and scale the moment demands. On September 18, the Brookings Initiative on Climate Research and Action will host a public event to explore the challenges and opportunities related to financing a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable country. Brookings experts will briefly discuss new research findings released the prior week. Following a keynote from Ethan Zindler, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Climate Counselor, a panel of national climate journalists will dive deeper into the challenges and opportunities to address climate financing gaps.
- Brooking Institution: On the Front Porch with Tony Pipa: A special Election ’24 conversation with Sarah Mills about the energy transition in rural America– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 4:00 PM. Contemporary differences between rural and urban areas in America have their roots in long-term demographic, economic, technological, and social factors. In the “On the Front Porch” series, Tony Pipa (Brookings) and Brent Orrell (American Enterprise Institute) sit down with authors of recent research on issues facing rural America to explore these factors and more. These conversations seek to unpack the unique challenges and opportunities facing rural America and consider policy options to promote prosperity and opportunity outside the nation’s major metropolitan areas. In “Farming for Wind in Rural Michigan,” an episode of the Reimagine Rural podcast, Tony Pipa captures the story of the trade-offs and decisions that local residents in rural Isabella County, Michigan faced while considering the viability of siting a wind farm in their community. This discussion with Sarah Mills, director of the Graham Sustainability Institute’s Center for EmPowering Communities at the University of Michigan, will use case studies and analysis to explore the role that rural places will play as the country transforms its energy infrastructure, how these installations affect rural residents and local governments, and how federal and state policy choices can shape those impacts. This conversation will be hosted at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan as a prelude to the Election 2024 and U.S. Climate Policy event, to be hosted at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy from 5-7 p.m. on September 19. Viewers may submit questions via X (Twitter) to [@BrookingsGlobal](https://twitter.com/BrookingsGlobal) using #OntheFrontPorch.
- CSIS: Strategic Equilibrium: America’s Manufacturing Resurgence and the Role of Natural Gas in the Carbon Competitive World– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Online event, 8:30 AM. CSIS is honored to be hosting the 52nd Speaker of the House to celebrate the recent release of her memoir on her time in Congress. Speaker Emerita Pelosi has been a fixture of the House of Representatives and American politics since she took office nearly three decades ago. This event aims to bring together some of the brightest minds and top women in national security to celebrate the former House Speaker.
- CSIS: The Future of Development Cooperation in a World of Disruptions– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Online event, 11:00 AM. Please join the CSIS Project on Prosperity and Development to hear from Dr. TANAKA Akihiko, President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing nations. President TANAKA will be discussing the evolution of Japan’s ODA and its approach to strengthen Japan’s engagement with

developing nations over time, particularly in light of the recent divisions in the world. In addition to a keynote address, the program will feature a discussion on how Japan views its role in a geostrategic sense, and how JICA hopes to contribute to a free, peaceful, and prosperous world.

- CSIS: Commercial Space for National Security: Integration and Institutional Change– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Online event, 2:00 PM. Please join the CSIS Aerospace Security Project on Wednesday, September 18, at 2:00 PM EDT, for a conversation on commercial space and national security with General (Ret.) Ellen M. Pawlikowski, U.S. Air Force, and Ms. Mandy F. Vaughn, CEO and Founder, GXO, Inc. The virtual discussion will be moderated by Kari A. Bingen, director of the Aerospace Security Project and senior fellow with the International Security Program.
- AEI: America at 250: Religion and the American Revolution – Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: AEI Auditorium, 2:30 PM. The year 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of American independence, yet the nation’s founding is controversial now in ways it has not been in decades. In the third symposium of AEI’s “We Hold These Truths: America at 250” project, scholars of American history, law, and theology will consider how religion shaped the American Revolution. Many who fought for independence understood the cause as a fundamentally spiritual struggle, one with enormous implications for religion’s future in American civil society. Exploring the ways in which the founding generation understood religious freedom and worked to balance protections for diverse religious communities with the rights of individual conscience illuminates the commitment to liberty at the heart of the American project.
- Aspen Institute: Beyond Chevron: 2024 Aspen Cyber Summit– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Aspen Institute, 9:00 AM. Cybersecurity intersects with every aspect of modern life, from clean drinking water to financial transactions to free and fair elections. This is a human problem as much as it is a digital one, and it can’t be fixed with lines of code alone. Attackers exploit psychology, not just technology. The Aspen Cyber Summit connects the dots between the cybersecurity challenges of today and the topics that matter to you. Whether you attend as an engaged member of the public or a Chief Information Security Officer, you will come away from this nonpartisan event with a clear understanding of what’s at stake and what role you can play in building a more secure future.
- Atlantic Council: Senator Joni Ernst on enhancing security and tech cooperation among N7 countries– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Atlantic Council, 9:00 AM. Join the N7 Initiative, a partnership between the Jeffrey M. Talpins Foundation and the Atlantic Council, for a public conversation with Senator Joni Ernst on her upcoming legislation supporting the Abraham Accords. The discussion will be moderated by former Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral John W. “Fozzie” Miller. This event will cover the LINK Act and AI Accords and how these bi-partisan initiatives can enhance security and technological cooperation between US partners in the Middle East and North Africa. Senator Ernst will also discuss her recent trip to the region, where she met with a range of leaders to discuss the current situation and the way forward. This event will take place in a hybrid format on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. ET at the Atlantic Council’s headquarters in Washington, DC. Participants can join in person or virtually via Zoom.
- Atlantic Council: Inaugural discussion: The state of women’s entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Atlantic Council, 11:00 AM. For the third year in a row, the Atlantic Council’s WIn Fellowship is bringing together a group of trailblazing women entrepreneurs from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a year-long journey to accelerate their business skills and expand their regional and international networks. This year, we are excited to announce that twenty inspiring business leaders have been selected for our 2024-2025 Saudi Cohort, representing diverse sectors ranging from technology and climate sustainability to healthcare. To kick off the program, the Atlantic Council will host a hybrid event in Riyadh on Wednesday, September 18th, at 11 am ET/ 6:00 pm KSA. The event will address the state of women’s entrepreneurship in the Kingdom and explore ways forward for continued growth and innovation as the kingdom shifts its economic ecosystem. Join us for a discussion on the current state of female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia, the challenges that remain, and the opportunities ahead to ensure continued progress.
- Wilson Center: Latin America: The Vision of its Leaders – Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Wilson Center, 3:30 PM. Book Event “Latin America: The Vision of its Leaders” (Planeta, June 2024) by Andres Rugeles, associate member of the University of Oxford, member of the advisory board of the Global South

Unit at the London School of Economics (LSE), and fellow of the I+D Foundation. With the participation of Ivan Duque, former President of Colombia; Rebecca Bill Chavez, president of the Inter-American Dialogue; and Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, World Bank Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean.

- Hudson Institute: Religion in the Crossfire between Russia and Ukraine– Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Location: Hudson Institute, 2:00 PM. Ukraine’s Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, recently passed a controversial law that seeks to thwart the Kremlin-backed Russian Orthodox Church’s influence in Ukraine. This comes in response to accusations that some clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) support the Russian Armed Forces through means like trafficking weapons and disseminating propaganda. Is the new law a legitimate response to the weaponization of religion by an enemy nation during wartime? Or is it a violation of religious freedom? Oleksandr Aliksiichuk, member of the Verkhovna Rada and coauthor of the legislation; Dr. Maksym Vasin, executive director of the Ukraine-based Institute for Religious Freedom; and Lauren Homer, an international human rights lawyer and the president of Law and Liberty Trust, will join Hudson to discuss this question. Then a second panel of experts and witnesses will discuss the Russian Armed Forces’ religious atrocities in Ukraine, including deliberate attacks against churches and evangelical Christians. This panel will feature Ukrainian minister and former Verkhovna Rada Member Pavlo Unguryan; Dmitry Bodyu, founder and pastor of the Word of Life Church in Melitopol and a victim of torture by the Russian Armed Forces; and Dr. Katharyn Hanson, the head of research at the Smithsonian’s Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI) and an expert on Russia’s destruction of Ukraine’s cultural heritage sites.

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