

## **FBI PUBLIC AFFAIRS – DIRECTOR’S AM NEWS BRIEFING**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020 5:00 AM EST**

**Georgia Recertifies Election Results As Trump Legal Efforts Continue Elsewhere.** Norah O'Donnell said on the [CBS Evening News](#) (12/7, story 5, 1:45, 4.74M) that with “more states certifying their results, there are questions tonight about the future of the President’s legal fight to overturn the election.” In Georgia, CBS’ Paula Reid reported, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, “a Republican, recertified the results [Monday] after a second recount.” Raffensperger: “We have now counted legally cast ballots three times, and the results remain unchanged.” On [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/7, story 5, 1:30, Holt, 6.35M), Hallie Jackson said Joe Biden’s “win [was] recertified in Georgia after a recount, with a top Republican there dismissing the campaign’s baseless claims of widespread fraud.”

[CNN](#) (12/7, Collins, 83.16M) reports on its website that according to “multiple sources,” there is “a sense developing within Donald Trump’s legal team and what remains of his campaign staff that their efforts to overturn or delay the results of the election are coming to an end...despite what the President has said publicly. ... Following the news of Rudy Giuliani’s coronavirus hospitalization, staffers only speculated further that it’s a matter of time before their legal efforts come to a halt completely.”

The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, 14.2M) reports that Raffensperger “said Monday that the office would recertify the state’s election results, which would reaffirm Biden’s victory after a second statewide recount of presidential votes.” The [New York Times](#) (12/7, Roose, 18.61M) reports Raffensperger’s office “dedicated part of a morning news conference to debunking” several “falsehood[s]...in what was called ‘Disinformation Monday.’” According to the [AP](#) (12/7, Brumback), “the total number of votes in the recount results certified Monday and posted on the secretary of state’s website was 766 fewer than the number certified when the ballots were first tallied after the election. Biden’s lead dropped from 12,670 to 11,779.”

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (12/7, 895K) says the President’s “efforts to overturn Georgia’s election results have met a wall of opposition from an unlikely source: Republican state officials and GOP-appointed judges who have loudly rejected his calls to undo Joe Biden’s narrow victory in the state. ... Trump’s pleas to top state officials to interfere in the election have been soundly rejected by Republican politicians he once endorsed.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/7, Corse, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), [Axios](#) (12/7, 521K), and [The Hill](#) (12/7, Greenwood, 2.98M) also cover the certification, while other outlets examine the impact of the fight between Trump and his party’s leaders in Georgia on the two January 5 Senate runoffs. Steve Osunsami said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (12/7, story 4, 2:20, Muir, 7.76M), “The deadline in Georgia to register to vote in this upcoming runoff election” was Monday night. At a weekend rally, Trump “was trying to help the two sitting Republican senators who hope to hold onto their seats. ... The real worry: that Republicans might not show up to vote is born from the President’s own made-up stories about widespread election fraud in the November election.” [Politico](#) (12/7, Arkin, 4.29M) reports, “During a feverish weekend of campaigning...Georgia Republicans continued to indulge Trump’s untruths about the last election, while imploring their backers to show up for the next one.”

The [AP](#) (12/7) reports that Secretary of State Pompeo “plans to deliver a speech extolling the Trump administration’s foreign policy this week in Georgia, ahead of key Senate run-off elections in the state that will determine control of the upper chamber of Congress.” [Fox News](#) (12/7, Steinhauer, 27.59M) reports on its website that while it is “normal for secretaries of state to speak to domestic audiences, the address by Pompeo comes as the nation’s campaign spotlight is shining on Georgia. ... And it comes as Pompeo, who political pundits consider a potential 2024 GOP presidential contender, has faced criticism this year for giving speeches considered to be tinged with political overtones.”

The [New York Times](#) (12/7, Herndon, 18.61M) looks at GOP strategy in the contests, writing that Republicans are focusing primarily on Raphael Warnock, the African American minister challenging Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA), and largely ignoring Jon Ossoff, the Democratic challenger to Sen. David Perdue (R-GA).

**Trump Reached Out To Pennsylvania House Speaker.** The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, Gardner, Dawsey, Bade, 14.2M) reports the office of Pennsylvania House Speaker Bryan Cutler has confirmed that Trump called the GOP speaker “twice during the past week to make an extraordinary request for help reversing his loss in the state.” Cutler spokesman Michael Straub said, “The President said, ‘I’m hearing about all these issues in Philadelphia, and these issues with your law. What can we do to fix it?’” The Post says the calls “make Pennsylvania the third state where Trump has directly attempted to overturn a result.”

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (12/7, Roebuck, 347K) reports, “With less than a day to go until the federal deadline for states to lock in their delegates for the Dec. 14 Electoral College vote, Pennsylvania Republicans have bombarded state and federal courts with a flurry of new legal filings, grasping for last-minute traction in their thus far unsuccessful attempts to overturn the results of the presidential election.”

**Trump Campaign Appeals To Nevada Supreme Court.** The [AP](#) (12/7, Ritter) reports attorneys for the Trump campaign are appealing to the Nevada Supreme Court "to overrule a lower court judge and nullify...Biden's electoral win in Nevada. ... A hearing was not immediately scheduled, but the appeal is expected to get fast-track handling." The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (12/7, 345K) reports, "Campaign attorneys representing Trump's proposed slate of presidential electors filed a notice of appeal in the District Court shortly after Judge James Russell denied their request to essentially overturn the state's presidential result."

**Sidney Powell Suits Rejected In Two States.** [Reuters](#) (12/7, Hals, Brice) reports federal judges in Georgia and Michigan rejected efforts by Sidney Powell, "a former lawyer for the Trump campaign," to decertify Biden's win in those states. US District Judge Timothy Batten in Atlanta and US District Judge Linda Parker in Detroit "ruled that the plaintiffs lacked the legal standing to bring the lawsuits and that the cases were filed too late." Batten "said [in] a hearing on Monday that the plaintiffs were seeking 'perhaps the most extraordinary relief ever sought' in connection with an election." Batten said, "They want this court to substitute its judgment for that of two-and-a-half million Georgia voters who voted for Joe Biden, and this I am unwilling to do."

The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, 14.2M) reports that Batten, "who was appointed by President George W. Bush, forcefully rejected the plaintiffs' requests. Citing other technical reasons, Batten said that he was unwilling to reverse the decision of Georgia's voters, which has been reaffirmed through two recounts of presidential votes." [Bloomberg](#) (12/7, Davis, 4.73M) reports that Powell, "who is no longer associated" with Trump's legal team, "filed the suits last month on behalf of Republican voters." According to Bloomberg, Powell has "claim[ed] that foreign agents from Iran and China conspired with Democratic officials and poll workers to infiltrate voting machines and switch votes" from Trump to Biden.

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (12/7, 1.52M) reports Parker said in her opinion, "This lawsuit seems to be less about achieving the relief Plaintiffs seek – as much of that relief is beyond the power of this Court – and more about the impact of their allegations on People's faith in the democratic process and their trust in our government."

**Amistad Project "Has A Tie To President Trump's Legal Team."** The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, Swaine, Helderman, Dawsey, Hamburger, 14.2M) reports that the Amistad Project, "a conservative legal organization that has filed lawsuits challenging the election results in five states, has a tie to President Trump's legal team, raising questions about the independence of what has appeared to be an endeavor separate from the president's last-gasp legal maneuvering." Trump campaign legal adviser Jenna Ellis "serves as special counsel to the Thomas More Society, which has filed lawsuits through the newly formed Amistad Project alleging problems with the vote in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin."

**Trump's Capitol Hill Defenders Urge Him Not To Concede.** [CNN](#) (12/7, Raju, Herb, 83.16M) reports on its website that Trump's "staunchest defenders on Capitol Hill are urging him not to concede even after [Biden] wins the Electoral College vote next week, calling on their party's leader to fight for his unsubstantiated claims of widespread election fraud all the way to the House floor in January. ... Asked if Trump should concede next Monday," Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) said, "No. No way, no way, no way." However, the [Dallas Morning News](#) (12/7, 946K) reports veteran Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX), who is retiring, "referred Monday to 'President-elect Biden' in a briefing call about a major defense bill pending in the House, becoming only the third Texas Republican in Congress" to have done so.

**FBI Spoke To IS Fighter About Australian Terrorist.** The [News \(AUS\)](#) (12/6, Schelle, 355K) reports, "An Islamic State fighter told FBI agents in Syria that he visited a convicted Australian terrorist in jail before he travelled overseas," but "lawyers for terror plotter Abdul Nacer Benbrika argued in the Supreme Court of Victoria that it was not relevant in the case to keep their client behind bars for longer." According to the News, "The terrorist fighter Jamil Shqeir told the United States intelligence agency in 2019 that he had gone to visit Benbrika in jail before he left for Syria years prior." According to the News, "Benbrika has spent the past 15 years behind bars for plotting attacks on Melbourne's MCG and Crown as well as a nuclear reactor in Sydney and was due to be released this year," but "the Australian government wants to keep him in jail for an extra three years because they believe he's at risk of committing further terrorist acts."

**Opinion: Al-Qaeda Persists Despite Shifting US Priorities, Is Poised For "Comeback."** Colin P. Clarke, a Senior Research Fellow at The Soufan Center, writes in an op-ed in [Newsweek](#) (12/7, 1.53M) that Al-Qaeda "has sidestepped the dilemma of leadership decapitation." It has shifted "its organizational structure to afford its affiliates in the Sahel, the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere with the operational autonomy to develop attack plans and map out strategic objectives." In recent years, the group "has focused on grassroots organizing in an attempt to make inroads with local populations in countries like Mali, Yemen, and Syria. By lowering its profile, including by working through front organizations, al-Qaeda has concentrated its resources on gaining popular support." Though the US and its allies want to move on from the Global War on Terrorism, "al-Qaeda and its network of global affiliates will remain a significant challenge, and in some parts of the world may be poised for a major comeback."

**Senate GOP Set To Link Durham Appointment To Confirmation Of Next AG.** [The Hill](#) (12/7, Bolton, 2.98M) says Attorney General Barr "is setting the stage for a Senate brawl on his way out the door with the appointment of U.S. Attorney John Durham to serve as special counsel well beyond the end" of the current Administration. Senate Republicans say Joe Biden's choice for attorney general "should promise not to terminate Durham." The [New York Post](#) (12/7, Jacobs, 4.57M) says the next attorney general "will be the only one in public office with the ability to fire Durham or revoke his prosecutorial authority, meaning that whoever he selects as AG will likely face conflicting demands from both parties on the matter."

**Appeals Court Denies Request For NSA Leaker To Leave Prison Early.** The [Washington Examiner](#) (12/7, Dunleavy, 448K) reports, "An appeals court denied a request by Reality Winner...to serve out the remainder of her prison sentence in home confinement because of the coronavirus outbreak." Judges of the 11th Circuit "upheld the district court's decision to deny Winner's request to leave prison early amid the pandemic." Judge Beverly Martin wrote, "Ms. Winner argues the District Court abused its discretion when it denied her motion because it refused to hold a hearing and did not properly consider her evidence." Winner's lawyer Joe Whitley argued that his client "signed up to serve her sentence under the care, custody, and safety of the Bureau of Prisons – she did not agree (nor did this Court require her) to be confined to an institution that was caught unprepared for this virus."

**Ratcliffe: "No Greater Threat" To US Than China.** DNI Ratcliffe said on [Fox News' Tucker Carlson Tonight](#) (12/7), "There are a lot of people who for economic reasons do not want China to be our greatest threat. There are a lot of people who for political reasons don't want China to be our greatest threat in America. But the intelligence doesn't lie. China is our greatest threat, and it's not even close. No other country has the capability of essentially taking away the American dream and the specific plan to do so."

**US Sanctions Chinese Officials Tied To Hong Kong Crackdown.** [Reuters](#) (12/7, Pamuk) reports that on Monday, the Trump Administration "imposed financial sanctions and a travel ban on 14 Chinese officials over their alleged role in Beijing's disqualification last month of elected opposition legislators in Hong Kong." Reuters says the sanctions "targeted the vice chairpersons of the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), the top decision-making body of the Chinese legislature."

The [AP](#) (12/7) reports that "just last week, the administration further restricted visa access for Chinese Communist Party officials as part of the campaign which has also seen penalties imposed on China for its actions in western Xinjiang province, Tibet, Taiwan and the South China Sea." Secretary of State Pompeo released a statement reading, "Beijing's unrelenting assault against Hong Kong's democratic processes has gutted its Legislative Council, rendering the body a rubber stamp devoid of meaningful opposition." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/7, Talley, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that the Chinese Embassy had no immediate comment, though earlier Monday said such moves would be construed "as meddling in China's sovereign affairs."

**US Says China Flouting Sanctions On North Korea.** The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/7, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports US officials are charging China with increasingly flouting international sanctions on North Korea, no longer bothering to try to obscure some of the efforts. One senior State Department official said, "It is not particularly disguised or hidden. The fact that China is making it easier on them makes it a much more reliable revenue stream than they've had."

**Report Concludes Directed Pulse Microwave Energy Likely Responsible For Diplomats' Illnesses.** Andrea Mitchell reported on [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/7, story 7, 1:50, Holt, 6.27M) that the National Academies of Sciences [has concluded](#) that "the most likely explanation" for illnesses that struck US diplomats and CIA officers in China, Cuba, and Russia is "directed pulse microwave energy." David Relman, National Academies of Sciences report editor: "Pulsed directed microwave radiation can be focused on a particular space or physical environment at the level of several yards or a dozens of yards." Mitchell: "Russia has a long history of working on these weapons but denies involvement."

**Sentencing Hearing In Nebraska Murder Rescheduled Over COVID Concerns.** The [Lincoln \(NE\) Journal Star](#) (12/7, Pilger, 399K) reports, "A multi-day hearing to determine whether Aubrey Trail will get the death penalty for the killing of a 24-year-old Lincoln woman has been reset for March after one of his attorneys tested positive for COVID-19." According to the Journal Star, "On Friday, the defense filed a motion to continue the aggravation and mitigation hearing, which was set to start next week in Wilber. In the filing, attorney Ben Murray listed a number of COVID-related reasons prompting him to ask for a continuance. Among them, that the pandemic was making it impossible for out-of-state witnesses, who included Trail's relatives

in Tennessee, to travel to Nebraska. 'The present pandemic substantially impairs counsel's ability to take on the "extraordinary responsibility" of representing a person whose life is at stake and provide effective representation,' he wrote."

**Marijuana Subpoena May Have Been Linked To Missouri FBI Probe.** The [Independence \(MO\) Examiner](#) (12/7, Hancock, 13K) reports, "The head of Missouri's medical marijuana program testified under oath that a grand jury subpoena his agency received late last year was likely connected to an FBI investigation in Independence." The Examiner adds, "The revelation by Lyndall Fraker, director of medical marijuana regulation at the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, is the first indication of the target of the federal subpoena. In November 2019, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services received the subpoena, which was issued by the United States District Court for the Western District. It demanded the agency turn over all records pertaining to four medical marijuana license applications. The copy of the subpoena that was made public redacted the identity of the four applicants at the request of the FBI."

**Attorneys Seek Bail For Ghislaine Maxwell.** The [AP](#) (12/7, Neumeister) reports from New York, "A lawyer for the onetime girlfriend of Jeffrey Epstein said Monday that her client, who again seeks release on bail, has lost weight and hair as she suffers under onerous jail conditions imposed in part because Epstein killed himself last year in a federal lockup." According to the AP, "The claims by defense attorney Bobbi Sternheim were made on Ghislaine Maxwell's behalf after lawyers for the Metropolitan Detention Center warden in Brooklyn defended conditions at the facility in a Friday letter that was publicly filed on Monday. 'Ms. Maxwell remains in good health,' the lawyers wrote in the letter as they defended her treatment as by-the-book following of rules to ensure the safety of all federal inmates. The letters were filed on the same day that a Nov. 25 letter was unsealed in which two of Maxwell's lawyers said they were renewing her application to be released on bail after compiling information not available when her initial request was rejected in July. Judge Alison J. Nathan said she will decide later this month whether to conduct a hearing."

**FBI Seizes 40 Pounds Of Meth, Two Pounds Of Heroin In New Mexico.** The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (12/7, Gallagher, 196K) reports, "FBI agents seized 40 pounds of methamphetamine and two pounds of heroin last week during an investigation of an Albuquerque man suspected of being a member of the notorious SNM prison gang." According to the Journal, "Agents arrested Michael Anthony Hernandez, 44, known as "Polo," as part of a five-year racketeering investigation into the gang, which has sought to extend its influence from inside the prison to the streets of cities and towns throughout New Mexico. According to a search warrant affidavit, agents believe Hernandez put out a 'hit' or 'greenlight' on a lower-level drug dealer who owed him money for a drug transaction. He was being held on probation and parole violations pending further charges. He has not been charged in connection with the alleged hit plan."

**New Jersey Lab At Center Of FBI COVID-19 Test Warning Only Recently Opened.** The [Press of Atlantic City \(NJ\)](#) (12/7, Lowe, 177K) reports from Ventnor, New Jersey, "The North Jersey-based diagnostic lab at the center of an FBI warning last week regarding the efficacy of its COVID-19 tests only recently moved into its Atlantic Avenue storefront, the building owners said." On Friday, the FBI "released a statement directing anyone who received a coronavirus test at the Infinity Diagnostic Laboratory at 6715 Atlantic Ave. to be retested as soon as possible. Although the statement did not specify what initiated the warning, it did include a notice that a 'rapid' finger prick blood test is an antibody test and should not be used for diagnosing active cases of COVID-19." NBC10 News "reported that the building was raided by the FBI on Thursday, but officials from the FBI declined to comment citing an ongoing investigation."

**Former Los Angeles Councilman Pleads Not Guilty To Corruption Charges.** The [AP](#) (12/7) reports from Los Angeles, "Former City Council member Jose Huizar pleaded not guilty Monday to federal charges that he took bribes to help developers win favors for large building projects in the city's burgeoning downtown district." Huizar "entered the plea to a new racketeering indictment that added additional charges. The 41-count complaint includes allegations of bribery, honest services fraud and money laundering." Huizar "was arrested in June on allegations that he masterminded a \$1.5 million pay-to-play scheme tied to the approval of developments. They included a 77-story tower in Huizar's district that would have been the largest skyscraper west of the Mississippi River. The developer, who already had a hotel in the district, was accused of providing cash and benefits worth \$800,000 to Huizar and others that included a dozen trips to Las Vegas casinos and funds to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit against the councilman."

The [My News LA \(CA\)](#) (12/7) reports, "Huizar, 52, of Boyle Heights, has a June 22 trial date in the case, which is a result of a federal investigation into alleged widespread corruption at Los Angeles City Hall that has also ensnared political operatives, lobbyists and the former general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety." Huizar "was charged in July in

a 34-count indictment that alleged a conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act in which he's accused of agreeing to accept at least \$1.5 million in illicit financial benefits. The racketeering charge alleges 402 overt acts that Huizar and his co-conspirators are accused of committing to further their criminal enterprise, including bribery, honest services fraud, and money laundering."

[KTLA-TV](#)

Los Angeles (12/7, Gutierrez, 766K) reports, "The superseding indictment also names Raymond Chan, a deputy mayor who oversaw economic development for Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2016 and 2017. He also is a former general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. The case has already resulted in guilty pleas from a former Huizar aide, a City Hall lobbyist and two real estate consultants."

### **Bribery Trial Of Cincinnati Councilman Delayed.**

[WXIX-TV](#)

Cincinnati (12/7, Baker, 42K) reports from Cincinnati, "The January trial date for suspended Cincinnati City Councilman Jeff Pastor on federal corruption-related charges has been postponed at the request of his lawyer and the attorney representing his business partner, who also faces charges, court documents show. 'In order to permit adequate time to review the voluminous discovery in this case, and due to the difficulties created by the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Ohio and nationwide, Defendants' counsel jointly requested a continuance of this matter. The Government did not object to the request,' the records state. 'Having been so advised and for good cause shown, the Court vacated the trial date previously set for January 11, 2021 and converted the final pretrial conference set for January 4, 2021 at 3:00pm to a telephonic status conference.'" Pastor "was accused in an indictment last month of bribery, extortion, wire fraud, money laundering and other crimes related to his role on council."

### **US Charges Ohio Developer With Embezzlement.**

[The Akron \(OH\) Beacon Journal](#)

(12/7, 198K) reports that an Aurora, Ohio man "is accused of embezzling money through a nonprofit and using more than \$1 million of it to gamble." Arthur Fayne, 58, "was indicted on wire fraud charges in federal court. The Cleveland-area real-estate developer is accused of using a subsidiary of a nonprofit to embezzle money for personal use. According to a press release from U.S. Attorney's Office in Cleveland, Fayne owned Business Development Concepts in Cleveland and was vice president of a subsidiary of an unnamed nonprofit. Fayne is accused of entering into contracts on behalf of the nonprofit that allowed him to divert money to himself." The Beacon Journal adds, "According to the FBI, Fayne used that money for personal interests, including gambling. He's accused of using and losing more than \$1 million at a casino using the funds over three separate occasions."

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (12/7, Heisig, 895K) reports, "Prosecutors said Fayne stole more than \$885,000 intended for a construction management contractor and an audio-visual technology installation subcontractor, as his company was used as an intermediary for payments made by a nonprofit behind the project. At the same time, Fayne was using his company's money to gamble, losing large amounts between 2016 and 2018, according to the FBI."

### **FBI Warns Of Hackers Finding Their Way Into School Zoom Classrooms.**

[WWL-TV](#)

New Orleans (12/7, Farris, 67K) reports from New Orleans, "With more work meetings and school classrooms online, hackers are playing pranks by joining in uninvited, but the FBI says they are seeing an increase of a type of Zoom bombing that can send people to federal prison." WWL-TV adds, "A video from YouTube prankster 'Ben of the Week' has 7.7 million views. He's labeled on TikTok as a comedy skit creator. Some may think Zoom bombing, and disrupting children trying to go to school virtually, is funny, but to the FBI, a different type of Zoom hacking is no laughing matter. 'In some of the more extreme circumstances, we are seeing people that are putting child sexual abuse material up as kind of the, you know, the element used to upset the group and shock everybody and shut it down,' said Dan Genck, Assistant Special Agent in Charge for the New Orleans Field Office."

### **UK Man Who Hacked Webcams In 39 Countries Avoids Extradition To US.**

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#)

(12/7, 4.19M) reports, "A 58-year-old man from Wigan who hacked into hundreds of webcams in dozens of countries has avoided extradition to the US after a judge ruled that it was not in the interests of justice." Christopher Taylor, "a full-time carer for his wife of 38 years, had faced up to 20 years in a US prison after he was charged with wire fraud and two counts of computer fraud in Georgia," but "on Monday a judge at Westminster magistrates court blocked the extradition, ruling that because of Taylor's strong family links in the UK, any prosecution for the offences should take place here." District judge Michael Fanning "also said that Taylor's extradition would breach both his and his wife's human rights, on the basis that disrupting his care for her would amount to a disproportionate interference with both of their Article 8 rights to a family life."

### **Canadian Police Officer Says He Was FBI's Point Of Contact During Huawei CFO Arrest.**

[Reuters](#)

(12/7, Berman) reports, "A police officer stationed at Vancouver's airport on the day Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou "was arrested two years ago testified on Monday he found himself to be in a 'very uncomfortable position' as the point

of contact" for the FBI. Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Sergeant Ross Lundie testified, "At the end of the day, I'm not there to provide information and act on behalf of the FBI. I'm there working as an RCMP member." Lundie added, "Assisting the FBI, given my background – this is a very uncomfortable position to be in." In court, "Lundie testified that he was concerned about the appearance of collusion between the CBSA and the RCMP in the lead up to Meng's arrest. He told the court it was 'reasonable' for CBSA to secure Meng's electronic devices in Mylar bags – which block all signals – before the RCMP arrested her."

[Business In Vancouver \(CAN\)](#) (12/7, Chiang) reports that Lundie "said he has had contact with various law enforcement agencies throughout his career – and may have answered questions from the FBI on the Meng case's operations." However, he "emphasized that such contact was coincidental – that his main role was to serve the RCMP and assist in the operations of the police's central financial crimes unit." Defense lawyer Richard Peck "accused the RCMP sergeant of trying to cover up his role in having contact with the FBI throughout the case, noting the lack of the mentioning of the U.S. investigative agency in any of his written notes or legal Will Say." Peck also attacked "Lundie's lack of useful notes in the arrest process, to which the RCMP officer responded by admitting he should take better notes."

**Trump Signs Bill Requiring Minimum Cybersecurity Requirements For Feds.** [Reuters](#) (12/7, Merken) reports that President Trump "has signed new legislation aimed at limiting the risks to government and incentivizing manufacturers to address [cyber] security gaps" through the Internet of Things Cybersecurity Improvement Act of 2020. The legislation "will require minimum security requirements for procurement and use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices by the federal government. Trump signed the bipartisan bill into law on Friday, the White House said."

**Growing Number Of Prosecutors Join Effort To Revisit Lengthy Prison Sentences.** The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, Jackman, 14.2M) reports on a "push to begin revisiting lengthy prison sentences, as part of the justice reform effort being promoted by big city prosecutors around the country," that is "gaining momentum even in states like Maryland, where there is no formal mechanism for prosecutors to revisit settled cases." The Post says Baltimore State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby on Monday "announced the launch of a sentencing review unit in Baltimore to address both mass incarceration and racial inequities in the justice system. ... Also Monday, the newly elected district attorney of Los Angeles, George Gascón, announced at his swearing-in that he, too, is launching a sentencing review unit." The Post adds similar initiatives are being launched by prosecutors in San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia and Brooklyn.

**Child Sex Exploitation Prosecutions Triple In Frederick, Maryland Area.** The [Frederick \(MD\) News-Post](#) (12/7, Keller, 74K) reports, "The prosecution of child sex exploitation cases has tripled locally, but with the number of tips increasing by more than one million nationally and a fear of underreporting on their minds, members of the Frederick County Cyber Crime Task Force expect they will need to devote even more resources to solving these crimes." The News-Post adds, "The FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Maryland State Police, Frederick County State's Attorney's Office, Frederick County Sheriff's Office and Frederick Police Department on Monday revealed the results of the first 18 months of work by the cyber crimes task force. The task force, formed in May 2019 as a memorandum of understanding between the state's attorney's office, sheriff's office and city police, serves to investigate, apprehend and prosecute internet sexual predators who exploit children."

**Five More Federal Inmates Set To Be Executed Before Inauguration Day.** The [AP](#) (12/7, Tarm, Balsamo) reports that the Trump Administration is "ratcheting up the pace of federal executions despite a surge of coronavirus cases in prisons, announcing plans for five starting Thursday and concluding just days before" Inauguration Day. If the five "go off as planned, it will make 13 executions since July when the Republican administration resumed putting inmates to death after a 17-year hiatus."

**Wray Taps Dugan As New Norfolk, Virginia SAC.** The [Hampton Roads \(VA\) Virginian-Pilot](#) (12/7, Harper, 227K) reports, "A veteran FBI agent with more than 20 years of experience gathering intelligence and investigating a wide variety of crimes has been chosen to head the agency's Norfolk field office." Brian Dugan, 49, "was appointed to the position by FBI Director Christopher Wray, according to a news release. His tenure began Monday. Dugan replaces Martin Culbreth, who retired in October after leading the Norfolk office for four years."

[WAVY-TV](#) Norfolk, VA (12/7, 64K) reports, "Dugan joined the FBI as a special agent in 1998 and was first assigned to the San Diego Field Office to mostly work domestic terrorism cases. In 1999, he transferred to the San Francisco

Field Office to conduct gang investigations. Most recently, Mr. Dugan served as section chief of the HUMINT Operations Section in the Directorate of Intelligence at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C."

**US Expected To Surpass 200K New COVID Cases Per Day This Week.** [CNBC](#) (12/7, Feuer, 3.62M) says on its website that the US "reported more than 175,600 new cases of the virus and more than 1,100 deaths caused by Covid-19 on Sunday, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. But the data historically tends to come in lower at the end of the weekend and the beginning of the week." CNBC also reports the US recorded a "record-high" seven-day average "of more than 196,200 cases of the virus, up more than 20% compared with a week ago." CNBC adds, "If current trends hold, that figure will likely top 200,000 this week." On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (12/7, story 2, 3:25, Muir, 7.46M), Matt Gutman said the US "topped a million cases in the first five days of December."

In the lead [CBS Evening News](#) (12/7, lead story, 4:05, 4.74M) story, Norah O'Donnell reported the coronavirus is "now rocketing across the US so rapidly more than one million people have been infected in just the past five days and that is pushing the country past 14.9 million cases." O'Donnell added that NIAID Director Fauci is "telling CBS News the coming weeks will be even worse, with the US breaking records every day for new cases and deaths. And he says the country hasn't even seen the full brunt of infections from Thanksgiving." CBS' Carter Evans also said that in "a grim reality, every hour the US is seeing more than 8,000 new COVID cases and nearly 100 deaths."

[CNN](#) (12/7, Holcombe, 83.16M) reports on its website that as the US "nears an average of 200,000 Covid-19 cases a day, experts say 'behavior and cold weather' are behind the current surge gripping American communities." HHS Secretary Azar on Sunday said, "People are going indoors, they're not minding the three W's." Azar continued, "Our advice is always the same. Wash your hands, watch your distance, wear face coverings."

Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) (12/7, Canipe) highlights that the US "lost 15,000 people to COVID-19 last week, the deadliest seven days since April." The number of new cases also "rose 19% to 1.4 million in the week ended Dec. 6, after falling the previous week as many testing centers were closed for the Thanksgiving holiday, according to a Reuters analysis of state and county reports."

[Bloomberg](#) (12/7, Levin, 4.73M) says that the US "is now averaging about as many deaths per day from Covid-19 as it was in April when the pandemic ambushed the New York area." Bloomberg adds the seven-day average for fatalities "rose to 2,201 on Sunday, just one shy of the peak on April 18, according to Johns Hopkins University data," while the average number of daily deaths has been "predicted in the range of 1,643 to 1,886 through Dec. 26, according to a four-week forecast from the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Reich Lab."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (12/7, story 2, 2:25, 4.66M), O'Donnell reported doctors and nurses "tell CBS News this surge is the worst since the pandemic began, and they may not be able to care for future patients." David Begnaud highlighted Renown Health in Reno, Nevada, which "is in crisis mode. Look at what they have had to resort to. They're putting patients in their parking garage." Begnaud added that he "just spoke with one of the lead ICU doctors at the main hospital [in Las Vegas], and she said they are...extremely busy with some of the sickest COVID patients."

**Fauci Cautions That Christmas Is Likely To Cause Further Spike In Cases.** The [Washington Post](#) (12/7, Armus, Cunningham, 14.2M) reports Fauci "warned Monday that Christmas celebrations could facilitate the spread of the virus even more than Thanksgiving, because Christmas gatherings often start several days before the holiday and continue through New Year's." [Bloomberg](#) (12/7, Clukey, 4.73M) reports that during a Monday news briefing with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D), Fauci said, "Without substantial mitigation, the middle of January could be a really dark time for us."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (12/7, story 3, 2:20, 4.66M), O'Donnell reported Fauci in an interview "said stay at home orders are needed to prevent hospitals from being overrun. And should last long enough to ensure that everyone who needs lifesaving care can get it." Fauci: "We have a base line of infections that literally is breaking records every day number of hospitalizations and numbers of deaths. The numbers are really stunning." Asked why the Christmas holiday will be worse than Thanksgiving, Fauci explained, "When you look at Thanksgiving, that say very brief period of time, of travel and congregating. When you are talking about Christmas, you go through Christmas and Hanukkah, you go through the week between Christmas and New Year's, and then you have another celebration, on New Year. That extends that vulnerable period by two or three times what you do in Thanksgiving. That's the reason why the Christmas issue bothers me even more than Thanksgiving."

[Bloomberg](#) (12/7, Court, 4.73M) also reports Fauci "said he won't celebrate the holiday with his daughters for the first time in more than 30 years." Bloomberg adds Christmas Eve also marks "Fauci's 80th birthday, for which he and his wife plan a Zoom celebration with their children."

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