



# SURRENDER



■ Biden orders border agents to let migrants in with NO tracking or conditions

■ And the next asylum court date: 2035!

After Title 42 expired yesterday, Biden officials unveiled a new strategy: Give up. Overwhelmed at border crossings like this near San Ysidro, Calif., masses were let in with no tracking. Late yesterday, a Florida federal judge temporarily blocked their release.

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# BEY PRESTO CHANGE-O

By ASIA GRACE

Let there Bey light.

This week, Beyoncé kicked off her Renaissance World Tour in Stockholm, Sweden, and fans went wild for her multiple costume changes throughout the 37-song set.

The most show-stopping look was a white bell-sleeved Anrealage coat that, when exposed to UV light that slowly moved down her body, turned into a kaleidoscope of colors.

After the coat's transformation, the singer coolly took it off to reveal a pearl-embellished Balmain bodysuit underneath.

Social-media observers went wild for the futuristic fashion, hailing her as "the queen of AI" and "BeyoncéGPT" — in a nod to ChatGPT.

But there was no artificial intelligence involved in the high-tech stage hijinks.

Rather, it appeared to be the handwork of Tokyo-based Anrealage designer Kunihiko Morinaga, who wowed fashionistas at Paris Fashion Week in March by making similar fashion magic.

There, Morinaga integrated his light-dependent polychromic technology into faux fur, velvet, lace, knits, jacquards and satins, according to Vogue.

For the garments, he uses photosensitive fabrics and materials that change color when exposed to UV rays and direct sunlight — bathing once-colorless outfits into a sea of vibrant patterns and colors.

Once the photochromatic areas are no longer exposed to UV rays, the ensembles return to their original color after about three minutes — allowing Beyoncé to remove the holographic-seeming coat before the colors faded away.

The luminescent look was one of nine costume changes Beyoncé made throughout the night — all of them playing on light and color.

Her other stop-and-stare outfits included an optical illusion Loewe catsuit that made it appear that hands were covering her body.



**Brilliant  
fashion  
'magic'  
on tour**

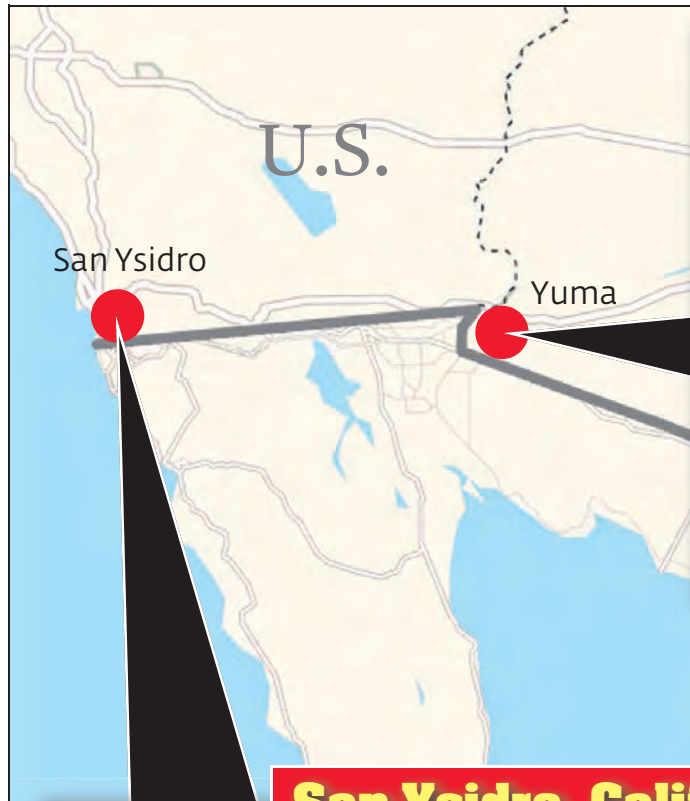


#### **COSTUME PARTY:**

Beyoncé's coat goes from white to bright on stage Wednesday in Sweden. Later, she donned a catsuit that appeared to show hands covering her body (inset left).

# FREED MIGRANTS'

nypost.com  
New York Post, Friday, May 12, 2023



**RAIDING ARIZONA:** Migrants walk on the wall stretching along the no-man's land between the borders of Mexico and the United States as they cross into the US illegally Thursday in Yuma, Ariz.



**San Ysidro, Calif.**



Mark Peterson/Redux for NY Post

**CALIFORNIA DREAMING:** Migrants wait for processing Thursday at the border wall in San Ysidro, Calif. — as border agents select mostly women and children.

## Final prep for Title wave

Dozens of uniformed agents conducted training drills as agents across the southern border prepared for the expiration of Title 42 on Thursday night.

Footage posted online showed Department of Homeland Security agents clad in riot gear as they stood and ran defensive measures in case of a surge over the border in front of the San Ysidro Port of Entry, located along the border between San Diego and Mexico.

An announcement blared in English and Spanish: "Attention, the San Ysidro Port of Entry is conducting a training exercise, normal operations will continue shortly.

## House OKs border-security bill

House Republicans voted Thursday to pass enhanced border security measures meant to stem the tide of illegal immigration to the US hours before the expiration of the pandemic-era Title 42 health policy.

The House voted 219-213 to approve the Secure the Border Act,

Thank you for your patience."

In El Paso, guards advised members of the press to stay on the US side of the border on Thursday night as there was no way of knowing what would happen once Title 42 expired. Thousands of migrants had been camping out at locations along the southern border in anticipation of the end of Title 42.

On Thursday, Customs and Border Protection put out a call within its ranks seeking volunteers from coastal and northern sectors to temporarily relocate to the southwest border, the Daily Caller reported. *Stephanie Pagonis*

which asks the Department of Homeland Security to resume building a border wall and authorizes the agency to hire another 22,000 Border Patrol agents.

The bill is unlikely to pass the Senate and President Biden has vowed to veto it if it reaches his desk. *Josh Christenson*



# 'ROAMIN' HOLIDAY

By OLIVIA LAND

## Let go in US & no tracking

As record numbers of migrants crossed into the US this week, overwhelmed Customs and Border Protection facilities were ordered to simply start releasing them, without giving their court dates to plead their cases or any ability to track where in the country they are.

Migrants rushed to make it onto US soil before the end of Title 42, with many being simply waved into the country for processing and hundreds of illegal border-crossers offered amnesty.

Border Patrol reported 28,000 people in custody Wednesday, when an order came down from Chief Raul Ortiz saying to begin releasing swaths of people.

A leaked email published by the Daily Caller instructed agents to facilitate releases from any border sector that reached 125% capacity — which was the case in five of the nine Border Patrol sectors in the southwest, according to ABC.

"We're already breaking and we haven't hit the starting line," one DHS official told NBC.

The migrants, most of whom have entered the country illegally, were released into the US under "parole with conditions," which leaves it up to them to arrange an appointment with Immigration and Customs Enforcement within 60 days or apply for an asylum court date to be sent to them by mail.

### Temporary halt

Late Thursday, a Florida federal judge temporarily blocked the Biden administration from releasing migrants into the US without notices to appear in court.

The two-week temporary restraining order, issued by District Judge T. Kent Wetherell II, went into effect a minute before

Title 42 ended. It's unclear how it will be enforced and the Biden administration is expected to appeal the ruling.

Agents were also told by the Biden administration to release people whose average time in custody had exceeded 60 hours or if 7,000 migrants were taken into custody across the border in just one day. Those quotas were exceeded every day from Sunday to Wednesday, with more than 10,000 people apprehended by officials each day.

Figures were not immediately available to show how many people were let out of CBP custody Thursday before the judge's order.

Art Acevedo, chief of the Aurora, Colo., Police Department and himself a Cuban immigrant, said he was worried about the prospect of releasing migrants without fully processing them.

He told The Post: "We're either a nation of laws where our processes are followed or we're not."

### No vetting

"We should always be concerned with releasing people into our communities, without knowing where they're at, where they're living, where we can reasonably find them if we need to locate them," he said. "And most importantly, without vetting, to see who they are and assessing the threat to public safety."

A similar scheme to let migrants go with notices to report to ICE in 2021 was unsuccessful as thousands of those migrants simply didn't check in, according to the Washington Times.

Releasing masses of asylum-seekers into the country is not a good idea, according to Rep.

Tony Gonzales (R-Texas), who previously warned that Border Patrol would have to rely on "expedited processing of migrants."

"Border Patrol have been coming out and warning a lot of the small communities that they were going to release people into their communities," he said. "I've seen that happen in other places and it does not go well."

Department of Homeland Security head Alejandro Mayorkas said Thursday: "I want to be very clear: Our borders are not open."

However, that same day The Post saw buses of migrants from south of the border arriving in Brownsville, Texas, migrants lining up and being admitted to the US at El Paso, and asylum-seekers in San Ysidro, Calif., who had been directed by border officials to line up for processing and expected to be in the US by nightfall.

At a press conference Tuesday, President Biden admitted that the influx of migrants in the eleventh hour of Title 42 was going to be "chaotic for a while."

## Court dates — wait for it — '35!

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Migrants processed into the US as asylum-seekers are being given immigration court dates more than a decade away.

In Brownsville, migrants who arrived in the US Thursday showed The Post their paperwork with designated court dates set as late as 2032 and 2035 in Chicago and Florida.

Now they have been admitted into the country and given a court date, the migrants can receive a work permit and legally live and work in the US until their case comes up.

Others had immigration hearings set for August 2023 in a Maryland immigration court and March 2027 at a Dallas immigration court. Two people heading to New York City had dates listed for 2025.

US Customs and Border Protection has apprehended more than 10,000 migrants each day since Monday as Title 42 expires. *Valentina Jaramillo*

## Brownsville, Texas



Reuters

## El Paso, Texas



**WAITING GAME:** A large encampment of migrants waits at the border to the US across from El Paso, Texas, on Wednesday.

Brownsville

**IN DEEP:** Migrants wade the Rio Bravo in Matamoros, Mexico, on Wednesday to cross the border and turn themselves in to US Border Patrol agents before Title 42 ends — at which time rules for illegal immigrants will become more strict under new guidelines from the Biden administration.

# BITTER 'DAY' FOR MAYOR

By REUVEN FENTON, NOLAN HICKS, EMILY CRANE and BERNADETTE HOGAN

Mayor Adams ripped into Rockland County Executive Ed Day Thursday for blocking asylum-seekers from heading to his district — as dozens of migrants arrived at an Orange County hotel just hours after New York City said it was temporarily backing off its plans.

“When you look at the County Exec Day, I mean this guy has a record of being anti-Semitic, his racist comments,” Adams said as he lashed out at the Rockland pol, without offering up examples of such alleged remarks.

“His thoughts and how he responded to this really shows a lack of leadership,” Adams said of Day. “I thought he was the Texas governor, the way he acted.”

Hizzoner earlier this month had accused Lone Star State GOP Gov. Greg Abbott of trying to “hurt black-run cities.”

The mayor’s criticism came as a bus carrying about 20 asylum-seekers from the city pulled up to the Crossroads Hotel in the Orange County town of Newburgh, about 60 miles north of the Big Apple, just before 10:30 a.m. A second bus arrived shortly after 12:30 p.m., unloading roughly the same number of migrants.

The decision to forge ahead with the buses came hours after City Hall spokesman Fabien Levy said late Wednesday the plan had been paused, at least short-term.

Adams’ push to relocate the asylum-seekers to Orange and Rockland this week has been met with fierce criticism — and legal action — from leaders in the counties.

Day quickly fired back.

“The mayor can call me every name in the book to deflect the reality of this former [police] officer’s clear disregard for our laws,” he told The Post.



**UPSTATE FUROR:** As migrants (right) exited a bus at a hotel (below) in Newburgh, Mayor Adams engaged in a war of words with Rockland County Executive Ed Day (below, far right). Some Rockland residents (below left) were more welcoming.



Daniel William McKnight (2)



Kevin C. Downs (2)



## Eric: Migrant-nixing Rockland

“Between his actions underscoring his belief that he is above local and state law, his disregard for emergencies in neighboring municipalities, and ongoing deception to the state of New York, Rockland County, and most recently Orange County — which was blindsided Thursday morning after being told by Adams

they were holding off with their plan — speaks volumes about the character of Mayor Adams,” Day continued. “I’ll do whatever is necessary to safeguard all the lives involved that this plan will without question endanger.”

Day, who issued a county state of emergency last weekend, had earlier threatened to grab Adams

“by the throat” if the mayor tried to offload the city’s growing migrant problem onto Day’s tight-knit community.

The Big Apple was already forced to back down from plans to bus migrants to the Armoni Inn & Suites in Rockland County after a state judge on Tuesday granted local officials’ request for

a temporary restraining order that prevents the hotel from operating as a shelter.

Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus issued a similar declaration earlier this week that prohibits hotels, motels and other short-term rentals from accepting any migrants.

Despite the migrant arrivals



# Push to monitor migrants

## NY bill to vet & watch

By ZACH WILLIAMS

ALBANY — A new bill seeking to get a handle on New York’s growing migrant crisis would require state officials to vet and monitor migrants sent to the state from the US southern border.

Assemblyman Matt Slater, a Republican who represents parts of the Hudson Valley, where Mayor Adams has sent migrants in recent days, sponsored the measure in hopes it would bring some order to the state’s seemingly chaotic response to the flow of migrant arrivals.

“It’s not denying the state’s responsibility to helping those who are seeking asylum, but it is providing security checks and balances and scrutiny to make sure that we’re protecting New Yorkers at the same time as protecting those seeking asylum here in our state,” Slater told The Post.

Slater’s bill would require the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to develop a plan to fill what Slater called a gap in the government response to the migrants’ arrival.

“There is just no legitimate plan in place to deal with the crisis,” the freshman legislator said.

The “common-sense” legislation comes as New York City grapples with a growing deluge of migrants that has pushed the city to its fiscal breaking point.

The situation is expected to worsen in upcoming weeks following the midnight Thursday

expiration of a federal rule that had allowed immigration officials to expel people with relative ease after they entered the country illegally.

“You can’t just continue to hand out blank checks when it comes to providing taxpayer-funded services without some kind of checks and balances in place,” said Slater, whose district includes parts of Westchester and Putnam counties.

He added that he would amend the current bill language to keep monitoring in place until asylum cases are resolved.

### Overwhelming

More than 60,000 migrants have arrived in the five boroughs since Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbot, and some Democratic officials, began sending people to New York last summer in order to shift the burden of accommodating them to blue states with immigration-friendly policies.

Adams and Gov. Hochul have called on President Biden to increase aid to the state while somehow wrangling a deal with Congress to overhaul the dysfunctional immigration system at large.

Dozens of Republican colleagues have signed on as co-sponsors to the legislation, which Slater said will have a state Senate sponsor soon.

His idea faces an uphill battle in Albany, where Democrats have supermajorities in both chambers with less than a month to go in the legislative session ending June 8.



negatively impacted New York state.”

As the migrants stepped off the buses outside the Crossroads Thursday, they were greeted by a dozen immigration advocates saying “*Bienvenidos*.”

“We’re just here to make folks feel welcome,” said Rene Majia, an organizer with the nonprofit group For the Many.

“I know one of the narratives that’s really been pushed is that we don’t want them here. As someone born and raised in the community, and also a child of immigrants, I know how important it is to feel welcomed in the community and to be accepted.”

Not everyone was thrilled for the migrants to arrive in Newburgh, a town of nearly 29,000. When asked about busloads of asylum-seekers, an onlooker named Kevin told The Post, “God help this country. Once the faucet opens, it doesn’t close. One hotel today, another hotel tomorrow. This town is f—ked.”

Adams on Thursday vowed to fight all legal challenges put in the city’s way — as he insisted the Big Apple is now receiving an average of 500 migrants per day.

Additional reporting by Carl Campanile

## exec’s a bigot

early Thursday, Neuhaus insisted the Adams administration had assured him no buses would be directed to his district without prior warning.

“Last night, both the state and city assured the Town of Newburgh and Orange County that no buses with asylum-seekers would be here until further notice,”

Neuhaus told The Post.

“The process has been a disorganized disaster and the blame lies with the mayor of New York, who originally opened the door for as many undocumented immigrants as possible to his self-proclaimed sanctuary city, and the governor. She has sat back and done nothing as this crisis has

# BORDER CRISIS

**OVERFLOWING:** Soaked migrants reach the US border near Brownsville, Texas, on Thursday after crossing the Rio Grande from Mexico.



**LINING UP:** People in Yuma, Ariz., stand in growing lines to request asylum from Border Patrol agents.



## Scenes from the chaos

**UPBRINGING:** A man holds a baby aloft as he fords the Rio Grande from Matamoros, in Tamaulipas state, on Thursday.



**NEW DAY:** At daybreak on Thursday, migrants were already traveling along the border toward the Yuma entry point in hopes of beating the lines.

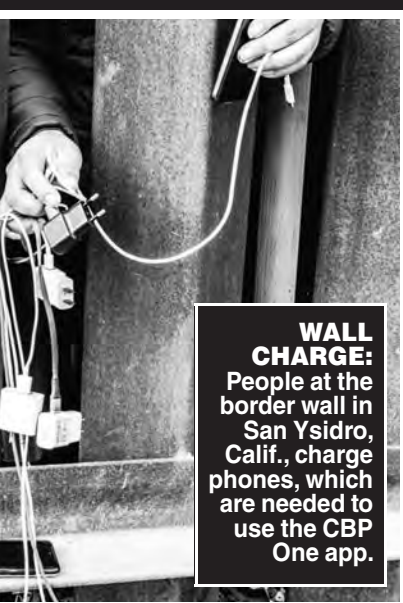


**HOLD ON:** Women and children received priority but still endured long waits among crowds of asylum-seekers in San Ysidro.





Getty Images



Mark Peterson

**WALL CHARGE:** People at the border wall in San Ysidro, Calif., charge phones, which are needed to use the CBP One app.

# RIDING THE FRIGHT TRAIN



Getty Images

**RAIL DANGER:** Migrants head north through Mexico along the freight car system called La Bestia, or the Beast.

## Deadly rail-hop to cross Mexico

By ISABEL VINCENT

For more than a decade, migrants crossing Mexico on their way to the US border have risked their lives to hop a series of fast-moving freight cars — referred to collectively as La Bestia or “the Beast” — that are so dangerous they are known as “death trains.”

Every year up to 500,000 migrants from Central America, but also lately from Venezuela, ride on top of box cars that normally transport grain, cement and other industrial materials to the border. Many have been killed or lost limbs after falling off the trains’ roofs and under the wheels.

Despite the danger, thousands of the poorest migrants and those who do not have the temporary visas required by the Mexican government to travel through the country hop aboard La Bestia —

some with infants in tow — because it offers a free way of making it to border towns.

“It’s very dangerous,” said Robert Almonte, a security consultant who uses a video of migrants hopping the trains in his lectures to law-enforcement officials across the country. “When they are on top of the trains some of the migrants push each other off because there is so little space. I show a video in my talks of one person being sliced in half after he falls off a train and onto the wheels. It just goes to show the lengths people go to get through Mexico.”

In addition to reports of amputated limbs and deaths, there have also been reports of physical abuse, kidnapping and rape.

And once they make it to a northern Mexican border city, migrants face shakedowns by

transnational criminal groups, such as the Juarez cartel, in order to approach the US border, Almonte said.

“It’s easy money for the cartels because they get paid right away,” said Almonte, a former US marshal and El Paso police chief. “With drug shipments, cartel members have to wait sometimes months to get paid, but with the migrants it’s fast cash.”

### ‘Beast from the South’

According to the Migration Policy Institute report, “Train conductors are also part of the chain of extortion, sometimes demanding bribes, particularly of women and families with children, who want to board before the train starts moving.”

Little has been done officially to dissuade migrants from riding

the rails, Almonte said.

In 2014, the US Customs and Border Protection hired a public-relations firm to write a song about the dangers of taking the trains. The result was “La Bestia Norte,” written in the style of a *corrido*, or narrative ballad.

The song, which hit the airwaves in Central American countries, was written by New York City-based composer Carlo Nicolau and features the voice of Eddie Ganz, a wedding and barmitzvah singer.

The lyrics are dark, and include the lines: “Migrants from everywhere, entrenched along the rail ties. Far away from where they come, farther away from where they go ... They call her the Beast from the South, this wretched train of death. With the devil in the boiler, it whistles, roars, twists and turns.”



Getty Images

# NY OKs sales without Rx's at 10 stores

By CARL CAMPANILE

State regulators approved new rules Thursday allowing existing medical cannabis stores to sell pot to the public while upstate farmers fumed about a rocky rollout of the legal weed program.

New York state in 2014 approved the sale of marijuana for prescribed medical purposes and seven years later legalized the recreational sale of cannabis.

But as it stands, there are just 10 legal cannabis dispensaries open across the state, while the illegal market has flourished, with New York City Mayor Adams and city officials claiming 1,500 retail stores are illegally selling weed. As a result, 40 existing medical cannabis stores with the infrastructure to immediately begin pot sales to the public were barred from doing so.

The new rules from New York's Cannabis Control Board allow 10 medical marijuana operators to sell cannabis to the public, not just ailing patients, beginning on Dec. 30. Another 20 of the medical pot stores can start sales to the public by June 30, 2024.

## 'Growing pains'

The medical cannabis operators would be required to pay a \$5 million license fee to expand and pay millions more based on revenue earned. The board also approved 50 other cannabis retail licenses for future openings.

Queens Councilman Robert Holden, who has complained about the illegal pot shops, said the conversion of medical marijuana shops should have been done sooner to cut off the illegal market. "That would have made sense," Holden said. "I guess that made too much sense. You wouldn't have all these illegal shops."

Meanwhile, frustrated upstate farmers Thursday urged regulators to accelerate the program during a meeting in Morrisville, complaining that they're sitting on unsold weed.

"There are growing pains — and we have felt them. Many cannabis farmers are facing bankruptcy and they're very distressed," said farmer Mae Becker. "If we fail, farms and homes will be lost to



**JOINT VENTURE:** Housing Works Cannabis Co. near Washington Square Park is one of the few legal marijuana shops currently operating in New York as officials struggle to keep up with the illegal market.

# Med pot shops open to public

bankruptcy and repossession."

Another farmer, Catherine Miller, said her initial excitement about participating in the budding marijuana market has turned into a bad trip. A year later, she said she's become "severely stressed, very, very concerned about the future of my business I have built

over the past 13 years."

"I have three employees waiting to come back to work and I keep putting them off because I'm not sure I can make payroll," she said.

"We need to open up lines of sales and we need to do it now. This is an emergency. For people who put ourselves and our busi-

nesses and lives on the line to make this happen, it's pretty distressing to find ourselves in this situation."

Regulators said a new law approved by Gov. Hochul and the Legislature as part of the state budget gives them more authority to impose stiffer penalties and close illegal weed operators.

## Dem bid vs. Iyin' George

A Democratic former state senator launched a bid Thursday to take Rep. George Santos' congressional seat with a video highlighting her Jewish heritage — and reminding voters of Santos' lies about having a Jewish background.

The launch of Anna Kaplan's effort to topple the Long Island/Queens Republican comes a day after he was hit with numerous federal fraud charges — and she made clear she plans to hit him hard for the many lies.

Her biggest focus was on Santos' claim on his campaign website that his mother was Jewish and his grandparents escaped the Nazis during World War II — he later said he wasn't a Jew but merely "Jew-ish."

"I'm running because George Santos is a disgrace," Kaplan, who lost her state Senate seat last year, says in her new ad. *Carl Campanile*

## Letitia sues gun maker

New York Attorney General Letitia James has filed a suit against the maker of a gun-safety part she says Buffalo slayer Payton Gendron was "easily" able to remove to carry out his rampage.

The lawsuit — filed Thursday, three days before the first anniversary of the racism-fueled shooting — was brought against Mean Arms for its magazine lock part called the MA Lock.

The 19-year-old white supremacist — sentenced to life in prison for killing 10 black people at Tops Friendly Markets — said he could take the MA lock off an AR-15 within minutes, the Manhattan Supreme Court lawsuit says.

Mean Arms didn't immediately return a request for comment.

*Priscilla DeGregory*

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■ Midday Win-4 Thu.: **9331**  
■ Evening Nos. Thu.: **585**  
■ Evening Win-4 Thu.: **0349**  
■ Midday Take-5 Thu.:  
**11, 12, 23, 34, 38**  
■ Evening Take-5 Thu.:  
**6, 23, 32, 36, 37**  
■ Pick-10 Thu.: **4, 7, 8, 11,**  
**13, 14, 30, 31, 35, 40, 41, 46,**  
**49, 53, 59, 63, 68, 69, 71, 76**  
■ Cash-4-Life Thu.: **11, 22,**  
**39, 50, 56; Cash Ball: 1**

### NEW JERSEY

Pick-3 Thu.: **192; Fireball: 1**  
Pick-4 Thu.: **1359; Fireball: 1**  
Cash-5 Xtra Thu.: **2, 16,**  
**22, 35, 41; Xtra: 3**  
Pick-6 Thu.: **4, 5, 19, 20,**  
**33, 46; Double Play: 2, 9,**  
**17, 26, 30, 37**  
**CONNECTICUT**  
Play-3 Thu.: **764; Wild: 3**  
Play-4 Thu.: **2725; Wild: 2**  
Cash-5 Thu.: **7, 25, 27, 29, 35**  
Lucky for Life Thu.: **10, 16,**  
**34, 40, 47; Lucky Ball: 5**

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## Pontiff's Catch-22 on pervers

Pope Francis raised some eyebrows while discussing sex abusers, whom he labeled “children of God” who deserve love and “pastoral care” — as well as revolting “enemies” who must be punished.

The pontiff (above) made his remarks last month during a private meeting with a group of Jesuit priests in Hungary, but they were only published Tuesday by *La Civiltà Cattolica*, an Italian Jesuit journal.

“How do we approach, how do we talk to the abusers for whom we feel revulsion? Yes, they too are children of God. But how can you love them?” Francis was quoted as saying.

The pontiff was responding to a question from a Hungarian Jesuit who asked: “The Gospel asks us to love, but how do we love at the same time people who have experienced abuse and their abusers?”

Francis explained that a sexual predator was to be condemned, “but as a brother” deserving of love and care. *Snejana Farberov*

## Bx. gunmen steal bulldog

A bulldog was stolen at gunpoint from his owner by three crooks who pretended they were interested in buying the pooch in The Bronx, police said.

The victim said over social media that he intended to sell the pup, and the thieves replied that they were interested — before showing up to his home in Hunts Point around 9:20 p.m. Tuesday, cops said.

One of the men flashed a gun and stole the dog from outside the owner's home.

The dog has not been recovered. *Amanda Woods*

# BENNIFUR FLIES

## Bit tense before red-carpet kiss

By TAYLOR KNIGHT

There was no need to get loud — as a lip reading specialist has deduced what Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck reportedly discussed Wednesday on the LA red carpet for her Netflix movie “The Mother.”

The singer/actress, who appeared to be frowning at times during the interaction, asked Affleck, 50, whether her low-cut top was “showing too much.”

He told Lopez, 53, that

it was fine, the Daily Mail reported, quoting a lip reader.

Lopez wore a sequin-covered beige bralette with a matching high-waisted maxi skirt, while Affleck suited up in a black three-piece suit with a white shirt.

The newlyweds continued shuffling, trying to nail their poses for the photographers, as the “Let’s Get Loud” singer gestured to the “Air” actor to get into position.

Affleck appeared to tell Lopez to come closer to him, leaning into her ear and whispering, “Don’t worry, babe,” per the Daily Mail.

Lopez then tells him to “come close to me.”

After striking several poses, the “Argo” director wraps it up, saying it’s “done.”

Ready to head inside for the premiere, he kisses Lopez and comforts her by asking if she is OK.

She responds “yes” and proceeds to say they need to “step over there” for others on the carpet.

The couple’s tense body language that evening could be attributed to a viral video of Affleck abruptly shutting the car door in Lopez’s face Tuesday.

The clip, posted by the Hollywood Fix, shows the couple walking toward their car and Affleck opening the door for his wife as she gets settled in.

He lightly slams the door closed and glances at the paparazzi with annoyance.

YouTube users quickly labeled Affleck’s glare as grumpy, sad or miserable. “He looks really sad; he doesn’t like paparazzi attention,” commented one person.



**AND ACTION!** Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez seem to quarrel Wednesday at the LA premiere for “The Mother” before putting on a kissy show.



Chelsea Lauren/Shutterstock

## CITY IN CRISIS

## CROSSFIRE TEEN

CCRB  
probing  
lack of  
swift bust

The city's police watchdog is investigating the NYPD over its call to not immediately arrest Daniel Penny in the chokehold death of Jordan Neely on the subway. The Post has learned.

A spokeswoman for the Civilian Complaint Review Board confirmed Thursday that a complaint was filed and a formal probe was underway to see if there was any wrongdoing in the decision not to immediately charge Penny after he was questioned by cops following Neely's death. It's unclear who filed the complaint.

Penny's release sparked a backlash with protesters and lawmakers calling for his arrest. He's now set to turn himself in to cops Friday.

The CCRB would see if there is evidence of misconduct by the officers or supervisors involved in the release decision. No such evidence has emerged.

The agency recently substantiated a complaint that NYPD Chief of Department Jeff Madrey abused his authority by ordering a Brooklyn precinct sergeant to void the arrest of an ex-cop accused of flashing a gun at three teens in 2021.

The department did not return a request for comment Thursday. *Craig McCarthy*

By JOE MARINO,  
CRAIG McCARTHY  
and DAVID PROPPER

Daniel Penny — the ex-Marine who put homeless man Jordan Neely in a deadly chokehold on the subway last week — will surrender to face criminal charges Friday, law enforcement sources with knowledge of the case said.

Penny, 24, will turn himself in at the NYPD's Fifth Precinct station house in Chinatown Friday morning, high-ranking police sources said Thursday. He will be arrested on a criminal complaint charging him with second-degree manslaughter, which could carry a prison term of up to 15 years, according to prosecutors.

"We can confirm that Daniel Penny will be arrested on a charge of manslaughter in the second degree," a spokesman for Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said in a statement.

"We cannot provide any additional information until he has been arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court, which we expect to take place tomorrow."

Penny's legal team said Thursday their client would be "fully absolved of any wrongdoing" when all the facts come out.

"When Mr. Penny, a decorated Marine veteran, stepped in to protect himself and his fellow New Yorkers, his well-being was not assured," lawyers Steven Raiser and Thomas Kenniff said.

"He risked his own life and safety, for the good of his fellow passengers. The unfortunate result was the unintended and unforeseen death of Mr. Neely."

The DA's Office had faced pressure to bring charges as its probe into the May 1 encounter progressed. Neely, a 30-year-old ex-street performer with a history of mental illness, was left unconscious on the floor of an F train after Penny put him in a chokehold.

Criminal rap  
due vs. Marine

**DEADLY MOMENT:** Former Marine Daniel Penny applies a fatal chokehold on homeless street performer Jordan Neely last week after Neely had ranted at fellow passengers aboard an F train.

Juan Vazquez

Video showed Penny and two other straphangers restrain Neely after cops and witnesses said the disturbed man had gone on an aggressive rant in the subway car.

He died at a hospital in what the city's medical examiner ruled a homicide from neck compression.

Cops had taken Penny into custody for questioning in the aftermath of Neely's death, and he was then released without charges — sparking outrage from protesters,

some lawmakers and Neely's family, who called for authorities to lock up the ex-military man from Queens.

Penny's anticipated arrest comes after authorities updated the original complaint report with the medical examiner's ruling and additional witness interviews, according to sources.

It had been widely expected that Bragg would present the case to a grand jury for an indictment, rather than file a felony

complaint, in order to sidestep a potential political minefield.

Neely's uncle, Christopher Neely, told The Post he was disappointed Penny was being charged with manslaughter and not murder.

"Manslaughter suggests an accident. This was no accident," Neely, 44, said Thursday. "There was intent to kill and that's murder."

*Additional reporting by Larry Celona and Jack Morphet*

## Subway witness 'prayers' &amp; 'thank you' to Penny

A straphanger in the subway car where ex-Marine Daniel Penny placed Jordan Neely in a fatal chokehold said Thursday she's "praying" for Penny after it was revealed the 24-year-old would face charges in the high-profile case.

"I hope he has a great lawyer, and I'm praying for him," the 66-year-old woman, who did not want her ID revealed, told The Post Thursday night.

"And I pray that he gets treated fairly, I really do. Because after all of this ensued, I went back and

made sure that I said, thank you to him."

The subway rider said Neely, who had a history of mental illness, was threatening passengers after he boarded an F train in Manhattan.

"He said, 'I don't care. I'll take a

bullet, I'll go to jail,' because Neely would kill people on the train," the woman said. "He said 'I would kill a motherf-ker. I don't care. I'll take a bullet. I'll go to jail.'"

The purported witness said Penny did not initially engage with Neely during the rant until

things got out of hand.

"This gentleman, Mr. Penny, did not stand up, did not engage with the gentleman," the rider explained. "He said not a word. It was all Mr. Neely ... threatening the passengers if he did not get what he wants." *David Propper*

# IS 'BRAIN DEAD'

## Dad grieves for daughter shot outside Qns. park

By KHRISTINA NARIZHNAYA,  
JOE MARINO  
and JORGE FITZ-GIBBON

A Queens teenager who was shot in the head and critically wounded Wednesday after getting into a playground fight is now “brain dead,” her grieving father told The Post Thursday.

Claudia Quaatey, 16, was in an SUV outside Locust Manor Park after settling a beef with another group of girls when shots rang out around 8:30 p.m. Wednesday — with one slug hitting her in the head and leaving her in a medically induced coma, police said Thursday.

Now cops are trying to determine if the earlier scuffle had anything to do with the shooting or if the teen was just an innocent bystander.

“She had gotten into a fight,” her father Albert Quaatey, 65, said at the family home in Queens. “My daughter, she doesn’t happen to be in fights like that. Just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

“The police don’t have much to say other than it was an angry meeting, that was it,” said Quaatey, a construction worker who is originally from Ghana. “So, she’s brain dead.”

Quaatey said his daughter dreamed of becoming a nurse and liked to braid hair for her friends — and told him she was on her way to do just that when she was shot while sitting in a Hyundai SUV, which was parked near the park and outside PS 015 Jackie Robinson Elementary School, police said.

Three gunmen fired off “multiple” 9mm rounds — in what the sources believe was part of a gang-related dispute — before fleeing the scene and remaining on the loose.

“The shooting happened just after 8 p.m. so everyone was there with their family,” said Jillian McKoy, 39, a teacher’s assistant who was at the park at the time of the shooting. “I thought it was fireworks until I saw the children running and they were all yelling, ‘Oh, my God! Oh no, they shot her.’

“Within minutes every cop from the 113th [Precinct] was on our block,” McKoy said.

The wounded teen was taken to Jamaica Hospital Medical Center and later transferred to Long Island Jewish Hospital, where she remains in a coma.

“Usually I tell her, school days, I don’t want her going out,” her father said. “It wasn’t late, but still. They always called me old-school, but there are these kinds of problems. Too many younger people are being killed. I tried, but how much can you do?”

### ‘State of shock’

“She goes out to braid people’s hair, or usually they come here,” he said. “She was not going too much.”

Quaatey said he was on his way home from work around 9:30 p.m. when he got a call that he needed to get to Jamaica Hospital, where Claudia was then being treated.

“It’s terrible,” the father said. “We’re devastated. You never want to hear this kind of news. I’m

standing here in a state of shock.”

Claudia is one of six siblings, and was described by her father as “very loving.”

The shooting comes as the number of under-18 victims of gun violence continues to rise in the Big Apple.

According to NYPD statistics, there were 153 underage shooting victims in the five boroughs last year, a jump from 138 in 2021 and 125 in 2020 — and more than double the 2017 figure of 75.

“This is really a good neighborhood, this is not a bad place,” Albert Quaatey said. “Lately these guns, guns, guns people are dying by the numbers, it’s craziness.

“There is a lot of crime,” he added. “If they could just keep the guns off the streets, I think we’ll be all right, and we don’t have to bury our loved ones. It is our future we’re burying right now.”

*Additional reporting by Craig McCarthy, Larry Celona and Amanda Woods*



**CUT SHORT:** Claudia Quaatey, 16, was in this SUV (with bullet hole) when she was shot outside a Queens playground. Her grieving father says she is now brain dead.

## Mayor: Close mental health loopholes Neely used

Mayor Adams said Thursday he wants to strengthen state law so the city can commit people suffering from severe mental illness for longer — following a Post exposé about a loophole that let Jordan Neely stroll out of court-man-

dated treatment.

Hizzoner said he wants changes to Kendra’s Law — which lets the courts mandate outpatient treatment for people with serious mental illness — that would let the city get people into treatment who are con-

sidered a risk to themselves.

“People who are dealing with a severe mental health illness can’t make the determination [about] what kind of care they want,” Adams said.

Adams’ call for Albany lawmakers to expand Kendra’s

Law came in response to a Post report this week that found Neely was able to check himself out of a mental health program he had been sent to as part of a plea deal in an assault case. He died less than three months later.

The mayor also wants to raise the standards people must meet before signing themselves out.

“It can’t be, ‘OK, I’m all right for this moment,’” Adams said.

*Nolan Hicks and Steve Janoski*

# Bride-slay driver '3x legal limit'

## Damning toxicology report

By RONNY REYES

Alleged drunken driver Jamie Lee Komoroski had a blood alcohol level more than three times the legal limit during the crash that killed new bride Samantha Hutchinson, police said.

Komoroski, 25, had a BAC of 0.261 when she allegedly slammed her car into a golf cart Hutchinson, 34, was driving in with her new husband in Folly Beach, according to a toxicology report from South Carolina police.

The former waitress was allegedly so intoxicated that she appeared confused, telling responding officers "All the sudden something hit me" and repeatedly saying "I did nothing wrong," according to the incident report.

The report, filed by Folly Beach Police Sgt. Zac Halpern, reveals that Komoroski admitted to having two drinks an hour before the accident, a beer and a tequila pineapple.

When Halpern asked her how drunk she was between one and 10, he said he heard her mumble that she was at an eight before demanding a lawyer.

When the responding officers tried to administer a sobriety test, Komoroski refused, yelling for her boyfriend as police noted that she appeared to try to hide her eyes from them.

When Halpern tried to help her out of the car to check her balance, the officer noted she had trouble standing on her feet, but Komoroski

claimed she was fine.

Halpern's report also claimed Komoroski was dazed at the scene of the crash, calling for her boyfriend at one moment and then suddenly screaming after looking back at the wreckage.

Halpern noted that Komoroski was clearly confused when he was arresting her, as the officer had to repeat his reasoning three times after she refused to get in the back of his patrol car.

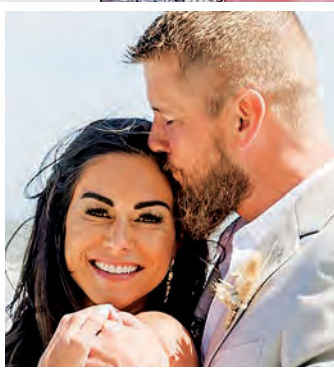
"This is a clear indication of someone who is intoxicated; is to repeat over and over, after their question has already been answered," Halpern wrote in the report.

Officials said Komoroski was going 40 mph over the 25 mph speed limit in her rented Toyota Camry along a poorly lit residential street when she slammed into the newlyweds' slow-moving vehicle, which was thrown 100 yards on impact and rolled over several times.

Samantha was declared dead at the scene, still wearing her white wedding dress. Her 36-year-old husband, Aric Hutchinson, was transported to a hospital suffering from a brain injury and multiple broken bones.

Komoroski remains jailed in North Charleston, having been denied bond.

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**'I DID NOTHING WRONG':** According to police, Jamie Lee Komoroski (above) was acting confused after allegedly crashing into a golf cart holding newlyweds Samantha and Aric Hutchinson (left), killing the bride and putting the groom in the hospital.

Instagram



**JOE PERCOCO**  
Fraud conviction tossed.

## Justices clear top Cuo aide

The US Supreme Court on Thursday threw out the fraud conviction of Joseph Percoco, the once-powerful top aide and longtime buddy of disgraced former Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Percoco — whom Cuomo once publicly likened to a brother — was found guilty in 2018 of conspiracy to commit "honest services" fraud after pocketing more than \$300,000 from executives at two companies doing business with the state.

Percoco maintained that the payments he took in 2014 weren't bribes because he was on leave from his government job and working for Cuomo's reelection campaign at the time.

Writing for a unanimous court, Justice Samuel Alito found the jurors in Percoco's case were given "erroneous" instructions that were "too vague" regarding the federal honest services law that prejudiced the defendant.

In a separate ruling, also unanimous, the high court tossed out a bid-rigging conviction of Buffalo real estate executive Louis Ciminnelli connected to Cuomo's "Buffalo Billion" economic development program.

Carl Campanile

## Dianne's Judiciary return

Dianne Feinstein was welcomed back to the Senate Judiciary Committee with applause Thursday morning, a day after the 89-year-old California Democrat returned to Capitol Hill while "still experiencing some side effects" from shingles.

Feinstein's chair was empty for a little more than an hour following the start

of a committee meeting to consider nominations for federal judgeships as well as four Senate bills.

Feinstein had been absent from the Senate for more than two months, disrupting Democratic efforts to confirm President Biden's nominees to the federal bench and pass legislation.

Josh Christenson

# 16 years prison for slashing ex

A Manhattan man was sentenced to 16 years to life in prison Thursday for repeatedly slashing his ex-girlfriend on a subway platform — leaving her with cuts to the face, neck and back that required surgery.

Billy Hernandez, 50, admitted to meeting his es-

tranged flame at the Fulton Street subway station on June 21, 2022, so she could return his clothes to him — and then attacking her with a blade when she began to walk away, the District Attorney's Office said.

Hernandez grabbed the 50-year-old woman by the

shoulder and slashed her neck, continuing the assault as she tried in vain to escape, prosecutors said.

He pleaded guilty to attempted assault March 30. He also copped to disorderly conduct and attempted assault in two other cases — in which he groped

the butt of a receptionist at a substance-abuse center the same day as the slashing and separately punched an acquaintance in the face and stole their phone.

Lawyers for Hernandez did not return a request for comment.

Priscilla DeGregory

# Don eyes appeal in \$5M suit

Former President Donald Trump Thursday formally signaled he would appeal the \$5 million judgment against him in E. Jean Carroll's lawsuit — as the writer's attorneys said she's thinking of suing him again.

Trump, 76, was found liable of sexual abuse and defamation against Carroll, 79, by a Manhattan federal jury for allegedly assaulting her in a Bergdorf Goodman fitting room in 1996 and then for his public statements denying it and calling her claims a "hoax."

During a town hall on CNN Wednesday, Trump called Carroll a "wack job" and said her case was "a rigged deal."

The comments followed Carroll's win in her case Tuesday, including on a claim that Trump smeared her with a lengthy Oct. 12, 2022, post on Truth Social.

Carroll is now considering filing a third defamation case against Trump over his town hall comments, according to a report by The New York Times.

The "Ask E. Jean" advice columnist has a 2019 defamation case still pending against the 45th president over his comments about her from that year denying having ever met her and calling her a liar.

Priscilla DeGregory

## Ukr., not US, in Trump ad

WASHINGTON — Former President Donald Trump's campaign used images from Ukraine to depict Americans suffering under President Biden in an attack ad titled "Mourning in America," The Post has learned.

"Under Biden's unprecedented inflation, the hope of home ownership — gone. And young adults, forced to abandon seeking the American dream," the ad says.

But Ukrainian photographers whose work was used say the images don't show Americans and instead show a young home-shopping couple in Lviv, western Ukraine, in 2021 — before the Russian invasion. Steven Nelson

**ALL THE RAGE:** Ex-President Donald Trump talks Wednesday at his town hall, which drew big ratings but caused an uproar of disapproval at CNN.



## Big ratings for Don as staff fumes

# CNN'S EYES & NAYS

By ALEXANDRA STEIGRAD and ARIEL ZILBER

CNN's chaotic town hall with former President Donald Trump spurred a backlash from staffers and left-wing pundits — but it paid off in the ratings.

The perennially last-place cable network reeled in 3.3 million viewers for Wednesday's 70-minute broadcast, CNN said Thursday.

The ratings easily eclipsed the paltry figures drawn by its regular 8 p.m. news hour hosted by Anderson Cooper, who averages less than 1 million viewers.

Still, CNN boss Chris Licht faced a "fury of criticism" from the rank and file for giving Trump a forum to repeat his litany of lies and conspiracy theories in front of a partisan crowd at St. Anselm College in New Hampshire.

### 'No-win situation'

Licht, who has been trying to pivot away from the left-leaning coverage of his predecessor, was pilloried after putting moderator Kaitlan Collins "in a no-win situation."

Oliver Darcy, the network's own media reporter, revealed the network in-fighting in his "Reliable

## Ron PAC pans show

A super PAC supporting Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' widely expected 2024 presidential run bashed ex-President Donald Trump for his performance at a CNN town hall Wednesday night, saying he was "stuck in the past."

"On the same day Ron DeSantis was assailing Joe Biden's border crisis, Donald Trump was on CNN attacking DeSantis and lying about finishing the border wall," said Erin Perrine, communications director for Never Back Down.

"The CNN town hall was, as

expected, over an hour of nonsense that proved Trump is stuck in the past. After 76 years, Trump still doesn't know where he stands on important conservative issues like supporting life and the 2nd Amendment. How does that Make America Great Again?"

Chris Jankowski, Never Back Down's CEO, went after both Trump and CNN: "The Trump town hall on CNN is a true marriage of equals: A candidate who has lost his luster appearing on a network that's lost its ratings." Josh Christenson

Sources" newsletter.

"CNN and new network boss Chris Licht are facing a fury of criticism — both internally and externally over the event," Darcy wrote.

On Thursday, Licht tried to quell his restive staff at a morning editorial meeting, sources told The Post.

"You do not have to like the former president's answers, but

you can't say that we didn't get them," Licht said, according to the audio provided to The Post.

Licht also rebuffed suggestions that Collins did not push back hard enough on Trump's claims of election fraud and other matters.

"Kaitlan pressed him again and again and made news," Licht reportedly told staffers. "That is our job."

Collins was hired by CNN in

2017, served as the network's youngest chief White House correspondent and has since become a favorite of Licht, who is reportedly eyeing the rising star for the network's 9 p.m. prime-time slot.

### Angling for anchor

The plum anchor chair has been in flux since CNN fired Chris Cuomo in 2021 after it was revealed he was helping his brother, then-New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, fight sexual-harassment allegations made by his ex-aides.

Despite the left-wing hand-wringing, the town hall pulled in one of CNN's highest ratings in years.

The network had logged 3.7 million viewers for a town hall with Joe Biden on Feb. 16, 2021, and drew 3.2 million for last July's final Jan. 6 hearing, according to Nielsen.

The Trump town hall also nabbed 781,000 viewers in the coveted 25-54 demographic.

CNN beat out its rival news channels in the time slot, with Fox News snagging 1.4 million total viewers and 125,000 viewers in the key demo, while MSNBC amassed 1.4 million viewers and 155,000 in the demo.

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# Right back at ya, Ivan

## Seized-weapon strike

By SNEJANA FARBEROV

A video has emerged showing what appears to be fleeing Russian troops being struck by their own anti-tank guided missile that had fallen into Ukrainian hands.

In the footage, Kyiv forces operating the Ukrainian-made Stuhna-P anti-tank guided-missile system are watching on a monitor how their comrades turn a Russian Kornet missile system against the enemy.

Anatoly Shariy, a Ukrainian journalist and pro-Russian propagandist, shared the minute-long recording on his Telegram channel, writing in the caption: “that’s what happens when the Russian army scatters, leaving behind things like Kornet.”

In the recording, men following the action on the battlefield via the monitor comment in Ukrainian heavily sprinkled with profanities that there are a lot of enemy soldiers taking flight.

Someone counts 12 Russian troops in the field.

Moments later, a missile is seen flying toward the Russians’ position.

One of the spectators asks if the missile came from their Stuhna-P system, but

his colleague replies that “it was from the Kornet.”

Another predicts that the Russians will all be annihilated.

The screen then displays a massive explosion that envelops the deserters in a cloud of smoke.

The Ukrainians are heard excitedly celebrating the deadly strike.

“F--k, two survived out of 12,” one Ukrainian soldier exclaims.

Another corrects him that, in fact, three Russians managed to stumble away from the blast.

“Three ran away. The rest are gone,” the overjoyed soldier gushes to his brothers in arms.

It was not immediately clear where this incident took place.

It comes after Kyiv’s forces reportedly routed a Russian infantry brigade near the key city of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, which has seen some of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Ukraine’s Third Separate Assault Brigade said in a statement this week that Russia’s 72nd Independent Motorized Rifle Brigade abandoned its positions near Bakhmut after suffering heavy casualties.

# Resistant ringworm appears in the city

New York City is home to the first known cases of antifungal-resistant ringworm in the US, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Thursday.

Ringworm is a highly contagious infection of the skin, hair or nails typically treated with antifungal medications. This particular resistant strain emerged in South Asia.

Two city women with no known links reported experiencing symptoms in 2021 and 2022.

One of the patients, a 28-year-old woman in her third

trimester of pregnancy, had not traveled internationally, nor come in contact with anyone who had a similar rash, suggesting there is some community spread of this infection in America.

The other patient, a 47-year-old woman, developed the rash while in Bangladesh in the summer of 2022.

Cases of this type initially appeared in South Asia, but have since been found in European countries.

The CDC stressed the importance of not sharing clothes with someone who has a rash. *Erin Keller*

# ‘Wheel’ host stuns and

By MICHAEL STARR

**I**N recent weeks, there’s been a “Wheel of Fortune” puzzle that can’t be solved by buying a vowel or guessing another consonant: What in the world is going on with host Pat Sajak?

The 76-year-old game show legend has been acting quite bizarrely.

In the past month or so, Sajak has put a contestant in a chokehold; claimed he hides in letter-turner Vanna White’s garden; asked a contestant to remove his shirt and tugged on a contestant’s beard.

On Monday night’s show, he even scolded a contestant who grabbed the envelope in the show’s bonus round, saying: “Don’t ever do it again!”

One can’t help but wonder if America’s longest-running game show host has finally had enough — or maybe he was always this strange and grumpy.

Getting tired of the wordplay grind would be understandable.

He’s been hosting “Wheel” for more than four decades, since 1981. The fashions have changed, but the game has remained very much the same.

## Rude to contestants

By comparison, Johnny Carson’s seemingly never-ending reign on “The Tonight Show” was just 30 years — and the King of Late Night took 15 weeks of vacation at the end of his run.

Sajak’s recent high jinks aren’t the first time he’s exhibited strange behavior.

In the fall of 2020, in a span of 10 days, there were numerous incidents.

He snapped at a contestant for “interrupting” him while he read a commercial promo on one show.

On another, he told a competitor to “stop making sound effects” when they let out a celebratory yelp. “Ungrateful players! I’ve had it!” he said to another player when they questioned an answer as “redundant.”

In 2021, he even mocked a young man’s speech impediment on air.

The following year, he made viewers cringe when he asked longtime letter-turner White, “Have you ever watched opera in the buff? I’m just curious.”

Such moments reportedly put Sajak on thin ice with his bosses.

“Pat has put his foot in it one too many times and offended people with his off-color humor and temperamental behavior,” an insider told OK! in September. “Network brass and top-level producers have come down hard on him and read him the riot act.”

‘One can’t help but wonder if America’s longest-running game show host has finally had enough.’

(Representatives for “Wheel of Fortune” and Sajak did not respond to repeated requests for comment.)

Off-camera, Sajak’s behavior can also be edgy.

Like his “Wheel of Fortune” predecessor Chuck Woolery, he’s known for publicly expressing his conservative views on a variety of topics, such as COVID vaccines and climate change.

He once tweeted, “Global warming alarmists are unpatriotic racists knowingly misleading for their own ends” — only to later apologize and delete the missive.

Politics aside, Sajak is known for his cutting sense of humor.

Perhaps he’s attempted some bad jokes of late, but many say he’s a pleasure to be around.

“Pat was wonderful to work with ... and I have nothing but good things to say about him. He couldn’t have been nicer,” an industry insider, who worked with Sajak for several years on “Wheel,” told The Post.

A female contestant on the show in 2019 had similarly positive things to say.

“He was actually super funny and sharp. I didn’t get the ick,” she told The Post.



**A LOT OF LETTERS:** Pat Sajak started hosting “Wheel of Fortune” in 1981. His glam sidekick Vanna White came aboard the following year.

Viewers and advertisers seem, for the most part, happy.

“Wheel” remains at the top of the syndicated heap with its sister show “Jeopardy!” — which is also produced by Sony Pictures Television.

In the week ending April 17, it pulled in over 8 million viewers each weeknight — and it’s showing no signs of slowing down even amid its host’s outbursts.

Sponsors are not pulling ads, nor are they threatening to do so — always a sign of trouble in TV land.

There’s an off chance that Sajak’s recent behavior is related to some health issue unknown to the general public.

In 2019, he revealed that he’d almost died after suffering an intestinal blockage that required emergency surgery.

“I remember thinking, not in a morbid way, I think this must be death. This must be what death is like,” he told Good Morning America.

## His contract is up soon

Seemingly more likely is the possibility that Sajak’s acting-out is a contract ploy.

He and White, 66, with whom he reportedly gets on famously, are both signed through 2024.

Sajak earns an estimated \$15 million a year and added a lucrative executive producer credit to his hosting duties in his last deal.

He’s estimated to be worth between \$65 million and \$75 million and owns both a sprawling hilltop home in Los Angeles and a brick mansion in Severna Park, Md.

He and his wife — Maryland native Lesly-Brown Sajak — divide their time between the two abodes.

Their children — son Patrick, 32, and daughter Maggie, 28 — are grown, and Maggie is getting into the family business, as well as carving her own path as a country singer. She’s been the show’s “Social Correspondent” since 2021 — shooting behind-the-scenes clips and interviews with the show’s staff and contestants and sharing them online.

On occasion, Maggie has even stepped in for White as the show’s letter-turner — though neither she nor show officials have said anything publicly about what that could mean when both her father and White eventually leave the show.

Sajak has acknowledged that his final puzzle is coming fairly soon.

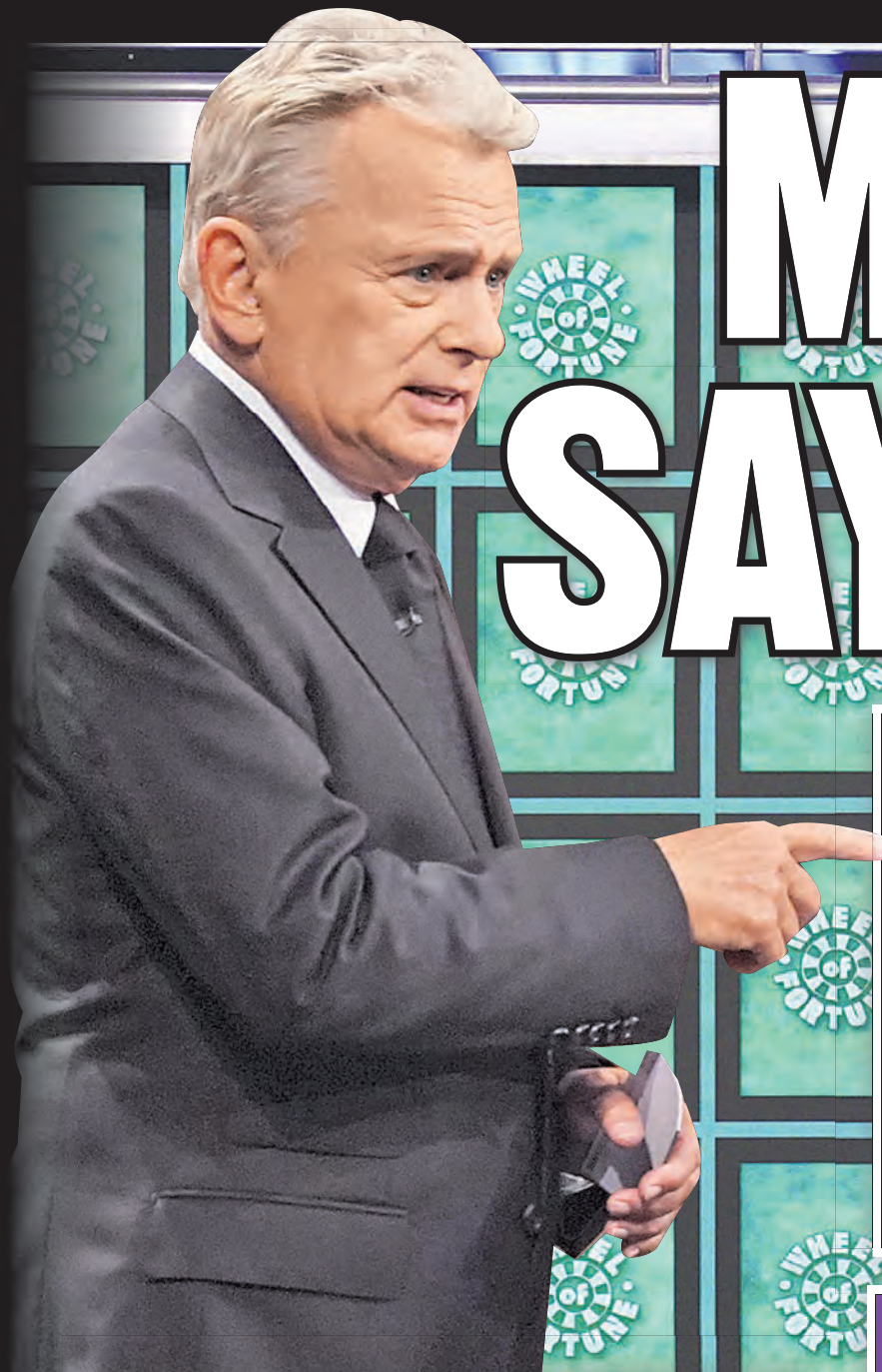
In 2021, he told “Entertainment Tonight” that he and White are “certainly closer to the end than the beginning” and that he’d “like to leave before people tune in and look at me and say, ‘Ooh, what happened to him?’”

Indeed, that time may be now.



confuses with strange behavior

# MEET PAT SAY-WHAT?



Sony Pictures TV, ABC/Getty Images (2); ABC (3)



**STRANGE TURNS:** In recent weeks on "Wheel of Fortune," Pat Sajak has (clockwise from top left) choked a contestant, asked one to remove his shirt and pulled the beard of another. Sajak's daughter Maggie (left, center) has joined him and Vanna White behind-the-scenes, doing social media for the show and occasionally filling in for White.



## 'Taxi' on the UWS



Cast reunion! Carol Kane (from left), Christopher Lloyd, Tony Danza and Judd Hirsch of comedy classic "Taxi" (inset, along with Danny DeVito and Marilu Henner) get together at Manny's Bistro on the Upper West Side, as seen in this snap from Danza's Instagram. "Another great shot from a great hang! #oldfriends #taxi," he wrote.

Tony Danza / Instagram

# Dinner outta this world

## Balloon sets 'courses' for the stratosphere

By JEANETTE SETTEMBRE

**HEIGHT OF LUXURY:** Guests aboard French hot air balloon *Céleste* (rendering right) will eat a meal prepared by a Michelin-star chef on the edge of space at 80,000 feet.



Zephalto

It's a Michelin-star mission.

A tourism company is selling tickets for voyages in a luxury hot air balloon — with a pressurized capsule designed for stratospheric heights — where brave gourmands will be served three-star fare on the edge of space.

French company Zephalto's low-carbon luxury air balloon, *Céleste*, will seat up to six passengers, plus two pilots on the six-hour voyage that kicks off at the end of 2024.

And the company is calling it "the experience of a lifetime."

Think bottomless champagne served from an elevation of 80,000 feet while gazing at a layer of the

Earth's stratosphere.

Reservations are on sale now for a cool \$10,900 and the full trip will cost around \$131,100.

On Thursday, guests were al-

lowed to book the excursion departing from France, with three hours at cruising altitude, the company said in a news release.

The luxe flight will hit maximum

altitude in a speedy 90 minutes and float above Earth for long enough to accommodate the multi-course meal, CNN reported.

The dinner's Michelin-star chef has not been announced, but guests are promised a customized experience tailored to their dietary preferences and meal requests.

*Céleste* was designed by the French architect, Joseph Dirand, who is also behind the restaurant Loulou at the Louvre.

"Zephalto's vision is to offer guests a chance to view the Earth from a new perspective and witness its spherical curve, in the darkness of space but in the comfort of quality, hospitality and safety," the company said in a statement.

## Influencer had *herself* for supper

Spanish social media star Paula Gonu sickened fans earlier month after revealing she ate her own knee cartilage during a romantic dinner date with her beau.

However, she is far from the first person to profess to sampling human flesh.

Murderers, plane crash survivors and investigative authors have spoken out about how humans taste: tuna and chicken, for instance.

However, one scientific gadget concluded human flesh tastes most like a different kind of animal — pork.

In 2006, scientists created a meat-tasting robot — and it identified a reporter's hand in its "mouth" as bacon. (Not to worry, the journo kept her appendage.) *Andrew Court*



# Douglas Murray

**S**OME people say that democracy dies in darkness. But it can die in the full light of day, too. Especially if people are prevented from seeing what's in front of them.

This week, two bombshell events happened. On the Republican side, the candidate still most favored by the party's base to be its nominee for the presidency lost a civil case against writer E. Jean Carroll. A New York jury found that Donald Trump had sexually abused and defamed the woman and ordered him to pay \$5 million in damages. You may have heard about this.

After all, the story was splashed on the front page of The Post the next day. It also led the news around the world. Although Trump denies the charges, it will be up to American voters to decide what they think about this. Is this the sort of thing they've already factored in with Trump? Or will they deem it yet another mark against him in a long list that anyone — of any political stripe — could now compile? It's up to the American public.

But the other political bombshell of the week had a different landing. I listened with amazement to Wednesday morning's report of the House Oversight Committee on the Biden family's business dealings. It has been perfectly clear for some time that while Joe Biden was vice president, his son Hunter and brother James enriched themselves through various pay-to-play schemes.

But the committee's findings revealed far worse than even those familiar with the story had expected.

The range of foreign donors included a corrupt Romanian businessman who gave the Biden family more than \$1 million. But more scandalous was the revelation that as many as nine members of the Biden family were benefiting from the money that came from this influence-peddling scheme.

New revelations included the claim that even one of Biden's grandchildren had received six-figure wire transfers from a foreign national.

## Late to admit the truth

As readers of this publication know, this all suggests a very serious form of political corruption. It is a story that has been suppressed for almost three years and that much of the rest of the media have only recently, and reluctantly, started to admit is true.

If they started late, they also stopped early. Because after the committee's press conference Wednesday, you might have expected some of the Democratic media to at least acknowledge something awkward

# Media willfully in dark on Joe



had taken place. But no. Although the story was splashed on the front page of this paper, most of the rest of the media seemed intent on continuing to cover over the story of the Biden family's business dealings.

The Post put the story on its front page. But what did papers like The New York Times and The Washington Post instead go big on? Well, both decided to splash their front pages Thursday with photos and stories about crazy Rep. George Santos. Specifically the fact that the serial fibber now faces a federal indictment.

And while it is obviously a story, here is some news for the NYT and WaPo: George Santos is not running for president. In no universe is it remotely likely that he will even retain any position of power. He will be lucky to keep the shirt on his back after the end of this process.

But, of course, the Democratic me-

dia love Santos. Because they can suggest that somehow the congressman is not an embarrassment to the GOP, but in fact some kind of poster boy of the party. They love the opportunity to make it so. Yet, still it isn't. Santos may be a figure of fun but he is someone of almost zero national political significance. Biden, on the other hand, has made it clear that he would like to once again run — or at least stumble — to retain the office of president next year.

## Covering up for Biden

Do sections of the media believe that they can keep covering for him? It seems so. Yesterday The New York Times buried a story deep in its paper about the Biden family corruption allegations. And how did they headline it? "House Republican Report Finds No Evidence of

Wrongdoing by President Biden." In other words, they completely misrepresented (or what used to be called "lied about") the facts. MSNBC and other left-wing media followed suit.

And here is the thing. When this country next goes to the polls, the public should know the pros and cons of every candidate. If Donald Trump ends up as the Republican candidate there will be no shortage of opinions and information about him. But the same will not be able to be said about Biden. Because half of the country is being kept in deliberate darkness by a media class that believes its job is not to report on candidates but to cover up for certain of them.

It's a disservice to the name of journalism. More important, it's a disservice to the American people — who deserve to be more than half-informed when they vote.

# Adams' sane talk on Neely

Mayor Adams has been taking flak from his left for being level-headed about the death of Jordan Neely on the subway last week. One left-wing media outlet condemned the mayor again this week for not saying that Neely was "killed." You have to wonder what these people want.

Since the incident on the F train, Adams has been one of the few politicians in this city who have been measured and judicious in his responses to the tragedy. In a speech Wednesday, he spoke with dignity and gracefulness about Neely. He made a point of saying that despite being a homeless drug addict with dozens of arrests and assaults to his name, Neely's "life mattered." But Adams is holding his counsel ahead of any legal cases to come.

But what would the mayor's critics like? Would they like him to join the fire-starter politicians I wrote about here last week? Would they like him to join the crowds who have gone out nightly in this city threatening to burn our town down?

We are used to politicians being incendiary. When someone does the opposite and tries to stop people literally starting fires, we should not condemn them, but thank them.

# Curtains for Tonys?

## Awards show faces ax as writers strike

By JOHNNY OLEKSINSKI

To the tune of the famous “A Chorus Line” song: “Kiss To-ny goodbye!”

Chances that the 2023 Tony Awards telecast will go on as planned a month from now are slipping away fast, multiple sources told The Post.

The complexities of the writers strike, which is still in its early days, have made it virtually impossible for the show, Broadway’s biggest promotional push of the year, to air June 11 on CBS.

“The Tonys are hanging on by fingernails,” said a source familiar with the turmoil. “It’s a mess.”

The American Theatre Wing and Broadway League, two trade organizations that put on the ceremony, are voting Friday to decide how to move forward.

The Wing, sources say, would prefer to postpone the broadcast — which is still set to take place at the United Palace in Washington Heights — until the strike is over.

### Disharmony

That option would look something like when the 2020 Tony Awards finally went on in September 2021, after theaters reopened from COVID shutdowns.

The last writers strike in 2007-08 lasted a little more than three months.

The wait would be an eternity for struggling musicals and plays, and frankly many wouldn’t make it until then. Multiple productions are bleeding money in the lead-up to the awards show, in hopes the visibility might give them a boost at the box office. By the fall, a few minutes of TV time won’t matter anymore.

The League, meanwhile, is said to want the winners to be announced in some other manner on schedule, as the Golden Globes did with a press conference due to the writers strike in 2008. That plan has pitfalls, too.

“No telecast means it’s meaningless,” an insider said. “It will

be the end of all these shows that are running at big losses to get to the Tonys.”

Best Musical front-runner “Kimberly Akimbo” and likely Best Play winner “Leopoldstadt” are both posting troubling weekly grosses.

The Tony Awards and American Theatre Wing did not respond to requests for comment.

Although a source said a script for the Tonys was written long ago — avoiding one major roadblock — the nominated shows’ playwrights are WGA members.

and likely wouldn’t show up for the big night. The WGA is expected to picket the event. And most other entertainment industry unions — SAG-AFTRA, Actors Equity, the Directors Guild — are all standing lockstep behind the striking writers.

The insider said, “They have to can it. Nobody will participate. No actors will do it.”

### At this stage

Multiple sources said they doubt Tonys host Ariana DeBose, who won the Oscar for playing Anita in “West Side Story” and was emcee last year, would go through with the gig.

Actors Equity, the union representing Broadway performers, recently encouraged its members to join the picket lines outside HBO and Amazon’s offices in Manhattan.

And that union’s president, Kate Shindle, told Deadline this week, “Equity stands unequivocally with the Writers Guild of America in their pursuit of a fair contract.”

But, she added, “It’s too soon to predict whether this will impact the Tony Awards, which are extremely important to our community as we continue to rebuild.”

There is still a spark of hope that the show could go on. The producers of the Tonys have requested a waiver from the Directors Guild to go forward with the telecast.

If the waiver is shot down? “S--tshow,” a source said.



**BOWING OUT:** The telecast of the Tony Awards could get canceled as many in the industry, including host Ariana DeBose, may not attend in solidarity with a writers strike.

## Boy, 13, shoots Fla. cop

A 13-year-old boy described by authorities as a “hardened criminal” with “no regard for life” shot a cop during a foot chase in Florida and was wounded in the exchange of fire.

The gun battle unfolded Wednesday in Lakeland as officer Jamie Smith was responding to a 911 call reporting a drive-by shooting.

Smith spotted the white Dodge mentioned on the call and pursued it until the car stopped and three teens jumped out and took off.

One of the teens brandished a gun, Lakeland Police Chief Sam Taylor said during a press conference.

Smith followed the armed suspect, later identified by the police chief as Wesley Dalmas.

Smith’s bodycam video shows him running after Dalmas, then repeatedly ordering the teen to stop and drop his weapon, but Dalmas refuses to comply.

As the officer rounds a corner, he runs into Dalmas crouching in wait. The teen fired at Smith three times, video shows, hitting Smith in the left foot.

Other officers caught up with Dalmas, who Taylor said opened fire on them.

During the ensuing gun battle, the 13-year-old was shot in the stomach, leg and thigh. *Snejana Farberov*

## Gunman kills Canada officer

A person in Ontario shot three police officers who responded to a report of a gunshot at a home in a rural part of the Canadian province early on Thursday, killing one of them and wounding two, authorities said.

At about 2 a.m., a shooter opened fire on the officers as they arrived at the house in Bourget, about 30 miles east of Ottawa, Ontario Provincial Police said in a statement.

All three officers were taken to an Ottawa hospital, where one died.

One person was taken into custody, police said, adding that there was no risk to public safety. *Reuters*

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# NYC's Union divided on Don

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## New 'Morning'

**T.J. Holmes** and **Amy Robach** have officially been replaced at "GMA3." The "Good Morning America" spinoff announced **DeMarco Morgan** and **Eva Pilgrim** as the permanent co-hosts. "Allow us to reintroduce ourselves," the show wrote on its Instagram account alongside the host reveal yesterday. Sources previously told Page Six that ABC was looking to replace Holmes with Morgan even before it decided to give Holmes and Robach the boot over their scandalous love affair. "All it takes is one move from God. Just one!" Morgan said of his new position. The duo will join Dr. **Jen Ashton**, who was already on the program as its chief medical correspondent.



## Pitch perfect

YANKEE legend **David Wells'** 60th birthday party got rocking when Bon Jovi keyboardist **David Bryan** took the stage and played his band's biggest hits at the Moxy. And Wells' 24-year-old son, **Lars**, was playing the drums when Boomer (above) jumped onstage and grabbed the mike to belt out a solid cover of "Wanted Dead or Alive." The pitcher's wife, **Nina**, planned the surprise party, which started at 7 p.m. and raged till 3 a.m. Guests included **Lorne Michaels**, **Dave Cone** and **Noel Ashman**.

SNOOTY Republican stronghold the Union League Club is divided over a portrait of President **Trump**, Page Six hears.

There's a long tradition (is there any other kind at a club that opened in 1863?) of commissioning imposing portraits of Republican presidents for its Murray Hill clubhouse.

But three years after Trump left the White House (for the first time, at least), honchos at the club — which has boasted 15 presidents as members — are still wrestling over whether to honor native New Yorker Don with his own majestic mug shot.

Said one source familiar with the situation, "Across the entry hall, in a long event room,

hang portraits of United States presidents. They include . . . every Republican president, except one. While Richard Nixon is at least consigned to a shadowy corner, Trump is conspicuously missing."

"There's a group that's agitating for a portrait. There are members who think Trump did a lot of good things, even if his personality leaves a lot to be desired," said another insider.

Meanwhile, we hear that "some members think he's hurting the party. Some won't let him go."

We're told that Trump didn't make any friends when the Union League's overseers invited him to speak during the 2020 campaign.

One insider recalls, "Trump asked, 'Will there be reporters?' He was told, 'Absolutely not! You won't be quoted.' He said, 'No reporters? I won't be quoted? Then I'm not coming.'"

(It is said that the club's unofficial motto was long considered to be "No women, no dogs, no reporters and no Democrats.")

Both Bushes turned up for the unveiling of their portraits.

The Union League was formed during the Civil War, intended as a club for gentlemen who staunchly defended the Union. It was a time when many among the city's elite were eager to appease the Confederacy.

A rep for the club didn't get back to us.



Formula 1 racer extraordinaire Lewis Hamilton (in hat) switches up his mode of transit for a boat ride with Shakira in Miami après-Prix.

## Shakira cruises new beau

**SHAKIRA**, who was recently spotted hanging out with **Tom Cruise** at the Miami Grand Prix, joined Formula 1 legend **Lewis Hamilton** for a boat ride on Wednesday (above). The newly single pop star, 46, was photographed getting onto a luxe sea vessel in Miami with a helping hand from the seven-time F1 champion, 38. The pair are believed to have crossed paths at celebrity hot spot Cipriani in downtown Miami after the race Sunday night and have since linked back up. Hamilton, who was joined by close friend and Team USA fencer **Miles Chamley-Watson**, picked up Shakira outside her \$20 million waterfront mansion. The boat was loaded with surfboards and other floaty fun paraphernalia. Reps for Shakira and Hamilton did not return Page Six's request for comment. But an insider told us, "There is nothing going on at all" between the duo. The "Waka Waka" singer is single following her dramatic split from the father of her two kids, **Gerard Piqué**. Cruise and the Colombian pop star, who moved to Miami from Spain after her breakup, were photographed hanging out together at the Grand Prix, and the actor, 60, is "extremely interested in pursuing her," a source told Page Six. "There is chemistry," said the source.

Follow us on Twitter @PageSix

## Fans Swift boated

**TAYLOR Swift** fans are convinced the star is releasing a memoir after an imprint teased a mysterious nonfiction book with a release date of July 9. Flatiron Books recently put up a publication for preorder under the working title "4C Untitled Flatiron Nonfiction Summer 2023." The book has soared on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other preorder lists after Swifties proposed that the singer is behind it. Fans think the book is by her thanks to a number of obscure numerical "clues" linking back to the star. But insiders tell Page Six the book is not by Swift at all. Variety quoted a publishing insider as saying the mystery book is a "fun, celebratory title and will skew slightly younger."



## Plating the Fork

**HAMPTONS** restaurateur **Zach Erdem** (above) has his eyes on the North Fork. Erdem — who owns 75 Main and Blu Mar in Southampton and is featured on HBO Max reality show "Serving the Hamptons" — tells us he'll open three spots in Greenport. He signed a 20-year lease on two restaurants. One will be a Greek spot, ZErдем, while Café 75 will serve American fare and is attached to a new hotel, Zey, that Erdem has purchased.

**Penelope Cruz** dots the red carpet at the 68th annual David di Donatello film awards in Rome.



Daniele Venturelli/WireImage

## Alarming morning hosts

**KELLY Ripa** and **Mark Consuelos** were jolted awake at 2 a.m. Wednesday when fire alarms went off, prompting firefighters to show up at the couple's home. "Good morning, guys, we're a little tired," Ripa said on "Live With Kelly and Mark." "Last night we had an incident — I'm not gonna name names, but the fire department came," Ripa joked that it was not her husband's fault, but they still had at least two alarms screeching. The co-hosts explained that the problem stemmed from not knowing the passcodes to their alarms. After talking to one of the alarm operators on the phone and still not remembering the code, the fire department showed up. "So I'm trying to get it off, and the guys come in," Consuelos said, while Ripa added that they were "real men." Their daughter, **Lola**, 21, was taking photos and videos of the ordeal. The firefighters were able to turn off all the alarms except one. "[The fire captain] gets up there, turns it, pulls it out, it stops — thankfully it stops — he looks at it, he goes, 'It expired April 2023,'" Consuelos said. "And then you sort of see the disappointment on the faces of everyone," Ripa said while laughing. "We feel like we've let them down, because there is no fire, there's not even smoke."

## Getting hot for star pair

**NELLY** and **Ashanti** continue to fuel dating rumors after attending a star-studded party together Wednesday. The stars — who set tongues wagging about a reconciliation last month, after being romantically linked throughout the 2000s — were spotted arriving together at Tao Group Hospitality executive **Jon Schwartz's** extravagant 40th birthday party at New York nightclub Marquee. "They were smiling at each other nonstop," an insider tells Page Six, adding, "They were super cute." Nelly took the stage to perform several of his hits for partygoers including "Hot in Herre" and "Flap Your Wings," reports The Post's **Leah Bitsky**.

## Strike — and a pose

IN the midst of the Hollywood writers strike, Chanel held a glitzy fashion show on the Paramount lot in Los Angeles — spreading confusion and anxiety across Tinseltown. A source tells us there was plenty of "buzz beforehand about who would show" at such an awkwardly timed event. "The strike is the only conversation in LA right now," they added. Deadline reported that the usual front-row crew — many of whom are movie and TV stars, who are supposed to be supporting the striking scribblers — were fretting about whether they would be seen as crossing picket lines if they went to the show on Paramount's property. But they seemed to have been reassured by the Paris fashion house, which was set to show its cruise collection. "Guests will enter the event though a neutral gate and are not in violation of the strike by being on property to attend this event," its press office said before the show. It also said it had chosen the location before the strike. Guests included **Kristen Stewart**, **Marion Cotillard**, **Margot Robbie**, **Paris Hilton**, **Kris Jenner** and more.

### Sightings

**ASAP Rocky** at a party for his liquor brand Mercer + Prince in Miami . . . **KEVIN Hart** hosting a celebration for bartenders and staff at the Nice Guy in LA for his tequila company, Gran Coramino Tequila . . . "The Real Housewives of New York City" star **Heather Thomson** at the Sea Fire Grill.



Karlie Kloss / Instagram

**Karlie Kloss** and her baby bump don bright red for FIT's Future of Fashion event in Chelsea. Kloss took home the Fashion Icon award.

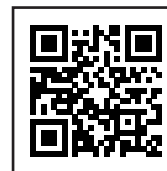
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# Biden's humor runs thin

President Biden dusted off a cringeworthy joke about how “thin” the walls were at his childhood home while delivering a campaign-style speech in Westchester about the debt-ceiling crisis.

Biden, was speaking Wednesday at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, blasting Republicans in Congress for demanding spending cuts as a condition to increasing the debt limit in a bid to stave off a potential US default.

While discussing his middle-class roots, the president shared a well-worn vignette about growing up in a large family sharing a modest home in the suburbs of Claymont, Del.

“We lived in a three-bedroom, split-level home in a housing development that got . . . it was a nice area; that was when they were developing suburbia — with four kids and a grandpop living with us,” he recounted.

“I look back and I wonder how thin those walls were for my mom and dad. But at any rate . . .” he trailed off, drawing laughter from a crowd of supporters.

It wasn't the first time Biden told the story. He did so at a campaign stop in Iowa in 2019 and again in 2012 at a conference in Las Vegas.

Snejana Farberov

## GOPer Vivek: Raise vote age

Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy said he wants to raise the voting age from 18 to 25 for anyone who is not in public service or can't pass a basic civics test.

Ramaswamy — a 37-year-old tech entrepreneur — laid out the ambitious proposal that would require a change to the 26th Amendment, which gives citizens 18 and up the right to vote.

Under the proposal, citizens under 25 who don't serve in the military would need to take a test.

Ramaswamy explained: “Or else you have to pass the same civics test an immigrant has to pass in order to become a naturalized citizen who can vote in this country.” Ronny Reyes

# STRIKE A POSE-R

KIRSTEN FLEMING



**C**HARLIZE Theron has come out — as an enforcer for drag queens.

“We love you queens! We're in your corner, and we've got you, and I will f--k anybody up who is, like, trying to f--k with anything with you guys,” Theron said during the Drag Isn't Dangerous telethon.

Theron is putting her muscle behind performers who are biological men and choose to dress up like clownish, overexaggerated women in their spare time.

They're not some vulnerable ethnic or religious minority subject to oppression based on immutable characteristics.

But that hasn't stopped Theron and other Hollywood feminists such as Melissa McCarthy, Marcia Gay Harden and Sarah Silverman from fetishizing them as the Uyghurs of the West.

## H'wood hypocrisy

I enjoyed “Kinky Boots” and the delightful movie “Dumplin'” but overall, I'm quite agnostic on drag queens. However, I could never have predicted they'd be the source of so much cultural agita in 2023.

The right wants to prevent oversexualizing drag shows in front of kids while the left has essentially deemed the performers virtuous and necessary components of childhood education, thus sending both sides to the legislative mat.

But some of the circulating videos of drag performers gyrating or twerking on or near kids are so graphic, one has to assume the audience's next family outing is to see Crystal on the main stage at Foxy Lady. Bizarre.

If you're so invested in your kids growing up with drag queens, God bless.

But let's chalk up this particular celebrity advocacy as another win for the patriarchy.

All of these women are self-identified feminists, but they haven't said a peep when girls are literally crying out for their spaces, which are being invaded by biological males, with self-identification serving as the only gatekeeper.

Where were these activists last week when 18-year-old Megan Simpkins, a senior at Martin Luther



**BYE, GIRL, BYE:** Celebs such as Marcia Gay Harden (center) ignoring the cries of biological women is not how feminism is supposed to work.

Getty Images; Fox 11; RUSD Board Meeting

# Phony feminists on wrong side in tacky war over drag

King HS in Riverside, Calif., gave an impassioned speech about having to share a bathroom with an erratic and violent trans classmate who beat up a much smaller girl in a sickening attack caught on video.

“Of course, any male who claims he is a woman will accept it, but what about the women? What

about the true girls like myself who are females down to our DNA? Why don't we ever get a say in whether or not we are comfortable with this?” Simpkins bravely said, addressing the school board.

## Women muted

“The truth is we aren't, the majority of us aren't, and yet nothing has been done to protect the safety of these women. I will conclude with this: It all starts with you. You are in charge of the safety of us women.”

Where are they when former University of Kentucky swimmer Riley Gaines was assaulted by trans activists at San Francisco State for speaking out against allowing trans athletes to compete against women?

What about when Austin Killips, a trans woman, took top prize (\$35,000) in the Tour of the Gila bike race — and when champion cyclocross rider Hannah Arensman quit competing after losing to a trans woman?

The hypocrisy and silence are

deafening.

Both Theron and Harden say they have kids who identify as trans — but as feminists, that shouldn't stop them and others from having common-sense discussions about the rights of biological women to feel safe in bathrooms and to have a level playing field in athletics.

Theron was once a vocal proponent of the #MeToo movement and argued that the “re-education” of society was good, even if “we have to overcorrect for a little while.”

Maybe she now feels the need for a re-education of women on their rights. That they should always be ceded to a biological man who feels like a woman.

Nowadays, it seems as if “I am woman, hear me roar” has been rebranded to “I am woman, please ignore.”

But if you cross the men who dress as women for play, Theron has a knuckle sandwich for you.

I've seen enough drag queens in New York City to know that they're perfectly capable of manhandling someone themselves.



**SILENCE:** SoCal student Megan Simpkins, 18 (inset), received little support when speaking out for female classmates after a brutal fight.

# Stayed with accused missus 'for kids'

By RONNY REYES

The slain husband of Kouri Richins stayed with her, despite suspicions the accused wife-from-hell was trying to poison him, to spare their kids from growing up in a broken home.

Greg Skordas, a spokesperson for the late Eric Richins' family, told The Post the devoted Utah dad left himself in a dangerous situation to keep his strained marriage going and do what was best for his three sons.

Skordas described Eric, 39, as the quintessential family man — coaching his kids' soccer, basketball and baseball teams and teaching the boys about hunting and the outdoors.

Their family life was upended when Eric died in March 2022, raising his family and investigators' suspicions that 33-year-old Kouri killed him with a fentanyl-laced Moscow Mule. She later wrote a tear-jerker book about children's grief.

"He lived for those boys," Skordas said. "I believe he would have stayed in a less than desirable relationship if it meant he could do right by them."

Eric had previously told a friend he thought his wife was trying to poison him after he got sick following a Feb. 14, 2022, Valentine's Day dinner at home, according to court documents in the battle between Kouri and Eric's family for his \$3.6 million estate.

Eric's sister also told the court her brother became violently ill after Kouri gave him a drink during a trip to Greece a few years ago, telling his sibling he thought "his wife had tried to kill him."

Skordas admitted it might have been "naive" for Eric to stay despite suspecting his wife, but he said the late lawyer's love for his family outweighed his suspicions.

The spokesman added that if Kouri is convicted as Eric's killer, it would be even more distressing for the family since she made money and became famous for her writings on how to help children get through the loss of a loved one.

"It's the great irony of the case," Skordas said. "It would just be horribly sad and all the more



**ON TO HER:** A family spokesperson said Eric Richins stayed with wife Kouri despite his suspicions.

## Hubby 'feared' 'killer-wife' plot

heart-wrenching."

Shortly before Eric's death, Kouri allegedly tried to name herself beneficiary to her husband's life insurance policy, but the lawyer changed it back to his sister's name without telling his wife, KUTV reported.

Eric eventually warned his family that "if anything happened to

him she was to blame," according to court records.

He died on March 4, 2022, just a day before Kouri closed on a \$2 million deal to buy a 22,000-square-foot unfinished home in Heber City, a deal for which Eric refused to pay, according to docs obtained by KPCW.

After buying the new house,

Kouri put it back on the market two weeks later, trying to more than double her money by flipping it for nearly \$5 million.

She has been charged with first-degree aggravated murder and multiple counts of second-degree possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute — and is due in court on May 19.



**TONY KEMPSEY**  
Victim rode his scooter.

## Rape rap against ex-con

An ex-con on lifetime parole was arrested Thursday for allegedly raping an unconscious woman in Queens last month, police said.

Tony Kempsey, 58, was nabbed by cops in Brooklyn and later charged with rape, assault and sexual abuse in the April 30 attack on a 49-year-old woman in Elmhurst, according to cops.

Kempsey, serving lifetime parole for a subway slashing decades ago, was riding his scooter around 5 a.m. when he encountered the woman walking home, NYPD Chief of Detectives James Essig said Wednesday.

The unidentified woman jumped on the back of the ride and the pair took off, but they made it only a few blocks when Kempsey allegedly struck her in the face.

She dropped to the pavement in a "desolate" area and lost consciousness.

When she came to, she realized Kempsey was allegedly raping her, according to police. "The rape was caught on video, it is pretty brutal," Essig said.

She says she's unable to remember details and it's unclear whether she willingly hopped on the scooter or was forced to — though police are confident the two were strangers.

*Craig McCarthy and Katherine Donlevy*

## LI thug 'shoots' officer

A Suffolk County police officer was shot on Thursday while chasing a gang member, cops said.

The plainclothes cop was struck in the leg when Janell Funderburke opened fire from his home in Coram at about 1 p.m., according to Suffolk County Police.

The unidentified officer

has been on the force for six years. He was listed in stable condition at Stony Brook University Hospital on Thursday night.

Funderburke, an alleged Bloods gang member, was arrested after a 20-minute standoff and charged with attempted murder. *Larry Celona and David Propper*

## Pizzeria pummel on Long Island

A Long Island pizzamaker has been arrested after he walloped his co-worker with a pizza peel in a heated fight at the shop earlier this week, police said.

John Vano, 50, and the 42-year-old victim got into a spat around 8:15 p.m. Satur-

day inside La Piazza on Merrick Road near Frankel Boulevard in Merrick, according to Nassau County Police.

An irate Vano struck his colleague in the back of the head with the peel, which is used to move pies in and out of the oven, according

to the criminal complaint.

After the victim fell to the floor, Vano punched him in the face, according to the court document.

The victim was taken to a hospital, where he was treated for substantial pain and a cut on his lip.

Vano turned himself in to Nassau County Police the next day and was charged with assault and criminal possession of a weapon, cops said. The judge freed Vano during his arraignment, the county DA's Office said. *Amanda Woods*

# PATCH ISN'T NUTS

## Tot-allergy 'Rx'

By ADRIANA DIAZ

Parents of children with peanut allergies will go nutty for this solution.

A new skin patch has shown promising results in helping to manage serious peanut allergies in toddlers.

Nut allergy is among the most common found in children in the US and one of the food allergens most often linked to anaphylaxis, a severe, whole-body allergic reaction, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

Peanut allergies can be fatal and are often the cause of much anxiety for parents whose children suffer from the condition.

There are currently no cures for the dangerous allergy, and there's only one treatment on the market — which is available only for children 4 and up.

But a recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed promising results for a potential second option.

The skin-based immunotherapy was tested on toddlers who have flexible immune systems. The Viaskin patch is coated with a small amount of peanut protein that is absorbed into the skin, gradually exposing the

body to the allergen in small doses.

Researchers conducted a randomized trial with 362 children, ages 1 to 3, who were first tested to find what dosage of the peanut protein they could handle. They were then provided with the patch or a placebo on a daily basis for one year.

After the 12 months ended, the toddlers' tolerance to peanut protein was reevaluated.

### Clear results

The study concluded that of the 84.8% of the participants who completed the trial, 67% of those who wore the patch were able to handle a higher amount compared to 34% of those who were given a placebo.

The researchers noted that some of the children may have naturally outgrown their allergies, but were still optimistic about the results showing that two-thirds of the children had become desensitized.

Dr. Alkis Togias of the National Institutes of Health, which wasn't involved with the study, commented that the findings "are very good news for toddlers and their families as the next step toward a future with more treatments for food allergies."

Peanut allergies usually develop early in life.

## Ohio thug 'bagged' woman, 60

An Ohio man was arrested after police found a woman stabbed, beaten and "stuffed" into a bag under his porch.

Dalontay Edmond-Geiger, 31, of Cleveland, was taken into custody on May 2, when officers doing a welfare check at his home found the woman, 60, moaning, WKYC reported.

Edmond-Geiger reportedly picked up the unidentified victim in early May and proceeded to torture her. *Olivia Land*

Kate Bosworth / Instagram



Hang 10 — or why not 20? Two decades after her surfing drama "Blue Crush" (inset), Kate Bosworth is back in Hawaii to drop a swimwear collection for Roxy. "Does it feel like 2002 yet??" she wrote on Instagram.

# Kate's surf & perfect



# ROYAL 'HUE' & CRY

Christopher Furlong/Getty Images



## Backlash versus star's 'terribly white' TV claim

By LEE BROWN

"Bridgerton" star Adjoa Andoh is under fire for deriding the royal family as "terribly white" during live coverage of the coronation — sparking more official complaints than any other UK broadcast this year.

The 60-year-old British actress, who plays Lady Agatha Danbury in the royal-themed Netflix show, made the racial remark while serving as a guest commentator for ITV's live coverage of Saturday's crowning of King Charles III.

As the king and his family waved to well-wishers from a Buckingham Palace balcony, Andoh de-

cried how the event had "gone from the rich diversity of [Westminster] Abbey to the terribly white balcony."

"I'm very struck by that," she said as fellow pundit Myleene Klass appeared aghast.

### 4,165 complaints

UK regulator Ofcom confirmed to The Post on Thursday that there have already been 4,165 complaints about her remarks — making it the most complained-about moment of 2023.

That is already more than 1,150 above the most complained-about TV moment last year when 2,630 officially denounced bullying and

misogyny on "Love Island," the Telegraph noted.

However, a spokesperson said Ofcom was still "assessing

the complaints against our broadcasting rules before deciding whether or not to investigate."

Andoh addressed the backlash during an interview with BBC Radio 4 on Sunday, as the coronation celebrations continued.

"I think I upset a few people," she conceded, according to the Telegraph.



**COLOR COMMENTARY:** "Bridgerton" star Adjoa Andoh (above) says she "didn't mean to upset anybody," but her coronation remark prompted a record number of complaints.

"I was talking about the day and how marvelous it was and then looking at the balcony at the end and suddenly went, 'Oh, it's so white' because the day had been so, so mixed," she said of her off-the-cuff comments.

"I didn't mean to upset anybody."

ITV has declined to comment.

## Arrest in NJ ax killings

A New Jersey man has been arrested in the grisly ax murder of his sister-in-law and niece, who were found dead underneath a mattress last month inside their Roselle home.

Everoy L. Morrison, 44, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder, motor-vehicle theft and several weapons counts in connection to the April killings, the Union County Prosecutor's Office said.

The bloodied bodies of Keisha Morrison, 45, and her 9-year-old daughter, Kelsey, were discovered by police who were called to the home April 18 after the two were reported missing.

Initial reports said the mother and daughter were bludgeoned to death, but later reports claimed an ax had been used.

Then police determined that Keisha Morrison's brand-new BMW had been stolen.

Investigators from the prosecutor's Homicide Task Force and the Roselle police were able to track the vehicle to Maryland.

There, the driver, Everoy Morrison, was pulled over and arrested for being in possession of the stolen car.

After an investigation, officials were able to identify Morrison as the murder suspect. *Isabel Keane*

## LI boater's body found

The body of a Long Island boat racing enthusiast who was thrown overboard when his vessel hit a wave has been found in Great South Bay after a four-day search by friends, family and local marine crews, officials said Thursday.

James Jaronzkyk, 28, was found by a Suffolk County marine rescue team just west of the Village Pool, officials at the Village of Babylon said on Facebook.

"Earlier this morning, missing boater James Jaronzkyk was discovered by Suffolk County Underwater Marine Rescue," the post said.

*Jorge Fitz-Gibbon and Alex Mitchell*

## Vid shows cop slay of knife-threat gal

Police fatally shot a woman after she drew a knife on them while they were responding to a domestic dispute in Dutchess County, newly released bodycam footage shows.

The tense footage of the April 29, 2022, killing of Jamie Feith was released

Tuesday by the state Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation.

At the time of the shooting, Feith, 34, lived with her partner and their three young boys in Hyde Park, the Poughkeepsie Journal reported.

Police were called to the

home after receiving a report of physical domestic violence and were initially able to de-escalate the conflict between Feith and her partner, who has not been named.

As Hyde Park Police Officers Joshua Kemlage and Bryan Sweeney and Sate

Trooper Christopher Miller spoke with Feith, she armed herself with a knife and attempted to stab the officers, according to State Police.

The Hyde Park Police Department had no comment due to the investigation.

In the short video, taken from Miller's body-worn

camera, one officer announces she is armed and exclaims, "Watch! Knife!"

Officers tell Feith, who is starting to stand up, to "get back" and "drop the knife," but she does not listen.

One of the officers then says, "Shoot her."

*Isabel Keane*

# Living in Fear

## How border residents suffer in Biden's crisis

**EL PASO, TEXAS**  
**T**HIS city is the latest ground zero for President Biden's failed border policies. And El Pasoans — in both the city proper and its rugged agricultural environs — feel increasingly abandoned by an administration more concerned about the well-being and comfort of “newcomers” than the safety of residents who have called the area home for generations.

With more than 860,000 residents, El Paso is the largest city on the southwest border, and it sits directly across the Rio Grande from Juarez, Mexico, home to 1.5 million.

As its name suggests, “the pass” has long been a conduit for the two nations' travel and trade.

State law-enforcement officials I spoke to believe the infrastructure that has facilitated that transit and trade is now driving the migrant surge across the river. Freight trains offer readily accessible travel north from Mexico's interior, and highways provide easy transit for smugglers.

In the first six months of fiscal year 2023, agents in the Border Patrol's El Paso sector have made more than 265,000 migrant apprehensions, a figure that does not count untold thousands of “gotaways” who have evaded agents and successfully entered illegally.

Once in El Paso, however, many migrants have no quick way out. They had taken to congregating in the streets and alleys around the city's historic Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where “humanitarian” groups have provided them with food, clothing and blankets — drawing even more to the area.

In an ironic convergence of events, the 2023 Border Security Expo was scheduled months ago for May 10 and 11 at the city's Judson F. Williams Convention Center — hours before the end of pandemic-era Title 42 restrictions.

The expo attracts contractors and federal law-enforcement officials, and the optics were likely just too much for an administration struggling to hide its border failures. Consequently, Tuesday, May 9, Department of Homeland Security officers swept through the area around the church, handing out leaflets encouraging the squatters to turn themselves in at a local processing center.



At the breaking point: With shelters full even before Title 42 expires, migrants set up camp outside a church in downtown El Paso.

Most complied and were reportedly processed — making them eligible for more formal aid — and released.

When I was there Thursday morning, several had returned and were being hustled away by the local police. One cop I talked to said they would be allowed to return once the city had cleared up the accumulated trash.

Largely ignored have been the residents themselves. One group — composed of farmers and local business people — met surreptitiously miles away from downtown at a ranch house adjacent to the border. El Paso is 80% Hispanic, and the crowd of 50 was indicative of the local population.

Shockingly, many of those assembled were afraid they would be targeted by criminals for meeting with outsiders and sharing their stories. Fortunately, off-duty police and retired federal agents provided a modicum of calm.

They told of cartels running drugs through their property, killing their animals and threatening their lives if they dared to call the authorities. Land their families had owned for more than a century was no longer safe; some had left, but most planned to stay and hope for the best.

I heard similar tales in a small adobe home that backed directly up to two layers of border fencing — the first a chain-link fence topped with razor wire erected under the Clinton administration, the second a much higher mesh fence built in 2008 under George W. Bush.

Before that fencing was installed, migrants would cross the river and hide in the modest house's small backyard or scramble onto its ramshackle roof. One managed to enter the house itself, only to be found by agents in a small sitting room in the back.

Of course, in the past the residents could count on Border Patrol to respond when such intruders were spotted. Agents are now too busy rounding up, transporting, processing and releasing migrants to provide much help, and the local police are too busy policing the throngs of squatters.

The locals are on their own and long for the protection they had been provided in the past. The Biden administration prefers to call the situation at the southwest border a “challenge” instead of the crisis verging on total meltdown it is, but regardless, it's a challenge the president is failing.

The cartels and smugglers run the border now, and they have the Americans who call the area home living in fear.

Andrew Arthur is the Center for Immigration Studies' resident fellow in law and policy.

**ANDREW ARTHUR**

# THE WEEK IN WHOPPERS

A diary of disinformation and the delusional

**THIS BOAST** **“We have seen the effectiveness of our approach (at the southern border).”**

**We say:** Effectiveness at the border? Thousands of migrants have been illegally crossing into the country every day with barely any resistance — and promptly vanishing. They've caused nightmares for border towns and cities like New York. That's what Mayorkas calls “effective”? Actually, he was bragging about a new Team Biden program that basically deems certain illegal entries legal (despite the lack of congressional approval). Great. Americans might just prefer failure.

—Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Wednesday

**Hundreds of US troops to arrive at the border today as migrants' anxieties rise ahead of Title 42's expiration**  
**CNN, Wednesday**

**THIS HEADLINE**  
**We say:** Americans are on edge over the expected tidal wave of migrants as Team Biden stops using Title 42 to reject them. Mayors and governors are racing to find resources to accommodate the influx. Yet CNN chooses to highlight the migrants' anxiety? Ha! Even the network must've realized its headline was wacky; the headline on its updated story flags both “officials and migrants” as “brac[ing] ‘for the unknown.’”

**THIS COLUMN**  
**We say:** Everything “reeks of racism” to MSNBC (which is almost like saying *nothing* does). But how is it racist to note that Jordan Neely needed help? In run-ins with cops, he himself admitted he was schizophrenic and didn't take his meds. His mental illness clearly fueled his menacing behavior, which prompted a subway rider to restrain him, leading tragically to his death. Heck, even MSNBC flagged Neely's mental illness in another piece that blames hatred of the homeless for the incident. (Hmm: Are homeless-haters or racists at fault here?)

The media's focus on Jordan Neely's mental health reeks of racism  
**MSNBC, Tuesday**

**THIS HEADLINE**  
**House Republicans escalate attacks on Biden family, alleging business with foreign nationals**  
**NBC, Wednesday**

**We say:** Sorry: Republicans didn't “escalate” any “attacks”; they merely reported on millions in dubious payments from foreign nationals that went to nine Biden family members via shady LLC shell-companies in what was surely an influence-peddling racket the family sought to hide. If this was Donald Trump's family, NBC would be calling for impeachment — and Democrats would comply (several times over!).  
 — Compiled by the Post Editorial Board

## Policy: Admit Them All

As the border crisis explodes, one thing's grown crystal-clear, despite the lying Bidenites' efforts to obfuscate: Their *only* priority is to admit every illegal migrant they can.

The latest surrender: The administration is just *letting everyone* go anywhere holding facilities are overcrowded (how many aren't?), with a stern note to report to some ICE office within a couple of months or maybe file an asylum claim *by mail*.

These "mass releases" began *before* the end of Title 42. They're calling it "parole," since "catch and release" doesn't sound good on a press release.

Why not just stop the line *at* the border until you have room? Only because waving everybody through is their goal.

Or witness Homeland Security boss Alejandro Mayorkas' pique after Texas National Guardsmen erected barbed wire to block one popular illegal-crossing spot: "I'm going to leave it to our Department of Justice to speak to the lawfulness, or lack thereof, of those actions," he huffed. If he thought his job was to keep people from crossing illegally, a simple "Thanks!" would do.

That he instead all but called it illegal shows the reverse, and reveals this administration's perverse priorities. *This* is why

Mayorkas keeps insisting the border is "under control": For *his* purposes, it is.

From the outset, this shady administration's only goal has been to admit as many people as stealthily and speedily as possible, while avoiding the "bad optics" of migrants held in detention facilities or under bridges.

They don't even have the courage to stand by their progressive principles of a completely open border. Dishonesty is at the root of all the brags on how the president's done "the largest expansion of lawful pathways" to enter "in decades" — because they're straining the laws to make it as easy as possible.

Same for the complaints that this mess is only because Congress won't pass "immigration reform." What they mean is "mass legalization" to speed up the lines.

Certainly *not*, say, toughening the rules for claiming asylum or enforcing a secure border.

In fact, asylum provisions were *never* intended to allow the mass migration now under way. Yet the left has gradually twisted them into a license for end-running every other immigration statute.

Time and time again, the Bidenites have insisted the law leaves them no choice. The truth is, they just don't want to own up to the disaster they blindly pursued.

## Demoted for Standing Up for NYC

Bravo, Mr. Mayor: You did right in standing up to President Biden and his administration. Even if it *did* get you dropped as a surrogate from Joe's re-election campaign.

Adams rightly accused the feds of turning their backs on New York, warning that "the city is being destroyed by the migrant crisis." He cares far more about New Yorkers than sucking up to national Dems.

Migrants will already cost the city over \$4 billion these next two fiscal years. And that's sure to skyrocket as Title 42's end supercharges arrivals. So the mayor's outrage here is *more* than justified. Especially since there's a clear line of blame from Biden's policies since Day 1 to the fix we're in now.

No, Adams doesn't go as far as we think he should. He's mainly asking for more federal

money and expedited work visas for the migrants. But he is the rare Dem politician showing courage on the issue.

Biden and his circle, as well as leftists across the nation, ruthlessly demagogue it.

They claim *any* opposition to unchecked illegal immigration *at all* is racism. Never mind the horrors that the Biden policy is inflicting on the mostly non-white migrants.

In February, 63% of Gothamites were saying *enough is enough*. It's surely more now.

Adams' pushback takes real cojones in a party devoted to patronage and Twitter activism — and not the voters they represent.

Are you listening, Sen. Chuck Schumer? Speaker Hakeem Jeffries? You should be.

Adams, meanwhile, should wear his demotion as a badge of honor.

## CNN's First Gift to Trump '24

For all their screams about ex-President Donald Trump's threats to democracy, the media hand him massive free gifts at any chance. Case in point: CNN's "Republican primary" town hall Wednesday night.

How better for a tanking network to draw eyes, even if free media helps Trump? (CNN, MSNBC, etc. coverage was key to his 2016 success.) But our brave Defenders of Democracy are actually OK with helping Trump win the '24 Republican nomination.

After all, with a thin bench, the Dems think he's the candidate that an increasingly senile and unpopular Joe Biden could beat.

He's a great turnout machine: No one inspires more hate and fear among the Dem base; no other Republican turns off as many

independents. Plus, his character issues and ever-expanding suite of ugly liabilities alienate plenty of normally-GOP voters, too.

At an event supposedly meant to help GOP primary voters make up their minds, moderator Kaitlan Collins *ignored* issues Republicans are focused on (soaring federal debt, the border mess, inflation). Instead she went to his sex-assault civil trial, his pending criminal trial in Manhattan, the Capitol Riot.

Which let him put her through the wood-chipper, at least in the eyes of the most GOPers, including the clapping studio audience.

If CNN means to bootstrap Trump into the nomination, it was a great start.

It's playing with fire: Remember 2016. But Trump's presidency was ratings gold for CNN.

## A New Biden, Inc. Scandal: Covering Up Foreign Cash

**THE ISSUE:** A House committee's finding that the Biden family was paid \$10 million by foreign interests.



•Rep. James Comer's House Oversight Committee has presented a plethora of documents seemingly showing "Big Guy" President Biden involved in an influence-peddling scheme ("It pays to be a Biden," May 11).

He and his family were enriched by foreign nationals. He has a chance to save himself from any more bombshell revelations and prosecution by resigning the presidency.

So here's your opportunity, Biden. Grab it while you can.

It's only going to get worse for you. Even if you have the support of the media, Big Tech, the FBI and the Justice Department, the American public is finally opening its eyes to your nefarious activities. **Joseph Valente**  
Staten Island

•If there is a scintilla of truth to these allegations, Biden should be impeached.

This president has embarrassed his office and the entire country with his deception and ineptitude. It doesn't say much for those who elected him and continue to support him.

Americans should not tolerate corruption or the suspicion of it from their governmental leaders. **Jerry Chiappetta**  
Monticello

•What does it mean that the FBI has "refused" to cooperate and hand over documents that would help the House Oversight Committee ("FBI's whistle-blow no," May 11)?

The FBI now has no rules? The FBI thinks it's more powerful than the Congress? What has happened to our country?

The Biden family is not the problem. The prob-

lem is President Biden — and slowly but surely the truth will come to light, despite the continued protection of the FBI, the Justice Department and the mainstream media.

**Joe Nugent**  
Staten Island

•Where are all the Woodwards and Bernsteins? Why are we not seeing this troubling story covered by most news outlets?

Why was money transferred through so many LLCs? This seems to be a Pulitzer-winning story waiting to be written.

The fact that this is not being covered validates so many no longer trusting the media. **D. Snyder**  
Baiting Hollow

•Evidently Hunter is the "brains" behind his father. After all, Joe did say Hunter was the smartest person he knew.

Obviously that's the case, since he has been able to peddle the Biden connection into funds for almost the entire family.

You can bet that if this were a famous family in the Republican Party, no stone would be left unturned to prosecute them. Is there no one in power who finds these payments questionable besides Comer?

We are truly doomed if

we continue to turn a blind eye and refuse to step up and look under these rocks.

The Bidens aren't doomed, though. They will just keep collecting funds because they know no legal body will do anything about it. **Betsy Flor**  
Putnam Valley

•I'm trying to choose which aspect of Biden is worse — his corrupt grafting or his incompetent policies.

Joe travels the world lecturing foreign governments on the evils of corruption while serving as the patriarch of the Biden family graft network. Payments from Romania were just the start. Money from China and Ukraine would follow.

On the other hand, his incompetent policies have caused the Afghanistan-withdrawal debacle, inflation, high energy prices and an open border. With respect to the border, the consequences include depressed wages for the working class and increasing taxes.

My choice is to vote Republican.

**Kenneth Fitzgerald**  
Hicksville

•With the breaking news by James Comer regarding the substantial cash payments to Biden family members from a corrupt Romanian businessman, it will be interesting to see if the Internal Revenue Service investigates the recipients for trying to hide the payments through a highly sophisticated LLC network.

I fear we are about to see just how bad the double standard of justice really is in our country.

**Matthew Pease**  
Demarest, NJ

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# 'Detroitification'?

## Credit crunch to slam US cities

PHILIP PILKINGTON

**M**IGHT big cities like New York soon undergo Detroitification?

Credit standards are tightening. That means it is becoming harder to get a loan. Whether you want to get a mortgage to buy a home or a loan for your small business, banks are becoming less and less willing to hand over the cash.

At the same time, borrowers are becoming less willing to take on any debt. This is what the Federal Reserve's latest senior-loan-officer-opinion survey shows.

You don't need to be an economist to guess what is going on. The past few months have seen several significant bank failures. Silicon Valley Bank was the first to go pop in March, followed shortly by Signature Bank. Then First Republic had to be bought out by JPMorgan, which only took on the bank on condition the federal government threw wads of cash on the table.

With all this chaos, is it any wonder banks are becoming more nervous about lending?

Potential borrowers, meanwhile, are looking at higher interest rates.

In May 2021, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate was just below 3%. Today it is well over 6%.

Since inflation-adjusted house prices are now the highest they've ever been, this sort of borrowing rate is daunting for most people.

So it is no surprise potential borrowers are having second thoughts about asking their bank manager for a loan. This raises the prospect of a credit crunch, a sharp decline in lending in the economy.

This happened before, in 2008, and the impact on the financial sector and the economy was grim.

When banks stop lending and consumers and businesspeople stop borrowing, the economy goes into recession.

As in 2008, the sector that is of most concern is real estate, especially commercial real estate, which has been under immense pressure since many people started working from home during the lockdowns.

Some might hope for a decline in property prices as they have become so expensive in recent years. But this is a case of "Be careful what you wish for" if there ever was one.

The construction sector employs just over 7.9 million people. Real estate, lending and leasing em-



Urban blight: Spendthrift blue places like NYC risk becoming the next Detroit.

REUTERS

ploys another 2.4 million people.

One in 16 people in the United States works in either construction or real estate. If real-estate properties fall, many of these jobs are under threat.

Then there are the consequences for governments, especially city governments. Apart from transfers from the federal government, property taxes make up the largest component of state and local government revenue (around 17% on average).

In the last time credit crunch, in

2008, state and local government revenue got hammered, and the Obama administration had to include bailouts for these governments in its American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Yet there are reasons to believe the problems this time around are even worse for many metropolises.

Crime, especially violent crime, has gotten completely out of control in many American cities.

From 2019 to 2022, the Major Cities Chiefs Association estimates a shocking 50% increase in homi-

cides and 36% rise in aggravated assaults in their member cities.

This has led many to simply leave the cities. We see this in the house-price data, with prices declining in states where people are fleeing, like California, and rising in states where people are settling, like Florida.

Many of the cities in these states have strained budgets that were highly reliant on property taxes to begin with.

Take San Francisco. Its annual budget is around \$6.2 billion, with a deficit of around \$290 million. And \$2 billion of revenue comes from property taxes, and its property market is already under pressure.

In 2020, the asking price for one newly built commercial office tower in downtown was \$250 million. The property recently sold for \$60 million, a shocking 75% discount.

New York City isn't looking much better. Its overall budget is nearly \$107 billion, but around \$35 billion of that comes from property-tax revenues. It already runs a deficit of around \$1.3 billion.

When the credit crunch really bites, cities like San Francisco and New York are in a lot of trouble.

Many already run large budget deficits. Their revenue base is highly concentrated in property taxes. Lax policing policies are already causing an exodus.

This raises the possibility that many will go bankrupt and collapse. This decade we could see the Detroitification of many American cities.

*Philip Pilkington is a macroeconomist and investment professional.*

# OUR SCHOOLS NEED A LOT OF FIXING

**O**UR schools are failing.

Across the country, English and math scores have plummeted thanks to bad pandemic policies that kept schools needlessly closed.

But literacy rates had been in trouble even before COVID. Detroit made headlines in March when National Assessment of Educational Progress scores showed that only 5% of the city's 8th graders can read on grade level. In 2018, that number was 7%.

Keeping schools closed hurt children, but academics have been going off the rails for years.

Take the recent national conversation on teaching reading. For decades, schools dropped phonics-based models in favor of memorization. This half-baked idea was implemented throughout the country with disastrous results. Bad ideas sometimes work — until they don't.

My older two children learned to read easily using this ridiculous memorization method. But my youngest decided to just memorize all words instead of actually learning to read. This worked remarkably well, and he managed to fool a lot of people in his orbit.

When we realized what was happening, we got him extra help focused on phonics. But how many parents were unable to get

their kids similar help?

This week, New York decided to scrap this failed model and return to the basics of teaching kids to read by sounding out words.

The problem is, the way we teach literacy isn't the only mistake we continue to make in our schools. Our kids spend a lot of time on irrelevant nonsense.

My fourth grader, at a south Florida public school, is about to tackle a Human Growth and Development unit. Great, right?

It includes a section on HIV/AIDS. But why? Why is learning about AIDS still standard-operating procedure for kids in 2023?

The curriculum reads: "HIV is hard to get. It is not as easy to get as some more common illnesses such as the chicken pox, flu, or colds." So why are children learning about a hard-to-get virus that's largely irrelevant to them?

As of 2020, Washington, DC, and 39 states mandate instruction about HIV. It makes no sense.

Parents aren't going to rise up and fight AIDS education as there are so many more important battles happening.

But people need to understand that every

minute wasted in the classroom is a minute the teacher could be teaching math, reading, history or science.

But science has been corrupted, too. Nearly every state has a climate-change curriculum. My own kids started learning about it in New York kindergarten. But again, why?

Thinking it's pointless to teach children about climate change does not mean you're a climate-change denier.

It means we understand there is no purpose to scaring young children into thinking the Earth is going to die soon. They can't do anything about it, they're children, and it only succeeds in frightening them.

The topic has serious repercussions. A Lancet study reported more than 45% of 16- to 25-year-olds in 10 countries "said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily lives" — 26% of Americans surveyed.

And what has been gained? More pointless paper-straw usage?

Their anxiety rates have not produced a decrease in climate change. We have accomplished absolutely nothing by telling children to be afraid of the future.



KAROL MARKOWICZ

Then there are the various commemoration days. A parent sent me the Broward County, Fla., calendar of observances, and it includes Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness day, National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness day, Haitian Flag Day and Immigrant Heritage Month.

There's a Day of Silence "where concerned students, middle school and older, take some form of a vow of silence to bring attention" to "the silencing" of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender "students and their allies."

None of these topics should have five minutes in schools let alone a whole day.

It's nice we've faced reality on reading and how to teach it, but there is so much more that needs changing.

Schools going back to basics, and what works, on reading should do the same with their whole curriculum.

Post-pandemic, kids and their education need to be a top priority. Academic subjects should be front and center.

Feel-good baloney that no one remembers how or why it got in the curriculum in the first place should be canceled.

*Karol Markowicz is co-author of the new book "Stolen Youth."*

Twitter: @Karol

# The Post Puzzle Page

## SCRABBLE G R A M S

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E <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>4</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	Double Word Score	RAK 1
								RAK 2
I <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	U <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>		RAK 3
								RAK 4
A <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>4</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>		
I <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	3rd Letter Triple	

PAR SCORE 145-155  
BEST SCORE 206

FOUR RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

**TODAY'S ANSWER**

SCRABBLE G R A M S

						SOLUTION
N <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>				RAK 1 = 70
E <sub>1</sub>	U <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>			RAK 2 = 59
V <sub>4</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>			RAK 3 = 61
I <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>			RAK 4 = 16
L <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>			TOTAL 206
N <sub>1</sub>	R <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>			
E <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>4</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>			

PAR SCORE 145-155

**Directions:** Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7 Letter words get 50 point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE players Dictionary, 4th Edition.

### Bridge

North dealer  
N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
 ♠ K Q  
 ♥ Q 3  
 ♦ A K Q 8 5  
 ♣ K 7 3 2

**WEST**  
 ♠ J 8 7 6  
 ♥ J 10 8 4  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ A Q 6 5

**EAST**  
 ♠ A 10 9 4  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ J 10 9 2  
 ♣ J 10 9 4

**SOUTH**  
 ♠ 5 3 2  
 ♥ A K 9 7 5 2  
 ♦ 7 4 3  
 ♣ 8

North	East	South	West
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
4 ♥	All Pass		

Opening lead — ♠ 6

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My friend the English professor can't tolerate poor grammar. He also has no use for poor partners -- except when he partners his wife, a dear lady who abides his eccentricities.

"She played at four hearts in this deal," the prof said, showing today's layout. "West led a spade, and East won and returned a spade. My wife promptly cashed the Q-K of trumps. When East discarded, she took the ace and then started the diamonds. West ruffed the second diamond, and the defense took the jack of spades and ace of clubs. Down one."

"You were upset?" I asked.

"No. I commiserated with my wife like a good English professor. I said 'there, there, they're'."

There is an easy way South can guard against bad breaks and prevent the defense from getting their four tricks. After South wins the second spade, she leads a club from dummy to set up communication with her hand. She can ruff her last spade in dummy.

As for the prof and his wife, I would say they're a lovely couple.

### Word Force

## BARBECUED

From the word or phrase above, form **AT LEAST 18** five-letter words, without using more than one form of the same word. For example, drink or drank (not both).

**ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S POST**  
Yesterday's word:

**CHOCOLATE**

cache	coach	leach
catch	cocoa	loath
cheat	hotel	teach
cleat	latch	
cloth	lathe	

### Wonderword

**How to play:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **circle their letters only**. Do not circle the word. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

**SPECIAL ELIXIRS** Solution: 11 letters

S	P	E	E	D	N	E	L	B	E	R	R	Y	C	S
T	P	M	I	X	T	U	R	E	A	L	O	E	I	K
I	L	I	Y	E	Y	D	O	B	G	S	E	M	N	I
R	A	X	C	E	P	D	N	E	O	N	I	R	A	N
I	C	E	G	E	N	A	E	L	J	N	A	L	G	O
N	I	S	R	W	S	O	V	M	T	U	Y	R	R	I
G	D	L	A	B	R	E	H	N	E	C	I	N	O	T
R	E	R	E	D	N	A	E	X	T	R	A	C	T	O
E	M	O	P	T	Z	M	A	G	I	C	A	L	E	P
D	E	S	W	E	E	T	R	L	I	Q	U	I	D	I
I	L	E	L	L	I	H	E	A	L	T	H	N	Ⓢ	N
E	T	N	P	R	O	T	E	I	N	I	A	K	Ⓐ	F
N	U	P	U	R	Y	S	L	E	M	O	N	S	ⓔ	U
T	U	R	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	I	M	A	Ⓣ	S
S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	I	M	A	T	I	V	E

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Aloe, Basil, Berry, Blend, Body, Extract, Hazelnut, Health, Herbal, Honey, Infuse, Ingredients, Juice, Lemon, Liquid, Magical, Medical, Melt, Mint, Mixes, Mixture, Orange, Organic, Pear, Potion, Protein, Remedy, Rose, Skin, Solution, Solvent, Speed, Spices, Stamina, Stir, Supplement, Sweet, Syrup, Taste, Teas, Tonic, Turmeric, Vanilla, Vape, Vitamin, Warm

**Yesterday's Answer: Recipient**

The NEW TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

## POST SUDOKU

To solve a Su Doku, you must put a number from 1 to 9, in each empty box.

Each number must appear once in each horizontal row, as well as in each vertical column and in each of the 3-by-3 grids. Impossible? Not once you get the hang of it. Tips and in depth strategies at

[www.SudokuWiki.org](http://www.SudokuWiki.org)

**For more Su Doku puzzles see tomorrow's New York Post**

Solutions on Page 44

© Syndicated Puzzles

Very Easy #6,180

						5	3
	7	9			6	2	
	3	5	8		7		9
7				9		3	1
	8						6
4	5	3		7			8
	2		5		9	6	7
		7	1			8	4
6	1						

Difficult #5,970

8				5				3
	3		2					
	6	5			9	4		
		3		8	1			
	7			6				4
			5	7		3		
		4	6			8	5	
					5		9	
1				4				6

## Quick Crossword

Across

- Informant
- MGM part
- Labor leader Chavez
- Goof
- Sprinter Bolt
- Enough
- Leg muscle of a mathlete?
- Stacked
- "Don't you agree?," informally
- Dam things
- However, poetically
- Game requiring plug-ins?
- Idle talk
- International gas brand
- Fruity pastry made by a movie boxer?
- Source of a low blow?
- "History of the World, Part II" actress/writer Wanda
- Pub pour for an enlisted soldier?
- Like part of some fusion cuisine
- Semisoft cheese
- Vacation for a stand-up performer?
- Shirt part with a button
- Tip
- ESPN Deportes language
- Small bill
- Crossed (out)
- 55 \_\_ board
- Pegasus pair
- Makes room, and when parsed differently, an instruction for four answers in this puzzle
- First name in cosmetics
- Netflix crime drama set in Missouri
- Self-regard
- River in a van Gogh painting
- Event of passing interest?
- Silent approval

Down

- Ruling period
- Entertainment centers?
- Directions
- "You honestly need me to do that?"
- Letters on some office suite doors
- Sigma follower
- Narrow inlets

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15					16				
17			18						19				
20						21		22			23		
24					25	26		27		28	29		
30						31		32					
						33				34			
					35	36				37	38		
39	40							41					
42						43	44			45	46	47	48
49								50		51			
52						53		54			55		
56				57	58			59		60	61		
62								63				64	
65								66					67

8 Next

9 Indie rockers Death \_\_ for Cutie

10 Cassowary cousin

11 Classic bit of slapstick

12 "Everyone's accounted for"

13 Fires bag, in a way

18 K, in the NATO alphabet

22 Frequent question from a toddler

25 British dude

26 Buckwheat noodle

28 Indian state near Bhutan

29 Brief sign-off

32 Cover the spread?

33 Hint of color

35 Olive stuffing

36 Cloudburst

37 Singer Brickell

38 Drains

39 Household outlet output

40 "In a few"

43 \_\_ed

44 Shiver

45 Hunting garb

46 Bumpy

47 Precede



**PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER**  
 (C) 2023 Tribune Media Services  
 48 Casting option  
 51 Annoying  
 54 Nap  
 57 Mil. title  
 58 Match, in poker  
 60 Kilmer of film  
 61 Cy Young stat



# JETS

## 2023 SCHEDULE

AARON RODGERS

HOME GAMES	AWAY GAMES
 MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 BUFFALO BILLS 8:15 p.m., ESPN	 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 at DALLAS COWBOYS 4:25 p.m., CBS
 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS 1 p.m., CBS	 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS 8:20 p.m., NBC
 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 at DENVER BRONCOS 4:25 p.m., CBS	 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES 4:25 p.m., FOX
BYE WEEK	
 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 at NEW YORK GIANTS 1 p.m., CBS	 MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS 8:15 p.m., ESPN
 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 at LAS VEGAS RAIDERS 8:20 p.m., NBC	 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19 at BUFFALO BILLS 4:25 p.m., CBS
 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 MIAMI DOLPHINS 3 p.m., Amazon	 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 ATLANTA FALCONS 1 p.m., FOX
 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 HOUSTON TEXANS 1 p.m., CBS	 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 at MIAMI DOLPHINS 1 p.m., CBS
 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 WASHINGTON COMMANDERS 1 p.m., CBS	 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28 at CLEVELAND BROWNS 8:15 p.m., Amazon
 JANUARY 6 or 7 at NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TBD	



**NEW YORK POST**

# GIANTS



## 2023 SCHEDULE

HOME GAMES	AWAY GAMES
	
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 <b>DALLAS COWBOYS</b> 8:20 p.m., NBC	SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 <b>at ARIZONA CARDINALS</b> 4:05 p.m., FOX
	
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 <b>at SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS</b> 8:15 p.m., Amazon	MONDAY, OCTOBER 2 <b>SEATTLE SEAHAWKS</b> 8:15 p.m., ESPN
	
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 <b>at MIAMI DOLPHINS</b> 1 p.m., FOX	SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 <b>at BUFFALO BILLS</b> 8:20 p.m., NBC
	
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22	SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29



**DANIEL  
JONES**

# NY



**WASHINGTON COMMANDERS**  
1 p.m., FOX



**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29**  
**NEW YORK JETS**  
1 p.m., CBS



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5**  
**at LAS VEGAS RAIDERS**  
4:25 p.m., FOX



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12**  
**at DALLAS COWBOYS**  
4:25 p.m., FOX



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19**  
**at WASHINGTON COMMANDERS**  
1 p.m., FOX



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26**  
**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**  
1 p.m., FOX

**BYE WEEK**



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11**  
**GREEN BAY PACKERS**  
8:15 p.m., ABC



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 17**  
**at NEW ORLEANS SAINTS**  
1 p.m., FOX



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 25**  
**at PHILADELPHIA EAGLES**  
4:30 p.m., FOX



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**  
**LOS ANGELES RAMS**  
1 p.m., CBS



**JANUARY 6 or 7**  
**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES**  
TBD



Dow Jones Indust. Avg. **Down 221.82**  
**33,309.51**

# Business

Nasdaq Comp. **Up 22.07**  
**12,328.51**

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Dow reeling

Stocks on Wall Street were mixed Thursday as more signs emerged that the economy is cooling. The Dow fell for a fourth straight day, while shares of Google parent Alphabet lifted the Nasdaq.

### Fed pleased

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits last week rose by 22,000 to 264,000, the highest level since October 2021 and a potential sign giving the Federal Reserve room to halt further rate hikes.

### Pfizer fury

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla called US plans to negotiate drug prices for its Medicare health program “negotiation with a gun to your head” and said he expects drugmakers to sue in an attempt to halt the process.

### ‘Meat’ slump

Shares of Beyond Meat tumbled 18% to new lows after the plant-based substitute meat seller said it would sell up to \$200 million worth of new shares as it faces a shrinking cash pile.

### No sharing

Lyft is officially discontinuing shared rides, new CEO David Risher told Bloomberg, one of a slate of product changes the company is making to compete with Uber.

Sources: Reuters, Dow Jones, AP

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# A-ROD'S HEFTY CUT

## Starts fund to invest in sport teams

### EXCLUSIVE

By LYDIA MOYNIHAN and JOSH KOSMAN

Alex Rodriguez is looking to raise a massive buyout fund that will invest in pro sports teams in the US and abroad, The Post has learned.

The former Yankee slugger's nascent private equity fund would aim for minority stakes in pro franchises across US leagues including MLB, the NFL and the NHL, as well as sports teams overseas ranging from soccer to cricket, according to people with knowledge of the fund.

While the hoped-for size of the sports-focused fund couldn't immediately be learned, a source close to the situation said A-Rod is gunning for a war chest in “the billions.”

That's despite the fact that Marc Lore, the e-commerce billionaire who has partnered with A-Rod to buy the Minnesota Timberwolves, won't be participating in the new fund, insiders said.

A-Rod is actively looking to hire management for the fund and has brought in recruiters to help with that effort. Fundraising is still in the early stages and A-Rod could decide to scrap it at any time, sources cautioned.

### Whole new ballgame

Former Yankee star Alex Rodriguez is attempting to raise a buyout fund in the billions of dollars in the hopes of purchasing minority stakes in professional franchises of different sports worldwide.



Post photo illustration

“Alex's successful purchase of the Timberwolves franchise has drawn the interest of large PE firms and institutional investors who are courting him to create sizable PE funds that would invest in the broader sports and real estate universe,” a source with knowledge of the situation said.

A spokesperson for A-Rod declined to comment.

A 10-figure fundraising would put the A-Rod fund in league with other major players in sports investing like Arctos Sports Partners, a minority owner in the Golden State Warriors that's reportedly close to

raising a \$2.5 billion fund, and Gerry Cardinale's RedBird Capital Partners, an owner of the Boston Red Sox and Liverpool FC.

### Filling a need

Ares Management, whose founder Tony Ressler personally owns the Atlanta Hawks, also has raised \$3.7 billion. Avenue Capital Group CEO Marc Lasry has announced plans for a \$2 billion to \$3 billion sports fund.

A-Rod is looking to capitalize on professional sports teams' increasing

need for minority investors as their valuations have ballooned. Within the last few years, the MLB and NBA have been letting owners sell minority stakes in their teams to private equity funds. NFL team owners are pushing for the league to allow private equity to take minority stakes.

Sources close to the situation noted, however, that A-Rod's Timberwolves deal would likely bar his fund from further investments in NBA teams.

A source said A-Rod's group is “focused on building the Timberwolves and the Lynx franchises and bringing a championship to Minnesota.”

# Musk on new Twit CEO: ‘She’ starts soon

Billionaire Elon Musk revealed Thursday that he has hired a female executive to replace him as CEO of Twitter.

Musk's pick reportedly will be NBCUniversal's head of advertising Linda Yaccarino, according to The Wall Street Journal, which cited people familiar with

the situation.

Musk, who has served as Twitter's top boss since he acquired the company for \$44 billion last October, did not initially say whom he had chosen for the key role.

“Excited to announce that I've hired a new CEO for X/Twitter,” Musk tweeted. “She will be starting in ~6 weeks!”

The mogul added that he would transition to a role as executive chairman and chief technology officer “overseeing product, software & sysops.”

Twitter didn't respond to a request for further comment.

Yaccarino has been at NBCU for more than a dec-

ade and helped launch the company's ad-supported Peacock streaming service.

An NBCU spokesman said Yaccarino is in back to back rehearsals for an up-front presentation to advertisers, the Journal reported.

Musk has said for months that he would step away from day-to-day operations

once he had found a suitable candidate.

Last December, Musk polled his Twitter followers on whether he should continue leading the platform.

“I will resign as CEO as soon as I find someone foolish enough to take the job!” Musk tweeted at the time.

Thomas Barrabi

# Adidas may sell vast Yeezy pile

Adidas CEO Björn Gulden — who has been wrestling for months over what to do with the company's piled-up Yeezy inventory — suggested Thursday that it might be sold.

Since breaking ties with rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West (right), last October over his anti-Semitic outbursts and public meltdowns, Adidas' once-popular Yeezy shoes have been piling up in warehouses.

While Adidas has been slow to decide what to do with the millions of sneakers, Gulden clarified that “burning is not the solution” at Thursday's annual shareholder meeting, according to Bloomberg.

He added that Adidas has spoken to many nonprofit organizations that agreed with the decision.

Gulden had previously said he was “trying to avoid” burning the shoes “because it's a sustainability issue.”

Instead, “what we are trying to do over time is to sell parts of these goods and then donate to organizations that help us and that also have been hurt by Kanye's statements,” Gulden said, according to Bloomberg.

“It's not yet clear when we will do that and how we will do that, but we're working on these things,” he said. He didn't say which organizations Adidas might donate to. *Shannon Thaler*



# News Corp rev dips

News Corp reported slightly lower revenue amid a softening advertising market, despite continued growth at Wall Street Journal parent Dow Jones.

The New York-based media company, which owns The Post, the Journal, HarperCollins Publishers and news organizations in the UK and Australia, said revenue fell 1.8% to \$2.45 billion for the quarter ended March 31. Net profit declined 39% to \$50 million.

“In a period in which advertising was clearly insipid in certain parts of the world, our core non-advertising revenue has been particularly robust,” Chief Executive Robert Thomson said.

News Corp shares were up 4.6% in after-hours trading.

During a call with investors Thursday, Thomson expressed his concern about the impact of generative artificial intelligence on News Corp's intellectual property and the future of journalism. He called for compensation for the use of IP for training AI engines, the content that is surfaced in user queries and answers that are monetized by other parties when articles are aggregated and synthesized.

“We expect our fair share of that monetization,” he said. “Generative AI cannot be degenerative AI.” *Dow Jones*

# Florida's enforcer

## DeSantis agent empowered to fine Disney.

By SHANNON THALER

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' hand-picked board to oversee Disney's tax district has “weaponized” a new special magistrate who could impose \$500 fines — and even shut down rides — for code violations at its theme parks, local media report.

The Central Florida Tourism Oversight District named longtime DeSantis ally Glen Gilzean to the newly created role of administrator to oversee the scrapped Reedy Creek tax district, the Orlando Sentinel reported Wednesday.

The board also unanimously voted to adopt a code enforcement program and to hire new enforcement officers who will answer to Gilzean. Any attractions that violate the as-yet-to-be-determined codes will be subject to fines of up to \$500 a

### Watching Mouse House

**Glen Gilzean (center, with Gov. Ron DeSantis) has been named a special magistrate to look for code violations at Disney parks.**



day, the paper reported.

Gilzean reportedly will also have “pretty awesome powers” to shut rides in violation of the unspecified code at the Disney World parks near Orlando, which include Magic Kingdom

and Epcot, the Sentinel reported.

The strong-arm move comes during an escalating legal battle between DeSantis and Disney — and as Mouse House boss Bob Iger called out the Re-

publican governor for playing politics over the special district.

The two sides have filed suits and countersuits against each other after DeSantis stripped Disney of its special district status

earlier this year — following the company's opposition to the so-called Don't Say Gay law.

“This is about one thing and one thing only: them retaliating against us,” Iger said during a call with investors Wednesday.

Rick Foglesong, a Walt Disney World historian, said Disney has a lot to fear from the position.

“You'd think [Disney] would see a threat here,” Foglesong, the author of “Married to the Mouse,” told the Sentinel.

Gilzean, a former head of the Central Florida Urban League, will get a starting salary of \$400,000 and will be the state's point man in the lawsuit filed by Disney against the new district.

“Our new administrator can plan on being a defendant in a lawsuit,” board Chair Martin Garcia told the Sentinel. Gilzean didn't respond to a request for comment.

# Peloton recalls 2M bikes

Peloton Interactive will recall 2.2 million exercise bikes due to the risk of injuries from a seat-related issue, the company said Thursday, sending its shares down 9%.

The voluntary recall piles more pressure on Peloton as it faces waning demand for its equipment in an uncertain economy.

“We have identified 35 reports of seat posts breaking out of 2,160,000 units sold in the United States, as of

April 30,” Peloton said in a statement after disclosing the defect earlier this month.

During the January-March quarter, Peloton said it accrued \$8.4 million as an estimated expense for a “voluntary corrective-action plan.”

The recall involves bikes with model number PL01 sold from January 2018 to May 2023. The seat post can break unexpectedly during use.

*Reuters*

# Labels for AI ‘photos’

Google is adding features that will help users identify pictures generated through artificial intelligence — a move that came after deepfake images of Pope Francis in a Balenciaga puffer jacket and Donald Trump resisting arrest took the Internet by storm.

The move came as critics, including Elon Musk and the “Godfather of AI” Dr. Geoffrey Hinton, warn that AI could exacerbate the spread

of online misinformation by providing inaccurate answers or producing images nearly indistinguishable from the real thing.

Google said it will add a “markup” in the metadata of photos produced by its own AI models to show that the images are computer-generated.

Google Search will use the metadata to display a warning label when AI-generated images appear in its results. *Thomas Barrabi*

# SW pilots OK strike

Southwest's pilots have voted to authorize a strike, raising pressure in years-long contract negotiations.

The Southwest Airlines Pilots Association said it released the results of the referendum early after votes came in more quickly and decisively than it expected, with 98% of pilots participating and 99% voting to authorize a potential strike.

But the vote doesn't mean pilots are likely to walk out soon, as federal law makes it difficult for airline unions to go on strike.

Southwest said the vote would have no impact on its scheduled operations.

*Dow Jones*



**JAMIE DIMON**

Monitoring DC spending fight.

## JPMorgan girds for US default

JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon said Thursday the bank is holding weekly meetings to discuss the implications of a potential US default, according to an interview on Bloomberg TV.

The bank's "war room" will probably start daily meetings on May 21, then ramp up to three times a day if the debt-limit stand-off drags on, he said.

"We've got to be very careful about getting close" to a default, which could cause a financial panic, he added. "It's very unfortunate, it's time-consuming, hopefully it won't happen, but it affects contracts, collateral, clearing houses, clients."

Turning to the banking crisis, Dimon said regional banks are "quite strong" after reporting good earnings. Still, the industry and regulators should "just be prepared for problems."

He expects more regulation on the banks, but stressed the need to proceed carefully. *Reuters*

## PacWest sinks 23%

Shares of PacWest Bancorp plunged 23% Thursday after the Los Angeles-based lender said its deposits declined and that it had posted more collateral to the Federal Reserve to boost its liquidity.

PacWest deposits fell 9.5%, or \$1.5 billion, last week, with the majority of those outflows occurring May 4-5 following reports that the bank was exploring ways to bolster its finances, including a sale. PacWest shares have lost nearly 40% this month. *Reuters*

**G**RAYDON Carter was editor-in-chief of *Vanity Fair* for 25 years during a golden era of magazines. He is now co-editor of *Air Mail*, where he serves as a tastemaker for "worldly cosmopolitans." Graydon shares his musings with *On The Money: Why the Internet is an acid pit and how the Met Ball has become the Greenwich Village Halloween parade for the rich.*

**Lydia:** You get *The Post* every day in NYC. Why *The Post*?

**Graydon:** The *New York Times* tells you about the world and the *New York Post* tells you about your world. I read the *Post* every single morning. I always have. I read it before *The Times*. The *Post* is the daily biography of *New York* in all its glory and grimness.

**Lydia:** You co-founded *Spy* magazine which was biting and funny and sarcastic.

Given the cultural climate, is there a place for that kind of humor today?

**Graydon:** The Internet is like an acid bath. *Spy* was like a slightly astringent cocktail. It was written in a pointed, clever way during a period in *New York* when money was on show for the first time in decades. And most of the people we wrote about were "overdogs" — as opposed to underdogs. There probably is still room for *Spy* but without me, and I suspect without my partner, **Kurt Andersen**. You need someone in their 30s willing to spend a lot of time in the muck of contemporary culture — and a further willingness to burn bridges.

### Too woke for humor?

**Lydia:** Are we as a society simply too woke to appreciate pointed humor?

**Graydon:** If you watch **Seth Meyers** or **John Oliver** or **Jimmy Kimmel** or *SNL*, they're really funny on a regular basis.

**Lydia:** You have said that one of your overriding mantras as an editor is to "treat people fairly." Is that in conflict with the rampant advocacy journalism we see today?

**Graydon:** I think I care about treating people more fairly now than when I was younger. At some point you just come to the realization that simply surviving in this crazy world is an accomplishment. I think advocacy journalism continues to be vital. The work of *ProPublica* over the last couple weeks on the Supreme Court, specifically **Clarence Thomas**, was extraordinary. And I do think that, for all the damning revelations in their investigations, they have treated **Thomas** fairly.

**Lydia:** You created the highest-profile event during Oscar season outside the Academy Awards it-



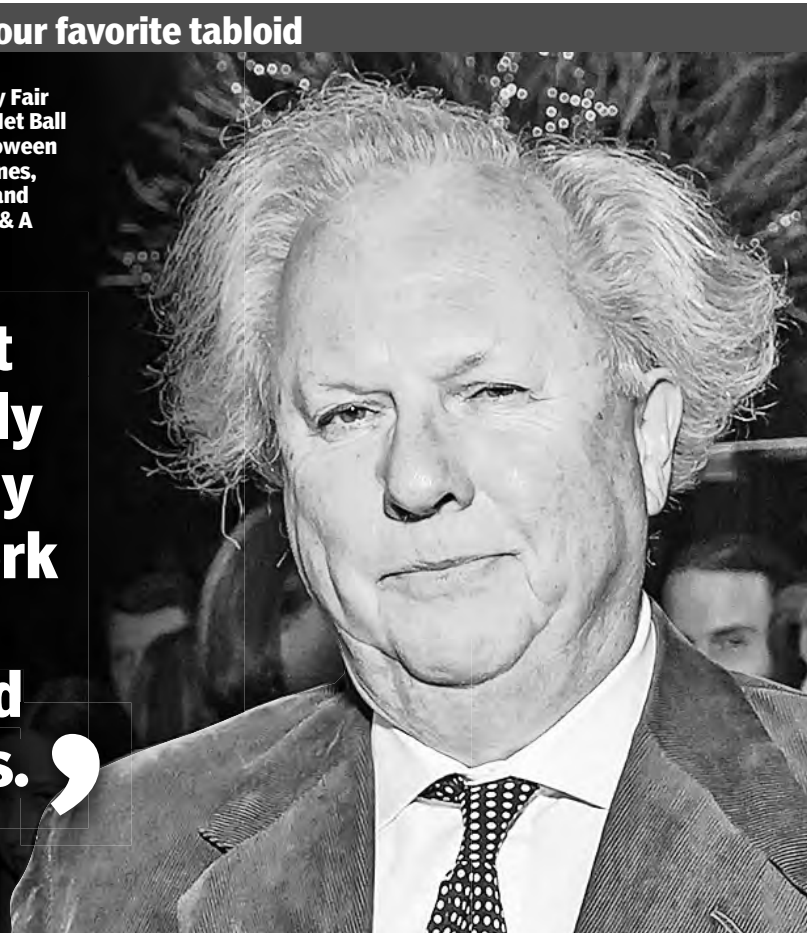
# GRAYDON'S DISH LIST

And, yes, he loves our favorite tabloid

Graydon Carter, former *Vanity Fair* editor (right), compares the Met Ball to the Greenwich Village Halloween parade and discusses magazines, Hollywood, comedy, reading and *The Post* in this far-ranging Q & A with our columnist.

“The *Post* is the daily biography of *New York* in all its glory and grimness.”

— Graydon Carter



REX/Shutterstock

## Musings on Met Ball, media, H'wood

self: the *Vanity Fair* Oscar Party. Were the '90s and the aughts "peak Hollywood?" Have the streamers and tech giants sucked the glamor out of the studios? Is it over?

**Graydon:** A certain part of it is over. I'll be honest, my wife and I haven't watched the Oscars since I left *Vanity Fair* almost six years ago. We do very little Hollywood coverage in *Air Mail*. The entertainment business is not exactly an underreported subject. I do get interested in Hollywood stories when things go terribly, terribly wrong. Hollywood may not be as glamor-centric as it was in the past, but maybe it never was.

**Lydia:** You've said glamor moves and shifts. Can glamor come back to news and magazines?

**Graydon:** The Internet can be unrelentingly grim, but most peo-

ple want something other than that daily dose of awfulness in their lives. People watch coverage of the Met Ball just to see the insane clothing. Although I would say over the last couple of years, attendees are wearing costumes rather than clothes. You could get a version of many of the outfits worn that night for a fraction of the cost at any Halloween shop in October. The Met Ball of today is not all that far removed from the Greenwich Village Halloween parade.

**Lydia:** Do you miss the longevity of print?

**Graydon:** With print you actually have to keep the magazine with you. The great thing about the Internet is your archive is always available. Even on your phone.

**Lydia:** Do people even read books anymore?

**Graydon:** I think people read as much as ever. Just in different ways. They're not lying down with the volumes of **Charles Dickens**, but they're reading. There's always been a percentage of the population that doesn't read. I divide the world into two groups: readers and nonreaders. Readers you want to be around. Nonreaders, not so much.

**Lydia:** Of course, people used to read **Charles Dickens** in installments over the span of weeks.

**Graydon:** They were serials. Chapters would run in the small London weekly magazines of the day. His books were essentially what series like "Succession" or "Game of Thrones" are today. And like good television, **Dickens** exited each chapter with a cliffhanger.

*lmoynihan@nypost.com*

# Sally Brompton Daily Horoscope



**DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS AT SALLYBROMPTON.COM**

**♉ TAURUS (April 21-May 21)**  
Cosmic activity in your own sign means you possess supreme self-belief, but as mind planet Mercury is still moving retrograde there is a danger you could think you are infallible and unbeatable. As an Earth sign you should know better than that.

**♊ GEMINI (May 22-June 21)**  
You won't have to let partners and colleagues and loved ones know how you feel today - they will see in your face what your mood is and adjust the way they interact with you accordingly. They won't want to risk getting on your bad side!

**♋ CANCER (June 22-July 23)**  
Forget about making money and making your way in the world and have fun for a change. There are so many interesting things you could be doing now, some of which can make you happier than you have been for a very long time.

**♌ LEO (July 24-Aug. 23)**  
Get on top of your workload early and quickly today so you can have a fun evening on the town with your friends. Just be careful you don't overdo it and spend the weekend nursing a king-sized hangover. Even Leos need to pace themselves!

**♍ VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)**  
Because you are cautious by nature you won't be taken in by someone who promises you the world for just a small investment. Tell them you'll wait until Mercury moves in your favor on Monday before making a decision, which will almost certainly be "no".

**♎ LIBRA (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)**  
Be wary of people who have the power to make life difficult for you. The planets warn that no

matter how much you try to get in their good books they will see you as a threat and try to cut you down to size. Steer well clear!

**♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)**  
A little bit of self-analysis may be no bad thing but the planets warn you could get carried away and dive so deep inside yourself today that the rest of the world ceases to exist. Never forget that the world "out there" is important too.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)**  
You don't have to explain to other people how or why you have reached a decision. In fact, the more they pester you to let them in on your thought processes the less information you should give them. Put simply, it's none of their business.

**♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)**  
Some of your friends and colleagues may be of the opinion that disaster lurks round the next corner but you have no intention of joining in with their apocalyptic way of thinking. Your world is still a very good place to be and you intend to enjoy it.

**♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)**  
A few days from now you will look back on the week now ending and realize that what you were worrying about simply wasn't worth the effort. But why wait a few days when you can change your outlook for the better this very moment?

**♓ PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)**  
Do you really have to change a method or routine that has

served you well in the past? Even if it's nearing its sell-by date you would be wise to leave it be for a few days yet, at least until Mercury ends its retrograde phase on Monday.

**♈ ARIES (March 21-April 20)**  
Don't waste your time arguing with someone whose ideas and opinions are the opposite of your own. You won't change them and they won't change you, so agree to disagree and go your separate ways. It's highly unlikely you will find common ground.

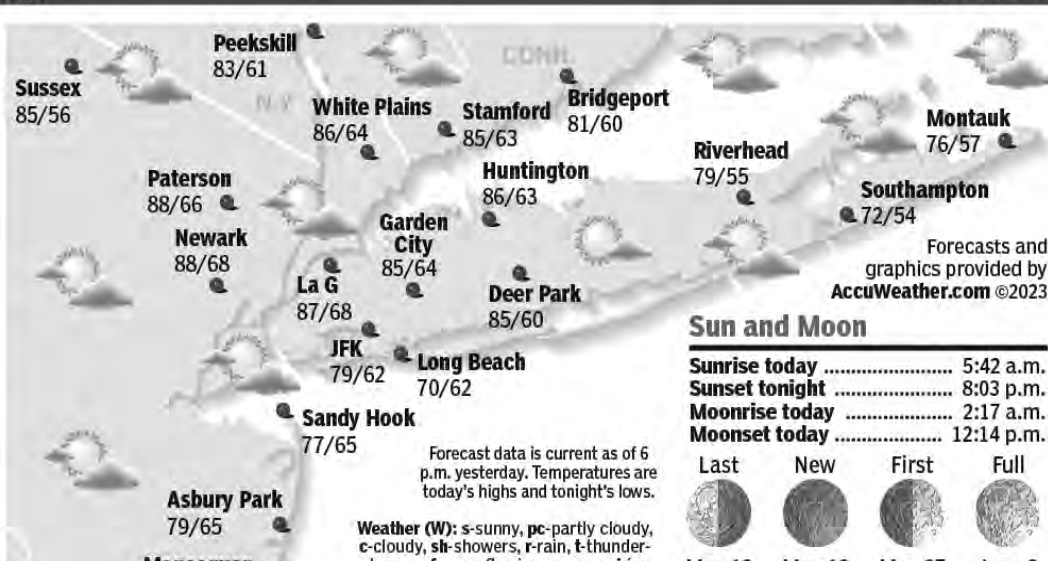
**BIRTHDAY FRIDAY**  
You are often at your best when following a path or pattern you are familiar with and there is no need to change that over the coming 12 months. By all means challenge yourself to do more and do better but play to your strengths as well.

## Post Weather Report

<b>Friday</b> Today: Partly sunny and very warm. High 84 to 90. Tonight: Becoming cloudy, a shower late. Low 65 to 71.	<b>Saturday</b> Tomorrow: A shower in the morning; partly sunny. High 76 to 82. Tomorrow night: Partly cloudy. Low 56 to 62.
<b>Sunday</b> Partly sunny. High 70 to 76. Evening: Patchy clouds. Low 53 to 59.	<b>Monday</b> Partly sunny. High 67 to 73. Evening: Patchy clouds. Low 54 to 60.

**Almanac**  
YESTERDAY'S CONDITIONS AT CENTRAL PARK THROUGH 6PM  
**Temperature**  
High: 80, Low: 57, Mean: 69  
**Departure from Normal**  
Yesterday: +7 degrees  
**Precipitation**  
Yesterday: 0.00", Month: 0.41", Year: 17.09", Normal year to date: 16.59"  
**Cooling Degree days yesterday** .....4  
**Total for the month (normal)** .....8 (11)  
**Total since Jan. 1 (normal)** .....49 (25)  
**Last year to date** .....3  
**Heat Index (at noon yest.)** ..... 68  
**UV Index (for Fri.)** ..... 9 (Very High)  
**Humidity (at noon)** ..... 27%

**AIR QUALITY**  
**Pollen:** High Predominant pollen: Oak, Birch, Sycamore  
**AQI rating:** (for Fri.).....Moderate



**Sun and Moon**  
Sunrise today ..... 5:42 a.m.  
Sunset tonight ..... 8:03 p.m.  
Moonrise today ..... 2:17 a.m.  
Moonset today ..... 12:14 p.m.

Last	New	First	Full
May 12	May 19	May 27	June 3

New York Tides	TODAY	TOMORROW
High Tide for	1st 2nd	1st 2nd
Coney Island	1:43a 2:25p	2:44a 3:26p
Fire Island	1:50a 2:21p	2:52a 3:35p
Hempstead	5:12a 6:04p	6:31a 7:21p
Huntington	5:15a 5:59p	6:25a 7:06p
Jones Inlet	1:27a 2:09p	2:28a 3:10p
Montauk Point	2:59a 3:40p	4:02a 4:47p
Port Washington	5:12a 6:07p	6:34a 7:27p
Sandy Hook	1:47a 2:29p	2:48a 3:30p

Regional cities	TODAY	TOMORROW
Albany	86/59/pc	78/45/pc
Danbury	88/57/s	79/50/pc
Glens Falls	83/53/pc	75/40/pc
Gr Barrington	84/54/pc	76/41/pc
Kingston	85/58/pc	79/47/pc
Liberty	79/53/pc	74/43/pc
Monticello	81/54/pc	75/43/pc
Newburgh	86/58/s	79/50/pc
Poughkeepsie	85/55/pc	79/47/pc
Saratoga Springs	83/56/pc	76/44/pc
Stroudsburg	85/58/pc	80/49/pc
Torrington	86/59/pc	78/45/pc
Syracuse	81/55/s	73/44/pc

World cities	TODAY	TOMORROW
Athens	71/55/pc	70/58/pc
Baghdad	106/78/pc	97/73/pc
Beijing	81/56/pc	85/55/pc
Berlin	72/50/pc	71/51/pc
Calo	87/64/s	85/62/s
Dublin	60/44/pc	64/49/c
Geneva	62/50/sh	62/49/r
Hong Kong	77/72/r	77/71/c
Jerusalem	78/56/s	72/54/pc
Kabul	80/54/c	76/52/sh
London	56/48/sh	67/45/pc
Madrid	66/44/sh	68/47/pc
Mexico City	81/56/t	80/55/c
Montreal	78/52/pc	67/42/s
Moscow	69/47/c	70/49/s
Paris	58/52/sh	70/50/sh
Rio de Janeiro	75/67/t	74/68/pc
Rome	69/53/t	65/56/r
Sydney	72/56/s	68/56/sh
Tokyo	70/60/pc	64/60/r





# MOTHER OF ALL DAYS

Gifts that will spoil and pamper Mom this Sunday

By APRIL HARDWICK

**M**AY blooms signal the beginning of spring and a reminder that it's time to indulge all those honorable ladies that we so often take for granted. Mother's Day is May 14, so whether it's your own mother or the mother of another, show them how much you care. A yummy brunch for two is always nice, but you can elevate their day with gifts of gratitude that really pamper but won't (except for that one luxe item) deplete your wallet. So take this opportunity to gift a tangible token of your love that they will appreciate and enjoy.



1. Gift a little extra TLC with this pamper-me, vibrant Fiery Pink Pepper bath and shower gel. \$35 at MoltonBrown.com
2. You know you're getting the best a sneaker can offer if Olympian Allyson Felix created it. The Saysh Two leather sneaker is versatile enough to wear with workout gear or an elegant pantsuit. \$185 at Saysh.com
3. Notes of jasmine, mandarin and pink praline are behind this elegant scent, Soleil eau de parfum by Laliq. From \$80 at Laliq.com
4. This lightweight tote is both planet-friendly and machine washable. \$179 at Rothys.com
5. Formulated with 100% vegetable wax, this elegant La Rose Aime la Menthe candle with a scent of spearmint and rose will soothe and relax. \$75 at CarriereFreres.com
6. Give her a reason to stay home and feel glamorous in this Amina rose-pink silk fringed robe. \$940 at OliviaVonHalle.com
7. Brighten up her kitchen with this nontoxic, 10½-inch Always Pan 2.0, which claims to do the job of 10 cookware items, in Azul. \$115 at FromOurPlace.com
8. Fill her heart with joy and strawberry chocolate in the form of a hazelnut bouchée from the French masters. \$36 at LaMaisonDuChocolat.com
9. This limited-edition nail polish gift set, A Brit of Blooms, is inspired by London flowers. \$21 at LondonTownUSA.com
10. This artificial Coral Garden floral arrangement is a beautiful bouquet suitable for the allergy-prone, and certain to uplift a tired space. \$299 at BalsamHill.com
11. Floral and fruity notes come together nicely in this Parisian eau de parfum, Delina Exclusif. From \$210 at Parfums-de-Marly.com
12. Mom deserves an Everything Oil that is 100% organic, unrefined and works wonders on hair, body and everything in between. Plus this brand is on a mission to support women's empowerment. \$7 at 1Girl1City.com

## PET PLACE

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## NOTICES

### LEGAL NOTICES

SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMONS Index No. 704881/2014  
STATE OF NEW YORK SUPREME COURT – COUNTY OF QUEENS

U.S. BANK TRUST, N.A., AS TRUSTEE FOR LSF8 MASTER PARTICIPATION TRUST, Plaintiff, -vs- EMERITO A. RODRIGUEZ, whether he/she be alive or dead, or the successor in interest, if any, of said defendant who may be deceased, and the respective Heirs at Law, next of kin, distributees, devisees, grantees, trustees, lienors, creditors, assignees and successors in interest of the aforesaid classes of persons, if they or any of them be dead, and their respective husbands, wives or widows, if any, all of whom and whose names and places of residence are unknown to the plaintiff; HOUSEHOLD FINANCE REALTY CORPORATION OF NEW YORK; CAPITAL ONE BANK (USA) N.A.; NYC DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE-PARKING VIOLATIONS BUREAU PAYMENT AND ADJUDICATION CENTER OF QUEENS; NEW YORK CITY ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL BOARD; MR. RODRIGUEZ; ANTHONY RUJIZ; "JANE DOE", a woman who refused to identify herself; NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT ADJUDICATION BUREAU; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE; PIEDAD RODRIGUEZ; LOUIS A. RODRIGUEZ; MASSIEL A. RODRIGUEZ; Defendants. Mortgage Premises: 30-24 92nd Street a/k/a 3024 92nd Street, East Elmhurst, NY 11369 TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT(S): YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to answer the Complaint in the above entitled action and to serve a copy of your Answer on the plaintiff's attorney within twenty (20) days of the service of this Summons, exclusive of the day of service, or within thirty (30) days after service of the same, is complete where service is made in any manner other than by personal delivery within the State. The United States of America, if designated as a defendant in this action, may answer or appear within sixty (60) days of service hereof. Your failure to appear or answer will result in a judgment against you by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint. In the event that a deficiency balance remains from the sale proceeds, a judgment may be entered against you, unless the Defendant obtained a bankruptcy discharge and such other or further relief as may be just and equitable. NOTICE YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME if you do not respond to this summons and complaint by serving a copy of the answer to the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home. Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case is pending for further information on how to answer the summons and protect your property. Sending payment to your mortgage company will not stop this foreclosure action. YOU MUST RESPOND BY SERVING A COPY OF THE ANSWER ON THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF (MORTGAGE COMPANY) AND FILING THE ANSWER WITH THE COURT. These pleadings are being amended to substitute in EMERITO A. RODRIGUEZ, whether he/she be alive or dead, in lieu of Emerito A. Rodriguez. These pleadings are being amended to include Piedad Rodriguez, Louis A. Rodriguez and Massiel A. Rodriguez as necessary parties as possible heirs to the Estate of Emerito A. Rodriguez, deceased. These pleadings are being amended to include New York City Transit Adjudication Bureau, New York State Department of Taxation and Finance and United States of America as necessary parties pursuant based on holding a subordinate lienholder interest. These pleadings are being amended to substitute in U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity, but solely as trustee for the RMAC Trust, Series 2016-CTT, be substituted in place of U.S. Bank Trust, N.A., as Trustee for LSF8 Master Participation Trust, as Plaintiff. QUEENS County is designated as the place of trial. The basis of venue is the location of the mortgaged premises. Dated: September 2, 2021 Mark K. Broyles, Esq. FEIN SUCH & CRANE, LLP Attorneys for Plaintiff Office and P.O. Address 28 East Main Street, Suite 1800 Rochester, New York 14614 Telephone No. (585) 232-7400 Block: 1389 Lot: 19 NATURE AND OBJECT OF ACTION The object of the above action is to foreclose a mortgage held by the Plaintiff recorded in the County of QUEENS, State of New York as more particularly described in the Complaint herein. TO THE DEFENDANT, the plaintiff makes no personal claim against you in this action. To the above named defendants: The foregoing summons is served upon you by publication pursuant to an order of HON. LANCE P. EVANS Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, dated April 10, 2023 and filed along with the supporting papers in the QUEENS County Clerk's Office. This is an action to foreclose a Mortgage. ALL that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough and County of Queens, City and State of New York Mortgaged Premises: 30-24 92nd Street a/k/a 3024 92nd Street, East Elmhurst, NY 11369 Tax Map/Parcel ID No.: Block: 1389 Lot: 19 of the Borough of QUEENS, NY 11369. 76156

REFEREE'S NOTICE OF SALE IN FORECLOSURE  
SUPREME COURT - COUNTY OF QUEENS

BANK OF AMERICA, N.A., Plaintiff - against - CYNTHIA COLBERT A/K/A CYNTHIA COLBERT-WATSON, et al Defendant(s).

Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered on March 6, 2023, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction on the Courthouse steps of the Queens Supreme Court, located at 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, New York on the 2nd day of June, 2023 at 12:30 PM. All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough and County of Queens, City and State of New York. Premises known as 171-40 119th Road, Jamaica, NY 11434. (Block: 12375, Lot: 81)

Approximate amount of lien \$454,079.88 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed judgment and terms of sale. Index No. 724655/2021 FKA 15200/2012. Stephanie Stutman Goldstone, Esq., Referee.

McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLC  
Attorney(s) for Plaintiff  
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 840  
New York, NY 10170  
Tel. 347/286-7409

For sale information, please visit [Auction.com](http://Auction.com) at [www.Auction.com](http://www.Auction.com) or call (800) 280-2832

Dated: March 8, 2023

During the COVID-19 health emergency, bidders are required to comply with all governmental health requirements in effect at the time of sale including but not limited to, wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing (at least 6-feet apart) during the auction, while tendering deposit and at any subsequent closing. Bidders are also required to comply with the Foreclosure Auction Rules and COVID-19 Health Emergency Rules issued by the Supreme Court of this County in addition to the conditions set forth in the Terms of Sale.

### LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION  
PURSUANT TO THE UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE  
OF NEW YORK OF NEW YORK CITY TAXICAB MEDALLIONS

In accordance with the Uniform Commercial Code as adopted in the State of New York, DePalma Acquisition I LLC ("Lender"), will sell at public auction the following property of certain debtors:

New York City Taxi Medallion (collectively, the "Medallions") Nos:

1A49	1L97	1L98	3F81
4B53	5D43	6C26	6C57
6C78	7A82	7C46	7D87
7L82	8M33	8F53	8M32
		8Y35	

**1. Time and Place of Auction:** The Auctions will be held on June 6, 2023 at 11:00 am, prevailing Eastern Time. The Auctions will take place solely via video conference. Only parties intending to bid at the Auction will be permitted to participate in the video conference. Persons wishing to attend the Auctions must contact Reed Smith LLP, counsel to Lender ("Counsel"), at [MedallionAuction@reedsmith.com](mailto:MedallionAuction@reedsmith.com) at least three (3) business days prior to the scheduled time of the Auctions to obtain login credentials for the video conference, and must provide (i) a copy of their driver's license or other photo identification and (ii) an acknowledgment that they must pay the Deposit (as defined below) in the form of a certified or bank check or wire transfer of immediately available funds. Parties unable to attend the Auctions by video conference due to technological limitations, must contact Counsel at [MedallionAuction@reedsmith.com](mailto:MedallionAuction@reedsmith.com) at least five (5) days prior to the scheduled time of the Auctions so that other arrangements can be made.

**2. Terms of Sale:** Each bidder must provide to Counsel at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled time of the Auctions an executed acknowledgment of the terms of sale, which include, among other terms: (a) a requirement that, in Lender's discretion, each bidder must submit proof of financial wherewithal and qualifications to acquire one or more of the Medallions; (b) any successful bidder shall be required to deposit, in immediately available funds, a sum equal to ten percent (10%) of the price bid by such bidder prior to the conclusion of the Auctions; and (c) any prevailing bidder must close by 5:00 p.m. prevailing Eastern Time on the forty-fifth (45th) day after the conclusion of the Auctions or at such other time as may be agreed by Lender and the prevailing bidder. Lender reserves the right to exclude from the Auctions any bidder that fails to comply with this requirement. The complete terms of sale are available upon request. Lender reserves the right to alter the terms of sale at any time.

**3. Selection of Winning Bid(s):** Lender shall determine which bid, or combination of bids, are the highest or best bid for the Medallions. Lender reserves the rights to: (a) bid all or a portion of its claim(s) against the owner(s) of the Medallions at the Auctions without cash or Deposit as required of other bidders; (b) alter the terms of payment; (c) abandon or elect not to dispose of certain Collateral; and/or (d) reject all bids.

**4. No Representations or Warranties:** The Collateral being auctioned is being sold "AS IS", "WITH ALL FAULTS" and "WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND." All potential bidders are presumed to have conducted all necessary due diligence, including without limitation research as to whether there exist any fines, violations, or unpaid taxes with respect to the Collateral, prior to the commencement of the Auctions. There is no warranty relating to title, possession, quiet enjoyment, or the like in this disposition.

### LEGAL NOTICES

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF QUEENS

MTGLQ INVESTORS, L.P., Plaintiff,  
-against- Index No. 718890/2020

ROSHNEE DHANRAJ, DANA DHANRAJ, AMAYA DHANRAJ, THE UNKNOWN HEIRS-AT-LAW, NEXT-OF-KIN, DISTRIBUTEES, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, TRUSTEES, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS AND SUCCESSORS IN INTEREST AND GENERALLY ALL PERSONS HAVING OR CLAIMING, UNDER, BY OR THROUGH THE DECEDENT RAMESHWAR DHANRAJ, BY PURCHASE, INHERITANCE, LIEN OR OTHERWISE, ANY RIGHT, TITLE OR INTEREST IN AND TO THE PREMISES DESCRIBED IN THE COMPLAINT HEREIN, CRIMINAL COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK (QUEENS), MADISON RESOURCES, LTD., MORTGAGE ELECTRONICS REGISTRATION SYSTEMS, INC. AS NOMINEE FOR U.S. BANK N.A., NEW YORK CITY ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL BOARD, NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT ADJUDICATION BUREAU, NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE, SAMIL PERSAUD, ALANA JAIKRAAN, SHAWNDLELL RIVERS, CHANTELL JOHNSON,

#### NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO CAPTION

Defendants. X

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:  
**Unknown Heirs, Dana Dhanraj, and Amaya Dhanraj:**

This Notice is to inform you that you have been substituted as party Defendants into a foreclosure action, in place of the Decedent Rameshwar Dhanraj, and that the Caption has been amended to reflect this change.

You are not required to serve an answer as the Decedent has already defaulted, and any answer served will be rejected as precluded by law.

No action is necessary on your part. The sole purpose of this Notice is to inform you that the caption has been amended to include your name(s) as a matter of law, and that you may be given additional notice of further developments in this case, as required by law.

Plaintiff is not seeking a deficiency judgment against you. You are merely being named by virtue of being possible heirs to the Decedent, and as such are entitled to notice of these proceedings.

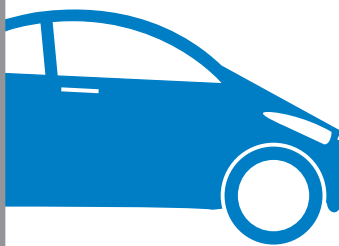
These proceedings concern ONLY the Property known as: **116-17 139TH ST, QUEENS, NY 11436**

**GNUCKLES, KOMOSINSKI & MANFRO, LLP.**

By: ALEX ZAMENHOF  
ALEX ZAMENHOF, ESQ.  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

565 Taxter Road, Suite 590 Elmsford, NY 10523

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# The POST Line



**NBA Playoffs**  
**Friday- Semifinals**

Favorite	PTS/(O/U)	Underdog
HEAT	4.5 (209.5)	Knicks
LAKERS	2.5 (221.5)	Warriors

**Home Teams in CAPS**

**NHL**  
**Friday- Semifinals**

Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
MAPLE LEAFS	\$145-175	Panthers
Oilers	\$110-130	GOLDEN KNIGHTS

**USFL- Week 5**  
**Saturday**

Favorite	PTS/(O/U)	Underdog
*Panthers	3.5 (42)	Maulers
**Stallions	4.5 (48.5)	Gamblers

**Sunday**

*Generals	6.5 (43.5)	Stars
**Breakers	7 (47.5)	Showboats

\*Game played in Detroit, MI  
\*\*Game played in Birmingham, AL

**MLB**  
**Friday**

Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
YANKEES	OFF	Rays
Mets	\$160-180	NATIONALS
MARLINS	\$120-140	Reds
Mariners	\$115-135	TIGERS
ORIOLES	\$135-160	Pirates
Braves	\$130-150	BLUE JAYS
GUARDIANS	\$105-125	Angels
RED SOX	-105-115	Cardinals
Astros	\$120-140	WHITE SOX
TWINS	\$135-160	Cubs
Phillies	\$135-160	ROCKIES
Giants	\$105-125	D'BACKS
Rangers	\$165-195	ATHLETICS
DODGERS	\$120-140	Padres
BREWERS	\$199-221	Royals

**XFL- Championship**  
**Saturday**

Favorite	PTS/(O/U)	Underdog
*Defenders	6.5 (47.5)	Renegades

\*Game played in San Antonio, TX

## SPORTS SHORTS

### NHL: Stars win to take series lead

**Roope Hintz** had two goals and had an assist, **Joe Pavelski** scored his seventh goal of the second-round series and the Stars beat the Kraken 5-2 in Game 5 on Thursday night in Dallas to move within a victory of the Western Conference finals. Dallas will take a 3-2 lead into Game 6 on Saturday in Seattle.

● **Ilya Sorokin** of the Islanders was one of three finalists named on Thursday for the 2022-23 Vezina Trophy, awarded annually to the best goaltender in the NHL. The Jets' **Connor Hellebuyck** and **Linus Ullmark** of the Bruins were the other finalists for the award, which will be revealed at the NHL Awards show on June 26 in Nashville.

### NBA: Davis expected to return

Lakers coach **Darvin Ham** said he expects **Anthony Davis** to play Friday night in Los Angeles, adding that the eight-time All-Star big man is "not showing any signs of anything" and is not in the NBA's concussion protocol after being hit in the head late in Game 5 of the Western Conference semifinals against the Warriors.

● Bucks guard **Jrue Holiday** has been selected the NBA's teammate of the year for the second straight year and third time in the last four seasons. The NBA announced the voting results for the Twyman-Stokes Teammate of the Year Award, which recognizes the player deemed the best teammate based on selfless play, leadership and dedication to a team.

### NFL: Patriots to honor Brady

The Patriots will honor **Tom Brady** at the

team's 2023 home opener, owner **Bob Kraft** said Thursday. Brady, who played his first 20 seasons and captured six Super Bowl championships with the Patriots, announced his retirement after the 2022 season.

● Cardinals quarterback **Kyler Murray** has made two donations to victims of a Texas mall shooting last weekend, including \$15,000 to a young boy who lost his entire family.

● Jacksonville mayor **Lenny Curry** said in radio interview on Wednesday that the "best-case scenario" is major stadium renovations, if approved, will keep the Jaguars from playing home games at TIAA Bank Field, and also impact the annual Georgia-Florida college football game for two years.

### MLB: Correa, Twins top Padres

**Carlos Correa** hit a two-run double in the seventh inning, lifting the Twins to a 5-3 victory over the Padres Thursday afternoon in Minneapolis. Correa, who was booed by the home crowd after two strikeouts earlier in the game, capped off a three-run seventh with his two-RBI double.

### GOLF: Noh leads Byron Nelson

**S.Y. Noh** tied the course record at TPC Craig Ranch, about 30 miles north of Dallas, after making three putts of at least 25 feet on the back nine for an 11-under 60 and a three-shot lead after the first round of the AT&T Byron Nelson.

● In Birmingham, Ala., **Billy Andrade**, **Timothy O'Neal** and **Paul Broadhurst** each shot a 5-under 67 to take the first-round lead at the Regions Tradition, the first of five PGA Tour Champions majors.

## ACTION TOP PLAY

# Running it up with Rangers

By THOMAS CASALE  
actionnetwork.com

The biggest surprise in MLB over the first six weeks of the season has been the Rangers. Texas sits atop the loaded AL West heading into Friday. The A's are also in the AL West. That's about the nicest thing we can say right now about an Oakland team that comes into this matchup with the worst record in baseball.

A couple of lefties will battle it out on Friday night. Martin Perez will go for Texas, while the A's turn to youngster Ken Waldichuk.

Perez is coming off by far his worst start of the season where he allowed eight hits and seven runs against the

Angels in 3<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings. Before that poor outing, Perez hadn't allowed more than three runs in any of his first six starts.

Waldichuk will be making just his 15th career start. He's allowed at least four runs in four of his seven starts in 2023, and now faces a Rangers offense that crushes lefties (hitting .271 and averaging just under seven runs per nine innings).

The A's have been awful at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, sporting a MLB-worst 3-15 record at home heading into Thursday. Don't look for that to change with Waldichuk facing a dangerous Rangers lineup.

**THE PLAY:** Rangers runline -1.5.  
Thomas Casale handicaps baseball for Action Network.

## Pitching Form

	(Game time)	2023			'23 vs OPP		CAREER	LAST 3 STARTS			
		W-L	ERA	*REC	W-L	ERA	vs OPP	W-L	IP	ERA	
Rays	Kelley (R)	0-1	9.00	—	—	—	0-0	—	—	—	
Yankees	Cole (R)	5-0	2.09	7-1	0-0	9.00	2-7	1-0	17.2	4.58	
Mets	TBD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Nationals	Gore (L)	3-2	3.65	3-4	1-0	1.50	1-0	1-1	16.0	3.94	
Pirates	Oviedo (R)	2-3	5.60	3-4	—	—	—	0-2	12.2	12.08	
Orioles	Bradish (R)	1-1	5.95	3-2	—	—	—	0-1	12.0	9.75	
Braves	Strider (R)	4-0	2.70	7-0	—	—	—	2-0	18.0	3.00	
Blue Jays	Bassitt (R)	4-2	4.28	4-3	1-2	4.60	1-2	2-0	18.1	2.95	
Cardinals	Wainwright (R)	0-0	7.20	0-1	0-1	5.68	1-1	0-2	12.2	9.95	
Red Sox	Paxton (L)	7:10pm	0-0	0.00	0-0	0.00	1-0	0-0	1.1	6.75	
Cubs	Smyly (L)	3-1	3.05	5-2	—	—	2-1	1-0	15.1	2.93	
Twins	Gray (R)	8:10pm	4-0	1.35	5-2	—	4-3	2-0	18.0	2.00	
Royals	Taylor (L)	0-0	6.55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Brewers	Burnes (R)	8:10pm	3-2	3.86	4-3	—	1-0	1-1	17.0	2.65	
Mariners	Gonzales (L)	2-0	4.70	4-2	1-0	4.15	2-3	1-0	14.0	5.79	
Tigers	Boyd (L)	6:40pm	2-2	5.28	4-2	0-0	0.00	2-1	16.2	5.94	
Angels	Anderson (L)	1-0	5.40	3-3	—	—	—	0-0	17.0	4.24	
Guardians	Allen (L)	7:10pm	1-1	2.70	2-1	—	—	1-1	16.2	2.70	
Astros	France (R)	0-0	0.00	0-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-0	5.0	0.00	
White Sox	Kopech (R)	8:10pm	1-3	5.97	3-4	0-2	5.73	0-2	17.0	4.76	
Rangers	Pérez (L)	4-1	3.86	5-2	1-0	0.90	9-7	1-0	16.0	4.50	
Athletics	Waldichuk (L)	9:40pm	1-2	7.25	4-3	0-0	9.00	0-0	16.0	6.75	
Reds	Ashcraft (R)	2-1	3.82	4-3	1-0	1.80	1-0	0-1	13.2	7.24	
Marlins	Pérez (R)	6:40pm	0-0	0.00	0-0	0.00	0.00	0-0	0.0	0.00	
Phillies	Walker (R)	3-2	5.97	4-3	1-0	0.00	3-1	1-1	13.1	9.45	
Rockies	Gomber (L)	8:40pm	3-4	6.75	3-4	0-1	3.00	0-1	3-0	17.0	1.59
Giants	Stripling (R)	0-2	6.66	1-3	—	—	2-4	0-1	13.1	6.08	
D'Backs	Nelson (R)	9:40pm	1-2	6.00	1-6	—	0-0	0-2	14.0	7.71	
Padres	Snell (L)	1-5	4.89	1-6	0-1	3.00	1-2	1-2	17.0	3.71	
Dodgers	May (R)	10:10pm	4-1	2.68	4-3	1-0	0.00	2-4	3-0	16.1	2.20

\* REC: Won-lost record of pitcher's team in games he has started.

## STITCHES

# Tai fortunes to Walker, Philly

What the ... Donald Trump in a friendly town hall on CNN? What's next? The Hunter Biden Memorial Day cookout on Hannity? ... Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas may be looking to get his own late-night show: "Our borders are not open." Funny, but the Mets are not laughing. With Citi Field parking lots a possible destination for the overflow of migrants, the Mutts are looking to shore up their pitching staff.

Think the Mets wish they still had Taijuan Walker? Maybe. Walker was

brutal, surrendering 13 runs over his 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings but rebounded, giving up just one run over six strong against Boston. Philly is in Colorado. Austin Gomber goes for the Balboas. He's won three straight, allowing just three runs over 17 innings. Philly's won three in a row as well. \$50 on Philly.

-\$

Fernando Tatis Jr. tattooed the first pitch of the game, but the Twins came back to pop the Pods, 5-3. Winning streak is over. Down -602 jackmurphys.

stitches@nypost.com

Home Team Lineups		HOME	AWAY				
	TODAY May 12	SAT May 13	SUN May 14	MON May 15	TUE May 16	WED May 17	THU May 18
	<b>Tampa Bay</b> 7:05 YES WFAN 660 AM/ 101.9 FM	T.B. 1:05 YES WFAN	T.B. 1:35 YES WFAN	Tor. 7:07 YES WFAN	Tor. 7:07 YES WFAN	Tor. 7:07 Amaz. WFAN	Tor. 7:07 YES WFAN
	<b>Washington</b> 7:05 PIX11 WCBS 880 AM	Wash. 4:05 SNY WCBS	Wash. 1:35 SNY WCBS	Wash. 4:05 SNY WCBS	T.B. 7:10 SNY WCBS	T.B. 7:10 SNY WCBS	T.B. 1:10 SNY WCBS
	<b>Miami</b> 7:30 ESPN ESPN 98.7 FM	NO GAME	NO GAME	if nec. Mia. 8:00 ESPN	NO GAME	TBD	TBD
	NO GAME	(Exh.) L.V. 5:00	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME
<b>Saturday</b>		<b>Saturday</b>					
	<b>New York City FC</b> 7:30 p.m. TV - Apple TV+		<b>Red Bulls</b> 7:30 p.m. TV - Apple TV+				

Today's Sports on the Air			
<b>NBA</b>	7:30 p.m.	Eastern Semifinals: Knicks at Heat, Game 6	ESPN ESPN (98.7 FM)
	10 p.m.	Western Semifinals: Warriors at Lakers, Game 6	ESPN
<b>MLB</b>	7 p.m.	Pirates at Orioles	MLBN
	7:05 p.m.	Rays at Yankees YES, WFAN (660 AM/101.9 FM)	
	7:05 p.m.	Mets at Nationals	PIX11, WCBS (880 AM)
	8 p.m.	Cubs at Twins	Apple TV+
	8 p.m.	Royals at Brewers	Apple TV+
<b>NHL</b>	7 p.m.	Eastern Semifinals: Panthers at Maple Leafs, Game 5	TNT
	10 p.m.	Western Semifinals: Oilers at Golden Knights, Game 5	TNT
<b>Golf</b>	7 a.m.	DP World Tour: The Soudal Open, 2nd Round	GOLF
	10:30 a.m.	LPGA Tour: The Cognizant Founders Cup, 2nd Round	GOLF
	1 p.m.	Champions Tour: The Regions Tradition, 2nd Round	GOLF
	4 p.m.	PGA Tour: The AT&T Byron Nelson, 2nd Round	GOLF
<b>Tennis</b>	6 a.m.	ATP/WTA Italian Open: 2nd Round	TENNIS
	8 a.m.	ATP/WTA Italian Open: 2nd Round	MSG
<b>MMA</b>	4 p.m.	Bellator 296 Main Card: Mousasi vs. Edwards	SHO
<b>Auto Racing</b>	3 p.m.	NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series: The Buckle Up South Carolina 200, Qualifying	FS1
	5 p.m.	NASCAR Xfinity Series: The Shriners Children's 200, Qualifying	FS1
	7 p.m.	NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series: The Buckle Up South Carolina 200	FS1
<b>Horse Racing</b>	2 p.m.	America's Day at the Races	FS2
	2:30 p.m.	FanDuel Racing	MSGSN
<b>Hockey</b>	9 a.m.	World Championship Group Stage: Finland vs. United States	NHLN
	1 p.m.	World Championship Group Stage: Latvia vs. Canada	NHLN
	5 a.m.	World Championship Group Stage: (Sat.) Switzerland vs. Slovenia	NHLN
	11:30 p.m.	Oregon State at UCLA	Pac-12
<b>College Baseball</b>	5:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt at Florida	SECN
	7 p.m.	NC State at North Carolina	ACCN
	8:30 p.m.	Mississippi State at LSU	SECN
	8:30 p.m.	Arizona at Stanford	Pac-12

## ODDS & ENDS

NBA PLAYOFFS	
Knicks-Heat series odds	
<b>TO WIN SERIES</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Knicks	+350
Heat	-450
<b>EXACT SERIES RESULT</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Knicks in 7	+350
Heat in 6	-225
Heat in 7	+425
<b>Knicks at Heat Game 6, Friday</b>	
<b>FULL-GAME MONEYLINE</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Knicks	+180
Heat	-225
<b>RACE TO 10 POINTS</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Knicks	+105
Heat	-145
<b>RACE TO 20 POINTS</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Knicks	+120
Heat	-165
<b>FIRST FIELD GOAL IN GAME</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Jalen Brunson	+425
Jimmy Butler	+425
Julius Randle	+500
RJ Barrett	+550
Bam Adebayo	+650
Max Strus	10/1
Gabe Vincent	11/1
Kevin Love	12/1
Mitchell Robinson	14/1
Quentin Grimes	16/1
<b>POINTS</b>	<b>O/U</b>
Jimmy Butler	28.5
Jalen Brunson	27.5
Julius Randle	23.5
RJ Barrett	20.5
Bam Adebayo	17.5
Max Strus	12.5
Gabe Vincent	9.5
Kevin Love	7.5
Mitchell Robinson	6.5
<b>REBOUNDS</b>	<b>O/U</b>
Julius Randle	8.5
Mitchell Robinson	8.5
Bam Adebayo	8.5
Jimmy Butler	6.5
Kevin Love	5.5
<b>ASSISTS</b>	<b>O/U</b>
Jalen Brunson	6.5
Jimmy Butler	6.5
Julius Randle	3.5
Gabe Vincent	3.5
<b>DOUBLE-DOUBLE</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Julius Randle	+135
Bam Adebayo	+140
Jimmy Butler	+200
Jalen Brunson	+333
Mitchell Robinson	+333
Kevin Love	+500
RJ Barrett	14/1
<b>TRIPLE-DOUBLE</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Jimmy Butler	+1350
<b>WILL GAME GO TO OT?</b>	<b>ODDS</b>
Yes	10/1
No	-10000

## ACTION BET SMART

# Time for fireworks in Leafs' war with Panthers

**EXPECTED GOALS:** Sam Bennett is one of the players Michael Leboff is including in an anytime goal-same game parlay, figuring the Panthers-Maple Leafs series will perk up.

Getty Images

By MICHAEL LEBOFF  
actionnetwork.com

Coming into Round 2, you'd have thought that the series between the Panthers and Maple Leafs would be a wild, back-and-forth affair with plenty of scoring. Everybody seemed to agree this matchup between two high-powered offenses would be a dream for Over bettors. Not so fast.

All four games in the series so far have gone under the total and the last two games featured a total of seven goals in regulation. The most recent contest was a 2-1 Leafs victory in a defensive battle that featured very few high-danger scoring chances for either side.

So the question bettors must ponder now is whether we overestimated how much pizzazz would be on display in this series or if there's just been some funky, random stuff going on to keep the games from sailing over the total.

After the first three games, I would lean toward the latter. Although none of the games went Over 6.5 goals, all three of them had plenty of chances to get there, but came up short thanks to some terrific goaltending and puck luck. According to Natural Stat Trick, Florida and Toronto combined for a total of 20.3 expected goals through the first three contests, but only 16 pucks went into the net.

The box scores may not have shown it but these were back-and-forth contests that could have turned into 10-goal thrillers with a bounce here or there. That's why bookmakers didn't adjust the total down from a heavily juiced 6.5.

But Game 4 may change things a bit.

After three all-action contests in a row, the script for Wednesday night's game read very differently. The Leafs were facing elimination and seemed de-

termined to slow things down and play a more defensive, rigid style of hockey. It's not what we're accustomed to seeing out of this group, but the strategy worked as Toronto collected its first win of the series.

By clogging up the neutral zone and gumming up the middle of the ice, the Leafs made it quite difficult for Florida to get anything going offensively, but the same was true for Toronto, a team that thrives on offensive creativity.

Every game in a playoff series is different and perhaps the Leafs felt they needed to button things up to just get on the board, but trying to turn every contest into a coin flip seems a dangerous game to play when you're in a 3-1 series hole. Perhaps it would make sense if Toronto was an underdog that didn't have the talent advantage in this series, but that's not the case. I'd expect the Leafs to play a lot looser in Game 5 and try to impose their will on the Panthers with their playmakers leading the way.

The bookies seem to lean that way, too, as the total for Game 5 is still sitting at 6.5 with juice on the Over.

Despite the defensive showcase we saw in Game 4, I still think every game in this series has great "lottery-ticket" potential when it comes to same-game parlays and bets of that nature. We should have had at least one 10-goal thriller already in this series and it wouldn't be a shock if we get a couple if this goes beyond Game 5.

And if you're interested in joining me on this strategy, the players I'll be targeting for my AGSSGP (anytime goal-scorer same-game parlay) will be Sam Bennett, Brandon Montour, William Nylander and Morgan Rielly.

Michael Leboff analyzes the NHL for Action Network.

A familiar figure wearing a Giants ballcap and a caddie bib roamed the Upper Montclair Country Club fairways and greens on Thursday, guiding his pro — one of the top golfers in the world — around the course, reading greens and dishing out yardages and supportive, soothing advice.

Joe LaCava isn't caddying Tiger Woods or Fred Couples or Steve Stricker or Patrick Cantlay this week, though.



Mark Cannizzaro

The 59-year-old lifelong looper is on the bag of Nelly Korda, the No. 1 ranked player in women's golf, for the Cognizant Founders Cup at the New Jersey club located about a 20-minute drive west of the Lincoln Tunnel.

And, one round into the tournament, LaCava is having a ball. The Connecticut native was accompanied for the day by his wife Megan and daughter Lauren while Korda shot an even-par 72.

LaCava, who with Woods' blessing joined Cantlay full time last week at the Wells Fargo Championship in Charlotte, N.C., is moonlighting this week.

Korda approached him — via her agent reaching out to Woods' manager — a couple months ago when she knew her regular caddie, Jason McDede, would need time off for paternity leave (McDede is married to LPGA player Caroline Masson).

Woods gave his blessing.

"It's a huge honor to have Joe on the bag this week," Korda told The Post. "I've had so much success with Jason, but in sports, you're always trying to get better. Joe is one of the greatest caddies that has ever caddied in the game, and if I can learn one or two things from him to take on in my future, I'll be extremely grateful for that."

LaCava, who's been sitting on the sidelines too often the past few years with Woods' series of back surgeries and the 2021 car crash that nearly cost him his right leg, is grateful for the work. Woods has played only eight tournaments in the past three years and had to withdraw from two of them.

LaCava has wanted more, and Woods knew it.

"Tiger and I talked over the winter, and he said, 'Listen, I know you love caddying. If something comes up and you want to do it, there will certainly be no hard feelings. We'll be buddies for life,'" LaCava told The Post Thursday. "That was nice that he said that, nice that he did that."

LaCava insisted he wasn't "looking" for new work, saying, "I really was content just kind of hanging, and Tiger was looking after me, but the more I sat around for most the winter, I said, 'I do miss it.'"

The turning point for LaCava



**IN THE BAG:** Joe LaCava, with the blessing of pal Tiger Woods, is caddying for top-ranked LPGA player Nelly Korda at this weekend's Cognizant Founders Cup at Upper Montclair Country Club. Mark Cannizzaro

## LaCava, Tiger's caddie, grateful to carry bag of another No. 1

came in February at the Genesis Invitational at Riviera, where he said "the juices were flowing the most when [Woods] was trying to make the cut."

"I've never been so excited to make a cut, and I think that was because I missed it so much," he went on. "That's when I said to myself, 'I miss this more than I thought. I want to keep doing this. I want to do more.' I missed it too much. I missed being out there, missed the guys and missed caddying. It was very simple."

LaCava said Cantlay reached out to him two weeks ago, before the Wells Fargo, and said he was parting ways with his longtime caddie Matt Minister, and wanted to know if he was "interested going forward."

"I talked to Tiger on the phone and we discussed it, and he gave

me his blessing," LaCava said.

LaCava called Woods having to withdraw from the Masters last month "frustrating, because he was swinging the club really well, his swing speed was up, he was driving it well, he was hitting some good golf shots. The walking just took its toll."

Woods, 47, had surgery on his right foot and ankle recently and isn't expected to play again this season.

"He misses it more than you can imagine," LaCava said of Woods — spoken by a person who has a deep understanding of missing something he's most passionate about.

You could see the passion in LaCava's eyes and hear it in his voice on Thursday.

So, now the caddie who didn't have many tournaments to work has worked two with Woods, three

Champions Tour events for Couples, one PGA Tour event for Stricker, last week's debut with Cantlay and now this week with Korda before he drives to Rochester on Sunday night — after he finishes with Korda — to rejoin Cantlay, seems to be making up for lost time.

"It was kind of a perfect storm," he said. "It all came together at the same time. I'm happy to be working again. It's a nice stretch, and this is a home game more or less. It's been fun. Lot of Giants fans. I'm always comfortable around Giants fans."

LaCava sounded as excited about the nearby hotel he's staying in this week as he did about working with Korda.

"I've got a view of MetLife Stadium," he said. "It gets me jacked up for September."

mcannizzaro@nypost.com

## Phil says PGA, major colluding against LIV

By RYAN GLASSPIEGEL

Phil Mickelson continues to lash out over what he perceives as collusion between the PGA Championship and PGA Tour adversely affecting his colleagues at LIV Golf.

Previously, Mickelson blasted the new USGA rule change that appears likely to keep LIV's Talor Gooch out of the event as a "d--k move."

In a since-deleted tweet posted Thursday morning, Mickelson pointed out the differences in world player rankings of LIV Golf players excluded from the PGA Championship, and that of a PGA Tour professional who has made it in.

Mickelson tweeted that fellow LIV Golf competitors Cameron Tringale, Jason Kokrak and Sebastian Munoz are ranked Nos. 103, 110 and 111, respectively, while PGA Tour golfer Beau Hossler is ranked No. 128.

The former group is out of the PGA Championship field, while Hossler is in.

"Colluding with Tour and against LIV," Mickelson tweeted, before firing warning shots at PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan and USGA CEO Mike Whan. "3 years from now who is more likely to still be here? Monahan or LIV? We won't forget. You too Whan."

Last week, Mickelson took a number of shots at Whan over rule changes at the PGA Championship that pretty much only affected Gooch.

"[Gooch] qualified 9 months ago via Tour championship," Mickelson tweeted on Friday. "3 months ago Whan changed the wording on the qualifying criteria to take it away. Total d--k move by Whan. He leads our governing body. Sad."

It had been a week full of similar messages.

"Mike Whan recently changed the wording from 'qualified' for the Tour championship to 'eligible,' Mickelson had tweeted Tuesday.

"Thereby taking away Gooch's exemption since he wasn't eligible to play even though he had qualified. This doesn't make the US open better in any way but does help collude with the Tour."

Mickelson is advocating for others even has his own ability to play in the tournament is safe; he is eligible for the PGA Championship after improbably winning it in 2021 at 50 years old.

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# Jon Heyman

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INSIDE MLB

## Money well spent

### Biggest FA deals haven't paid off, but some mid-market moves have

The free-agent frenzy was something to behold this winter, with five contracts of at least \$300M (counting all three for Carlos Correa), and many more nine-figure deals. But what's become of all the big money spent? Not much — at least not so far.

Among players signing for \$50M plus, Correa (who admits he deserves to be booted), Trea Turner, Jose Abreu and Andrew Benintendi are stars underperforming. Plus, Willson Contreras already has been demoted, Jacob deGrom is on the injured list with his third ailment after an otherwise nice beginning, Justin Verlander has logged just two starts after missing a month and Carlos Rodon has yet to appear.

Contrary to how it seems sometimes, however, some free agents are outperforming their contracts — it's just not the headline grabbers. Here are some in the free agency "middle class" who are off to great starts.

**1. Cody Bellinger (\$17.5M, Cubs).** With hard work — he was the first guy

at Cubs camp most days — his familiarity with a couple of Cubs coaches and extra time to recover from the shoulder injury suffered in the 2020 World Series home run celebration, he looks like he may be close to regaining MVP form (.890 OPS).

**2. Clayton Kershaw (\$20M, Dodgers).** He's a great deal every year, as he's loyal to the Dodgers. While he's the same age as deGrom (and much more accomplished,) he signed a contract for barely more than 10 percent of deGrom's deal; the Dodgers legend wouldn't think of leaving.

**3. Nathan Eovaldi (\$34M, Rangers).** Texas remade its team and is being rewarded. Beloved everywhere he's gone.

**4. Kenley Jansen (\$32M, Red Sox).** He garnered his 400th career save Wednesday. Some incorrectly figured the pitch clock would doom him (yep, me too).

**5. Zach Eflin (\$40M, Rays).** This looked like an overpay, but the Rays are on quite a roll.

**6. David Robertson (\$10M, Mets).** How does he explain such a revival? "New arm," he told me, referring to his Tommy John surgery.

**7. Kevin Kiermaier (\$9M, Blue Jays).** One of the game's best center fielders is off to a nice start with the bat, too (.800 OPS).

**8. Carlos Estevez (\$13M, Angels).** The Angels made a lot of nice mid-market moves, and Estevez has provided solid closing in Orange County.

**9. Andrew McCutchen (\$5M, Pirates).** He's given a psychological lift to the surprising Pirates, and hit seven home runs back in his old haunt.

**10. Joey Gallo (\$11M, Twins).** We knew all along New York wasn't the right place. The Twin Cities seem about the right speed, and he's back to his Texas-level production. He's hitting .189, but it's a strong .189 (.866 OPS).

**Honorable mention:** Wade Miley (Brewers), Aroldis Chapman (Royals), Kyle Gibson (Orioles).



Cody Bellinger

Nathan Eovaldi

Geddy Images USA TODAY Sports

## Max may deal with pain all season

**MAX Scherzer's** neck issue, which caused him to be pushed back from his Tuesday start, isn't seen as serious. But people around the team are concerned his side/back issue (near the scapula) that delayed him out West may be something he needs to monitor and manage all year. He told Mike Puma he badly wants to avoid the injured list. ...

The hope is **Carlos Rodon** can resume throwing off flat ground Friday following his cortisone shot on Tuesday. If everything goes as hoped, he could be pitching in the majors six weeks after he restarts throwing, which would put him back June 23.

It's been a bit of a soap opera, as he was telling teammates he wanted to pitch but the Yankees were stopping him. From the team's perspective, they didn't want him pitching while he was reporting issues.

The elbow is said to feel great. The issue has been his back, which has caused stiffness, prohibited a full range of motion and limited velocity. While he publicly used the word "chronic" to describe his back condition, that is a misnomer according to people around the team. ...

If there was discussion about DFA'ing **Aaron Hicks** when **Aaron Judge** returned, it was brief. It's hard to let go of \$30M. ...

**Jose Trevino** on The Post podcast "The Show" named **Luis Arraez** as perhaps the game's toughest out (not counting Judge). ...

While it may seem like pitching injuries are up, word is that through 80 days (counting spring training), they are actually down slightly from 2022 and 2021. So they more than survived the WBC. ...

How well are the Rays going? They DFA'ed **Chase Anderson** with a 0.00 ERA. There should be interest. ... **Gary Sanchez** was close to an Angels deal before he went with the Mets. ... **Matt Harvey** could have gone to Mexico or Korea (or for the Long Island Ducks) to pitch following his boffo performance for Team Italy, but retired when no MLB team offered. ...

The Padres seek catching help. ... For all the worries about **Juan Soto**, he has a 144 OPS plus.

## Tigers' ace E-Rod looks like a huge trade chip

**TIGERS** left-hander **Eduardo Rodriguez**, who's pitching like a No. 1 (1.57 ERA), may be the biggest pitcher dealt at the deadline.

If the Tigers aren't in the race, an E-Rod deal is very likely considering he has an opt-out after this season. (The opt-out may also slightly limit his value.)

The White Sox are an interesting potential seller. **Lucas Giolito**, **Lance Lynn** and **Mike Clevinger** would be obvious trade candidates. If they really want to blow things up, they could consider dealing ace **Dylan Cease**,

but that seems pretty unlikely. ...

The belief here is the usually consistent Cardinals will get back into the race despite their stunningly bad start. But they will need to figure out the **Willson Contreras** situation; it makes no sense for him to DH at that pay rate (\$87.5 million).

What also makes little sense is that they determined he was the right man to replace the legendary **Yadier Molina** based on a 3 ½ hour meeting with him in Orlando this winter (via Ken Roshenthal). A job interview is no way to

choose players. Contreras has been in their division for more than a half decade; they should have had extensive intel on him.

Also, why remove him based on the word of the pitchers? He's fine at blocking pitches, framing and throwing. If game calling is an issue, let the pitchers/coaches call pitches. ...

The Orioles are an underplayed great story. **Yennier Cano**, who had an 11.50 ERA last year, has been unhittable, with a 0.16 WHIP. Despite being a reliever, his 1.8 WAR ranks just outside MLB's top 10. ...

Reds prospect **Elly de la Cruz** looks like a mega-talent. He hit two home runs over 117 mph Tuesday, and a double 118.8 mph, which was the hardest hit ball in Triple-A or the majors this year (usual leader Giancarlo Stanton is on the IL). De la Cruz originally signed for \$65,000.

Top Marlins pitching prospect, the 6-foot-8 right-hander **Eury Perez**, 20, debuts Friday against the Reds. From an AL scout: "Can outstuff hitters but needs to learn how to pitch. I think they're rushing him."



# Phil Mushnick

**EQUAL TIME**

## SLUR IT UP

I'LL NEVER forget the time B.B. King came over for a barbecue. When we went to the backyard, I looked around and said, "B.B., the grill is gone!"

He said, "Say that again." I said, "The grill is gone." He grabbed Lucille, his guitar, and the rest is R&B history.

My point? You never know what inspires brilliance and what inspires ignorance. Take Bob Huggins, a Machiavellian career college basketball slug, who this week got in a heap of hot water. The same TV folks who for years pretended that he's just a big, whimsical Teddy Bear whose teams win a lot, had to pretend they had no idea.

Informed viewers knew better, but, as always, were on their own.

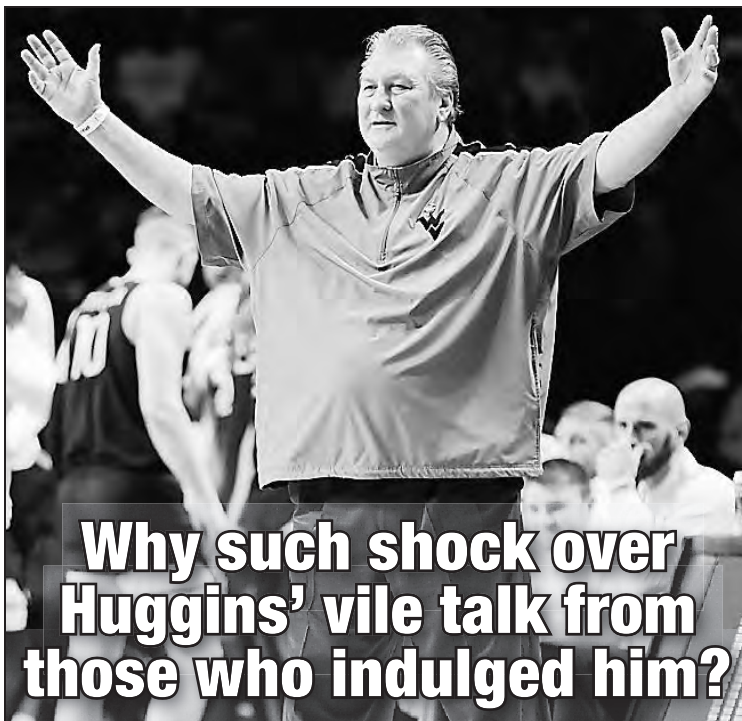
As the longtime coach of Cincinnati, then West Virginia, who in September joined many other college basketball coaches enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame for no apparent good deeds other than winning by whatever sleazy means it took, Huggins was fully indulged by the highest authorities, starting with college presidents.

While at Cincy, Huggins was nationally known for recruiting players with no legit reason to be enrolled in any college. Even by darkly comical NCAA standards, Huggins' Cincy teams, with 14 NCAA Tournament appearances, were a wink-and-a-nod academic joke. And with the school's tacit approval, arrests outnumbered graduates, walk-ons excluded.

At Cincinnati, Huggins also starred in a video, the one of him being arrested for a DUI.

But worry not. After his firing by Cincy, West Virginia, his alma mater, was waiting. And Huggins' ways and means continued. Until this week, when on a Cincinnati radio show, he "playfully" referenced the student body of Xavier — a Jesuit university in Cincy — as "all those f--s, those Catholic f--s."

Well West Virginia would have none of that, so it sprung into action and did as close to nothing as it could.



**Why such shock over Huggins' vile talk from those who indulged him?**

**BOB & WEAVE:** West Virginia coach Bob Huggins is in hot water over a slur, but Phil Mushnick says complicit TV networks have long ignored his uncouth win-at-all-costs side. Getty Images

It suspended Huggins for the first three games of the season — pay-to-slay home games against Missouri State, Monmouth and Jacksonville State — and hit him with a \$1 million pay cut to \$3.2 million, still a school-high salary for a guy who this week made himself virtually impossible to hire.

Also, this week, in what seemed a sign of the times, the media were more outraged that Huggins bashed homosexuals than that he bashed Catholics. Is one bigoted bashing

more acceptable than the other?

But for more than 25 years, TV folks knew Huggins to be an uncouth, self-entitled loophole-reliant stinker. Yet almost weekly, he was presented on TV as a sweetheart. How many men and women who call college sports telecasts tell non-pandering truths? How many have aided and abetted the fraud that further allows colleges to serve as mob-like fronts for sports?

This week, ESPN "SportsCenter" host John Anderson apologized for a

childish crack he made about Golden Knights defenseman Zach Whitecloud. Unaware of the obvious — Whitecloud is a Native North American — Anderson said his name sounded like a brand of toilet paper.

Anderson seemed sincere in his apology and Whitecloud was gracious in accepting it.

Yet Anderson's employment by ESPN is predicated on his presence as a wise guy, thus ESPN was at least as responsible for what Anderson said as was Anderson, who had merely stayed in his ESPN character.

In the last 10 days, Alabama's baseball coach was fired and at least 40 student-athletes at Iowa and Iowa State are under investigation for gambling "irregularities" and suspicions. Scandal, inevitable due to sports gambling's saturated commercial climate — no one loses, get-rich-quick, bogus come-ons target the young and vulnerable — has arrived.

But how do all these TV and radio skills and sportscasters, from Michael Kay, to Charles Barkley, to Evan Roberts, to Colin Cowherd, handle those stories, along with others involving the sports gambling busts of pro athletes?

Do they make "shame-shame" at the accused or sanctioned? Do they ignore the growing stories? Or do they rationalize their own involvement by backing the violators as society's children just responding to commercial prompts?

How did these broadcasters and their bosses not see any of this coming? How did they not avoid such personalized entanglements? Why did they allow their employees to attach their names to sucker ads? The inevitable is here, but the grill is gone.

Later, after Cosell wouldn't return my calls — and I told ABC exactly what I was preparing to write — I wrote it. Cosell then issued a statement claiming that he was a victim of "a documented, long-term vendetta against me by certain writers of the New York Post."

But he didn't deny that he'd been caught being dishonest.

ESPN, which didn't acknowledge on its telecast Monday what had just happened, relied on its audience being too stupid to notice.

**Boone keeps raiding 'pen till it flops**

**YANKEES** manager **Aaron Boone** was tried and convicted for the wrong crime, after an 8-7 loss to the Rays on Sunday.

Did Boone allow **Gerrit Cole** to stay in too long, as a 6-0 lead turned to 6-6 after five innings? Only in retrospect. Cole has shown self-corrective, in-game successes that have helped him achieve ace status.

But what followed was irreconcilable. By now, you know the Aaron Boone Baseball Bullpen drill:

First, Boone removed **Clay Holmes** after he went one-two-three, with two strikeouts. Then, **Wandy Peralta** after three up, three down, two Ks. Then **Michael King** after one inning, one hit and three strikeouts. As always, Boone went looking for better!

In **Albert Abreu**, Boone's search was over. In the 10th, with a Rob Manfred runner on second, Abreu allowed the game-ending hit.

➤ **Joe Kapp**, hard-bitten Vikings quarterback of the late 1960s and a favorite of those who appreciated "winning ugly," died Monday at 85. Kapp's three seasons in Minnesota were fun to watch. He threw 37 TD passes for the Vikings, some of them spirals.

➤ Early in Game 4 of Heat-Knicks, after Miami hit a short jumper, **Ian Eagle**, calling the game on TBS, spoke some new-age nonsense: "Miami has a high execution level," leaving himself to explain himself, "They get the shots they want." Oh.

➤ Hey, hey, hey! Rangers-Mariners, on Monday, ran only 2:16. But it was fast bad baseball. Seven pitchers combined to strike out 26 — 48 percent of the outs.

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## Ignoring early reveal insult to audience

SO ESPN, which wrecks everything it touches, messed up the NHL draft lottery on Monday when, headed to commercials, co-host **Kevin Weekes** revealed the early inside tip that Columbus would select third, leaving Chicago or Anaheim to the first pick and the latest can't miss, **Connor Bedard**.

The prematurely spilled info removed much of the audience's anticipation.

Sherman, set the Wayback Machine to 1984. ... Working the U.S. Olympic boxing trials, "Tell It

Like It Is" **Howard Cosell** called a close bout between **Pernell Whitaker** and **Joe Belinc**.

Cosell was then surreptitiously given the result by ring announcer **Chuck Hull** before it was revealed on TV. Cosell then applied his "genius" to "guess" at the result he already knew.

But then he blew it. After "predicting" Whitaker in a close decision, the winner was declared. "There it is," said Cosell, "a three-to-two decision for Whitaker." But the scores of the bouts were never announced!



### STORM BREWS:

Former St. John's coach Mike Anderson says the school fired him while already planning to hire Rick Pitino (inset) to replace him and he wants \$45.6 million from the university.

N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg (2)



# Anderson seeking \$45.6M from SJU

By RYAN GLASSPIEGEL

Mike Anderson is seeking \$45.6 million dollars from St. John's, claiming the university fired him in March due to a desire to hire Rick Pitino as its new men's basketball coach.

St. John's fired Anderson, 63, for cause the day after its loss to Marquette in the second round of the Big East Tournament. In four seasons at the school, Anderson went 68-56 and 30-46 in the conference.

In arbitration documents revealed by ESPN, Anderson said he was fired so St. John's could avoid paying him the money left on his deal and use that money to lure the 70-year-old Pitino to Queens. Pitino's hiring was announced 10 days after the firing of Anderson, who began planning to fight the decision in the days after losing his job.

ESPN reported Thursday that Anderson's attorney, John Singer of Singer Deutsch, filed a "notice of intention to arbitrate" seeking the \$11.4 million remaining on his contract, plus \$34.2 million in "punitive" damages.

Anderson claimed in the

suit that St. John's was already having serious talks with Pitino when he was fired, that he continued to represent the program in a "first class manner" after he signed a new contract in 2021 and that firing him for cause was part of a strategy focusing "on marshaling and amalgamating enough assets" to pay Pitino. According to reports, Pitino's deal is for six years and \$20 million.

"St. John's manufactured out of whole cloth its posterous 'for cause' termination of Mr. Anderson's employment with the sole purpose of attempting to extricate the University from its \$11.4 million ironclad contractual obligation to Mr. Anderson, specifically so that it could otherwise divert those funds to Pitino," the filing claimed.

Anderson's filing also called out St. John's for hypocrisy over hiring Pitino, pointing out he has been "enmeshed in one highly publicized, sensational scandal after another over the years."

In a statement in response to the arbitration filing, St. John's said: "We dispute the wildly inaccur-

rate claims being reported in the media and will vigorously defend those claims in arbitration."

When St. John's fired Anderson, the coach was sent a notice of termination that alleged a "failure to perform your duties and responsibilities in a manner that reflected positively on St. John's University ... in actions [that] brought serious discredit" to St. John's, plus a "failure to appropriately supervise and communicate with your assistant coaches."

Sources told The Post's Zach Braziller that the culture under Anderson had deteriorated significantly in recent years. There were repeated disciplinary issues and two players — Rafael Pinzon and Andre Curbelo — were suspended this past season.

At his introductory press conference, Pitino, who has a 834-293 record in 34-plus college seasons since 1976, said he didn't get positive reviews of many of the players in the program. Only two players from the 2022-23 roster — Joel Soriano and Drissa Traore — remain part of the program.

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# FAMILIAR FACES

## Plenty of options if Drury seeks new Rangers coach with connections to past

By MOLLIE WALKER

Chris Drury's second coaching search as president and general manager of the Rangers is well underway. The Stanley Cup implications that come with this search, however, have intensified the importance of making the right choice.

Differences in ideologies or philosophies between Drury and former coach Gerald Gallant certainly played a role in the two parting ways. While it wasn't the only reason, that alone was justification for Drury to take action.

It would not be surprising if Drury were to hire someone with whom he is familiar, and thus who sees the game the same way he does. There was no preexisting connection between Drury and Gallant, but perhaps that will be a prerequisite this time around.

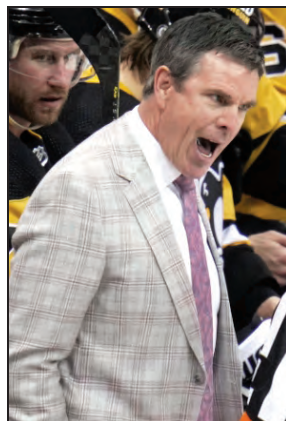
Let's dive into some potential coaching candidates for the Rangers who have worked or played with Drury over the course of his hockey career:

### BU blood

**Mike Sullivan:** We're starting off strong with someone who technically can't even be an official option, because: Why not?

Sullivan not only is still employed by the Penguins, but the 55-year-old two-time Stanley Cup winner also just signed a three-year extension last year. Pittsburgh just cleaned out its front office, firing GM Ron Hextall, assistant GM Chris Pryor and president of hockey operations Brian Burke.

Word is Sullivan, 55, is playing a role in the search for a new general manager, which also makes a union with the Rangers feel all the less likely.



Sullivan and Drury share a Boston University heritage, and they were U.S. teammates during the 1997 World Championships. Drury also played under Sullivan, who was an assistant coach with the Rangers, for his last two NHL seasons as a player in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

**Jay Pandolfo:** It's difficult to imagine Drury going back to the Boston University pipeline, especially for Terriers head coach Pandolfo, who has no NHL head coaching experience. He has spent five seasons as an assistant for the Bruins, but this past season at BU was his first as head honcho anywhere.

Pandolfo, 48, may have led the Terriers to the Frozen Four this season, but his lack of NHL head coaching experience makes him a risky option. His two Stanley Cups and 15 years as an NHL player make the risk look like it could include a reward, though.

Drury and Pandolfo overlapped for two seasons at Boston University, in 1994-95 and 1995-96.

### Rocky Mountain high

**Bob Hartley:** Hartley was Drury's head coach of with the Avalanche when they won the Stanley Cup in 2001. Despite having

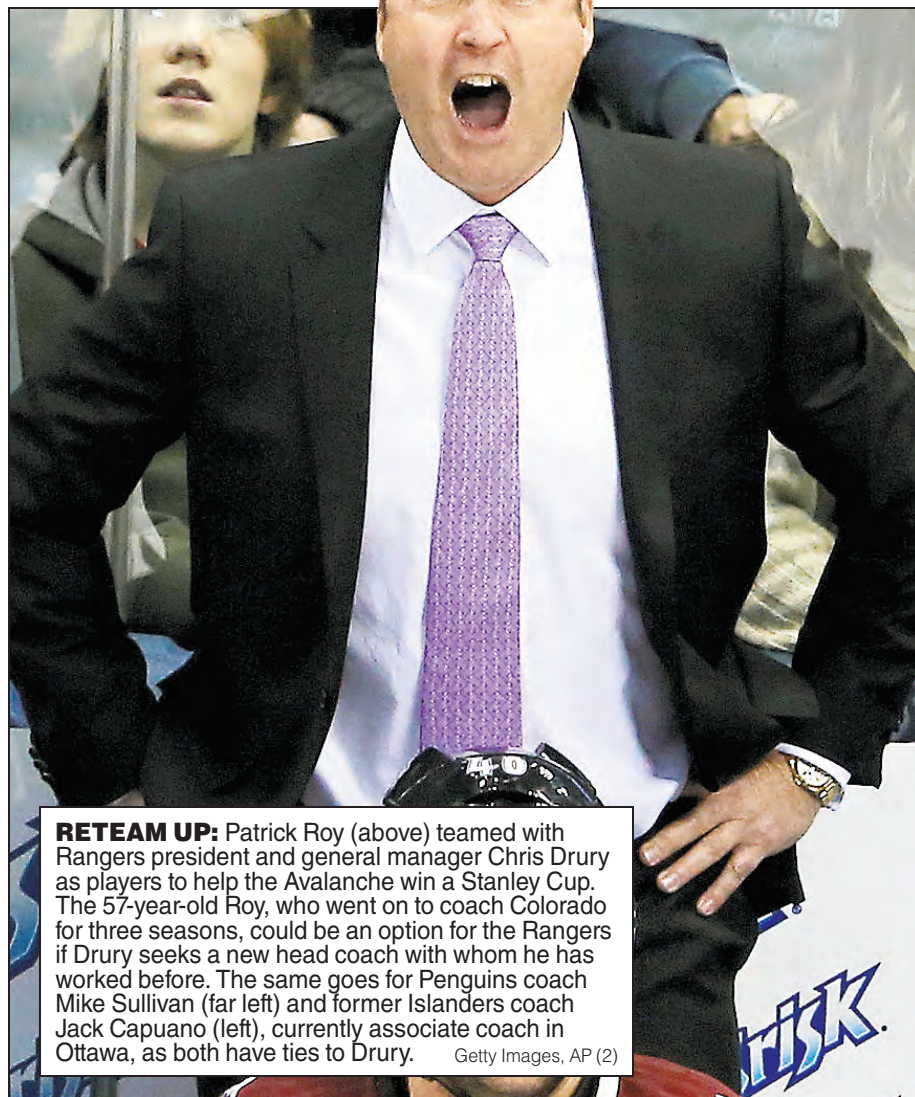
been away from the NHL since 2016, when the Flames relieved him of his head coaching duties after they missed the playoffs in three of his four seasons, the 62-year-old Hartley could be a candidate.

Hartley's most recent coaching stint was for four seasons in the Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League with the Omsk Avangard, which won the Gagarin Cup under his leadership in 2021. When he stepped away from that job, Hartley insisted he wasn't ready to retire from coaching, but just wanted to spend more time with his family.

**Patrick Roy:** If Drury wants someone who can relate to the players in a similar way to how Gallant did, Roy fits the bill.

Just three seasons of NHL head coaching experience doesn't appear as daunting when paired with a 19-year playing career and four Stanley Cup rings. He is a Hockey Hall of Famer and is regarded as one of the top goaltenders in NHL history, as the only player to win the Conn Smythe Trophy three times in three different decades.

The 57-year-old Roy, who last coached the Quebec Remparts of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey



**RETEAM UP:** Patrick Roy (above) teamed with Rangers president and general manager Chris Drury as players to help the Avalanche win a Stanley Cup. The 57-year-old Roy, who went on to coach Colorado for three seasons, could be an option for the Rangers if Drury seeks a new head coach with whom he has worked before. The same goes for Penguins coach Mike Sullivan (far left) and former Islanders coach Jack Capuano (left), currently associate coach in Ottawa, as both have ties to Drury. Getty Images, AP (2)

League, was teammates with Drury for four seasons and one Cup championship on the Avalanche.

### Team USA ties

**Jack Capuano:** His last NHL head coaching gig was back in 2017, after which the Islanders fired him following parts of seven seasons, so Capuano is probably itching for another opportunity at the helm.

After two seasons as an associate coach for the Panthers, Capuano has been in the same role for the Senators the last four campaigns. None of those teams has been able to reach the playoffs over that span.

Capuano, 56, was the last coach of Team USA at the 2021 World Championships under Drury as gen-

eral manager. He led that team to a bronze medal.

**Peter Laviolette:** Laviolette, 58, has already been presented as a potential candidate for the Rangers by The Post, but his connections with Drury could make for a harmonious match.

Not only did Drury play under Laviolette in the 2006 Olympics (head coach) and the 2004 World Cup (assistant), but also Drury's older brother, Ted, played alongside Laviolette in the 1994 Olympics.

**Jeff Blashill:** After serving as head coach of the Red Wings for seven seasons, during which Detroit missed the playoffs six times, Blashill spent 2022-23 as an assistant for the Lightning.

Blashill, 49, was the head coach of Team USA in 2019,

when Drury was general manager.

**Dan Bylsma:** Bylsma made a name for himself in his first year as an NHL head coach, when he led the Penguins to the 2009 Stanley Cup after he was promoted from the club's AHL affiliate in the middle of the season. At age 39, he was the youngest head coach in the league at the time.

After head coaching stints with the Penguins and Sabres from 2008-09 through 2016-17, Bylsma served as a Red Wings assistant for three seasons before going down to the American Hockey League.

Bylsma, now 52, was an assistant on Blashill's coaching staff with Team USA in 2019, when Drury was general manager.

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# Sevy set for 2nd rehab start, much to his dismay

By DAN MARTIN

Luis Severino came out of his first rehab start Wednesday with no issues and he is expected to make another rehab outing Tuesday at Double-A Somerset, since there are no minor league games on Mondays.

The Yankees hope to get the right-hander, who has yet to pitch for them this season due to a strained right lat, up to 60 or so pitches in his next start.

## YANKEES NOTES

Manager Aaron Boone didn't rule out the possibility of Severino returning to the rotation following that next rehab start.

"We'll make that decision at that point," Boone said.

Not surprisingly, Severino said after the Yankees' 8-2 loss to the Rays on Thursday, that he was ready to start in the majors instead of waiting for another minor league appearance.

"I get it, but at this point, I know my body, and not for good reasons," the oft-injured righty said. "I feel good. I feel ready. If I'm pitching there, I can pitch here. It's still pitching and I'm healthy."

Without Severino, Frankie Montas and Carlos Rodon, who is expected to throw Saturday after receiving a cortisone injection in his back on Tuesday, the Yankees have used Jhony Brito and Clarke Schmidt in the rotation.

Rodon has been bothered by the back issue, which restricts his delivery, but despite the extended absence, Boone is hopeful he won't need too long to be built back up.

"I wouldn't say [he'd have to start] from scratch," Boone said of Rodon, who was sidelined by a left forearm strain he suffered in spring training.

"He's kept his arm going and has been throwing the last few months to varying degrees. Hopefully it's a small ramp-up."

But he was unsure when Rodon might start to face hitters again.

► The Scranton Shuttle is in full effect, as **Ryan Weber**, on Thursday, became the latest reliever to be summoned from Triple-A. The right-hander gave up three runs in two innings in the loss to the Rays, but was able to finish the game.

Weber replaced **Deivi Garcia**, who was optioned to SWB after he picked up a three-inning save Wednesday against Oakland. Garcia had come up for **Greg Weissert**, who had been summoned to take **Nick Ramirez's** spot.

► **Tommy Kahnle** (biceps) threw a live bullpen session, which "went well," according to Boone. ... Boone said **Josh Donaldson** could begin a rehab assignment next week, with **Giancarlo Stanton** considered a week behind. ... **Ben Rortvedt** was reinstated from the IL and optioned to Triple-A. Rortvedt had surgery to repair an aneurysm in his left shoulder during spring training.



**THE END:** Akira Schmid and Michael McLeod react as the Hurricanes celebrate Jesper Fast's overtime goal that gave Carolina a 3-2 Game 5 win and a 4-1 series victory. Getty Images

## Jersey's playoff run ends with OT heartache

By AARON BEARD

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Devils fought past the Rangers, but they didn't have an answer for the Hurricanes.

Jesper Fast deflected in a shot by Jesperi Kotkaniemi on a power play at 7:09 of overtime to give the Hurricanes a series-ending 3-2 victory over the Devils on Thursday night.

Fast's deflection while shielding Akira Schmid set off a celebration for the Hurricanes, who never led until the final play and twice trailed by a goal before winning the best-of-seven series 4-1 to reach the Eastern Conference final.

In the first tight game of the second-round matchup, Fast made amends for popping a puck over the goal in front of an open net in the first period. It came on the power play after the Devils' Jonas Siegenthaler was sent to the box for a delay-of-game penalty for sending a puck out of play from his own

**HURRICANES 3** **Overtime**  
**DEVILS 2** **Sum. / P. 45**

zone.

"I know that he was shaking his head in the first period," Carolina defenseman Jaccob Slavin said, "but to get it in the end is awesome for him."

Slavin and Brent Burns also scored for Carolina, and Frederik Andersen made 27 saves.

Dawson Mercer and Timo Meier scored for New Jersey. Schmid stopped 36 shots.

This marks Carolina's first trip to the Eastern Conference final since 2019. The Hurricanes will face the winner of the Florida-Toronto series, with the Panthers leading that one 3-1.

The first four games of the series had been filled by lopsided results, with each decided by at least four goals and a starting goaltender chased early. Carolina won the first two games at home by an 11-2 margin, then shook off a Game 3 loss by

blowing things open in the second period for a 6-1 road win Tuesday in Game 4.

The Hurricanes had been in this position in Round 1, with a chance to close out the Islanders on home ice in Game 5. They lost that one and instead had to clinch the series with an overtime road win in Game 6.

This time, they needed a dramatic finish to avoid a repeat.

The Devils' exit comes in a season where a young group arrived to postseason contention earlier than expected.

New Jersey finished one point behind the Hurricanes in the Metropolitan Division for the league's third-best point total (112) and the franchise's first playoff appearance in five years, then pushed past the Rangers in seven games despite falling behind 0-2 for its first playoff series win since 2012.

"We knew we had to play better and I think the whole team bought in," Devils captain Nico Hischier said. "The effort was

there and we had our chances."

Both teams missed on apparent easy putaways that loomed large as the game pushed into OT.

The Hurricanes' early chances included Seth Jarvis' deflection banging off the right post roughly 6 minutes in. Then came Paul Stastny finding Fast at the top of the crease — only to see Fast lift the puck over the exposed net in a play that left him shaking his head in exasperation once back on the bench.

The Devils' frustrating moment came in a wild second-period sequence.

Meier stole possession behind the Carolina net and started a pass-happy sequence that saw the puck go from Michael McLeod to Jack Hughes just outside the crease, and then to Meier on the opposite side for a putaway chance — only to see Meier send the puck harmlessly through and out of the crease. — AP

# 10

## MUST-SEE MATCHUPS OF 2023

BY RYAN DUNLEAVY



**Dolphins at Chargers, Week 1:** If the Dolphins, Bengals and Bills are the AFC's three best teams, who's next?

The winner of this game could provide an answer. The Dolphins drafted Tua Tagovailoa (top) one pick before the Chargers took Justin Herbert (bottom) in 2020. They've already split two head-to-head meetings. Tagovailoa had the inside track to an MVP pre-injury, but Herbert was first to a playoff win.



**Ravens at Browns, Week 4:** Two quarterbacks who need to live up to massive contracts. Lamar Jackson is the NFL's highest-paid player and has the best weaponry of his career with Odell Beckham Jr. and Zay Flowers. Deshaun Watson — who got the fully guaranteed contract that Jackson initially sought — was not very good in six games last season after a 27-game absence. Margin for error in the AFC North is razor thin.



**Packers at Broncos, Week 7:** Two new eras collide — Jordan Love as Packers quarterback and Sean Payton as Broncos head coach. Can Love continue an esteemed tradition? Can Payton revive Russell Wilson after a scary bad season by the nine-time Pro Bowl quarterback? The Broncos traded three first-round picks and three seconds (plus more) to unite Wilson and Payton.



**Texans at Panthers, Week 8:** Will Bryce Young (top) and C.J. Stroud (bottom)



both be starting by then? If so, it will be the fifth time since 1967 that quarterbacks drafted No. 1 and No. 2 overall meet as rookies. The Panthers traded a small fortune to draft Young. The Texans took Stroud and then traded up to No. 3 to draft Will Anderson, who could be trying to sack his former Alabama teammate.



**Bills at Bengals, Week 9:** It's impossible to imagine what Bills safety Damar Hamlin (right) — who recently



was cleared to return to football — will be feeling when he steps onto the same field where he suffered cardiac arrest during a January game that was canceled. This game also is a rematch of a playoff game won by the Bengals on the road. The Bills face as much pressure as any team this season.



### ARIZONA CARDINALS

SEPTEMBER	
10 at Commanders	1:00
17 GIANTS	4:05
24 COWBOYS	4:25
OCTOBER	
1 at 49ers	4:25
8 BENGALS	4:05
15 at Rams	4:25
22 at Seahawks	4:05
29 RAVENS	4:25
NOVEMBER	
5 at Browns	1:00
12 FALCONS	4:05
19 at Texans	1:00
26 RAMS	4:05
DECEMBER	
3 at Steelers	1:00
Bye week	
17 49ERS	4:05
24 at Bears	4:25
31 at Eagles	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 SEAHAWKS	TBD



### ATLANTA FALCONS

SEPTEMBER	
10 PANTHERS	1:00
17 PACKERS	1:00
24 at Lions	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 at Jaguars*	9:30 a.m.
8 TEXANS	1:00
15 COMMANDERS	1:00
22 at Buccaneers	1:00
29 at Titans	1:00
NOVEMBER	
5 VIKINGS	1:00
12 at Cardinals	4:05
Bye week	
26 SAINTS	1:00
DECEMBER	
3 at Jets	1:00
10 BUCCANEERS	1:00
16/17 at Panthers	TBD
24 COLTS	1:00
31 at Bears	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 at Saints	TBD
* in London	



### BALTIMORE RAVENS

SEPTEMBER	
10 TEXANS	1:00
17 at Bengals	1:00
24 COLTS	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 at Browns	1:00
8 at Steelers	1:00
15 at Titans*	9:30 a.m.
22 LIONS	1:00
29 at Cardinals	4:25
NOVEMBER	
5 SEAHAWKS	1:00
12 BROWNS	1:00
16 BENGALS	8:15
26 at Chargers	8:20
DECEMBER	
Bye week	
10 RAMS	1:00
17 at Jaguars	8:20
25 at 49ers	8:15
31 DOLPHINS	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 STEELERS	TBD
* In London	

# COMPLETE 2023 NFL SCHEDULE

## ALL 32 TEAMS. ALL 17 GAMES.

**SUPER BOWL LVIII**  
Feb. 11, 2024  
Allegiant Stadium Las Vegas



### BUFFALO BILLS

SEPTEMBER	
11 at Jets	8:15
17 RAIDERS	1:00
24 at Commanders	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 DOLPHINS	1:00
8 JAGUARS*	9:30 a.m.
15 GIANTS	8:20
22 at Patriots	1:00
26 BUCCANEERS	8:15
NOVEMBER	
5 at Bengals	8:20
13 BRONCOS	8:15
19 JETS	4:25
26 at Eagles	4:25
DECEMBER	
Bye week	
10 at Chiefs	4:25
17 at COWBOYS	4:25
23 at Chargers	8:00
31 PATRIOTS	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 at Dolphins	TBD



### CHICAGO BEARS

SEPTEMBER	
10 PACKERS	4:25
17 at Buccaneers	1:00
24 at Chiefs	4:25
OCTOBER	
1 BRONCOS	1:00
5 at Commanders	8:15
15 VIKINGS	1:00
22 RAIDERS	1:00
29 at Chargers	8:20
NOVEMBER	
5 at Saints	1:00
9 PANTHERS	8:15
19 at Lions	1:00
27 at Vikings	8:15
DECEMBER	
Bye week	
10 LIONS	1:00
16/17 at Browns	TBD
24 CARDINALS	4:25
31 FALCONS	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 at Green Bay	TBD



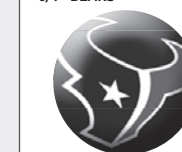
### CLEVELAND BROWNS

SEPTEMBER	
10 BENGALS	1:00
18 at Steelers	8:15
24 TITANS	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 RAVENS	1:00
Bye week	
15 49ERS	1:00
22 at Colts	1:00
29 at Seahawks	4:05
NOVEMBER	
5 CARDINALS	1:00
12 at Ravens	1:00
19 STEELERS	1:00
26 at Broncos	4:05
DECEMBER	
3 at Rams	4:25
10 JAGUARS	1:00
16/17 BEARS	TBD
24 at Texans	1:00
28 JETS	8:15
JANUARY	
6/7 at Bengals	TBD



### DENVER BRONCOS

SEPTEMBER	
10 RAIDERS	4:25
17 COMMANDERS	4:25
24 at Dolphins	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 at Bears	1:00
8 JETS	4:25
12 at Chiefs	8:15
22 PACKERS	4:25
29 CHIEFS	4:25
NOVEMBER	
Bye week	
13 at Bills	8:15
19 VIKINGS	8:20
26 BROWNS	4:05
DECEMBER	
3 at Texans	4:05
10 at Chargers	4:25
16/17 at Lions	TBD
24 PATRIOTS	8:15
31 CHARGERS	4:25
JANUARY	
6/7 at Raiders	TBD



### HOUSTON TEXANS

SEPTEMBER	
10 at Ravens	1:00
17 COLTS	1:00
24 at Jaguars	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 STEELERS	1:00
8 at Falcons	1:00
15 SAINTS	1:00
Bye week	
29 at Panthers	1:00
NOVEMBER	
5 BUCCANEERS	1:00
12 at Bengals	1:00
19 CARDINALS	1:00
26 JAGUARS	1:00
DECEMBER	
3 BRONCOS	4:05
10 at Jets	1:00
17 at Titans	1:00
24 BROWNS	1:00
31 TITANS	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 at Colts	TBD



### INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

SEPTEMBER	
10 JAGUARS	1:00
17 at Texans	1:00
24 at Ravens	1:00
OCTOBER	
1 RAMS	1:00
8 TITANS	1:00
15 at Jaguars	1:00
22 BROWNS	1:00
29 SAINTS	1:00
NOVEMBER	
5 at Panthers	4:05
12 at Patriots*	9:30 a.m.
Bye week	
26 BUCCANEERS	1:00
DECEMBER	
3 at Titans	1:00
10 at Bengals	1:00
16/17 STEELERS	TBD
24 at Falcons	1:00
31 RAIDERS	1:00
JANUARY	
6/7 TEXANS	TBD
* In Frankfurt, Germany	



### GREEN BAY PACKERS

SEPTEMBER	
10 at Bears	4:25
17 at Falcons	1:00
24 SAINTS	1:00
28 LIONS	8:15
OCTOBER	
9 at Raiders	8:15
Bye week	
22 at Broncos	4:25
29 VIKINGS	1:00
NOVEMBER	
5 RAMS	1:00
12 at Steelers	1:00
19 CHARGERS	1:00
23 at Lions	12:30
DECEMBER	
3 CHIEFS	8:20
11 at Giants	8:15
17 BUCCANEERS	1:00
24 at Panthers	1:00
31 at Vikings	8:20
JANUARY	
6/7 BEARS	TBD





Brian Daboll

# GIANTS



PAUL SCHWARTZ'S

## 2023 SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

### THREE TOUGHEST GAMES

**Week 3 at 49ers:** Sure, we don't know if the Niners quarterback will be Trey Lance, Brock Purdy or ... Sam Darnold. What we do know is the Giants will be facing in prime time on "Thursday Night Football" a ferocious defense and an inventive offense, far from home, on a short week of rest.

**Week 6 at Bills:** The good news is the Lake Erie snow should not be in effect in mid-October. The bad news is the Bills figure to be loaded and Josh Allen (below) is a bear to play against. This will be a homecoming for GM Joe Schoen and head coach Brian Daboll, who earned their shot with the Giants thanks to their good work in Buffalo.

**Week 16 at Eagles:** Any game any place any week against the Eagles can qualify for any "toughest game" list. The difficulty factor goes up with this being a Christmas Day afternoon game, which figures to be quite a celebratory and raucous atmosphere. This is a house of horrors for the Giants, losers of 10 consecutive games at Lincoln Financial Field.

N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg



### THREE EASIEST GAMES

**Week 2 at Cardinals:** Kyle Murray is rehabbing following reconstructive knee surgery and not expected until later in the season. So, the Giants will face their former backup, Colt McCoy, at quarterback, or David Blough or Jeff Driskel. There will be plenty of blue-clad Giants fans amid the Cardinals red in the building.

**Week 7 vs. Commanders:** Yes, we know, division games are never easy but some are definitely easier than others. The Giants went 1-0-1 against the Commanders in 2022 and 0-5 against the rest of the NFC East in the regular season and playoffs. Dexter Lawrence, Kayvon Thibodeaux, Leonard Williams and Azeem Ojulari will take aim at ... Sam Howell?

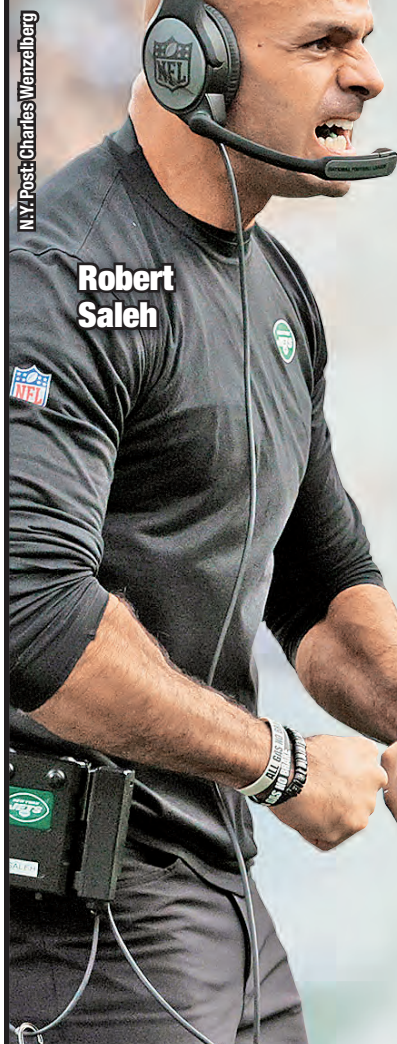
**Week 17 vs. Rams:** A New Year's Eve home game against a regressing team from Los Angeles? This could be just what the Giants need this late in the season. They hope the temperatures are low, low, low, and a little freezing rain wouldn't hurt, either, with the sun-drenched Rams in town.

### NOTABLE GAMES

**Week 1 vs. Cowboys:** There was a stretch (2012-2019) when the Giants and Cowboys met six of eight years in the season opener. The Giants lost five of those six games. This one is a "Sunday Night Football" extravaganza at MetLife Stadium. The Giants in 2022 were swept by the 'Boys.

**Week 8 vs. Jets:** The teams that both call MetLife Stadium home clash once every four years in the regular season and it is always meaningful when they do — if only for claiming area supremacy. Aaron Rodgers, if you haven't heard, now plays quarterback for the J-E-T-S. This is a Giants home game. How many Rodgers No. 8 jerseys will inhabit the seats?

**Week 9 at Raiders:** Vegas, baby. The Giants have been around since 1925 and for most of that time the NFL would have played a game on the moon before venturing into gambling-infested Las Vegas. Times have changed. The first-ever Giants game in Vegas will be a return for tight end Darren Waller, who was with the Raiders for five seasons before the Giants traded for him.



Robert Saleh

# JETS



BRIAN COSTELLO'S

## 2023 SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

### THREE TOUGHEST GAMES

**Week 1 vs. Bills:** The Aaron Rodgers era starts off with a bang. The kings of the AFC East come to MetLife Stadium on Sept. 11 to face the Jets on "Monday Night Football." This is going to be the most anticipated Jets opener since 2011, when the Jets played the Cowboys on the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

**Week 4 vs. Chiefs:** Rodgers and Patrick Mahomes (below) have never played each other. Hopefully both of them will be on the field for this one. It will be the first time the Jets are on "Sunday Night Football" since 2011. The defending Super Bowl champions will be a huge test to see how improved the Jets are with Rodgers.

**Week 6 vs. Eagles:** Two weeks after facing the defending Super Bowl champions, the

Jets will take on the team the Chiefs defeated in the Super Bowl. The Eagles are 12-0 all time against the Jets, a quirky streak that Rodgers will try to end. The Eagles had a strong draft coming off an NFC title and will be a tough team for everyone to beat.



Getty Images

### THREE EASIEST GAMES

**Week 13 vs. Falcons:** The Jets have a tough stretch to start the season but things ease up in December. The Falcons have worked to upgrade their defense this offseason but it still feels like they are a rebuilding team. When you look at the Jets' schedule, the Falcons are not a team that scares you.

**Week 14 vs. Texans:** A week after playing the Falcons, the Jets get the Texans. Houston could have rookie CJ Stroud starting at quarterback for them. The Texans are a long way off from contending and the Jets should handle a young Houston team. If they don't, something went wrong for the Jets this season.

**Week 16 vs. Commanders:** Washington comes to MetLife Stadium on Christmas Eve. Sam Howell is expected to be the Commanders quarterback this season, but who knows by this point of the season. The Commanders could have a new owner by the time this game is being played and Ron Rivera may be fighting for his job. The Jets hope they are fighting for a playoff berth.

### NOTABLE GAMES

**Week 2 at Cowboys:** The Jets travel to Dallas on a short week to face the always dangerous Cowboys. Rodgers had his biggest win in this stadium when he quarterbacked the Packers to a Super Bowl title after the 2010 season. Now, he makes his road debut for the Jets against Dak Prescott and Co. We'll know plenty about the 2023 Jets after their first two games.

**Week 3 vs. Patriots:** The Jets have not beaten their rivals since 2015. They have lost 14 straight games to the Patriots with a variety of different quarterbacks. Now, Rodgers gets his crack at ending Bill Belichick's domination over the franchise. It comes early in the season and the Jets may still be finding their way, but it finally feels like they have the upper hand in this rivalry.

**Week 9 vs. Chargers:** Justin Herbert carved up the Jets as a rookie in 2020. Now, Herbert and the Chargers come to MetLife Stadium for a Monday night matchup with Rodgers and the Jets. By this point in the season, the Jets should be used to playing together and should have an identity. While the focus will be on the quarterback matchup, how Robert Saleh's defense fares against Herbert could decide the game.



## WHERE'S THE BYE?

It is quite late — in Week 13, meaning the Giants will have played 12 games before they get a break. Coaches usually prefer a bye closer to the middle of the season. This respite figures to be a welcome rest before the final five-game stretch run.

## OVERALL TAKEAWAYS



The Giants have five prime-time games — three in the first four weeks, so get ready, national audience. The Giants requested and were granted back-to-back road games for two of their longest trips and as a result will be able to stay in Arizona between Week 2 (at the Cardinals) and Week 3 (at the 49ers), eliminating one cross-country trip. Five of the first six games

are against teams that made the playoffs in 2022. Based on 2022 records, the Giants, Cowboys and Patriots have the toughest schedules in the league. This one offers severe challenges for the Giants, as seven of their first 11 games are on the road. On the flip side, the Giants have only one flight (New Orleans) in the last eight weeks.



## WHERE'S THE BYE?

The bye comes in Week 7, which feels a little early but not too bad. The Jets will need a break after that opening slate of games that features both conference champions and three legitimate Super Bowl contenders.

## OVERALL TAKEAWAYS



The schedule makers did not give the Jets an easy start. They face eight teams that were in the playoffs last year in their first 11 games. Games against the Bills, Chiefs and Eagles in the first six weeks will let us know where the Jets stand. If Rodgers and the offense take time to find their rhythm,

the Jets could be in a deep hole by midseason. The good news for them is December features plenty of winnable games against the Texans, Dolphins, Commanders, Browns and Patriots.



By JOSHUA RHETT MILLER

The resurrection of “Punt God” is underway.

Matt Araiza, whose mighty left leg led to his mythical nickname, saw his lifelong NFL dream dashed in an instant last August when he was accused of gang rape while at San Diego State University.

Araiza, a sixth-round pick in the 2022 NFL Draft, was cut by the Bills from a four-year, \$3.8 million contract without even making a regular-season punt a week after a 17-year-old high school senior sued him and two San Diego State teammates.

She accused them of rape at Araiza’s off-campus house in October 2021, revealing that police and prosecutors were also investigating the trio.

The 17-year-old said she had sex with Araiza, then 21, outside the house but claimed he then led her inside where at least three other men, including Xavier Leonard and Pa’a Ewaliko, raped her face-down on a bed so violently that she was left bloodied and drifted out of consciousness.

The attack only ended when the party was closed down, she claimed.

Documents unsealed this week revealed that prosecutors had concluded from 101 minutes of recordings, including sex tapes made by the other two players, that Araiza — honored as college football’s best punter in his unanimous All-American junior season — wasn’t even at the party during the alleged attack.

Prosecutors in San Diego announced in December that no rape charges would be filed against Araiza, now 22, and his former Aztecs teammates.

The video evidence led them to conclude the encounters between Leonard, Ewaliko and the 17-year-old were not clearly forcible.

Ewaliko was charged with possessing child pornography after his phone was seized and denies the charge.

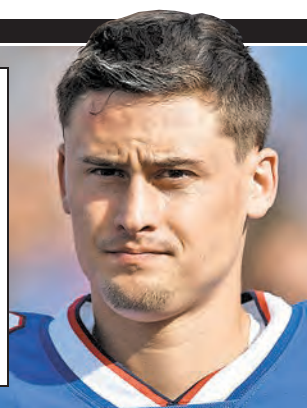
“I was happy that there was so much evidence and that this wasn’t a ‘he-said, she-said’ thing,” Araiza, who had always acknowledged having a consensual encounter with the girl outside but denied being part of a violent attack, told *The Post*.

“A lot of cases like this are and it’s up to a jury kind of guessing. I mean, if there’s no evidence either way, it’s somewhat a guess. I’m grateful that’s not the case in this one.”

Araiza is now back at home with his parents in Poway, Calif., training hard to try to break back into the NFL — a goal he acknowledges will be tough despite his cleared name, storied collegiate ca-

**KICKED OUT:** Punter Matt Araiza was cut by the Bills after being accused last year of rape while a college student. In December, prosecutors announced he would not be charged.

AP



# ‘Punt God’ out to reboot NFL career after clearing name

reer and once-promising professional start, including an 82-yard preseason smash against the Colts.

“That’s the goal,” he told *The Post*. “I think people underestimate how tough it is to make it in the NFL when you’re a free agent and you’ve been out of the game for a year. That just gives teams questions, so I’m just looking for the opportunity to answer those questions.”

Araiza said he’s “very confident” he’ll be an asset if given an opportunity, whether in Buffalo or elsewhere. His agent has been in contact with a “couple” of teams, but the special teams maven understands organizations typically don’t want players to be potential “distractions,” he said.

“I just think it’s a very rare situation, especially being a punter,” Araiza said. “If I were a quarterback — no question — I’d be on a team right now. No question whatsoever, it’s just the position I play.”

The most difficult part since last summer, Araiza said, was being on the sidelines again.

“It was a journey mentally, for sure,” Araiza said. “It had its ups and downs and there were days I was able to accept it and try to enjoy the little things in life. But then there were days when the big picture was consuming, and I could think about what I lost.

“Watching Bills’ games — that was brutal.”

Those games pushed Araiza to the brink, he admitted. “Angry, cheated,” he said of

his emotions. “I felt like I had worked my whole life for this thing and the way it was taken from me was brutal.”

Araiza is still being sued by the alleged victim, who offered to settle for \$50,000 — an offer he rejected, saying he would consider countersuing her and definitely plans to sue her attorney.

“I’m not willing to pay money to people who damaged my life irreversibly,” Araiza said. “It’s just not something I’m willing to do. But I will never waive my right to sue her attorney — ever. That lawsuit is coming.”

Araiza’s attorney, Kerry Armstrong, has called the civil suit a “shakedown,” while the ex-NFL punter isn’t sure if he was accused due to his celebrity status on campus and likely future gridiron success.

“I don’t know what the motive was, to be honest with you,” he said.

The woman, now 18, said Thursday that the recordings that convinced prosecutors to drop charges show only a portion of what happens.

“I don’t think it exonerates anybody,” she told *USA Today Sports*.

For now, Araiza said he’s content continuing to hone his craft until some team comes calling.

“I’m not really someone who enjoys the spotlight, to be honest with you,” Araiza told *The Post*. “I enjoy playing sports at the highest level, and with that, comes a little bit of the spotlight, but I’ll never be a ‘me-before-the-team’ guy.”

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# BLIGHT FROM THE START



**NOT THEIR DAY:** Kodai Senga reacts during the Reds' four-run first inning in the Mets' 5-0 loss in Cincinnati. Later, Pete Alonso tumbled over the tarp trying to catch a pop-up that landed in the stands.

Getty Images (2)



## Senga pounds the

By MIKE PUMA

CINCINNATI — One step forward and another backward for Kodai Senga.

After receiving his best results of the season in his previous start — six shutout innings against the Rockies last week — the Mets right-hander was on the verge of removal before recording three outs against the Reds on Thursday. Senga survived the first inning, but the Mets never recov-

ered in their 5-0 loss at Great American Ball Park.

Tommy Hunter was warming up in the bullpen as Senga faced his ninth batter of the first inning. Curt Casali struck out, ending the inning at 37 pitches for Senga, who had fallen into a 4-0 hole.

“One thing I had in mind coming into this outing was pounding the strike zone, which I thought I did pretty well,” Senga said through his interpreter. “But I happened to throw it where they

# Dumped in early hole, Mets show no fight and lose 7th out of last 9

By MIKE PUMA

CINCINNATI — The “worst performances of the season” category is way too cluttered for the Mets this early, but the latest entry should be strongly considered for first place.

Facing a menagerie of relievers in a Reds bullpen game Thursday, the Mets were toothless at the plate after Kodai Senga got jumped in the first inning, barely showing a pulse in a 5-0 loss at Great American Ball Park. The Mets, who lost a fifth straight series, were shut out for the seventh time this season, which leads MLB.

It was a seventh loss in nine games for the Mets in what was initially regarded as a weak portion of the schedule, against the Tigers, Rockies and Reds — with four games remaining this weekend in Washington. Overall, the Mets are 4-13 since starting a West Coast trip last month with seven victories in eight games.

“It’s a challenge for us — something I feel comfortable our guys will meet,” manager Buck Showalter said. “It’s tough because we know our guys are capable of a lot better offensively. It’s frustrating for everybody, especially the players.”

Only Justin Verlander’s gem on Wednesday in which the ace right-hander allowed one run over seven innings prevented the Mets from getting completely embarrassed in this series.

Among the Mets’ troubling statistics: They have been outscored 33-9 in the first inning this season.

“Yeah, we have gotten behind a lot or we just haven’t scored in the first inning — quite a lot,” Francisco Lindor said. “However, as a team we are doing everything possible to get going early. ... We are trying to win innings. We just haven’t done it how consistent we want to do it.”

Lindor’s overall assessment?



**NOT EVEN CLOSE:** Francisco Alvarez gets tagged out easily by Reds catcher Curt Casali, thwarting one of the Mets’ few rallies. AP

<b>REDS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Boxscore Page 44</b>
<b>METS</b>	<b>0</b>	

“[This slump] has happened because our pitchers have done a good job and then we haven’t backed them up,” Lindor said. “Other times we score, and we just haven’t put it together as a team.”

Senga surrendered his most runs in a start since joining the Mets. The right-hander was removed after five innings in which he allowed five earned runs on eight hits with seven strikeouts and one walk. He became the Mets’ fourth starting pitcher in their last five games — Verlander was the exception — to pitch five innings or fewer.

“I think everybody just needs to do their job and fulfill their role,” Senga said through his interpreter. “As a starter I need to go deep into the games and get the team on a good roll.”

Senga barely survived a first inning in which he threw 37 pitches and allowed four earned runs, facing nine batters. Jonathan India doubled leading off the game for the Reds and after Senga recorded two outs, Jake Fraley delivered a bloop RBI single. Tyler Stephenson singled on a check-

swing before Nick Senzel stroked an RBI double. Henry Ramos walked before Kyle Newman singled in two runs. With Tommy Hunter warming up in the bullpen, Senga struck out Curt Casali.

Over the next three innings Senga faced the minimum nine batters — including striking out the side in the second — but the Reds extended their lead to 5-0 in the fifth on Spencer Steer’s two-out homer.

The Mets had trouble mustering any kind of offense against an assortment of pitchers. In the third, Francisco Alvarez and Brandon Nimmo singled in succession, but Lindor and Jeff McNeil were retired in order to end the threat. In the fifth, Mark Canha singled and Nimmo walked, but Lindor and McNeil were again retired, ending the threat.

Alvarez was thrown out at the plate attempting to score on Lindor’s single in the seventh and the Mets went hitless from that point.

“We have got to figure it out,” Showalter said. “Guys are pushing, sometimes to a fault. Sometimes you can want something too much, but I am not ever going to pull that back.”

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## strike zone but gets pounded

could hit it.”

Senga had two outs with a runner on second in the first when Jake Fraley got jammed and singled in a run. The ensuing batter, Tyler Stephenson, hit a check-swing single through the first-base hole. Nick Senzel’s RBI double and Kevin Newman’s two-run single brought in the additional runs in the inning.

“I think those weak hits turning into hits ... there’s not much you can do about it,” Senga said. “But

to let in those runs in the first inning it’s hard to get the team in a groove, so it’s something I need to work on.”

Senga didn’t allow another run until the fifth, when Spencer Steer homered against him. The five runs allowed were a season-high for Senga, who walked only one batter over his five innings. Senga walked four batters in each of his previous four starts.

Senga’s four-seam fastball averaged 94.7 mph, down from his

season average of 96. The average velocity on his cutter was 88.9 mph, down from his season average of 90.3.

“I think when you throw that many pitches in one inning it takes a toll on your body,” Senga said, referring to the first inning. “It drains the stamina out of you a little bit, so in order to not do that I need to be a little more economical and to limit the damage. I know where they are going to do damage, so pitch away from that.”

# Buck gives fresh Alvarez another start behind plate

By MIKE PUMA

## METS NOTES

CINCINNATI — Buck Showalter reevaluated his plan to give Francisco Alvarez a day off Thursday, perhaps recognizing the Mets rookie catcher has been a productive piece lately to an underachieving lineup.

Alvarez was behind the plate for the matinee following a night game and was the only Mets player with multiple hits in the team’s 5-0 loss to the Reds.

The 21-year-old Alvarez went 2-for-3, including a seventh-inning double.

The Mets managed only six hits in the game.

If Alvarez rested, the Mets would have turned to Michael Perez, who was selected from Triple-A a day earlier after Tomas Nido was placed on the injured list with dry-eye syndrome — a condition that has affected his vision.

Showalter cited the fact that Wednesday’s game lasted only 2 hours, 35 minutes as a reason he didn’t mind bringing back Alvarez for the matinee.

“One of the benefits of some of the faster games is not as much wear and tear on the catchers,” Showalter said. “He looks at us like we’re crazy when he doesn’t catch.”

The manager also wanted to let Alvarez catch Kodai Senga for the first time.

➤ Showalter hadn’t reached a final decision after the game whether he will start **Taylor Meggill** or **Joey Lucchesi** on Friday against the Nationals. Whoever doesn’t get the start will likely pitch Saturday, according to Showalter, with **Max Scherzer** now a consideration for Sunday at the earliest.

Scherzer is showing gradual improvement, according to Showalter, from the neck spasms that scratched him from his Tuesday start, but is still dealing with discomfort.

Lucchesi last pitched Sunday — on short rest — and allowed three earned runs over four innings against the Rockies. Meggill started the previous day. With the Mets looking to potentially remove **Brooks Raley** from the injured list before Saturday’s game — the team has been playing short in the bullpen — it’s possible that whoever starts Friday’s game will be optioned to Triple-A Syracuse afterward to create roster space for Raley.



## ON DECK: vs. NATIONALS

Friday, 7:05 p.m., PIX11, WCBS (880 AM)

TBD



2023 stats:

--

Career vs. NYM:

--

Last start:

--

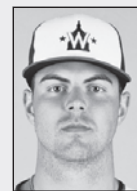
### PITCH BREAKDOWN

--%  
Type

--%  
Type

--%  
Type

RHP MacKenzie Gore



2023 stats:

3-2, 3.65 ERA

Career vs. NYM:

1-0, 1.50 ERA

Last start:

May 6 at ARI  
6.0 IP, 8 H, 2 ER

### PITCH BREAKDOWN

60%  
Fastball

21%  
Curveball

18%  
Slider

UP  
NEXT

**SATURDAY:** at Nationals, 4:05 p.m., SNY, WCBS

TBD vs. RHP Trevor Williams

**SUNDAY:** at Nationals, 1:35, SNY, WCBS

TBD vs. RHP Jake Irvin

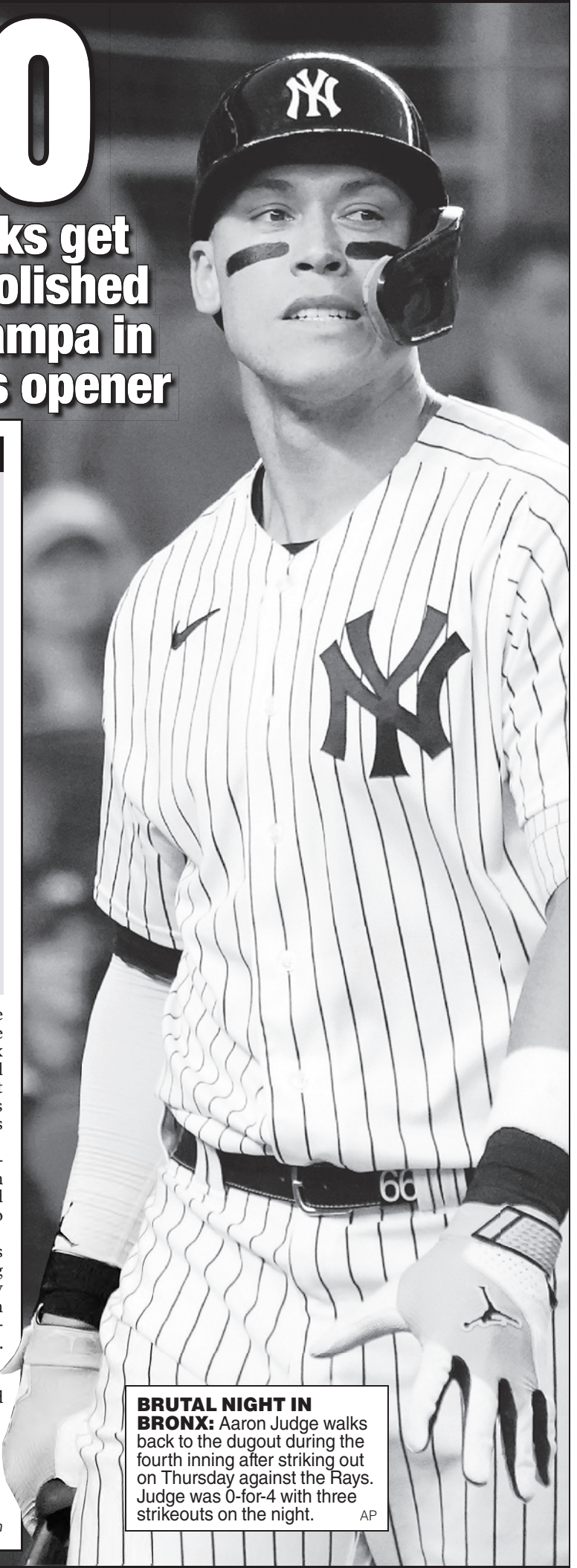
## STAT SO?

7

Times the Mets have been shut out in their first 38 games. Last season, they were blanked eight times all season.

# RAYSED TO GROUND

## Yanks get demolished by Tampa in series opener



By DAN MARTIN

The minor league portion of their schedule over with for now with the Oakland A's having left town, the Yankees got back to reality on Thursday night when they were knocked around by the first-place Rays in an 8-2 loss to open the series.

**RAYS** 8  
**YANKEES** 2 **Boxscore**  
Page 44

The loss came after the Yankees dropped two of three at Tampa Bay last week and on Thursday in The Bronx they barely avoided their second shutout of the season, scoring a pair of runs in the bottom of the ninth.

"It's tough," Aaron Judge said of another defeat at the hands of the Rays. "This team is sitting at the top [of the AL East]. We have to try and gain some ground on them."

On Thursday, the last-place Yankees fell to 21-18, nine games behind Tampa Bay (30-9), which became the first team since the 1984 Tigers to win 30 of its first 39 games.

Domingo German was solid for a second straight start against the Rays, but got nothing to show for it, as the Yankee offense, which beat up Oakland's laughably bad pitching in a three-game sweep, couldn't figure out Tampa Bay right-hander Drew Rasmussen ... again.


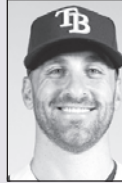
The Yankees came into the game having scored double figures in each of their previous two games and seven or more in four straight before Rasmussen shut them down for seven innings.

Rasmussen allowed just a pair of singles to Jake Bauers and has developed into a Yankee killer. He's tossed 21 scoreless innings against the Yankees in four appearances — three starts — with 26 strikeouts.

"We haven't solved him yet," Aaron Boone said. "He had his way."

And the 27-year-old was very efficient on Thursday, needing just

**ON DECK: vs. Rays**  
Friday, 7:05 p.m., YES, WFAN (660 AM, 101.9 FM)

RHP Gerrit Cole	RHP Trevor Kelley
 <b>2023 stats:</b> 5-0, 2.09 ERA <b>Career vs. TBR:</b> 2-7, 3.80 ERA <b>Last start:</b> May 7 at TBR; 5.0 IP, 8 H, 5 ER	 <b>2023 stats:</b> 0-1, 9.00 ERA <b>Career vs. NYY:</b> 0-0, 3.86 ERA <b>Last appearance:</b> April 15 at TOR; 2.0 IP, 2 H, 2 ER
PITCH BREAKDOWN	PITCH BREAKDOWN
<b>56%</b> Fastball <b>19%</b> Slider <b>15%</b> Curveball	<b>64%</b> Fastball <b>25%</b> Curveball <b>6%</b> Changeup
<b>UP NEXT</b> <b>SATURDAY:</b> vs. Rays, 1:05 p.m., YES, WFAN <i>LHP Nestor Cortes vs. LHP Shane McClellan</i> <b>SUNDAY:</b> vs. Rays, 1:35 p.m., YES, WFAN <i>RHP Clarke Schmidt vs. RHP Zach Eflin</i>	<b>STAT SO?</b> <b>2.09</b> Gerrit Cole's ERA is the third-lowest ERA by a Yankee through his first eight starts of the season since 2004. Cole's ERA this season only trails his 1.37 ERA in 2021 and Nestor Cortes' 1.80 ERA in 2022.

76 pitches to get through seven innings.

German cruised through the first four innings before Anthony Rizzo booted a routine grounder by Josh Lowe with one out in the fifth.

Francisco Mejia followed by popping out to third, but Yandy Diaz made the Yankees pay for Rizzo's miscue with a double down the left-field line that scored Lowe from first.

German was pulled after walking Taylor Walls with two outs in the sixth — having thrown 87 pitches — and Ron Marinaccio entered and gave up a single to Luke Raley and hit Manuel Margot to load the bases for Josh Lowe, who hit a bases-clearing double to right-center to make it 4-0.

Albert Abreu gave up an RBI double to Taylor Walls in the seventh and Ryan Weber was hit hard in the eighth and gave up three runs after being called up from Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

The bullpen, which entered the game with the lowest ERA in the majors, ended up allowing six earned runs in 3 1/3 innings and Marinaccio, who had given up just four hits in his first 12 appearances this season, has allowed five in his last three outings.

As much as the right-hander regretted giving up the three-run double to Lowe, he also lamented Raley's single, when Marinaccio had been ahead in the count, 1-2.

It may not have mattered, as Yankees got almost nothing going offensively all night before they loaded the bases with two outs in the bottom of the ninth and Gleyber Torres singled in the two runs.

That was all they could come up with after scoring double digits in their previous two games and seven or more in four straight.

Friday, they'll turn to Gerrit Cole to try to solve Tampa Bay after they were unable to get back to a season-high five games over .500.

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**BRUTAL NIGHT IN BRONX:** Aaron Judge walks back to the dugout during the fourth inning after striking out on Thursday against the Rays. Judge was 0-for-4 with three strikeouts on the night. AP

# Bombers gotta make the grade after easy A's

## SLIPPED AWAY:

Gleyber Torres reacts after he is unable to field a single by Wander Franco during the first inning on Thursday night in The Bronx.

Robert Sabo



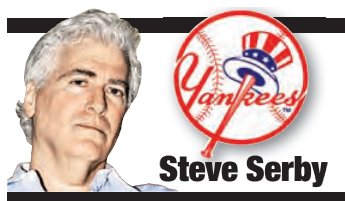
**A**PPARENTLY THE Yankees should have barricaded the entrances to the Stadium and prevented the A's from leaving and the Rays from entering.

It was Rays 8, Yankees 2 when the opener of this four-game series ended, and Aaron Boone's Boys remained in last place in the AL East — nine games behind the Rays.

"It's tough ... especially this team is sitting at the top, you want to try to gain some ground on them and get a couple of wins here and keep it close," Aaron Judge said.

The Yankees had scored at least seven runs in four straight games following their three-game sweep of the Bad News A's. Boone had seen signs that his team had recaptured the edge that no team with championship ambition can win without.

Then they showed up as the Bad News Yankees against right-hander Drew Rasmussen, who promptly threw seven innings of



Steve Serby

two-hit shutout ball. Rasmussen has blanked the Yanks across 21 innings in four career outings with 26 Ks.

"We certainly haven't solved him yet," Boone said.

Aaron Judge, who struck out three times against Rasmussen during an 0-for-4 night, attempted to explain why they haven't.

"He was pounding the zone but just still working the edges as well, so you gotta tip your cap," Judge said, "but we gotta come up with a better game plan in the box and execute."

Judge and DJ LeMahieu and Harrison Bader had sat in a mini-circle holding a quiet powwow.

"I think some guys had some good plans," Judge said, "but it's just about sticking with it as the at-bat goes on. You'll foul off a pitch, you'll miss a pitch and then you'll kinda get upset ... maybe switch off it, and maybe try something different. You gotta have conviction, you gotta stick with your approach, stick with your plan throughout the whole at-bat. When you got nine guys in the lineup doing that, it makes for a tough outing."

One guy in the lineup doing that would have been nice. Rasmussen employed a dizzying number of quality pitches that kept the Yankees off-balance.

"He's not just a one-two pitch guy," Judge said.

Domingo German, who applauded the fans when he left after allowing one earned run over 5 2/3 innings, deserved better.

"Those sting ... I know how hard he works, the preparation he puts in and to keep an offense like that

off-balance, man," Judge said, "that's all we're asking for as an offense is get a couple of zeroes for us and let us go to work. So when we waste an outing like that for Domingo it's tough, but we'll pick it up next time."

It wasn't only the somnolent bats that sabotaged the Yanks:

Anthony Rizzo lets a routine grounder eat him up for an unearned run against German in the fifth inning.

Ron Marinaccio turns a 1-0 deficit into 4-0 by walking a batter, hitting a batter and surrendering a bases-clearing double to Josh Lowe in the sixth.

Albert Abreu and Ryan Weber were then fellow arsonists out of the bullpen.

Other than that, how was the play, Mrs. Lincoln?

"I don't know any teams that went 162-0," Jose Trevino said, "so you just gotta kind of roll with them, and for us it's how we're gonna bounce back."

Were the Harlem Globetrotters 162-0? The 30-9 Rays have had that edge that Boone demands of his team from the start of this season.

"I think it's critical," Boone said before the game. "The grind of a 162 eliminates a lot of pretenders, both as teams and as players. It's a lot of talented players that get swallowed up by that 162 grind, not just physically but the toll it takes on you mentally. There's an adjustment, there's a toughness, a grit that it takes in a game of failure that you're playing every single day."

For the No Quit crowd, Gleyber Torres singled in a pair of runs with two outs in the ninth against Javy Guerra.

"We got an important one with our ace [Gerrit Cole] going [Friday]," Boone said. "We gotta go get it."

Better go get it fast. The Rays are not the A's.

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## Left field remains Achilles' heel for Boone's crew

By DAN MARTIN

Left field has been a mess for the Yankees since Andrew Benintendi got an extra year and more money to sign with the White Sox as a free agent this offseason.

Jake Bauers made the start there in Thursday's 8-2 loss to Tampa Bay in The Bronx. While the lefty-swinging Bauers had the Yankees' only two hits until the eighth in-

ning, he came up limping after he made a sliding catch on a Josh Lowe liner to end the top of the ninth.

Aaron Boone said he thought Bauers was OK following the game.

The Yankees left-field situation, though, is not.

They entered the game with a .566 OPS at the position, a number dragged down by the struggles of Oswaldo Cabrera, Franchy Cordero

and Aaron Hicks.

Hicks is still feeling tightness in his hip after leaving Tuesday's game with the injury. He went through pre-game Thursday and isn't sure if an stint on the injured list will be necessary.

"We want to get it out of there," Hicks said of the injury.

The long-struggling Hicks, who has been abysmal at the plate — and occasionally in

the field — for much of the past two years, was coming off two straight games in which he had an extra-base hit, his first of the season.

He had more imaging done on the hip Thursday.

The Yankees' outfield has been a bit of a mess for much of the season, with the team's right fielders combining for an OPS of just .517, mostly because Aaron Judge was forced to play center with

Harrison Bader out until recently with a strained oblique.

Bader and Judge are back and Bauers got the start in left Thursday, with Willie Calhoun starting at DH.

But the hole that was in left all offseason remains in place.

Cabrera hasn't shown he can hit consistently in the majors after proving his versatility in the latter part of last year.

Giancarlo Stanton remains weeks — at least — away from returning from a left hamstring strain.

And while Kole Calhoun, recently signed to a minor league deal, continues to hit well with Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, he hasn't been considered an option to be called up to The Bronx.

**More Yanks / P. 53**

MIAMI  
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# HEAT CHECK

By PETER BOTTE

MIAMI — The Jalen Brunson admiration society extended to the opposing locker room following his 48-minute masterpiece in Game 5 against the Heat on Wednesday.

Brunson and Quentin Grimes played every second of the Knicks' season-extending victory at the Garden, with their starting point guard scoring a game-high 38 points to propel his team to its next chance to avoid elimination in Game 6 on Friday night in South Florida.

"He has a great competitive will," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said after the game about Brunson. "So, he's going to continue to attack, he's going to try to manipulate the defense. He's aggressive, he's physical, but he also knows how to draw fouls."

"He's clever, so he has that combination. So be it, you have to respect him as a competitor and then find a way to get the job done."

Brunson and Grimes became the first pair of Knicks to play 48 minutes apiece in a regulation postseason game since Walt Frazier and Jerry Lucas went the distance against the Celtics in 1972.



**Brunson's hot play drawing notice from Miami locker room**

**COMING UP CLUTCH:** Jalen Brunson went for 38 points in Wednesday's Game 5 victory over Kyle Lowry (left), Jimmy Butler and the Heat. Game 6 is tonight in Miami.

The 26-year-old Brunson also registered nine rebounds and seven assists in Game 5 to become the first player in Knicks history to score at least 38 points with that many boards and assists in one post-

season game.

"He's talented; there's great talent that kid has there," veteran Heat guard Kyle Lowry said. "The man has played 45 minutes and 48 minutes in the last couple of games, so you got

to give him credit. He's just being aggressive and continuing to attack."

All-Star center Bam Adebayo didn't think the Heat did enough defensively to contest Brunson's looks at the basket

inside and outside the 3-point arc. Brunson finished 12-for-22 from the floor, 4-for-10 from long distance and 10-for-12 from the free-throw line for a .545/.400/.833 slash line.

"He's crafty, that's one thing about him. Our job is for him to make difficult shots and I feel like he got in a groove in his spots, and he was making his shots," Adebayo said.

"I think we had a chance to close out tonight. They didn't let us," Lowry added. "They played their butts off and we give them credit for how they played at home. We have to go home and do our job and protect home court."

"They did their job, they protected home court and we've got to respond on Friday."

And if that means someone on the Heat playing the entire game, as Brunson and Grimes did?

"If [Spoelstra] tells me to play 48 minutes, I'll be suited and booted and ready to do that," said star forward Jimmy Butler, who missed Game 2 with an ankle injury. "And we'll win."

Brunson and the Knicks might have something to say about that.

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## Grimes impacting both ends of court after slow start to series

By PETER BOTTE

MIAMI — Quentin Grimes found his footing — 48 minutes worth of footing — in the Knicks' pivotal victory in Game 5 against the Heat.

Grimes rightly was praised for his defense in a workhorse effort during Wednesday's elimination-avoiding win at the Garden, particularly a key strip of Jimmy Butler late in the fourth quarter.

But the second-year guard also has posted back-to-back games hit-

ting multiple 3-pointers, draining 5 of 13 attempts from beyond the arc (38.5 percent) since rejoining Tom Thibodeau's starting lineup in Game 4.

"I'm a rhythm player, definitely, so seeing the ball go through the hoop, it definitely is a good feeling," Grimes said after Wednesday's game. "Locking in definitely, getting rebounds, whatever you can to find a rhythm."

The 23-year-old Grimes finally heating up from deep could help the

Knicks better space their offense in a series in which the winning team in each of the first five games registered a better shooting percentage from 3-point range. Miami's ugly win in Game 3 mostly was a wash in that regard, with the victorious Heat shooting 7-for-32 (.219) from long range and the Knicks 8-for-40 (.200).

Grimes had missed 15 of



**QUENTIN GRIMES**

18 long-range tries in his first six career playoff games — three starts against the Cavaliers before suffering a shoulder injury and three games coming off the bench against the Heat before replacing Josh Hart in the starting lineup in Game 4 on Monday in Miami.

Grimes only played 10 minutes in Game 1 due to the shoulder injury, making his 48-minute grind

on Wednesday night all the more "unbelievable," according to Jalen Brunson, who also was on the court for the entirety of Game 5.

"The things he brings to the game, a lot of it doesn't show up on the stat sheet, but he's willing to do whatever it takes," Brunson said after the game. "Nothing but respect for him and he needs to rest up so we can do it again."

Even if he doesn't shoulder the same workload on Friday night — 48 hours

after logging a career-high 48 minutes played — the Knicks need Grimes to continue impacting the game at both ends. His final stat line Wednesday included eight points, five assists, four rebounds, two blocked shots and two steals, including the key pickpocketing of Butler with the Knicks leading by six and 1:36 to play. Earlier in that possession, Grimes had twisted his knee after getting floored while running through a hard screen by Bam Adebayo.



## Quickley 'doubtful' to play in Game 6

By ZACH BRAZILLER

MIAMI — Reinforcements don't appear to be coming for the Knicks' backcourt.

Immanuel Quickley is listed as doubtful with a sprained left ankle, the team announced Thursday, making Game 6 likely the third straight game the super-sub will miss.

### KNICKS NOTES

Without Quickley, coach Tom Thibodeau went with his starting backcourt of Jalen Brunson and Quentin Grimes for a full 48 minutes in Wednesday's Game 5 victory at the Garden. Grimes was briefly shaken up in the fourth quarter after bumping knees with Heat big man Bam Adebayo, but he stayed in the game. He wasn't listed on the injury report.

Grimes and Brunson became the first Knicks duo to play a full 48 minutes in a playoff game since Jerry Lucas and Walt "Clyde" Frazier in 1972.

"It says a lot about them," Thibodeau said.

Asked if he planned to operate the same way on Friday night in Miami, the Knicks' coach said: "We'll see what Game 6 brings. If it requires them to do that, then I'm not afraid to do it. If we have other players available, we'll just see how it goes."

► There has been one common denominator in the Knicks' two wins in this series: Dominance on the glass. In their victories in Game 2 and Game 5, they have out-rebounded the Heat by 16 in each contest. It was a major part of the Knicks' success in their five-game, opening-round series win over the Cavaliers.

"The rebounding is big in this game," Thibodeau said after Wednesday night's win. "I think obviously we gotta get our turnovers down. But I think that the rebounding, that's a big part of our defense, and we gotta continue to make sure that we prioritize it."

► The Heat listed **Jimmy Butler** (sprained right ankle), **Caleb Martin** (back contusion) and **Haywood Highsmith** (left knee tendinitis) all as probable.

## Tatum 3s in 4th propel Celtics to Game 7 vs. Philly



**WHO'S THE BOS'?** Celtics forward Jayson Tatum, launching a shot over 76ers center Joel Embiid, made a pair of clutch 3-pointers in Game 6 on Thursday. USA TODAY Sports

Associated Press

### NBA PLAYOFFS

Jayson Tatum missed his first six 3-pointers before he drilled two straight clutch ones late in the game that pushed the Celtics past the 76ers, 95-86, in Philadelphia on Thursday night to send the Eastern Conference semifinals back to Boston for Game 7.

The defending conference champs are in familiar territory. Boston trailed 3-2 last season in the second round against Milwaukee before it won Game 6 on the road and the clincher at home.

Game 7 is Sunday. Tatum, who averaged 30.1 points in the regular season, never stopped shooting even as the misses kept coming. He missed 14 of his first 15 shots overall from the floor and his ineffectiveness was a key reason the Celtics couldn't hold a 16-point lead.

With a shot at their first conference final since 2001 at stake, the Sixers slogged through the first half before Joel Embiid flashed his MVP form and rallied the Sixers to a fourth-quarter lead.

Tyrese Maxey hit two free throws with 5:25 left for an 83-81 edge.

And that was it for Philly. Tatum buried one 3 for the 84-83 lead and a second that made it 87-83 and put the Celtics in firm control of Game 6.

Embiid and Tyrese Maxey each scored 26 points for the 76ers.

76ers coach Doc Rivers has blown three 3-1 series leads over his playoff career. Though the 76ers never got that far ahead, this is their second loss at home in the series and they seemingly had seized momentum in the fourth quarter.

Tatum instead stuck it to the 76ers with one final 3-point dagger for a 95-84 lead.

After Embiid's pull-up jumper tied the game 81-all, 76ers didn't make a bucket over the final 6:13 of the game.

Tatum finished with 19 points on just 5-for-21 shooting but the final stat line mattered little after he keyed the 14-3 run that kept the Celtics' conference repeat hopes alive

under rookie head coach Joe Mazzulla.

### Nuggets 125, Suns 100

In Phoenix, Nikola Jokic scored 32 points in another triple-double, Jamal Murray added 26 and the Nuggets advanced to the Western Conference finals for the first time since the Florida bubble during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 by beating the short-handed Suns in Game 6.

The top-seeded Nuggets used a 23-2 run during the latter part of the first quarter to take a 44-26 lead and never looked back.

Denver's offensive onslaught continued in the second as the lead grew to 81-51 by halftime, leading to boos from Suns fans as players made their way to the locker room. The second half was essentially an afterthought.

Cameron Payne scored 31 points for Phoenix, hitting 7 of 9 3-pointers. Kevin Durant added 23.

The Suns were playing without injured starters Deandre Ayton and Chris Paul. Ayton sustained a rib contusion in Tuesday's Game 5 while Paul has been out the past four games with a strained left groin.

MIAMI  
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## 3 OF LIFE

## Brunson, Barrett, Randle must keep thriving for Knicks to survive

By ZACH BRAZILLER

MIAMI — The postseason started with RJ Barrett trying to find his game and Julius Randle battling a left ankle injury.

At the end of the first round, just as Barrett was starting to hit his stride, a mostly ineffective Randle re-injured the ankle that cost him the opening game of the second round.

But as the Knicks prepare for this do-or-die Game 6 against the Heat on Friday night as a significant underdog, Barrett and Randle have elevated their games, complementing the consistently brilliant Jalen Brunson.

The Knicks' Big 3 is finally clicking at the same time.

The trio have all scored at least 20 points in each of the last two games, and in three of the last four. It is particularly important with Immanuel Quickley (left ankle) missing the last two games and Josh Hart struggling.

To send this series back to the Garden for Game 7, the Knicks will obviously need everyone at his best. The Heat have been the better team through the first five games. They are 4-0 at Kaseya Center in the playoffs and trailed for all of 24 seconds in the two wins over the Knicks there.

But if Brunson, Barrett and Randle can replicate their Game 5 performances, when the trio combined for 88 points on 27 of 52 shooting, made 11 3-pointers and played 122 of a possible 144 minutes, it will at least give the Knicks a puncher's chance.

"It's crucial in an elimination game. Everything matters. Can't really take anything for granted," Brunson said. "Can't really take

plays off. That's all it comes down to, one possession at a time. Just being together for the minutes you're out there."

Brunson was the story of the gritty win, pouring in 38 points along with nine rebounds and seven assists in a full 48 minutes.

It overshadowed the continued excellence of Barrett, who is averaging 20.1 points on 45.5 percent shooting after two poor games to start the playoffs. In this series, his numbers are even better: 22.8 points, 5.2 rebounds and 41.2 percent 3-point shooting.

Perhaps the biggest reason for optimism, though, is Randle. It's been a haywire postseason for him, interrupted by the nagging ankle injuries and inconsistent play. His second half on Wednesday was fantastic. He made all five of his field-goal attempts, scored 14 points and had four assists. He punctuated the performance with a hustle play, stripping Kyle Lowry after a Mitchell Robinson missed free throw with 17.1 seconds left and scored to ice the game. It came two days after his eyebrow-raising quote, "maybe [the Heat] want it more."

"I liked his game. He took a pretty big hit to start the game," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "The first quarter was rough but he

fought through it. And then I liked the way he attacked the basket. I thought he had really good balance tonight, made good reads."

Randle was sporting a good-sized bruise under his eye, the result of a first-quarter collision with Bam Adebayo. It was an opening 12 minutes to forget for the team's lone All-Star. Randle missed six of seven shots and committed two turnovers.

After sitting most of the second quarter, Randle returned to the court playing with more force and decisiveness. He sent the Knicks into the break with momentum and the lead by sinking a step-back 3-pointer.

"It's the price of war I guess," Randle joked about the bruise. "After that I couldn't really see anything. But seeing the guys go out and compete the way they did energized me. I started to feel a little bit better after that."

Eventually, so did his teammates. So did the sold-out Garden crowd. What felt like the end of this surprising season had at least 48 minutes left in it after all. For the Knicks to earn 48 more, they will need the big three of Brunson, Randle and Barrett to repeat their virtuoso performance Friday night in South Beach.

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Knicks  
vs. HeatEASTERN CONFERENCE  
SECOND ROUND

Game 1: Heat 108, Knicks 101

Game 2: Knicks 111, Heat 105

Game 3: Heat 105, Knicks 86

Game 4: Heat 109, Knicks 101

Game 5: Knicks 112, Heat 103  
Heat lead series, 3-2

Friday: at Heat, 7:30 p.m., ESPN

Monday\*: at Knicks, 8 p.m., TNT

\* if necessary



**GOTTA BE LEADERS:** RJ Barrett, Julius Randle (top right) and Jalen Brunson (bottom right) have carried the load the past two games. That will have to continue for the Knicks to force Game 7 in their series with the Heat.

Getty Images (3)





## Taking root

The Knicks Big 3 of Jalen Brunson, RJ Barrett and Julius Randle are collectively playing their best basketball of the postseason in the past two games, each scoring at least 20 points in both games. Here's a look at their numbers from Games 4 and 5:

Player	PPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	RPG	APG
Brunson	35.0	51.2	35.3	87.0	6.5	9.0
Barrett	25.0	51.5	46.2	90.9	5.5	2.5
Randle	22.0	57.7	45.5	60.0	7.0	4.0



PLAYOFFS



NEW YORK  
KNICKS

# With backs against wall, this team finds answers

**M**IAMI — By rights, and by reason, this should all be a pro forma gathering at Kaseya Center on Friday night. By rights, and by reason, and by what we've all seen in this series so far, the Heat ought to take care of their business in Game 6, send the Knicks back home without a basketball game to prepare for Monday.

The Heat have been the better team across these first five games and they have been damn near untouchable at home, trailing for exactly 24 seconds in two games. They have shot the ball exquisitely, outworked the Knicks at both ends of the floor. The Knicks never once made the Heat sweat out those wins the way the Heat pushed the Knicks to the fourth quarter in Games 2 and 5.



By rights, and by reason, the Knicks should be forced to lock the balls away for a few months by sometime after 10 o'clock Friday night.

There is one thing, though.

There is this stubborn, underlying belief the Knicks have — and which they've shown, continually, this season — that they are never more dangerous than when it feels they are close to careening into the murkiest parts of the ocean. All season, faced with benchmark games that could have sent them spiraling down the standings the Knicks always had an answer. They always found a way.

They sure found a way Wednesday night, when they trailed 24-14 after a quarter, when the Garden was flagrantly funereal, when it sure seemed the Heat were going to run the Knicks right out of their own gym.

Instead, there was an 18-2 run to kick off the second quarter, which seemed to come clear out of nowhere. There was a stout fourth-quarter stand where the Heat erased all but two points of a 19-point deficit, the exact kind of games in which the Heat positively tortured the Bucks in the first round.

And so there is another day for



**THIBS' TOUGH GUYS:** All signs point to the Knicks' season ending Friday night in Miami, but Tom Thibodeau's team has defied the odds all season long.

N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg

this team. There is another chance. There is at least one more game, Game 6, with a chance to force Game 7 and make the Heat join them in throwing all their cards on the table back at the Garden on Monday night.

All year long they have defied — and exceeded — expectations. All year long they have heard the whispers of doom and answered them bluntly: Doubt us at your own risk.

Now they face the firing squad of skeptics again.

Now, they collide with a second straight elimination game, in a hostile building in which they've looked strictly overmatched so far this series, knowing they need to play an almost perfect game — no silly turnovers, no sloppy slippages on the boards, no daring the Heat to take wide-open 3s because as we've seen by now they'll happily take them — and merrily make them.

Forty-eight minutes to prove the same point they've proven time and again these past six months. At a singular moment of truth for this group.

"Maximum effort," Mitch Robinson said, asked what it'll take for the Knicks to get back on the airplane Friday night with their season still intact. "Rebounding is mainly what this game comes

down to. Whoever wins the rebounding matchup is nine out of 10 times who wins the game."

You start there. You move on to defense, to keeping the endless array of shooters from having one of those games where it feels they're making 90 percent of their shots, regardless of what the official stats say. And lastly you land on sweat equity, which is what the Knicks have specialized in, especially at those seminal moments of the season when they needed to stand up and declare themselves.

Of course, the Heat will be relying on the same things. And so far, in Miami anyway, have been superior in each way, in every facet.

"We feel like we had a shot to close this out tonight," Miami's Kyle Lowry said Wednesday night. "We have to go home and do our job and protect home court."

If they do, we'll see the Knicks again next come October. If the Knicks can figure a way to right themselves one more time when the blur is most dark, we'll have more basketball in New York City on Monday night. Maybe that feels like a long shot right now, and maybe it is.

These Knicks have never seemed to mind that. They actually seem to prefer it. We'll see if they can summon that defiance one more time.

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**CHOPPING BLOCK** Say goodbye to “Kung Fu,” which was canned by The CW after three seasons with stars Yvonne Chapman (far left) and Olivia Liang.

**GORDON RAMSAY HOSTS** Fox renewed “Next Level Chef” for an additional two seasons (3 and 4). The competition show is averaging 6.1 million multi-platform viewers



# TV Friday

FX doc on disgraced pastor of scandalous megachurch

By SAMANTHA IBRAHIM

**D**ISGRACED Hillsong pastor Carl Lentz is keeping his fans up to date about his life following his firing from the megachurch in 2020 amidst a public cheating scandal. Ahead of the new FX documentary series “The Secrets of Hillsong” — premiering May 19 — Lentz, 44, wrote a long post on Instagram and revealed where he stands with his wife, Laura.

The former pastor admitted he cheated on his spouse of 20 years back in November 2020.

“For the last 3 years my entire focus has been fighting for my wife and my kids,” he began his social media memo.

“In order to do that, seeking sobriety and healing had to run parallel with those goals,” wrote the celebrity pastor.

Lentz went on: “All I wanted was to prove to my wife and kids that I could show up for them like I had never done before.”

“Although we have a long way to go, with a lot of work, a lot of honesty and a lot of prayer, we have found ourselves in a beautiful, happy and deliberately honest place,” he said.

He then shared that he and Laura celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on May 5.

Lentz and his family are featured in the FX series in which he confessed that the marital commemoration couldn’t have oc-



**ALL IN THE FAMILY** Lea Thompson and Stacey Farber will headline “The Spencer Sisters,” about a mother-daughter detective agency. It will debut this fall on The CW. Thompson (far left) starred on “Switched at Birth” (2011-2017).



Carl Lentz in “The Secrets of Hillsong” and, right, with Justin Bieber and Rev. Jesse Jackson at a Knicks game in 2014.

# WHO'S SORRY NOW?

curred without “humiliation, embarrassment and heartache.”

“Part of the healing from that heartache led us to the decision to be a part of a documentary that we do not control, that we don’t have any say in and that we haven’t even seen yet,” he said.

He added: “We’ll see it when the world does. We were not interested in blame shifting or responsibility deflection, we focus on my mistakes and the context for what transpired.”

Lentz also divulged that he is no longer preaching and his “role is to help give perspective and insight where I can.”

“I can say I understand it and my relationship with Jesus in a way that I couldn’t from the pulpit. Repentance and life change is proven over

time with consistent choices and that’s a road I look forward to,” he scribed. “It truly makes me wonder if this is what all of this pain was all about.”

The scandalous and controversial church was also explored in The Post and Discovery+’s 2022 documentary, “Hillsong: A Megachurch Exposed.”

The show took a deep dive into the history of the church and its founder Brian Houston.

Houston, 69, also had a rough year and was accused of embezzling funds and covering up child sex abuse.

Houston also stepped down as Hillsong’s director last January and formally resigned from the organization two months later following a misconduct investigation.

The internal inquiry came to the conclusion that Houston had be-

haved in an inappropriate manner towards two women.

Houston founded Hillsong back in 1983 in Australia and crossed paths with Lentz in 2010.

Hillsong has attracted celebrity devotees such as Justin and Hailey Bieber, Selena Gomez, Kendall Jenner and Chris Pratt over the years.



**Box score: two for ‘3’** Eva Pilgrim and DeMarco Morgan are the new co-anchors of ABC’s “GMA3” along with Dr. Jennifer Ashton (far right). Pilgrim and Morgan replace Amy Robach and TJ Holmes, who were fired in January after they revealed they were in a relationship and left their respective spouses.







# TOPPLED BY TAMPA

YANKS CAN'T RAISE LEVEL AGAINST RAYS / PAGES 60-61

# FLAT METS FALL TO REDS

PAGES 58-59

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# SIX ON THE BEACH



N.Y. Post photo illustration

## With season on line, Knicks ready to get it on with Heat

Jalen Brunson, RJ Barrett and the Knicks went all out to keep their season alive Wednesday night. Still trailing their Eastern Conference semifinal series 3-2, they have to find a way to beat Jimmy Butler and the Heat in Game 6 tonight in Miami. **PAGES 65-62**

## GIANTS & JETS PRIME TIME PLAYERS



BIG BLUE OPEN ON SNF VS. DALLAS

GANG GREEN GET BILLS IN MNF START

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## SCHEDULE POSTERS



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