

FBI PUBLIC AFFAIRS – DIRECTOR’S AM NEWS BRIEFING

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Federal Authorities Seek To Discover Nashville Bombing Suspect’s Motive. The [New York Times](#) (12/28, McGee, Tompkins, 20.6M) says that with law enforcement officials “confident they know who set off a powerful explosion in downtown [Nashville] on Christmas morning, their attention on Monday turned to answering what may prove a far more difficult question: Why?” The Times adds that investigators “say Anthony Quinn Warner, 63, rigged his R.V. with explosives and parked it in a popular entertainment district, a place typically full of tourists and shoppers. But he also played a message warning people of an imminent explosion, which detonated at 6:30 a.m. on a holiday, a time when the area was basically deserted.”

The [Washington Post](#) (12/28, Witte, 10.52M) reports, “Warner’s explosives-packed recreational vehicle was parked near an AT&T communications hub when it detonated. Conspiracy theories about 5G technology have proliferated online this year, with people trading unfounded claims that the relatively new system for mobile communication is also spreading the novel coronavirus,” but “authorities said they have also gathered evidence suggesting Warner’s interest in other unusual subjects, according to two people familiar with the investigation. They cautioned that someone who commits such an irrational act may not have a rational reason for doing so, and emphasized that the inquiry is just getting started. ‘We’re at the beginning stages of determining the motive,’ said FBI Special Agent Jason Pack. ‘It could be weeks before we have a comprehensive picture.’”

On the lead [CBS Evening News](#) (12/28, lead story, 3:40, Garrett, 4.74M) story, Mola Lenghi reported that officials “admit there are some questions that may never be answered, but they are still trying to get into Warner’s mindset before they say he killed himself in that blast and in the process leveled parts of downtown Nashville.” Lenghi added that prior to the explosion, Warner “deeded his house to someone and gave someone else his car, telling them he had cancer, but the FBI is investigating Warner’s medical records to see if that is true.” Warner’s neighbor also told the [AP](#) (12/28, Kruesi, Balsamo, Tucker) that when recently asked if he would be getting “anything good for Christmas,” Warner had replied, “Oh, yeah, Nashville and the world is never going to forget me.”

[CBS News](#) (12/28, 5.39M) reports that “authorities now turn to the monumental task of piecing together the motive behind the explosion. ‘We hope to get an answer. Sometimes, it’s just not possible,’ David Rausch, the director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said in a Monday interview on TODAY. ‘We may never find the exact reasoning behind the activity that took place.’ ‘It does appear that the intent was more destruction than death but again that’s all still speculation at this point as we continue in our investigation with all our partners,’ Rausch added.”

[Reuters](#) (12/28, Layne) reports, “David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, said on Monday that Warner’s mother was cooperating with the multiagency investigation but that motive remained elusive. The TBI released Warner’s criminal history, showing a single marijuana charge more than four decades ago. ‘He was not on our radar,’ Rausch told a news briefing, explaining that the TBI was helping the FBI and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to interview neighbors and relatives. ‘We are all taking pieces of the puzzle, working to determine what the motivation was for this individual.’”

[NBC News](#) (12/28, Silva, 4.91M) reports, “Before he was identified as the suspect and the only person killed in” the explosion, Warner, “according to people who knew him, was a loner who had recently retired as an information technology consultant.” Steve Schmoldt, “Warner’s next-door neighbor since 2001, described Warner as a ‘loner’ whom he understood to be an information technology specialist who worked from home. Schmoldt said Warner once told him that he had 14 security cameras around his house. ‘He was a loner,’ Schmoldt said. ‘I never saw anybody go into his house. I never saw him have anybody over.’ But Warner was friendly to him and his wife, he said. They would sometimes interact while Warner was working in his yard or on his property. ‘I never really saw him in a dark mood,’ Schmoldt said.” Warner “had several dogs over the years that he ‘loved’ and ‘really took good care of,’ he said.”

The [Daily Beast](#) (12/28, Briquet, 933K) reports, “Tom Lundborg was a teenager in the late 1970s when he worked under” Warner, “who was a technician for an alarm company. Back then, Lundborg’s father owned A.C.E. Alarms, a firm providing commercial and residential burglar systems, but was incapacitated in a car wreck. That left a young Lundborg and 20-something ‘Tony’ Warner to run the business, and they drove to different sites to do burglar alarm installations and service calls. ‘I worked with Tony as his helper. I kind of looked up to him. He was kind of a hippie. Had long hair, a Magnum, P.I. mustache,’ Lundborg told The Daily Beast. ‘He was a smart cocky kind of guy. I rode around with him all day every day – during the summers, at least for a couple years.’” Lundborg “said Warner disliked authority, loved smoking weed and claimed he’d just gotten out of the Navy.”

[ABC News](#) (12/28, Shapiro, 2.44M) reports, “Warner’s neighbor, Rick Laude told ABC News, ‘Nothing about this guy raised any red flags that he would do something like this.’”

[CNN](#) (12/28, Silverman, 89.21M) reports that Laude "told CNN Monday he spoke with Warner four days before the bombing. 'I said, "Hey, Anthony, is Santa going to bring you something good for Christmas?"' Laude said. 'He said, "Yes, I'm going to be more famous. I'm going to be so famous Nashville will never forget me.'" Laude said he thought Warner was referring to something good happening. 'Let me be very clear, he and I were not friends,' he said. 'You will not find anyone in my neighborhood who will claim to be a friend of his. He was just a legitimate recluse.'"

[USA Today](#) (12/28, Timms, Alund, Bacon, 12.7M) reports, "A tip, a hat and a pair of gloves provided all the evidence authorities needed to identify the remains of Warner. David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, "said Monday that a tip from the public put Warner "on law enforcement radar and that DNA from gloves and a hat retrieved from a car Warner owned help confirm the identification."

[Fox News](#) (12/28, Casiano, 23.99M) reports, "The FBI's Memphis bureau tweeted out a photograph" Warner "taken from surveillance footage while inside a vehicle. Investigators are still trying to piece together a motivation for the early morning bombing, which killed Warner, damaged buildings, injured three people and displaced some others."

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/28, story 3, 1:55, Melvin, 6.11M), Morgan Chesky reported investigators are "speaking to Warner's mother, who they say is cooperating." Chesky added Tennessee Bureau of Investigations Director David Rausch "said tissue recovered near the bomb site matched DNA from a hat and gloves inside a car that Warner gave to a woman months ago. And then a tip tying Warner's RV, seen in the backyard, to the one that gave the warning to evacuate before blowing up."

The [Tennessean](#) (12/28, Hineman, 645K) reports, "The FBI on Sunday declined to classify the Christmas morning bomb explosion...as an act of terrorism, saying authorities didn't yet have enough evidence to determine a motive." The Tennessean adds, "Doug Korneski, the FBI special agent in charge of the Memphis field office, said authorities were 'looking at any and all possible motives' but were unable to determine one as of Sunday. He called upon people who knew Warner's beliefs and ideologies to contact the FBI. When asked whether this would be considered an act of terrorism, Korneski said investigators hadn't tied Warner's motivation to an ideology, which must be done for the FBI to consider it terrorism. Korneski said the act of violence must be committed in an attempt to further a political or social belief."

Meanwhile, the [New York Times](#) (12/28, Rojas, Cavendish, McGee, 20.6M) considers how the bombing will further test Nashville, after the city has faced a year that included "another tornado, this one ripping a trail of devastation in parts of the city that had been at the center of Nashville's boom" and "the coronavirus: It has nearly claimed a tourism industry that had been thriving, and it took John Prine, the singer and songwriter who was a beloved figure in the city."

[Reuters](#) (12/28, Layne, Hosenball) reports, "Nashville Councilman At-Large Bob Mendes said that while it seems Warner took steps with the warning to limit deaths, the bombing was likely to be labeled domestic terrorism once the suspect's agenda becomes clear. 'You don't go out of your way to build a bomb this big,' said Mendes, a lawyer. 'He had to have had a callous disregard for whether there would be a loss of life.'"

"5G Paranoia" Explored As Possible Motive. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (12/28, story 2, 2:50, Llamas, 6.73M), Marcus Moore reported sources told ABC News that investigators "are looking at a theory that Warner may have been motivated, at least in part, by a paranoia over 5G cell technology. Conspiracy theories falsely allege 5G networks can weaken the immune system, among other things."

[McClatchy](#) (12/28, Stunson, 29K) reports, "Investigators say they are now looking into Anthony Warner's alleged 5G paranoia and if it motivated the bombing, ABC News reported." Douglas Korneski, "an FBI special agent in charge, told ABC News investigators 'are aware of certain things online, and we're looking at every possible motive.' That includes whether Warner believed '5G technology was being used to spy on Americans,' WSMV reported." McClatchy adds, "The RV linked to the explosion was parked outside of an AT&T building, and the blast caused internet and phone outages throughout Tennessee and surrounding states. 'Early in 2020, conspiracy theories about 5G technology were considered the greatest domestic threat to critical infrastructure, according to homeland security reports,' Newsweek reported."

[WKRN-TV](#) Nashville, TN (12/28, 172K) reports, "Federal investigators are 'looking seriously' at whether 'paranoia over 5G technology' led Warner to detonate the bomb. Sources "told ABC News that" Warner "may have been motivated, at least in part, by that paranoia, which also possibly extended to 'a range of things, including the existence of life in outer space.' Metro police and the FBI have not revealed if they believe the AT&T building where the RV was parked was Warner's intended target, but said they are investigating."

[Newsweek](#) (12/28, Rahman, 2.67M) reports, "Frank Figliuzzi, the former assistant director for counterintelligence at the FBI, said that the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville, Tennessee should be a 'wake-up call' about the vulnerability of U.S. infrastructure." Newsweek adds, "In an appearance on CBS' Face the Nation on Sunday, Figliuzzi warned the blast revealed how 'relatively easy' it is for a single individual to cause such disruption and warned that the public needs to be 'extremely vigilant' due to the possibility of copycat attacks in the future. 'I think this is a wake-up call and a warning for all of us about how vulnerable our infrastructure is, how relatively easy it is for a single individual to do this,' Figliuzzi told Margaret

Brennan. 'Now, we've concentrated post-9/11 on getting our hands around all the chemical companies' mass orders of precursors for known explosives, and look what an individual can do on his or her own when they simply amass quantities of things that are under the radar screen.'

Nashville Bombing Seen Exposing Vulnerability Of US Telecom Infrastructure. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/28, Uberti, Rosenbush, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that the severe regional disruption of wireless networks in the wake of the Christmas Day bombing near an AT&T building in Nashville exposes a vulnerability in the design of US telecom infrastructure to terrorist attacks and other disasters.

The [Washington Post](#) (12/28, Harris, 10.52M) similarly reports that the Nashville bombing "triggered a cascade of technological failures that disrupted daily life and imperiled emergency services, offering a sobering reminder of the fragility of the nation's critical communications systems, according to national security experts." Paul Rosenzweig, a former official at the US Department of Homeland Security, is quoted saying, "There's a saying in security circles that if there's no Internet 'kill switch' but you want to kill the Internet, kill the switching stations."

[Fox News](#) (12/28, Creitz, 23.99M), meanwhile, reports that Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, a Republican from Chattanooga who sits on the House Homeland Security Committee, "wants stronger oversight of the nation's telecommunications grid" following the bombing, which "caused 911 outages and a sudden unreliability in regional phone service." Fleischmann is quoted saying, "We need to make sure not only that we protect our grid from a software cybersecurity standpoint but we have to have physical protection for our grid. ... There's a lot of talk about that out there. Maybe now we'll focus in a very bipartisan way on making sure that we physically protect our grid because as you said, when this building was knocked out, it had a ripple effect across the state and the region."

Bombing Raises Fears Of "Lone Wolf" Terror Threats. [CBS News](#) (12/28, Pegues, 5.39M) reports, "The Nashville bombing is prompting new concerns about 'lone wolf' terror threats in the United States. Investigators believe the Nashville bomber acted alone in carrying out the explosion that rocked the city's downtown on Christmas. Three people were injured and dozens of buildings were damaged in the area. 'Lone wolf' attackers have proven to be some of the most difficult for law enforcement to stop. Studies show they are often 'more educated and socially isolated than group-based actors,' said Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League. "'Lone wolf'-style subjects sometimes choose to commit their crimes not over a period of months,' he said, 'but in a matter of minutes.'" CBS News adds, "While the Nashville bombing has not been characterized as an act of domestic terrorism, the number of domestic terror cases under FBI investigation has been rising in recent years. These types of attacks can be motivated by any number of grievances."

Police Arrest Tennessee Man Who Allegedly Played Recording Similar To Nashville Bombing. [The Hill](#) (12/28, Pitofsky, 5.69M) reports in its "Briefing Room" blog that the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office on Sunday announced deputies arrested James Turgeon, 33, "who was allegedly playing 'audio similar to what was heard' before a vehicle exploded in downtown Nashville on Christmas Day." The Hill says Turgeon has been "charged with two counts of felony filing a false report and one count of tampering with evidence."

Conspiracy Theorists Defend Warner. The [Daily Beast](#) (12/28, Weill, 933K) reports, "No sooner had Anthony Quinn Warner been named as a person of interest in an apparent Christmas Day suicide bombing in Nashville, Tennessee, than conspiratorial circles began casting doubt on his identity, or else applauding his actions." Although investigators "have not yet identified a motive for the attack," "a certain pro-Trump segment appears to have taken up the bomber's side, with another Tennessee man allegedly attempting a similar threat – albeit without any actual explosives – on Sunday." The Daily Beast adds, "Moments after his name emerged in connection with the case, subscribers to the far-right QAnon conspiracy movement began flooding Twitter with absurd ideas, falsely claiming that Warner was an actor, partially because a different Anthony Quinn was a Hollywood star before dying in 2001. Other QAnon followers broke down his name to associate his initials with made-up clues, or to dissect parts of his name to display 'Q WARN.'"

Biden Calls For "Continuing Vigilance" Against Domestic Terrorism As Trump Publicly Silent. [USA Today](#) (12/28, 12.7M) reports Joe Biden "said Monday an array of national security challenges includes protection against domestic attacks, and the nation needs to be alert in the wake of the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville." [The Hill](#) (12/28, Chalfant, 5.69M) reports Biden "emphasized the need for 'continuing vigilance' following the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville, Tenn., offering praise for law enforcement and first responders who assisted in the wake of the explosion."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (12/28, story 2, 2:05, Garrett, 4.45M), Chief Justice and Homeland Security Correspondent Jeff Pegues stated that although the bombing in Nashville "has not been characterized as an act of domestic terrorism, the number of domestic terror cases under FBI investigation has been rising in recent years. And these types of attacks can be motivated by any number of grievances." FBI Director Wray said, "This year, the lethal attacks, domestic terrorism lethal attacks, we have, I think, all fit in the category of anti-government/anti-authority, which covers everything from anarchist violent extremists to militia types."

[The Hill](#) (12/28, Budryk, 5.69M) reports Nashville Mayor John Cooper (D) on Monday "said that he has not spoken directly to President Trump since the intentional detonation of an RV in the city's downtown on Christmas," but he "credited" Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) "for lobbying the president for a federal disaster declaration in the wake of the blast." Cooper told CNN that Blackburn "talked to him yesterday, she said, and he apparently had been following the news very closely and was committing help from the federal government aspect for which we are grateful and we'll need that." On [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/28, story 2, 1:10, Melvin, 6.11M), Geoff Bennett said Trump "has not yet publicly acknowledged the attack."

White Ohio Police Officer Fired After Fatal Shooting Of Unarmed Black Man. The [AP](#) (12/28, Amiri) reports "white [Columbus] Ohio police officer" Adam Coy "was fired Monday after bodycam footage showed him fatally shooting 47-year-old Andre Hill – a Black man who was holding a cellphone – and refusing to administer first aid for several minutes." Columbus Public Safety Director Ned Pettus Jr. said in a statement, "The actions of Adam Coy do not live up to the oath of a Columbus Police officer, or the standards we, and the community, demand of our officers. ... The shooting of Andre Hill is a tragedy for all who loved him in addition to the community and our Division of Police." [Reuters](#) (12/28, Staff) says Pettus' decision to fire Coy "capped a disciplinary hearing that came three days after Police Chief Thomas Quinlan concluded his own expedited review of the case, finding that Coy had engaged in 'critical misconduct' that should cost him his job." In brief reports, [ABC World News Tonight](#) (12/28, story 8, 0:25, Llamas, 6.73M) and [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/28, story 4, 0:15, Melvin, 6.11M) provided similar coverage.

Biden Says Trump Appointees Are Obstructing Transition In "Key" National Security Areas. The [Washington Post](#) (12/28, A1, Wang, Johnson, 10.52M) reports President-elect Joe Biden "on Monday accused...Trump and his political appointees of obstructing the transition of power to his incoming administration, particularly on national security issues, an escalation in tone after reports of isolated difficulties in the transition process last week." The Post adds that Biden "specifically called out" OMB and DOD "as agencies where his transition team had encountered 'roadblocks' from political leadership." The [New York Times](#) (12/28, Kaplan, 20.6M) similarly reports Biden "emphasized the importance of a smooth transition, saying, 'Right now, as our nation is in a period of transition, we need to make sure that nothing is lost in the handoff between administrations.'"

While [Breitbart](#) (12/28, Alic, 1.26M) reports that Biden said his transition teams "received exemplary cooperation from the career staff" of some agencies, Paula Reid said in a brief [CBS Evening News](#) (12/28, story 3, 0:50, Garrett, 4.74M) segment that Biden is "warning that nothing must get lost in the transfer of power." The [AP](#) (12/28, Jaffe) reports Biden "warned that his team needs 'full visibility' into the budget process at the Defense Department 'in order to avoid any window of confusion or catch-up that our adversaries may try to exploit,'" and he "said they need 'a clear picture of our force posture around the world and of our operations to deter our enemies.'" [Reuters](#) (12/28, Lewis, Spetalnick) reports that when Biden "takes office, he will inherit a wide range of foreign policy and national security challenges, including China, Iran and North Korea, as well as the coronavirus pandemic raging across the globe," while "one of his toughest tasks will be rebuilding U.S. alliances that have frayed under four years of Trump's 'America First' agenda."

However, [Bloomberg](#) (12/28, Kinery, Korte, 3.57M) reports acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller "said the department had responded to 188 requests for information from the Biden team with more than 5,000 pages of controlled and classified information." In a statement, Miller "said that Defense officials 'have been working with the utmost professionalism to support transition activities in a compressed time schedule and they will continue to do so in a transparent and collegial manner that upholds the finest traditions of the department. The American people expect nothing less and that is what I remain committed to.'"

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (12/28, Niedzwiadek, Seligman, 6.73M) reports Biden's comments "reignited tensions with the Pentagon just over a week after defense officials abruptly canceled a series of meetings with the transition that had been scheduled for Dec. 18." According to Politico, Defense officials "said the two sides had agreed on a two week holiday pause and that the meetings would resume in the new year, but the Biden transition executive director, Yohannes Abraham, rebutted that claim."

In addition, [The Hill](#) (12/28, Chalfant, 5.69M) reports a senior Administration official "described Biden's remarks as ridiculous while adding that OMB staff would not waste time helping the transition team develop what would ultimately be failed proposals, seeming to confirm that there has been a refusal by political leaders to cooperate." The Hill adds the official "denied that cooperation issues had anything to do with national security."

A DOD spokesperson told [CNN](#) (12/28, Lee, 89.21M) "that there are three briefings/interviews scheduled for this week with the Biden transition team. Two of the briefings pertain to coronavirus issues and the other one is on 'cybersecurity.'" Though Miller said there has been unprecedented cooperation with the transition team, an unnamed source "told CNN that critical

meetings remain outstanding." An official "told CNN that the Defense Department continues to 'deny and delay' meetings with agency review team members." That person said "no Department is more pivotal to our national security than the Department of Defense, and an unwillingness to work together could have consequences well beyond January 20."

[Newsweek](#) (12/28, Hutzler, 2.67M) also reports.

Chinese State Media Denies Axios Report About Spy's Relationship With US Congressman.

According to [Breitbart](#) (12/28, 1.26M), "Global Times, a Communist Chinese Party-controlled media outlet, published a report recently" saying an "an Axios report alleging a Chinese spy developed extensive ties with Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) is 'complete fiction.'" An anonymous source reportedly told the Global Times the report was "completely fabricated to slander China, and urged the US media and relevant personnel to stop violating a Chinese citizen's reputation and cease poisoning China-US relations with a Cold War mentality." The outlet "cited a professor at a Chinese university named Shen Yi who claimed American intelligence agents have 'no evidence' on American politicians and 'have to cut in by hinting about their lifestyle and social activities.'"

Federal Prosecutors Argue Against Release Of Suspected Whitmer Kidnapping Plotter.

The [Detroit News](#) (12/28, Snell, 1.16M) reports, "Freeing a violent extremist accused of serving as the bombmaker for a group that plotted to kidnap and kill Gov. Gretchen Whitmer would be dangerous and unreasonable, federal prosecutors said." Barry Croft, 45, of Bear, Delaware, "should stay in prison while awaiting an unscheduled trial date in a case that has focused national attention on violent extremism in Michigan, prosecutors said in a court filing Sunday." The FBI "said in early October that agents had thwarted a plot involving at least 14 men, including Croft, angered by state restrictions on travel and business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Croft has cited the pandemic as one reason he should be released, saying he fears contracting the virus while in a Philadelphia prison. 'Croft's first proposed remedy, the immediate release of a violent extremist, is unsupported and unreasonable,' Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler wrote in the court filing Sunday."

FBI Probing Fire At Black Church In Massachusetts.

The [AP](#) (12/28) reports from Springfield, Massachusetts, "A fire early Monday morning at a Massachusetts church with a predominantly Black congregation is considered 'highly suspicious' and is being investigated as a possible arson, authorities said." The AP adds, "City, state and federal authorities are investigating the fire that heavily damaged the Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Fire Commissioner Bernard Calvi said at a news conference. The fire was reported at about 5 a.m., and although it was limited mostly to the basement and first floor the building is now unusable, Calvi said. No one was injured. The FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are assisting with the investigation."

[NBC News](#) (12/28, 4.91M) reports, "Firefighters responded to a call at the Martin Luther King Jr., Community Presbyterian Church at about 5 a.m. on Monday morning, according to Springfield Fire Commissioner Bernard Calvi. It took about an hour to put the blaze out, leaving the church 'unusable' due to the damage. 'It's highly suspicious,' Calvi said. 'There's been three other fires in this general area in the last three weeks.'"

[New England Public Radio](#) (12/28, Bourne) reports, "Fire Commissioner B.J. Calvi said firefighters were able to save some religious artifacts from the Martin Luther King Junior Community Presbyterian Church. But the interior was totally destroyed. 'Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, FBI, the State Police, as well as the Springfield Police Department and the Arson and Bomb Squad are investigating this,' Calvi said. 'We're looking for any and all leads. We're taking this matter very seriously.' Calvi said a \$5,000 reward is being offered for information that would lead to an arrest in the case." [The Hill](#) (12/28, Mastrangelo, 5.69M) also reports.

Judge Again Denies Ghislaine Maxwell's Bail Request.

The [New York Times](#) (12/28, Shanahan, 20.6M) reports Ghislaine Maxwell, "the British socialite and longtime companion of Jeffrey Epstein who is charged with contributing to his abuse of teenage girls more than two decades ago, was again denied bail by a federal judge on Monday." The Times says that the ruling "came in response to a \$28.5 million bail package, proposed this month by Ms. Maxwell. It would have released her from what her lawyers called the 'intolerable' conditions in jail and into house arrest at a friend's New York City home."

The [AP](#) (12/28, Neumeister) reports from New York that US District Judge Alison J. Nathan in Manhattan "rejected the proposed bail for Ghislaine Maxwell in an order," but "she did not immediately release an opinion explaining her reasoning, in order to allow defense lawyers and prosecutors to propose redactions." According to the AP, "Defense lawyers for Maxwell, who had lost a bail request shortly after her July arrest, recently offered the new bail package, saying Maxwell and her husband were offering all of their wealth – \$22.5 million – and millions more in the assets of friends and family to secure bail."

Epstein Reportedly Shared Suicidal Thoughts In Jail. The [New York Daily News](#) (12/28, Keogh, Brown, 2.51M) reports, "Before he died by suicide, Jeffrey Epstein got an early taste of hell. The multimillionaire sex offender was extorted by inmates and ignored by staff as he became increasingly suicidal, Metropolitan Correctional Center inmates told the Daily News in exclusive interviews. 'He was saying he's going to kill himself because the government is trying to kill him anyway,' one inmate recalled." The Daily News adds, "Shocking details about Epstein's one-month stay behind bars in lower Manhattan were corroborated by the niece of Efrain 'Stone' Reyes, who was the last inmate to share a cell with the multimillionaire sex offender. 'Epstein was very depressed and he mentioned to my uncle that he didn't want to live anymore...' Angelique Lopez told The News. Staffers at the federal lockup 'were treating him like crap. They were making him sleep on the floor. They wouldn't let him sleep on a cot,' Lopez added."

Attorney Says Soldier Charged In Illinois Shootings May Suffer From PTSD. The [AP](#) (12/28, Tarm, Tareen) reports an attorney for Duke Webb, the Army special forces sergeant "arrested in what authorities called an apparently random shooting at an Illinois bowling alley that left three people dead told an initial hearing Monday that her client may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder." According to Army service information, Webb, who "faces three counts of murder and three counts of first-degree attempted murder for injuring three others in the shooting at Don Carter Lanes, in Rockford, on Saturday evening," had "four deployments to Afghanistan, the most recent once ending in July." Attorney Elizabeth Bucko, "also told the hearing in a Winnebago County courtroom that Webb appeared to have issues with memory loss. She added that he will undergo mental health evaluations, the Rockford Register Star reported." The [New York Times](#) (12/28, León, Fazio, 20.6M) reports Webb "was on leave and visiting family members," Winnebago County state's attorney J. Hanley said Monday. Hanley "declined to comment on a possible motive." The [CBS Evening News](#) (12/28, story 7, 0:25, Garrett, 4.74M) provided similar coverage in a brief broadcast.

Loughlin Released After Serving Prison Term For College Admissions Scam. The [New York Times](#) (12/28, Taylor, 20.6M) report actress Lori Loughlin "was released from federal prison in Dublin, Calif., on Monday, having completed a two-month sentence for conspiring to pass her daughters off as rowers so they would be admitted to the University of Southern California." Loughlin "was among more than three dozen wealthy parents, many of them in Southern California, who were caught up in a sprawling scheme to bribe coaches, test administrators and others to help their children get into college." The [AP](#) (12/28, Richer) reports Loughlin's husband, "Mossimo Giannulli, is serving his five-month sentence at a prison in Lompoc near Santa Barbara, California." He "is scheduled to be released on April 17, the Bureau of Prisons says. Prosecutors said Giannulli deserved a tougher sentence because he was 'the more active participant in the scheme.'" A brief [CBS Evening News](#) (12/28, story 9, 0:25, Garrett, 4.74M) segment and [ABC World News Tonight](#) (12/28, story 7, 1:20, Llamas, 6.73M) provided similar coverage.

Swiss To Return Remaining \$150M To US From Stanford Ponzi Scheme. [Reuters](#) (12/28) reports from Zurich, "Switzerland will return \$150 million from blocked Swiss bank accounts by the end of the year to the United States to be given to victims of convicted Ponzi scheme con artist Robert Allen Stanford, the Federal Ministry of Justice said on Monday." Stanford, "a former Texas financier known primarily by his middle name, was convicted of fraud by a Houston jury in 2012 in what prosecutors called a \$7.2 billion fraud that lasted two decades and which was eclipsed in size only by the Ponzi scheme run by Bernie Madoff. About \$50 million had previously been returned, the justice ministry said." Reuters adds, "In October, the Swiss criminal court had rejected appeals against the seizure of the assets, paving the way for the remaining \$150 million to be returned by the end of December, the ministry said."

[AFP](#) (12/28) reports, "In total, Switzerland in 2009 froze some \$200 million in assets in accounts linked to the flamboyant money man and cricket mogul, in connection with a U.S. investigation into a massive \$7 billion Ponzi scheme. He was sentenced in June 2012 to 110 years in prison over the scheme, which bilked some 30,000 investors from more than 110 countries through bogus investments with Stanford International Bank between 2001 and 2008." AFP adds, "The Swiss ministry of justice (OFJ) said in a statement that since his conviction and a U.S. confiscation order had taken effect, it was possible to return the full amount to the U.S."

[The Hill](#) (12/28, Coleman, 5.69M) reports, "The financier put millions from his Stanford International Bank in the Swiss branch of the French Societe Generale bank." The Hill adds, "U.S. federal prosecutors had alleged that Stanford sent \$116 million in proceeds 'through a Swiss slush fund he controlled at Societe Generale.' The bank repeatedly denied assertions that it did not sufficiently follow anti-money laundering obligations in taking in Stanford's money."

Cyber Stocks Surging Since SolarWinds Attack. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/28, Gallagher, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that the NYSE FactSet Global Cyber Security Index has risen 12% since the SolarWinds attack was reported on December 12 – after FireEye's shares had dropped 13% following reports its own system had been breached on December 8. FireEye then brought the SolarWinds attack to light, and its shares surged 70% from their "initial selloff" and are up 53% in December overall. The Journal says investors tend to see high-profile cyberattacks as "promotional events" for companies in the industry, but the impact on those firms is not as clear-cut.

Justice Department Appeals Tik-Tok Ruling. [Reuters](#) (12/28, Shepardson) reports the Justice Department "appealed a Dec. 7 order by a U.S. judge that blocked the U.S. Commerce Department from imposing restrictions on Chinese-owned short video-sharing app TikTok that would have effectively barred its use in the United States." The appeal was filed in the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Wray Honors Fallen FBI Investigator At Funeral. The [Culpeper \(VA\) Star Exponent](#) (12/28, Schemmer, 42K) reports, "They may not be felt by most Americans, but the heartache and after-effects of Sept. 11, 2001, live on. Few know that better than the family and friends of Culpeper County resident Saul Charles 'Seahawk' Tocker, 51, who died Dec. 20 of cancer caused when he combed for clues through the Pentagon's wreckage after terrorists crashed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Defense Department headquarters in Arlington, Va." The Star Exponent adds that Tocker, "a supervisory investigative specialist with the FBI who was interred Monday in Culpeper's Fairview Cemetery, didn't want to be remembered with a downbeat note," and "those who loved and appreciated him made that clear during his 11 a.m. graveside service on the cemetery's chilly, windswept heights." Director Wray, "who came to Culpeper fresh from his family's Christmas vacation, spoke of his colleague's zest for life, describing Tocker as a big, quick-witted guy with a warm laugh who stood by his colleagues. 'His teammates said they could always rely on him for help,' Wray said. 'If you needed anything, if you were struggling, if you just needed to talk – Saul could put aside the burly, brusque, sarcastic Seahawk. He would really listen to you, and you could trust him. He could be your biggest critic – always in the interest of helping you – and your staunchest ally.'" The [Culpeper \(VA\) Star Exponent](#) (12/28, 42K) also posts a copy of Director Wray's remarks on its website.

NYTimes Analysis: Trump Using Clemency Power For Those With Personal, Political Connections. A [New York Times](#) (12/28, Robles, 20.6M) analysis examines President Trump's use of the pardon power, saying that the "vast majority of the people to whom he granted pardons or commutations had either a personal or political connection to the White House, and only seven were recommended by the government's pardon attorney, according to a Harvard University professor who is tracking the process." Although the regulation "can be waived, the government normally only considers pardons for people who have served at least five years in prison, a rule that was not applied for a number of Mr. Trump's cohorts."

Trump Hints At Turmoil When Congress Affirms Electoral College Votes. The [Washington Times](#) (12/27, 626K) reports President Trump late Sunday "tweeted about his own battle to overturn the results of the November election" and "suggested there is intrigue to come on Jan. 6, when Congress meets to affirm the results of the Electoral College."

In his [Washington Post](#) (12/28, Milbank, 10.52M) column, Dana Milbank says that as Trump "behaves ever more erratically in the waning weeks of his term, Republicans and Democrats alike wonder: What's he thinking?" Milbank adds that to anyone "who would divine in the president's floundering a grand strategy, or even a small one, let me offer some caution: If you go rummaging around in Trump's brain right now, you're going to emerge empty-handed." According to Milbank, "Attention is his lifeblood, and chaos its delivery vehicle. There is no strategy or policy. Arguably, there never was. But in these final days, we see a defeated president abandoning all things – national security, democratic elections and any pretense of handling the duties of the presidency – as he does anything and everything to keep the spotlight on himself."

Gohmert, Other Republicans Sue Pence To Reverse Biden Win. [The Hill](#) (12/28, Kruzel, 5.69M) reports Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX) "and several other Republicans" on Sunday sued Vice President Pence as part of their "far-fetched bid that appeared aimed at overturning...Joe Biden's election win." The lawsuit "focuses on Pence's role in an upcoming Jan. 6 meeting of Congress to count states' electoral votes and finalize Biden's victory over President Trump." The vice president's role "in presiding over the meeting is a largely ceremonial one governed by an 1887 federal law known as the Electoral Count Act," but the GOP lawsuit "asks a federal judge in Texas to strike down the law as unconstitutional" and give Pence the authority to recognize electors who would support...Trump. [Politico](#) (12/28, Cheney, 6.73M) reports District Judge Jeremy Kernodle, a Trump appointee, will hear the case.

In addition, the [Washington Times](#) (12/28, Sherfinski, 626K) reports that on Fox News "Fox & Friends," Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL) "said Monday that 'dozens' of House Republicans might sign onto objections to the Electoral College results on Jan. 6, when

a joint session of Congress meets to announce the numbers." Brooks pledged to "sponsor and co-sponsor objections to the Electoral College vote returns of Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada and maybe more depending on where we collectively want to go."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/28, Paul, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Republicans from six states submitted "alternative" slates of electors to Congress, but election law experts argued that the strategy of changing electors after their certification is unlikely to succeed. Meanwhile, [Bloomberg](#) (12/28, 3.57M) describes Gohmert's effort as "the latest in a series of grievance-fueled lawsuits attempting to undo the Nov. 3 presidential contest, in which Biden beat Trump by more than seven million votes, based on unsubstantiated claims of rampant voter fraud committed by Democrats." Bloomberg also highlights that "almost all" of the lawsuits "have been dismissed due to a lack of evidence, including by judges appointed by Trump."

However, [The Hill](#) (12/28, Kruzel, 5.69M) says Trump "last week retweeted a supporter who called on Pence to refuse to certify Biden's win on Jan. 6," and he has "reportedly complained that Pence has not done enough in the fight to overturn Trump's electoral defeat, according to CNN." The [Washington Times](#) (12/28, Mordock, 626K) and the [Daily Caller](#) (12/28, Rodgers, 375K) provide similar coverage.

New York Post Editorial Calls On Trump To Concede Defeat. The [Washington Post](#) (12/28, Elfrink, 10.52M) reports that on Sunday, the [New York Post](#) "aimed a blistering editorial at" Trump, "demanding that he accept his loss to" Joe Biden "and stop falsely claiming that mass voter fraud had marred the results – an effort the paper labeled a 'dark charade.'" The editorial says, "We understand, Mr. President, that you're angry that you lost. But to continue down this road is ruinous." The Post adds the "editorial is among the most stinging rebukes yet from the Trump-friendly confines of conservative media."

[Bloomberg](#) (12/28, Wasserman, 3.57M) reports that "since Joe Biden's victory," the New York Post had been "backing away from Trump and his continued unfounded claims of fraud." [Breitbart](#) (12/28, 1.26M) reports the New York Post warned Trump "of a future legacy of madness. 'Mr. President, it's time to end this dark charade,' the newspaper wrote in an editorial on Monday that was given a cover page."

The [New York Times](#) (12/28, Tracy, 20.6M) reports the Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid "also ridiculed Sidney Powell, a former lawyer for the Trump campaign who pushed conspiracy theories about a Venezuelan plot to rig voting machines in the United States. And it said a suggestion by Michael T. Flynn, the former lieutenant general who served as Mr. Trump's first national security adviser, to impose martial law was 'tantamount to treason.'"

Dominion Sends Cease-And-Desist Letter To Giuliani Witness Carone. [The Hill](#) (12/28, Coleman, 5.69M) reports Dominion Voting Systems "has sent a cease-and-desist letter to a witness who accompanied Rudy Giuliani in contesting the presidential vote in Michigan." Lawyers for the company "told Mellissa Carone, a former contractor for Dominion, to 'cease and desist making defamatory claims' and to preserve documents associated with her 'smear campaign against the company,' according to the letter obtained by The Hill on Monday." The company argues Carone "knowingly made false statements about the company and voter fraud, describing her mockingly as Giuliani's 'star witness.'"

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (12/28, Boucher, 2.16M) reports that last week, Dominion Voting Systems "sent cease-and-desist letters to a litany of people tied to the campaign of President Donald Trump, including several with ties to Michigan." Another was Russell James Ramsland Jr., a "self-proclaimed cybersecurity analyst who has worked with the Trump campaign to create several deeply flawed analyses about the election in Michigan and other states." A third was Matthew DePerno, an "attorney representing a man who sued Antrim County over a marijuana-related election issue." The letter to Carone accused her of making her accusations without "a shred of evidence," knowing "all along" that her "attacks on Dominion have no basis in reality."

Emanuel Says Biden Victory Was More Than A Repudiation Of Trump. In an op-ed for the [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/28, Subscription Publication, 8.41M), former White House Chief of Staff, Congressman and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel says Biden's victory was more than a repudiation of Trump, and serves as an indication that rather than tearing down our economic and political systems, Americans want to renew and revitalize them.

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