

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

**TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2021 5:00 AM EDT**

### **New York’s Eastern District To Expand Civil Rights Unit To Probe Bias Crimes.** [Newsday \(NY\)](#)

(3/29, 776K) reports that “federal prosecutors on Long Island on Monday announced an expanded effort to investigate alleged hate crimes in the wake of an increase in violence targeting Asian Americans.” Acting US Attorney Mark Lesko for the Eastern District “said the office’s existing Civil Rights Section will double in size as a result” from three to six prosecutors, “though more will be assigned on an as-needed basis.” The head of the FBI in New York, William Sweeney, said of the EDNY’s expanded unit: “We can’t investigate what we don’t know, however, so I would urge anyone who has been the victim of a hate crime, or anyone who has witnessed a hate crime, to report this information to the FBI by calling 1-800-CALL-FBI or submitting a tip online at tips.fbi.gov. Victims should know that information may be reported anonymously and in their native language.”

### **No Evidence Colorado Shooting Suspect Illegally Entered Country, Bought Stolen Gun Despite Internet Claims.**

In a fact check piece, [USA Today](#) (3/29, Rouan, 12.7M) reports on the claim that “the suspect in the mass shooting in a Boulder, Colorado, grocery store entered the U.S. illegally through Mexico and bought a stolen gun.” However, the “man accused of killing 10 people in a Colorado grocery store on March 22 was born in Syria, and law enforcement officials said he bought the gun days before carrying out the mass shooting.” Meanwhile, “no evidence has emerged to suggest Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, 21, of Arvada, Colorado, entered the U.S. illegally or illegally purchased the gun police said he used.”

### **Man Photographed In Capitol With Zip-tie Cuffs, His Mother Win Pretrial Release.** The [Washington Post](#)

(3/29, Weiner, 10.52M) reports that “a man photographed inside the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6 riot with a handful of plastic handcuffs and the mother with whom he traveled to Washington will be released from jail to home confinement ahead of their trial after weeks of debate over how dangerous they might be.” Prosecutors said “Eric Munchel, 30, and his mother, Lisa Marie Eisenhart, 57, both accused of trespassing at the Capitol and obstructing the congressional confirmation of President Biden’s victory, can await trial on home confinement in Tennessee.” The Post says “Their decision came after a federal appeals court on Friday sided with the two accused rioters’ request for release from jail, drawing a distinction between violent and nonviolent rioters.”

The [Tennessean](#) (3/29, 645K) reports “Munchel and Eisenhart are to be released with conditions established by Middle Tennessee District U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeffrey S. Frensley, similar to those ordered in other Capitol riot cases about GPS monitoring, lack of drug or excessive alcohol use and a ban on travel except for legal proceedings.”

### **Holocaust Group: Capitol Attack Shows Far-Right “Mainstreaming” Anti-Semitism.** [Newsweek](#)

(3/29, 2.67M) reports that “the rise of America’s far-right is helping mainstream anti-Semitism in U.S. politics, according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance – a global intergovernmental organization that promotes Holocaust education and tracks extremism.” Kathrin Meyer, the IHRA permanent secretary general, said “there is a growing trend of extremism and anti-Semitism across the world, exacerbated by the disruption of the coronavirus pandemic and shaped by transnational social media platforms.” FBI Director Christopher Wray has “recently warned Congress that the far-right threat in the U.S. is ‘metastasizing,’ and that the January 6 Capitol attack will serve as inspiration for future agitation.”

### **Capitol Riot Suspect Arrested While Wearing “I Was There” T-shirt.** [The Hill](#) (3/29, 5.69M)

reports that “a Dallas man who was arrested in late January and charged with involvement in the riot that overtook the Capitol on Jan. 6 was reportedly wearing a shirt that declared his participation in the siege during his arrest.” Federal prosecutors “wrote in a court filing Monday that Garret Miller was clad in a shirt bearing the message ‘I Was There, Washington D.C., January 6, 2021,’ when he was arrested on Jan. 20.” Meanwhile, “despite his shirt’s apparent admission and evidence submitted by prosecutors Monday indicating that Miller had tweeted ‘assassinate AOC’ at Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) in the days following the riot, he reportedly told his mother ‘I don’t feel that I’ve done anything wrong and now I’m being locked up.’” The FBI “is still looking for information on numerous individuals seen at the Capitol and around Washington, D.C. related to the Capitol siege.”

[WTTG-TV](#) Washington (3/29, 168K) reports that “like many of the more than 300 people facing federal charges in connection with the siege, Miller thoroughly documented and commented on his actions that day in a flurry of social media posts.”

The [Daily Caller](#) (3/29, 375K) also reports.

**Kentucky Man Charged With Participating In Capitol Riot.** The [Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#) (3/29, 554K) reports that "a Louisville man charged earlier this month with participating in the Jan. 6 riots at the U.S. Capitol is the 13th with ties to Kentucky to be arrested, and authorities say more are expected." The Courier-Journal says "Michael Orangias is charged with entering restricted grounds, entering with the intent to impede government business, demonstrating on Capitol grounds and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds." During a phone interview with the FBI, he "acknowledged being at the Capitol on Jan. 6 for the Trump rally" and "during a second interview – in-person with an FBI agent – he admitted to going into the building for about 5 to 7 minutes before going back outside, authorities said."

**At least 17 Ohioans Facing Charges In US Capitol Siege.** The [AP](#) (3/29) reports that "more than 300 supporters of former President Donald Trump have been charged in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, including members of far-right extremist groups." Meanwhile, "at least 17 of those cases, including one announced Monday, involve Ohio residents identified through social media posts and surveillance footage and often turned in by friends or family members." The AP detail the Ohioans charged in the Capitol breach and the FBI's efforts to investigate those individuals.

**Florida Man Arrested In Connection To Capitol Riot Seeks Release Due To Risk Of COVID.** The [Naples \(FL\) Daily News](#) (3/29, 238K) reports that "an attorney representing an East Naples man suspected of participating in the U.S. Capitol riot in January filed an emergency motion on Friday stating the suspect has cancer and is at risk of COVID-19 exposure while in custody." Christopher Worrell "was arrested after FBI agents executed a search and arrest warrant at his home on March 13." According to the prosecution, "Worrell assaulted a line of law enforcement officers with pepper spray gel outside the U.S. Capitol building during the riot in Washington D.C. on Jan. 6."

**Michigan Man Charged In Capitol Riot Will Fight For Bond.** The [Detroit News](#) (3/29, 1.16M) reports that "the first Michigan resident charged with a federal crime stemming from the Capitol riot pleaded not guilty to five charges Monday and will fight for bond later this week, his lawyer said." Karl Dresch, "of Calumet was arraigned in front of U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson in Washington, D.C., almost two months after being indicted on five charges related to the Jan. 6 riot." The News says "the charges include obstructing an official proceeding, entering a restricted building or grounds, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building, disorderly conduct in a Capitol building and parading, demonstrating or picketing in a Capitol building." In its complaint against Dresch, the FBI "supported its allegations of unlawful entry into the Capitol with pictures the Upper Peninsula man posted on social media as the mob stormed the building in Washington, D.C."

**Tipster Turns In Michigan Man To FBI After Bragging About "Storming U.S. Capitol."** The [Southgate \(MI\) News Herald](#) (3/29, 57K) reports that according to statements in a Federal Bureau of Investigations complaint, Anthony Williams, of Southgate, has been named as being in the Capitol building by an online tipster to the FBI. The tip "identified Williams by name and told authorities there were screenshots of Williams in the building on his Facebook account." The News Herald says "after getting records from his Facebook account, agents found pictures from inside the building, likely taken on a device that Williams held while he was inside, according to their report."

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (3/29, 828K) also reports.

**Lawmakers Pressure Capitol Police To Make Report Public.** The [Miami Herald](#) (3/29, 647K) reports that "two lawmakers in charge of determining Capitol Police funding levels are pressuring the notoriously secretive department to publicly release an upcoming inspector general report on the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol." House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Tim Ryan (D-OH) and ranking member Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) wrote to the Capitol Police Board, "In the wake of the January 6th attack that shook the confidence of so many Americans, taking a more open and transparent approach isn't just the right thing to do, it will be the most effective as we seek to restore citizens' confidence that the heart of America's government is secure." The Herald says the board "is now composed of House Sergeant-at-Arms William J. Walker, Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Karen Gibson and Architect of the Capitol J. Brett Blanton."

[The Hill](#) (3/29, Marcos, 5.69M) reports "the lawmakers asked that members of the Capitol Police Board hold press conferences to provide updates on any threats to Congress and progress on efforts to protect the Capitol complex and the people who work and visit there."

**Oregon Man Arrested In Attack On US Capitol.** The [AP](#) (3/29) reports that "an Oregon man has been arrested in Florida on criminal charges in connection with the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, court records show." The AP says "a grand jury indicted Richard Harris, 40, and federal law enforcement officers took him into custody March 18." Federal prosecutors

"charged Harris with five counts related to the Capitol riots, including assaulting, resisting or impeding officers; obstruction of an official proceeding; and entering and remaining in a restricted building."

### **Capitol Police Provide More Than 14,000 Hours Of Capitol Riot Footage To Lawmakers.** [Politico](#)

(3/29, Cheney, 6.73M) reports that "the Capitol Police shared thousands of hours of Jan. 6 surveillance camera footage with two key congressional committees investigating the mob attack on the building – and provided 'numerous' clips to the Democrats prosecuting Donald Trump's impeachment, the department's top lawyer revealed Monday." Politico says "the department provided the footage to the impeachment managers in response to a request from top House lawyer Douglas Letter, according to Capitol Police General Counsel Thomas DiBiase, who made the disclosures in a sworn affidavit he submitted in one of the criminal cases stemming from the Jan. 6 riot." DiBiase "said the department also provided more than 14,000 hours of surveillance camera footage – encompassing the hours of noon to 8 p.m. on Jan. 6 – to two key committees investigating the Capitol assault: The House Administration Committee and the Senate Rules Committee."

**Attorneys Make Opening Statements As Chauvin Trial Begins.** The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (3/29, Walsh, 855K) reports attorneys on Monday made their opening arguments in the murder trial of Derek Chauvin "before jurors who will decide the fired Minneapolis police officer's fate in the killing of George Floyd 10 months ago." The Star Tribune says prosecutor Jerry Blackwell "turned to what could be prosecution's most crucial piece of the evidence: the viral bystander video of Floyd's arrest and showed it in full to the jurors, others in the courtroom and millions watching on the livestream." The [AP](#) (3/29, Karnowski, Forliti) says the footage of Floyd "gasping for breath was essentially Exhibit A as the former Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee on the Black man's neck went on trial...on charges of murder and manslaughter."

[CNN](#) (3/29, Levenson, 89.21M) reports on its website that Blackwell "broke down the timing of Chauvin's kneeling into three sections: 4 minutes and 45 seconds as Floyd cried out for help, 53 seconds as Floyd flailed due to seizures and 3 minutes and 51 seconds as Floyd was non-responsive."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/29, A1, Bailey, Bellware, 10.52M) reports Blackwell "told the jury that Chauvin 'didn't let up' and 'didn't get up' even after Floyd repeatedly complained of struggling to breathe, cried out for his mother and ultimately went limp," and said the former officer "betrayed his badge." Blackwell also "described Floyd as 'defenseless' and 'completely in control of the police.'" The Post says Chauvin's attorney, Eric Nelson, pointed to Hennepin County Medical Examiner Andrew Baker's "interviews with prosecutors and the FBI – in which he called attention to the high level of drugs in Floyd's system."

In addition, Jamie Yuccas reported on the [CBS Evening News](#) (3/29, lead story, 4:35, O'Donnell, 4.18M) that three witnesses for the prosecution testified on Monday, "including one who shot seven videos of the incident, and another who says he heard Floyd plead for his life. But nothing may have been more impactful on the jury than those opening statements." The [New York Post](#) (3/29, Rosenberg, Fitz-Gibbon, 7.45M) reports 911 dispatcher Jena Lee Scurry, the first witness called in the trial, "said she saw city officers pin the dead man down for so long that she thought 'the screen was broken.'" [Axios](#) (3/29, 1.26M) reports Scurry "said she felt a 'gut instinct' that 'something was not right' as she watched police officers hold George Floyd on the ground with a knee on his neck."

[Fox News](#) (3/29, Wallace, 23.99M) reports on its website that another witness, Alisha Oyler, "told jurors she took seven video clips on her phone" because the police were "messing with someone," while Donald Williams, "a wrestler and mixed martial artist who said he has worked with athletes and off-duty Minneapolis police officers," testified about "various chokeholds and how they are used."

However, [Reuters](#) (3/29, Allen) says Chauvin's lawyers "responded by saying that the former officer was simply following training from his 19 years on the force, even as they acknowledged that the arrest, caught in videos from multiple angles, was distressing to watch." [CNBC](#) (3/29, Higgins, Breuninger, 7.34M) reports on its website that Chauvin's attorney Eric Nelson "aimed to separate the case from Floyd's status as an activist symbol while introducing the concept of a reasonable doubt to the jurors."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/29, Ailworth, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Nelson called for the jury to look beyond the videos and consider other evidence before making their decision. On [NBC Nightly News](#) (3/29, lead story, 3:50, Holt, 5.9M), Gabe Gutierrez reported Nelson "pointed to other videos, the body cameras worn by the officers which he said will show the full interaction between Floyd and the police." The [New York Times](#) (3/29, Martinez, Arango, 20.6M) says that legal experts believe "the defense's best tool to minimize the impact of that video, which spurred the largest protests in the United States since the Civil Rights era, may be calling on Mr. Chauvin to testify."

Meanwhile, the [New York Daily News](#) (3/29, Oliveira, 2.51M) reports that as the trial was ongoing, "prominent civil rights leaders joined George Floyd's family in downtown Minneapolis to highlight the importance of this moment in U.S. history." According to [USA Today](#) (3/29, Keveney, 12.7M), "The level of TV coverage reflected the significance of the May 25 killing of Floyd while in police custody, which became the catalyst for protests and a larger cultural conversation about racial injustice and

police brutality." USA Today adds that ABC, CBS, and NBC "broke into regular programming to cover the opening statements in the trial, as did cable and streaming networks CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, HLN, Newsmax, Court TV and Law & Crime Network."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (3/29, lead story, 7:30, Muir, 7.27M), Alex Perez reported, "Security is very tight. The rest of the building is shut down and surrounded by National Guardsmen. Jurors are escorted in and out of the building by security every day. We expect this to last about three to four weeks." Perez added the judge "says he's allowing this trial to be broadcast so that the rest of the world can watch and follow along."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/29, 10.52M) editorializes that Chauvin's lawyer "argued there is more to the case than the video," but "we hope no jury can accept that a police officer would be trained to be so willing to cause harm and so indifferent to human suffering." Eugene Robinson writes in his [Washington Post](#) (3/29, 10.52M) column that the opening statements "made clear that much will be made of Floyd's medical cause of death." Chauvin's attorney "indicated he will claim that Floyd died of an overdose of opioids. We can expect testimony from dueling experts on the question." Robinson adds, "We should know by now...that it is all too possible to convince juries to blame the victim if the victim is a Black man. It is not possible, however, to erase the video of Floyd's final minutes. The world has seen it; and it will never, ever be unseen."

James A. Gagliano, a retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent, writes at the [New York Post](#) (3/29, Gagliano, 7.45M) that "it is necessary to balance the revulsion for disgraced former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin's mistreatment of George Floyd – an appalling case of police brutality – with recognition that prosecutors may have made a critical error by overcharging the case." He predicts an "acquittal on the murder charges and found guilty of second-degree manslaughter."

Also reporting are [Reuters](#) (3/29) and [NBC News](#) (3/29, 4.91M).

**Connecticut Middle School Bomb Threat A Hoax.** [Fairfield \(CT\) Daily Voice](#) (3/29, Reakes) reports a bomb threat at a middle school in Ansonia, CT was "deemed unfounded after a search of the facility by bomb-sniffing dogs, state police, and the FBI." The search began after Ansonia police were informed by the FBI that they had received a report of a threat. The threat was tracked down to neighbors who were having a dispute.

**Ghislaine Maxwell Charged With Sex Trafficking In Expanded Indictment.** The [AP](#) (3/29, Neumeister) reports that "sex trafficking charges and another alleged victim were added to a superseding indictment returned Monday in the criminal case against financier Jeffrey Epstein's ex-girlfriend as prosecutors alleged that a conspiracy to sexually abuse girls stretched over a decade." The AP says "the charges contained in a rewritten indictment returned by a grand jury in Manhattan federal court alleged that a conspiracy between Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell occurred between 1994 and 2004." The indictment "returned after Maxwell's July arrest limited crimes to a three-year period in the 1990s."

[Reuters](#) (3/29, Stempel) reports that "it is unclear whether the new charges could lead to a postponement of Maxwell's scheduled July 12 trial before U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan in Manhattan, though prosecutors said Maxwell should have 'ample time' to prepare." Prosecutors "said they have given Maxwell's lawyers the month and year when the fourth victim was born and key evidence about her."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/29, Jacobs, 10.52M) reports David Boies, an attorney for Epstein accuser ██████████ who is part of Maxwell's case, said Monday's development "demonstrates that the prosecution is continuing to build its case." He added, "I think it's certainly an important addition to the case because of the age of the victim and the length of time she was trafficked." Meanwhile, "Maxwell now faces eight counts in total, including perjury charges for allegedly lying during depositions in a defamation lawsuit brought against her by another Epstein accuser, ██████████."

Also reporting are the [New York Times](#) (3/29, Weiser, 20.6M) and [CNN](#) (3/29, Scannell, 89.21M).

**Judge Orders Three Men To Stand Trial Over Plot To Kidnap Whitmer.** The [AP](#) (3/29, Williams) reports Jackson County District Court Judge Michael Klaeren on Monday "ordered three men to stand trial in a plot to kidnap Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer over her coronavirus restrictions." The AP says Klaeren "ruled there was enough evidence and bound over Paul Bellar, Joe Morrison and Pete Musico to circuit court to stand trial," but "dismissed a charge of threat of terrorism against Musico and Morrison. Bellar didn't face that charge." The AP says "the FBI in October said it broke up a plot to kidnap Whitmer by anti-government extremists upset over her coronavirus restrictions."

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (3/29, Moran, Marini, 2.16M) reports that while their lawyers had "argued, at various times, that the men had disengaged from those making trouble in the group," Klaeren "wasn't on board with that argument. He said they were never fully disengaged or considered crazy and therefore not listened to by others." The Free Press says "the Michigan Attorney General's Office laid out in early March its case against the men – anti-government social media posts, at least one featuring a grenade, FBI testimony on surveillance of the men and their training and attendance of protests, and eyewitness testimony from an FBI informant."

[The Hill](#) (3/29, Coleman, 5.69M) reports "the FBI has previously said it became aware of the group early last year and used undercover agents and confidential informants for months for the investigation."

Also reporting are [USA Today](#) (3/29, Moran, 12.7M), [PBS NewsHour](#) (3/29, 792K), [NBC News](#) (3/29, 4.91M), the [Washington Examiner](#) (3/29, Deese, 888K), [WDIV-TV](#) Detroit (3/29, Ley, Clarke, 568K), [MLive \(MI\)](#) (3/29, 828K), and [WUOM-FM](#) Ann Arbor, MI (3/29, Carmody, Tribou, 24K).

**FBI Offers \$50,000 Reward In 1998 Kansas Cold Case Killing.** The [AP](#) (3/29) reports that "the FBI is offering a reward of up to \$50,000 in the death of a Kansas City-area woman who died more than 22 years ago." The AP Rhonda Tribue was a mother of six from Kansas City, Kansas and "was found dead on Oct. 8, 1998" in the roadway near Edwardsville, Kansas. Authorities said she died of blunt force trauma at the age of 34. The FBI "says Tribue had been at the Firelight Lounge in Kansas City, Kansas, hours before her death."

Also reporting are [Wyandotte Daily \(KS\)](#) (3/29) and [WDAF-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (3/29, 349K).

**Washington Man Sentenced For Torching Police Car At Protest.** [KING-TV](#) Seattle (3/30, 417K) reports Kelly Thomas Jackson of Edmonds, WA was sentenced to 40 months in prison "for setting two Seattle police cars on fire by throwing Molotov cocktails at them during a protest" on May 2020. Jackson "was identified...after an anonymous tip to police." The FBI was among the investigating agencies.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (3/29, Dima, 888K) reports "several videos reviewed by law enforcement showed a white male suspect, who was later identified as Jackson...jumping up and down with excitement after his crime." FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Seattle Field Office Donald Voiret said, "This instigator researched his arsons and, on multiple occasions, endangered the safety of those nearby, as he helped to overshadow peaceful protests and escalate the environment into violence."

The [AP](#) (3/29) reports Jackson "was identified in surveillance video because of unique clothing and other identifying marks and arrested several days later."

**FBI Turns To Google In Investigation Of Racist Vandalism At Knoxville Church.** The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (3/30, 379K) reports that "federal agents are asking Google for help to figure out who wrote a racial slur on a bottle and tossed it through the window of one of Knoxville's oldest historically black churches." The News Sentinel says "records filed in U.S. District Court show authorities still don't know who tossed the bottle through the window of Logan Temple AME Zion in early February or why." Records show "with no fingerprint evidence to point to a suspect, the FBI is asking Google to help identify any cellular devices that might have been in use near the church at the time." FBI agent Jason Malkiewicz in his request for a search warrant wrote, "Nearly every cellular phone using the Android operating system has an associated Google account, and users are prompted to add a Google account when they first turn on a new Android device."

**SCOTUS Hears Securities Fraud Case Against Goldman Sachs.** The [New York Times](#) (3/29, Liptak, 20.6M) reports the Supreme Court "heard arguments on Monday in a securities fraud class-action case against Goldman Sachs." The Times describes the justice as "frustrated" and says several indicated "puzzlement about what they were meant to do in light of both parties seeming to agree about the governing legal standard." Pension funds brought the case, arguing "they had lost as much as \$13 billion as a consequence of what they called false statements about the investment bank's sales of complex debt instruments before the 2008 financial crisis." Goldman's lawyer Kannon K. Shanmugam said the case involved "exceptionally generic and aspirational statements" that could not have impacted its stock price. But "he conceded as a general matter that courts could take account of generic statements in deciding whether investors had relied on them." the pension funds' lawyer Thomas C. Goldstein "said the firm's statements in context justified certifying a class action," but "conceded that the generic nature of the statements was 'relevant evidence.'" The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/29, Bravin, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the tone of Monday's argument indicated the Court is inclined to support a small clarification instead of a major change to class action procedures.

**Chicago Precinct Captain Charged With Deceiving FBI.** The [Chicago Tribune](#) (3/29, Meisner, 2.03M) reports that "a longtime precinct captain for indicted Chicago Ald. Edward Burke and aide to former state Sen. Martin Sandoval was charged Monday with misleading the FBI in its sprawling federal political corruption investigation." The Tribune says "Rudy Acosta Jr., 70, was charged in a criminal information with one count of willfully deceiving the FBI about the criminal activity of others when he was interviewed in 2017 and 2018." According to the charge, "Acosta failed to disclose in interviews with agents

benefits both he and Sandoval received from another person – identified only as Individual A – including ‘free services, meals and travel.’”

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (3/29, 970K) reports that “beyond the corruption charges leveled against Burke and Sandoval, Acosta is the father of a onetime reputed drug kingpin whose own case has been pending for more than five years.” Meanwhile, “he also has ties to a Summit bar operator who admitted bribing public officials there.”

[WBEZ-FM](#) Chicago (3/29, 29K) reports that “Sandoval died of COVID-19 in December” and “had pleaded guilty to bribery and tax evasion charges relating to his support of the red light camera industry, and was cooperating with the federal government in its corruption investigation.”

**Chicago-based Marijuana Cultivator Part Of Federal Pay-to-play Investigation.** The [Chicago Tribune](#) (3/29, Meisner, Long, 2.03M) reports that “a Chicago-based marijuana cultivator and dispenser that has rapidly grown into one of the nation’s biggest pot firms is under federal investigation for possible pay-to-play violations during its push for coveted state licenses, sources said.” The Tribune says “investigators have been scrutinizing campaign donations and other steps Green Thumb Industries took as it sought to secure growing and distribution licenses in Illinois and several other states.” Spokeswoman Linda Marsicano said, “Green Thumb takes compliance very seriously and operates with the highest standards of ethical business conduct. We are not aware of any such investigation.”

**Mosby Investigation A Distraction For Baltimore City Council.** The [Baltimore Sun](#) (3/29, Opilo, 629K) reports that since it was revealed last week that federal officials are investigating City Council President Nick Mosby and his wife, Baltimore State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby’s “finances, the task of council members to concentrate on the city’s business has gotten a whole lot harder.” The Sun says “unlike past probes of City Hall that have focused attention on the mayor’s office, one of the targets of the current one is the head of their legislative body.” meanwhile, “neither Mosby has been criminally charged” and “their attorney has denounced the investigation as a ‘political witch hunt.’”

**FBI Warns Of Rise Of “Deepfakes” In Coming Months.** [Business Insider](#) (3/29, Civieta, Ravindran, 2.74M) reports the FBI has issued a stark warning saying “malicious actors almost certainly will leverage synthetic content for cyber and foreign influence operations in the next 12-18 months.” In the statement issued March 10, the FBI said “Russian, Chinese, and Chinese-language actors are using synthetic profile images derived from GANs [generative adversarial networks].” The FBI said they had “identified multiple campaigns which have leveraged synthetic content” since late 2019, and the number looks set to grow.

**Raleigh Real Estate Investor Agrees To Plea Deal.** The [Triangle \(NC\) Business Journal](#) (3/29, Subscription Publication, 854K) reports Leonid Teyf, a Russian national-turned Raleigh real estate investor who, last week, agreed “to a plea deal after months of back-and-forth court arguments and years of FBI investigations.” The Business Journal says “in a matter of months, Teyf could be sentenced to prison time, as prosecutors – even with the plea – are arguing for a 60-month sentence.” Initially facing a slew of charges, “following the plea deal Teyf now faces just bribery of a public official, visa fraud and providing false statements on a tax return.” Meanwhile, “recently released court transcripts paint a picture of what’s alleged to have happened – a scheme purportedly scanning two continents, where the danger was in a phone call.”

**Na Leo CEO To Go On Leave Following Allegations Of Fraud, Bribery.** The [Hawaii Tribune-Herald](#) (3/29, 47K) reports that “the president and CEO of Na Leo ‘O Hawaii public access television will be placed on a leave of absence after allegations were made against him in a federal plea agreement by a former associate.” According to a statement from Na Leo, “the nonprofit corporation’s board agreed to allow Stacy K. Higa, a former County Council chairman and unsuccessful mayoral candidate last year, to take a leave of absence from his position, effective this Thursday.” The statement said the leave would allow the 57-year-old Higa “to address these allegations while limiting any interference or disruption to Na Leo ‘O Hawaii’s operations.” The Tribune-Herald says “Na Leo’s Hilo offices and studios were raided by the FBI in early October 2020, and the feds charged Aipoalani in December.”

**White House Assesses Potential Responses To Major Hack.** [Bloomberg](#) (3/29, Jacobs, 3.57M) reports Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden’s national security adviser, “said the White House is in ‘the closing stages’ of deciding how to respond to a hack that compromised popular software by Texas-based SolarWinds Corp.” Sullivan “said the US is considering ‘seen and unseen’ responses to the attack, suspected of being carried out by Russian hackers and affecting at least 100 US companies and nine federal agencies.” Sullivan said in an interview with Bloomberg News. “We’re in the closing stages of that process with options that will be presented at the highest levels here.” Sullivan “said the Administration continues to be

focused intensively on remediation." He said, "Meaning, making sure that we've address the vulnerabilities of federal networks in particular."

### **US Banking Regulators Seek Information On How Financial Institutions Use AI.** [Reuters](#)

(3/29, Schroeder) reports that in a joint statement on Monday, US banking regulators, including the Federal Reserve and CFPB, "announced...they were soliciting public input on the growing use of artificial intelligence by financial institutions." The regulators "said they wanted feedback on the use of the technology by banks to policy fraud, underwrite loans and for other purpose, and what perks and challenges it presents." The regulators added that they were looking to identify any areas where they may be able to provide clarification around existing rules on the use of AI.

**Malicious Software Attacks "Spiraling Out Of Control," Report Warns.** The [Financial Times](#) (3/29, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) reports, "The UK government has been urged to stop criminals from carrying out malicious software attacks with "impunity", after research revealed..."

**SolarWinds hackers gained accessed to head of DHS' emails.** The AP/[NBC News](#) (3/29, 4.91M) reports that those behind the SolarWinds breach – suspected to be Russian hackers – gained access to the emails of the Department of Homeland Security, including the emails of the department's cybersecurity staff and former acting secretary Chad Wolf. The [AP](#) (3/29) reports their accounts were "accessed as part of what's known as the SolarWinds intrusion, and it throws into question how the US government can protect individuals, companies and institutions across the country if it can't protect itself." The short answer for many security experts and federal officials "is that it can't – at least not without some significant changes." [Reuters](#) (3/29) reports the AP report "said the intelligence value of the hacking of Chad Wolf, the former acting secretary of the DHS, and of email accounts belonging to officials in the department's cybersecurity staff, was not publicly known."

[Business Insider](#) (3/29, Sheth, 2.74M) reports that, "in addition to Wolf, hackers may have also gained access to the email accounts of senior members of the DHS's cyber division, which is responsible for identifying and rooting out foreign threats to the US's national security and cybersecurity infrastructure."

[CNBC](#) (3/29, 7.34M) reports the Biden Administration has "tried to keep a tight lid on the scope of the SolarWinds attack as it weighs retaliatory measures against Russia." But an inquiry by the AP "found new details about the breach at DHS and other agencies." The AP "interviewed more than a dozen current and former US government officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the confidential nature of the ongoing investigation into the hack." The vulnerabilities at Homeland Security, in particular, "intensify the worries following the SolarWinds attack and an even more widespread hack affecting Microsoft Exchange's email program." In both cases, the hackers were "detected not by the government but by a private company." Also providing similar coverage are [CNET News](#) (3/29, Hautala, 3.77M) and [WTOP-FM](#) Washington (3/29, 164K).

**Biden Faces Few Strong Options For SolarWinds Retaliation.** [Politico](#) (3/29, Geller, 6.73M) reports in its Weekly Cybersecurity newsletter that, "as President Biden considers how to hit back at Russia and China for massive cyberattack campaigns tied to their regimes...the reality is that his options may be limited to a well-worn playbook that has failed to stem digital threats during multiple previous administrations." Biden's dilemma is the "same one that vexed former President Obama after Russia intervened in the 2016 election, even as observers said the US needs to respond or risk tacitly condoning the SolarWinds and Exchange compromises." A cyber expert in the Biden White House has "shared that concern about the digitally dependent US' unique vulnerabilities." Biden's best option "may be to take a page out of the Trump Administration's book, deploying US Cyber Command to degrade Russian and Chinese hackers' own capabilities."

**Biden Says New Cybersecurity Czar Will Be Appointed Soon.** The [Washington Examiner](#) (3/29, McIntyre, 888K) reports creation of the cyber czar in the White House job "was one of the recommendations from the Cyberspace Solarium Commission that was included in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to increase coordination of the nation's defense against cyberattacks and cyberespionage." Sen. Angus King (I-ME), who was co-chairman of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, "has expressed concern that the cyber director position has remained vacant months after cyberattacks from Russian and Chinese actors."

**FBI Hopes Murder Suspect's iPhone Will Reveal Motive.** [Forbes](#) (3/29, Brewster, 10.33M) reports that "in January, police followed up a call about a stabbing in the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, Arizona. The call had come from a woman who'd said her grandmother had been stabbed by her brother, a former Marine who'd served in communications off the coast of Iran and Syria." Meanwhile, "during a subsequent interview, the suspect said repeatedly that he'd snapped and

started stabbing his grandmother for no reason, according to the warrant." Forbes says "with the interviewee providing no clear motivation for his alleged actions, the FBI are carrying out a search on the suspect's iPhone 11." At the top of the list of reasons for searching the iPhone is to find any signs of an "intent, plan, or motive to kill or harm any person, his mens rea, or his mental state."

**Former GOP Officials: We Need Voting Rights Champion Like Vanita Gupta At Justice.** Christine Todd Whitman, former two-term Republican governor of New Jersey, and Greg Brower, former Assistant Director and Deputy General Counsel of the FBI, write at [USA Today](#) (3/29, Whitman, Brower, 12.7M) that "at a time when barriers to voting are being built through more than 250 bills across 43 states that seek to limit the freedom to vote, we need more leaders who are true champions of voting rights, especially at the Department of Justice." At her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee this month, Vanita Gupta, President Joe Biden's nominee to serve as associate attorney general, said: "The fight for voting rights and to ensure that every eligible American can access their right to vote and exercise it is foundational to our democracy." They say "we need that kind of clear, strong leadership at DOJ, now more than ever."

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