

Washington State Fusion Center
INFOCUS



THURSDAY – 16 Nov 2017



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Event Calendar

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Date	Event	Location/Time	Other Information
9-13 Apr 2018	LEIU/IALEIA Training Event	Marriott Hotel, 700 West Convention Way Anaheim, CA 92801 (714) 750-8000	http://www.ialeia.org/2018_conference.php
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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	11/15 Seattle mayor, mayor-elect push back DOJ
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2017/11/15/seattle-mayor-mayor-elect-both-denounce-justice-department-letter-on-immigration-policies/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Mayor Tim Burgess said Wednesday that the city had received a “threatening” letter from the Justice Department expressing “concern” over a 2003 law that prevents city employees, including police, from asking about a person’s immigration status, with limited exceptions.</p> <p>Burgess said the city adopted the sanctuary law “so that no one would fear reporting a crime or approaching a police officer to request help, especially victims of domestic violence.”</p> <p>“Now, the Trump Administration is threatening to withdraw federal grant money from Seattle that is used to fund the work of three civilian crime prevention specialists in our police department,” Burgess said. “It’s ironic that a president who says he wants to reduce crime and help crime victims works to remove funding from programs that do exactly that.</p> <p>“The same city ordinance chapter that the Trump Administration is using to threaten us also says city employees are directed to cooperate with, and not hinder, enforcement of federal immigration laws. Today’s letter is more bluster and bullying by the president based on his ideologically driven fixation on immigrants and refugees,” Burgess said.</p> <p>Seattle Mayor-elect Jenny Durkan, who just won election to the mayor’s office and who had previously worked for the Justice Department as the U.S. attorney for Western Washington, called the action “both immoral and illegal.”</p> <p>“It threatens the safety not just of our immigrant families but of all of Seattle which relies on the police resources they seek to cut. Unfortunately for the Trump administration, multiple federal judges have ruled that the Department of Justice cannot (be) withholding federal law enforcement aid to sanctuary cities.</p> <p>“Seattle is and will continue to be a Sanctuary City, and our City will fight Trump every step of the way against these illegal attempts to withhold funds. I’ll say it again: (U.S. Attorney General) Jeff Sessions and Donald Trump keep your hands off Seattle,” Durkan said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Seattle PD: Lyles shooting within policy
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/seattle-police-review-finds-fatal-shooting-of-charleena-lyles-was-within-department-policy/
GIST	The Seattle Police Department’s Force Review Board has found the fatal shooting of Charleena Lyles by two officers in June to be reasonable, proportional and within policy, according to sources familiar with the decision.

The board's unanimous vote occurred during a meeting Tuesday that began at 9 a.m. and lasted until about 5 p.m., said one source with direct knowledge of the proceeding.

The findings are subject to final approval from Assistant Chief Lesley Cordner, who presided over the meeting and oversees the department's Compliance and Professional Standards Bureau, the source said.

Corey Guilmette, an attorney representing Lyles' family, issued a statement Wednesday night, saying, "We cannot accept that Charleena Lyles' killing was unavoidable. If her killing was within policy and training, we need changes in policy and training."

Lyles, a 30-year-old African-American mother of four, was shot seven times by Officers Steven McNew and Jason Anderson on June 18 after she called 911 to report a burglary at her Northeast Seattle apartment. Police said Lyles suddenly threatened the officers inside the apartment with one or two knives before they opened fire.

The officers found no evidence of a burglary, according to police.

Lyles had struggled with mental-health issues, according to her family and court records, and the shooting came at a time her life was spinning out of control.

The shooting unleashed a storm of public protest, with many seeing it as another example of unnecessary deadly force being used by police against people of color. Lyles' family members have said they believe race was a factor. The officers who shot her are white.

The Force Review Board was created as part of a 2012 consent decree between the city and the U.S. Justice Department to address excessive force and biased policing in the Police Department. It replaced the Firearms Review Board, which had been criticized over the depth of its work.

In Tuesday's review, the board, consisting of about 15 members of the department, found the officers used proper tactics and decision-making, followed their training and did not violate policies regarding de-escalation and crisis-intervention training, according to the sources.

A separate inquest has been set for April 16, in which a jury will determine the causes and circumstances of the shooting, followed by King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg's decision whether to file criminal charges against the officers.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Bahrain: Iran behind deadly bomb attack
SOURCE	http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-security/bahrain-says-deadly-bus-attack-engineered-by-iran-idUSKBN1DF2CG
GIST	<p>DUBAI (Reuters) - Bahrain said on Wednesday a bomb attack on a police bus which killed an officer and wounded nine last month was carried out by a militant cell trained by its arch-foe Iran.</p> <p>After authorities quashed Shi'ite Muslim-led "Arab Spring" protests on the Sunni-ruled island in 2011, militants have launched deadly bombing and shooting attacks against security forces that Bahrain blames on Tehran's Shi'ite theocracy.</p> <p>Iran denies any role in Bahrain's unrest.</p> <p>There was no immediate Iranian reaction to Wednesday's Bahraini interior ministry statement, which added that authorities had arrested one member of the cell while others were fugitives in Iran.</p> <p>"The terrorist cell received extensive training in Iranian Revolutionary Guard camps on the use and manufacture of explosives and firearms, as well as material and logistical support," the ministry said.</p>

Bahrain said earlier this week that an explosion at its main oil pipeline on Friday was caused by “terrorist” sabotage, linking the unprecedented attack to Iran.

A key Western ally and host to the U.S. Fifth Fleet, Gulf Arab monarchy Bahrain has for years grappled with protests and sporadic violence coming from its Shi‘ite majority.

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HEADLINE	11/16 Las Vegas shooting lawsuits stack up
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/231e470453574f8da0a5336ee4fb3958/Las-Vegas-shooting-lawsuits-stack-up-with-14-more-filed
GIST	<p>CHICAGO (AP) — Legal action following the mass shooting at a Las Vegas concert is picking up with lawsuits filed Wednesday on behalf of 14 concertgoers, including some who were shot or injured trying to escape and one woman who is so traumatized that she has since mistaken the sound of rain for gunshots.</p> <p>The hotel-casino from where Stephen Paddock fired, concert organizers and the makers and sellers of a bump stock gun accessory that enabled him to fire rapidly are named as defendants. The court filings argue that they all share blame for the worst mass shooting in recent U.S. history.</p> <p>The 14 civil complaints, filed together in state court in Las Vegas, follow at least three others filed since Paddock opened fire Oct. 1 from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel and casino, killing 58 people and injuring hundreds of others. The lawsuit seeks unspecific compensation for both “physical and mental injuries.”</p> <p>The challenge for mass-shooting lawsuits is clearing a high legal bar to prove someone other than the shooter bears any responsibility. Such litigation typically drags for years and can end with victims and their families receiving little to nothing.</p> <p>A Chicago law firm helped to prepare the filings, which include several plaintiffs from the Chicago area. Victims named in the suits also include a California man, Anthony Crisci, who was rushed to a hospital with a gunshot wound in a truck crowded with other victims.</p> <p>Among deficiencies at the concert venue were poorly marked exits, Wednesday’s filings say. And the hotel, it says, should have had gunfire-location devices that pinpoint where shots are coming from.</p> <p>The 64-year-old Paddock, who killed himself just before his room was stormed, is also named in a bid to seize assets from his estate.</p> <p>The filings name a leading bump stock maker, Texas-based Slide Fire Solutions, as a defendant. A lead attorney, Chicago-based Antonio Romanucci, said it wasn’t yet clear which manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer made and sold the specific bump stock that Paddock used, but that the idea was to hold “the entire supply chain” responsible. Messages seeking comment from Slide Fire weren’t returned.</p> <p>MGM Resorts International, the parent company of Mandalay Bay, called the shooting “a meticulously planned, evil ... act” in a statement Wednesday and added that it would respond to any allegations only through “the appropriate legal channels.” Live Nation, a concert organizer named in the filings, said in a statement it cannot comment on pending litigation, but that the company remains “heartbroken for the victims.”</p> <p>Bump stocks were originally created ostensibly to make it easier for people with disabilities to shoot. But the filings allege that Slide Fire geared its marketing to regular gun owners who wanted their semi-automatic rifles to mimic fully automatic weapons.</p> <p>Civil cases in mass shootings are becoming increasingly common.</p>

HEADLINE	11/16 Russian Institute for Strategic Studies
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/russian-general-denies-hes-behind-the-us-election-plot
GIST	<p>MOSCOW—The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) is the Kremlin’s think tank. Managed by former officials of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), it draws up guidelines for President Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy, and last year it was watching the American elections very closely.</p> <p>Indeed, according to a Reuters report in April, during the 2016 campaign that took Donald Trump to the White House the RISS produced and distributed around the Russian government two documents: one a framework advising Putin how to swing the 2016 U.S. presidential vote in Trump’s favor, and the other a strategy to discredit the elections if Trump failed.</p> <p>This week in an exclusive interview The Daily Beast spoke with Lt. Gen. Leonid Reshetnikov, who was in charge of RISS until January 2017—which is to say during the entire period in question last year. He denied the allegations in the Reuters report and gave his own interpretation of what led Russia and the United States to their current state of conflict.</p> <p>“The American intelligence services are a machine that is always working, constantly making up anti-Russian cases,” Reshetnikov told The Daily Beast.</p> <p>The general perception is that Moscow is defending itself against U.S. aggression, a view strengthened after brief encounters between Putin and Trump at an Asian economic summit in Vietnam. Those produced an accord about fighting the so-called Islamic State in Syria by largely accepting Russia’s strategy and dominance there, but there was no relief from past sanctions against Russia and against Putin’s inner circle, or new ones that are due to kick in.</p> <p>In August, Trump reluctantly signed a bill that was passed overwhelmingly by Congress imposing heavy sanctions on Iran and North Korea as well as Russia. It effectively ties Trump’s hands, preventing him from waiving any of the measures against Putin without Congressional approval.</p> <p>Some in Moscow argue that Putin’s advisers in the secret services and the ministry of foreign affairs have grown too “old-fashioned,” perhaps too genteel. (One thinks of suave Sergei Lavrov, the foreign minister.) Others see the failure of Russia’s diplomatic push as simply one more example of the U.S. demonizing Russia for all kinds of ulterior motives.</p> <p>RISS expert Anna Glazova says that relations between the two countries are worse than during the Cold War between the Soviets and the United States. The RISS expert says that U.S. accusations leveled against Russia are cover for economic competition, which is the real reason to implement sanctions "against our country," as Glazova put it on the RISS website this week.</p> <p>In 2014, after Russia annexed Crimea, a strategic peninsula that had been part of Ukraine, the Group of 7 economic powers, led by the United States, decided to implement three stages of economic sanctions. The goal was to stop Russia from funding, arming, and supplying weapons to Ukrainian rebels in the east of the country. The first stage limited cooperation with Russia, the second was meant to stop any help with technologies for Russia, and the third, the worst part, was to limit the development of certain sectors of the Russian economy.</p> <p>Then additional sanctions were imposed by the Obama administration last year to punish Russia for its interference in the American elections. Previously, in 2012, the U.S. imposed sanctions targeting members of Putin’s inner circle believed responsible for massive corruption and, specifically, the death in prison of whistleblowing accountant Sergei Magnitsky.</p> <p>The RISS analyst, Glazova, did not mention any of the reasons behind the U.S. economic sanctions.</p>

Instead, she insisted they are “an attempt to push our energy companies off the world’s market.” And since Russia’s greatest source of income is the sale of oil and natural gas, that would be disastrous, but low energy prices already have been at least as hurtful to Russian prosperity as the sanctions.

It is important to understand this line of defensive thinking at RISS, one of the key institutions advising the Kremlin.

“It is a very influential center,” Sergei Markov, a member of the Public Chamber of Russia’s parliament and an adviser to the presidential administration, told The Daily Beast. “I once passed a recommendation on an important issue to the country’s leadership through RISS and all my suggestions were heard and implemented.”

The Reuters report in April said the RISS gave recommendations to the Kremlin—a game plan—on how to affect the U.S. presidential elections. If true, those policy papers could be a key element for the investigations related to Russian meddling in the U.S. elections that are being conducted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s team and committees of the U.S. Congress.

The Reuters report in April about the RISS policy papers was not based on the documents themselves, but on interviews with “three current and four former U.S. officials.”

According to the report, the U.S. intelligence services had obtained two documents prepared by the RISS. One of them was “a strategy paper written last June [2016] that circulated at the highest levels of the Russian government but was not addressed to any specific individuals,” according to the report. It advised the Russian leadership to launch a massive propaganda campaign on social media and in the Kremlin-controlled mass media to encourage Americans to vote for Trump, considered a candidate who would be friendlier to Russia than Barack Obama had been or Hillary Clinton would be.

The second document drafted in October 2016 warned that Hillary Clinton was most likely going to win the election, so the focus should shift to discrediting Clinton’s legitimacy, raising questions of voter fraud that would undermine her presidency.

Lt. Gen. Reshetnikov, the former head of RISS, dismissed the Reuters report when he talked to The Daily Beast on Monday of this week.

“I was the RISS director until January, and I definitely never signed any of the described papers,” he said. “All documents passed to the very top of the country’s leadership are marked, ‘classified as secret,’ they could not be circulating in public.” Washington was just listening “to some information passed to them by their Moscow spooks,” Reshetnikov said.

He denied having anything to do with the army of trolls agitating for Trump on social media last year.

“It could be that some one or two former RISS employees, freelancers, had written some recommendations to the leadership, which, if they were circulating in public were not very serious,” Reshetnikov said. “Besides, somebody in the U.S. said the recommendations were 30 pages long. I do not remember anything as long as that. We tried to write short notes, since we realized that the management did not have enough time to read what we wrote.”

Before President Putin appointed Reshetnikov as the director of RISS in 2009, the general was the head of the information-analytical department of the SVR and the number one Kremlin adviser on foreign policy. He had been part of the foreign intelligence service since 1976.

Reshetnikov and his colleagues worked on themes for Putin’s key speeches at international events, including the memorable speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, when the Russian president criticized Washington’s behavior as the only center of global authority and suggested the world develop a multi-polar system that would allow other centers of economic and political influence to grow stronger.

It was also in 2007 that Putin decided to oblige all independent and foreign-funded NGOs to register as “foreign agents.”

Reshetnikov blamed the current tensions between Russia and United States on Washington. “The Cold War between Russia and the USA that lasted for decades in Soviet times has never ended,” Reshetnikov said. “The main problem is that the USA proclaims itself responsible for the New World Order while, as President Putin said in his speech in Munich, Russia rejects that concept.”

This is fundamental, according to Reshetnikov. “Especially under Obama, Washington wanted to downgrade Russia to the level of a second-rate regional power.”

But now, “Russia is growing more powerful in its own concept of multipolar world, defending its sovereign spiritual power, while the U.S. suffers from ideological crises,” said Reshetnikov.

He said that the RISS was a powerful institution with at least 200 employees working under his management, focusing on both closed and open sources to analyze the current Cold War situation.

Reshetnikov blamed Washington for constantly offending Russia, for NATO expansion into countries neighboring Russia, for bringing anti-missile systems to Europe, for not cooperating in Syria.

“The American intelligence services are a machine that is always working, constantly making up anti-Russian cases such as the Magnitsky case or some reason to ban Russian Olympic athletes, but they will not have enough power to keep pressing Russia all over the perimeter,” said the intelligence veteran. In his view, Russia has plenty of reason to look for revenge.

“The war is obvious: the U.S. implemented sanctions against Russia, and put pressure on Europe to back up the neo-Nazi regime in Ukraine, but our response, as President Putin said, is ‘the dog’s barking but the caravan’s walking.’ We’ll proceed with our strategy and that will be our way to give them a blow in their teeth.”

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HEADLINE	11/15 DOJ letter targets 29 ‘sanctuary cities’
SOURCE	https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2017-11-15/justice-department-targets-29-sanctuary-cities-in-latest-salvo
GIST	<p>The Justice Department on Wednesday escalated its crackdown on so-called "sanctuary" jurisdictions, naming more than two dozen cities, counties and states across America that it believes may be out of compliance with laws mandating local cooperation with federal immigration authorities.</p> <p>Attorney General Jeff Sessions sent letters to officials in localities from Jackson, Mississippi, to Sonoma County, California, demanding that they certify that they are in compliance with federal immigration law or risk losing millions of dollars through a federal law enforcement grant program.</p> <p>The letters were sent to jurisdictions that previously received Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, which were allocated about \$376 million by Congress in fiscal 2016.</p> <p>At issue is a portion of law in the U.S. Code known as Section 1373, which prohibits localities from taking any step that would restrict public employees from sharing someone's immigration status with federal authorities.</p> <p>The Justice Department under Sessions has taken an expansive view of the statute: Cities, counties and states that bar police from asking about someone's immigration status or prohibit officers from allowing federal immigration agents into their jails may be in violation of Section 1373, the attorney general has contended.</p>

In the letters to the sanctuary jurisdictions, which the Justice Department barred reporters from making public, the department cited policies in each jurisdiction that appeared not to be in compliance, frequently including prohibitions on local police inquiring about immigration status. But they also pointed to policies like declining to notify federal immigration authorities of the upcoming jail release of someone in the country illegally or whether officials reasonably suspect a person illegally re-entered the U.S.

The letters say no final determination has been made on whether the jurisdictions are in compliance and gives them until Dec. 8 to address the Justice Department's concerns. It marks at least the third time this year that the Justice Department has sent letters to jurisdictions warning that they might be out of compliance.

Just two hours before the latest round of letters were made public, a federal court in Philadelphia blocked the Justice Department from tying Byrne Grant funding to compliance with Section 1373. Philadelphia had been one of five jurisdictions to receive a letter from the Justice Department last month accusing the city of potentially being in conflict with the law and at risk of losing up to \$1.6 in federal law enforcement grant funding.

U.S. District Judge Michael M. Baylson, however, concluded that the city was in compliance.

"Given Philadelphia's unique approach to meshing the legitimate needs of the federal government to remove criminal aliens with the City's promotion of health and safety, there is no conflict of any significance," Baylson wrote in a lengthy memo accompanying his preliminary injunction Wednesday.

The order applies only to Philadelphia's grant application, but it was a setback in the Justice Department's efforts to force localities to fully cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

Notably, federal judges have concluded that while Section 1373 prohibits local towns, counties and states from enacting any rule or policy that would prevent officers from sharing someone's immigration status with authorities – or even maintaining that information locally – it says nothing about policies that simply bar police from asking for that information or notifying federal authorities about someone's release date from jail.

"It's a separation of powers issue," says Christopher Lasch, a law professor specializing in immigration policy at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. "There's a really basic concept here, which is that the federal government really can't compel state officers to do anything. But the Department of Justice has really tried to split hairs on Section 1373, because Section 1373 technically doesn't compel anything. It forbids localities from forbidding their own officials from doing things."

Federal judges in several jurisdictions during the Obama administration concluded that requiring local police to comply could run afoul of the 10th Amendment, which restricts the federal government from what's known as "commandeering" or "conscripting" local resources to enforce federal law. The Obama administration chose not to pursue appeals – a decision that seems less likely in the Trump administration, which is already appealing certain injunctions.

Wednesday's announcement represents the latest of several attempts by the Trump administration and the Justice Department to tie federal law enforcement grants to full cooperation with federal immigration law.

The jurisdictions that received the DOJ letters Wednesday were:

Albany, New York
Berkeley, California
Bernalillo County, New Mexico
Burlington, Vermont
Contra Costa County, California
City and county of Denver, Colorado
Fremont, California

	<p>Jackson, Mississippi King County, Washington Lawrence, Massachusetts Los Angeles, California Louisville metro, Kentucky Middlesex, New Jersey Monterey County, California Multnomah County, Oregon Newark, New Jersey Riverside County, California Sacramento County, California City and county of San Francisco, California Santa Ana, California Santa Clara County, California Seattle, Washington Sonoma County, California Washington, D.C. Watsonville, California West Palm Beach, Florida State of Illinois State of Oregon State of Vermont</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Army rips 'mischaracterized' waiver story
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/15/army-rips-mischaracterized-story-on-waivers-for-se/
GIST	<p>The U.S. Army came out swinging Wednesday in response to a report on its reversal of a 2009 waiver ban for mental health issues.</p> <p>Gen. Mark Milley, the Army's chief of staff, says a Nov. 12 USA Today piece on new recruiting guidelines "mischaracterized" the issue. The newspaper noted that applicants with a history of bipolar disorder, depression, and drug and alcohol abuse could conceivably receive a waiver due to policy changes implemented in August.</p> <p>The newspaper also received comments by Army spokesman Randy Taylor and a retired Army colonel psychiatrist for its piece on Sunday.</p> <p>"The bottom line is there has been no change in standards," the general told reporters, Star and Stripes reported. "Since 2017, there has been no one to come into the Army that has not met the Department of Defense standards for behavioral health and/or personal conduct. When it says we are letting people in with a history of cutting themselves, of self-mutilation, that is not true. When it says we are letting people in with serious mental health conditions, with bipolar disorder, that is not true."</p> <p>USA Today's original reporting noted that Army officials "did not respond to a question of how many waivers, if any, have been issued since the policy was changed."</p> <p>Likewise, Army officials did not dispute documents obtained by the newspaper stating medical conditions "removed from UR-601-210 M-5b which were part of the 'never waiver/suspended status.'"</p> <p>"The decision was primarily due to the increased availability of medical records and other data which is now more readily available," Mr. Taylor told USA Today. "These records allow Army officials to better document applicant medical histories."</p>

	<p>The new policy lowers the level at which many waivers are approved by shifting decisions from Army headquarters to U.S. Army Recruiting Command.</p> <p>A statement sent to Stars and Stripes “did not clarify in what situations it would grant waivers for potential recruits.”</p> <p>“Here’s what we’ve told recruiters: If you make the numbers that’s great, but you will make the standard,” Gen. Milley said. “We will not reduce quality to gain quantity. Full stop.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Border Patrol agents: catch-release restart
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/15/catch-and-release-illegal-immigrant-restarted-texa/
GIST	<p>The Trump administration reinstated a de facto catch-and-release policy for illegal immigrants nabbed crossing the border in Texas, with Border Patrol agents being told Wednesday not to even bother turning them over for speedy deportation because there was no bed space, a top agent said.</p> <p>The problem, said Brandon Judd, an agent and president of the National Border Patrol Council, is that illegal immigration has surged once again after dipping during the early months of President Trump’s tenure.</p> <p>That has left the deportation agency, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, struggling to find beds to hold the illegal immigrants. As a result, Border Patrol agents who bring apprehended people to ICE are turned away.</p> <p>“We’re going to have to release them out our front door,” Mr. Judd said. “Even if we try to turn them over to them, they’re just not going to take them.”</p> <p>He said ICE’s San Antonio office, which handles most of the traffic from the Texas border, said it would have to refuse to take any family units the Border Patrol tries to turn over and will soon reject even non-family migrants.</p> <p>Later Wednesday, Mr. Judd said, ICE’s El Paso office told agents it also was at capacity and was refusing family units.</p> <p>ICE didn’t deny the problem. Instead, the agency said it has to prioritize cases and is struggling with how to comply with court rulings on treatment of illegal immigrant families traveling together.</p> <p>An official at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the Border Patrol, insisted the agency won’t end up issuing notices to appear — essentially just notifications of future immigration hearings. The official said CBP will pursue expedited removal or speedy deportation.</p> <p>“We are in the business of catch and remove, not release,” the official said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 More homeless in Seattle w/changes?
SOURCE	http://crosscut.com/2017/11/will-seattle-see-more-homeless-when-spending-changes-hit/
GIST	<p>Social service providers are worried about how the homeless will fare in the face of fast-approaching changes to how the city funds its efforts to get people off the street.</p> <p>On Nov. 27, the day before Jenny Durkan is sworn in as Seattle’s 56th mayor, Seattle’s Human Services Department will reveal which homeless service providers will get funding and which will not, the result of</p>

a wholesale rebidding of \$30 million worth of contracts. It will be the most significant and dramatic step in carrying out the city's shift toward new priorities for homelessness, which will focus, above all else, on getting people into housing. That could mean less money put into shelters, for example.

Following this great reveal, service providers will have just over a month, until Jan. 1, 2018, to adjust to their newly adjusted budgets.

While the city's new plan for homelessness, known as Pathways Home, may look to its proponents as a much needed fix to a diffuse system, the near-term transition has some service providers worried. As the Seattle City Council haggles over investments for getting people off the street, the New Year's deadline looks to some like a cliff and, so far, little in the budget gives them confidence that there is money to mitigate that quick transition.

"If we're gonna stop doing some things in favor of doing other things, you've got to figure out how to make that bridge," says Daniel Malone, executive director of the Downtown Emergency Services Center, a key nonprofit working with the homeless. "Because some of the things you're going to stop doing may provide immediate assistance and it would be irresponsible to shut it off without some transition."

The result, warns Malone, is the city could see an immediate jump in people on the streets. Separate from any judgments on the merits of Pathways Home, the plan has a "new focus on housing people, and I'm convinced that's going to take more resources," says Malone.

The questions became even more critical after a dramatic Seattle City Council showdown Tuesday over new revenue ended in all proposals for new funding being rejected.

In total, the council pulled together just over \$9 million for near-term solutions, including ways to deal with any further uptick in homelessness.

What does the council get for this money? It gets just over \$1 million in new shelter, for a day center, foster youth, and survivors of domestic violence. It gets four new employees in the Human Services Department. It also plans to spend about \$1 million in outreach and case work for sexual abuse survivors and victims of sex trafficking. There is \$1.3 million in money for safe consumption sites. And it has \$2.75 million for new permanent supportive housing services, which, according to Councilmember Mike O'Brien, is to maintain programming that the United Way no longer funds.

Also on Wednesday, the council declined to block funding, as Sawant wanted, for so-called "sweeps" of unsanctioned encampments. It did, however, pass a measure from Councilmember Herbold that would block funding for any sweep that does not follow the city's own rules on such evictions exactly.

All of the money found on Wednesday is in addition to several new investments in the budget originally proposed by Mayor Burgess, which includes an expansion of the Navigation Team, a combination law enforcement/social worker outreach group working with the homeless.

Cut from the original proposal is a \$1 million expansion of the popular Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, although Councilmember O'Brien shifted to LEAD \$750,000 from a program for outreach to people living in RVs. Additionally, \$3.3 million for response to the homelessness state of emergency has been struck.

However, while there is an expansion of some shelter space, there are no funds specifically earmarked for transitioning to the new funding models. Malone uses the Navigation Team as an example of programs that are getting additional money while the transition is still a question.

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HEADLINE 11/15 DOJ warns Seattle, King Co. on grant fund

SOURCE

<http://crosscut.com/2017/11/sessions-sends-warning-to-seattle-king-county-on-immigration-policy/>

GIST

Attorney General Jeff Sessions sent King County and Seattle officials' letters on Wednesday inquiring about whether they are violating the terms of a U.S. Department of Justice grant with sanctuary city policies.

It's the latest escalation of the Trump administration's attempts to force municipal and state police and law enforcement agencies to assist federal authorities in their efforts to capture possible undocumented immigrants. Wednesday's letters went to 29 cities, counties and states.

The Justice Department said it had found that the jurisdictions all "may have laws, policies, or practices that violate 8 U.S.C. 1373, a federal statute that promotes information sharing related to immigration enforcement."

The local letters went to the chair of the King County Council, Joe McDermott, and Seattle Mayor Tim Burgess. Both of the letters refer to a 2016 grant and say that the Justice Department is concerned that some of the city and county practices related to undocumented immigrants "may violate" requirements to comply with the department's policies.

In a statement, Burgess referred to the letter as "more bluster and bullying by the president based on his ideologically driven fixation on immigrants and refugees."

"Seattle is a welcoming city," Burgess said. "We value the contributions made by the neighbors who live among us. We are proud of their presence."

Kimberly Mills, a spokesperson for City Attorney Pete Holmes, added that the Justice Department had initially sent the city letter to Ed Murray, who resigned Sept. 12 amid allegations of sexual harassment. The Department later resent the letter and addressed it to Mayor Burgess.

Mayor-elect Jenny Durkan also issued a statement: "Unfortunately for the Trump administration, multiple federal judges have ruled that the Department of Justice cannot withhold federal law enforcement aid to sanctuary cities."

"Seattle is and will continue to be a sanctuary city," Durkan said. "Jeff Sessions and Donald Trump, keep your hands off Seattle."

McDermott, for his part, said that he had learned of the letter addressed to him only after receiving calls from the press and that he was forced to go to the Department of Justice website to read it. He referred to the letter as "insulting" and as "an attempt to bully and intimidate the residents of King County."

"We are a welcoming, inclusive, affirming place," McDermott said. He added that he would not allow the letter to change the values of King County. McDermott also argued that, contrary to what the letter implies, King County complies with all federal statutes. The county does not restrict communication with federal officials, McDermott said.

McDermott indicated he is working with King County Executive Dow Constantine and King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg on crafting a formal response to the letter, which they intend to send by a Dec. 8 deadline that the Department of Justice specified. "If they want to take federal money away, we will fight them on that," McDermott said.

The letters specifically state that no final decision has been made about whether the jurisdictions have failed to comply with their grants, a finding that presumably could lead to cutting off funds or even requiring repayments. In a statement, however, Sessions used strong language in urging the jurisdictions to review and change their policies.

The \$673,000 grant was awarded jointly to Seattle and King County under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program. The money is to allow "states and units of local government, including

	<p>tribes, to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime based on their own state and local needs and conditions.”</p> <p>Burgess said the city used the money to “fund the work of three civilian crime prevention specialists in our police department.”</p> <p>“These prevention specialists work with people throughout the city and give advice on how to avoid being a crime victim, how to report crimes that do occur, and how to take proactive steps to improve the physical environment to reduce crime,” Burgess said in an emailed statement. “It’s ironic that a president who says he wants to reduce crime and help crime victims works to remove funding from programs that do exactly that.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Benton Co. bans new pot production
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/818325/southeast-washington-county-bans-pot-production/
GIST	<p>PROSSER, Wash. (AP) — Officials in a southeast Washington county have approved an emergency ordinance to ban new marijuana production and processing for six months.</p> <p>The Tri-City Herald reports Benton County commissioners voted Tuesday in Prosser. Two commissioners voted in favor while one was excused.</p> <p>Like a current retail ban, it affects new operators. It does not apply to the 47 cannabis producers and 35 processors with physical addresses in Benton County.</p> <p>The moratorium will end in six months unless the county commission acts to extend it or make it permanent.</p> <p>Marijuana processors and producers came under scrutiny in October when the smell of the cannabis harvest compelled Finley residents to demand action from county leaders.</p> <p>Washington voters approved Initiative 502 in 2012. It passed statewide by 56 percent to 44 percent.</p> <p>Benton County voters rejected the measure.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Govt. blocked in ‘sanctuary cities’ case
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/ce54a66b03d744c4ac37a3a032f65e6d/Judge-sides-with-Philadelphia-in-'sanctuary-cities'-case
GIST	<p>PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A federal judge has blocked the U.S. government from withholding a major grant because Philadelphia is a “sanctuary city.”</p> <p>U.S. District Judge Michael Baylson says in his decision issued Wednesday that he weighed the public interest and possible harm that could come from the withholding of such funds.</p> <p>The city filed suit against Attorney General Jeff Sessions in August.</p> <p>Sessions has said that cities that don’t help enforce immigration law are endangering public safety, especially when it comes to sharing information about immigrants who have been accused of crimes.</p> <p>The Justice Department has threatened to cut off millions of dollars in federal grants to cities if they don’t meet certain criteria for cooperating with immigration officials.</p>

	For Philadelphia, about \$1.6 million was a stake.
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HEADLINE	11/15 Court: not met school funding mandate
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/washington-supreme-court-says-legislatures-mccleary-school-funding-plan-isnt-enough/
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA — The Washington state Supreme Court announced Wednesday it will keep its contempt order and daily sanctions in place against the state in its McCleary K-12 school-funding order.</p> <p>In a unanimous order, the justices acknowledged that “the State has made significant progress in fully funding the program of basic education,” according to a news release from the court.</p> <p>But the school-funding plan approved by lawmakers this year “delays by over a year implementation of a constitutionally compliant salary model, a critical part of meaningful reform.”</p> <p>The justices announced they will continue overseeing the case and ordered the state to report on its progress in April, after the 2018 legislative session is expected to end, according to the release.</p> <p>The court’s 2012 landmark McCleary ruling found that Washington state was unconstitutionally underfunding its K-12 school system.</p> <p>Lawmakers have since poured billions of dollars into the state’s school system and this year drafted a complex plan to fund teacher and other school-worker salaries.</p> <p>But in an October hearing, the justices sounded skeptical about those efforts.</p> <p>Under the McCleary ruling the state is supposed to fully implement its school-funding plan by Sept. 1, 2018.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Zimbabwe president under arrest
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/11/15/Zimbabwe-president-under-arrest-as-military-denies-takeover-is-coup/2081510749035/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts_pi&utm_medium=4
GIST	<p>Nov. 15 (UPI) -- Zimbabwe's military took over control of the country on Wednesday and said it detained President Robert Mugabe -- but denied the actions amounted to a coup.</p> <p>Zimbabwe Maj. Gen. Sibusiso Moyo said Mugabe was safely at home in South Africa, and rejected notions that it was a full military takeover.</p> <p>"We wish to make it abundantly clear that this is not a military takeover," the general said. "We are only targeting criminals around [Mugabe] who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice."</p> <p>"As soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy."</p> <p>Wednesday's actions escalated a political confrontation that's been brewing over Mugabe's apparent attempts to install his wife as his successor. The president's wife, Grace Mugabe, reportedly escaped to neighboring Namibia.</p> <p>The announcement came as Zimbabwe military forces patrolled Harare, where at least three explosions were reported early Wednesday -- in what government officials have called a "bloodless" political</p>

	transition.
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HEADLINE	11/15 'Mass exodus' Texas prison guards
SOURCE	http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/article/Mass-exodus-of-Texas-prison-guards-leaves-units-12357797.php
GIST	<p>Texas prisons are shedding officers with a staggering 28 percent turnover rate in the last fiscal year, a "mass exodus" that some experts say stems from a strengthening economy and recovering oil and gas sector.</p> <p>"A lot of these guys don't want to work in a prison," said Lance Lowry, a spokesman for the Huntsville-based Texas Correctional Employees union. "There's other job opportunities opening up in rural Texas."</p> <p>Data from the Texas State Auditor's Office show a marked increase over the previous year, when 22.8 percent of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's roughly 26,000 officers left for other jobs. At the same time, department vacancy rates have crept up again to over 12 percent, with 3,207 jobs unfilled.</p> <p>"When the economy is doing well and growing is typically when we see correctional officers leave for better paying jobs," said TDCJ spokesman Jason Clark. "The more rural areas tend to be more challenging, particularly in South Texas when we've seen an uptick in oil and gas jobs being offered."</p> <p>But in 2017, with the oil and gas boom largely in the rearview mirror, that doesn't explain the whole picture.</p> <p>"From 2012 to 2014, [turnover] was becoming pretty acute and especially where fracking was kind of big," said Scott Henson, policy director with the nonprofit Just Liberty. Then, "it was more than just a vague correlation."</p> <p>Five years ago, the McConnell and Connally units — both in counties that lie partially on the Eagle Ford Shale — had just over 40 percent vacancy, according to Business & Finance Division data.</p> <p>Now, the southeast region of the state — which is far from the currently most active oil and gas fields — is experiencing rising officer turnover rates close to 37 percent, the highest in Texas.</p> <p>TDCJ facilities in Jefferson and Liberty counties saw turnover rates of 36 and 31 percent, respectively, according to data from the Texas State Auditor's Office, which is broken down by region and county but not by facility.</p> <p>"Some of it just could be the local economy growing that tends to pull away from TDCJ," Clark said. Over the past five years, staffing shortages forced the department to mothball about 1,900 beds, according to TDCJ numbers.</p> <p>County-by-county numbers, however, show that staffing challenges can be highly localized and specific, as in the Texas Panhandle. Hartley and Dallam counties are not in an area particularly known for oil and gas, but a cheese factory in Dalhart has typically pulled away would-be prison workers, Henson said.</p> <p>In fiscal 2017, TDCJ facilities in Hartley County had a 59 percent turnover rate, one of only three counties over the 50 percent mark.</p> <p>"Whether people will work in prisons depends on hyperlocal economic conditions," Henson said. "A prison is someplace that you work as a job of last resort."</p> <p>But in some regions, staffing levels seem to be doing just fine. The Upper Rio Grande and South Texas Border regions had less than 15 percent turnover.</p>

	<p>"That tends to be a more stable workforce along the border," Clark said.</p> <p>For officers on the job, high turnover can raise safety concerns when many of the employees are new.</p> <p>"When you lose 20-some percent of your employees every year, it's hard," Lowry said.</p> <p>One of the challenges in staffing Texas prisons is the low wages. Officer pay starts at around \$32,000 per year, with increases at three and nine months. After seven years, pay plateaus at \$43,000.</p> <p>"If you want the staff to stay — and having experienced staff is critical for effective prison operations — then the pay has to increase significantly," said Michele Deitch, a senior lecturer at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.</p> <p>Unlike in some other states, such as California and New York, Texas jailers are not certified peace officers, which means they're not eligible for the more generous Schedule C pay scale.</p> <p>"Texas correctional officers are treated no better than most security guards," Lowry said. In the Golden State, where prison guards are certified peace officers, vacancy rates hover around 3 percent, according to a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesman.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 SKorea quake raises alarm seismic activity
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/south-korea-earthquake-alarm-seismic-activity/story?id=51163387
GIST	<p>A magnitude-5.4 earthquake shook southeastern South Korea today, marking the largest in the nation since last year's trembler in nearby Gyeongju.</p> <p>Today's earthquake, which caused minor injuries, struck around 2:29 p.m. local time about 6 miles north of the city of Pohang. Old buildings collapsed and concrete roads cracked open. Some residents in Seoul even detected the vibration several hundred miles away.</p> <p>There have been 18 aftershocks, officials said, ranging in magnitude from 2.2 to 5.4 as residents tweeted in real-time on the damages. At Handong Global University, an outer wall of a school building collapsed. Books fell from shelves and furniture trembled, as seen through videos from social network services.</p> <p>Fifty people suffered minor injuries, according to the National Fire Agency, but the number is expected to rise. The epicenter of the quake was about 5 miles underground, according to South Korea's Meteorological Administration. The more shallow the epicenter, the bigger the shock above ground.</p> <p>"The earthquake is the second-strongest natural earthquake to take place in the Korean peninsula since last year's quake in Gyeongju," the meteorological administration said.</p> <p>Last year's earthquake had a magnitude of 5.8, damaging many cultural sites and buildings.</p> <p>The Korea Meteorological Administration stressed that South Korea is no longer free from earthquake threats. Seismic activity has reached a new phase since last year's Gyeongju earthquake.</p> <p>A total of 139 quakes of magnitude-2 and above have been detected this year alone, which is more than twice the historical average. South Korea had been known to have little seismic activity compared to neighboring Japan.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 EU parliament takes action against Poland
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/barbs-fly-heated-debate-poland-eu-parliament-51162947
GIST	<p>European Union lawmakers launched action against Poland Wednesday over concerns that the government has compromised the independence of the judiciary and risks breaching fundamental European values.</p> <p>In a resolution adopted by 438 to 152, with 71 abstentions, the lawmakers triggered the first stage of a so-called rule-of-law procedure against the Polish government.</p> <p>The procedure could lead to the suspensions of Poland's EU voting rights.</p> <p>The assembly's Civil Liberties Committee must now draw up a legal proposal to formally request that the mechanism — known as Article 7 — be activated due to a "clear risk of a serious breach" of EU values.</p> <p>The EU's executive, the Commission, has already launched a procedure of its own against the right-wing government in Warsaw amid concerns that new laws in Poland undermine judicial independence and the rule of law.</p> <p>The vote came after a heated debate that exposed the bitter feelings between European officials trying to keep Poland on a democratic course and conservative Polish officials who insist that the ruling party has a democratic mandate to change its own court system and that Brussels has no right to interfere in the affairs of sovereign nations.</p> <p>Ryszard Legutko, a member of Poland's ruling party, accused the EU of waging an illegal "crusade against Poland." He also accused the German media, which been critical of Poland's direction, of holding an "anti-Polish orgy."</p> <p>In turn, others sharply criticized Poland's direction, with the parliament's liberal leader Guy Verhofstadt saying the Polish government "has lost its senses." Gianni Pittella, leader of an alliance of Socialists and Democrats, accused Warsaw of showing "scorn for liberal democracy."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Southern Calif. smog worsens
SOURCE	http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-bad-air-days-20171115-story.html
GIST	<p>Southern California smog worsened for a second straight year in the latest sign that progress in cleaning the nation's most polluted air is faltering.</p> <p>The dive in air quality comes even though emissions are declining, forcing regulators to explain why returns are diminishing after years of progress battling smog.</p> <p>Ozone, the harmful gas in smog that inflames the lungs and triggers asthma attacks and other health problems, has violated federal health standards 145 days this year across the sea-to-mountains South Coast air basin, according to monitoring data from state and local air regulators.</p> <p>That's up from 132 ozone violation days last year and 113 in 2015 across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.</p> <p>The last time the region had more than 140 bad air days was in 2004, when there was more than twice as much smog-forming pollution spewing out of tailpipes and smokestacks, according to official inventories.</p> <p>The South Coast Air Quality Management District, the smog-control agency for the region of 17 million people, believes the uptick is probably the result of more days with hotter temperatures and inversion layers, weather patterns that trap pollution near the ground.</p>

	<p>“We’re not denying that we’ve had two really bad ozone years,” said Philip Fine, deputy executive officer for the district. But he added: “It’s quite possible weather explains all of it.”</p> <p>Still, air quality officials are looking into other possibilities, including whether smog-forming pollution is actually declining as predicted in its emissions models.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 NKorea issues Trump ‘death sentence’
SOURCE	https://www.yahoo.com/news/north-korea-issues-apos-death-095834662.html
GIST	<p>The North Korean ruling party’s mouthpiece Rodong Sinmun published a seething commentary condemning President Donald Trump and the speech he gave to the South Korean parliament last week.</p> <p>Trump was given the opportunity to address the National Assembly in Seoul as part of his state visit to Seoul, the first American president to give a speech to lawmakers since Bill Clinton in 1993.</p> <p>In his speech, Trump congratulated South Korea’s progress since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, highlighting the differences in living standards between the two Koreas and personally addressed dictator Kim Jong Un, calling North Korea “hell” and urging him to give up his weapons.</p> <p>The state-controlled North Korean media took a week to react to the president’s words, but the commentary published Wednesday both addressed Trump’s speech and reiterated some key points of the North Korean rhetoric. It repeated the idea that North Koreans won’t cower in front of a “rabid dog’s barking” and that Trump’s hostility represents a “declaration of war.”</p> <p>According to the commentary, Trump committed four capital offenses in criticizing Kim’s leadership, North Korea’s society, lifestyle and history—North Korea contests the events sparking the Korean War, claiming it was invaded rather than being the invading force.</p> <p>“Trump, who is no more than an old slave of money, dared point an accusing finger at the sun. He should know that he is just a hideous criminal sentenced to death by the Korean people,” the commentary read.</p> <p>“He will be forced to pay dearly for his blasphemy any moment,” it continued, “The one who violated the dignity of the people and insulted them should never expect their pardon.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Seattle cuts mayor staffing budget 17%
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/news/local/seattle/seattle-city-council-cuts-mayors-staffing-budget/492120197
GIST	<p>In a dizzying display of governing, the Seattle City Council voted Wednesday to cut staffing funding to the Mayor’s Office by 17 percent in 2018.</p> <p>It means Mayor-elect Jenny Durkan may have to do more with less and in a short amount of time.</p> <p>The council re-directed the money elsewhere.</p> <p>Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez was dissenting vote in the move, noting how the council recently increased spending on staffing in its own office. However, Councilmember Kirsten Harris-Talley suggested Durkan can work her with “61-member transition team” to figure out how to implement the cuts.</p> <p>Current Mayor Tim Burgess did not waste time issuing a statement:</p> <p>“During this unprecedented period of mayoral transition, we should be coming together to help Mayor-</p>

Elect Jenny Durkan staff up and hit the ground running on November 28—just seven business days from now. If all of the proposed cuts are adopted the Council will be reducing the Mayor’s budget by approximately 17 percent. This misguided surprise illustrates the harm that can be caused when significant budget decisions are made on the fly without a thorough analysis of impacts.

“If in their wisdom, the Council believes these funds are needed for other purposes, and remembering that the Legislative Department’s budget is twice the size of the Mayor’s budget, then the funds should come proportionately from the Mayor’s Office and the Legislative Department.

“It’s also important to remember that the Mayor of Seattle is responsible for managing more than 11,000 city employees and directly responsible for overseeing the delivery of city services. The Legislative department has approximately 99 employees.”

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HEADLINE	11/16 Thanksgiving weekend: turkey, traffic
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/thanksgiving-weekend-snarled-traffic-heavy-travel-aaa/
GIST	<p>Despite the onslaught of hurricanes, fires and tornadoes this year, Americans still have a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Day -- and they're taking to their cars to do it.</p> <p>During the five-day Thanksgiving holiday from Wednesday to Sunday, which is traditionally one of the busiest travel periods, 45.5 million people will be on the roads. That's more than a 3 percent increase over last year. And they'll join the nearly 4 million in flight above them and the more than 1 million riding the rails to embark on the most hectic Thanksgiving holiday weekend since 2005, according to the annual AAA travel survey.</p> <p>But it comes at a cost, particularly for white-knuckled drivers caught in traffic at major highway interchanges or near airports. "Travel times in the most congested cities in the U.S. during the holiday weekend could be as much as three times longer than the optimal trip," predicted the AAA, a federation of motor clubs with more than 56 million members.</p> <p>And that's just one scenario awaiting those who'll drive during what should be a happy occasion. Another is that a good portion of the worst traffic jams will occur even before the weekend's official start. Snarled roads will begin on Tuesday evening during the 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. commuter hour, when holiday travelers trying to leave early to avoid expected delays the following morning could bump into -- in some cases literally -- those trying to get home from work.</p> <p>The bumper-to-bumper mayhem is expected to be the worst in metro areas like Chicago around the interchange of I-90 and I-19; in Los Angeles on the infamous I-5 at Valley View Avenue and in New York on Long Island's I-495 where it intersects with NY 106/NY 107.</p> <p>When it comes to airport gridlock, the worst times again are on Tuesday evening as travelers from Manhattan struggle to reach JFK Airport via the Long Island Expressway, or grapple with traffic en-route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport on the Kennedy Expressway.</p> <p>Nearly 90 percent of those traveling 50 miles or more will do so by car. And as expected, the holiday will have a higher toll in highway casualties. The National Safety Council said the Thanksgiving highway death toll in recent years has averaged almost 400. According to AAA, last year's toll was 533 fatalities.</p> <p>Thanks to a good economy -- and more jobs -- the higher cost of gasoline won't affect travel. Drivers will pay the highest Thanksgiving holiday gas prices since 2014, an average of \$2.54 per gallon, or 37 cents more than last November. Conversely, AAA said air travel will cost less -- a 23 percent fare drop from last year. But this savings will be spent on car rentals, which will hit a four-year high at \$70 per day.</p> <p>AAA warned that, in addition to traffic snarls, car problems could strand motorists. It said it expects to</p>

	rescue more than 330,000 drivers this Thanksgiving holiday, most due to lockouts, flat tires and dead batteries. AAA noted that a quick inspection by a trusted repair shop might keep more people on the road and headed toward their turkey dinner.
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HEADLINE	11/16 Global alliance to phase out coal 2030
SOURCE	http://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-accord-coal/at-least-15-states-join-global-alliance-to-phase-out-coal-by-2030-idUSKBN1DG1AI
GIST	<p>BONN, Germany (Reuters) - At least 15 countries have joined an international alliance to phase out coal from power generation before 2030, delegates at U.N. climate talks in Bonn said on Thursday.</p> <p>Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland, New Zealand, Ethiopia, Chile, Mexico and the Marshall Islands have joined the Powering Past Coal Alliance, delegates said.</p> <p>The alliance aims to have 50 members by the next U.N. climate summit in 2018 to be held in Poland's Katowice, one of Europe's most polluted cities.</p> <p>But some of the world's biggest coal users, such as China, the United States, Germany and Russia, have not signed up.</p> <p>Powering Past Coal comes just days after U.S. administration officials, along with energy company representatives, led a side event at the talks to promote "fossil fuels and nuclear power in climate mitigation."</p> <p>The event triggered a peaceful protest by anti-coal demonstrators and jarred with many ministers who are working on a rule book for implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to move the world economy off fossil fuels.</p> <p>The alliance was kicked off by Britain, Canada and the Marshall Islands, who urged other nations to join them in a letter seen by Reuters on Wednesday.</p> <p>A source close to the matter said signatories to the alliance so far had been at least a dozen, in addition to some U.S. states, Canadian provinces and businesses.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Europe's next separatist time-bomb
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-16/europe-s-next-separatist-time-bomb-is-ticking-in-the-balkans
GIST	<p>Europe's latest separatist threat is in its most volatile region: the Balkans.</p> <p>Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik wants to pull his faction out of Bosnia-Herzegovina, breaking the tripartite power-sharing agreement that's kept it together since the 1995 peace accord that ended Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II. Dodik's stance has earned him economic sanctions from the U.S.</p> <p>He can rely on a longtime friend: Russia. Dodik and Russian President Vladimir Putin have met seven times since March 2011, according to Kremlin records. He's also met with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov five times in the last decade. And Russia is the no. 2 investor in Dodik's territory, Republika Srpska, after Serbia.</p> <p>"Bosnia is undergoing a silent breakup, and that's best for it," Dodik said in a recent interview. "If we saw a chance we wouldn't miss it. Nobody should doubt that." As for Russia, "I have not had a single</p>

unpleasant situation with the Russians. With others from the West, I always face an ultimatum.”

Much of the western Balkans has managed to shake off the burden of the bloody wars that tore apart the former Yugoslavia, but decades of international aid have failed to change much in one of Europe’s poorest countries. Bickering among Bosnia’s three ethnic groups, which are bound together in a complicated power structure but divided by religion, has crippled state institutions.

The country’s governing entities are unable to agree on basic economic reforms required by the International Monetary Fund, whose three-year program with the country is already off-track after Bosnia failed to pass its first quarterly review. Gross domestic product of just \$17 billion, just over 15 percent of the EU per-capita average, is helped by remittances from abroad, central bank Governor Senad Softic said in an interview in Sarajevo.

“Bosnia is experiencing its most serious crisis since the end of the war,” said Timothy Less, director of the Nova Europa political risk consulting firm in Cambridge, U.K. “Not only have the shared institutions of government reached the point of near total breakdown, no one seems particularly interested in reconstituting them.”

The Bosnian Serbs aren’t unique among the other two principal ethnic groups, the Croats and the Muslims, in failing to cooperate. Key companies and institutions -- such as telecom operators and statistics offices -- mirror the split.

“You have Muslim electricity, Catholic electricity and Orthodox electricity,” said Valentin Inzko, the Austrian who heads the Office High Representative for Bosnia, referring to the three power companies operating in the country. “The current situation actually suits all politicians.”

Bosnian Muslims, who account for half of the country’s 3.7 million citizens, accuse Dodik of hurting the country’s future.

Leaders like him “conduct destructive, secessionist and destabilizing politics that create problems not only for Bosnia-Herzegovina, but will have consequences for the region and for the whole of Europe,” Bakir Izetbegovic, the Bosnian Muslim leader, said in a statement.

The Croats, for their part, oppose dissolution. But if the Bosnian Serbs do pull out, they would probably push for a three-way division of the country and then seek to join neighboring Croatia, said Zarko Puhovski, a political science professor at the University of Zagreb.

Spelling Catastrophe

“In that case, which I think is very unlikely, that Bosnian Serbs secede, it would spell catastrophe for the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” he said, adding that “This time around, there is no appetite for war.”

Russia says it’s committed to the 1995 Dayton peace accords but officials have indicated Dodik is being unfairly blamed for the problems threatening the peace agreement. Lavrov pledged at a March meeting in Moscow with the Bosnian Serb leader to continue to develop ties with his faction and to pressure Western nations not to violate the rights of ethnic groups in Bosnia.

“As we develop relations with Republika Srpska, we are closely tied together, especially since in terms of our approach to international affairs and respect for the Dayton accords we have a lot in common,” Pyotr Ivantsov, Russian ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, said in an interview last month posted on the Foreign Ministry website.

Dodik believes time is working for him, and that Bosnia will simply fall apart even without a Serb independence referendum, which he considered and decided against for now.

HEADLINE	11/16 Russian power play in Belarus
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-16/a-russian-power-play-in-belarus
GIST	<p>Since breaking away from the Soviet Union in 1990, Lithuania has done its best to draw closer to Western Europe, joining NATO and the European Union, and adopting the bloc's common currency. But less than 30 miles from the capital, Vilnius, looms a symbol of everything Lithuanians thought they'd left behind: the hulking concrete towers of a nuclear power plant being built with Russian money and expertise.</p> <p>The power station going up across the border in Astravets, Belarus, is creating a sense of déjà vu among Lithuanians, who fear not only a Chernobyl-type disaster from a largely untested nuclear technology, but also a resurgence of Russian influence in the region. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite has called the plant a "nuclear monstrosity" and an "existential threat to European security."</p> <p>Concerns over the plant intensified last year when authorities in Belarus failed to disclose that a 330-ton reactor encasement had slipped from a crane and dropped to the ground. The incident initially went unreported, and plans to replace the part were announced only after social media and independent online publications revealed details. "What's worrying is the lack of transparency," says Jonas Radlinskas, a retiree in Vilnius who says his neighbor died after working on the Chernobyl cleanup.</p> <p>Inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency haven't revealed any major flaws in the plant, but that's done little to allay Lithuania's concerns. The country of 2.9 million people was among the first Soviet republics to announce its departure from the bloc, and many see the nuclear plant as a ploy by Moscow to extend the region's dependence on Russian energy. Like many of its Baltic neighbors, Lithuania has been working to loosen the grip of Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas company. The country already generates 26 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, according to the most recent available data. And in August it received its first delivery of U.S. liquefied natural gas.</p> <p>Belarus, a country of 9.5 million, whose main exports include gasoline, tractors, dairy, and the fertilizer ingredient potash, relies on Russian gas to generate 95 percent of its electricity. Although the 2,400-megawatt nuclear power plant will allow the country to dial back on gas imports, it won't do much to curb its dependence on Moscow, given that it's being built by state-owned Rosatom Corp. and Russia is financing the lion's share of the \$11 billion cost.</p> <p>Astravets, which is scheduled to open in 2019, "is very clearly a means for Russia to try to remain influential," says Antony Froggatt, an energy security researcher at Chatham House in London. "Nuclear energy will play an increasingly important geopolitical role in Russian strategy."</p> <p>Officials in Belarus see the opposition to Astravets as sour grapes, because Lithuania was forced to shut down its own aging Soviet-era nuclear station in 2009 as a condition for joining the EU and later failed to attract investors for a new project near the site. President Alexander Lukashenko—who's ruled Belarus virtually unchallenged since he was elected in 1994—has appealed to Lithuania to stop politicizing the issue. "Let us build this plant together and use it jointly," he said in July. "Let us sit down together and resolve this dispute instead of making the whole world laugh at us." Lithuanians have turned a deaf ear. In April the country passed legislation barring imports of electricity from the plant.</p> <p>Darius Degutis, a Lithuanian career diplomat appointed ambassador-at-large for Astravets, concedes the design of the two pressurized water reactors is similar to those of nuclear plants commissioned by EU members Finland and Hungary. His country, though, should have been consulted on the location, he says, since more Lithuanians than Belarusians live in the vicinity. "We're not against Belarus building a power plant. Every country has that right," Degutis says. "But the location is very wrong." Officials in Belarus have said geology was one of the principal factors in choosing Astravets.</p> <p>Even though Belarus suffered more from Chernobyl than any other Soviet republic, many there view the new reactors with a mix of curiosity and pride. The plant, whose cooling towers rise as high as a 40-story building above log house villages and sugar beet fields, has brought rapid development to the tiny provincial town of Astravets.</p>

Since 2010, row upon row of pastel-colored apartment blocks, schools, and offices have cropped up to accommodate an expected 2,300 employees, their families, and all those seeking jobs amid the nuclear-powered boom. “Isn’t it impressive?” says Eduard Svirid, a press official at the plant, sweeping his hand across the landscape. “Seven years ago there was nothing, just an empty field.”

In Belarus, a country where political opposition is stifled, Stanislau Shushkevich is one of the prominent critical voices. In his study in a modest Minsk apartment, where books line the walls from floor to ceiling, he says Belarus needs a nuclear plant, but not at the cost of spoiling relations with its neighbors. The 82-year-old former physics professor, who in 1991 became the first head of independent Belarus, calls the spat “unproductive” on both sides. He believes the plant’s location may have been influenced by Russia’s desire to reinforce the message that it remains the dominant power in the region.

“This is a way to keep the Baltics on their toes,” says Shushkevich, who oversaw the withdrawal of Soviet nuclear warheads from Belarus before losing to Lukashenko in 1994. “It’s purely political, but Lithuania will have to live with it, as the plant is not going away.”

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HEADLINE	11/15 How US became a Medicaid nation
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/11/15/how-u-s-has-become-medicaid-nation/867918001/
GIST	<p>When high levels of lead were discovered in the public water system in Flint, Mich., in 2015, Medicaid stepped in to help thousands of children get tested for poisoning and receive care.</p> <p>When disabled children need to get to doctors’ appointments — either across town or hundreds of miles away — Medicaid pays for their transportation.</p> <p>When middle-class older Americans deplete their savings to pay for costly nursing home care, Medicaid offers coverage.</p> <p>The United States has become a Medicaid nation.</p> <p>Although it started as a plan to cover only the poor, Medicaid now touches tens of millions of Americans who live above the poverty line. The program serves as a backstop for America’s scattershot health care system, and as Republicans learned this year in their relentless battle to replace the Affordable Care Act, efforts to drastically change that can spur a backlash.</p> <p>The latest Republican proposal — by Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana — was defeated in part because it would scrap the health law’s Medicaid expansion and reduce federal funding for Medicaid over time.</p> <p>While Republicans in Congress are certain to continue to push for cuts, the fact is that Republican and Democratic governors as well as rich and poor Americans rely on the program.</p> <p>Today, Medicaid is the nation’s largest health insurance program, covering 74 million, or more than one in five Americans. Twenty-five percent of Americans will be on Medicaid at some point in their lives — many are just a pink slip away from being eligible.</p> <p>Medicaid funding protects families from having to sell a home or declare bankruptcy to pay for the care of a disabled child or elderly parent. It responds to cover disaster relief, public health emergencies and programs in schools that lack other sources of funding.</p> <p>Millions of women who don’t qualify for full Medicaid benefits each year obtain family planning services paid for by Medicaid. These women have incomes as high as triple the federal poverty rate, or more than</p>

\$36,000 for an individual. And thousands of women, who otherwise don't qualify for the program, get treated each year for breast and cervical cancers through Medicaid.

"Instead of cutting Medicaid, (lawmakers) increased public awareness of its value and made it even harder to cut in the future," said Jonathan Oberlander, professor of health policy and management at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a supporter of the federal health law. The Medicaid cuts passed the House, but the ACA overhaul legislation fell short in the Senate in July.

Medicaid is the workhorse of the health system, covering:

- 39% of all children.
- Nearly half of all births in the country.
- 60% of nursing home and other long-term care expenses.
- More than one-quarter of all spending on mental health services and over a fifth of all spending on substance abuse treatment.

Unlike Medicare beneficiaries, who keep that insurance for life, most Medicaid enrollees churn in and out of the program every few years, depending on their circumstances.

Such numbers underline the importance of Medicaid but also provoke alarm among conservatives and some economists who say the U.S. cannot afford the costs over the long run.

Bill Hammond, director of health policy of the fiscally conservative Empire Center for Public Policy in Albany, N.Y., said Medicaid has been a big help for those it was designed to cover — children and the disabled. But it has grown so big that the cost hurts state efforts to pay for other necessary public services, such as education and roads. "I can't think of any other anti-poverty program that reaches so many people. ... It's too expensive a benefit."

"We need to transition people to get coverage in the private sector," he said, noting how millions on the program have incomes above the federal poverty level.

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HEADLINE	11/16 NKorea missile test lull: cause for hope?
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/11/16/two-months-without-north-korean-missile-test-record-year-cause-hope/867564001/
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — North Korea has gone two months without test firing a missile, the longest such dry spell this year.</p> <p>Is it reason for hope?</p> <p>"Any answer is speculative," said Jonathan Pollack, an analyst at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., think tank. "The reasons could be technical. The reasons could be political."</p> <p>The problem is that that the United States has very little insight into the isolated country and its enigmatic leader, Kim Jong Un.</p> <p>U.S. intelligence agencies can peer from the sky and count missiles, tanks and other weapons, at least those that aren't hidden underground. But reading the intentions of its leadership has proved next to impossible. The country remains under the iron grip of Kim, who apparently is the sole decision-maker about when to launch a missile test.</p>

Analysts scrutinize what information they can. North Korea has traditionally fired fewer missiles in the last three months of the year, said Tom Karako, an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "We don't know why that is," he added.

North Korea launched a record number of missile tests this year, raising worries that a miscalculation by the North of the United States about the other country's intentions could lead to war in the region.

North Korea conducted 15 missile tests and detonated a nuclear bomb this year, according to data compiled by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The last test was Sept. 14, when North Korea launched an intermediate range missile that flew over Japan and into the northern Pacific.

The high number of tests this year have helped North Korea advance its nuclear weapons program. It has also raised tensions with the United States and its allies to one of the highest levels in decades.

North Korea is still conducting tests with rocket engines and conducting other work that suggests it is not slowing its nuclear weapons program, Pollack said.

That has raised speculation that the pause in tests could be political. Pollack said Kim may have cooled the tests to see the reaction from President Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to annihilate North Korea if it strikes first.

The lull in tests has not been accompanied by a respite in insults and threats the U.S. and North Korean leader have exchanged all year.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Idaho nuclear fuel test facility restart
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/us-restarts-nuclear-testing-facility-idaho-23-years-51178018
GIST	<p>Federal officials have restarted an eastern Idaho nuclear fuel testing facility amid efforts to boost the nation's nuclear power generating capacity and possibly reduce concerns about nuclear power safety.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Energy said the facility at the Idaho National Laboratory about 50 miles west of Idaho Falls began operating Tuesday for the first time since it went on standby status in 1994.</p> <p>"It went well," John Bumgardner, director of the laboratory's Transient Testing Program said Wednesday. "The reactor and the facility as a whole, as well as our trained personnel, all performed as expected."</p> <p>Testing of the facility's equipment began Tuesday, Bumgardner said. Nuclear fuel testing is expected to begin next year.</p> <p>The Energy Department proposed resuming operations at the Transient Reactor Test Facility in 2013 as part of former President Barack Obama's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by generating carbon-free electricity with nuclear power. Nuclear power currently produces about 19 percent of the nation's energy.</p> <p>Energy department officials hope the testing facility will help researchers create fuels that leave behind less nuclear waste, that are harder to turn into weapons and that are less likely to lead to a reactor core meltdown.</p> <p>The United States has no permanent nuclear waste repository, which means the waste is often stored at the same sites where it is produced — often near large cities.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Claim: 17 escapes from Hawaii hospital
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/apnewsbreak-17-escapes-hawaii-hospital-2010-51189029?
GIST	<p>More than a dozen escapes have occurred over the past eight years at a Hawaii psychiatric hospital where a patient described as dangerous walked off the grounds and made it to California before he was captured this week.</p> <p>Many of the 17 escapes between 2010 and this year happened when a patient broke "curfew" and didn't return from the Hawaii State Hospital after being allowed to leave for a period of time, according to information obtained by The Associated Press from police and the state Department of Health.</p> <p>In the case of Randall Saito, the 59-year-old man left the hospital on Sunday, took a taxi to a chartered plane bound for the island of Maui and then boarded another plane to San Jose, California, police said. He was captured Wednesday morning in the city of Stockton after authorities got a tip from a taxi driver.</p> <p>Saito was committed to the hospital outside Honolulu in 1981 after he was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the shooting and stabbing death of a woman, whose body was found in her car at a mall. Saito was permitted to roam the hospital grounds with an escort, but he did not have permission to leave the hospital campus without supervision.</p> <p>It took the hospital at least eight hours to notify law enforcement that Saito was missing. On Wednesday, Dr. Virginia Pressler, director of the Hawaii Department of Health, said an internal inquiry indicated that workers inadvertently or intentionally neglected to supervise Saito or notify their supervisors. The apparent failures were spread through several shifts of works, she said. Seven hospital employees have been placed on unpaid leave as the investigation continues.</p> <p>Sunday's escape was the latest in a series of similar incidents at the Hawaii hospital in recent years, the documents obtained by the AP show. Among the 17: In March 2013, a patient upset about earlier disciplinary actions fled after punching a staffer who was in a vehicle trying to convince the man to return. The man was later apprehended. In March 2010, a patient attempted to escape by using a bed sheet as a rope and climbing over a perimeter fence. In November 2015, a patient who had a history of "threatening/assaultive behavior" went unescorted to the cafeteria and didn't return. The patient was later apprehended.</p> <p>The AP initially requested information from dozens of states, including Hawaii, about escapes from psychiatric facilities following a 2016 breakout in Washington state by a man accused of torturing a woman to death. Anthony Garver crawled out of a window of his ground-floor room at Western State Hospital in Lakewood, Washington, rode a bus 300 miles (480 kilometers) and was captured days later.</p> <p>After the escape, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee fired the hospital's CEO and brought in the Corrections Department to inspect the building for security improvements. A review of police reports by AP found 185 instances in the 3 ½ years before Garver's escape in which Western State patients escaped or walked away.</p> <p>Hawaii Gov. David Ige has said the public and authorities should have been notified much sooner about Saito. The state has started reviewing patient privileges and public visitation policies at the hospital and is boosting the frequency of unannounced patient searches and ordering more fencing.</p> <p>Officials have not provided details about how Saito was able to charter a plane and then fly on another plane to California. Video footage from inside the taxi that drove Saito to the chartered flight shows him using a cellphone after climbing in with a backpack. During the ride, he makes two calls. "I'm on my way," Saito said to someone he called Mickey.</p> <p>A few minutes later, he makes another call: "Is this the captain that's going to fly to Maui today? Hi. Hi, its' me. I'm on my way."</p> <p>The state has said when court-ordered patients "leave the grounds without authorization" police search for the person. In police reports the incidents are listed as "Escape." The 202-bed facility is the state's only</p>

	publicly-funded state psychiatric facility, located northeast of Honolulu. Janice Okubo, spokeswoman for the Hawaii State Department of Health, told the AP last year the majority of escapees are returned within a few days, however in 2009 one person escaped and was missing for nearly three years before being arrested.
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HEADLINE	11/16 London police: death toll tower fire at 71
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-final-grenfell-fire-death-toll-71-including-51189680?
GIST	<p>British police say the final death toll in the Grenfell Tower high-rise fire is 71.</p> <p>London's Metropolitan Police force say remains have been identified from 71 people killed in the June 14 blaze, including a baby who was stillborn. A total of 223 people escaped the fire.</p> <p>For months police have estimated that about 80 people died in the fire, which began in a refrigerator in an apartment before racing through the 24-story building. There has been frustration among survivors at how long it has taken to identify the victims and determine the final toll.</p> <p>Police Commander Stuart Cundy said Thursday that specialist teams "have pushed the boundaries of what was scientifically possible to identify people."</p> <p>Police say they are considering individual and corporate manslaughter charges over the fire.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 China renews call for 'freeze-for-freeze'
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/china-renews-call-north-korea-us-freeze-freeze-51189747?
GIST	<p>China is reiterating its call for an agreement between North Korea and the U.S. under which the North would gain concessions if it freezes its nuclear weapons program.</p> <p>The statement from foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang Thursday appeared to contradict President Donald Trump's remarks Wednesday that the U.S. and China agreed that North Korea cannot just freeze its nuclear weapons program in exchange for benefits. Trump said the North must eliminate its arsenal.</p> <p>Trump was restating a long-standing U.S. position, but also suggesting that China now concurred with Washington that a "freeze-for-freeze" agreement was unacceptable.</p> <p>Geng said at a regular briefing that China's position has not changed. He said the "freeze-for-freeze" initiative, under which the U.S. and South Korea would suspend large-scale military exercises in return, remained a "first step."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Open secret: Saudis, Israelis collaborate
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/open-secret-saudi-arabia-israel-get-cozy-n821136
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — In the Middle East, your enemy's enemy is your friend.</p> <p>For Israel, Saudi Arabia's growing willingness to confront Iranian influence in the Middle East presents an opening for an awkward alliance. As the kingdom's dynamic new crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, tries to rally an anti-Iran coalition, Israel — with the blessing of the Trump administration — is presenting</p>

itself as a willing and able partner.

The appetite for cooperation between two of America's closest allies in the Middle East has grown in recent years as their security interests have dovetailed. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia view Iran's growing influence in the region as an existential threat and want to squash militant Islamist groups like ISIS and Iran's main proxy, Hezbollah.

A U.S. official who witnessed a Saudi and Israeli official hold a closed-door meeting together recently said such informal meetings have been taking place for "at least five years."

Officials say Israelis are cautiously optimistic about the budding friendship with the revamped Saudi regime, but observers identify many risks.

The crown prince, while seen by many as a reformer, is also widely viewed as erratic.

For example, the abrupt resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri last week after Saudi leaders summoned him to Saudi Arabia has essentially left Lebanon, Israel's neighbor to the north, vulnerable to total Hezbollah domination.

Daniel Shapiro, the U.S. ambassador to Israel until January, said that while Israelis are encouraged by the prince's swift actions, "He is inexperienced, young and kind of impulsive, and in the case of Lebanon, there's a sense he may be setting Israel up to do the dirty work."

An Israeli-Saudi alliance would also be vastly unpopular on the Arab street given the ongoing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

"An alliance with Israel will definitely hurt the Saudis and their allies," said Hassan Hassan, an author and Middle East expert with the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy in Washington. "It makes sense for them on the geopolitical level but not internally or on the social level."

"The paradox is that Saudi Arabia and others want to counter Iran through an alliance with Israel, but failing to stand up to Iran and then align with Israel is ticking all the boxes of a bad policy."

In the late 1970s, Arab governments became less concerned with their conflict with Israel and more focused on modernization and political continuity, leaving dormant the question of Palestinian statehood. Meanwhile, Israeli and Saudi officials began realizing the potential for collaboration as their concerns converged during Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Sunni kingdom and the Jewish state were both unhappy about the hostile new Shiite theocracy in the neighborhood.

"The Saudi-Israeli intelligence relationship has been there in an outline — an exchange of views — for decades," said Simon Henderson, director of the gulf and energy policy program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "It has its own life because of Iran. That's the umbrella reason."

While Saudi Arabia's government has since come to view the Israelis as a potential partner in the region, it continues to resist an open diplomatic embrace, preferring off-the-record consultations.

"It's an open secret," Shapiro said. "There is a considerable amounts of quiet, behind-the-scenes coordination between them — intelligence channels and other security channels — and it remains quiet because Israel is still unpopular in those Arab states."

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HEADLINE 11/15 Army: failures in reporting crime to FBI

SOURCE http://abcnews.go.com/US/army-chief-staff-gaps-failures-reporting-criminal-activity/story?id=51174762&cid=clicksource_4380645_1_hero_headlines_headlines_hed

GIST	<p>The U.S. Army Chief of Staff said there are "gaps and failures" on the part of the Army to report the criminal activity of soldiers to civil law enforcement agencies like the FBI.</p> <p>Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Gen. Mark Milley estimated that as many as 10 to 20 percent of the Army's total cases are not reported.</p> <p>"The percentage is too high," he admitted.</p> <p>After former Airman Devin Kelley opened fire at a church in Texas earlier this month, killing 26 people, it was revealed that the Air Force had failed to submit his conviction on domestic violence-related charges to the FBI. Had the FBI obtained his record, Kelley would have been legally prohibited from purchasing a firearm.</p> <p>"It's not just an Air Force problem," Milley said. "It's a problem across all the services where we have gaps in reporting criminal activity of people in service when they're convicted or they get a dishonorable discharge or those sorts of things, getting that over the appropriate law enforcement agency."</p> <p>Milley said there are a "significant amount of omissions" that show the U.S. Army needs to "tighten up" its reporting of criminal activity.</p> <p>Following the deadly shooting in Texas, Secretary of Defense James Mattis ordered all of the military branches to review their procedures.</p> <p>"We all know that the situation inside the Air Force that could have been any one of the services," Milley said.</p> <p>According to the general, about 150 soldiers every year receive a general court martial and are dishonorably discharged from the Army -- just one of the categories of cases that would be required to be reported to law enforcement.</p> <p>"We need to make sure every one of those is transmitted over to the civilian law enforcement agencies, the FBI for example," he added.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Puerto Rico hit by new power outage
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/15/us/puerto-rico-new-power-outage/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)On the same day Puerto Rico's governor celebrated power generation on the island reaching 50% of capacity, the lights went out in the San Juan metro area.</p> <p>The source of Wednesday's outage was the same main north-south transmission line that failed last Thursday, leaving swaths of the capital without power for hours, officials said.</p> <p>But the latest interruption appeared to cover a larger area, including Bayamon, Guaynabo, San Juan, Carolina and other municipalities, said Justo González Torres, director of power generation for the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, known as PREPA.</p> <p>The cause of the outage was an unspecified "technical failure," he said.</p> <p>González said the authority hoped to restore power in the coming hours.</p> <p>The outage came hours after Gov. Ricardo Rosselló tweeted that the power authority had completed its stated goal of 50% generation for Wednesday.</p> <p>San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz promptly replied via Twitter, telling the governor the percentage of</p>

	<p>power generation "has just changed" and that the municipal medical center and other buildings were in the dark.</p> <p>Shortly after noon, PREPA tweeted that power had been restored to the medical center and several other locations.</p> <p>Power generation was at 48.7% of capacity on Wednesday, according to PREPA.</p> <p>González said capacity had reached 49.9% on Tuesday, and 50% for part of Wednesday morning. Much of Puerto Rico has been without power since Hurricane Maria smashed the island on September 20.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 New norm: school active shooter training
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/15/health/active-shooters-school-security/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)School fire drills became popular decades ago after several deadly fires triggered changes in safety codes. Today, teachers and children are preparing for something entirely different: mass shootings.</p> <p>A gunman tried to break into a remote Northern California elementary school on Tuesday but officials say, the quick action of school officials "saved countless lives and children."</p> <p>The building went on lockdown, a teacher rushed to block a classroom's door with a computer and students ducked under their desks. Those responses have become the new normal as more schools are being forced to adapt to more elaborate safety measures.</p> <p>Two thirds of schools in the US conduct active-shooter exercises and nearly all of them have a plan if a shooter comes into the school, the Government Accountability Office found in a recent survey of schools.</p> <p>"I think everybody, no matter where you are, needs to think about this. If you're in a school, in a college, if you go to the movies we should all be thinking about what are we going to do if a crisis breaks out right here," said Christopher Combs, FBI special agent in charge, after last week's church massacre in Texas.</p> <p>This year, there has been about one mass shooting every single day, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a non-profit that tracks gun-related violence in the US.</p> <p>Sara Rounds and her colleagues recently took part in a series of simulated active-shooter scenarios at their western Indiana school.</p> <p>"When I did enter teaching, you know, this was not a thought in my head. But this is where we are now," Rounds, a first grade teacher at Jackson Township Elementary in Clay County, Indiana told CNN affiliate WTHI.</p> <p>Through training programs like ALICE -- Alert, lockdown, inform, counter and evacuate -- Rounds and other teachers are learning how to barricade doors with desks and chairs, run away from gunfire and throw everything from pencils to staplers at a potential shooter.</p> <p>"It's not really defense techniques, it's not martial arts of any kind. It basically just gives them options," Jeffrey Fritz, the Indiana school's superintendent told CNN affiliate WTHI.</p> <p>"You might alert, you might lock down, you might try to escape, it just depends on the situation," he added.</p> <p>But training teachers is just the first step. The school plans to teach students how to make choices during an active shooter situation.</p> <p>"We are going to teach this to the kids in a very kind way, not using harsh words, kid friendly, so I think</p>

	<p>our kids will really grasp on to this," Rounds said. "This is nothing new here to society, it's in the news a lot. They understand what our world is going through unfortunately."</p> <p>Those who plan for an active shooting situation are more likely to react quickly rather than freeze, said Katherine Schweit, a former senior FBI official and an active shooter expert.</p> <p>"We're not talking about making a decision on what to make for dinner. We're making a decision on how to survive," she said.</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	11/16 Kaspersky admits NSA downloads
SOURCE	https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2017/11/kaspersky-yes-we-obtained-nsa-secrets-no-we-didnt-help-steal-them/
GIST	<p>For almost two months in 2014, servers belonging to Moscow-based Kaspersky Lab received confidential National Security Agency materials from a poorly secured computer located in the United States that stored the files, most likely in violation of US laws, company officials said.</p> <p>The classified source code, documents, and executable binaries were stored on a computer that used an IP address reserved for Verizon FIOS customers in Baltimore, about 20 miles from the NSA's Fort Meade, Maryland, headquarters, Kaspersky Lab said in an investigation report it published early Thursday morning. Starting on September 11, 2014 and running until November 9 of that year, Kaspersky Lab servers downloaded the confidential files multiple times after the company's antivirus software, which was installed on the machine, found they contained malicious code from Equation Group, an NSA-linked hacking group that operated for at least 14 years before Kaspersky exposed it in 2015.</p> <p>The downloads—which, like other AV software, the Kaspersky program automatically initiated when it encountered suspicious software that warranted further inspection—included a 45MB 7-Zip archive that contained source code, malicious executables, and four documents bearing US government classification markings. A company analyst who manually reviewed the archive quickly determined it contained confidential material. Within a few days and at the direction of CEO and founder Eugene Kaspersky, the company deleted all materials except for the malicious binaries. The company then created a special software tweak to prevent the 7-Zip file from being downloaded again.</p> <p>"The reason we deleted those files and will delete similar ones in the future is two-fold," Kaspersky Lab officials wrote in Thursday's report. "We don't need anything other than malware binaries to improve protection of our customers and secondly, because of concerns regarding the handling of potential classified materials. Assuming that the markings were real, such information cannot and will not [be] consumed even to produce detection signatures based on descriptions."</p> <p>Pushing back</p> <p>The report is Kaspersky's latest attempt to refute anonymous allegations, reported last month by The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, that hackers working for the Russian government used Kaspersky AV to locate or steal confidential NSA material stored on a worker's home computer. The initial WSJ report said the AV program somehow alerted the hackers to the presence of the improperly stored files, but the paper said it wasn't clear how the program detected the material or whether company employees alerted the Russian government of those files.</p> <p>Five days later, the NYT and WaPo said the Russian hackers were caught in the act of abusing the Kaspersky AV by Israeli spies, who happened to be burrowed deep inside Kaspersky's network at the time the confidential NSA files were stolen (Kaspersky Lab disclosed the breach in 2015). A day later, the WSJ went on to report that the role AV played in the hack required changes to the way the program worked and</p>

that those modifications likely came with the knowledge of Kaspersky officials.

The allegations, all attributed to unnamed officials with no supporting documentation, helped explain why the US Department of Homeland Security in September took the unprecedented step of directing all US agencies to stop using Kaspersky products and services. A month earlier, according to Cyber Scoop, members of the FBI quietly briefed US companies in the private sector on threat US officials believed Kaspersky posed to national security. Within weeks of the briefings, retailer Best Buy stopped selling Kaspersky software and offered free removals and credits toward competing packages.

Thursday's report is Kaspersky Lab's attempt to fight accusations that could significantly reduce the revenue it generates in the US and potentially US allies. The report expands on preliminary findings it published three weeks ago that challenge the NSA narrative that its highly privileged access to millions of PCs throughout the world helps the Russian government obtain confidential materials from its adversaries.

Smoke Loader backdoor

Thursday's 13-page report provided more details about a malicious backdoor that infected the Kaspersky customer's computer when it installed a pirated version of Microsoft Office. The report said that Kaspersky AV first detected the trojan known as Smoke Loader and Smoke Bot on October 4 at 11:38pm EDT. That was 22 days after the AV program first detected the Equation Group files and 15 days after Kaspersky had downloaded the 7-Zip file. For it to have been installed, a user would have to temporarily disable the AV program. Kaspersky Lab officials suspect the user turned off protection when it blocked attempts to install the pirated version of Office and once it was installed, then turned the AV back on.

Smoke Loader came to the attention of security researchers in 2011, when a Russian hacker advertised the Trojan for sale in an underground forum. During the time it infected the computer storing the NSA material, it relied on a command and control domain that was registered to someone using the name Zhou Lou, an address in Hunan, China, and the e-mail address zhoulu823@gmail.com. This analysis, which was published three months before Kaspersky Lab says the Baltimore PC was infected, reports Smoke Loader contained a range of malicious capabilities, including the ability for attackers to remotely control it. There may have been more malware besides Smoke Loader installed on the computer. During the same two-month span, Kaspersky AV provided alerts from 121 alerts for non-NSA software.

"The hygiene of this user on the Internet was not very good," Brian Bartholomew, a US-based principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab, told Ars. "All that leads to the possibility that there was potentially someone else on that system at the time" the NSA materials were reported stolen. "We see no indications of that, but there is that possibility."

Kaspersky Lab has additional information about the backdoor here.

One of the few new pieces of information in the report is the revelation of a detection rule Kaspersky Lab added to its AV in 2015. To better detect a surveillance operation known as TeamSpy, the AV program started scanning files that embedded the word "secret" inside its code. A malware analyst, the report said, added it because TeamSpy malware was designed to automatically collect certain files of interest to the attackers. Specifically, files of interest contained both extensions such as .doc, .rtf, .xls, .mdb, and .pdf and words including "pass," "secret," and "saidumlo" (the Georgian translation for secret). The 2015 detection rule searched files for strings including:

```
*saidumlo*  
*secret*  
*.xls  
*.pdf  
*.pgp  
*pass*
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The rule might explain reporting in the latter WSJ article that, citing unnamed officials, said Kaspersky AV "searched for terms as broad as 'top secret,' which may be written on classified government

documents, as well as the classified code names of US government programs."

Plausible deniability

Like the preliminary findings Kaspersky published three weeks ago, Thursday's report isn't likely to change the minds of critics who say the company's ties to the Kremlin pose an unacceptable risk to US security.

"It's very, very believable," Dave Aitel, a former NSA analyst and long-time Kaspersky critic said of the information Kaspersky Lab has brought to light. "But my personal perspective is that it does not address whatever the [US government] has on Kaspersky."

Still, Kaspersky's version of events raises a variety of inconsistencies and questions in the narrative provided by the unnamed people cited in the October articles. For instance:

- Is the computer Kaspersky described the same one that stored the NSA secrets that were stolen by Russian hackers? If it is, why did the news accounts say the data theft occurred in 2015?
- If the PCs are the same, do US government investigators have any evidence it was infected by malware at the time it stored those materials? If yes, have investigators ruled out the possibility the infection played a role in the location or theft of the NSA materials?
- How can US government investigators be sure Kaspersky AV was modified intentionally to help Russian spies locate the NSA material?

Representatives with the NSA declined to answer the questions and referred Ars to FBI officials. The FBI declined to comment as well.

In fairness to US officials, there are often valid national security reasons for not providing specific pieces of information when disclosing classified information to reporters. What's more, if Russian President Vladimir Putin were to order Kaspersky Lab to help steal NSA secrets, it's not at all clear the Moscow-based company would have a legal mechanism to challenge the demand. Such an order would almost certainly require absolute secrecy and the kinds of vigorous denials Kaspersky Lab is publishing now.

This leaves much of the security world in a geopolitical he-said/she-said duel that makes it hard to know which version of events to believe. This stalemate isn't likely to resolve itself until US officials provide more details.

"I think it's plausible that Kaspersky Lab has been used to obtain confidential material, but so far we've only seen accusations, largely from anonymous sources," Jake Williams, a malware expert at Rendition InfoSec who worked in the NSA's elite Tailored Access Operations hacking group until 2013, told Ars.

"Credible evidence and/or on the record statements from the US government are needed before we attack a foreign company."

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HEADLINE	11/16 Anonymous takes down neo-Nazi sites
SOURCE	https://fossbytes.com/anonymous-hackers-take-down-dozen-neo-nazi-websites/
GIST	<p>Another hacking campaign by the hacktivist collective Anonymous is online; it's called #OpDomesticTerrorism. And this time, the target was more than a dozen neo-nazi websites collectively taken down by Anonymous groups across the globe, according to a report by IBTimes.</p> <p>The hacktivist group has taken responsibility for the attacks through a Twitter handle known by the name AnonyInfo. The series of cyber attacks were made as a response to Charlottesville's Unite the Right rally and the recent White Lives Matter rally, according to a hacker associated with the group who spoke with the publication.</p>

The hacker said that their operation saw global cooperation because it was related to the US. He added that they might consider expanding the operation “to work with Anonymous groups in their own countries” as the “fight against fascism is global.”

The hacker also said that more “continuous attacks” are on the way.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Experts: NKorea getting ready cyber war
SOURCE	http://www.eweek.com/security/north-korea-getting-ready-wage-a-global-cyber-war-experts-say
GIST	<p>It’s no secret that North Korea has a cyber army working in the shadows to attack western interests. The cyber-attack against Sony Pictures Entertainment in 2014 made it clear that the nation had developed its cyber warfare capabilities much more than had been realized until then.</p> <p>But now it appears that North Korea has set its sights on loftier goals, perhaps spreading chaos and even damage worldwide through a well-placed series of cyber-attacks on defense targets, industry and media.</p> <p>Now, US-CERT and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have issued a series of warnings intended to provide the necessary information for organizations to prevent or reduce the likelihood of a successful North Korean infiltration.</p> <p>However, if the warning may be too late for some organization because their networks have been infected by the components of Hidden Cobra, which refers to the collection of malware being used to attack targets in South Korea and elsewhere around the world.</p> <p>Hidden Cobra is an umbrella operation that launches malware against a wide variety of targets that North Korea is studying, apparently for future action. According to Paul Innella, CEO of TDI Security based in Washington, the goal of the Hidden Cobra operation appears to have changed. He said that North Korea has moved from running ransomware operations to something more sinister – information gathering.</p> <p>“A lot of it is polling information on network infrastructure data,” Innella explained. “They’re trying to map out what we have.” He said that this operation already resulted in a breach that compromised planning between the military of South Korea and the United States.</p> <p>Innella said that there’s been discussion recently about recent failures of North Korean rocket launches and whether those failures occurred as a result of cyber-attacks by the west. He said that it appears that the North Korean effort to map out the infrastructure of organizations in the west is a precursor to cyber-war.</p> <p>Initially the attacks are likely to be against the military or launch systems, Innella said. But the plans of the North Koreans apparently go beyond that. The warnings from the Department of Homeland Security through US-CERT and the FBI indicate that there are also plans to attack the financial sector, aerospace and telecommunications using its FallChill malware, which is part of Hidden Cobra.</p> <p>FallChill is a remote administration tool that evades detection by encrypting its communications traffic using TLS (transport layer security). The malware is able to use its remote administration capabilities to map out a network and then to report what it finds. The idea is that once FallChill has mapped out the networks (including the defenses) North Korea will know what and where to attack for best effect.</p> <p>Fortunately, there is something that can be done about Hidden Cobra and its components. Innella pointed out that while North Korea and its cyber forces are persistent, they’re not unbeatable. “On the scale of global cyber warfare, I wouldn’t say they’re the most impressive adversary,” Innella said. He added that they’re not the equal of China or Russia in terms of their ability to wage cyber-war.</p> <p>While Innella said that North Korea is a very big cyber-threat, most CISOs should be able to prevent them</p>

	<p>from exploiting their networks.</p> <p>“There’s nothing significantly different about their attacks,” Innella said. “Any robust defense program is going to have some level of threat awareness. Your CISO you would have already seen the CERT notice and made the changes.”</p> <p>The recommendations by US-CERT provides enough information to enable your network security team to perform the necessary white listing, and should also be able to see from their routers and firewalls whether any traffic from FallChill or its Trojan companion, Volgmer, has passed in or out of your network. The alerts include the IP addresses that the malware uses for reporting and for command and control, enabling your IT security specialists to block those addresses.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Cyberthreat looms for UK banks
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-16/cyber-threat-looms-for-u-k-banks-as-ring-fencing-exposes-data
GIST	<p>New rules that were supposed to protect depositors may end up making them vulnerable to fraudsters. Changing the account data of about a million clients at banks including Barclays Plc and HSBC Holdings Plc is a golden opportunity for hackers, the U.K.’s Financial Conduct Authority has warned banks.</p> <p>The FCA has briefed lenders about its concerns, as British banks alert customers of the need to move their accounts, said a person with knowledge of the discussions, who asked not to be identified because the matter is private. A spokesman for the regulator declined to comment and pointed to its warnings on treating all bank communication with care.</p> <p>“In creating a new system that houses personal data, you’re opening up security holes,” said James Tedman, managing director in London at ACA Aponix, a company which provides cyber-security services to hedge funds and investment managers in Europe and the U.S. “The impact of an indiscriminate attack can be substantial.”</p> <p>Formulated after the financial crisis to protect consumer deposits, the ring-fencing rules require lenders with more than 25 billion pounds (\$33 billion) of deposits to separate core services such as checking and savings accounts from riskier investment banking by 2019. The Bank of England said in June that almost a million customers will see changes to their sort codes, a six digit number that helps identify their bank account.</p> <p>Perfect Scenario</p> <p>“When you start shifting a huge amount of data, there are always risks attached,” Richard Benham, cyber director at the Corsham Institute and chairman of the National Cyber Management Centre, said in a phone interview. “This is a perfect scenario for a cyber attack.”</p> <p>HSBC has launched a campaign to encourage clients to “take five and stop to think” if they get a request to hand over personal information, said a spokesperson at the bank. Barclays has been “rigorous” in its communication with customers, a spokesman said, declining to comment on any discussions with regulators. In information sent to clients Lloyds has urged clients to be “extra vigilant,” while a spokeswoman declined to comment further. RBS will need to make “very few” changes to account numbers, it said in an emailed statement.</p> <p>Banks are “very aware” of the risks, but this doesn’t make them immune, said Tedman. Hackers are usually professionally organized. “We’re not talking about 15-year-olds in their bedroom, we are talking about well-financed and sophisticated criminal groups,” he added.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Expert: cloud storage next target
SOURCE	http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/rancho-bernardo/sd-cm-pow-news-cyber-crime-rbba-nov17-story.html
GIST	<p>The cloud is among likely future targets of hackers, as are internet-connected home electronic devices, says a local law enforcement official who specializes in the field.</p> <p>San Diego County Sheriff's Sgt. Mark Varnau is the law enforcement coordinator for the Computer and Technology Crime High-Tech Response Team, that goes by the acronym CATCH. The multi-agency task force formed in 2000 "to apprehend and prosecute criminals who use technology to prey on citizens," according to its website, www.catchteam.org.</p> <p>CATCH members are local, state and federal law enforcement agencies from San Diego, Riverside and Imperial counties.</p> <p>While for many years Varnau has often advised people to back up their computers and other devices to a cloud-based storage system, he said sometime next year he will likely stop doing that because it is criminals' next target.</p> <p>"Ransomware will attack the cloud," he said. "They're not there yet, but it is a matter of time."</p> <p>Varnau said it will be better for people to back up their files on a portable drive that is unplugged from the computer following the update.</p> <p>Varnau, who has 37 years of law enforcement experience, said devices that operate via voice commands are "creepy beyond creepiness," when speaking at a Nov. 8 Rancho Bernardo Business Association "Lunch & Learn" event.</p> <p>"They're always listening," he said of the devices that include interactive children's toys, smart televisions and voice-activated smart home assistants. "They listen to your voice for commands. You can turn it off. But if it is on, it is always listening to everything you say."</p> <p>He said some companies, like those making the smart TVs, are selling what their devices hear in homes to advertisers.</p> <p>The "internet of things" also includes home thermostats and refrigerators that create a way for hackers to break into the home's wireless system. The flaw with the thermostats, Varnau said, is that their software cannot be upgraded. Because the thermostat can adjust temperature based on sensing when someone is home, he said, "It's a great device, but not something I would have."</p> <p>According to Varnau, the "massive growth" in popularity of such devices present huge opportunities for criminals. "This is the growth area. Crime has moved out of the dark alley ... and moved into here. (Criminals) can reach out through wireless connection to victimize people to no end and not leave (their) house."</p> <p>He said internet crime is a \$50 billion a year industry. "Crooks are very good at changing their modus operandi," Varnau said. For example, compromised business email has increased 270 percent since 2015, with the average loss being between \$25,000 and \$75,000. Often it comes through the form of a legitimate-looking email sent to someone allowed to transfer money. It will appear to have a higher company official copied on the email, with instructions that the money needs to be sent to a specific account. Often the employee will do as told without confirming in another manner that the email is legit.</p> <p>"Everybody falls for it — banks, businesses, government, cities. It is common fraud," he said. "If you are in an industry that deals with (money), verify the transaction and do not just rely on the email."</p> <p>He said those in real estate are especially susceptible since they routinely transfer money electronically</p>

	during the escrow process.
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HEADLINE	11/15 Study: Oregon in middle pack cybercrime
SOURCE	http://www.ktvz.com/news/oregon-in-the-middle-of-the-pack-on-cybercrimes/657005971
GIST	<p>BEND, Ore. - Cyber Monday is a big day for online retailers, but it's also a time when cyber criminals are waiting to steal your identity.</p> <p>According to a study done by Open VPN, 30,000 cybercrimes happened in Oregon last year.</p> <p>The study also ranked Oregon 24th for cybercrime in the country. California, Nevada and Florida were ranked in the top five for cybercrimes.</p> <p>In 2016, Oregonians reported losing more than \$13 million to internet crimes. The study also found men and seniors were the most targeted group by cyber criminals in Oregon.</p> <p>A cybercrime expert at the Bend Police Department told NewsChannel 21 on Wednesday that big retailers usually will have security protection to make sure you can, for example, see if they have a padlock icon on the browser.</p> <p>Detective Tim Knea said people should be aware of suspicious emails that are asking for your credit card information.</p> <p>Knea said consumers can always pick up the phone and call the company's customer service line to double-check if the email is a scam.</p> <p>He said most of these cybercrimes are done by scammers overseas.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Voting machine hacks overblown?
SOURCE	https://gcn.com/articles/2017/11/15/voting-machine-hack.aspx
GIST	<p>When information security researchers at this summer's DefCon hacker conference had the opportunity to break into election systems, they quickly rose to the challenge, breaching every poll book and voting machine that event organizers had in the Voting Machine Hacking Village.</p> <p>The results, detailed by DEFCON, the National Governors Association, the Atlantic Council, the Center for Internet Security and a number of universities and top technology vendors, were "sobering." The report cited vulnerabilities in the hardware supply chain, weak passwords, unprotected USB ports and insecure firmware.</p> <p>If a room full of information security researchers could compromise these voting machines in a single day, what chance did the U.S. electoral infrastructure have defending against organized hacking groups and dedicated nation-states?</p> <p>Hands-on access</p> <p>However, a closer examination reveals that the most direct form of "hacking an election," breaking into voting machines and altering vote counts, is a good deal more difficult than the headlines suggest. For instance, while many outlets reported that conference attendees were able to penetrate all 30 machines, less reported was the fact that in the vast majority of cases, hackers needed to have extensive and direct physical access, including taking them apart, in order to find the vulnerabilities that allowed them to access voting software.</p>

Jeanette Manfra, assistant secretary for the office of cybersecurity and communications at the Department of Homeland Security, made this point during a Nov. 8 cybersecurity event hosted by the Washington Post.

"There have been people who've talked about being able to hack into those voting machines, but they still need to have physical access, and states and localities are very circumspect about how they treat those voting machines. They're locked in warehouses, they're transported securely. And a lot of them, while they may be digital, they're not online," Manfra said.

While hackers at DefCon were able to remotely hack into at least one machine, an AVS WinVote machine, that model was decertified in 2014 precisely because of its notoriously weak Wi-Fi security, and it hasn't been used in U.S. elections since. Furthermore, many of the models used were older machines purchased on the secondary market and not necessarily representative of what most states rely on today.

The distinction between a remote and physical hack matters, because any attempt to alter an election at scale through vote tampering would almost by definition require secrecy, and it is logistically far more difficult to pull off a discrete hack when it requires taking apart a machine that is often subject to complex chain of custody protocols.

Jason Ogden, an information security specialist at DHS, gave an overview of U.S. election security Oct. 30 at the Executive Leadership Conference in Williamsburg, Va. While Ogden emphasized that "all future elections will face cyber threats," he said the decentralized nature of U.S. election infrastructure is often one of its greatest shields against a large-scale, coordinated cyber attack. There are over 8,000 jurisdictions that administer local, state and federal elections across the United States. Each operates more or less independently of one another, with their own rules, protocols, equipment, technology and software.

After his presentation, he told FCW that while nobody should be resting on their laurels, the ability to break into voting machines is not as easy or direct as the results from DefCon imply.

"My personal opinion is that when we're dealing with what occurred at Black Hat and DefCon, some of that is for show, obviously," Ogden said. "As a best practice ... if you're controlling any kind of infrastructure you're not going to let just anybody have access to it."

Alternate pathways

That's not to say the threat is nonexistent or that nation states and hacking groups aren't actively looking for ways to access voting software. DHS itself notified 21 states in September that Russian cyber actors had "targeted" internet connected networks, like voter registration databases, related to their election systems. Several states subsequently disputed those assertions, questioning whether the information DHS provided backed up their claims.

Alex Halderman, professor of computer science and engineering at the University of Michigan, made headlines shortly after the 2016 election when he publicly urged the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign to call for a recount in three swing states based on evidence he had compiled that purported to show discrepancies between counties that relied on electronic ballots and paper ballots.

Halderman later acknowledged it was "probably not" the case that 2016 election results were tampered with, but he has continued to sound the alarm about election cybersecurity vulnerabilities since. During a September 2017 panel hosted by the Brennan Center for Justice, Halderman laid out the research he had done on electronic voting machine security over the past decade.

Today, most jurisdictions rely on two styles of voting machine: optical scan and direct-recording electronic (DRE) machines. While these machines are not typically connected to the internet, the software used to update them every election cycle is.

Before every election, each voting machine must be updated with the ballot, names of the candidates and specific races. A hacker could theoretically gain access and manipulate vote totals "by inserting malicious software into the removable memory cards that are used before every election to program the ballot design into the machine." If poll workers used that card to update multiple machines, that could potentially cause the malware to spread.

While Halderman acknowledged that there is no evidence that vote counts have been manipulated in any previous election, he is convinced it is only a matter of time. Even if hackers are only able to penetrate a select number of voting machines, he argued that a targeted effort could still potentially influence election results.

"In a close election, a national outcome might depend on a few states or swing districts. A hacker could probe all of these jurisdictions, find the ones that are most weakly protected and target them," Halderman said.

The wrong lens

Many officials believe that because of the level of difficulty and effort required, it doesn't make sense for nation-states to influence an election through electronic vote tampering, especially since approximately 70 percent of counties still use paper ballots in some form. It may ultimately be far easier for a nation to wage a larger, covert disinformation campaign designed to exploit pre-existing political and societal fissures in an electorate and nudge voters at the margins toward or away from certain candidates.

"I have less concern about the data itself and more about [bad actors] causing confusion," said Manfra.

While speaking at a Nov. 7 Center for Strategic and International Studies event, former CIA director Michael Hayden said the nation needs to stop looking at election influence through the lens of cybersecurity and start looking at the problem as a broader issue of information warfare.

"The [Russian] cyber attack could have been done by script kiddies. That was basic stuff," Hayden said. "What happened afterwards was the big news."

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HEADLINE	11/15 White House: Vulnerabilities Equities Process
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/15/white-house-details-vulnerabilities-equities-proce/b
GIST	<p>The White House has opened up about the so-called Vulnerabilities Equities Process (VEP) established during the Obama administration, providing its first public explanation of how the government goes about determining whether to disclose cybersecurity flaws or keep them secret.</p> <p>The Trump administration released the unclassified charter for the equities process Wednesday in the face of growing concerns surrounding the government's hoarding of exploits and the related security risks, particularly in light of losing control of classified hacking tools subsequently used to wage wide-scale cyberattacks recently affecting victims in the U.S. and abroad.</p> <p>Published on the White House website, the charter shows for the first time the government agencies that participate in the equities process and the criteria used when deciding whether to disclose otherwise unknown security vulnerabilities — laws colloquially called “zero days,” because there’s been zero days to patch them.</p> <p>Federal authorities have exploited zero day in digital products during the course of pursuing law enforcement and national security matters, perhaps most notably evidenced by Stuxnet, a malicious computer worm reportedly created by U.S. and Israeli intelligence that sabotaged Iran’s contentious nuclear program by harnessing several unpatched security flaws.</p>

By keeping these vulnerabilities private, however, critics argue that the government keeps vendors from securing their products and consequently make their customers prone to hacking.

Indeed, Microsoft vulnerabilities previously hoarded by the National Security Agency (NSA) were leaked online and ultimately weaponized into WannaCry, a ransomware strain that crippled computers systems in more than 150 countries earlier this year and briefly sidelined the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS), among others victims.

Any decision to withhold security bugs must be revisited one year later, and the government must issue an annual report providing information on the equities process, according to the charter published Wednesday.

The agencies that participate in the equities process include the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Energy and Homeland Security, as well as the Secret Service, Office of the Director of the National Intelligence, NSA, CIA, Treasury, State Department and White House, the charter revealed.

The government considers criteria including the severity of the vulnerability and the scope of potential victims while determining whether to disclose security bugs, according to the charter.

"The United States is a world leader when it comes to sophisticated processes and conversation on this topic, and no other nation in has created and run a process as advanced, meticulous and transparent as ours," White House cybersecurity coordinator Rob Joyce said in a blog post published in tandem with the publication. "While not infallible, these processes ensure rigorous consideration of all factors vital to our national security."

More than 90 percent of security flaws detected by the government are ultimately disclosed to vendors, Mr. Joyce said at an event Wednesday, but critics including former NSA analyst Edward Snowden said the statistic wasn't terribly meaningful.

"The percentage of [vulnerabilities] the government discloses to vendors is largely PR," tweeted Mr. Snowden, who leaked evidence of the NSA's offensive previously secret operations in 2013. "The public harm of maintaining 10 high severity flaws far outweighs the benefit of disclosing 90 low severity ones. We need to know the severity of disclosed vulnerabilities, not just the number."

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HEADLINE	11/15 Report: fileless malware attacks on rise
SOURCE	http://www.securityweek.com/fileless-attacks-ten-times-more-likely-succeed-report
GIST	<p>A new report from the Ponemon Institute confirms, but quantifies, what most people know: protecting endpoints is becoming more difficult, more complex and more time-consuming -- but not necessarily more successful.</p> <p>Commissioned by endpoint protection firm Barkly, the report (PDF) confirms that defenders are increasingly moving away from primarily signature-based malware detection by replacing or supplementing existing defenses with additional protection or response capabilities. One third of respondents have replaced their existing AV product, while half of the respondents have retained their existing product but supplemented them with additional protections.</p> <p>To combat both old and new defenses, attackers are responding with a new attack methodology -- the fileless attack. Ponemon notes that 29% of attacks in 2017 have been fileless. This is up from 20% in 2016, and is expected to increase to 35% in 2018.</p> <p>The fileless attack does not install detectable files. These attacks, says Ponemon, "instead leverage exploits designed to run malicious code or launch scripts directly from memory, infecting endpoints without</p>

	<p>leaving easily-discoverable artifacts behind. Once an endpoint has been compromised, these attacks can also abuse legitimate system administration tools and processes to gain persistence, elevate privileges, and spread laterally across the network."</p> <p>According to Ponemon, 54% of companies have experienced one or more successful attacks that have compromised data and/or infrastructure, while 77% of those attacks used exploits or fileless attacks. While the attack methodology has changed, the ultimate goal of the attacker has not. Ransomware, for example, remains a major problem. Half of the surveyed organizations have suffered a ransomware incident in 2017, while 40% of those have experienced multiple incidents. The average ransomware demand is now \$3,675.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 WordPress sites exposed to attacks
SOURCE	http://www.securityweek.com/wordpress-sites-exposed-attacks-formidable-forms-flaws
GIST	<p>Vulnerabilities found by a researcher in a popular WordPress plugin can be exploited by malicious actors to gain access to sensitive data and take control of affected websites.</p> <p>Formidable Forms, available both for free and as a paid version that provides additional features, is a plugin that allows users to easily create contact pages, polls and surveys, and other types of forms. The plugin has more than 200,000 active installations.</p> <p>Jouko Pynnönen of Finland-based company Klikki Oy has analyzed the plugin and discovered several vulnerabilities, including ones that introduce serious security risks for the websites using it.</p> <p>The flaw with the highest severity is a blind SQL injection that can allow attackers to enumerate a website's databases and obtain their content. Exposed data includes WordPress user credentials and data submitted to a website via Formidable forms.</p> <p>The researcher also found another flaw that exposes data submitted via Formidable forms. Both this and the SQL injection bug are related to Formidable's implementation of shortcodes, WordPress-specific code that allows users to add various types of content to their sites with very little effort.</p> <p>Pynnönen also discovered reflected and stored cross-site scripting (XSS) vulnerabilities. The stored XSS allows an attacker to execute arbitrary JavaScript code in the context of an administrator's browsing session – the attacker injects the malicious code via forms and it gets executed when viewed by the site admin in the WordPress dashboard.</p> <p>The expert also noticed that if the iThemes Sync WordPress maintenance plugin is present alongside Formidable Forms, an attacker can exploit the aforementioned SQL injection flaw to obtain a user's ID and authentication key. This information can be used to control WordPress via iThemes Sync, including to add new admins or install plugins.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Star Wars theme botnets hijack for spam
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/forces-of-the-dark-side-are-hijacking-send-to-a-friend-modules-to-send-spam/article/707687/
GIST	<p>Forces of the dark side are hijacking send-to-a-friend, a.k.a. share-with-a-friend, social sharing modules to send random Star Wars quotes and malicious links.</p> <p>Imperva researchers spotted what they dubbed as "Sith Spam Bots" or bots exploiting the modules commonly found on commercial websites that allow users to email the details of a product/service with their friends, according to a Nov. 15 blog post.</p>

	<p>Spammers typically target the modules for several purposes including for IP obfuscation, spam link obfuscation, or to avoid fees associated with sending emails en masse.</p> <p>Once a target is found the spammers use a host of form-filler bots on the send-to-a-friend form to send thousands of emails with embedded malicious links to sites offering a selection of gambling apps. The emails also included random texts from Star Wars themed sources including Path of Destruction, a Star War Legends novel.</p> <p>Between October 10 and October 16 researchers spotted 33 unrelated domains on their network hit by over 275,000 attack requests using these methods and a week later, the number of targets had increased to 60, and the volume of the attack had almost tripled—reaching a total of over a million requests.</p> <p>Researchers speculate the spammers were trying to add some uniqueness to their emails with the quotes, and further fly under the radars of filtering mechanisms scanning for content patterns.</p> <p>The use of Stars Wars quotes, or any other non-randomized content, could be an effective way to bypass content-based email filters that protect recipients from spam, Imperva Incapsula Director Igal Zeifman said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Study: critical IT incidents costly
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/study-organizations-suffer-critical-and-costly-it-incidents-five-times-a-month/article/707517/
GIST	<p>On average, organizations experience a critical IT incident five times per month, with each one costing a mean of \$141,628, according to a new report, based on a study conducted by research firm Quocirca on behalf of big-data company Splunk.</p> <p>Of this total amount, IT department costs account for \$36,326, while the remaining \$105,302 is comprised of downstream costs to the business. Extrapolating these numbers over the course of a full year, these high-severity events would cost close to \$8.5 million.</p> <p>For the purpose of this study, Quocirca surveyed 1,000 senior IT managers in nine countries. Among these respondents, 70 percent said that a past critical incident -- such as a data breach, ransomware infection of distributed denial of service attack -- damaged their organization's reputation. And yet, 96% of survey-takers admitted that their organizations are failing to learn from previous incidents, and 80 percent said that their mean time to detect incidents can still be improved.</p> <p>Based on survey responses, the mean time to repair such critical incidents is 5.81 hours, the report notes.</p> <p>Of course, not every incident is critical in nature. On average, organizations are experiencing 1,200 IT incidents of varying severity per month.</p> <p>Another new report, based on a study conducted by Ponemon Research on behalf of Radware, similarly reveals how IT departments can become overwhelmed responding to incidents. Of 600 surveyed CISOs, 45 percent of them revealed that they experienced a data breach in the last year, and 68 percent said they lack confidence that they can keep their corporate information safe. Moreover, only 27 of respondents who specifically work in the healthcare industry said they felt confident they could protect patients' medical records.</p> <p>The study's primary focus in on web application security, including how it can be impacted by bot-driven web traffic. One on three CISOs surveyed for the study acknowledged that their organizations are unable to differentiate between good bots and bad bots, even though in some cases bots represent more than 75 percent of a company's total web traffic.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Echo, Home BlueBorne exploit vulnerable
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2017/11/amazon-alexa-hacking-bluetooth.html
GIST	<p>A series of recently disclosed critical Bluetooth flaws that affect billions of Android, iOS, Windows and Linux devices have now been discovered in millions of AI-based voice-activated personal assistants, including Google Home and Amazon Echo.</p> <p>As estimated during the discovery of this devastating threat, several IoT and smart devices whose operating systems are often updated less frequently than smartphones and desktops are also vulnerable to BlueBorne.</p> <p>BlueBorne is the name given to the sophisticated attack exploiting a total of eight Bluetooth implementation vulnerabilities that allow attackers within the range of the targeted devices to run malicious code, steal sensitive information, take complete control, and launch man-in-the-middle attacks.</p> <p>What's worse? Triggering the BlueBorne exploit doesn't require victims to click any link or open any file—all without requiring user interaction. Also, most security products would likely not be able to detect the attack.</p> <p>What's even scarier is that once an attacker gains control of one Bluetooth-enabled device, he/she can infect any or all devices on the same network.</p> <p>These Bluetooth vulnerabilities were patched by Google for Android in September, Microsoft for Windows in July, Apple for iOS one year before disclosure, and Linux distributions also shortly after disclosure.</p> <p>However, many of these 5 billion devices are still unpatched and open to attacks via these flaws.</p> <p>IoT security firm Armis, who initially discovered this issue, has now disclosed that an estimated 20 million Amazon Echo and Google Home devices are also vulnerable to attacks leveraging the BlueBorne vulnerabilities.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Stealthy Android malware in Google Play
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/mobile/stealthy-android-malware-found-in-google-play/d/d-id/1330440?
GIST	<p>A sneaky new Android Trojan family employs four payload stages in its attack rather than the more typical two stages, researchers say.</p> <p>The Android/TrojanDropper.Agent.BKY family was found in at least eight apps in Google Play so far, but the damage has been limited. Each of the apps only had a few hundred downloads before Google pulled them from the store, according to ESET, which discovered the malware family and notified Google.</p> <p>The attack's use of four payload stages before delivering its final nastiness, a mobile banking Trojan, is rare. "Two-stage payloads are really common in the Android ecosystem. Four-stage malware on Google Play isn't so common," observes Lukas Stefanko, an ESET malware researcher.</p> <p>With more payload stages, attackers are able to deeply hide the true intent of their payload.</p> <p>"This one added some extra obfuscating layers - dropper and decryptor, plus a downloader - to hide its malicious purpose," Stefanko explains.</p>

The Attack

Once a user launches the app, it initially behaves like a legitimate app by mimicking its advertised functions and withholding suspicious permission requests. The first stage calls for the malicious app to decrypt and execute the second-stage payload. Both steps are invisible to users.

Inside the second-stage payload is a hardcoded URL, which then downloads another malicious app or third payload. App users are prompted to install this bogus but legitimate-looking app. In some cases, it's disguised as an Adobe Flash Player or Android update.

"Once they see a request to install the third stage payload, it should become a bit suspicious for users," Stefanko notes.

After the third payload, or app, has all its requested permissions granted, it will decrypt and execute the fourth and final payload – a mobile banking Trojan. The malicious app will take users to a bogus login form to steal their credentials or credit card details, according to ESET's report.

One of the malicious apps ESET reviewed had 3,000 downloaded links, with the vast majority of the victims coming from the Netherlands.

Although the Android/TrojanDropper.Agent.BKY samples ESET came across were banking Trojans or spyware, the downloader could be any nefarious piece of code that the attacker wants, the researchers say.

ESET came across the Android/TrojanDropper.Agent.BKY family in late September when its systems detected the apps dropping payloads in an unusual way. For now, it is not clear who is behind these attacks, Stefanko says.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Russia Twitter meddling in Brexit vote
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/reports-russian-twitter-meddling/
GIST	<p>It appears as if Russia's attempts to undermine the political stability of rival nations extended to the EU referendum last year, after two separate reports revealed Kremlin-backed Twitter accounts sought to sway opinion ahead of the Brexit vote.</p> <p>Over 150,000 accounts based in Russia posted mainly pro-Brexit content in the run-up to the infamous June 23, 2016 vote, according to research from Swansea University and the University of California, Berkeley.</p> <p>Most notably, they tweeted 45,000 times about Brexit in just a 48-hour period around the vote, according to The Times.</p> <p>Interestingly, the rabidly pro-Putin accounts had apparently previously tweeted in support of Russian interests in the Crimea and similar, before switching their attention to the referendum.</p> <p>The paper claims a "massive number of Russian-related tweets were created a few days before the voting day, reached its peak during the voting and the result and then dropped immediately afterwards."</p> <p>Co-author, Tho Pam, reportedly added that "the main conclusion is that bots were used on purpose and had influence."</p> <p>A similar report from the University of Edinburgh identified a smaller number of Twitter accounts operated by the infamous Russian propaganda arm the Internet Research Agency (IRA), which it claims attempted to sow discord in society and destabilize politics.</p>

	<p>It spotted 419 accounts from the 2752 suspended by Twitter in the US for interfering in the presidential election last year.</p> <p>Damian Collins, chairman of the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee — which is investigating fake news — called on Twitter to come clean about possible interference in the June 2016 vote.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Retailers beware: expect 50M fraud attacks
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/50-million-fraud-attacks-expected/
GIST	<p>Experts are predicting an astonishing 50 million global fraud attempts next week as scammers look to capitalize on a busy shopping period to slip past fraud filters.</p> <p>The week beginning November 20 features Thanksgiving in the US, followed by Black Friday and then Cyber Monday — a weekend of sales which in the UK will help to generate a £7bn bonanza for retailers.</p> <p>However, the fraudsters are more than ready, having harvested identity data that has flooded the dark web over recent months from major high-profile breaches, according to ThreatMetrix.</p> <p>Typically they use automated bots to test credentials first before the breaches are publicly disclosed, according to the fraud prevention vendor’s VP, Vanita Pandey.</p> <p>Over the next week there’ll be an estimated 5-8 million daily identity testing attacks, she added.</p> <p>The ones that still work will then be utilized to launch large scale fraud attempts, with new account registrations twice as likely to be fraudulent than payments.</p> <p>In just the past 90 days, the ThreatMetrix Digital Identity Network detected 171 million attacks, a 32% spike since the beginning of 2017.</p> <p>Fraudsters typically use busy shopping periods like the coming week to hide their activity from e-commerce filters.</p> <p>“Many e-commerce merchants choose to accept a greater degree of risk on these key days in order to accept more transactions and reduce the chance that good customers experience friction when placing orders,” Pandey explained to Infosecurity.</p> <p>“Secondly, fraudsters see peak shopping days as the opportunity to make larger purchases/attempt to redeem bigger basket sizes, which are less likely to be flagged as suspicious in among the sea of other high value purchases being made by good customers.”</p> <p>UK and European retailers in particular have been told to be extra wary of such activity, because online transactions are 63% more likely to be fraudulent here than in North America.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Backpage.com help or hinder police?
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/backpage-website-investigation-sex-trafficking-prostitution/
GIST	<p>A bipartisan group of 47 lawmakers – almost half of the Senate – is co-sponsoring a bill to close what it sees as a loophole that supports an online market for sex trafficking. They want to remove legal protections for websites that host prostitution ads, but some in law enforcement warn the effort could be counterproductive.</p>

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children says classifieds website Backpage.com is involved in nearly three-quarters of all reports of online child sex trafficking that it receives from the general public, reports CBS News correspondent Anna Werner. A Senate investigation showed adult ads proved to be big business for Backpage, generating more than 90 percent of its ad revenue in 2011. Some victims' advocates want the site shut down. But is it that simple?

Chicago police use Backpage for undercover sting operations. They post ads on the site and according to Commander Bill Leen, who heads Cook County's vice unit, they get responses within a minute or two. Leen said sometimes they'll get 50 to 100 calls in one night from one of their ads. That's despite the fact that Backpage shut down its "adult" advertising section earlier this year under pressure from lawmakers. Now, police say they find ads for sex with young girls in the website's dating section.

"I honestly, even being a former prosecutor, I couldn't believe what I was seeing," said Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart.

Dart says many of the girls advertised are victims of sex trafficking.

"I was naïve," said one teenage girl who says she is a victim of sex trafficking. She says a pimp seduced her when she was just 14 years old and convinced her to post on Backpage.

"There was, like, hundreds of guys responding to the ad," she said.

She says the pimp told her to book appointments with men, then send him the money. On a good day, she says would make about \$1,000 -- meaning appointments with about four men. The pimp even branded her with a tattoo. He later plead guilty to human trafficking and is serving eight years in prison. Now she's filed a lawsuit accusing Backpage of negligence among other allegations.

"They're letting all of this happen on their website. I mean, without Backpage, I would have never been in any of this in the first place," she said.

"Backpage has a primary purpose and it's to sell sex. Backpage has not done anything to ensure the safety of the kids on there, period," the teen's mother said.

The company recently settled a similar lawsuit in Washington, but it's also won several legal decisions in part because of a federal law called the Communications Decency Act. The company has argued in court filings that under the act, "websites cannot be held liable for publishing or editing content provided by third-party users".

However, a Senate report alleges Backpage "knowingly concealed evidence" of child sex trafficking through its editing "by deleting words, phrases, and images indicative of criminality". Senate investigators said words like "young," "little girl" and "innocent" were removed while "the remainder of the ad would be published."

At a congressional hearing in January, Backpage executives took the fifth.

Backpage says it cooperates with police departments to help find victims and some police like Minneapolis Sergeant Grant Snyder – a sex trafficking investigator – agree.

"In some cases, we just tell them we've got a victim out there and we need to recover this individual and they respond very rapidly to that," Snyder said.

Snyder also agrees with Backpage that if ads aren't on their site, they'll pop up somewhere else – on sites that may not be as helpful to police.

"I think that if we eliminated Backpage today, you would see the same level of commercial exploitation occurring in other venues," he said.

	<p>Sheriff Dart doesn't buy the argument.</p> <p>"I would hope our bar would be a lot higher than that. That your entire logic behind it is, like, 'Well, it could be just really, really worse. So just allow this to continue to go on,'" Dart said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 LAPD cop in drug-planting video
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/lapd-officer-pulled-from-field-after-apparent-drug-planting-caught-on-body-cam/
GIST	<p>LOS ANGELES -- A body camera video that allegedly shows a Los Angeles police officer planting drugs on a suspect is by itself inconclusive, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said Tuesday.</p> <p>An LAPD investigation is underway into the video – which first aired Thursday on CBS Los Angeles after being recorded in April – that appears to show Officer Samuel Lee picking up a small bag that later tested positive for cocaine and placing it in the wallet of suspect Ronald Shields.</p> <p>Shields was being arrested for his alleged involvement in a hit-and-run crash. The location of the arrest occurred is unclear from the footage. In the video, a second officer is seen picking up Shields' wallet and showing it to Lee.</p> <p>"The video in and of itself is not dispositive one way or the other, I think that's important to recognize," Beck told the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners.</p> <p>Commissioner Cynthia McClain-Hill -- who asked Beck to comment on the investigation -- said she agreed with his assessment that the video was not "dispositive."</p> <p>Ask by CBS Los Angeles about the defendant's claims that the drugs were planted, the commission's president Steve Soboroff said, "I don't believe that for a minute."</p> <p>CBS Los Angeles' David Goldstein reported officers testified the cocaine was found in Shields' left front pocket during a court hearing. The video footage was later used to refute that claim.</p> <p>Shields faces charges of hit-and-run and cocaine possession, Goldstein reported.</p> <p>The arrest video appears to show that Lee turned his camera on after placing the drugs inside the wallet.</p> <p>"I would remind folks that the criminal charges levied against the individual involved here were pretty serious, and they were not restricted to the possession of narcotics and include an ex-felon with a gun and felony hit-and-run," Beck said.</p> <p>Lee has been taken off field duty while the investigation continues, Beck said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Twitter targets white nationalists
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2017/11/16/twitter-targets-white-nationalists-and-far-right-activists-in-de-verification-purge.html
GIST	<p>Twitter on Wednesday removed the “verification” checkmarks from the accounts of a number of white nationalists and far-right activists -- in a move that critics say could have a chilling effect on free speech.</p> <p>The move came one week after the company drew criticism for verifying the account of Jason Kessler, the open white nationalist who organized the infamous Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., in August.</p>

	<p>In recent weeks Twitter has cracked down on the accounts of multiple controversial personalities and issued new guidelines regarding its account verification and de-verification.</p> <p>Among the de-verified is Kessler, who responded by helping to spark the controversy surrounding Twitter's action. But many had objected to his verification because he had described Heather Heyer, the woman who was killed at the August rally, as a "fat, disgusting Communist," whose death was "payback time," the Washington Post reported.</p> <p>Also losing verification were white nationalist Richard Spencer and far-right figures Laura Loomer and James Allsup. Tim Gionet, a prominent alt-right activist better known as "Baked Alaska," was suspended from Twitter.</p> <p>According to Twitter's new guidelines, the platform "reserves the right to remove verification at any time without notice" if the accounts are found to have violated rules of behavior such as engaging in promotion of hate speech, inciting the harassment of others, or threatening people with violence on the basis of race, gender, religious affiliation or other factors.</p> <p>It remains likely that Twitter will continue its crackdown. The company said Wednesday that it is "conducting an initial review of verified accounts and will remove verification from accounts whose behavior does not fall within these new guidelines."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 AT&T: restart phones after outage
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/att-recommends-restarting-phone-after-nationwide-outages-reported/
GIST	<p>AT&T said Wednesday that some US customers are experiencing trouble placing wireless calls but rebooting the device would fix the problem.</p> <p>DownDetector.com, which monitors reports of outages in real time, showed customers complaining about a lack of service across the country including in Houston, New York and San Francisco. AT&T, which also owns DirecTV, said it was aware of the issue and was working to restore services to affected customers.</p> <p>"We are aware of an issue affecting some users' ability to make certain wireless calls," AT&T said in a statement. "These users should restart their devices, which should resolve the issue."</p> <p>The outage appears to have begun around 1 p.m. PT, according to DownDetector, which counted more than 6,000 customer complaints of service outages at 3 p.m. PT. Of those, 42 percent reported problems related to internet access, while 32 percent complained of phone issues.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Hackers escalate attacks on schools
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/criminals-make-student-data-public-escalating-demands-ransom-n821066
GIST	<p>In a world where everything is hackable and nothing off limits, cyber criminals are now targeting schools, stealing student data and holding it for ransom.</p> <p>Last month, the U.S. Department of Education warned that hackers were targeting schools with weak cyber security and known vulnerabilities, threatening to release sensitive student information unless a ransom is paid.</p>

"In some cases, this has included threats of violence, shaming, or bullying the children unless payment is received," the warning said.

Steve Bradshaw, school superintendent in Columbia Falls, Montana, a quiet town nestled at the foot of Glacier National Park, said he received messages in September from an anonymous person who mentioned "splattering blood all over the hallways."

Bradshaw turned over the alarming messages to local law enforcement.

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Bradshaw turned over the alarming messages to local law enforcement.

"The threats were mostly about killing children -- and graphic ways that they were going to kill the children," Columbia Falls Police Chief Clint Peters told NBC News.

When it was evident that the person or group sending the messages was after a ransom in exchange for not releasing student social security numbers, phone numbers and addresses, law enforcement officials began trying to negotiate with the cyber criminals over their demands.

Particularly alarming was the discovery that the group had hacked the school's security cameras and could watch their every move.

After a rash of attacks across the country, the FBI is asking school districts to make cyber security a priority.

In Columbia Falls, Bradshaw's team met with families, consulted with the FBI, and ultimately made the decision to not pay the hackers.

That was followed by more threatening texts.

"It's about power and it's about fear," Bradshaw told NBC News. While he made the choice not to pay, he said he dreads the thought of the hackers dumping student information.

"Will they dump this information? Will they impact some child to the point that that child could be emotionally damaged for the rest of their life?" he said.

With many school districts across the country facing tight budgets, cyber security is often an after-thought, according to experts.

"Schools are vulnerable for a variety of reasons," said Shawn Henry, chief security officer of CrowdStrike and former assistant director of the FBI.

"First of all, their security is not always up to par and that's because they don't have a high budget in order

	<p>to invest in security protocols," he said. "But they also have information that's of value and people want to protect children."</p> <p>The Department of Education is encouraging schools to conduct security audits and to train staff on cyber security best practices, including how to avoid being targeted by social engineering schemes, such as fake emails that look real but, if clicked, can provide hackers access into the school's system.</p> <p>Cyber security "needs to be a budget item every year," said Howard Marshall, a spokesman for the FBI. "At the end of the day, they are protecting the country's most important asset and resource - and that's our children."</p>
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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	11/16 ISIS threatens Christmas attack Vatican
SOURCE	https://www.rt.com/news/410035-isis-threaten-vatican-attack-christmas/
GIST	<p>An Islamic State-linked group has allegedly vowed to launch a Christmas terrorist attack on the Vatican. A propaganda poster depicted a jihadist driving a car at high speed towards St. Peter's Basilica.</p> <p>The menacing poster was released by the pro-Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) group known as Wafa Media Foundation. It was revealed on Tuesday by the SITE Intelligence Group, a Maryland-based company that tracks the online activity of the extremist organization. The words at the top of the poster, written in red, warn that the attack will take place at Christmas.</p> <p>The image shows a masked figure, apparently a jihadist, driving at high speed towards St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, where Pope Francis usually celebrates Mass. An assault rifle and a rucksack are clearly visible on the seat next to the driver, who is using a satellite navigation system.</p> <p>This is not the first time that the extremist group has vowed to carry out attacks against the Vatican. Last August, IS reportedly released footage of its militants ripping up photos of Pope Francis and his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI; and threatening to come to Rome.</p> <p>The video is understood to have been filmed in the city of Marawi in the Philippines, where the Maute group, which has pledged allegiance to IS, was fighting against government forces.</p> <p>The threat from IS terrorists has tended to heighten at Christmas time. In 2016, an IS sympathizer deliberately drove a truck into the Christmas market in Berlin, leaving 12 people dead and dozens injured. The perpetrator, Anis Amri, turned out to be a rejected asylum seeker from Tunisia. He was killed days later in a shootout with police near Milan, Italy.</p> <p>There has been a rise in terrorist attacks using vehicles in Europe and the US. Nice, Berlin, London, Stockholm, Barcelona, as well as New York have all endured attacks of this kind.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 UK military bases, assets 'left at risk'
SOURCE	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-military-bases-terror-attacks-risk-police-budget-cuts-federation-gavin-williamson-mod-ministry-of-a8056336.html
GIST	<p>Britain's military bases and assets are being left at "unacceptable risk of attack" because of budget cuts, the new Defence Secretary has been warned.</p> <p>In a letter to Gavin Williamson, the chairman of the Defence Police Federation said that that continued efficiencies could force armed officers to be reduced, despite the rising terror threat.</p>

“I must highlight the deeply concerning, and in many cases deplorable decision making that is leaving many of the UK’s critical military assets and sites at unacceptable risk of attack on our own shores,” Sergeant Eamon Keating wrote.

“The tragic and cowardly terrorist attacks of the last 12 months have demonstrated not only an appetite and ability for destruction amongst those who threaten our society, but also a willingness to target our most secure locations as in the case of the attack on the Palace of Westminster.

“Yet despite this risk, decisions are being taken by MoD officials...that prioritise the pursuit of financial savings over the threat to our assets.

“It is perhaps only a matter of time before an MoD establishment in the UK faces attack, and the reality is that continued and pernicious reductions in the capacity of the MoD Police leave it ill-equipped and understaffed to deal with such a situation.”

The 2,500-strong Ministry of Defence Police (MoD Police) provide armed security protecting assets such as the Trident nuclear deterrent, munitions sites and new aircraft carriers, as well as contributing to some criminal investigations.

While the number of officers has risen over the past four years – from 2,499 in the 2014/15 financial year to 2,542 in 2017/18 – the Defence Police Federation predicts that cuts could now force a reduction of up to 13 per cent of the workforce.

“This is leaving MoD sites around the UK at serious risk, and well below agreed and acceptable levels of security and at the level of maximum risk on a daily basis,” Mr Keating wrote.

The MoD Police is the second-largest armed police contingent in the country, containing more firearms officers than every force bar the Metropolitan Police combined.

Its officers are among those released under Operation Temperer, which sees troops deployed to bolster regular police officers during periods of a critical terror threat, as seen after the Manchester attack and Parsons Green bombing.

The most recent annual plan for the MoD police listed terror attacks at the top of its priority list, with Chief Constable Alf Hitchcock warning that the threat was expected to continue for the “foreseeable future” but budget constraints were “challenging”.

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HEADLINE	11/16 ISIS tightens hold northern Afghanistan
SOURCE	https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-islamic-state-jawzjan/28856188.html
GIST	<p>After braving government offensives and defeating Taliban onslaughts, an offshoot of the Islamic State (IS) militants is set to increase influence in northern Afghanistan close to the Central Asian border.</p> <p>Officials, lawmakers, and activists say IS is increasing its control and influence in Jawzjan Province, where IS recently repelled a major Taliban offensive and now controls two of the region's 11 districts.</p> <p>The rise of IS in the region, predominantly populated by Uzbeks, has been facilitated by Taliban infighting, an influx of battle-hardened Central Asian militants, government weaknesses, and a brutal campaign of intimidation and violence against civilians.</p> <p>Like many Afghans, Abdullah goes by one name only. He is among the thousands of Qush-Teppa residents who fled the intense recent fighting between the Taliban and IS. The region is one of the Jawzjan districts.</p>

“We were stuck between the warring sides; the Taliban were firing at us from one side while Daesh targeted us from the other side,” he told Radio Free Afghanistan while referring to IS with the Arabic acronym commonly used to identify it in Afghanistan.

“We are very unfortunate. I was only able to escape with my life and my family,” he said while waiting for aid in Jawzjan’s provincial center, Sheberghan. “We left all our belongings and livelihoods behind.”

Authorities in Jawzjan say that scores of militants from both sides died in the fighting last month.

Rehmatullah Hashar, a former district governor of Darzab, another district in Jawzjan, says a cell of eight IS fighters established the local branch nearly two years ago but today the number of their fighters is estimated to exceed 500.

“The founding members of Daesh were disgruntled Taliban,” he told Radio Free Afghanistan. “They were noticed after they began attacking government forces.”

Qari Hekmat, a key IS leader in Jawzjan, was the most infamous renegade Taliban commander. In late 2015, he joined remnants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who had fled a Pakistani military offensive after sheltering in the country for decade.

Within a year, the ranks of the IS cell swelled, and they established near complete control over Darzab and within a year also gradually established control over the neighboring district of Qush-Teppa.

Ali Sher Intizar Jawzjani, an activist in Sheberghan, says IS shut all 64 schools in the two districts. He says thousands of students have been deprived of an education while more than 600 teachers are now jobless.

“Our schools have been shut for three months now,” he told Radio Free Afghanistan. “I hope the government will soon launch an operation to snatch these regions back from Daesh control.”

Jawzjan government spokesman Mohammad Raza Ghafoori agrees. He says Kabul and its Western allies need to act soon.

“We have repeatedly urged senior officials in the capital to act. We are calling on them yet again to launch an offensive soon so civilians displaced by fighting can return to their home,” he told Radio Free Afghanistan.

Darzab’s police chief commander Ismail says local forces currently lack the strength to push the militants out.

“We can’t put the lives of our soldiers at risk because there are not enough forces and no timely logistical supply from the central government if we conduct a counter-offensive against the militants,” he told the Afghan Analysts Network.

Aminullah, the government appointed district chief of Qush-Teppa, says local Taliban are keen on taking on IS but are afraid to attack after hundreds of their militants were beaten back by IS last month.

Hashar, the former district governor, says IS is already preparing for the next battle. He says local IS ranks are boosted by the presence of Uzbekistani militant Abdul Malik, whose father, Tohir Yuldash, led the IMU until his death 2009.

In Sheberghan, Malik is rumored to be camped in Darzab’s Sardara region along with 70 Uzbekistani families.

HEADLINE	11/15 DHS IG slams air marshals program
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/15/politics/air-marshals-tsa/index.html
GIST	<p>Washington (CNN)A review of the air marshals program reveals how Transportation Security Administration "money gets wasted basically fighting the last war," its watchdog said Wednesday.</p> <p>Department of Homeland Security Inspector General John Roth told Congress its recent review of the \$800 million-per-year program found that TSA doesn't make budget decisions based on its analyses of potential risks.</p> <p>"So things that are low-risk, for example, still, notwithstanding the change in the risk environment or the intelligence that they receive with regard to terrorist activity, their budget does not change in accordance with that," Roth said.</p> <p>An unspecified part of the air marshal program could be "discontinued" and its "funds could be put to better use," according to a brief, two-paragraph unclassified statement released publicly last month. The full report remains classified.</p> <p>The TSA did not respond to a request for comment on the report or Roth's comments.</p> <p>The inspector general's assessment is the latest blow to the air marshal program, which has its roots in an effort by President John F. Kennedy to stem a string of airplane hijackings in the 1960s. It grew in size and prominence after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks and the creation of the DHS and TSA, which runs the program today. But its ranks are believed to have thinned in recent years, as TSA deployed additional screening practices prior to boarding an airplane and as the events of 9/11 grow more distant.</p> <p>In September, the Government Accountability Office concluded TSA can't accurately say how effective the air marshal program is at deterring attacks.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Dire trend Afghan opium production
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-opium-production-2017-un-poppy-cultivation-jumps/
GIST	<p>KABUL, Afghanistan -- Afghanistan's opium production has almost doubled this year compared to 2016, while areas that are under poppy cultivation rose by 63 percent, according to a new joint survey released Wednesday by the United Nations and the Afghan government.</p> <p>The production increased by 87 percent and stands at a record level of 9,921 tons so far in 2017, compared to the 2016 levels of 5,291 tons.</p> <p>Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics and the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime said the area under opium poppy cultivation has also increased to a record 810,488 acres in 2017, up 63 percent compared with the 496,671 acres that cultivated the poppy in 2016.</p> <p>"It is high time for the international community and Afghanistan to reprioritize drug control, and to acknowledge that every nation has a shared responsibility for this global problem," UNODC's Executive Director Yury Fedotov was quoted as saying in the statement.</p> <p>The increase in production is mainly result of the increase in the area under poppy cultivation, while an increase in opium yield also contributed. The largest increase in yields came in the south, in poppy-heavy provinces like Helmand, where the average yield grew by 19 percent. In the country's north-eastern region, the yield from the opium poppy rose by 14 percent, the statement said.</p> <p>Also, the survey said the number of poppy-free provinces in the country decreased from 13 to 10, with Ghazni, Samangan and Nuristan province also becoming poppy growing regions, raising the number of</p>

	<p>those cultivating the poppy from 21 to 24 provinces in the country.</p> <p>Afghanistan is the world's top cultivator of the poppy from which opium and heroin are produced. The 2017 record levels of opium production and poppy cultivation create multiple challenges for the country, its neighbors and the many other countries that are transit for or destination of Afghan opiates.</p> <p>The Taliban, who have been waging war against the Afghan government since 2001, are heavily involved in poppy cultivation and opium distribution, especially in areas under their control. They have stepped up their attacks against Afghan security forces in northern region of the country and elsewhere over the past year.</p> <p>In 2017, government-organized poppy eradication took place in 14 provinces, compared to seven provinces in 2016. During the latest eradication campaign, six people were killed and eight were wounded in attacks by Taliban as well as drug traffickers.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Egypt: suspected militants in Sinai killed
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/11/16/egyptian-army-says-3-militants-killed-74-arrested-in-sinai.html
GIST	<p>CAIRO – Egypt's armed forces say they have killed three "high-level" suspected militants and arrested 74 others in sweeps in the troubled northern Sinai Peninsula in recent days.</p> <p>Military spokesman Col. Tamer el-Rifai says in a Thursday statement that five four-wheel-drive vehicles and four bomb-making workshops were destroyed in the raids, as well as ammunition and fuel stocks.</p> <p>Security forces have been battling militants in northern Sinai for years in an insurgency that picked up after the 2013 military ouster of an elected but divisive Islamist president.</p> <p>Egypt is also facing a growing number of attacks by militants in its Western Desert.</p> <p>Hundreds of security forces and militants have been killed in Sinai over the years, although exact numbers are unclear as journalists and independent investigators are banned from the area.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 ISIS claims deadly blast in Kabul
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kabul-afghanistan-isis-suicide-attack-political-gathering-wedding-hall/
GIST	<p>KABUL, Afghanistan -- Afghan officials said Thursday that a suicide bomber killed nine people at a political gathering in the capital, Kabul.</p> <p>The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) faction in Afghanistan claimed responsibility for the attack.</p> <p>According to Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid, at least seven police officers and two civilians were among the dead, and 10 others were wounded. Based on photos posted on social media following the blast, however, the death toll seemed likely to rise.</p> <p>Mujahid said the suicide bomber wanted to get inside a wedding hall where the political gathering was taking place, but was stopped by police at a checkpoint, where he detonated his suicide vest.</p> <p>Parliament member Hafiz Mansoor, who attended the meeting but was not harmed, said around 700 supporters of the governor of the northern Balkh province were attending a conference to highlight his work.</p>

	<p>ISIS has repeatedly targeted civilians and security forces in Afghanistan this year.</p> <p>The Taliban insurgency has also attacked law enforcement -- and civilians -- across the country, but the group tends to target civilians less than ISIS. A wave of Taliban-claimed attacks across Afghanistan has left dozens of police dead in recent weeks.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Suicide bombers kill 14 in northern Nigeria
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/suicide-bombers-kill-14-wound-29-northern-nigeria-51179561?
GIST	<p>Four suicide bombers detonated in Nigeria's Borno state capital and killed 14 people while wounding another 29, police said Wednesday, in one of the largest such attacks in the city in years</p> <p>The deafening blasts could be heard in the evening in Maiduguri, the home of the Boko Haram extremist insurgency.</p> <p>Police spokesman Victor Isukwu said the two male and two female bombers targeted crowded parts of Muna Gari suburb. The first explosion went off at a prayer ground, he said.</p> <p>Police said the four bombers also were killed. The 29 injured were rushed to local hospitals for treatment.</p> <p>While Nigeria's military has made progress in combating Boko Haram's deadly insurgency, the group continues to carry out suicide attacks in Maiduguri and elsewhere. The group often uses female or child bombers, some who had been abducted.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	11/15 Scientists issue dire warning to humanity
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Science_News/2017/11/15/Warning-letter-to-humanity-on-climate-change-signed-by-16000-scientists/6611510755106/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts&utm_medium=17
GIST	<p>Nov. 15 (UPI) -- More than 16,000 scientists from across the globe have signed their name to an updated warning letter to humanity.</p> <p>The letter predicts dire consequences for the planet and the human race if human behavior isn't altered and Earth's ecosystems and natural resources aren't better protected.</p> <p>"Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course," warned the first version of the letter, published in 1992.</p> <p>The new letter, published Monday in the journal BioScience, serves as an update to the original "warning to humanity" letter, which was signed by 1,700 scientists at the time.</p> <p>The problems raised in the original letter remain unsolved, and many of them are worsening, scientists say. They include: air and water pollution, shrinking fish stocks, deforestation, declines in soil health, loss of biodiversity and manmade global warming.</p> <p>"Humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse," the scientists, hailing from 184 different countries, write.</p>

In the 25 years between the two letters, scientists point to a lone bright spot of progress: the shrinking of the ozone layer. Scientists suggest the ongoing regeneration of the ozone is proof humans can reverse course if they take decisive action.

The letter features several actions scientists believe are necessary to stave off ecological catastrophe. They include: establishing more nature reserves, investing in green technologies, curbing food waste, and instituting economic incentives to create more sustainable patterns of consumption.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Ford Explorer exhaust complaints grow
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SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ford-explorer-carbon-monoxide-free-repairs/
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GIST	<p>In a major update about our ongoing CBS News investigation into reports of carbon monoxide seeping into Ford Explorers, the automaker is now offering free repairs.</p> <p>Affecting models from 2011 to 2017, 1.3 million owners of the popular SUV will begin receiving notices today.</p> <p>But the automaker is stopping short of recalling the Explorer. The watchdog group, Center for Auto Safety, says anything short of a recall is not enough.</p> <p>The letters from Ford for the voluntary repair program were sent out Monday, reports CBS News correspondent Kris Van Cleave. The repairs include reprogramming the air conditioner, replacing drain valves and checking the seals around the back of the vehicle. It comes as CBS News has learned the number of complaints is growing.</p> <p>Calling it quits, Steve Simmons unloaded his tools from the 2015 Ford Explorer he bought used just a couple weeks earlier. He made the dealer buy it back after he said he got sick behind the wheel.</p> <p>"Nausea. Headaches. Dizziness. Blurred vision," Simmons said.</p> <p>After taking blood tests, Simmons' doctor diagnosed him with carbon monoxide poisoning.</p> <p>The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating at least 1.3 million 2011-2017 Explorers based on reports of exhaust, which contains carbon monoxide, seeping into the passenger cabin.</p> <p>Nearly 1,300 people have filed complaints with the regulator. Ford acknowledged getting more than 2,000 reports as of August last year. In the letter to customers, Ford insists Explorers "are safe" and its "investigation has not found carbon monoxide levels that exceed what people are exposed to every day."</p> <p>NHTSA said it's found no actual evidence of carbon monoxide poisoning. That's despite documented cases, like Louisiana police officer Brandy Sickey, who is now suing Ford, and Simmons. Both were diagnosed after driving an Explorer.</p> <p>Simmons just launched FordExplorerNightmare.com, hoping to rally support for a recall.</p> <p>"What's it going to take before decisive action is taken? Now I know it's a lot of money for Ford, but I mean, you know, put a value on human life," Simmons said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/14 NTSB: 'weak safety culture' at Amtrak
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/ntsb-finds-weak-safety-culture-amtrak-fatal-pennsylvania/story?
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<p>GIST</p>	<p>Following a 19-month investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board identified 20 different factors that contributed to the April 2016 crash that killed two veteran Amtrak employees and injured 39 passengers when a train struck a backhoe and derailed in Chester, Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Investigators said Amtrak had a "weak safety culture" where employees frequently took short cuts and put on-time performance over safety.</p> <p>The NTSB previously disclosed toxicology reports indicating marijuana in the system of the train's engineer and cocaine or opioids in the systems of the maintenance workers who died, but they did not conclude that the employees were impaired at the time of the crash.</p> <p>While drug use did not have a "direct causal link to this accident," according to investigators, it is a reflection of a lax safety culture at Amtrak, they said.</p> <p>The Federal Railroad Administration revised its federal drug testing rules to include Maintenance of Way workers, like those who were operating the backhoe, effective on June 12, 2017.</p> <p>Previously DOT regulations only required drug testing for locomotive engineers, trainmen, conductors, switchmen, locomotive helpers, utility employees, signalmen, operators and train dispatchers.</p> <p>These rules establish minimum requirements for drug testing, but rail companies are free to expand them.</p> <p>On Monday the FRA said it was adding certain semi-synthetic opioids such as hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxymorphone and oxycodone to its testing.</p> <p>“The opioid crisis is a threat to public safety when it involves safety-sensitive employees involved in the operation of any kind of vehicle or transport,” said Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. “The ability to test for a broader range of opioids will advance transportation safety significantly and provide another deterrence to opioid abuse, which will better protect the public and ultimately save lives.”</p> <p>Railroad repairs were ongoing in the days leading up to the fatal accident. A night foreman was found to have lifted a track safety closure while a backhoe remained on the track. The day foreman did not restore the closure, according to investigators, leading to a train striking the backhoe at nearly 100 mph.</p> <p>NTSB chairman Robert Sumwalt described the mistake by the foremen as "the fundamental error of the night."</p> <p>Among the contributing factors to the crash were lack of communication between employees, improper establishment of work zones and pressure from managers to keep trains on time.</p>
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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>11/15 Wrong-way driver Tacoma Narrows Bridge</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>http://komonews.com/news/local/deputy-put-cruiser-in-harms-way-to-stop-wrong-way-driver-on-narrows-bridge</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>TACOMA, Wash. -- A Pierce County deputy made a harrowing trip against oncoming traffic on the Tacoma Narrow Bridge earlier this week after seeing a wrong-way driver.</p> <p>The deputy swerved across lanes of traffic to protect other drivers, then put his cruiser in the path of the wrong-way driver to stop him.</p> <p>It worked. No one was hurt. The driver, a 94-year-old Poulsbo man, and his 88-year-old wife were taken home after the car keys were seized.</p> <p>The incident began at 1:40 p.m. Tuesday, The deputy was on state Route 16 in Gig Harbor and was</p>

approaching the bridge's toll booth.

Cars in front of him were slamming on their brakes and swerving.

He saw a gold Toyota Camry coming toward him. The car was headed west in the eastbound lanes.

The Pierce County Sheriff's Department says the deputy turned on his emergency lights and began weaving across all three lanes of traffic to slow the cars behind him.

The driver of the Camry cut to the right, crossed three lanes and got into the HOV lane. Then he sped up.

The deputy put his car in the HOV lane and stopped. As other drivers swerved and sped by, the Camry stopped a few feet from the cruiser.

The deputy told the driver to turn off the car and hand him the keys.

The Sheriff's Department said the driver appeared confused and couldn't tell the deputy where he was or how he got there.

The deputy drove the Camry away, and the man and woman were taken for medical evaluation. They were cleared by a firefighter.

Deputies said the couple didn't seem to understand the severity of going the wrong way on the bridge or the danger to themselves and others.

The driver told the deputies that he had thought the cars behind him were going too fast. He turned onto the freeway entrance to get away from them.

The 94-year-old man was cited for reckless driving. Deputies made arrangements for family members to pick the Camry up.

The Sheriff's Department says deputies believe the man was driving on Jackson Street in Tacoma, turned down the highway off-ramp and entered eastbound traffic, driving the wrong way on the bridge in the far left lane. He began to change lanes as he approached the jersey barriers near the toll booth in Gig Harbor.

The Sheriff's Department says people who worry about the driving of elderly relatives should talk to them. The AARP has an online seminar, "We Need to Talk," that gives information on how to assess an elderly relative's driving skills and provides tools on how to have the conversation.

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You can access that online seminar [here](#).

HEADLINE	11/15 Massive Antarctic iceberg slowly moving
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/science/2017/11/15/scientists-get-up-close-massive-antarctic-iceberg-size-delaware-slowly-move-scientists-get-close-up-vie/866545001/
GIST	<p>Researchers finally getting an up-close view of the mammoth iceberg that sheared off an Antarctica ice shelf earlier this year aren't having to look far — the 1-trillion ton chunk of ice hasn't moved much.</p> <p>The massive iceberg the size of Delaware has only moved about 15 miles at its southern edge, while its northern edge remains much closer to the Larsen C ice shelf it departed in July.</p> <p>As Antarctica nears summer, shedding its months of darkness, scientists have finally been able to see the iceberg, named A-68, in person. Stubbornly thick sea ice has blocked it from potentially traveling farther out to sea.</p>

	<p>Sea ice, or frozen ocean water, stays in the region year-round. "But sometimes during the summer, large areas open up, and it continually drifts clockwise, so may take A-68 with it," said Adrian Luckman of Swansea University in the U.K. and the lead investigator of Project MIDAS, a British research group that's been tracking the iceberg.</p> <p>Scientists said in July that the iceberg — or icebergs if it broke up even further — could remain in the region, where the ocean is quite cold, sticking around for years or even decades. Or it could move with ocean currents and winds in a northward direction, where it would erode more quickly.</p> <p>NASA scientists with the agency's Operation IceBridge have been flying over the region the past few weeks.</p> <p>In a blog post this week, NASA science writer Kathryn Hansen shared her experience seeing the massive chunk of ice for the first time. "I was aware that I would be seeing an iceberg the size of Delaware, but I wasn't prepared for how that would look from the air. Most icebergs I have seen appear relatively small and blocky, and the entire part of the berg that rises above the ocean surface is visible at once. Not this berg," she said.</p> <p>"A-68 is so expansive it appears if it were still part of the ice shelf. But if you look far into the distance you can see a thin line of water between the iceberg and where the new front of the shelf begins. A small part of the flight today took us down the front of iceberg A-68, its towering edge reflecting in the dark Weddell Sea."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Diplomat, playing game of trust, dies in fall
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-australian-diplomat-dies-fall-off-nyc-terrace-51177659?
GIST	<p>An Australian diplomat who had angered a woman's husband and then sought to prove himself with a risky game of trust on a seventh-floor terrace near the Empire State Building fell to his death, police said.</p> <p>The diplomat, Julian Simpson, and other people had gone on an apartment building roof to look at the Empire State Building lights early Wednesday, police said. The building was lit in rainbow colors in recognition of a survey that found most Australians support marriage equality and ensured that lawmakers will vote on a same-sex marriage bill this year.</p> <p>Simpson swung a woman around, and her husband became angry, police said. The men then went on the seventh-floor apartment terrace, and Simpson offered to prove he was trustworthy by playing a trust game, going to a ledge and leaning back.</p> <p>Simpson grabbed for the other man's hand but slipped and fell to a second-floor landing, authorities said.</p> <p>Simpson, 30, was an official with Australia's United Nations mission. Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it was assisting Simpson's relatives, who asked for privacy.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 'Invincible' Zimbabwe leader era ends
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/zimbabwe-leader-robert-mugabe-invincible-era-ends-51189678?
GIST	<p>Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe seemed almost untouchable for much of his nearly four-decade rule. Shrewd and ruthless, he stayed in power despite advancing age, growing opposition, international sanctions and the dissolving economy of a once-prosperous nation.</p>

	<p>Now that it seems to finally be here, the abrupt end of the Mugabe era is launching Zimbabwe into the unknown.</p> <p>Mugabe, at 93 the world's oldest head of state, is confined to his home after a military takeover. It was the most dramatic development in a factional battle within the ruling ZANU-PF party in which first lady Grace Mugabe had been angling, with Mugabe's help, to take over the presidency in a dynastic succession.</p> <p>It is a humbling close to Mugabe's career after leading Zimbabwe since independence from white minority rule in 1980.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Mystery: radioactive cloud over Europe
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/world/europe/radioactive-cloud-europe.html
GIST	<p>LONDON — Scientists across Europe have been puzzling about a phenomenon that seemed laden with mystery and menace in somewhat uneven proportions — a concentration of radioactive pollution caused by a nuclide called ruthenium 106.</p> <p>Official monitors in France and Germany concluded that, based on weather patterns, the contamination detected since late September had emanated from southern Russia or from Kazakhstan.</p> <p>“The most plausible zone of release lies between the Volga and the Urals,” the French Institute for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety said on Nov. 9. Jean-Marc Peres, the institute’s director, told Reuters that the geographic area could indicate a spillage in Russia or in Kazakhstan.</p> <p>On Oct. 8, the German Federal Office for Radiation Protection said, “Russia must be assumed to be the region of origin of radioactive release” — a suggestion that was denied by Rosatom, the state company that runs Russia’s nuclear industry.</p> <p>According to a statement from Rosatom, “None of the enterprises of the Russian nuclear industry has recorded radiation levels that exceed the norm.”</p> <p>“One of the countries in the eastern part of the European Union” was more likely to be the source, Rosatom added, noting high radiation levels over Italy, Romania and Ukraine.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the presence of the little-known substance raised unease that a threat to European health might be building — hardly surprising in light of the West’s broad palette of other worries about Russia’s intentions, including the crisis in Crimea, which was annexed by Moscow in 2014, and the Kremlin’s activities in cyberspace.</p> <p>On Wednesday, one of Britain’s top security officials, Ciaran Martin, warned in a speech that, over the past year, Russian hackers had undertaken far more persistent attacks on his country’s energy, telecommunications and media industries than previously acknowledged.</p> <p>Two days earlier, Prime Minister Theresa May accused Russia of “seeking to weaponize information, deploying its state-run media organizations to plant fake stories and photoshopped images in an attempt to sow discord in the West and undermine our institutions.”</p> <p>In matters of nuclear threat, of course, European memories are framed by episodes such as the catastrophic accident in 1986 at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union; and, 20 years later, the lethal poisoning in London of a former K.G.B. officer, Alexander V. Litvinenko, with polonium 210, a rare and highly toxic isotope.</p> <p>With such considerations in mind, the detection of elevated but unexplained levels of ruthenium 106 by monitoring stations in Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland raised alarms.</p>

Slowly though, as the levels retreated, the fretting eased.

German and French nuclear security agencies concluded that the pollution had not threatened the health of Europeans or the environment in which they live. "These low levels of radioactivity do not pose a health hazard to the population," the German radiation protection office said on Nov. 10.

The French institute reached similar conclusions, but said the amounts of ruthenium 106 released at the source of the accident were significant. If contamination of this magnitude had occurred in France, it said, the authorities would have ordered protective measures for people living miles around.

The nuclide, which does not occur naturally, is used for a variety of purposes, including as a therapy for cancers and as an energy source in satellites.

According to European scientists, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, has investigated whether the pollution could have been caused by a satellite falling back to earth, but concluded that there had been no such event.

Nor, according to the French and German radiation protection agencies, could the pollution have been caused by an accident at a nuclear reactor, because only ruthenium 106 has been detected and such a spillage would have released other nuclides. That left two potential sources, the French agency said, "either in nuclear fuel-cycle facilities or radioactive source production."

Jean-Christophe Gariel, a senior official at the French agency, said, "We've done our job with the European data that was available, but we cannot go further for now."

Referring to Russia, he added, "Maybe we'll be able to answer more questions when the country concerned by the issue comes up with more precise information."

He said that when he spoke to his counterparts in Russia last week, they had not been able to explain the origins of the contamination. "We showed them a document detailing our scientific approach. They told us that our results were coherent and correct, but that they were not aware of any event that could have caused that."

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HEADLINE	11/15 Reference librarians busier than ever
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/google-shmoogie-reference-librarians-are-busier-than-ever-1510763846
GIST	<p>PITTSBURGH—Sherry Yadlosky, a staff member at the Carnegie Library in this city's Oakland district, answered the phone in her cubicle late in the afternoon of Nov. 1. A woman wanted to know who would be pitching for the Dodgers that night in the final game of the World Series.</p> <p>Ms. Yadlosky consulted a sports website. "It looks like they're going to be starting Yu Darvish," she said. The caller asked whether Mr. Darvish was a good pitcher. Ms Yadlosky thought about it for a moment, then said: "It depends on your definition of good."</p> <p>After taking the call, Ms. Yadlosky, 28 years old, recalled a library patron who once asked her whether bar codes on store merchandise contained the Mark of the Beast, a symbol discussed in the Book of Revelation. "Um, no," she said.</p> <p>Carved in stone over the library's arched entrance is the motto "Free to the People." That applies not just to books but to answers for almost any question posed to librarians.</p> <p>Even in the internet age, reference librarians still dig up answers that require extra effort, searching old</p>

books, microfilm and paper files, looking for everything from owners of long-defunct firms to 19th-century weather reports.

Though online searches are now at the fingertips of most people, many still prefer to call or visit a library. Some can't or don't use computers; others recognize librarians have search skills and access to databases that search engines can't match.

Librarians generally are happy to receive questions, partly because serving lots of people helps them justify taxpayer funding. The Hennepin County public libraries in Minnesota calculate that they answer about 1.3 million questions a year. The county's population is about 1.2 million.

Privacy is respected. When someone asked the Pittsburgh library how to build a guillotine, a librarian emailed diagrams from a German website without asking questions.

Many people need help applying for a job online, setting up an email account or finding social services. Some want a phone number; others seek medical or legal information. A few call in to ask for the weather forecast or help with household-budget calculations. Librarians sometimes provide recipes or instructions for making papier-mâché.

Even in Silicon Valley, where people might be expected to be search wizards, libraries get plenty of questions. One caller asked the Mountain View, Calif., Public Library for the address of the White House.

"There's no really stupid question," said Cat Bierling of the Des Moines Public Library, though some can be frustrating. A woman recently called to ask whether the hurricanes she had been hearing about were fake news. Ms. Bierling informed her that numerous credible news organizations had reported the storms.

Often it isn't immediately clear exactly what the patron wants. A caller in Des Moines asked for the name of an actor who died of cancer after going to Mexico for treatment. Ms. Bierling did an internet search and identified the actor as Steve McQueen. The caller then asked for the name of a movie involving Mr. McQueen and a young boy. Ms. Bierling determined that the film in question was probably "The Reivers." Did the library have the DVD? Ms. Bierling reserved it for the caller.

At the Hennepin County public libraries in Minnesota, Jonathan Copeland specializes in questions about pop music. He said one caller wanted to find a "nasty" song that John Lennon wrote about Bob Dylan. The librarian identified two printed sources referring to Mr. Lennon's "Serve Yourself," a sendup of Mr. Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody."

James Scott, a Sacramento librarian, said one woman woke up with a red blotch on her skin and wanted to know if it was in the shape of any meaningful symbol. He offered books on symbology.

"We'll get folks that call up and say I woke up this morning and I had this trippy dream and I wonder if you have anything that can help me," Mr. Scott said. He recommends books on the interpretation of dreams.

By searching through microfilm or paper files, librarians can find news stories unavailable on the internet. Sarah McGowan, a librarian in the Mt. Lebanon, Pa., public library, was asked by a woman to help figure out whether her former husband was dead. Ms. McGowan couldn't give a definitive answer but found no obituaries for him.

A novelist recently asked librarians in Cleveland whether it snowed in northeastern Ohio on a certain date in 1837. After scouring old newspapers, they couldn't say for sure but did know that there had been snowy weather that week.

In Pittsburgh, librarians sometimes consult the "Standard Handbook for Secretaries," 1975 edition, to help patrons find the proper form for condolence notes or other types of letters.

Mary Phillips, a reference librarian there, recalls being asked how much clouds weigh. She tracked down a relevant paper from the National Center for Atmospheric Research and a podcast from Radiolab. "It was a satisfying multimedia search experience," she said.

She also has been helping a man who wants to know how the graphical design of instruction books for the tax form 1040 has evolved over the decades. She couldn't find many images of old tax booklets on the internet, so Ms. Phillips has requested help from archivists at the Internal Revenue Service.

"It's not a stumper," Ms. Phillips said of the form 1040 query, "but it's not easily unlocked."

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HEADLINE	11/15 Childbirth killing black women in US
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/15/health/black-women-maternal-mortality/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)It was her second time lying numb in a hospital bed in North Bergen, New Jersey, with blood streaming down her legs and fear creeping into her heart.</p> <p>At that moment, Timoria McQueen Saba thought to herself, "there's no way in the world that I'm the only woman who had this happen," she said.</p> <p>In 2010, after giving birth vaginally to her oldest daughter, Gigi, one late afternoon in April, postpartum hemorrhage or excessive bleeding -- the leading cause of maternal death worldwide -- nearly killed her.</p> <p>Then, about a year later, she started bleeding profusely in the small bathroom of a frozen yogurt shop. The blood was from a miscarriage, which left her feeling helpless in that hospital bed. She didn't know she was pregnant.</p> <p>"I was all the way back to where I was the year before, and I realized ... I hadn't healed from the near-fatal traumatic experience the year before," said Saba, now the 39-year-old mother of two girls.</p> <p>Timoria McQueen Saba, 39, now with her two daughters, Gigi and Harper, and her husband. Saba is a maternal health advocate whose goal is "to help other women have their birth experiences validated," she says.</p> <p>The former celebrity makeup artist, who saw clients such as novelists Candace Bushnell and Kyra Davis, decided to become a maternal health advocate, speaking on behalf of the 830 women who die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications every day around the world. That's about 303,000 a year.</p> <p>Each year in the United States, about 700 to 1,200 women die from pregnancy or childbirth complications, and black women like Saba are about three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy or delivery complications than white women.</p> <p>The quick-witted, savvy Saba said the data shocked her.</p> <p>"It really took me a while to digest it," she said -- she survived something that many others around the world haven't.</p> <p>"What was different about me? Why didn't I die? What were the reasons for that?" she asked. "I felt like I have a duty to tell this story, to represent my race in a way that not many people can, because I lived through it."</p> <p>Women in the United States are more likely to die from childbirth- or pregnancy-related causes than other women in the developed world, and half of those deaths may be preventable, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p>

The CDC's pregnancy mortality surveillance system was implemented in 1986 to track maternal deaths. Since then, the number of reported pregnancy-related deaths nationwide steadily increased from 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 17.8 per 100,000 in 2009 and 2011.

Why the increase? Some researchers argue that health officials simply have improved counting deaths over time by using new classification codes and introducing a pregnancy status box on death certificates in 2003, which could make it appear that there's an increase.

Others argue that higher rates of obesity, women having children at older ages, and other social changes and trends in public health could drive an apparent increase.

Yet it remains complicated to answer why there has been a rise in deaths and why black women are more affected than women of other races, said Dr. Michael Lindsay, associate professor at the Emory University School of Medicine and chief of service for gynecology and obstetrics at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

The racial divide in maternal deaths has been persistent for decades, Lindsay said, "so the rate is not something new. It's something we've known for a number of years."

Though maternal deaths are rare in the United States, many doctors and researchers have varying ideas about what factors could be driving this longstanding racial disparity in death rates.

Some point to the differences in overall health and chronic illnesses among black and white women as a driving factor for the disparity. For instance, rates of obesity and high blood pressure (or hypertension) -- risk factors for pregnancy complications -- tend to be higher among black women.

Others point to differences in socioeconomic status, access to health care, education, insurance coverage, housing, levels of stress and community health among black and white women, including even implicit bias and variations in the ways in which health care is delivered to black versus white women.

Historically, black women in low-income communities haven't had the same access to quality care as white women in high-income communities.

Those same factors shed light on disparities not only in maternal mortality but in obesity, hypertension, heart disease and overall health, said Dr. Elizabeth Howell, an obstetrician-gynecologist and professor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

"There are economics, social, environmental, biologic, genetic, behavioral and health care factors that all contribute to disparities in this country," Howell said.

"It's a complex web of these kinds of factors, and I think people are looking at and trying to figure out how these different factors actually all contribute to disparities," she said, adding that her research has focused on the factor of quality care.

For instance, Howell and her colleagues found that black women in New York City were more likely than white women to give birth in hospitals that already have a high rate of severe maternal morbidity or complications, according to a study published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology last year.

The researchers found that 63% of white patients versus 23% of black patients gave birth in the safest hospitals in the study.

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HEADLINE	11/15 WSP: threatening man on ferry arrested
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/state-patrol-suspect-detained-after-brandishing-gun-aboard-mukilteo-ferry
GIST	<p>MUKILTEO, Wash. - A man is in custody after allegedly brandishing a large knife and threatening a juvenile on board a state ferry Wednesday morning, the Washington State Patrol reports.</p> <p>State troopers and police responded to the ferry MV Kittitas at the Mukilteo dock at around 7:50 a.m. after receiving reports of someone brandishing a weapon toward a juvenile aboard the vessel, said Trooper Kevin Fortino. The weapon turned out to be a large kitchen knife, he said.</p> <p>A 39-year-old man was identified and then arrested before anyone was harmed.</p> <p>A preliminary investigation found that the suspect allegedly brandished the knife and accused the juvenile of theft. The incident began at the Clinton dock on Whidbey Island, and the weapon brandishing occurred as the ferry sailed to Mukilteo, Fortino said.</p> <p>After a search of the suspect, no weapon was located.</p> <p>However, a search located a knife aboard the Kittitas in the men's restroom, which matched the description of the one that was displayed during the confrontation.</p> <p>"The investigation continues and once completed, charges will be forwarded to the Island County prosecutor for review," Fortino said in a prepared statement.</p> <p>The incident delayed the ferry schedule by about 30 minutes. Sailings were returning to the normal schedule until early afternoon, when the Kittitas was removed from service to repair problems with the steering gear hatch.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Mexican cartels infiltrating Texas
SOURCE	http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/New-report-shows-how-Mexican-cartels-are-12320888.php
GIST	<p>Mexican cartels smuggle more drugs into the U.S. than any other criminal group, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration said in a new report.</p> <p>The 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment released in October lists six cartels as having major influences across the country and Texas.</p> <p>Cartels' influence in Texas is far-reaching, affecting cities hundreds of miles from the state's border with Mexico.</p> <p>San Antonio is the only city in the state with a drug trade controlled by the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion, which deals mostly with methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and marijuana, according to the DEA.</p> <p>The Gulf Cartel has a hold on cities in Texas' tip and coastal bend. McAllen, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Galveston, Houston and Beaumont are impacted most by the Gulf Cartel which mostly brings marijuana and cocaine into the area, according to the DEA. Drugs smuggled through the Gulf Cartel are mostly brought in through the area between the Rio Grande Valley and South Padre Island.</p> <p>Every week in Houston, a relative of a Gulf Cartel leader receives 100 kilograms of cocaine, according to the DEA.</p> <p>Moving West, Los Zetas control two cities and the Juarez Cartel has a hold on Alpine, Midland, El Paso and Lubbock.</p> <p>While the arrests of two Los Zetas leaders has weakened the cartel's influence on Eagle Pass and Laredo, its presence is still felt because of members who have assumed control, bringing cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and</p>

	<p>marijuana into Texas.</p> <p>The Sinaloa Cartel, formerly run by prison escape artist Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, is most found in Dallas, Lubbock and Fort Worth, according to the DEA.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Baltimore: cop shot in head; manhunt
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/15/police-officer-shot-in-west-baltimore/
GIST	<p>BALTIMORE — A homicide detective with the Baltimore police force was shot in the head Wednesday while working in a troubled area of the city grappling with high crime rates.</p> <p>Outside the hospital where the gravely wounded 18-year veteran was fighting for his life, Police Commissioner Kevin Davis said a manhunt was underway for a “cold, callous killer” who shot the detective who was “just doing his job.”</p> <p>Federal agencies were offering a \$60,000 reward for information leading to the gunman’s arrest. The officer wasn’t identified, but Davis said he has a wife and two children.</p> <p>“This is a dangerous profession. This is a dangerous job. Police officers know that at any given time they could confront someone who wants to do them harm, and that’s exactly what happened tonight,” Davis said, adding that it would be a “long night” for investigators seeking “every bit of evidence.”</p> <p>Dr. Thomas Scalea, chief of the University of Maryland Medical Center’s Shock Trauma Center, said the injured officer was on life support in the intensive care unit.</p> <p>Wednesday’s shooting of the police officer comes amid a particularly violent period in Baltimore: So far this year, the city of roughly 620,000 inhabitants has seen more than 300 homicides.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Thieves draining gas from school vans
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/818407/thieves-draining-gas-from-school-vans-in-west-seattle/
GIST	<p>WEST SEATTLE – Two West Seattle schools say thieves are siphoning gas out of their vans.</p> <p>Hope Lutheran School and Seattle Lutheran High School share a parking lot and school officials tell KIRO7 five of their vans are repeatedly emptied.</p> <p>“Our insurance company is helping us as well with some preventative measures, but it’s a drain on us,” said Seattle Lutheran High School executive director Dave Meyer.</p> <p>Meyer said their vans have been emptied the last few weeks, most recently on Monday or Tuesday evening.</p> <p>He added that the costs are starting to add up and the nonprofit school is not the only one paying for the costs.</p> <p>“We have to pass on that to our parents, and they’re already paying some tuition,” said Meyer.</p> <p>Officials from Hope Lutheran school did not want a formal interview, but told KIRO7 in a statement:</p> <p>“It was an unfortunate incident to have occurred, and we’re grateful for our quick acting staff and that our students were not impacted in any way by this. The vehicle is currently being fixed and will hopefully be back in service very soon.”</p> <p>A West Seattle mechanic estimated that Hope Lutheran’s van repairs could amount to nearly \$1,000.</p>

	<p>That is because thieves punctured a hole in the gas tank, thus a replacement is needed.</p> <p>And vans outside of King County have also recently had gas siphoned from them.</p> <p>Last month, officials at the Boys & Girls Club in Snohomish said they had been hit ten times.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 NY police: 'miracle' more weren't shot
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/8b0dc5abd6e7409ba654ab9722174a47/Police:-'Miracle'-more-weren't-shot-by-rifle-toting-man
GIST	<p>CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (AP) — It's a "miracle" more people weren't hurt when a man dressed in camouflage, wearing body armor and armed with two rifles sprayed a retail store with bullets, wounding one man, before being tackled by police, authorities said.</p> <p>Police in Cheektowaga, near Buffalo, said the gunfire erupted around 2:45 p.m. Tuesday outside a Dollar General store. The gunman fired repeatedly at the store's entrance from outside while several customers and employees were inside, police Chief David Zack said.</p> <p>When police arrived, witnesses pointed out the gunman, who attempted to run away before being tackled by the officers a short distance from the store, located in a stand-alone building on a side street in a commercial district. No other shots were fired during his capture, police aid.</p> <p>A 53-year-old Cheektowaga man suffered a gunshot wound to his shoulder, officials said. Police haven't said if he was a customer or a store employee.</p> <p>Police identified the suspect as Travis Green, 29, of Buffalo. His mother said her son and his wife had recently broken up, but police said they were still trying to determine a motive for what Zack called an "unprovoked attack."</p> <p>Zack said there was initial confusion over the exact location of the Dollar General because there are six of them in Cheektowaga, a sprawling suburb just east of Buffalo.</p> <p>"It is a miracle I'm not at this podium reading the names of the dead," Zack said Tuesday. Considering the number of rounds that hit the store, those inside were "clearly were extremely lucky," the police chief said.</p> <p>A pump-action, AR-15-style rifle was used to fire at least 20 rounds during the shooting, police said at a Wednesday news conference. Another 850 rounds and what appeared to be a semi-automatic rifle with ammunition magazines were found in his car, police said. (Authorities had earlier described both weapons as being semi-automatic rifles.)</p> <p>Green was arraigned Wednesday morning in town court on charges that included attempted murder, assault, criminal use of a firearm and resisting arrest. He pleaded not guilty and was ordered held in the Erie County Jail without bail.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Calif. gunman was out on bail for assault
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/0eaca5a9bc86433fb8706207ec81862a/California-gunman-who-killed-4,-wounded-10-was-out-on-bail
GIST	<p>RANCHO TEHAMA RESERVE, Calif. (AP) — The gunman behind a rampage in Northern California was out on bail charged with stabbing a neighbor, others had complained about him firing hundreds of rounds from his house, and he had been the subject of a domestic violence call the day before the attack.</p>

Yet Kevin Neal was free and able to use a semi-automatic rifle and two handguns Tuesday to shoot 14 people, killing four, in seven different locations across his rural community, including an elementary school, before he died in a shootout with police.

It's not yet clear what the terms of Neal's bail were, and whether he would have been allowed to possess and fire the weapons on his property at the end of a dirt road in Rancho Tehama Reserve. Nor did sheriff's officials give details on the domestic violence call.

But his many contacts with authorities raised questions of why he was out of custody and able to go on the 45-minute rampage that began with the killing of two neighbors in an apparent act of revenge before he went looking for random victims.

Cristal Caravez and her father live across a ravine from the roadway where the gunman and his first victims lived.

She said they and others heard constant gunfire from the area of the gunman's house, but couldn't say for sure it was him firing.

"You could hear the yelling. He'd go off the hinges," she said. The shooting, "it would be during the day, during the night, I mean, it didn't matter."

She and her father, who is president of the homeowners association, said neighbors would complain to the sheriff's department, which referred the complaints back to the homeowners association.

"The sheriff wouldn't do anything about it," said Juan Caravez.

The gunman's sister, Sheridan Orr, said her brother had struggled with mental illness throughout his life and at times had a violent temper.

She said Neal had "no business" owning firearms.

Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said the shooter was facing charges of assaulting one of the feuding neighbors in January and that she had a restraining order against him.

Johnston did not comment on the shooter's access to firearms.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Calif. rampage shooter known to police
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tehama-county-shooter-suspect-details-kevin-neal/
GIST	<p>Police in Northern California say the gunman in a deadly shooting rampage was feuding with his neighbors. They were his first victims. He targeted seven locations in the rural community of Rancho Tehama, including an elementary school that went on lockdown before he came in.</p> <p>Four people were killed in the assault that lasted 45 minutes and 10 more were injured, including at least one young student. Police killed the suspected shooter, Kevin Janson Neal.</p> <p>They say he chose random targets and stole two vehicles during the rampage. Officers recovered one semi-automatic rifle and two handguns. One of the stolen vehicles, a white truck with bullet holes in the windshield, was removed from the area Tuesday night, reports CBS News correspondent Jamie Yuccas.</p> <p>Neal was known to authorities and had at least one prior arrest. His neighbors had complained he had fired multiple rounds for days before this rampage that ended up at this elementary school.</p>

Armed with at least three guns and a ballistic vest, the shooter began his rampage just before 8:00 a.m., killing two of his neighbors. He then stole their truck, and began driving toward a nearby elementary school – shooting randomly at people along the way.

Sarah Gonzales had just dropped off her daughter, when the gunman blocked her car.

"He pretty much stopped me and shot at me three times through his windshield," Gonzales said.

When he stopped firing, she says he continued toward the school. School officials heard gunshots and made a critical decision to lock it down.

"The quick action of those school officials. There is no doubt in my mind, saved countless lives," said Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston.

The gunman tried to enter the school, but couldn't get in. He fired about 30 rounds in six minutes before he took off.

"He did shoot at a number of classrooms which resulted in the injury of at least one or two students that I'm aware of," the sheriff said.

A short time later, a patrol car rammed the suspect's vehicle. Officers then opened fire and killed him.

Officials are still trying to learn about the shooter's past, including an alleged assault earlier this year against one of the neighbors he killed Tuesday. The motive for the shooting is still unclear.

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HEADLINE	11/15 Police: MS-13 hitting ill-equipped towns
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/11/15/ms-13-terrorizing-american-small-towns-and-suburbs-ill-equipped-to-fight-back.html
GIST	<p>Fairfax County is a wealthy suburb in Virginia dotted with McMansions, upscale shopping malls and quiet cul-de-sacs.</p> <p>But it is dealing with an issue not typically seen in the suburbs – a vicious gang infiltrating its schools and neighborhoods.</p> <p>At least two teenagers were savagely killed. The culprit, some believe: MS-13 gang members.</p> <p>Away from urban areas that have seen a rise in gang-related activity, MS-13's brutality is turning up in small towns and communities across the country – places not always equipped or ready to deal with the growing and alarming threat.</p> <p>In the last year or so, police say, the gang known for its execution-style shootings and machete-hacking deaths has cropped up in a tiny Colorado town, two Virginia suburbs and Annapolis, Md. In parts of Long Island, N.Y. MS-13 is terrorizing once-sleepy neighborhoods that are now experiencing a scourge of violent deaths.</p> <p>The worst is being felt in suburban areas that lack the resources and money to fight back against an international and well-funded organization known for its extreme brutality.</p> <p>“When it comes to smaller departments and less populated areas, those areas generally have less resources, so it becomes much more important to approach [the problem] from a task force or inter-agency model,” Patrick J. Lechleitner, special agent in charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s homeland security investigations in Washington, D.C., told Fox News.</p>

In multiple speeches over the past few months, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said the federal government will use “whatever laws we have” to eradicate MS-13, noting that the group leaves “misery, devastation and death in their wake.” Those promises have yet to trickle down to the local level, experts say.

MS-13 was started by Central American immigrants, mainly from El Salvador, in Los Angeles in the 1980s.

But the gang has now expanded its reach, making inroads even in rural stretches of the country.

Angel Ramos, 36, was arrested by Colorado authorities on Friday after he allegedly stabbed a woman with screwdriver and ran over her leg. Ramos, a member of MS-13, was previously deported and was wanted for murder in El Salvador, according to investigators. The attack took place outside Hillrose, which has a population of roughly 264, according to the latest census.

The communities around Washington, D.C. have also become a hot bed of gang activity in recent years, and authorities there are struggling over how to deal with it.

“Northern Virginia is affluent, has plenty of resources, police and money. In areas where there are less of those things, there’s less money to combat any threat,” Lechleitner said. “When you see a transnational gang moving into an area, that can stress their resources.”

A 16-year-old Prince William County teen who was found after allegedly being abducted by an MS-13 member recently went missing again. In a separate incident, police in Springfield, Virginia charged two adults and three 17-year-olds with murder in connection with the “savagely, brutal” killing of 15-year-old Damaris Reyes Rivas. Although police have not yet identified the killers, Rivas’ mother believes it was MS-13.

On Long Island in October, the bodies of two 16-year-old boys and one 19-year-old were discovered in wooded areas and police believe MS-13 members were behind the killings. That discovery brings the total number of suspected MS-13 victims found on Long Island over the last two years to 25.

Law enforcement in those areas say they are doing all they can to fight back against MS-13, but they are hampered by funding cuts that threaten to undermine their efforts.

“The big challenge is always funding. There’s a lot of rhetoric,” Jay Lanham, executive director of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, told Fox News. “The problem is, we’re not seeing funding at the local level to combat this issue.”

He noted, however, that it’s not just a law enforcement issue.

“The police can’t solve it alone,” Lanham said. “We need the intervention, education and prevention.”

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HEADLINE	11/15 Chicago hits 600 homicides
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/11/15/chicago-hits-600-homicides-as-man-25-is-shot-in-head.html
GIST	<p>A 25-year-old man, who was shot multiple times in the head, reportedly became Chicago's 600th homicide, solidifying the Illinois city's place as the murder capital of America.</p> <p>Two other men were injured by the shooter, who opened fire from a vehicle located on the 500 block of South Lockwood in the West Side Austin neighborhood, according to Chicago Police and the Cook County medical examiner's office.</p> <p>Neither man suffered fatal injuries and both were stabilized at Stronger Hospital, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.</p>

	<p>The victims, whose names have not been released, were among five people who were shot in the South and West Sides of Chicago within just seven hours on Tuesday.</p> <p>With 600 homicides in 2017 already, Chicago remains the murder capital of America, according to data from the Chicago Sun-Times, though the homicide rate is down from 2016, when 762 people were killed.</p> <p>By the end of October, the Chicago Police Department had already recorded 2,445 shootings.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Court issues first of kind evidence rule
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/should-a-jury-know-a-persons-immigration-status-washingtons-high-court-says-no-with-groundbreaking-rule/
GIST	<p>After carpenter Alex Salas slipped from a ladder on a construction site about 15 years ago, suffering 10 fractures, he sued the site’s scaffolding subcontractor because the ladder did not meet code requirements.</p> <p>A jury in 2006 decided the company was negligent, but did not award Salas any money. Nearly a decade later, after appeals, a new King County jury awarded Salas \$2.6 million in the case.</p> <p>The two juries heard the same case — with a critical difference. The first jury knew he was in the country illegally; the second did not.</p> <p>In 2006, the defense admitted evidence about Salas’ immigration status. Years before his injuries, Salas’ visa had expired.</p> <p>His lawyers believed that information prejudiced the jury and should not have been included.</p> <p>The state Supreme Court agreed in 2010, saying the danger of unfair prejudice outweighed the evidence’s value, calling the lower court’s decision to admit the evidence “an abuse of discretion” and giving Salas the new trial that awarded him millions.</p> <p>Last Wednesday, the state Supreme Court took a unique step that proponents believe would have prevented Salas’ difficulties receiving a fair trial.</p> <p>The court approved a rule that makes evidence about a person’s immigration status “generally inadmissible” in civil and criminal courts statewide unless lawyers establish a compelling reason to raise the issue. The rule will take effect statewide next September.</p> <p>Washington is believed to be the first state in the nation to approve such a rule.</p> <p>“It’s very, very progressive and somewhat radical in the sense that this is the first of its kind I’ve seen in this country,” said Ann Murphy, a Gonzaga University law professor who teaches evidence law. Murphy supported the change.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 WWU: string of crime incidents
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/wwu-student-groped-on-campus-in-latest-in-string-of-incidents/647900192
GIST	<p>Police are investigating a report of a late-night assault on the Western Washington University campus.</p> <p>A student says she was groped while walking from the Wilson Library to Nash Hall on the east High Street sidewalk early Tuesday morning.</p>

	<p>As the student approached the crosswalk intersection, where the emergency phone is located, she heard a person run up behind her.</p> <p>She then felt two hands, which appeared to be from a male with light colored skin, reach around her and grasp her breasts.</p> <p>When she elbowed the suspect, she heard a deep male voice make a grunting sound.</p> <p>The suspect then ran southbound into the trees toward Wilson Library. The student went to her residence hall and contacted a friend after the incident.</p> <p>The attack is the latest in a string of incidents at the university.</p> <p>Since the start of the school year, there have been more than 20 reported crimes since July that are now under investigation -- indecent exposure, serial flashing and assault.</p> <p>Police provided a suspect sketch for some of the incidents, but said some descriptions of suspects in the incidents have varied.</p> <p>Bellingham police do not believe all of the incidents are connected, though some of them may be.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Calif. gunman was locked out of school
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/shooting-reported-northern-california-elementary-school/story?id=51143319
GIST	<p>The gunman who went on an apparently random shooting spree in rural Northern California allegedly left an elementary school after he failed to access classrooms there, authorities said.</p> <p>Four people were killed and 10 more were wounded in a series of shootings Tuesday morning in Tehama County. The shootings took place in seven locations, including at the Rancho Tehama School, an elementary school in Corning, about 130 miles north of Sacramento, police said, but no children were killed.</p> <p>Ten people were hospitalized, including at least two children, police said. One student was shot inside a classroom at the school, while the other injured child was shot while sitting in a truck when the shooter drove by, police said.</p> <p>The shooter rammed a fence at the gate of the school before entering the grounds with a semi-automatic rifle, Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said in a press conference Tuesday afternoon. The school's gate had been locked, the Corning Union Elementary School District said in a statement.</p> <p>The suspect was wearing a vest with clips attached to it, similar to ones often worn by U.S. soldiers, and fired 30 or so rounds at a number of classrooms, Johnston said. The gunman shot out windows and through walls, and broken glass led to some injuries, the school district said. The student who sustained a gunshot wound is in stable condition.</p> <p>It appears that the gunman became frustrated when he could not gain entry inside the classrooms, so he re-entered his vehicle and continued the shooting spree in the streets.</p> <p>The incident could have been much worse had it not been for the quick thinking of staff at the elementary school, Johnston said. The school district commended the school's staff for their "courageous and professional response" to the "terrible incident."</p>

	<p>"The school was able to go on lockdown very quickly and effectively, which prevented any further injury or violence," the school district said.</p> <p>Police said the motive is unknown but added that the gunman appeared to directly target the Rancho Tehama School and shot into the school multiple times, according to police.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 Burglars target Bellevue neighborhood
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/burglars-target-bellevue-neighborhood/648415820
GIST	<p>BELLEVUE, Wash. - Detectives with the Bellevue Police Department are investigating several burglaries in Bellevue's Newport neighborhood. A burglar was captured on surveillance video going through one of the victim's cars.</p> <p>In the video, you can see a man with a flashlight scour a car for more than three minutes. It's clear he's taking his time.</p> <p>Two cars were broken into around 3:30 a.m. Saturday, police said. The two burglars also broke a window and entered a garage on 113th Place. Investigators say they ransacked the garage and stole as many valuable items as possible before driving off with the car in the garage.</p> <p>According to investigators, the suspects arrived in a stolen truck and left it behind in order to steal another car. It happened twice in Bellevue Saturday morning.</p> <p>"It's an unusual night," Officer Seth Tyler with the Bellevue Police Department says, "We're fortunate that we do have some evidence that the suspect left behind."</p> <p>The number of car thefts have remained consistent in the city of Bellevue in the past year, Tyler said.</p> <p>After experiencing a spike in car prowls earlier this year, the department dedicated a task force to combat the problem. So far, prowls are down by 8 percent.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/16 La. man freed from prison after 46yrs
SOURCE	https://www.aol.com/article/news/2017/11/16/louisiana-man-released-from-prison-after-nearly-46-years-behind-bars/23279287/
GIST	<p>After spending nearly 46 years in a Louisiana prison for a crime he says he didn't commit, Wilbert Jones got his first taste of freedom on Wednesday — and it tasted a lot like gumbo.</p> <p>Shortly after his release from prison on Wednesday, Jones, 65, shared his plans now that he was a free man.</p> <p>"Some gumbo and some good potato salad and some good dessert," said Jones, who was arrested at 19. "Enjoy my little life I have left and speak to young kids and tell them to go the right way and not this way."</p> <p>"This ain't where it's at," he added.</p> <p>Jones was convicted of kidnapping and raping a nurse who was abducted from outside a Baton Rouge hospital in October 1971. In 1974, He was given a life sentence without the possibility of parole.</p> <p>His case was taken on by the Innocence Project in 2003 and one of their investigators found that a serial rapist had committed a nearly identical crime only four weeks later. That crime wasn't shared with Jones's</p>

	<p>attorneys.</p> <p>The nurse, who died in 2008, was also the only witness who testified against Jones. She identified him in a lineup three months after his arrest — but noted that Jones was shorter and had a different voice.</p> <p>Because the information wasn't shared and due to the inconsistencies in the nurse's testimony, Judge Richard Anderson said the conviction shouldn't stand and granted Jones a \$2,000 bond. He was released on Wednesday and was met by his family, who has long fought for his freedom.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Why do mass shooters target children?
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/11/15/rancho-tehama-why-do-mass-shooters-target-children-strangers/869306001/
GIST	<p>REDDING, Calif. — For most, it's a question that defies reason: Why does someone like the suspect in Tuesday's Rancho Tehama rampage try to kill everyone in sight, even strangers and children?</p> <p>Psychologists interviewed by the Record Searchlight Wednesday said the shooter likely is either trying — as will an animal — to recapture dominance or honor through violence; or is subscribing to extremist ideology that justifies the violence, or is so paranoid that the person thinks everyone is conspiring against him.</p> <p>"You are becoming life or death," said Arie Kruglanski, distinguished psychology professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. "That is a way of, in some strange way, asserting your dominance and importance. And these people are probably desperate for that kind of feeling."</p> <p>Investigators haven't figured out whether that's what motivated the Rancho Tehama shooter, identified by police as 44-year-old Kevin Janson Neal. They say Neal shot his wife Monday, then targeted people at random throughout the tiny community southwest of Red Bluff on Tuesday, killing four more of them and injuring 10, including children.</p> <p>Most shooters don't have a history of serious mental illness, and — as in Neal's case — studies have found more than half of their rampages start with a domestic incident, said J. Reid Meloy, a forensic psychologist and consultant for the FBI.</p> <p>"Their actual lives are swimming in misery," he said. "This is a final statement."</p> <p>For some mass killers, feelings of injustice from those personal or workplace spats are so severe that it warps their sense of rational thought. That means seemingly random victims may actually be part of a "paranoid pseudo-community," a group that can include strangers and even children because the suspect sees conspiracy everywhere, Meloy said.</p> <p>"There's an active belief that there are other people conspiring against them, and that tends to feed the anger and feed the suspicions and hyper-vigilance," he said. "From the outside, it looks like these strangers are randomly selected. But from inside the paranoid perspective, they are a part of this community of conspirators ... That could involve just opportunistic victims that are out on the street."</p> <p>Targeting children may also tie back to the dominance theory, and it's possible the children weren't targeted themselves but to make their parents suffer, Kruglanski said</p> <p>"He wanted to hurt other people, and therefore assert his great power," Kruglanski said. "And what can hurt other people more than killing their children?"</p> <p>Another theory about children: If Neal was deeply unhappy, he could have just been bitter that kids are usually carefree.</p>

"In contrast to the happiness of the children, he may feel particularly unhappy and humiliated," Kruglanski said. "And, 'I'm going to show them that I am the power the make them unhappy.'"

Still, Richard Cooter, chair of The George Washington University's forensic psychology program, said each case is different, and you can't necessarily inject logic into a deranged mind.

"You can't logically figure it out," he said. "Clearly, little kids in the school have nothing to do with this. And so at that point, it's just sort of generalized rage."

Cooter said it's possible Neal killing his wife made him realize he would be going to prison, so he figured he may as well die — but get his revenge on a society perceived as unfair first.

"You can probably assume that, whatever it was, it got out of control, and at the time that it was really out of control, that he just decided to go out in a blaze of glory," Cooter said.

Kruglanski believes America's "cultural narrative" around guns can foster the feelings that mass shooters dwell on.

"In our culture, where guns are used for self-protection, self-protection is a way of disallowing others to humiliate you, to take your property, to divest you of your rights," he said. "Self-protection is more than self-protection: It's assertion of your honor and, in our country, unfortunately, we have this idea that guns are for protection, for honor, for significance. And I think that adds fuel to the rage and to the sense of empowerment that guns will bring you."

How do we make the violence stop?

Preventing mass killings with a profile is challenging, Cooter said.

"There are a lot of people who have grievances, who are loners, who will never hurt anybody. And so if you said, 'There's your profile,' you'd end up ... identifying all sorts of people who will never be dangerous to anybody," he said.

Another problem: Meloy said people with mental illnesses that cause paranoia can be treated with medications, but there's no such remedy for someone whose ingrained world-view is behind it, like in those with paranoid personality disorder.

"For the individuals who are paranoid, they often present great difficulties for law enforcement because they will engage in behaviors that will (warrant) law enforcement attention, but then confirm their paranoid beliefs," he said. "They're very, very difficult cases for law enforcement to manage."

Tehama County authorities have already said as much about Neal, whom they had on their radar as "not law enforcement-friendly."

"It appears that there were a lot of warning behaviors in this particular case," Meloy said. "Fundamentally, the mass murderers cannot be predicted specifically, but there are steps that can be taken to prevent them ... (including) a concerted effort to both involve law enforcement as well as involve mental health professionals in individuals that raise concern in people's minds."

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HEADLINE	11/16 Official: school custodian diverted shooter
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/11/16/rancho-tehama-shooting-custodian-diverted-shooter-saved-lives/869342001/
GIST	CORNING, Calif. — A custodian at Rancho Tehama Elementary School is being credited with diverting

the attention of Tuesday's shooter just long enough to give teachers the seconds they needed to protect their students and save lives.

Richard Fitzpatrick, superintendent of the Corning Union Elementary School District, praised all of his staff at the rural school during the community rampage by 44-year-old Kevin Neal, but singled out the courage of his head custodian while school officials were finishing a lockdown.

The gunman did shoot 6-year-old student Alejandro "Alex" Hernandez in the chest and right foot as he indiscriminately sprayed gunfire at school buildings. Fitzpatrick said the boy was crouched under a classroom table during the shooting. He is in fair condition at University of California-Davis Medical Center.

The shooter also injured a parent and her son as they were on their way to school. The superintendent said that boy suffered minor injuries.

"The reason that I'm standing here today and I'm able to speak to you without breaking down and crying is because of the heroic efforts of our school staff," Fitzpatrick said at a Wednesday afternoon press conference.

Fitzpatrick provided a narrative of what happened at the school Tuesday morning based on what he saw on the school's surveillance video. He also said the head custodian asked Fitzpatrick not to give his name to the news media.

He said the school secretary and others heard a shot and immediately thereafter heard two more from some distance away. The gunman likely was firing a gun on his way to the school.

"At that time, immediately and without any instruction from law enforcement, our school staff went into lockdown," Fitzpatrick said.

Children outside on the playground and parents dropping off their children were whisked into classrooms and offices.

The head custodian was busy hustling students into a classroom when he poked his head around a building and drew the attention of the gunman. The school was only two-thirds of the way toward a complete lockdown when the gunman crashed a pickup through a fence and gate, jumped out and ran onto campus with a rifle.

As Fitzpatrick understands what happened next, the custodian made eye-to-eye contact with the shooter who then fired shots at him. But then the gunman seemed to have a problem with his gun jamming.

"There was something going on with the loading process of the weapon," Fitzpatrick said.

"The custodian's actions in diverting the attention from the shooter at that time gave us the much-needed seconds to complete the (lockdown) process," he said. "That amount of seconds was critical."

Fitzpatrick said between eight and 10 seconds elapsed between the time the lockdown was complete and when the shooter appeared in the school's quad. "At that time, he could be clearly seen in the surveillance video shooting windows, shooting walls and shooting doors," he said.

Neal looked around and tried opening the locked doors to the classrooms and the main office. He fired again then went inside an unlocked bathroom, but no one was inside.

Fitzpatrick said the video shows Neal walking into a field, loading a magazine and firing into the fenced-off forested neighborhood, apparently in frustration and then driving off.

Neal was shot and killed by police after he drove away from the school on Rancho Tehama Road.

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HEADLINE	11/15 'Dangerous' Hawaii patient caught in Calif.
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/escaped-psychiatric-patient-hawaii-captured-california/story?id=51162406
GIST	<p>An "extremely dangerous" psychiatric patient and alleged killer who escaped in Hawaii was captured in northern California today, the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office said.</p> <p>Randall Saito, who was committed to the Hawaii State Hospital on Oahu in 1981 after being acquitted of first-degree murder by reason of insanity, left the hospital outside Honolulu Sunday morning and never returned, according to the Honolulu Police Department.</p> <p>Police have determined that, shortly after escaping, Saito took a taxi from Kaneohe to Honolulu, where he chartered a plane to Maui. He boarded another plane from there, police said.</p> <p>Saito arrived in San Jose, California, on Sunday night, police said.</p> <p>Saito was arrested in Stockton at about 10:30 a.m. PT this morning, the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office said, "as the result of a tip received from an alert taxi cab driver."</p> <p>The Hawaii State Department of Health, which runs the Hawaii State Hospital, said earlier it was "cooperating with law enforcement officials to provide them with the information they need in order to conduct their search for the missing patient."</p> <p>"The incident is under investigation and details about a patient's status are restricted by state and federal privacy laws specific to individuals receiving mental health and substance abuse treatment," the department said earlier in a statement. "The Hawaii Department of Health recognizes the public's need and right to know more information, but we ask for their patience as this is an ongoing criminal investigation.</p> <p>"The Hawaii State Hospital is a 202-bed facility and is the only state psychiatric hospital to provide inpatient psychiatric services for court-ordered individuals within a safe and therapeutic environment," the department added.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 UCLA players admit to shoplifting
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/ucla-basketball-players-admit-shoplifting-china-trump/story?id=51164270&cid=clicksource_4380645_1_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>The three UCLA basketball players detained in China last week have admitted to shoplifting and thanked President Donald Trump for helping them return to the U.S.</p> <p>The players are suspended indefinitely as UCLA reviews the situation, Coach Steve Alford said, adding they will not travel with the team and will not suit up for home games.</p> <p>Last week, while in China for a game against Georgia Tech, the three players, LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley, were detained for questioning following shoplifting allegations. The rest of the UCLA team returned home without them on Saturday. Ball, Hill and Riley returned to Los Angeles on Tuesday.</p> <p>At today's press conference Riley said he takes "full responsibility for the mistake I have made -- shoplifting," and said he is "embarrassed" and "ashamed."</p> <p>Riley thanked the Chinese police and government for taking care of them and he also thanked Trump and the U.S. government for intervening "on our behalf."</p>

	<p>"We really appreciate you helping us out," he said.</p> <p>Ball apologized for "stealing" from the stores in China, calling it a "stupid decision."</p> <p>Ball said he "didn't exercise my best judgment," adding, "I've learned my lesson."</p> <p>He also thanked Trump and the U.S. government for helping and said he takes "full responsibility" for his actions.</p> <p>Hill admitted to shoplifting and thanked the president as well, describing his actions as "stupid" and "childish."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/15 Calif. gunman killed wife; then rampage
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/15/us/california-tehama-county-shootings/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Kevin Neal's deadly shooting rampage in Northern California may have been prompted by the fatal shooting of his wife, authorities said Wednesday.</p> <p>Neal, identified as the gunman who killed four people in a string of shootings Tuesday, shot and killed his wife the previous night and concealed her body under a floor in his home, Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said.</p> <p>The discovery of the spouse's body brought the death toll to six, including the gunman.</p> <p>"We believe that's probably what started this whole event," Johnston said of the wife's shooting.</p> <p>Neal had been out of bail on an assault with a deadly weapon charge from January, officials said. Neal, 44, "was not law enforcement friendly" and authorities a number of times had come to his house after complaints that shots were fired from the property, Johnston said.</p> <p>Neal's sister told CNN's Sara Sidner that he had struggled with mental health issues for at least 20 years.</p> <p>"My mom spent a great deal of her time and nearly all her energy trying so hard to placate him," said Sheridan Orr, who was with her distraught mother in North Carolina.</p> <p>Neal's mental state began a steep decline about a year ago, said Orr, adding the family had tried to get him help.</p> <p>Before police shot him dead, Neal injured at least 10 others in a string of shootings that spanned at least seven sites in the small community of Rancho Tehama, west of Corning, police said. Those locations include a locked elementary school that the shooter fired into from the outside, injuring a boy.</p>
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