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Judge denies Donald Trump legal request to end Georgia election interference probe



By Don Jacobson
UPI

A Georgia judge on Monday shot down an attempt by former President Donald Trump to quash an investigation into his alleged attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss in the state.

In a nine-page order, Judge Robert McBurney of the Fulton County Superior Court turned aside a request by Trump's lawyers to disqualify District Attorney Fani Willis from any further involvement in the case.

The former president's attorneys had argued that Willis' actions are politically motivated and that a report produced by a special grand jury she impaneled is unconstitutional. Their probe violated "the principles of fundamental fairness and due process" while Willis is guilty of "forensic misconduct" and "improper extrajudicial activity," Trump claimed.

McBurney, however, disagreed in his ruling. Rather, he said the request is premature because neither Trump nor another plaintiff in the case, pro-Trump "alternate" presidential

elector Cathleen Latham, have been indicted yet.

"Having reviewed the pleadings, the court now finds that neither Trump nor Latham enjoys standing to mount a challenge -- at this pre-indictment phase of the proceedings -- to the continued investigation into and potential prosecution of possible criminal interference in the 2020 general election in Georgia," he wrote.

"[W]hile being the subject (or even target) of a highly publicized criminal investigation is likely an unwelcome and unpleasant experience, no court ever has held that that status alone provides a basis for the courts to interfere with or halt the investigation," he added.

Willis has spent months probing claims that Trump meddled in the state's voting process during the 2020 presidential election, including asking Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" more than 11,000 votes in order to change the outcome of the election

See GEORGIA, page 6

Donald Trump indicted in conspiracy to overturn election

By Joe Fisher & Adam Schrader & Sheri Walsh
UPI

A federal grand jury has returned an indictment in special counsel Jack Smith's investigation into former President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, which culminated in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

A judge immediately sealed the indictment, and little information about the case was revealed at first. No information was given about other defendants, though six unindicted co-conspirators were mentioned.

Later, though, after the indictment was unsealed, it showed Trump was charged with four counts: conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, obstruction of an official proceeding, and conspiracy against the right to vote.

"Today, an indictment was unsealed, charging Donald J. Trump with conspiring to defraud the United States, conspiring to disenfranchise voters, and conspiring and attempting to obstruct an official proceeding," Smith said at a news conference after the indictment was handed up.

Calling the Capitol riot "an unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy," Smith said, "It was fueled by lies: lies by the defendant, targeted at obstructing a bedrock function of the U.S. government, the nation's process of collecting, counting and certifying the results of the presidential election."

Smith called the law enforcement officers who defended the Capitol "heroes" and "patriots" who "are the very best of us."

"In this case, my office will seek a speedy trial so that our evidence can be tested in court and judged by a jury of citizens," Smith said.

"In the meantime, I must emphasize that the

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OPINION

Human Trafficking: An American Tradition of Silence

Preserving a Mother and Son's Story

At the heart of the story that President Biden preserved last week by creating our newest national monument are a mother and son, Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till.



BEN JEALOUS

That's especially moving for me because so much of my understanding of what the Tills endured and why their story remains essential today comes from my own mom's experiences.

Like Emmett, she was in her early teens in 1955 and growing up in West Baltimore. The ritual he was taking part in by traveling from Chicago to Mississippi that summer was a universal one for Black kids living in destinations of the Great Migration, one that still happens today.

Despite the indignities of Jim Crow, everyone seemed safe when they went back to Grandma's. Emmett's torture and lynching by two White men incensed that he whistled at a White woman exposed the vulnerability of Blacks anywhere in South. But rather than cower in response to the brutal murder, my mom and many other young Black people dove deeper into a lifelong struggle for civil rights.

Mamie Till's courage to leave open her son's casket so tens of thousands of mourners in Chicago and the entire world could see his bloated, disfigured corpse galvanized that growing civil rights movement.

I went to Mississippi in my early 20s to organize opposition to the governor's plan to close three historically black colleges and turn their campuses into prisons. Nearly 40 years later, I could still see the deep trauma in the souls of Black Mississippians who were Emmett's age when he died.

One night, my dad called to ask me to leave the state, if only for a short time. "Your mom keeps having the same nightmare. She hasn't slept for days," he told me. "She keeps seeing your face on Emmett Till's beaten body."

The deep concern apparent in those dreams wasn't irrational. The rhetorical violence of Jim Crow always accompanied the physical violence of lynchings. That culture persisted. The Jackson newspaper where I later worked got shot up in drive-bys several times in much the same way a plaque at the place where Emmett's body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River has been repeatedly vandalized (with that site now part of the national monument, those crimes will be a federal offense).

At a time when we see racist rhetoric and dog whistles find renewed popularity, the Tills' story is a reminder to all of us that there's a well-worn path from hateful language to violence to the murder of a 14-year-old boy. As it's been since colonial times, that rhetoric exists to divide poor and working-class people of all races so that they can't unify around the political and economic interests they all share.

There are signs of hope, even in Mississippi. In November, the state could elect a populist Democrat as its governor, unseating the Republican heir of the governor I opposed 30 years ago who revived racist rhetoric from that high office.

We create national parks and national monuments to preserve places, people and ideas that define who we are as a country. Emmett Till should be alive and relatively anonymous in his 80s, not dead from an infamous attack. His mother should be remembered for anything other than making Americans look at just how cruel they can be.

Being able to visit where Emmett's body was recovered, where he was eulogized, and where an all-White jury acquitted his killers gives us the chance to measure how far we've come and accept how far we've left to go.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. He is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free," published in January.

In the hushed corners of our society, a sinister industry flourishes, largely hidden and unspoken. It's an issue so shocking and perplexing that people tend to ignore it when brought to light. This is the pandemic of sex trafficking and child sex trafficking.

One might presume that in a civilized, developed nation like the United States, such a crime would be promptly detected, prosecuted and eradicated. Yet, this is far from the truth. Sex trafficking thrives within our borders, and its true extent remains largely unknown. Prosecutors seldom uncover the crimes of traffickers, and sometimes, alarmingly, they choose to overlook them.

Consider the notorious case of Jeffrey Epstein. Despite a substantial federal investigation revealing enough evidence to put him behind bars for several lifetimes, Epstein was barely punished. Instead of dismantling a major human sex trafficking network that would have likely taken down numerous high-profile celebrities and politicians, Epstein received a minor penalty, serving only 13 months in county jail, with the privilege of leaving for work six days a week.

In the United States, nearly 17,000 people are trafficked annually. And that's all we know of. Estimates from the Department of Health and

Human Services suggest this number could range from 240,000 to 325,000. Each person trafficked represents a terrified, captive individual forced into a life of exploitation. They are sold from one person to another; their tales are each unique, compelling and tragic.



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

Despite the harsh reality of human trafficking, why does it garner so little attention? Why is it that when a film like "Sound of Freedom" is released to spotlight human trafficking, it's criticized as extremist and associated with QAnon? Why did the California Assembly reject a bill to increase penalties for human traffickers without any media backlash? Why do we often focus on less impactful issues?

The real question is, who is funding these campaigns to deride people who attempt to expose human traffickers?

It is tragically easy to find stories of human trafficking victims online. Here's a story you've probably never heard of.

A woman who was a victim of sex trafficking wrote an opinion piece about her harrowing experience in the Orlando Sentinel under the

pseudonym Maria. Maria dealt with the terrifying Hurricane Dorian, which left her and her children homeless. Amidst the turmoil, she decided to send her children to live with their father's family while she sought refuge in a shelter. Soon after, she was approached by a man promising work and a new life. Tragically, this man turned out to be her trafficker. He lured her with false promises of a job, a home and the chance to reunite with her children.

She realized something was wrong upon arrival at a dilapidated house, far from the sunny Florida cottage she was promised. Thirteen people were crammed into this tiny space, working day and night for a meager wage that barely met their basic needs, let alone providing an escape. She was trafficked in plain sight, working as a maid at a high-end Florida resort and on the cleaning crew of a major theme park, all under the guise of a staffing agency run by her captors. Her ordeal only ended when law enforcement raided her workplace.

Children, due to their innocence and naivety, are particularly vulnerable, too. Traffickers may lure them with gifts, friendship or attention, gradually grooming them to trust and depend on their abuser. In other cases, children may be sold or coerced into trafficking by family members

or acquaintances. Sex trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry, fueled by demand and facilitated by a lack of stringent enforcement and societal indifference. It thrives in the shadows, preying on the vulnerabilities of those least able to defend themselves. It's a market where innocence is bought and sold, and where childhoods are stolen.

This is not merely a problem; it's a crisis of our humanity. It's a stain on our collective conscience, a stark reminder of the depths of human depravity. We must shatter the silence that surrounds sex trafficking. We must educate ourselves and our communities about the signs of trafficking and the ways in which we can help combat it. We must support survivors and advocate for stronger laws and stricter enforcement.

The fight against sex trafficking is a fight for the soul of our society. It's a battle against the commodification of human beings, the exploitation of innocence, and the very idea that any person can be reduced to an object for sale.

In the face of this grave injustice, we must rise as a united front. The fight against sex trafficking is a fight for the very essence of human dignity and freedom. It is a fight that calls for our courage, our compassion and our unwavering commitment.

Sexual violence is a pervasive threat for female farm workers

By Kathleen Sexsmith & Francisco Alfredo Reyes & Megan A. M. Griffin

also happens all too often to women and girls on farms in the United States.

As we see it, sexual exploitation perpetrated by men in positions of power instills fear that keeps farm laborers obedient, despite precarious working conditions -- and keeps fruits and vegetables cheap.

Vulnerable workers

In our research on rural development, agriculture and rural gender inequality, we have found that gender-based violence against female workers is frighteningly common on U.S. farms.

According to the U.N., violence against women and girls includes "any gender-based act that creates sexual, psychological or physical harm or suffering." Men and boys can, of course, experience gender-based violence on U.S. farms, but to our knowledge no corroborating research exists.

Most often, sexual violence against women is committed by men in positions of power, such as foremen, farm labor contractors, farm owners and co-workers. Unfortunately, farmworkers often buy into the myth that women bring sexual harassment on themselves. This belief makes it difficult for victims to get support.

Immigrant women farmworkers are vulnerable because of power imbalances in their male-dominated

workplaces. Women represent 28% of the nation's farmworkers, making them a minority on many farms. Most are immigrants from Latin America and many are undocumented.

Female farmworkers also face a gender wage gap of about 6%, partly because of parenting responsibilities that limit the number of hours they can work. Researchers have documented how men in positions of power take advantage of this vulnerability by offering hours and job perks in exchange for sexual favors and threatening to fire women if they refuse.

Child labor

Girls under the age of 18 are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse on farms. While much-needed reporting has generated a public outcry against arduous work conditions for migrant child laborers, migrant children have worked in agriculture in the United States for decades -- legally.

Agriculture holds a special status under federal labor laws, which permit farm owners to hire children as young as 12. Facing low wages and high poverty rates, farmworker families often rely on income from children's work.

Experts say young girls may be especially vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence on farms because they are less likely to recognize and report

abuse. Currently, children as young as 12 can be hired on farms without a cap on the number of hours they work, as long as they don't miss school.

Democrats in Congress have repeatedly introduced versions of the Children's Act for Responsible Employment and Farm Safety Act since 2005. The bill would help address the vulnerability of young girls in farm work by aligning the legal farm working age with other industries.

Guest worker visas

Since one major driver of the threat of violence against female farmworkers is the fact that many of them are undocumented, could expanding the national H-2A agricultural guest worker visa program be a solution?

The H-2A program has exploded in popularity among farmers as a way to address agricultural labor shortages. The number of U.S. farm jobs certified for H-2A workers increased from 48,000 in 2005 to 371,000 in 2022 as farmers pressed Congress to allow more foreign nationals into the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs.

This program, at least in theory, addresses several of the structural vulnerabilities of female farmworkers. A visa confers a legal right to enter the country, alleviating the severe risk of sexual assault during clandestine border crossings.



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Congressman Don Davis Introduces Legislation to Ensure Agricultural Stability

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Congressman Don Davis (NC-01) introduced the Agricultural Commodities Price Enhancement Act. The legislation increases the reference price for wheat, corn, soybeans, peanuts, and seed cotton.

“Input costs for our farmers are astronomically high right now, whether it be fertilizer, seeds, or labor, and not to mention the volatility of the current world food market,” said Congressman Davis.

“Farmers need some certainty that they will be able to farm next year if their crops are not bringing in enough income to provide for their families. The Agricultural Commodities Price Enhancement Act of 2023 directly addresses this by increasing reference prices for key commodities grown in eastern North Carolina and across the U.S. Higher reference prices ensure that farmers can recoup some income if the market value of their commodities plummets, keeping

our farmers in business so they can do what they do best: feed and clothe America.”

The Agricultural Commodities Price Enhancement Act increases the reference price for multiple commodities grown throughout eastern North Carolina and the U.S. The bill increases the reference price for wheat, corn, soybeans, peanuts, and seed cotton. Reference prices determine payouts from the Price Loss Coverage Program (PLC), and farmers receive payments

from the program when market prices fall below the effective reference price.

As Vice Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture, Congressman Don Davis is fighting for eastern North Carolina and rural America’s agriculture industry. He is fighting the good fight of faith in Washington, D.C., to deliver a strong bipartisan Farm Bill that will provide resources and equipment to our farmers, families, and rural communities.

CVS Health to lay off 5,000 employee

By Patrick Hilsman
UPI

CVS Health is laying off 5,000 employees in what the company describes as a cost-saving measure, according to a memo from CVS Health CEO Karen Lynch.

The company says the layoffs won’t affect employees at its stores and pharmacies but instead will focus on corporate and “non-customer facing positions.”

In 2021, the company said it would close about 900 locations nationwide.

CVS has increased its focus on healthcare services in recent months, acquiring Signify Health for \$8 billion and Oak Street Health for \$10.6 billion earlier this year.

“We do not anticipate there will be any impact to our clients and customers as we remain focused on our mission -- continuing to provide the

exceptional care our customers, patients and communities deserve and depend on,” CVS said in a statement sent to ABC News.

“The difficult decision we are making will set the company up for long-term success.”

Employees will receive notice of potential layoffs in the next few weeks and the company said affected employees will receive benefits as well as severance pay.



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Pitt County Recognizes Child Support Awareness Month

DSS TO HOST EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF AUGUST

PITT COUNTY, N.C. – August is Child Support Awareness Month. Pitt County Department of Social Services (DSS) staff and their partnering agencies work together daily to ensure all children in our community receive the financial and parental support for which they are entitled.

To promote the efforts of Child Support Services personnel and the children they serve, Pitt County DSS will engage in awareness efforts throughout the month of August.

On Tuesday, August 1, at 9:00 a.m., DSS will hold a Child Support Awareness Walk "Igniting the Flame of Engagement: The Light to the Future" at the Pitt County Human Services Center, located at 203 Government Circle in Greenville. This event will feature DSS staff and community advocates, coming together for a one-mile walk around the Government Circle campus while holding signs and banners promoting child support awareness.

Additionally, PittTV (Optimum TV Ch 13), along with the Pitt County website and social media accounts, will feature special child support awareness infographics.

"The primary purpose of the child support program is to support families by providing child support services to families to prevent or relieve economic



stress and sustain self-support and self-sufficiency. Services include paternity establishment, establishment of support obligations, collection and distribution of support, and enforcement of support obligations," says Sonya Scott, Family Support Services Program Administrator.

From July 2022 - June 2023, Pitt County DSS handled more than 8,821 court-ordered child support cases securing and processing approximately

\$15,094,216.43 in child support funds.

To learn more about child support efforts, contact the department at 252-902-1300, or visit www.PittCountyNC.gov/CSS.

Media Availability - Members of the media interested in covering the Awareness Walk on August 1 are asked to arrive by 8:45 a.m., to allow time for interviews. For more information, contact Pitt County Child Support Services at 252-902-1300.

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Pet Oxygen Masks Purchased for City and County First Responders

LIFESAVING AIDS PURCHASED WITH PETCO LOVE GRANT FUNDING

PITT COUNTY, N.C. – Pitt County Animal Services (PCAS) announced a grant award in the amount of \$15,000 from national nonprofit, Petco Love, in April 2023. The grant was awarded in support of the lifesaving work for animals in Pitt County, NC.

In addition to caretaking investments for the routine and

medical care of the at-risk animal population, Animal Services in partnership with Pitt County Emergency Management, City of Greenville, Greenville Fire/Rescue and Town of Winterville Fire-Rescue-EMS purchased pet oxygen masks for City and County first responders.

The agencies were in collab-

oration prior to the Treybrook Apartments fire in May 2023. Following that incident, the group purchased 30 pet oxygen masks by Wag'N O2 Fur Life, LLC. Masks have been distributed to Greenville Fire/Rescue, Red Oak Volunteer Fire Department and Town of Winterville Fire-Rescue-EMS. For additional availability,

contact Animal Services at 252-902-1725.

Media Availability – a multi-agency media availability is scheduled for Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. at Greenville Fire/Rescue Station 1 located at 500 S Greene St, Greenville, NC. Officials will be on hand to answer questions and demonstrate the

proper use of the apparatus on a shelter pet.

The Mission of Pitt County Government is to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of our community by advocating for and providing quality services in a friendly and cost-effective manner. Learn more: www.PittCountyNC.gov

Ex-Michigan GOP attorney general nominee charged with voting machine tampering

By Sheri Walsh UPI

Last year's Republican nominee for Michigan attorney general and a former state lawmaker are facing criminal charges in an alleged plot to access voting machines after the 2020 presidential election.

Matthew DePerno, who was endorsed by former President Donald Trump and lost to incumbent Democratic Attorney General Dana Nessel, and former Republican state Rep. Daire Rendon have been charged with undue possession of a voting machine and conspiracy, according to special prosecutor D.J. Hilson who confirmed the charges Tuesday.

"The charging decision was the result of a thorough decision-making process by an independent citizens grand jury," Hilson said.

"This citizens grand jury carefully listened to the sworn testimony and analyzed the evidence as required by law and returned a decision to indict each of the defendants."

DePerno and Rendon were arraigned Tuesday and pleaded not guilty before posting \$5,000 personal bonds

According to court records, DePerno is facing four criminal charges, including possession of and willfully damaging a voting machine, which are felonies under Michigan law. Rendon was charged with conspiracy to commit undue possession of a voting machine and false pretenses.

Last year, Nessel petitioned Michigan's Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council to investigate the alleged "conspiracy" and to avoid a conflict of interest since DePerno was "the

presumptive Republican nominee for Attorney General" at the time.

DePerno's campaign manager Tyson Shepard blasted Nessel's petition last August, saying "Dana Nessel has a history of targeting and persecuting her political enemies."

Nessel's office named nine people who allegedly convinced local clerks in three counties to hand over their tabulators following the 2020 presidential election. Nessel's office alleged the nine people, who included DePerno, broke into the machines and performed tests on them.

While DePerno argued that the clerks allowed them to access the voting machines and that their tests were legal, a judge ruled last month that it is still

illegal to take possession of a voting tabulator without authorization from the Secretary of State's office or a court order.

Last month, Nessel announced felony charges against 16 other Republicans who signed and submitted a certificate falsely claiming Trump won Michigan's 16 electoral votes.

Following the announcement of Tuesday's charges, Nessel issued a statement calling the allegations against DePerno "incredibly serious and unprecedented."

"The 2024 presidential election will soon be upon us. The lies espoused by attorneys involved in this matter, and those who worked in concert with them across the nation, wreaked havoc and sowed distrust within our democratic institutions and processes," Nessel said.

Republican Michigan

House Minority Leader Matt Hall also called the charges "very serious."

"Many Americans are concerned about the recent flood of politically

charged prosecutions in Michigan and around the country, and this prosecutor will need to prove his allegations in court beyond a reasonable doubt."



DePerno



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Election

continued from page 1

indictment is only an allegation and that the defendant must be presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law."

Writing in the indictment, the grand jury said Trump "had a right, like every American, to speak publicly about the election" and even to falsely claim voter fraud affected the election.

"He was also entitled to formally challenge the results of the election through lawful and appropriate means, such as by seeking recounts or audits of the popular vote in state or filing lawsuits challenging ballots and procedures," the indictment reads.

However, the grand jury alleged that Trump "also pursued unlawful means of discounting legitimate votes and subverting the election results."

"The purpose of the conspiracy was to overturn the legitimate results of the 2020 presidential election by using knowingly false claims of election fraud to obstruct the federal government function by which those results are collected, counted and certified."

The judge also approved a summons for the unidentified defendants to appear in court, CNN reported.

Though the co-conspirators were unnamed in the document, the details in their descriptions indicate that they could include Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman and Jeff Clark, a former Justice Department employee.

A spokesperson for Giuliani told NBC News that the former attorney for Trump had not been contacted about the case.

The unprecedented in-

dictment is the second federal one the former president is facing and marks the third time he has been criminally indicted.

The indictment follows a months-long grand jury investigation into Trump's role in gathering supporters and inciting them to storm the Capitol to stop the certification of President Joe Biden's election victory.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said the investigation launched immediately after the Jan. 6 riots, led by "career men and women of the Justice Department."

He said Smith and his legal team "followed the facts" in the case against the former president, adding that Smith's leadership served the department's goal of "accountability and independence" in the investigation.

After news of the indictment broke, Trump released a statement on his Truth Social platform, calling the indictment "reminiscent of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, the former Soviet Union and other authoritarian, dictatorial regimes."

He went on to say he "always followed the law and the Constitution."

Five people died as a result of the clash between law enforcement and Trump supporters at the Capitol, and many more were injured. The U.S. Justice Department has brought charges against more than 1,000 people related to their actions on and around Jan. 6.

Many members from extremist, anti-government and White supremacist groups have been charged with seditious conspiracy, including Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio and Oath Keepers leader Elmer Stewart Rhodes.

Dozens of witnesses have testified before the

grand jury in Washington, from high-ranking players in the Trump administra-

tion, including former Vice President Mike Pence, to low-level aides.



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Stolen SUV fleeing police plows into pedestrians in NYC, injuring 10

By Darryl Coote
UPI

Ten people were injured Tuesday evening when a driver fleeing police in a stolen vehicle plowed through a group of pedestrians in Manhattan.

Authorities told reporters during a press conference that the incident began shortly after 5:30 p.m. when uniformed officers were alerted to a reported stolen vehicle via a license plate reader.

The vehicle, a Illinois-plated Hyundai SUV, was reportedly stolen from the Bronx on Monday, and as the officers attempted to pull it over at 3rd Avenue and 33rd Street, the driver sped off after initially indicating it would comply with police orders.

The SUV first struck a bicyclist on Lexington Avenue between 42nd and 43rd streets before hitting a 2016 Nissan yellow cab on the northeast corner of Lexington and 42nd, authorities said.

The vehicle then mounted the sidewalk, striking several pedestrians as it completed a U-turn within the intersection of 42nd and Lexington, which the SUV continued to drive the wrong way on before colliding with a black Toyota RAV4 and seemingly coming to a stop.

Civilians then detained the driver, identified as a 20-year-old man without a New York State driver's license, until the suspect was arrested by police.

Authorities said the incident is under investigation, but it does not appear to be terrorism related.

Of the 10 people injured, the most severe injury was a fractured ankle, with most victims sustaining minor abrasions and neck and back pain, authorities said, adding that all those injured were transported to local hospitals for further evaluation.

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Pentagon confirms North Korea responded to message about Travis King

By Thomas Maresca
UPI

North Korea has responded to outreach regarding Travis King, the U.S. soldier who bolted across the border inside the demilitarized zone in July, the Pentagon said.

"I can confirm that the DPRK has responded to United Nations Command but I don't have any substantial progress to read out," Pentagon press secretary Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder said at a press briefing on Tuesday.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the official name of North Korea.

The U.S.-led United Nations Command, which controls DMZ access and military demarcation

line crossings, had previously reached out to the North about King using established communication channels.

Ryder said the response was the first from North Korea and was "essentially an acknowledgment" that they had received the request for information.

King, a U.S. Army private, broke away from a tour group at the DMZ and crossed into North Korea on July 18.

The 23-year-old was scheduled to return to the United States and had been escorted to the security area of Incheon Airport earlier that day. He had served time in a correctional facility in South Korea after an altercation with locals and was expected to face additional

disciplinary action when he returned home.

Instead of boarding his flight, however, King joined a tour of the heavily guarded Panmunjom Village in the demilitarized zone and made his dash across the border, the Pentagon said.

U.S. officials say they have no further information about King's well-being. Army counter-intelligence is conducting a joint investigation with U.S. Forces Korea about the soldier's actions, the Pentagon said in July.

"I'm absolutely foremost concerned about the welfare of our troop," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said after the incident. "We will remain focused on this, and this will develop in the next several days."



Georgia

continued from page 1

in the state to his favor.

Trump has said that he did nothing wrong in that call, which

he has described as "perfect."

Monday's ruling comes two weeks after another legal setback for Trump in Georgia when the state's Supreme Court rejected a similar bid to block Willis' investigation.

In that case, Trump's lawyers also claimed Willis violated Georgia's rules governing grand juries. They said the motion was filed because it was justified by "extraordinary circumstances," but the high

court ruled Trump had made "no showing that he has been prevented fair access to the ordinary channels."

Willis has indicated a decision on whether to charge the former president will be

coming soon, likely sometime in August.

"The work is accomplished," Willis told WXIA-TV in Atlanta on Saturday. "We've been working for two-and-a-half years. We're ready to go."

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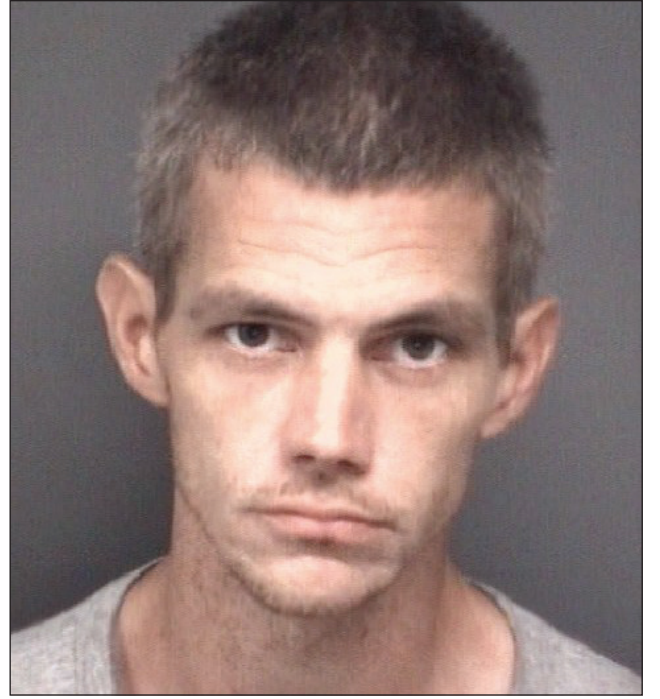
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Iowa State QB Hunter Dekkers charged with tampering amid sports gambling probe

By Alex Butler
UPI

Iowa State quarterback Hunter Dekkers is charged with tampering with records relating to the Iowa division of criminal investigation's investigation into sports gambling, Iowa court records show.

Dekkers committed the alleged aggravated misdemeanor offense on Nov. 7, 2021. The Story County Attorney's Office filed the criminal complaint Tuesday against Dekkers. The attorney's office also filed tampering charges -- related to the gambling investigation -- against two other current and one former Cyclones athlete.

Court records show that sophomore wrestler Paniro Johnson and sophomore offensive lineman Dodge Sausser were the other current athletes charged. Former Iowa State defensive lineman Enyi Uwazurike also faces a complaint of tampering in relation to the investigation.

All of those charged are ac-

cused of manipulating transactions to attempt to show their bets were made by other people. Dekkers denied criminal wrongdoing in a statement issued through his attorney. He is scheduled for an Aug. 16 initial court appearance.

"Hunter Dekkers denies the criminal charge brought against him," attorney Mark E. Weinhardt

said. "He will plead not guilty to that charge because he is in fact not guilty of that charge."

NCAA rules prohibit athletes or athletic employees from gambling on any sport at any level, and from sharing information for sports gambling purposes.

See **GAMBLING**, page 9

Women's World Cup: Sweden shuts out Argentina, advances to face USA in knockout stage

By Alex Butler
UPI

Sweden scored twice in the second half to shut out Argentina, winning Group G on Wednesday in Hamilton, New Zealand and advancing to the Round of 16.

The No. 3 Swedes will meet the top-ranked Americans in the knockout stage Sunday at AAMI Park in Melbourne.

Striker Rebecka Blomqvist and midfielder Elin Rubensson scored in the 2-0 victory at FMG Stadium Waikato.

Sweden owned a 44% to 38% edge in possession and outshot the No. 28 Argentines 7-6. They held a 449-326 advantage in passing and 20-11 edger in crosses.

Blomqvist then beat Argentina goalie Vanina Correa in the 66th minute to end the deadlock and give Sweden an initial edge.

Midfielder Hanna Bennison started that play with a dribble between midfield and the Argentina box. She then cut her dribble and slid a pass toward the right corner of the box.

Winger Sofia Jakobsson took control of that pass and dribbled toward the end line. She the curled in a cross, finding Blomqvist at



the far post. Blomqvist finished the play with a header from just a few yards out.

Argentina and Sweden logged a few close attempts down the stretch, but didn't find the net until Rubensson netted a penalty kick in the 90th minute.

The midfielder chipped that attempt into the left side of the net,

sealing the victory and matchup with the Americans in the Round of 16.

The Americans and Swedes will face off at 5 a.m. EDT Sunday on Fox. The winner will face No. 11 Japan or No. 12 Norway in the quarterfinals.

The Swedes beat the Americans 3-0 in the group stage of the 2020

Summer Games, held in 2021 in Tokyo, in their most-recent major matchup. They went on to lose to Canada in penalty kicks in the gold medal game.

Sweden also beat the Americans in the 2016 Summer Games quarterfinals.

No. 54 South Africa upset No. 16 Italy 3-2 in the other Group G

finale Wednesday in Wellington, New Zealand. The South Africans, who were winless in their previous eight Women's World Cup matches, advanced to the Round of 16 because of their second-place finish (1-1-1) in Group G.

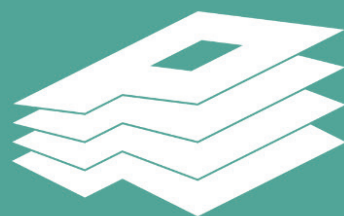
Group F also was settled Wednesday, with No. 5 France (2-0-1) beating No. 52 Panama 6-3 in Sydney. Panama went 0-3 in the group stage.

No. 43 Jamaica and No. 8 Brazil played to a scoreless draw in Melbourne. Jamaica went 1-0-2 in the group stage to advance to the Round of 16. Brazil (1-1-1) failed to reach the Round of 16 for the first time since 1995.

France will face the runner-up from Group H in the Round of 16. Jamaica will face the Group H champion to open the knockout stage.

No. 25 Colombia (2-0-0) leads Group H, followed by No. 2 Germany (1-1-0). No. 72 Morocco (1-1-0) and No. 17 South Korea (0-2-0) round out the group.

Colombia will battle Morocco at 6 a.m. Thursday in Perth, Australia. South Korea will meet Germany at the same time Thursday in Brisbane, Australia.



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Tua Tagovailoa focused off-season on longevity, honing jiu-jitsu-style falls

By Alex Butler
UPI

Less than a year after head injuries and concussion protocol visits interrupted his stellar third season, Tua Tagovailoa says an increased emphasis on staying on the field drove his off-season preparation for 2023.

"Everything that I did this offseason entailed to what would keep me on the field for the entirety of the season," Tagovailoa said Tuesday at Miami Dolphins training camp in Miami Gardens, Fla. "We understand that freaky things can happen. It's football. It's a physical sport."

Tagovailoa -- who missed four games last season -- entered the Dolphins off-season program slightly more muscular, as part of his physical transformation.

Mentally, he is being lauded for improved vocal leadership skills, recall of coach Mike McDaniel's playbook and implementation of new tactics for how to remain healthy, including falling like a jiu jitsu fighter.

"Not everything that you prepare for is what you're going to get," Tagovailoa said. "So, I did the best that I could to get myself ready and prepped for this season as far as injuries go."

McDaniel said strength and conditioning coach Dave Puloka and head athletic trainer Kyle Johnston helped identify an appropriate place for Tagovailoa to participate in the jiu-jitsu training and examined other health-related issues in his past to formulate

an off-season plan.

"Those parties did all of their homework, really tracked every single health-related issue that he's had from falling, and concretely attacked the problem," McDaniel said Monday. "I think it was really cool from an organizational standpoint and from Tua's standpoint, and I feel great about the results."

McDaniel said Tagovailoa showed off some of those results during organized team activities. Instead of going down awkwardly after contact, the quarterback reacted in an unorthodox fashion.

"I think he got stepped on and he fell down backwards and completed a backwards somersault," McDaniel said. "It was pretty sweet."

The Dolphins also implemented jiu-jitsu-style drills so that other quarterbacks on the roster could practice their falls. That training could prove invaluable for the room as it attempts to stay durable amid a 17-game regular season.

Tagovailoa said he is still working on trying to make the new falling style second-nature, which could take some time. He plans to wear a new quarterback-specific helmet to start the season, an additional safety precaution. The VICIS Zero2 Matrix QB helmet is specifically designed for helmet-to-ground impact.

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A post shared by VICIS (@vicispro)

"It's not to where it's something that's muscle memory yet for me,"



Tagovailoa said. "I don't think that'll be something that becomes muscle memory unless I do it for like a year or two years."

"I think that's for anything. You're very conscious of it. It's in the back of your mind when you do end up doing it. But it's not like, 'Oh, if I'm falling this way, I know exactly how to fall right here.' Unless I'm actually thinking of doing it that way. So I've just got to continue to work on it and practice it."

Tagovailoa's performances have been slightly uneventful, but sharp, throughout the off-season.

His lack of turnovers against pressure -- paired with accuracy -- could be an indication that he is ready to build off the positive production he logged a season ago.

The Dolphins will host the Atlanta Falcons next week in joint practices in Miami Gardens. They will then host the Falcons in their first pre-season game Aug. 11 at Hard Rock Stadium.

Tagovailoa said he doesn't know if he will play this preseason, but development and improved leadership is already being felt throughout the Dolphins roster.

"I think you can see his comfort level has gotten a lot better in his second year in the system," Dolphins backup quarterback Skylar Thompson said.

"It's not all brand new information. It's easier to show your leadership style and express yourself in those types of ways when you understand the system. ... I feel like Tua has gotten a grasp and mastered the offense to where he has been able to be more vocal and take command."

"He has done a great job for our whole football team this off-season."

Gambling

continued from page 8

Court documents, obtained by The Athletic, WHO13 and the Des Moines Register show that Dekkers and his parents were involved in a "scheme," which allowed the starting quarterback to "disguise his identity" and "manipulate online/mobile transactions" as a way to "create the appearance that sports wagers transactions" were made by his mother at a DraftKings sportsbook.

The complaint states that Dekkers was 20 years old when he used the platform. He is being accused of making 366 bets from his personal phone on mobile/online platforms, totaling \$2,799. The complaint states that more than two dozen bets were placed on Iowa State sporting events.

Iowa State and Iowa announced in May that gaming officials were investigating 41 student-athletes on allegations of prohibited online sports gambling. Iowa said that 26 student-athletes from baseball, men's basketball, men's track and field, men's wrestling and football -- and an athletic department employee -- were included in that probe.

Iowa State said it notified the NCAA that "approximately 15" athletes from football, wrestling and track

and field faced gambling allegations.

Iowa State said Tuesday it was still in the process of "gathering information" related to the matter.

"This investigation has gone on since May, when DCI agents executed a search warrant at Hunter's apartment in Ames (Iowa) and another at his family's home in northwest Iowa," Weinhardt said. "The investigation has been an immense distraction from Hunter's ability to be a good student and a great teammate."

"Hunter greatly appreciates the cooperation and support of Iowa State University and coach Matt Campbell and his staff during these events. "So he can focus on his studies and on the defense of this criminal charge, Hunter has informed the University and the coaching staff that he cannot participate in fall football camp."

Dekkers, 22, completed 66.1% of his throws for 3,044 yards, 19 touchdowns and 14 interceptions in 12 games last season for the 4-8 Cyclones. He was expected to start again this season. Redshirt freshman Rocco Becht, freshman J.J. Kohl, junior Tanner Hughes and freshman Wyatt Bohm are the other quarterbacks on the Cyclones roster.

The Cyclones will face Northern Iowa in their season opener Sept. 2 in Ames.

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La Voz Latina

Cardi B throws microphone at concertgoer who tossed cup filled with liquid at her



By Karen Butler
UPI

Rapper Cardi B yelled and threw a microphone at an audience member who tossed a cup of liquid at her while she was performing in Las Vegas Saturday.

TMZ said the music artist was soaked in the incident at Draï's Beachclub, but it is unclear if the microphone she lobbed back made contact with its intended

target.

Security led the cup-tosser out of the venue. UPI has reached out to the Las Vegas Metro Police Department seeking information about the alleged altercation.

The performer has not publicly commented about the interaction on her social media accounts, but a video of the exchange has been posted online.

The Hollywood Reporter noted this is the latest in a string of

incidents in which fans have hit performers with items they have thrown on stage.

Bebe Rexha, Kelsea Ballerini and Drake were all struck by items. Lil Nas X had sex toys thrown at him and Pink had a fan place what was purportedly her mother's remains in front of her during a live show.

Cardi B and her husband Offset released a single and music video for their new song "Jealousy" on Friday.

Houston Astros' Framber Valdez pitches no-hitter against Cleveland Guardians

By Alex Butler
UPI

Framber Valdez threw 93 pitches, including 65 strikes, en route to the 321st no-hitter in MLB history, leading the Houston Astros to a shutout of the Cleveland Guardians in Houston.

Valdez issued seven strikes and one walk and faced 27 batters in the 2-0 triumph Tuesday at Minute Maid Park. He dropped his season ERA from 3.29 to 3.07 with the pristine performance. He logged a 7.00 ERA over his previous five appearances.

"Obviously, I had a couple of rough starts before this one and, for me, the biggest thing was just continue working hard, continue with my focus and knowing that I was going to be able to get back to where I was before then," Valdez told reporters.

Valdez is just the second pitcher this season to pitch a solo no-hitter, joining Domingo German, who threw a perfect game

for the New York Yankees in June.

The left-handed pitcher started Tuesday's game by retiring the first dozen Guardians batters in order. The Astros scored the only runs of the game when right fielder Kyle Tucker smacked a two-run single to center in the bottom of the third.

Valdez issued his lone walk to Guardians designated hitter Oscar Gonzalez in the top of the fifth. He went on to retire the next 14 batters in order. He forced first baseman David Fry to fly out after facing Gonzalez. Guardians right fielder Will Brennan then grounded into a double play. Valdez issued just one strikeout over the final five innings.

He secured the 16th no-hitter in Astros history by forcing Guardians catcher Cam Gallagher to line out to end the bottom of the ninth.

The Astros (61-47) will host the Guardians (53-55) in the series finale at 2:10 p.m. EDT Wednesday in Houston.



Taylor Swift's 'Speak Now (Taylor's Version)' tops U.S. album chart

By Karen Butler
UPI

Pop star Taylor Swift's *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)* is the No. 1 album in the United States.

Coming in at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 chart dated Saturday is Morgan Wallen's

One Thing at a Time, followed by Peso Pluma's *Genesis* at No. 3, Swift's *Midnights* at No. 4 and Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* at No. 5.

Rounding out the top tier are Swift's *Lover* at No. 6, SZA's *SOS* at No. 6, Lil Uzi Vert's *Pink Tape* at No. 8, Gunna's *A Gift & a Curse* at No. 9 and Swift's *Folklore* at No. 10.

Carly Rae Jepsen releases album 'The Loveliest Time'

By Annie Martin
UPI

Carly Rae Jepsen is back with new music.

The 37-year-old singer-songwriter released her seventh studio album, *The Loveliest Time*, on Friday.

The Loveliest Time is a follow-up to Jepsen's 2022 album, *The Loneliest Time*.

In a post on Instagram, Jepsen shared her love for singer and musician James Taylor and his influence on her music. She described *The Loveliest Time* as "a few pages from my life to yours."

"It's sad sometimes, it's experimental, and it's ecstatic too. It's what happens after you've survived your first night alone and you realize -- I'm okay. In fact, I can thrive like this," the star wrote. "Connection comes next. Find the people that get you and never let them go."

"As James would say 'The secret to life is enjoying the passage of time,'" she added. "So here is to all of us climbing up on the roof one night soon and feeling the weight of the world slip away..."

The Loveliest Time features the single "Shy Boy" and 12 other songs: "Anything to Be with You," "Kamizake," "After Last



Night," "Aeroplanes," "Kollage," "Shadow," "Psychedelic Switch," "So Right," "Come Over," "Put It to Rest," "Stadium Love" and "Weekend Love."

Jepsen came to fame after appearing as a contestant of Canadian Idol in 2007. She is best known for her 2012 single "Call Me Maybe."