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 Federal Bureau of Investigation - Seal

**November 21, 2024**  
**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
**Daily News Briefing**

(In coordination with the Office of Public Affairs)

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### IN THE NEWS

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#### **House Ethics Committee Deadlock on Gaetz Report and Senate Democrats Request FBI File Amid AG Nomination Battle**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/20, Ferek, Wise, Hughes) reported that the House Ethics Committee is deadlocked on whether to release its report on sexual misconduct allegations against former Rep. Matt Gaetz, who is President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for attorney general. The article explained that Senate Democrats requested the FBI's evidentiary file from its previous investigation into Gaetz, which ended without criminal charges; the FBI acknowledged receiving the letter but declined to comment further. According to the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Schmidt), the federal investigation found a web of payments between Gaetz and dozens of friends and associates involved in sex parties, with two women receiving around \$10,000 from Gaetz. The payments were made through Venmo, with Gaetz and his friend sending thousands of dollars to dozens of people involved in the parties from 2017 to 2020. The investigation also found that one of Gaetz's associates paid a 17-year-old girl \$450, with Gaetz

denying any wrongdoing. [ABC News](#) (11/20, Parkinson, Peller, et al.) added that Two Democrats, Reps. Steve Cohen and Sean Casten, introduced privileged resolutions to force the House Ethics Committee to release its report on Gaetz. The resolutions aim to make the report public, despite the committee's general practice of dropping investigations of members who leave office, with a vote expected within two legislative days. [CBS News](#) (11/20, Hubbard, Quinn) reported that Gaetz met with Senate Republicans, including those on the Judiciary Committee, to build support for his nomination as attorney general. Gaetz, who Vice President-elect JD Vance accompanied, needs a majority vote in the Senate to be confirmed, despite President-elect Donald Trump's commitment to his nomination. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Mascaro, Groves, Amiri), [Reuters](#) (11/20, Erickson, Jackson, Morgan), the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Bolton), the [Washington Post](#) (11/20, Alemany, Goodwin, et al.) (2) (3), the [BBC](#) (11/20, Epstein), [CNN](#) (11/20, Ferris, Raju, Grayer) (2), [Fox News](#) (11/20, Elkind, Olson) (2), [ABC News](#) (11/20, Pecorin, Cherner, et al.), [NBC News](#) (11/20, Wong, Stewart, Asghar), [CNBC](#) (11/20, Breuninger), [Politico](#) (11/20, Tully-McManus, Diaz) (2) (3), [USA Today](#) (11/20, Beggan) (2), [Business Insider](#) (11/20, Lakritz), [CBS News](#) (11/20, Hubbard, Kim), [Axios](#) (11/20, Brufke), [NPR](#) (11/20, Walsh, Schapitl), [The Guardian](#) (11/20, Greve) (2), [The Hill](#) (11/20, Brooks, Schnell) (2) (3), [NewsNation](#) (11/20, Eskow, Jones, et al.), [Forbes](#) (11/20, Durkee), [Rolling Stone](#) (11/20, Ramirez, Bort), [Newsweek](#) (11/20, Sheth), [HuffPost](#) (11/20, Nicholson) (2), the [Washington Times](#) (11/20, Wilson), and the [New York Sun](#) (11/20, Rice).

### **The FBI Arrested a Man Who's Been Charged With Planning an Attack on the New York Stock Exchange**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Golden) reported that the FBI arrested a 30-year-old Florida man named Harun Abdul-Malik Yener for allegedly plotting to bomb the New York Stock Exchange with a remote-controlled device to "reboot" the U.S. government. According to the article, the FBI began investigating Yener in February after receiving a tip about "bombmaking schematics" stored in his unit and discovered bomb-making sketches, electronic components like watches with timers, and evidence of online searches related to explosives dating back to 2017. The article noted that Yener told undercover FBI agents of his plans to target the Stock Exchange because "it will wake people up," and had rewired two-way radios to serve as remote triggers for explosives, planning to disguise himself when planting the devices. Additionally, the article mentioned that Yener was known to post YouTube videos about making explosives from household items and had a history of making threats, including one where he threatened to "go Parkland shooter in this place" at his former workplace. The FBI's investigation also revealed that Yener attempted to join far-right anti-government groups like the "Boogaloo Bois" and the Proud Boys but was denied membership due to his expressed desire "to pursue martyrdom." Yener had his first court appearance and will be detained while awaiting trial. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Barrett), [CBS News](#) (11/20, Tabachnick), [Fox News](#) (11/20, Margolis, Spunt), [BBC News](#) (11/20, Matza), [The Independent](#) (11/20, Marcus), [NBC News](#) (11/20, Winter, Dienst), [UPI](#) (11/20, Coote), [The Hill](#) (11/20, Timotija), [Reuters](#) (11/20, Trotta), [New York Daily News](#) (11/20, Niemietz), [Axios](#) (11/20, Falconer), and [AZFamily](#) (11/20, Staff Writer).

### **Trump Reportedly Considers Replacing Director Wray Amid GOP Criticism**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/20, Oliver) and the [Washington Times](#) (11/20, Picket) reported that President-elect Donald Trump is considering replacing Director Wray, with potential candidates including Kash Patel—favored by the MAGA faction—and former Rep. Mike Rogers, who is seen as a more centrist choice. According to the articles, Vice President-elect J.D. Vance confirmed in a since-deleted post that he and Trump are actively interviewing candidates for FBI director, suggesting plans to dismiss Director Wray. The articles noted that Director Wray, appointed by Trump in 2017 after firing James Comey, has faced criticism from Trump and other Republicans over his handling of the January 6 Capitol riot investigations, the FBI's memo to probe the Catholic Church, the 2022 raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, and actions against pro-life activists, leading to increased enthusiasm within Trump's circle to replace him ahead of his term's expiration. [AlterNet](#) (11/20, Badash) [Newsweek](#) (11/21, Palmer), and the [Daily Caller](#) (11/20, Natta) also reported on the story.

### **Billionaire Gautam Adani of India's Adani Group Charged in U.S. With Bribery, Fraud**

[Reuters](#) (11/20, Cohen, Stempel) reported that Indian businessman Gautam Adani, one of the world's richest individuals, has been indicted in the U.S. on charges of securities fraud and conspiracy to commit securities and wire fraud related to a massive solar energy project in India. According to the article, federal prosecutors in New York allege that Adani and his co-defendants concealed a \$265 million bribery scheme intended to secure billions of dollars in contracts and financing for selling 12 gigawatts of solar power to the Indian government while misleading U.S. investors who invested several billion dollars into the project over the past five years. The article

noted that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has filed a parallel civil action accusing Adani and two co-defendants of violating antifraud provisions of U.S. securities laws and that shares in the Adani corporate empire plunged in India following the indictment. "Gautam S. Adani and seven other business executives allegedly bribed the Indian government to finance lucrative contracts designed to benefit their businesses. Adani and other defendants also defrauded investors by raising capital on the basis of false statements about bribery and corruption, while still other defendants allegedly attempted to conceal the bribery conspiracy by obstructing the government's investigation," stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Dennehy in the [press release](#). "The FBI maintains its steadfast mission to expose all corrupt agreements, especially with international governments, and protect investors from related harm." Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Sisak, Peltz), the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Grant), [NBC News](#) (11/20, Wile), [CNBC](#) (11/20, Mangan), [CNN](#) (11/20, Maruf), [Forbes](#) (11/20, Pequeno IV), [Business Insider](#) (11/20, Snodgrass, Musumeci), [Bloomberg](#) (11/20, Hurtado, Voreacos), [The Guardian](#) (11/20, Jones), [Al Jazeera](#) (11/20, Staff Writer), [AFP](#) (11/20, Walton), [Newsweek](#) (11/20, Venegas), and [Semafor](#) (11/20, Mendoza).

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## COUNTERTERRORISM

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### **Former Georgia Poll Worker Indicted for Mailing Bomb Threat to Polling Place**

[Fox News](#) (11/20, Hagstrom) reported that a Georgia poll worker named Nicholas Wimbish, 25, was arrested and charged by the FBI for allegedly mailing a bomb threat to a polling place ahead of Election Day. According to the article, the FBI alleges that on October 17, Wimbish mailed a threatening letter to the Jones County Elections superintendent, impersonating a voter and claiming that Wimbish had caused disruptions; the letter included threats such as "rage rape" against "the ladies" and warned officials to "look over their shoulder," concluding with a handwritten note stating, "PS boom toy in early vote place, cigar burning, be safe." The article noted that Wimbish was charged with multiple federal offenses—including mailing a bomb threat, conveying false information about a bomb threat, mailing a threatening letter, and making false statements to the FBI, who discovered a copy of the letter on his computer—and that if convicted, he faces up to 10 years in prison for the bomb threat charge and additional time for the other counts. [The Hill](#) (11/20, Suter) and the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (11/20, Stevens) also reported on the story.

### **Man Who Bought a Gun to 'Shoot Up a Synagogue' Is Sentenced to 10 Years**

The [New York Times](#) (11/20, Moynihan) reported that Christopher Brown, a 21-year-old man, was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to possessing a weapon as a crime of terrorism, following his plan to "shoot up a synagogue." According to the article, Brown had posted threatening messages on social media expressing his intent to target a synagogue; he was arrested at Pennsylvania Station by the NYPD after members of a Jewish organization that monitors online threats alerted the authorities, and he was found carrying weapons and a swastika arm patch. The article noted that Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg stated that evidence indicated Brown had an interest in "accelerationism"—aiming to incite a race war—and that authorities had "averted a serious risk of terrorism". The article also noted that the FBI was involved in the investigation through the Joint Terrorism Task Force alongside the NYPD. [WABC \(ABC-7\)](#) (11/20, Katersky) and [Hoodline](#) (11/20, Langston) also reported on the story.

### **Venezuelan Migrant Gang Tren de Aragua Now Operating in 16 States**

[Fox News](#) (11/20, Dorgan) reported that the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua (TdA) is now operating in 16 U.S. states, engaging in violent crimes such as murders, assaults, robberies, shootings of police officers, and gun smuggling, according to a Homeland Security memo cited by the New York Post. According to the article, Homeland Security recommended last month that more than 100 migrants identified as having possible ties to the gang be placed on an FBI watch list, after flagging over 600 individuals with possible connections. The article assessed that the gang's expansion has been facilitated by a lax southern border under the Biden-Harris administration. The article noted that TdA is involved in drug dealing and sex trafficking of migrant women, with Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Director David Rausch warning about the surge of human trafficking and describing law enforcement efforts as a dangerous "cat and mouse" game. Former Customs and Border Protection acting Commissioner Mark Morgan stated that TdA is "expanding its criminal operations like a slow-growing cancer across our nation and unleashing a preventable wave of crime that will be with us for decades."

### **Continued Reporting: The FBI Busted ISIS's Graphic Designer—After Raiding His Texas Home "**

[VICE](#) (11/20, Prada) reported that a 28-year-old Houston resident named Anas Said was arrested by the FBI for creating propaganda materials for ISIS after being monitored for several years. According to the article, Said designed pro-ISIS videos and images, communicated with ISIS's "number 2" graphic designer known as "The Nightmare," and managed multiple Facebook accounts promoting the terrorist group. The article noted that Said expressed a desire to join ISIS in person to commit terrorist acts against U.S. military personnel, and when approached by the FBI, he admitted his involvement with the organization. [TechTimes](#) (11/20, Richard) also reported on the story.

### **Arizona Student Facing Eight Counts of Terrorist Threats After FBI Investigation**

[KGUN \(ABC-9\)](#) (11/20, Staff Writer) reported that a student from an Arizona High School is facing eight counts of terrorist threats and disruption of an educational institution after an FBI investigation. According to the article, on September 14, the school received threatening emails from an unknown sender, which included messages threatening to "shoot up" the school on September 16. Due to the severity of the threats, the Sahuarita Police Department (SPD) sought assistance from the FBI. The article noted that the FBI provided the SPD with a lead related to the Proton email account used and a Sahuarita resident, which helped in identifying a possible suspect. Subsequently, the SPD arrested a local juvenile resident on multiple counts of terroristic threats and disruption of an educational institution.

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## **COUNTERINTELLIGENCE**

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### **Lawmakers Are Concerned About Background Checks of Trump's Cabinet Picks as Red Flags Surface**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Tucker, Miller, Jalonick) reported that lawmakers are concerned that President-elect Donald Trump's transition team has not signed the necessary agreements with the White House or Justice Department to allow the FBI to conduct background checks on his Cabinet picks, potentially bypassing a critical part of the confirmation process. According to the article, this could result in the Senate voting on nominees without the usual rigorous FBI vetting meant to uncover personal problems or red flags, raising security concerns—particularly because some nominees, such as former Rep. Matt Gaetz and Pete Hegseth, have faced serious allegations in the past; Gaetz was investigated by the Justice Department for alleged involvement with underage girls (a probe that ended without charges) and faced a House Ethics inquiry, while Hegseth was accused of sexual assault in 2017 but was not charged after a police investigation. The article noted that Democrats have introduced legislation to codify the FBI's role in the background check process for political appointees, emphasizing the importance of thorough vetting to address potential security liabilities and that some lawmakers, including Senator Susan Collins, have expressed concerns about proceeding without comprehensive FBI background checks. [Bloomberg](#) (11/20, Dennis, Tarabay, et al.) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: FBI and CISA Warn of Continued PRC Cyberattacks on U.S. Telecoms**

[SC Media](#) (11/20, Zurier) reported that the FBI and CISA issued a joint statement warning of ongoing cyberattacks by the People's Republic of China (PRC) on U.S. telecommunications companies. According to the article, PRC-affiliated actors compromised networks at multiple telecom providers to steal customer call records, intercept private communications of individuals involved in government or political activities, and obtain information related to ongoing U.S. government legal cases. The article noted that experts emphasize the seriousness of these espionage activities, with cybersecurity advisor Morgan Wright underscoring the urgent need to address the threat from China and warning that ignoring it could be perilous.

### **Continued Reporting: Allegations of China Harassment Surface in Texas**

[KIAH \(CW-39\)](#) (11/20, Estrada) reported that the Chinese government is facing allegations of cyberstalking, physical intimidation, and harassment against Chinese citizens, naturalized U.S. citizens, and families of dissidents in Texas who have spoken out against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). According to the article, FBI Houston posted claims on social media raising concerns about potential overreach by the People's Republic of China (PRC) beyond its borders, accusing the PRC of targeting individuals who criticize the CCP. The article noted that local authorities and federal agencies, including the FBI, are reportedly monitoring the situation to address any actions that may violate U.S. laws or threaten the safety of residents, highlighting ongoing tensions between the U.S. and PRC over

human rights and freedom of expression. [Fox News Radio](#) (11/20, Radio) and [Hoodline](#) (11/20, Greene) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: Iran Plot To Kill Jewish Politician Foiled in Canada**

[Newsweek](#) (11/20, Mehrara) reported that Canadian security services foiled an alleged Iranian plot to assassinate Irwin Cotler, an 84-year-old Jewish former politician, human-rights advocate, and former justice minister. According to the article, Cotler was warned by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on October 26 and placed under protection after being identified by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service as a high-profile target of Iran, especially following the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel; he has been critical of Iran's actions, including the 2020 downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 and the country's funding of the militant group Hamas. The article noted that Cotler was also contacted by the FBI regarding the unsealing of a U.S. indictment related to another alleged Iranian murder-for-hire plot targeting President-elect Donald Trump and others, although Cotler was not listed as a target.

### **Opinion: Trump Should Let the Clock Run Out on TikTok**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/20, Raus) reported that President-elect Donald Trump is considering allowing the ban on TikTok to proceed unless its parent company, ByteDance, divests the platform to a non-foreign adversary entity by mid-January, as mandated by a bill signed by outgoing President Joe Biden. According to the article, the FBI and the Department of Justice have expressed serious concerns that TikTok's management is beholden to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), posing espionage-related risks through data collection and potential manipulation of public opinion. The article highlighted that Director Wray emphasized this by stating in a Senate hearing, "The key point is that the parent company is, for all intents and purposes, beholden to the CCP." The article noted that TikTok has been accused of suppressing content about China's human rights abuses, such as the internment of Uyghur Muslims and the imprisonment of pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai, and enabling anti-Israeli, Hamas-sympathetic content following the Oct. 7 attacks, thereby distorting young people's views on the Israel-Gaza conflict.

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## **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

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### **Venezuelan Migrant Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murder of Georgia Student Laken Riley**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Brumback) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/20, Lukpat) reported that a Venezuelan migrant was convicted of killing a Georgia college student on Wednesday and sentenced to life in prison. Based on the information, the case became a rallying cry for those advocating stricter immigration policies. Reports indicated that Jose Antonio Ibarra was found guilty of murder, kidnapping, and other charges in connection with the February killing of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student from Athens, Georgia. According to the reports, Ibarra was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole and will serve additional shorter sentences consecutively. According to officials, Riley went for a run and was later found dead in a wooded area behind a lake. Immigration officials reported that Ibarra, who was 26 at the time of the crime, had entered the United States illegally. The conviction was issued by Georgia Superior Court Judge H. Patrick Haggard in a bench trial. The story was also reported on by [ABC News](#) (11/20, Deliso), [BBC](#) (11/20, Yousif), [CBS News](#) (11/20, Czachor), [CNN](#) (11/20, Chavez), [Fox News](#) (11/20, Conklin), the [Hill](#) (11/20, Irwin), [NBC News](#) (11/20, Silva), the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Rojas), [Reuters](#) (11/20, Ax), [USA TODAY](#) (11/20, Ortiz, Santucci), the [Washington Examiner](#) (11/20, Hunter), the [Washington Post](#) (11/20, Bellware), and the [Washington Times](#) (11/20, Delaney).

### **FBI Investigating Whether Burglaries Targeting Athletes Are Linked to a Transnational Crime Ring**

[NBC News](#) (11/20, Winter, Blankstein, Planas) reported that the FBI is working with local law enforcement agencies to determine whether a recent spate of burglaries at the homes of professional sports stars are connected to a transnational crime ring such as one from South America, two senior law enforcement officials said. The article added that the officials said Wednesday that they have not made any determination about who exactly is responsible and that the investigation is ongoing. The direction of the case is subject to change, the officials said. The article mentioned that the homes of two pillars of the Kansas City Chiefs, quarterback Patrick Mahomes and tight end Travis Kelce, were burglarized only hours apart last month, according to authorities and police reports. Officers were sent to Mahomes' house in Belton, Missouri, shortly after midnight on Oct. 6, according to an incident summary from the Cass County Sheriff's Office. The article noted that TMZ reported a break-in about 10

miles away at Kelce's home in Leawood, Kansas, the next day. Twenty-thousand dollars was taken, according to a police report. According to the article, NBC's "TODAY" show reported that Milwaukee Bucks forward Bobby Portis posted a video on Instagram on Nov. 3 saying his "prized possessions" were stolen from his home during his team's game the previous day. [KSHB \(NBC-41\)](#) (11/120, Medina), [KMBC \(ABC-9\)](#) (11/120, Sloan), [WISN \(ABC-12\)](#) (11/120, Stratton), [WHNT \(CBS-19\)](#) (11/120, Jackson), the [U.S. Sun](#) (11/120, Scott), [ABC News](#) (11/120, Katersky), and [People](#) (11/20, Saunders) also reported on the story.

### **Florida Man Pleads Guilty to Threatening to Kill Muslims in Michigan, Feds Say**

[CBS News](#) (11/20, Buczek) reported that a Florida man accused of repeatedly threatening to kill members of an American Muslim organization in Michigan has pleaded guilty to federal charges. According to court documents, Michael Shapiro, 72, of West Palm Beach, placed three phone calls to the Council on American-Islamic Relations Michigan Chapter (CAIR-MI) in Canton Township in December 2023. In all three instances, Shapiro reportedly left threatening voicemails. Prosecutors say Shapiro placed his first call to CAIR-MI on Dec. 8, 2023, twice saying, "I'm going to kill you bastards." The article quoted Cheyvorvea Gibson, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan, who said, "Michael Shapiro's guilty plea for threats motivated by religious bias underscores the FBI's unwavering commitment to protecting individuals from hate and intolerance, this conviction serves as a powerful demonstration of the serious consequences faced by those who engage in hate-fueled threats, sending a clear warning to others."

### **Urologist Who Sexually Abused Patients Is Sentenced to Life in Prison**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Staff Writer) reported that a former doctor was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison after being convicted of sexually abusing multiple patients, including children, over the span of years in the New York area. Darius A. Paduch, a former urologist, was found guilty in May following a trial where 11 victims testified about being abused by Paduch and dozens more submitted statements to the court, federal prosecutors said. The article added that Paduch, 57, has maintained his innocence and has said some of his methods of touching patients were medically necessary. Prosecutors said Paduch sexually abused patients at a prominent hospital in Manhattan from at least 2007 to 2019 and then continued to abuse patients after he began practicing at a different hospital on Long Island. He invited at least one victim to his boat, where prosecutors said Paduch provided the victim with sedatives and sexually assaulted him. A DOJ [press release](#) noted that the FBI was involved in the investigation. The [New York Times](#) (11/20, McFadden), and [New York Post](#) (11/20, Griffin) also reported on the story.

### **Corrections Worker, Detainees Charged With Smuggling Contraband at D.C. Jail**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/20, Hermann) reported that a corrections officer at the D.C. jail and three people awaiting trial in murder and assault cases have been indicted on charges of smuggling contraband into the facility, including a knife, drugs, and cellphones, according to the U.S. attorney's office for D.C. The article added that two women were also indicted in the case on charges alleging they packaged the contraband into Tupperware containers concealed in prepared food and brought them to the jail, formally called the Central Detention Facility. Authorities identified the corrections officer as Rashaad Roper, 36, of Gaithersburg, Maryland. He was released following an initial appearance in U.S. District Court on Tuesday, where a judge ordered him to stay away from the D.C. jail and people incarcerated there. The article mentioned that the smuggling case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office and the D.C. Department of Corrections Office of Investigative Services, court records show. The indictment covers a period starting in February but authorities said the alleged smuggling operation appears to have started many months earlier. D.C. corrections director Thomas Faust said through an agency spokesperson that the charges underscore how persistent issues with contraband are for correctional facilities. [WUSA \(CBS-9\)](#) (11/20, Gilstrap) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: Family of Missing Hawaii Woman 'Extremely Worried' Over New Footage**

The [New York Post](#) (11/20, Propper) reported that the family of the missing Hawaii woman who vanished in Los Angeles this month is growing desperate after viewing alarming footage of her from more than a week ago – and are calling on authorities to ramp up their search efforts. Loved ones of Hannah Kobayashi, 31, initially became worried after she sent a series of troubling texts to family and friends before she disappeared en route to New York for a "bucket list" trip. A missing persons report was filed with the Los Angeles Police Department on Nov. 10, but a new video has set off a heightened sense of concern for relatives, a family rep said Wednesday. According to the article, the family recently viewed surveillance footage of Kobayashi in downtown Los Angeles that shows she was with an unidentified individual near the Pico Metro station on Nov. 11, Kobayashi's aunt, Larie Pidgeon said. The

[Independent](#) (11/20, Bedigan), [People](#) (11/20, Chiu), [Newsnation](#) (11/20, Buchman), and [USA TODAY](#) (11/20, Powel) also reported on the story.

### **Passengers Duct Tape Man Who Allegedly Tried to Open Door During Flight**

[ABC News](#) (11/20, McMichael, Pereira) reported that a group of passengers sprung into action and stopped a man who allegedly tried to open the cabin door mid-flight during a trip to Dallas Tuesday morning by restraining him with duct tape, officials said. The incident took place on an American Airlines flight 1915 from Milwaukee when the Canadian national allegedly approached a flight attendant and asked to open the cabin door while they were in flight and grew more agitated when he was denied, according to the report issued by Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Department of Public Safety. The suspect allegedly tried to rush towards the door, striking the flight attendant who was blocking it, according to the report. The article added that passengers rushed to assist the flight attendant and tried to subdue the unruly passenger who allegedly kept asking to leave the plane, the report said. A flight attendant handed the passengers duct tape as they restrained him, according to the report. They were able to tape up his wrists and ankles and lay him on his stomach for the remainder of the flight, the report said. According to the article, airport police and the FBI detained the man, put him in a wheelchair and took him off the flight for a medical evaluation, according to the report and the FBI. No arrests have been made as of Wednesday evening and the investigation is ongoing, officials said. [CBS News](#) (11/20, Myers), and [USA TODAY](#) (11/20, Cervantes) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Accuses Suspect of Collecting Cash From Ohio Victim of Elder Fraud Scam**

[WFMJ \(NBC-21\)](#) (11/20, Gauntner) reported that a third suspect appeared before a federal judge in Youngstown Monday for his alleged role in a \$4.8 million nationwide elder fraud scheme that targeted half a dozen victims across the United States including a Salem man. Yash Raval pleaded "not guilty" to a money laundering conspiracy indictment unsealed last month. Raval's arrest follows that of 24-year-old Shreyas Baldevbhai Chaudhary, an Indian national charged with money laundering conspiracy. The article stated that the scheme involved a sophisticated operation where victims were tricked into believing their computers were hacked and their identities stolen. They were then pressured to send large sums of money to individuals posing as representatives of Microsoft or their financial institutions. Chaudhary is accused of using the fake tech support scam to defraud a 77-year-old man from Salem, out of approximately \$61,000. Chaudhary allegedly used a messaging account opened with an email address linked to a cloud account containing the man's identifying information. The article mentioned that in the case of the Salem victim, he was instructed to withdraw cash from his bank account and deliver it to Raval who arrived at his home in an SUV in November of last year. What Raval didn't know is that the \$50,000 he believed to be from the wire fraud scheme was actually cash supplied by the FBI. Six victims were identified with total losses exceeding \$4.8 million. In addition to two people from Ohio, there are also victims from California, New York, Maryland, and New York.

### **Doctor Pleads Guilty to Federal Charge Connected to FBI Investigations in Ohio**

[WHIO \(CBS-7\)](#) (11/20, Staff Writer) reported that an Ohio doctor charged in connection to a days-long FBI investigation near Troy and downtown Dayton earlier this year appeared in federal court on Wednesday. Steven Werling, 54, pleaded guilty to one federal charge, according to U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio records. The article noted that Werling was facing a federal weapons charge. The FBI and Miami County Sheriff's Office searched Werling's home on Barnhart Road in Concord Township in early April. The investigation shut down the neighborhood for two days. Court records indicate investigators found explosive components and devices inside. Prosecutors previously said that investigators found an unregistered silencer in Werling's home and claimed he had components to build more.

### **FBI, Police Search Home in Missing West Virginia Woman Investigation**

[WOWK \(CBS-13\)](#) (11/20, Taylor) reported that the FBI and the Parkersburg Police Department searched a home in connection to the investigation into Gretchen Fleming, a woman who went missing in December 2022. The article quoted the Parkersburg Police Department, who said, "While we are at times forced to be vague in our public communications regarding this case, we continue to work vigorously behind the scenes and continue to update and inform the family every step of the way." The article quoted the FBI, who said, "The FBI and our law enforcement partners are conducting court authorized activity at an address in Parkersburg. There is no threat to the public. Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, there is no further comment at this time." [WCHS \(ABC-8/Fox-11\)](#) (11/20, Rubin) also reported on the story.

### **Kansas City Police, FBI, U.S. Marshals Service Arrest 38 in Massive Crime Sweep**

[WDAF \(Fox-4\)](#) (11/20, French) reported that during a city-wide sweep last week, KCPD arrested dozens of people with outstanding warrants. KCPD worked with the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service on the sweep of high-priority suspects all around the city with outstanding warrants. So far, 38 arrests have been made. The article added that Major James Buck with KCPD's Special Investigations Division said of the 38 people arrested, five of them were members of a gang involved in violent crime. That group has been on KCPD's radar for several months. The week-long effort resulted in 69 total warrants cleared. Officers also seized one rifle, six handguns, more than 4 kilos of meth, fentanyl pills and other drugs.

### **FBI Wiretaps of Connecticut Drug Trafficking Ring Overheard Plot to Shoot Rivals Near School**

[ctpost](#) (11/20, Yankowski) reported that members of a Connecticut drug trafficking group the FBI said moved "large amounts of cocaine" out of a car dealership were recently prepared to gun down their rivals near a school, court documents show. According to the article, during a phone call overheard by an FBI wiretap in October, a purported leader of the drug-running operation acknowledged "innocent people" could be hurt when they planned to target their enemies while children would be around, the documents said. "I'm gonna spray the (expletive) out of it though," the man, Wilfredo Ortiz told an associate on the call, according to federal court filings. The article added that prosecutors have accused Ortiz, a 44-year-old Bristol resident, of heading the organization along with Michael Luisi, a 51-year-old Berlin resident. Authorities have also charged 11 other purported members of the organization, which they said Ortiz and Luisi ran out of the Supreme Automotive car dealership on Main Street in New Britain.

### **Continued Reporting: Head of D.C. Preschool Arrested After Directing Undercover Officer 'To Abuse His Child,'**

[Fox News](#) (11/20, Norman) reported that the leader of a preschool in Washington, D.C., is now facing a federal charge for allegedly directing an undercover officer posing as a father "to abuse his child," the Justice Department says. The article noted that James Carroll, who is the head of school at the National Child Research Center (NCRC) – which charges up to \$42,000 annually in tuition for children ages 2 to 5 – was taken into custody on Tuesday. He was charged with attempted coercion and enticement of a minor in a case being investigated by the FBI's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force, federal officials say. According to the article, federal authorities began investigating Carroll after a Discord employee reported a suspected file of child sexual abuse material that was uploaded onto the messaging app's servers on Sept. 11. Investigators later determined the content came from an account linked to Carroll. The [Independent](#) (11/20, Rohrlich) also reported on the story.

### **Alabama Woman Produced Child Porn of Daughter for Texas Imam**

[1819 News](#) (11/20, Monger) reported that according to an FBI affidavit filed by a special agent in Birmingham, the Chelsea woman arrested last month for multiple child sexual abuse charges was producing child porn featuring her daughter at the behest of a Texas-based Muslim imam who convinced her that doing so would bring her and her daughter "closer to Allah." The article stated that Blake Miller Barakat, 50, of Chelsea, was arrested last month and charged with three counts of sex abuse of a child under the age of 12 and 10 counts each of production of child pornography and dissemination of child pornography. The initial charges claimed Barakat filmed a female, described as prepubescent, engaging in sex acts while watching pornography. The agent's affidavit now reveals the underage girl is Barakat's daughter.

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## **FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS**

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### **Archegos Founder Bill Hwang Sentenced to 18 Years in Prison**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Neumeister) reported that the founder of Archegos Capital Management, a hedge fund, was sentenced to 18 years in prison on Wednesday for securities and market manipulation fraud in a scheme that prosecutors said cost global investment banks billions of dollars. Bill Hwang was told the length of the prison term in Manhattan federal court after he told Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein that he felt "really terrible for what happened at Archegos," alluding to the fund's demise over three years ago. The article added that Hellerstein estimated that up to nine financial institutions lost over \$9 billion in the fraud. At Hwang's July trial, prosecutors blamed Hwang and his co-conspirators, saying they artificially inflated the values of nearly a dozen stocks before the investments collapsed in March 2021, wiping out \$100 billion in market value along with the company he created. The article noted that prosecutors said Hwang lied to banks to get billions of dollars to grow his New York-

based investment firm before its portfolio grew dramatically from \$10 billion to \$160 billion. At the start of Hwang's trial, Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexandra Rothman told jurors that Hwang was already a billionaire when he sought "to be a legend on Wall Street" by engaging in a sophisticated scheme involving trades of stock derivatives to secretly build extraordinarily large positions in just a few companies. A DOJ [press release](#) notes that this case was investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/20, Telesca), [New York Times](#) (11/20, Goldstein), [Reuters](#) (11/20, Cohen, Stempel), [New York Post](#) (11/20, Barrabi), [Bloomberg](#) (11/20, Voris, Dolmetsch, Benny-Morrison), [BBC](#) (11/20, Silva), [Fortune](#) (11/20, Hetzner), [Law 360](#) (11/20, Bishop), [Forbes](#) (11/20, Bohannon), and [CNBC](#) (11/20, Video) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: Start-Up Founder Who Sold A.I. Chatbot to Schools Is Charged With Fraud**

The [New York Times](#) (11/20, Fahy) reported that the founder of an artificial intelligence start-up focused on education was arrested and charged with defrauding her investors, lying about the company's profits and falsely claiming that some of the largest school districts in the country, including New York City's, were her customers. The founder, Joanna Smith-Griffin, started the company, AllHere Education, in 2016, with the goal of using artificial intelligence to increase student and parent engagement and curb absenteeism. According to the article, in the years that followed, Smith-Griffin, 33, misrepresented AllHere's revenue and customer base to fraudulently raise almost \$10 million in funds, according to the indictment. Once the company's valuation had climbed, she sold some of her stake in it and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a down payment for a new home and on her wedding. Smith-Griffin was arrested Tuesday in North Carolina, where she lives, and charged with wire fraud, securities fraud, and aggravated identity theft. She faces more than 40 years in prison. The article quoted James E. Dennehy, the FBI Assistant Director in New York leading the investigation, who said, "Her alleged actions impacted the potential for improved learning environments across major school districts by selfishly prioritizing personal expenses, the FBI will ensure that any individual exploiting the promise of educational opportunities for our city's children will be taught a lesson." The [Daily Mail](#) (11/20, Rutt), [GIZMODO](#) (11/20, Feathers), [QUARTZ](#) (11/20, Kessler), [Daily News](#) (11/20, Staff Writer), and [Entrepreneur](#) (11/20, Newsham) also reported on the story.

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## **CYBER DIVISION**

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### **U.S. Charges Five Men in Scattered Spider Hacking Operations**

[Reuters](#) (11/20, Stempel, Vicens) reported that U.S. prosecutors unveiled criminal charges on Wednesday against five alleged members of Scattered Spider, a loose-knit community of hackers suspected of breaking into dozens of U.S. companies to steal confidential information and cryptocurrency. Martin Estrada, the U.S. Attorney in Los Angeles, said the defendants conducted phishing attacks by sending bogus but real-looking mass text messages to employees' mobile phones warning that their accounts would be deactivated. The article noted that the hackers, in their teens or 20s at the time, allegedly directed employees to links for entering log-in information, enabling the hackers to steal from their employers and millions of dollars of cryptocurrency from individuals' accounts. Victims allegedly included at least 12 companies in the gaming, outsourcing, telecommunications, and cryptocurrency fields, plus hundreds of thousands of individuals. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted Akil Davis, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office, who said, "The defendants allegedly preyed on unsuspecting victims in this phishing scheme and used their personal information as a gateway to steal millions in their cryptocurrency accounts, these types of fraudulent solicitations are ubiquitous and rob American victims of their hard-earned money with the click of a mouse. I'm proud of our stellar cyber agents whose work led to the identification of the alleged schemers who are facing significant prison time if convicted." [Bloomberg](#) (11/20, Murphy), the [Record](#) (11/20, Greig), [Bleeping Computer](#) (11/20, Gatlan), [TechCrunch](#) (11/20, Franceschi), the [Register](#) (11/20, Thomson), [Law 360](#) (11/20, Scharf), [KBTX \(CBS-3\)](#) (11/20, Surette), [UPI](#) (11/20, Heuer), [Axios](#) (11/20, Sabin), [Cointelegraph](#) (11/20, Coghlan), and [CYBERSCOOP](#) (11/20, Otto) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Says BianLian Based in Russia, Moving From Ransomware Attacks to Extortion**

The [Record](#) (11/20, Greig) reported that BianLian ransomware actors are likely based in Russia and have multiple Russia-based affiliates, according to new information shared by the FBI and Australian law enforcement. BianLian has drawn scrutiny for attacks on charities like Save The Children as well as healthcare firms like Boston Children's Health Physicians. On Tuesday, the gang took credit for an attack on Amherstburg Family Health Team — a Canadian healthcare company that said it is currently experiencing delays due to technical issues with its phone system. The article stated that the FBI and Australian Cyber Security Centre on Wednesday published

an updated advisory on the group, warning that the gang has shifted its tactics and is now moving toward extorting companies with stolen data instead of fully encrypting systems. The group has exclusively focused on exfiltration-based extortion since January. The advisory notes that like many ransomware gangs, the likely Russia-based group has used its name “to misattribute location and nationality by choosing foreign-language names, almost certainly to complicate attribution efforts.” The article mentioned that the group has been seen targeting public-facing applications of both Windows and ESXi infrastructure, possibly leveraging the popular ProxyShell vulnerabilities.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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### **North Korea Hackers Behind 2019 \$42 Million Ethereum Heist, South Korea Police Say**

[Reuters](#) (11/21, Staff Writer) reported that South Korean police said on Thursday an investigation confirmed that hackers linked to North Korea's military intelligence agency were responsible for an Ethereum cryptocurrency heist in 2019, worth 58 billion won (\$41.5 million) at the time. The article added that more than half of the stolen assets were laundered through three crypto exchanges set up by the hackers themselves at a discount to Bitcoin and the rest were laundered through 51 different exchanges, the National Police Agency said. The article noted that the hackers infiltrated a crypto exchange where the Ethereum was being kept and stole 342,000 tokens, now valued at more than 1.4 trillion won (\$1 billion), the police said in a statement. It did not name the exchange but South Korea-based Upbit exchange said at the time it had detected the transfer of 58 billion won of Ethereum to an unidentified wallet. The article mentioned that the police said its findings were based on an analysis of Internet Protocol addresses used and the subsequent flow of assets. The probe was conducted in cooperation with the FBI and it was the first time North Korea had been identified as the source of a cyberattack on a crypto exchange in South Korea, police said. In May, a panel of United Nations sanctions monitors said it suspected North Korea mounted 97 cyberattacks on cryptocurrency companies between 2017 and 2024 valued at about \$3.6 billion.

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## CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

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### **Jan. 6 Rioter Is Convicted of Plotting to Murder FBI Agents Who Investigated Him**

[NBC News](#) (11/20, Reilly) reported that Edward Kelley, a Donald Trump supporter and anti-abortion activist, has been convicted of plotting to kill FBI agents who investigated him for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, US Capitol riot. According to the article, Kelley was found guilty of conspiracy to murder employees of the United States, solicitation to commit a crime of violence, and influencing or retaliating against federal officials by threat. The article explained that Kelley's trial in Knoxville featured testimony from co-defendant Austin Carter, who pleaded guilty in November 2023. Carter told authorities that he and Kelley plotted “to murder employees of the Federal Bureau of Investigation” in December 2022, months after Kelley's arrest on Jan. 6 charges. Kelley provided a list of about 37 members of law enforcement who worked on his Jan. 6 case, prosecutors alleged. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Staff Writer), [Fox News](#) (11/20, Casiano), the [Washington Post](#) (11/20, Somasundaram), [Law & Crime](#) (11/20, Perez), [WBIR \(NBC-10\)](#) (11/20, North), [Newsweek](#) (11/20, Venegas), [ABC News](#) (11/20, Reinstein), and the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Feuer).

### **Trump-Nominated Judge Says Blanket Pardons for Capitol Rioters Would Be 'Beyond Frustrating'**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Kunzelman) reported that U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, a Trump nominee, expressed frustration at the possibility of blanket pardons for Capitol rioters, calling it “beyond frustrating and disappointing”. According to the article, Nichols made the comment during a hearing for Jacob Lang, a Capitol riot defendant, whose trial was postponed until after Trump's inauguration. “Blanket pardons for all January 6 defendants or anything close would be beyond frustrating and disappointing, but that's not my call,” Nichols said, according to a transcript. “And the possibility of some pardons, at least, is a very real thing.” The article noted that Nichols is one of many judges handling over 1,500 cases related to the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot, with some defendants hoping for pardons from Trump. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (11/20, Hsu), [Newsweek](#) (11/20, Sheth), [Law & Crime](#) (11/20, Harris), and [MSNBC](#) (11/20, Rubin).

### **Former Oath Keeper Who Helped Jan. 6 Prosecutors Sentenced to Probation**

[The Hill](#) (11/20, Lee) reported that former Oath Keeper Brian Ulrich was sentenced to three years of probation, six months of home detention, and 120 hours of community service for his role in the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, after pleading guilty to seditious conspiracy and cooperating with federal prosecutors. According to the article, Ulrich provided significant assistance in the prosecution of other Oath Keepers, including testifying against members of the group accused of plotting to use violence to stop the certification of the 2020 presidential election. The article noted that prosecutors highlighted the Oath Keepers' planning, including encrypted communications and the stashing of weapons in Virginia, while U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta commended Ulrich's efforts to help the nation "heal and move forward." [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (11/20, Joyner) also reported on the story.

### **Jan. 6 Defendants With Florida Ties Await Possible Pardons From Trump**

The [Lakeland Ledger](#) (11/20, White) reported that President-elect Donald Trump's campaign promise to pardon Jan. 6 defendants has sparked legal and political discussions, particularly for several Polk County residents charged with crimes related to the Capitol riot, including assaulting police officers. According to the article, Trump referred to Jan. 6 defendants as "patriots" and vowed to pardon them on "day one" of his presidency, though legal motions citing this promise, including one by defendant Thomas Osborne, have been denied by federal judges like Amit Mehta, who emphasized the public's interest in adjudicating these cases promptly. The article noted that the FBI has continued its efforts to track down and arrest Capitol riot participants, including Jonathan and Olivia Pollock, who were captured after fleeing for years, and detailed the broader implications of mass pardons, which experts suggest could undermine public confidence in the legal system while reinforcing Trump's political agenda.

### **Virginia Woman Sentenced for Assaulting Law Enforcement and Other Charges During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach**

[WDBJ \(CBS-7\)](#) (11/20, Dillon) reported that Casey Jane Tryon-Castro, a Roanoke resident, was sentenced to 31 months in prison and three years of supervised release for her involvement in the January 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot, along with being ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution. According to the article, Tryon-Castro was convicted of multiple felonies, including civil disorder, robbery, and assaulting officers, as well as misdemeanors related to her violent actions in the "Tunnel" on the Capitol's Lower West Terrace, where she pushed against police and took a riot shield from an officer to assist other rioters. The article noted that the Tunnel was the site of some of the most violent attacks on law enforcement during the riot, with Tryon-Castro spending 35 minutes there actively engaging in confrontational behavior.

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## **OTHER FBI NEWS**

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### **Philadelphia Loses Lawsuit That Sought Greater Power for the City to Regulate Firearms**

The [Associated Press](#) (11/20, Scolforo, Levy) reported that Philadelphia cannot impose stricter firearms regulations than are allowed by state law, Pennsylvania's Democratic-majority state Supreme Court ruled unanimously Wednesday, a blow to city leaders looking for ways to stem gun violence. The justices ruled 6-0 to uphold a lower court's dismissal of a lawsuit filed by the city, the nonprofit group CeaseFirePA and family members of gun violence victims. According to the article, they had sought to throw out a state law that has long prohibited municipalities from regulating the ownership or possession of guns or ammunition. Under it, courts in Pennsylvania have thrown out decades of local firearms measures, including a 1990s-era assault weapons ban in Pittsburgh. Justice Kevin Brobson's majority opinion acknowledged the tragedy of gun violence and that "a serious problem exists." But, he wrote, the court's role was not to decide whether laws passed by the Legislature are adequate to address the challenge. The article mentioned that researchers say gun violence is down in most big cities this year. The Center for American Progress said earlier this year that Philadelphia had seen the most significant decline in gun violence in 2024 of the 50 most populous U.S. cities. The FBI reported violent crime in the U.S. had dropped in 2023 by about 3% from the year before, including a drop of 12% in murders and non-negligent manslaughter. That was in line with findings by the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice, which reported 13% fewer homicides across 29 cities during the first half of 2024 from the year before.

### **Detective With the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Awarded Certificate From FBI El Paso**

[KTSM \(NBC-9\)](#) (11/20, Flores) reported that a detective with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPCSO) has been awarded a prestigious certificate from the FBI El Paso Office, the Sheriff's Office said in a press release on Wednesday, Nov. 20. According to the article, Detective Mario Correa has been awarded the Director's Certificate,

which recognizes Correa's "exceptional performance and unwavering commitment to the Joint Task Force, which collaborates with the FBI to enhance public safety and combat crime in our community," according to EPCSO. The Sheriff's Office says the Director's Certificate is awarded to individuals who exemplify high standards of performance and commitment to the FBI's mission.

### **Idaho Man Led FBI Case That Inspired 'The Order' Film**

The [Coeur d'Alene Post Falls Press](#) (11/20, Weeks) reported that death and danger were closer than FBI Special Agent Wayne Manis knew when he was embroiled in a 36-hour standoff on Whidbey Island, Wash., in early December 1984. According to the article, Manis and his team were in a shootout with Bob Mathews, who founded the white supremacist domestic terrorist group The Order in 1983. The Order's members had conducted armored truck robberies, murdered Jewish talk show host Alan Berg, and were building up their army to overthrow the government to create a whites-only America. The article stated that "The Order" starring Jude Law, a film inspired by the true events that took place in the Northwest, will be released Dec. 6. The film is based on journalist Kevin Flynn's nonfiction book "The Silent Brotherhood," on which Flynn closely worked with Manis. Manis also wrote about his experience in his book, "The Street Agent." This was the FBI's largest domestic terrorism investigation prior to the Oklahoma City Bombing.

### **Opinion: Weaponizing of DOJ Was a Hatchet Job Against the American People – And the New Trump Admin Must Restore Trust**

An opinion piece by the [New York Post](#) (11/20, Devine) stated that the first priority of the Trump administration's new attorney general and FBI director will be to dismantle the ideological weaponization of the DOJ and FBI that has crushed the best people, forced the rest into silence and betrayed the American people. The author added that there are few better examples of how this malign machine works than the case of senior FBI Supervisory Agent Zach Schoffstall, who was forced out of the FBI after 16 years of exemplary service because he refused to go along with a domestic terrorism prosecution. According to the author, the story begins in the small town of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on June 11, 2022, where local police got a tip off that a "little army" of masked men was in a U-Haul truck en route to disrupt the annual Pride parade. They pulled the truck over and arrested 31 young men from the white nationalist group Patriot Front, dressed near-identically in navy tops, chinos and COVID masks, and carrying flagpoles and flags. The men, including the group's 25-year-old founder, Thomas Rousseau, were charged with conspiracy to riot, a misdemeanor, and thrown in jail overnight to cool off. The author noted that Schoffstall was the FBI's supervisory senior resident agent at the time, he recalls pressure from Washington to find domestic terrorism in his region because of its sordid history with neo-Nazis such as the Aryan Nations group that had set up a compound near Coeur d'Alene two decades ago. Schoffstall believes the local community is still very sensitive to accusations of white supremacy, but the FBI couldn't just make up crimes that didn't exist. The author mentioned that when the Patriot Front turned up in Coeur d'Alene that Saturday, Attorney General Merrick Garland's DOJ seized on the opportunity to turn the case into proof of the domestic terrorism threat they had been itching to prosecute. But the local FBI agents refused to sign the warrants, says Schoffstall, because they deemed that there was no evidence that the Patriot Front guys were planning to riot and no justification for the over-the-top allegations in the search warrant since the 31 men had no guns, were not violent, had nothing to do with J6 and were a "lawful group formed for a legitimate activity." The agents' boss, Schoffstall, examined the evidence and backed his agents. The author quoted Schoffstall, who said, "I brought embarrassment to the Bureau. I refused to take a knee to the machine, agents should not be forced to lie under oath — that's our bread and butter. I would never bend the truth or make up evidence to get to the desired end. But I failed to read the room that this was going to happen whether I liked it or not."

### **Opinion: The Right's Triumph Over Social Media**

An opinion piece by the [New York Times](#) (11/20, Angwin) stated that the red tide that swept across the nation in our recent election marked many things. One of them was a right-wing triumph over social media. Under heavy pressure from the right, and with the help of X owner Elon Musk, the leading tech platforms opened the floodgates for propaganda to spread unchecked. The result was a flood of lies and distortions flowing through our social media feeds. That led to possibly the most misinformed electorate we've ever seen. According to the author, many voters headed to the polls convinced that border crossings are higher than ever before, violent crime rates are rising and inflation is soaring. The author added that the wave of fake news was so bad that in the days leading up to this month's election, the FBI issued five press releases warning the public about lies circulating online — including fake claims about FBI election monitoring activities and two rare joint statements with other intelligence

agencies warning of Russian online efforts to influence elections. The author claimed that the country is in a situation where it is clear that the tech platforms are not going to risk their profits or their political power to protect high-quality information, and it's equally clear that the Republicans will continue to push for fewer guardrails against falsehoods. The author noted that if the country want a quality information environment, we have to build a new one beyond the walls of the existing Big Tech social media platforms.

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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### **Biden Approves Antipersonnel Mines for Ukraine**

[Fox News](#), [CNN](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#)

### **Chinese-Registered Ship Is Held in Baltic Sea Sabotage Investigation**

[Wall Street Journal](#), [Newsweek](#), [NPR](#), [The Guardian](#)

### **Cease-Fire Between Israel and Hezbollah Edges Closer, U.S. Envoy Says**

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

### **Ugandan Opposition Leader Who Was 'Kidnapped' in Kenya Turns Up in Court**

[New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)

### **U.S. Pauses Operations at Kyiv Embassy, Warning of 'Significant Air Attack'**

[New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [NPR](#), [CNBC](#)

### **U.S. and Europeans Move to Censure Iran for Nuclear Secrecy**

[New York Times](#), [Aljazeera](#)

### **The Hair-Raising Stakes of Flying Into Beirut's Airport**

[Wall Street Journal](#)

### **Australia Launches 'Landmark' Bill to Ban Social Media for Children Under 16**

[Reuters](#)

### **Mexico's Lower House Votes to Abolish Autonomous Bodies**

[Reuters](#)

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## OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

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### **Trump Eyes Return of Russell Vought to Key White House Budget Post**

[Washington Post](#), [Politico](#), [Forbes](#), [CBS News](#), [ABC News](#)

### **Trump Taps Matthew Whitaker, Former Acting Attorney General, for NATO Ambassador**

[Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#), [Fox News](#), [NPR](#)

### **Trump Picks Business Executive Linda McMahon to Lead the Education Department**

[Washington Post](#), [BBC](#), [New York Times](#), [The Daily Beast](#), [NPR](#)

### **Jessica Tisch, Sanitation Chief, Becomes 2nd Woman to Lead the N.Y.P.D.**

[New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Gothamist](#), [Politico](#), [Bloomberg](#)

### **'Bomb Cyclone' Brings High Winds and Soaking Rain to Northern California and Pacific Northwest**

[Associated Press](#), [The Guardian](#), [Newsweek](#), [CBS News](#), [New York Times](#)

### **How Science Lost America's Trust and Surrendered Health Policy to Skeptics**

[Wall Street Journal](#)

### **Trump Has Called for Dismantling the Education Department. Here's What That Would Mean**

[Associated Press](#)

## **Speaker Johnson Restricts Use of Capitol Bathrooms by Transgender People**

[Washington Post](#)

## **Intelligence IGs Head for the Exit Before Trump's Return**

[NextGov](#)

## **U.S. Regulators Seek to Break up Google, Forcing Chrome Sale as Part of Monopoly Punishment**

[Associated Press](#)

## **Analysis: Trump Promised to Disrupt Washington. His Cabinet Picks Would Do Just That**

[ABC News](#)

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## **BIG PICTURE**

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### **New York Times**

- Inquiry Showed Gaetz Payments Went To Women
- Is the Northeast Entering Its Wildfire Era?
- Debating Role Of Trans Rights In Harris's Loss
- Battling Russia, Scarcity and Their Own Fatigue
- Wicked' Fans Beg Seatmates: Shush, Please!
- Grieving Israeli Parents Weigh Freezing Dead Soldiers' Sperm

### **Wall Street Journal**

- U.S. Companies Boost Imports As Trump's China Tariffs Loom
- Archegos Founder Sentenced To 18 Years
- Nvidia's Sales Jump, Lifted by AI Outlook
- \$6.2 Million for Banana on Wall: Bananas and Tape Not Included
- How Science Lost America's Trust

### **Washington Post**

- RFK Jr.'s Skepticism, Oregon Vote Further Turn Tide Against Fluoride
- House Panel Told Gaetz Paid for Sex
- Man Guilty in Murder That Became a GOP Focus
- U.S. Egg Supply in Pre-holiday Slump as Avian Flu Cases Surge
- Israel's War With Hezbollah Has Shattered Lives and Families.
- Trump's Picks Draw From Project 2025

### **ABC News**

- Laken Riley Case: Judge Finds Suspect Guilty in Campus Killing, Sentences Him to Life; Major Storms Bring Heavy Rainfall to Both Coasts; Separate Home Explosions Rock Midwest, Leave 2 Dead.

### **CBS News**

- Man Convicted of Murder in Slaying of Laken Riley; Restoring Pacific Northwest Forests Decimated by Wildfires.

### **NBC News**

- Bomb Cyclone and Atmospheric River Bring Prolonged Rain, High Winds to West Coast; Judge Finds Suspect Guilty of Murder, Other Charges in Killing of Laken Riley; Vance Joins Gaetz as He Meets With Senators Who Will Decide if He Becomes Attorney General.

### **Fox News**

- President-Elect Trump Confident on Achieving Cabinet Confirmations; Democrats Make Final Push to Confirm Biden Judicial Nominees Ahead of Trump Return; Matt Gaetz Has 'Burned Bridges With the Republican Party,' Marc Thiessen Says.

## CNN

- Police Report Details Sexual Assault Allegation Against Hegseth; Western Official Says Missile Used in Ukraine Attack Was Not an Icbm; The Biden Administration Is Trying to Throw a Hail Mary to Save the Colorado River Before Trump Takes Over

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## WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

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### White House

#### President Biden

- 10:00 AM: In-Town Pool Call Time
- 12:00 PM: The President signs the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2024
- 1:30 PM: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre
- 2:15 PM: The President receives the President's Daily Brief
- 4:30 PM: The President welcomes the Boston Celtics to the White House to celebrate their victory in the 2024 National Basketball Association Championship by 10:00 am edt]

#### Vice President Harris

- No events scheduled.

#### US Senate

- Hearings to examine threats to the homeland. – 10:00 AM – Host: Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- Business meeting to consider S.1306, to reauthorize the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, S.2220, to amend title 35, United States Code, to invest in inventors in the United States, maintain the United States as the leading innovation economy in the world, and protect the property rights of the inventors that grow the economy of the United States, S.2082, to make technical corrections relating to the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, and the nominations of Anthony J. Brindisi, and Elizabeth C. Coombe, both to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of New York, Sarah Morgan Davenport, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico, Tiffany Rene Johnson, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, Keli Marie Neary, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and Miranda L. Holloway-Baggett, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Alabama, Department of Justice. – 10:00 AM – Host: Judiciary

#### US House of Representatives

- No events scheduled.

#### Cabinet Members

- **Secretary of Defense Austin** is traveling.

- **Secretary of State Blinken** delivers remarks at the Overseas Security Advisory Council Annual Briefing in Arlington, Virginia at 9:05 AM.
- Secretary of State Blinken delivers remarks at the Resettlement Diplomacy Network virtual ministerial in Washington, D.C. at 4:00 PM.

## Visitors

- No events scheduled.

## General Events

- Brooking Institution: Transitions: Planning and staffing a presidency – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: The Brookings Institution, 10:00 AM. Newly elected presidents have 11 weeks to translate their electoral victory into a governing agenda and team. The two priorities go hand in hand, and successful transitions address both challenges at the same time. That includes strategic and operational choices in setting out a legislative and governing agenda, as well as confirming approximately 1,300 executive branch officials and filling judicial vacancies.
- Heritage: Nuclear Revolution: Powering the Next Generation – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Online event, 11:00 AM. Please join us for this special event where Jack Spencer will be discussing his new book, Nuclear Revolution: Powering the Next Generation, in which he argues that for nuclear energy to meet America's growing energy demand, we need to think beyond a nuclear renaissance and towards a nuclear revolution; a revolution animated by the American spirit, molded by free enterprise, and delivered by the private sector.
- CSIS: Preventing, Detecting, and Responding to Animal Disease Threats: 20 Years of UN FAO ECTAD – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: CSIS, 10:30 AM. Today, up to 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases originate from animal sources, posing outsized risks to livestock health, agricultural production and trade, and human security. From the African swine fever to the highly pathogenic avian influenza, the socio-economic and health threats posed by transboundary animal diseases are vast and far-reaching. Established in 2004, the UN FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) implements the largest animal health capacity development programming globally, supporting countries in forecasting, preventing, detecting, and responding to high-impact transboundary animal diseases.
- CATO Institute: A Life for Liberty: The Making of an American Originalist – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: CATO Institute, 1:00 PM. Georgetown University law professor Randy Barnett has played an integral role in the rise of originalism—the movement to identify, restore, and defend the original meaning of the Constitution. But Barnett's path to becoming an influential professor of constitutional law was not an easy one. Starting from a working-class childhood in Calumet City, Illinois, Barnett's unusual resume has included stints as an ice cream truck driver, newspaper ad salesman, prosecutor, libertarian theorist, contract law professor, and Supreme Court advocate. In his new autobiography, A Life for Liberty, Barnett tells the complete story of his personal and professional journey.
- Aspen Institute: Socrates San Francisco – Is technology the new religion? – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: The Institute at Salesforce Park, 6:00 PM. As our unified social values fragment and organized religion falls to the lowest levels of participation on record, people are seeking meaning. Belief in biohacking and the singularity now resemble tenets of a new faith. Since before the advent of the printing press and the Gutenberg Bible, technology and religion have had a complex and mutually beneficial relationship. While technology in the past augmented religion, join us as we ponder whether technology has itself become a new religion.
- PIIE: Small packages, big questions: Valuing the de minimis exemption – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Online event, 9:00 AM. The United States allows international shipments with a fair market value of \$800 or less to enter the country duty free. US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) processes about 4 million of these de minimis shipments a day, up from 2.8 million a day last year. Federal lawmakers are considering legislation that would significantly alter or eliminate the de minimis exemption.

- Atlantic Council: A fireside chat with Josu Jon Imaz, chief executive officer of Repsol – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Online event, 10:00 AM. Please join the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center on November 21, at 10:00 a.m. EST, for a virtual fireside chat with Josu Jon Imaz, chief executive officer of Repsol. The conversation will be moderated by Frederick Kempe, president and chief executive officer of the Atlantic Council, and explore the evolving landscape of transatlantic energy security, climate policy, and competitiveness under new European and US leadership.
- Atlantic Council: Congressman Michael McCaul on Russia and the authoritarian challenge – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Online event, 11:00 AM. On Thursday, November 21 at 11:00 a.m. ET, the Atlantic Council will host a #ACFrontPage conversation featuring Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX-10), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to discuss the threat to US interests from Russian aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere, as well as Russia’s growing authoritarian partnerships with North Korea, Iran, and China.
- Atlantic Council: Building the future of cross-sector collaboration in the Summit of the Americas – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Hotel Hilton Panama, 2:30 PM. The next event in this series is taking place in Panama, which hosted the 2015 Summit of the Americas under the banner of “prosperity with equity,” seeking to promote hemispheric cooperation across people and businesses. Senior representatives from Panama, the United States, and other key regional stakeholders will address lessons learned and propose new strategies to strengthen and enhance cooperation among governments, business leaders, civil society, and young leaders.
- Hudson Institute: Strategic Challenges Facing the US–South Korea Alliance – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Hudson Institute, 10:00 AM. President-elect Donald Trump will bring a new agenda and a different approach to the United States’ alliances compared to the outgoing Biden administration. How should the second Trump administration balance US national security interests while building on Washington’s strong alliance with the Republic of Korea (ROK)? The two governments recently “reaffirmed the shared vision, common values, and unwavering commitment to their combined defense posture and the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) as the bedrock of our security partnership.” On the other hand, President Trump will face growing security cooperation among North Korea, Russia, China, and Iran as he begins his second tenure.
- Hudson Institute: Big Ideas for America’s New National Security Team – Thursday, November 21, 2024. Location: Hudson Institute, 2:00 PM. The next four years of American foreign policy will be crucial. From Afghanistan to Ukraine to Israel, the Biden administration failed to fulfill its commitments, and China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have seized on this opportunity to increase their collaboration. America’s global allies and partners have looked on nervously as this axis of authoritarians developed into a major threat to the American-led world order. Distinguished Fellow Mike Gallagher will join Palantir Chief Technology Officer Shyam Sankar and Senior Fellows Peter Rough and Nadia Schadow to discuss what to expect from the second Trump administration and how Washington can change course by returning to hard-power principles and reasserting American dominance on the world stage.

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