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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

Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	03/08 Protesters sue Portland for police clash
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/6-protesters-sue-portland-over-clashes-with-police/
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Six activists filed lawsuits Thursday against the city of Portland, asserting they were roughed up by police at various protests.</p> <p>Street activism and public marches are common in the progressive city, and the lawsuits alleging battery note the long history of clashes between police and protesters. Attorneys for the plaintiffs said in court documents that the Portland Police Bureau has become “increasingly militarized” in its tactics.</p> <p>Five of the six lawsuits seek \$10,000 plus attorney fees. The other suit, filed by a retiree who suffered a broken nose, asks for \$200,000.</p> <p>City Attorney Tracy Reeve and a spokesman for Mayor Ted Wheeler said the city does not comment on pending litigation.</p> <p>The clashes outlined in the lawsuits happened between October 2016 and June 2017, a tense period highlighted by Donald Trump’s election, the shooting death of a black teenager by Portland police and the fatal stabbings of two men aboard a light-rail train.</p> <p>The plaintiffs said protesters exercising their First Amendment rights are generally met by police in riot gear who are too quick to use pepper spray and other crowd-control weapons.</p> <p>Peggy Zebroski, a 5-foot-1 grandmother who frequently calls for social justice, said she sustained her nose injury in February 2017 while protesting the police shooting of Quatrice Hayes. She had carried the banner of “Don’t Shoot Portland” into the street — blocking traffic — when confronted by officers on bicycles.</p> <p>She and others didn’t budge from the road until the bike officers were joined by police in riot gear.</p> <p>“We took to the sidewalk in confusion,” said Zebroski, 67. “There, I was abruptly pulled from the curb and slammed into the pavement. As I lay face down on the wet street, an officer quite deliberately kneeled on my head, grinding it into the pavement.”</p> <p>Zebroski was charged with disorderly conduct, interfering with a peace officer and resisting arrest. The charges were later dropped.</p> <p>Plaintiffs’ attorneys and the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon said they filed the lawsuits in Multnomah County instead of federal court to obtain a quicker resolution.</p> <p>“We want to send a clear message: Portland police must end its disproportionate response to protests, and commit to using safe and effective tactics of de-escalation,” said Mat dos Santos, the ACLU of Oregon legal director.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 US: Mexico threat unrelated to ferries
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Travel/wireStory/mexico-playa-del-carmen-safe-president-53607378
GIST	<p>The U.S. Embassy in Mexico said Thursday that a security alert about the Caribbean resort of Playa del Carmen was not related to an explosion on a ferry that injured at least two dozen people.</p>

The embassy did not specify what kind of security threat it had been informed of in the resort, which is near Cancun, Cozumel and Tulum.

But it did say that "we do not have information relating the ferry explosion to the security threat in Playa del Carmen."

That threatened to complicate matters for one of Mexico's key tourism sites, since the ferry threats had at least already been known and, according to Mexican officials, were related to "business issues" with the ferry company.

Now it appears a different threat also exists. The area has also been hit, albeit infrequently, by drug violence, and the violent Jalisco cartel has been seen moving into the area.

But it was not clear if that was in any way related to the security alert issued Wednesday by the Embassy.

The alert included an indefinite ban on travel to Playa del Carmen by U.S. government employees. It said the U.S. consular agency there "will be closed until further notice."

Mexican officials said the city is safe, despite the U.S. alert.

"All tourism and economic activity in Playa del Carmen continues in a normal manner," the government of Quintana Roo state said in a statement, noting that hotel occupancy at the resort was 80 percent.

It said President Enrique Pena Nieto attended an ocean conservation conference in Playa del Carmen on Thursday.

"We do not know why the U.S. government decided to emit this alert," the state government said.

A Feb. 21 explosion on a ferry that runs between Playa del Carmen and Cozumel injured 19 Mexicans and at least five U.S. citizens.

After that, the U.S. Embassy barred employees from taking the ferries to Cozumel, one of the world's busiest cruise ship ports of call.

And last week, undetonated explosive devices were found on another boat owned by the same ferry company.

State prosecutors say the ferry incidents are under investigation. Local media say officials are examining several possible motives, including the possibility the bombing may have been related to an insurance policy.

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HEADLINE	03/08 Utah fusion center tackles opioid trend
SOURCE	https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900012365/this-utah-fusion-center-tries-to-get-predictive-about-opioid-trends.html
GIST	<p>SALT LAKE CITY — They were panicky, confused. Some slurred their speech. Others had hallucinations. Convulsions. Seizures.</p> <p>All said they had recently ingested cannabidiol oil that they'd bought at local smoke shops, though that didn't make sense to the nurses and pharmacists answering the phones late last year at the Utah Poison Control Center. CBD oil is a nonpsychoactive component of the marijuana plant. Federal law technically bars smoke shops from selling it, but the law is widely disregarded, and CBD oil isn't known to be dangerous. What these callers described sounded dangerous.</p>

Next, the substance was sent to the Utah State Crime Lab, where tests revealed it wasn't CBD oil at all, but a previously unseen type of synthetic cannabinoid, similar to drugs known widely as spice. The Department of Public Safety then warned smoke shop owners, health workers, police officers and the wider public: Steer clear of purported CBD oils. And on Tuesday, the Legislature passed a bill sponsored by Cedar City Republican Sen. Evan Vickers to order the state's Department of Agriculture to make sure any product labeled CBD oil is actually what it claims to be.

The speed of that systemic reaction, going from unprecedented problem to a possible solution in just a few months, is owed partly to the timing of Utah's annual legislative session. But officials say it's also due to a new framework for sharing information, built using state law enforcement resources that were originally meant to combat terrorism, not drug use.

The Sandy-based Statewide Information and Analysis Center opened in 2007 as part of a nationwide network of so-called "fusion centers," established with support from the Department of Homeland Security to gather and share intelligence after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Utah and a growing number of states have since realized another use for them, though: gathering and sharing intelligence about illicit drugs.

By piecing together the vast quantity of available data collected each day about overdoses and drug seizures, fusion centers have been able to spot emerging threats that the data collectors might miss as they await monthly or even annual updates from their partners.

The value of such insights is increasing as people abuse more and more types or variants of drugs — some of them acquired through online cryptocurrency transactions that are more familiar to drug-seeking teenagers than many in law enforcement. Fentanyl and other opioids are so potent they can endanger first responders and investigators who unwittingly breathe them in, while the risks of new synthetic drugs like last year's CBD oil impostor may not be fully understood until they're seen at poison control centers, emergency rooms and coroner's offices.

By making quick sense of it all, fusion centers like Utah's can reduce the severity of overdose events — or even prevent them altogether.

New Jersey has an immense supply of highly pure white powder heroin, brought in by sea, air, rail and roads. The state's opioid trends are also among the nation's most alarming.

While fatal heroin overdoses more than doubled in Utah between 2011 and 2016, according to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation study, they increased by 650 percent in New Jersey. Over that time, that state also saw a 22-fold increase in overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

Yet, Juan Colon felt in the early days of the opioid epidemic, there was little real-time understanding of the crisis — where it was peaking, which batches were to blame and how to respond. So, Colon, who recently retired as a major with the New Jersey State Police, sowed the seeds for the nation's first Drug Monitoring Initiative.

The spark came to him years earlier, during a statewide assessment of phencyclidine, also known as PCP, angel dust, embalming fluid ... and a half-dozen other names that local police departments were using in their records, thereby muddying the overall picture of PCP use in the state.

Around 2009, Colon began to solicit as much information about drug overdoses as he could get his hands on — police seizures, crime lab analyses, coroner's reports, emergency responses and injections of overdose-reversal drugs. He reached out to crime labs, medical examiners, nearly 500 police departments and more than 200 EMS providers. Some had concerns. Some said no. But Colon persisted.

"OK, give me your email, and we're going to share whatever we have with you, anyway," he said he would tell them.

Whereas previously his department had waited years to receive some reports, long after trends had passed, now it had weekly and even daily updates. Doubters became devotees.

But it wasn't until 2013 that Colon received the state's blessing and the Drug Monitoring Initiative was formally established at the Regional Operations and Intelligence Center. By then, the data had already begun to demonstrate where heroin use was concentrated and how it was concentrated by age, gender and race. It also revealed previously invisible drug problems in rural areas, from where residents flocked to New Jersey's urban centers to find their fix.

Unlike the black tar heroin found in Utah and throughout the Western region, white powder heroin is easily mixed with fentanyl and other opioids that can increase its potency and reduce costs for producers. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times as potent as morphine and can cause respiratory problems even in minute quantities. Illegal drug manufacturers would be hard-pressed to guarantee, even if they wanted to, that a given dose containing fentanyl would not kill a user.

In early 2014, Colon saw a crime lab analysis of a powder that had been thought to be heroin but in fact only included fentanyl among active ingredients. When he asked the lab how frequently fentanyl was being mixed in with heroin, lab workers told him they stopped testing a sample once they identified heroin or another Schedule I drug. Colon instructed them that from then on, they should test each sample for all substances. Soon they saw that fentanyl was more prevalent than anybody had realized.

"Once we started getting the results, it opened our eyes," he said.

Colon's team also began to track and map the distinct dealer brands that were stamped onto the waxy, transparent paper folds that white powder heroin is sold in (black tar heroin, by comparison, is balled up and tied in tiny, indistinguishable and unstampable balloon scraps). When there was a spike in overdoses related to, say, "Bud Ice" or "Blue Magic," the fusion center issued targeted geographic alerts.

In early 2015, upon hearing that six people died using "Power Hour," "Taliban" and "Strike Dead" and that some had not responded to opioid overdose-reversal drugs, they issued an all-points buyer beware that those brands contained an unusual cocktail of compounds that in some cases didn't include any heroin.

New Jersey announced in February that it plans to ratchet up those information efforts by rolling out a real-time dashboard that will combine the monitoring initiative data with information from Consumer Affairs' prescription drug monitoring program, so that street-level activity and prescription abuse aren't treated as though they are separate narratives.

"The intangible is, 'OK, what did you prevent?' And it's hard to measure what you prevented," Colon said. "But we have such a better understanding of what's going on in the state."

Predict and prevent

Utah became one of the earliest adopters of New Jersey's increasingly popular model when Public Safety Commissioner Keith Squires heard a half-hour presentation from the Regional Operations and Intelligence Center while on a 2015 family vacation to the Garden State.

Squires said there had been several times he learned about drug-related incidents in newspapers, on TV or in multiagency meetings and thought to himself that his department might have done something if it had known sooner.

"We really, a lot of the times, get wrapped up in what's taking place in our area of responsibility, or our jurisdiction — this individual, this group, this criminal activity," Squires said. "But we have not been very good at sharing information."

The job of coordinating between public safety and its many partners in Utah's version of the Drug Monitoring Initiative falls to Stephen Gilley, a retired U.S. Air Force special agent who works as an

intelligence analyst at the Sandy fusion center.

Gilley started by working backward. After he negotiated memorandums of understanding to swap stats with federal, state and local partners, they collaborated on a historical review of drug data for a five-year period beginning in 2014. With that baseline established, Gilley began to distribute regular reports about fatal overdoses, hospitalizations, emergency room visits, poison control contacts, treatment admissions, submissions to the state crime lab, drug seizures and more.

None of it was new, per se. But “Steve will put out these reports, and we’re able to see it all concisely in one place,” said Sherrie Pace, outreach coordinator at the Utah Poison Control Center.

Utah’s illegal drug profile is fairly different from New Jersey’s. Black tar heroin isn’t so easily mixed with fentanyl and related opioids, so that’s less of a concern, nor does it come in branded packaging that can be tracked and mapped. But between the rise in opioid use, illicit pills, spice variants and bulk orders of online powders, the drug use landscape is as newly alien here as it once was in New Jersey.

After September 2016 reports of two fatal overdoses involving the synthetic opioid U-47700, or “pink,” drug monitoring reports went out to local law enforcement and emergency room staff, urging them to be on the lookout.

“We had seen (U-47700) in the East, on several overdoses and fatal overdoses, but this was kind of the first time we’d seen it here in Utah, and it was because of the relationships we’d built with this program that we were able to do that,” Gilley said.

Within days, two 13-year-old Park City boys, Grant Seaver and Ryan Ainsworth, were found dead from U-47700 overdoses. Although the new initiative hadn’t prevented the tragedy, the information helped responders quickly grasp what they were dealing with, and another recent monitoring report on dark web purchases guided local investigators who were searching the electronic devices of local teens for evidence.

Also in 2016 — before a large illicit fentanyl pill-pressing operation was discovered in the Cottonwood Heights home of alleged online drug kingpin Aaron Shamo — the monitoring initiative briefed the community about the dangers of not only purposely ingesting fentanyl and its analogs, but of accidental exposure.

Jennifer McNair, senior forensic scientist manager at the state crime lab, said lab workers wear a coat, safety glasses, gloves, hoods and sometimes face masks to handle fentanyl, and by rule they never handle it alone.

“We don’t see (those drugs) to the extent that the Northeast does, or the Eastern part of the United States,” McNair said, though the most recently released state data showed that fentanyl-related overdoses in Utah have increased by a smaller factor and jumped from 24 in 2015 to 41 in 2016. “However, these substances are so dangerous that one exposure in a massive amount can kill someone.”

The ultimate goal for the Drug Monitoring Initiative, said Department of Public Safety Col. Brian Redd, is to not only become more nimble and reactive, but to eventually collect and analyze data at such a sophisticated level that it can stop crises before they start.

It recently thought it had one such opportunity, amid the ongoing crackdown on lawbreaking around Salt Lake City’s downtown homeless shelter.

When the fusion center learned people had overdosed after using what they thought was spice — and that they had been revived somehow by overdose-reversal drugs that are only meant to work for opioids — it told first responders and residents “to just be careful,” Redd said. Officials still aren’t sure what happened. They don’t believe the spice was laced with fentanyl. But as the list of available drugs and compounds continues to expand and habits keep shifting, such things can happen, he said.

	“I think what we hope in the future — and I don’t know if it’s going to take legislation, it’s going to take more collaboration or it’s just more effort — but we want to be more predictive in our response to these threats.”
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HEADLINE	03/09 State: ‘talks’ not ‘negotiations’ w/NKorea
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/1fcf8a62cb7f4e15b0b39213368b0315/Tillerson-says-'talks,'-but-no-'negotiations'-with-NKorea
GIST	<p>DJIBOUTI (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson drew a distinction Friday between “talks” with North Korea and “negotiations,” arguing that President Donald Trump’s willingness to chat with Kim Jong Un shouldn’t be construed as anything more than that.</p> <p>The stunning announcement that Trump had agreed to a meeting with the North Korean leader raised questions about what had changed after months of Tillerson and other Trump officials insisting the conditions weren’t right for negotiations with Pyongyang. Tillerson said that Trump has been open to mere talks and a meeting with Kim “for some time,” and had decided on Thursday that “the time was right.”</p> <p>“In the president’s judgment, that time has arrived now,” Tillerson told reporters in Djibouti during a trip to Africa.</p> <p>Tillerson did not define the precise difference between talks and negotiations, and it was unclear what there was for the two countries — still technically at war — would have to discuss if not a deal to address concerns about the North’s nuclear weapons program. Ostensibly, they could hold preliminary conversations to see if there’s enough common ground and good will to proceed to formal negotiations.</p> <p>Explaining Trump’s decision-making about the meeting, Tillerson said that the U.S. had witnessed a shift from North Korea that became apparent when a South Korean delegation visited Pyongyang, then traveled to Washington to brief U.S. officials on the rare meeting. He said the dispatch from that meeting “was the most forward-leaning report that we’ve had, in terms of Kim Jong Un’s not just willingness but his strong desire for talks.</p> <p>“What changed was his posture in a fairly dramatic way,” Tillerson said. “In all honesty, that came as a little bit of a surprise to us as well.”</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 CBP: destructive pests found D.C. airports
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/f076ebe73a254dab8abcd72594370d7d/1-of-world's-most-destructive-insects-found-at-DC-airports
GIST	<p>BALTIMORE (AP) — The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol says it has intercepted one of the world’s most destructive pests of stored grains, cereals and seeds at two Washington-area airports this year.</p> <p>An agency release Thursday said agriculture specialists at Washington Dulles International Airport and Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport recently encountered the Khapra beetle, the only insect it takes regulatory action against. The statement describes the insect as having the potential to economically cripple exporters.</p> <p>Dulles specialists found four live adults, 12 live larvae, and several dead larvae and cast skins Jan. 24 in rice a Washington resident brought from Saudi Arabia. BWI specialists found two live adults, one dead immature larva, and several cast skins Feb. 23 in cow peas a New York City resident brought from Nigeria.</p> <p>The food was incinerated.</p>

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HEADLINE	03/09 Northeast tries to dig out after storm
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/e4f27e94507244c58e8d410294e96861/Northeast-tries-to-dig-out,-power-up-after-latest-storm
GIST	<p>HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Residents in the Northeast dug out from as much as 2 feet of wet, heavy snow Thursday, while utilities dealt with downed trees and power lines that snarled traffic and left hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in the dark after two strong nor'easters — all with the possibility of another storm headed to the area.</p> <p>With many schools closed for a second day, forecasters tracked the possibility of another late-season snowstorm to run up the coast early next week.</p> <p>“The strength of it and how close it comes to the coast will make all the difference. At this point it’s too early to say,” said Jim Nodchey, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Massachusetts. “We’re just looking at a chance.”</p> <p>At least two deaths were blamed on the storm.</p> <p>Snow still was falling Thursday in places including Vermont, where storm warnings were in effect until the evening.</p> <p>More than 800,000 customers were without power in the Northeast, including some who have been without electricity since last Friday’s destructive nor’easter. Thousands of flights across the region were canceled, and traveling on the ground was treacherous.</p> <p>A train carrying more than 100 passengers derailed in Wilmington, Massachusetts, after a fallen tree branch got wedged in a rail switch. Nobody was hurt. Tory Mazzola, a spokesman for Keolis Commuter Services, which runs the system for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, said the low-speed derailment remains under investigation.</p> <p>In New Hampshire, Interstate 95 in Portsmouth was closed in both directions because of downed power lines, leaving traffic at a standstill for hours.</p> <p>Amtrak restored modified service between New York City and Boston on Thursday after suspending it because of the storm. New York City’s Metro-North commuter railroad, which had suspended service on lines connecting the city to its northern suburbs and Connecticut because of downed trees, restored partial service Thursday.</p> <p>The Mount Snow ski area in Dover, Vermont, received 31 inches of snow by Thursday morning with more still falling. The resort said the snowfall from the past two storms would set it up for skiing through the middle of April.</p> <p>Montville, New Jersey, got more than 26 inches from Wednesday’s nor’easter. North Adams, Massachusetts, registered 24 inches, and Sloatsburg, New York, got 26 inches.</p> <p>Major cities along the Interstate 95 corridor saw much less. Philadelphia International Airport recorded about 6 inches, while New York City’s Central Park saw less than 3 inches.</p> <p>The storm was not as severe as the nor’easter that toppled trees, flooded coastal communities and caused more than 2 million power outages from Virginia to Maine last Friday.</p> <p>It still proved to be a headache for the tens of thousands of customers still in the dark from the earlier storm — and for the crews trying to restore power to them. Eversource, an electric utility serving</p>

	Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire, said it could take several days to restore power for everyone due partly to the challenge of clearing storm debris and repairing damage.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Pres. Trump to meet NKorea leader in May
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/8/trump-meet-kim-jong-un-may/
GIST	<p>President Trump has agreed to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un by May for historic talks on denuclearization, a senior South Korean official announced Thursday night.</p> <p>South Korean National Security Adviser Chung Eui-yong told reporters at the White House that Mr. Kim conveyed the invitation for a meeting with Mr. Trump after breakthrough talks this week between the North and South in Pyongyang.</p> <p>Mr. Trump called the development “great progress” but vowed that the U.S. would not lift sanctions on North Korea while diplomacy is under way.</p> <p>Mr. Chung said the North Korean leader “expressed his eagerness to meet President Trump as soon as possible.”</p> <p>South Korean President Moon Jae-in already had been scheduled to meet with the North Korean leader at a summit in April at the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas. Mr. Chung is part of a South Korean delegation visiting Washington following the talks this week in Pyongyang.</p> <p>Mr. Chung said the North Korean leader is “committed to denuclearization” and that he pledged to refrain from any further nuclear weapons or ballistic missile tests. He said Mr. Kim also has accepted that the U.S. and South Korea will proceed with “routine” military exercises scheduled for next month.</p> <p>“I explained to President Trump that his leadership and his maximum pressure policy, together with international solidarity, brought us to this juncture,” Mr. Chung said, adding that he expressed Mr. Moon’s “personal gratitude” for Mr. Trump’s leadership on confronting Pyongyang.</p> <p>Mr. Trump tweeted Thursday night about the sudden announcement: “Kim Jong Un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives, not just a freeze. Also, no missile testing by North Korea during this period of time. Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached. Meeting being planned!”</p> <p>There has never been a face-to-face meeting between the leaders of the U.S. and North Korea. A senior administration official said Mr. Kim conveyed the message by word of mouth through the South Koreans that he wants to meet with Mr. Trump “as quickly as possible.”</p> <p>The South Korean officials briefed Mr. Trump in the Oval Office on Thursday, with National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, Defense Secretary James Mattis, White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly and other U.S. officials present.</p> <p>The official said Mr. Trump agreed to meet with Mr. Kim “in a matter of a couple of months.”</p> <p>While the U.S. has often made concessions to North Korea in return for lower-level talks, the official said that keeping sanctions in place “is what differentiates the president’s policy from the policies of the past.”</p> <p>“President Trump has been very clear from the beginning that he is not prepared to reward North Korea in exchange for talks,” the aide said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 High school graduation rate stays 79%
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SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/921266/states-high-school-graduation-rate-remains-about-79-percent/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — Washington’s four-year graduation rate for public high schools remains at just below 80 percent.</p> <p>The Seattle Times reports the state superintendent’s office said this week that 79.3 percent of all students in the class of 2017 graduated within four years of starting high school. That’s up slightly from 79.1 percent for the class of 2016.</p> <p>But black, Latino, special-education and low-income students posted higher-than-average growth during the past two years. The graduation rate for black students rose from 70.7 percent in 2016 to 71.5 percent last year, while the graduation rate for students with special needs reached 59.4 percent in 2017, up from 58.1 percent the year before.</p> <p>The nation’s high-school graduation rate was 84 percent for the 2015-16 school year.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Washington police use-of-force bill passes
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/919887/deadly-force-law-road-block/ http://mynorthwest.com/922114/legislature-narrowly-oks-change-to-police-deadly-force-law/
GIST	<p>Washington lawmakers spent the final day of the 2018 session scrambling to pass a range of bills before their deadline. One high-profile initiative passed early in the evening which changes how officials handle police deadly use-of-force.</p> <p>Use of force</p> <p>— It happened in just two days, but lawmakers managed to pass a bill and a related initiative by Thursday evening.</p> <p>The Senate passed HB 3003 Thursday afternoon, which “perfects” Initiative 940, according to lawmakers. The same bill passed the House Wednesday afternoon with an amendment that will see it take effect one day after I-940 does. Yet, despite passing a bill that modifies it, the Legislature did not pass I-940 until around 6:30 p.m. Thursday — after the bill was passed. The process was a bit backwards, but lawmakers were forced to scramble at the last minute to avoid violating the state Constitution and procedural rules.</p> <p>I-940 will officially be a law for one day before HB 3003 is enacted. This is designed to get around initiative rules. Normally, if the Legislature modifies an initiative, both versions must be sent to the voters for final approval. Lawmakers instead put a gap between the time the initiative goes into effect and when the related bill becomes law. It also allows enough time for anyone opposed to bring a referendum.</p> <p>I-940 would allow changes to the state’s use of force law, making it easier to charge officers for using deadly force in some cases.</p> <p>Washington is the hardest state in the nation to prosecute officers in use-of-deadly-force cases because of the requirement to prove officers acted with malice and without good faith.</p> <p>At the initial a public hearing a couple of weeks ago Steve Strachan, Executive Director of the Washington Association of Sheriff’s and Police Chiefs said most in law enforcement did not support I-940 as written, but he did not close the door on it.</p> <p>“We oppose Initiative 940, however we’re not just saying no,” he said. “We’re interested in actively working to come together with proponents of I-940 to find a better way. We’re honored to serve in this valued profession. We are interested in serving everyone in our community and we look forward to finding ways toward our common goals.”</p>

Over the past couple of weeks that's exactly what happened. Spurred by lawmakers — including Democratic Representative Roger Goodman and Republican Representative Dave Hayes — law enforcement representatives met with I-940 organizers. They negotiated an agreement.

The plan: Have the Legislature approve I-940 as is, along with what Goodman called a “perfecting” bill, HB 3003. The bill further clarifies the good faith standard when prosecuting use-of-force cases, as well as the training and first aid requirements included in the initiative. The House bill would amend I-940 as soon as it was enacted with the agreed upon changes in HB 3003.

Both measures sailed through the House Public Safety Committee Tuesday, and were expected to quickly pass the House before coming up for a vote in the Senate Law and Justice Committee Wednesday.

The plan goes sideways

The plan went sideways Tuesday night when the House scrapped the vote on the measures. There were concerns in the Senate that the process of passing the House bill equated an amendment of I-940. That would be unconstitutional.

That concern stemmed from a 1971 State Attorney General opinion. Many believe the opinion made clear such a change amounted to amending the initiative, therefore requiring it to go to the ballot along with the original initiative.

Lawmakers and supporters of the effort worked for hours Wednesday morning to come up with a solution, and that appears to be moving forward quickly.

HB 3003 passed the House Wednesday afternoon with an amendment that will see it take effect one day after I-940 does (assuming it is also approved by the Legislature). Lawmakers say that avoids any question about its constitutionality — I-940 will officially be a law one day after it is enacted, making it exempt from initiative rules. That also has HB 3003 kicking in 91 days after passage, which is enough time for anyone opposed to bring a referendum.

I-940

Supporters from law enforcement, I-940, and lawmakers who helped negotiate the plan say that this was a combined effort from all parties that will help rebuild the trust between law enforcement and the community.

The plan appears to have a lot of support in both the House and Senate.

Both I-940 and HB 3003 cleared the Senate Law and Justice Committee Wednesday, while the House has approved HB 3003. The House is also expected to approve I-940 once the Senate acts.

That all has to happen before the end of session Thursday. Then the bills have to be sent to Governor Jay Inslee, who says he will sign it as soon as it gets to his desk.

As for question of constitutionality, State Attorney General Bob Ferguson says while his office won't provide a legal analysis, it will, “defend whatever the Legislature does on this issue.” The AG's office says Ferguson has been saying for a year that the statute relating to police use-of-force in Washington should be changed.

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington lawmakers have voted to make it easier to prosecute police who commit bad shootings, updating a law that made it uniquely difficult to hold officers criminally liable.

Gov. Jay Inslee signed the measure, ending years of wrestling over the existing law, which forces

prosecutors to prove the officers acted with malice — a hurdle no other state has.

Activists had gathered enough signatures to force a vote on the measure on the November ballot, but instead, they worked with police organizations on the compromise version lawmakers approved as the legislative session drew to a close Thursday. Lawmakers had to pass two measures — the original initiative, as well as the compromise that amended it and was signed by Inslee.

While Republicans and Democrats alike praised the compromise as sound policy, concerns remain about the constitutionality of the way lawmakers approved it. Many said that under the state Constitution, the compromise measure and the original proposal should both appear on the November ballot.

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HEADLINE	03/08 SPD chief addresses street protests
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/921459/carmen-best-addresses-protesters/
GIST	<p>Interim Police Chief Carmen Best is explaining to Seattle why protesters were not arrested March 2, despite shutting down traffic for hours amid the morning commute.</p> <p>“I know I’m taking a lot of heat and criticism,” Best said at a community meeting Wednesday, March 7. “But as far as I’m concerned, at the end of the day ... yes, people were inconvenienced, but nobody was arrested; nobody got hurt. We cleared everybody off of 5th Avenue. We made it known that if they’re not gone by three o’clock, you’re going to jail because, in fact, we can’t block off 5th Avenue in Friday rush hour.”</p> <p>Traffic, however, was snarled during the heavy morning commute. Best said the department was blindsided by the Friday morning protest. It began shortly before 8 a.m. Protesters used the “sleeping dragon” method, anchoring their arms inside tubing. It caused traffic to backup through the city’s roads and beyond. The disruption echoed onto I-5 and halted commutes throughout the region.</p> <p>The seven protesters eventually moved their demonstration from 4th Avenue and James Street to 5th Avenue and Stewart Street. Best said that Seattle police helped facilitate that march through downtown, despite no permits issued for the protest.</p> <p>“Ideally, we would love for people to get permits, and that process is there,” she said. “But, you know, they’re not required to ... I’m just telling you what the courts have said. And people don’t get the permits. And nobody on May Day ever has a permit; we know they’re coming, right? ... (police) still get out there and we still work the event regardless.”</p> <p>“We assist people in their personal right to free speech,” Best said. “We swore to do that, actually ... And nowhere in there does it say, ‘First Amendment right to free speech, except if it’s inconvenient ... except if there’s a permit.’ That is just not the way it works.”</p> <p>Best said that this is the approach Seattle police take to all types of protests.</p> <p>“I have stood, myself, right next to Westboro Baptists while they’re calling all sorts of things that you would be shocked to hear,” she said. “We’ve protected them, too. And the Patriot Prayer guys, we’ll protect them, too. And the Antifa guys. If they’re not being violent and causing destruction, we’ll protect them, too. We don’t need to pick and choose the issues, the date, or the time. That’s not our role. Our role is to make sure that people are able to express their personal free speech rights.”</p> <p>Best’s comments came on the same day King County Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht spoke with KTTH’s Todd Herman about the incident. The sheriff leads a different jurisdiction, but her main office is in downtown Seattle. She said that if traffic becomes disrupted, she would make arrests.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Seattle house-flipping market down
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/money/markets/real-estate/seattle-among-hottest-house-flipping-markets-but-trending-down/281-527056241
GIST	<p>Seattle is one of the hottest markets in the country for flipping homes, an analysis released Thursday finds. But the region is trending down for home flipping.</p> <p>Property database ATTOM says 207,088 single-family homes and condos nationwide were flipped in 2017. That was nearly six percent of all single-family homes and condos sold last year. It was the second straight year that number was over 200,000.</p> <p>Among 52 markets analyzed with at least 1 million people, Seattle ranked No. 5 when it comes to the highest percentage of completed flips with financing in 2017.</p> <p>Denver: 55.4 percent</p> <p>Boston: 52.8 percent</p> <p>Providence, RI: 49.4 percent</p> <p>San Diego: 48.5 percent</p> <p>Seattle: 48 percent</p> <p>But Seattle is one of the markets that trended down when it comes to home flips in 2017. The rate of flips decreased two percent, according to ATTOM. At least one economist thinks that trend will continue.</p> <p>"I believe the drop in Seattle home flipping can be attributed to the large number of buyers that home flippers are competing against in the market," Matthew Gardner, chief economist with Windermere Real Estate, said in a press release from ATTOM.</p> <p>"As a result, they're being forced to pay more which cuts deeply into potential profits — also down from last year. I anticipate that supply limitations, in concert with rising home prices, will continue to put downward pressure on the number of flips in the Seattle market in 2018."</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Teens rail against gun violence
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/03/08/teens-at-a-seattle-town-hall-rail-against-gun-violence/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE -- "I think seeing the activism from the Parkland (Florida) survivors really has been inspiring people around the county to form their own marches," says Rhiannon Rasaretnam.</p> <p>Rhiannon is a senior at Tahoma High School in rural Maple Valley. She was surprised that no one in the Seattle area had jumped on organizing a local "March For Our Lives" rally. So, and Emilia Allard from Seattle's Ballard High School did just that.</p> <p>The duo have only known each other for a few weeks-- but are planning a rally they hope will draw thousands to march against gun violence.</p> <p>"Be passionate about your views," says Allard, who has marched for other causes like the first Women's March and March for Science a year ago. "At least for myself, there's been so many issues I've felt passionate about, but I didn't act on."</p> <p>While the two teens aren't old enough to vote, they and some students got some time with Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan before her town hall on the same topic at Chief Sealth High School on a rainy Thursday</p>

night. They were two of dozens of people from the community including parents and students at the forum.

"We also know that too many people die from gun violence," Durkan told the audience. "That includes from suicide and accidents, too. We need better strategies, so kids can't get access to guns."

The five-person panel included a middle school principal, a junior at a Seattle high school involved with the 'Youth in Peace' project, a Harborview Medical Center doctor who is a pediatrician, a UW professor who has done research on gun violence and how it affects communities, and a director from the Duwamish Valley Youth Core.

All five took audience questions asked electronically. Topics like Seattle's extreme protection orders to keep guns away from people who might do harm to themselves and others -- and weapons storage ordinances to prevent the annual 250 gun thefts reported on average in the Emerald City.

While the students seemed excited to get active, the student-led "March For Our Lives" in Seattle on March 24 could just be the first of many steps for these teens.

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HEADLINE	03/08 Pipeline expansion opponents plan protest
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/like-standing-rock-trans-mountain-pipeline-expansion-opponents-plan-b-c-protest/
GIST	<p>Building in the courts and halls of Canadian government for years, conflict over the mammoth Trans Mountain tar- sands oil-pipeline expansion is expected to spill into the streets of British Columbia Saturday with massive civil disobedience demonstrations.</p> <p>Indigenous leaders from along the pipeline route and the U.S. are expected to join a march and rally beginning Saturday in metro Vancouver. Nearly 7,000 Coast Salish Water Protectors — as the pipeline opponents call themselves — have signed up to participate, said Will George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, spokesman for the Protect the Inlet movement.</p> <p>“We cannot stand by anymore,” George said. “It is going to be like Standing Rock,” where thousands of so-called water protectors stood against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota in 2016.</p> <p>“The similarity is we are standing up to protect our water. And we are going to do this in a peaceful way,” George said. “It is going to mark a day in history; it will be a massive mobilization.”</p> <p>The target is Houston-based Kinder Morgan’s more-than-700-mile-long tar- sands oil pipeline from Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia, intended to nearly triple the transport of oil from Canada’s interior to the coast to 890,000 barrels a day.</p> <p>Approved by the federal government of Canada in November 2016, opponents vow the pipeline will never be built.</p> <p>“All hell is going to break loose on March 10, and thereafter,” said Murray Rankin, a Member of Parliament representing the city of Victoria since 2012. “This is only the beginning, this is just the start, this is Ground Zero, day one. And it is going to go on for a very long time.”</p> <p>Because unlike the resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in rural North Dakota, where the governor called out the National Guard and the local sheriff marshaled an eight-state police force against opponents, this indigenous-led struggle will play out in metro Vancouver with support from local government. The pipeline is opposed by the province of British Columbia as well as the largest cities in the lower mainland: Vancouver, Burnaby and Victoria.</p>

There is support below the 49th Parallel as well.

Washington tribes, state agencies and conservation groups have fought the pipeline at every stage because its completion would bring with it a sevenfold increase in the number of oil tankers traveling through the home waters of critically endangered southern resident Killer Whales.

Whether rooted in concern over climate change, oil spills, species extinction or indigenous rights, the battle lines are drawn.

“I expect to see a level of opposition that is equal if not bigger to what we saw in North Dakota in 2016,” said Jan Hasselman, staff attorney at EarthJustice’s Northwest office in Seattle, and the lead attorney for the Standing Rock Sioux in the tribe’s fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“We are undergoing a cultural shift with a growing awareness that the benefits of fossil fuel projects simply aren’t worth the cost. Momentum is building as the same fight plays out in British Columbia, with more people, and government agencies joining the side of indigenous people.”

The expansion project came about in response to requests from oil shippers to help them reach new markets by expanding the capacity of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, said Ali Hounsell, spokeswoman for Kinder Morgan.

Its primary purpose is to move crude oil from Alberta to export markets around the Pacific Rim including British Columbia, Washington State, California and Asia.

The pipeline expansion has its supporters in British Columbia, as well.

“Crude oil in Canada is what pays the rent for us as a country,” said Stewart Muir of Resource Works Society, a nonprofit funded by the Business Council of British Columbia. Muir will help lead a pro-pipeline rally in downtown Vancouver to push back against the demonstration on Saturday. Canadian producers deserve a crack at overseas markets with better prices than the U.S., he said.

“It’s irresponsible to take a nonrenewable fossil-fuel resource and give it away for less than it is worth,” Muir said. “We are unable to get our product to the markets that the U.S. is eagerly selling to. We are looking for a fair shake.”

Completion is planned for December of 2020 for the \$7.4 billion project, which will duplicate an existing pipeline that has been in operation since 1954.

Hounsell said the company is well aware of the coming demonstration and respects the rights of opponents to peacefully demonstrate. “That’s what it means to be Canadian,” she said.

Kennedy Stewart, a Member of Parliament for Burnaby South, said controversy over the pipeline keeps growing. “I don’t think there is any way this pipeline is going to be built.”

Hounsell countered that in addition to the federal government’s approval, the company has signed agreements with every First Nation in the path of the pipeline. But traditional leaders said indigenous opposition nonetheless remains resolute.

“It’s the ongoing proverbial battle between oil versus water,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, an Okanagan aboriginal leader and president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, a political advocacy organization representing 118 bands and First Nations within British Columbia.

Phillip was one of hundreds arrested in 2014 when Kinder-Morgan’s test drilling on Burnaby Mountain drew thousands of protesters and resulted in more than 100 arrests. He said he and uncounted others are willing to do whatever it takes to stop the project.

	“Saturday will not simply be a one-off march,” Phillip said. “The opposition is deeply entrenched, and the resolute answer is no.”
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HEADLINE	03/08 Weather forecast: warm weekend
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/make-your-weekend-plans-now-its-going-to-be-warm-forecasters-say/
GIST	<p>Even if winter is not officially over, it’s sure going to feel like it this weekend.</p> <p>With dry weather, sun and highs that are expected to reach into the 60s in some areas of the Puget Sound region and the upper 50s in others, this weekend is going to feel like spring, according to the National Weather Service in Seattle.</p> <p>“If you want to be outside, it looks like this is going to be a good time,” meteorologist Jeff Michalski said.</p> <p>First though, we have one more little stretch of wet weather to make it through, he said.</p> <p>After rain on Thursday, Friday will be “a transition day,” according to Michalski, with some showers in the early hours that are predicted to taper off during the day. Forecasters expect Friday’s high temperature to reach 52 degrees in Seattle.</p> <p>Saturday is likely to be a few degrees cooler than Sunday, with high temperatures of 55 and 59 degrees, respectively, according to the service’s forecast.</p> <p>Then, on Monday, Meteorologists expect mostly sunny skies and highs in the lower 60s, the forecast shows.</p> <p>Normally, the high temperature here this time of year is about 52 degrees, Michalski said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Salmonella cases to chicken salad
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/03/08/CDC-105-more-report-salmonella-linked-to-chicken-salad/6571520546046/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=6
GIST	<p>March 8 (UPI) -- An outbreak of salmonella cases in seven states linked to chicken salad has expanded to include 170 people, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.</p> <p>An additional 105 people from a total of six states fell ill after likely purchasing and consuming contaminated chicken salad before it was recalled.</p> <p>A total of 62 people between the ages of 7 and 89 have been hospitalized and no deaths have been reported.</p> <p>The CDC said illnesses that occurred after Feb. 12, may not be reported as public health agencies receive reports on salmonella illnesses two to four weeks after illness starts.</p> <p>Fareway Stores Inc. retailers sold the chicken salad at stores in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota from Jan. 4 to Feb. 9. The store chain pulled the chicken salad from its stores on Feb. 9.</p> <p>Triple T Specialty Meats, Inc., which produces the chicken salad, recalled 20,600 pounds of the product on Feb. 21.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 China builds ambitiously in Africa
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/09/china-builds-ambitiously-in-africa-and-us-sounds-alarm.html
GIST	<p>ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – The United States is sounding the alarm that the Chinese money flooding Africa comes with major strings attached.</p> <p>The warnings carry distinct neocolonial undertones. The U.S. says with Beijing's astonishing investments in ports, roads and railways come dependency, exploitation of local resources and intrusion on nations' sovereignty.</p> <p>Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is visiting several heavily indebted African countries this week, including Ethiopia, Djibouti (jih-BOO'-tee) and Kenya. He says the U.S. isn't trying to prevent Chinese investments in Africa. But he says African nations must "carefully consider the terms."</p> <p>The U.S. says those terms lead to deals in which Chinese workers get the construction jobs, bribes are tolerated and countries risk perilous default.</p> <p>China denies its investments in Africa are exploitive. It says the projects are transparent and mutually beneficial.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Calif. homeless camp cleanup details
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/03/09/needles-debris-human-waste-tallied-after-cleanup-california-homeless-camp.html
GIST	<p>Gritty details from the cleanup of a homeless encampment in Southern California were revealed Thursday -- and the numbers were stunning.</p> <p>According to the figures, public works crews in Orange County collected 404 tons of debris, 13,950 needles, and 5,279 pounds of human waste during a massive overhaul between Jan. 22 and March 3, the Orange County Register reported.</p> <p>The specter of the ever-increasing homeless encampment along the Santa Ana River Trail had drawn the ire of local residents, prompting city officials to take action.</p> <p>Todd Spitzer, who sits on the Orange County Board of Supervisors and led an effort to address the growing encampment, says he felt compelled to take a different course than other major cities in California that have been experiencing growing homeless populations.</p> <p>"It's becoming part of the permanent landscape in those communities and there is no way we are going to allow Orange County land that is supposed to be used by residents to be occupied by the homeless," Spitzer said.</p> <p>The decision to move forward with the clearing drew praise from many residents but drew backlash from civil rights advocates such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).</p> <p>The encampment, located in the heart of Orange County, stretched from Interstate 5 in Orange to Ball Road in Anaheim along a bike trail, according to a spokesperson for Orange County Public Works.</p> <p>About 700 people had been living in the encampments when the dismantling began in late February, the Register reported. Many have been temporarily placed in motels while municipal workers assess their needs.</p> <p>Further overhauls will be made to remove 2 to 3 inches of soil along the bike trail, and trees will be</p>

	trimmed. The trail will also be refurbished, including sealed cracks and the application of slurry seal, the spokesperson said.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Venezuela new crisis: blood shortage
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/03/08/venezuela-faces-a-terrible-new-crisis-a-critical-shortage-of-blood/?utm_term=.6e4163b932dd
GIST	<p>CARACAS, Venezuela — In Venezuela, getting sick has never been more deadly.</p> <p>Medicines from antibiotics to chemotherapy drugs have become increasingly scarce in recent years. Public hospitals ask patients' families to supply bedsheets and syringes. HIV patients have gone months without their drugs, and transplant patients have died without the immunosuppressants they need after surgery.</p> <p>But the country is now experiencing a crisis in one of the most basic medical necessities: blood.</p> <p>Lower oil prices and populist policies championed by the late Hugo Chávez and continued by his successor, President Nicolás Maduro, have plunged Venezuela into a spiraling economic emergency. The health system, which is also plagued by mismanagement and corruption, is crumbling.</p> <p>Late last year, the situation turned so dire that blood for transfusions and surgeries was in critically short in supply at public hospitals. In January and February, medical workers say, the scarcity paralyzed most public blood banks, forcing patients to wait for urgent procedures and prompting doctors to advise families to try to acquire processed blood from private clinics.</p> <p>The problem, according to doctors, is not so much a lack of donors as a shortage of the seven reagents that test donated blood for infections. Those reagents, which the Health Ministry and the Institute of Social Security import to distribute to public institutions here, are priced in dollars, making them expensive in the local currency, the near-worthless bolívar.</p> <p>Without the reagents, blood can't be used.</p> <p>This week, Venezuelan patients received rare good news — a nearly two-month supply of reagents arrived at most public hospitals, purchased by the Health Ministry and the Institute of Social Security from laboratories and organizations abroad. The Pan American Health Organization said that a separate, donated batch will be sent to the country in the coming weeks and should last an additional month.</p> <p>But doctors call those deliveries short-term solutions to a long-term problem. Facing uncertainty, many patients' families have resorted to buying processed blood from private clinics, which acquire reagents from laboratories here that import them at black-market dollar rates. The official rate is largely inaccessible to private companies.</p> <p>In any case, in a country where 87 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, most families can't afford to pay what the clinics charge for usable blood. The Health Ministry and the Institute of Social Security did not respond to a request for comment.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Govt. workers barred from Mexico resort
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/08/politics/state-department-mexico-warning/index.html
GIST	<p>Washington (CNN)The State Department warned US citizens against travel to Mexico's Playa del Carmen late Wednesday, a week after an explosive device was found on a tourist ferry in the area.</p> <p>In an emergency message posted to the embassy's website, the agency said it had received "information</p>

	<p>about a security threat in Playa del Carmen," and that it is barring government employees from traveling to the resort town.</p> <p>Playa del Carmen is a popular destination for American college students traveling for spring break, which many universities observe in March.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Asia bristles over US tariffs
SOURCE	https://www.aol.com/article/finance/2018/03/08/china-japan-south-korea-bristle-over-us-steel-aluminum-tariffs/23381129/
GIST	<p>TOKYO March 9 (Reuters) - Major Asian nations reacted sharply to U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports on Friday, warning of damage to close relations amid industry calls for retaliation.</p> <p>Japan said the move would have a "big impact" on the countries' close bilateral ties, while China said it was "resolutely opposed" to the decision and South Korea said it may file a complaint to the World Trade Organization.</p> <p>Trump on Thursday pressed ahead with the imposition of 25 percent tariffs on steel imports and 10 percent for aluminum on Thursday, though he announced exemptions for Canada and Mexico, and said exceptions could also be made for other allies.</p> <p>China, which produces half the world's steel, will assess any damage caused by the U.S. move and "firmly defend its legitimate rights and interests," the country's Ministry of Commerce said.</p> <p>The tariffs would "seriously impact the normal order of international trade," China's commerce ministry said.</p> <p>Trade tensions between China and United States have risen since Trump took office. China accounts for only a small fraction of U.S. steel imports, but its massive industrial expansion has helped create a global glut of steel that has driven down prices.</p> <p>China's steel and metals associations urged the government to retaliate against the United States, citing imports ranging from stainless steel to coal, agricultural products and electronics.</p> <p>"The cost of a trade war will be tremendous and it will make everyone unhappy," Junichi Makino, chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities in Tokyo, said in a report on Friday.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 America's drunkest states
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/03/08/these-americas-drunkest-states/406342002/
GIST	<p>Excessive drinking can lead to a variety of health problems and significantly shorten a person's life. The habit claims nearly 90,000 lives each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And those who die as the result of alcohol abuse do so 30 years prematurely, on average.</p> <p>Excessive alcohol consumption, according to the CDC, includes binge drinking and heavy drinking. Binge drinking is defined as four or more drinks in a single occasion for women and five or more for men, and heavy drinking is defined as at least eight drinks per week for women and 15 for men.</p> <p>Nationwide, 18.0% of American adults drink an excessive amount of alcohol. However, the excessive drinking rate ranges considerably across states. In some states, just over 1 in 10 adults drink too much on a regular basis, while in others, the share is closer to 1 in 4.</p>

24/7 Wall St. reviewed data from the CDC to identify the states reporting the highest levels of adults who binge drink or drink heavily.

50. Tennessee

Adults drinking excessively: 11.2%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 28.0% (11th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 19.9% (9th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Nashville-Davidson–Murfreesboro–Franklin

Binge or heavy drinking is less of a problem in Tennessee than in any other state. However, it is not a rarity either as 11.2% of the adult population drinks excessively. Nationwide, a much higher percentage of adults report excessive drinking, at 18.0%.

Excessive drinking over time can lead to a myriad serious and potentially fatal health issues, including certain cancers, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. Despite the relatively few adults who binge drink or drink heavily, Tennessee has one of the highest premature death rates of any state. For every 100,000 state residents, 436 die before age 75, the eighth highest premature death rate among states. Perhaps the adult smoking rate of 21.9% — the seventh highest share among all states — contributes to the higher premature death rate.

49. West Virginia

Adults drinking excessively: 11.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.0% (25th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 23.7% (the highest)

Drunkest metro area: Morgantown, WV

Only 11.4% of adults binge or heavily drink in West Virginia, much less than the 18.0% of adults who binge or heavily drink nationwide. States with lower excessive drinking rates are often home to lower income populations; and West Virginia is no exception. The state's median household income of \$43,385 is well below the median household income nationwide of \$57,617, and the second lowest of any state.

Alcohol consumption is just one of many behavioral factors that can affect health outcomes and as a result, areas with low excessive drinking rates are not necessarily the healthiest. In West Virginia, nearly 24% of adults are in fair or poor health, the largest share of any state.

48. Utah

Adults drinking excessively: 12.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 19.7% (the lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 12.9% (6th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Salt Lake City, UT

In Utah, 12.4% of adults report excessive drinking, well below the 18.0% share of adults nationwide who either binge drink or drink heavily. States with a lower share of adults drinking excessively tend to have lower rates of alcohol-related driving deaths. Only 19.7% of driving deaths in Utah involve alcohol, the lowest alcohol-related driving death rate of any state and far below nationwide rate of 30.0%.

Low excessive drinking rates in Utah are partially attributable to religious faith. Over half of the state's population identify as Mormon, a religion that expressly forbids alcohol consumption.

47. Alabama

Adults drinking excessively: 13.0%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 29.4% (17th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 21.2% (4th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Auburn-Opelika, AL

In Alabama, 13.0% of adults drink to excess on a regular basis. This is a considerably lower share than the 18.0% of adults who binge or drink heavily nationwide. Although excessive drinking can lead to serious health problems, including liver cancer and cardiovascular disease, states with lower shares of adults drinking excessively are often less healthy than states reporting higher shares of excessive drinking. An

estimated 21.2% of adults in Alabama are in fair or poor health, the fourth largest share of any state.

Alcohol consumption is only one factor that can affect health. While Alabama adults drink less, many struggle with other health issues. For example, an estimated 34.0% of adults are obese, the fifth highest share among states.

46. Mississippi

Adults drinking excessively: 13.3%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 23.3% (3rd lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 22.2% (3rd highest)

Drunkest metro area: Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula, MS

Just 13.3% of adults in this Southern state binge or heavily drink, much less than the comparable national share of 18.0%. Despite the link between excessive drinking and a myriad of health problems, states with lower drinking rates tend to report worse health outcomes than states with higher drinking rates. In Mississippi, 22.2% of adults report being in fair or poor health — the third largest share of any state. This could be a function of income, as states with lower drinking rates also tend to have lower incomes, and poorer states generally report poorer health outcomes. Mississippi has the lowest median household income of all states at \$41,754 a year and the highest poverty rate at 20.8%.

While excessive drinking is never healthy, it is only one behavioral factor that can affect health. For example, lack of exercise can lead to obesity and heart problems, and in Mississippi, 31.9% of adults lead completely sedentary lives, the highest share among all states and well above the national average of 22.0%.

45. New Mexico

Adults drinking excessively: 13.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.1% (25th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 20.2% (8th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Santa Fe, NM

Some 13.8% of adults in New Mexico binge drink or drink heavily, a smaller share than the 18.0% of American adults who do. Despite the lower excessive drinking rate, the state reports poorer health outcomes such as an above average premature death rate and a higher share of adults reporting being in fair or poor health.

In general, states that have smaller shares of adults who drink heavily are likely to have lower incomes. New Mexico is one such example with a median household income of \$46,748 a year, nearly \$11,000 below the national figure of \$57,617 and the seventh lowest median income nationwide. New Mexico also has the third highest poverty among all states at 19.8%.

44. Oklahoma

Adults drinking excessively: 13.9%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 29.9% (19th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 20.9% (6th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Lawton, OK

Nearly 14% of adults in Oklahoma drink excessively — below the national average of 18%. Over time, binge or heavy drinking can lead to many health problems. However, excessive drinking is only one of many factors that can contribute to poor health. Adults in Oklahoma are much more likely to be physically inactive and smoke than the typical American. Partially as a result, despite a lower binge and heavy drinking rate, about 1 in 4 adults in the state are in fair or poor health, the sixth highest share of any state.

43. North Carolina

Adults drinking excessively: 14.9%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.3% (24th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 18.5% (12th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Jacksonville, NC

Nationwide, 18% of adults drink excessively. In North Carolina, that share is much lower at 15%.

Drinking too much alcohol on a regular basis can lead to many health complications — both short and long term — ranging from alcohol poisoning to certain cancers. Despite the lower percentage of adults drinking to excess, 18.5% of adults in North Carolina report being in poor or fair health, the 12th highest share of any state and well above the national average of 15%. One possible explanation for poorer health outcomes in North Carolina may be above average physical inactivity and obesity rates at 24.0% and 29.7%, respectively. Nationwide, 22% of adults get no exercise beyond getting up and going to work and 28% of adults are obese.

42. Arkansas

Adults drinking excessively: 15.3%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 28.4% (13th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 22.7% (2nd highest)

Drunkest metro area: Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO

Some 15.3% of adults in Arkansas drink to excess, which is below the national average of 18.0%. States where binge drinking and drinking heavily are less common tend to have poorer health outcomes, despite the many negative health problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Drinking alcohol is an expensive unhealthy habit and tends to be less common in states with lower incomes — which often report worse health outcomes than wealthier states.

Arkansas is no different. The state's median annual household income of \$44,334 is well below the national figure of \$57,617. Some 22.7% of adults in the state report being in fair or poor health, the second largest share among all states.

41. Idaho

Adults drinking excessively: 15.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.4% (23rd highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.1% (14th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Coeur d'Alene, ID

Only 15.4% of adults in Idaho drink excessively, a smaller share than the 18.0% of adults nationwide. Excessive drinking is never healthy and Idaho's low excessive drinking rate partially explains some positive health outcomes. A key measure of health is the premature death rate, and Idaho's is below average. For every 100,000 state residents, 310 die before the age of 75. Nationwide, there are 333 deaths before age 75 for every 100,000 people.

According to the CDC, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to risky sexual behavior — and Idaho's low excessive drinking rate may partially explain a low incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. There are 337 diagnoses of chlamydia per 100,000 state residents annually, one the lowest such rates among states and well below the U.S. rate of 456 per 100,000.

40. Maryland

Adults drinking excessively: 15.5%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.8% (20th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.3% (8th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: California-Lexington Park, MD

Some 15.5% of adults in Maryland binge drink or drink heavily, which is less than the national share of American adults who drink in excess at 18.0%. According to the CDC, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to depression and anxiety — and Maryland's low excessive drinking rate may help explain better than average mental health outcomes. Adults in the state report an average of just 3.4 mentally unhealthy days per month, fewer than the 3.7-day national average.

States with smaller shares of adults who drink excessively tend to have lower median household incomes. Maryland, however, is the exception. The median annual household income in the state of \$78,945 is the highest of any state and over \$20,000 above the national median of \$57,617.

39. Nevada

Adults drinking excessively: 15.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.8% (21st highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 17.2% (17th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Reno, NV

Nationwide, 18% of adults drink to excess, whereas in Nevada, only 15.8% of adults binge drink or drink heavily. Drinking large quantities of alcohol can lead to many health issues, yet states with lower shares of adults drinking excessively tend to be less healthy than those with higher shares. For example, the premature death rate is higher in Nevada than in most states — likely due to several factors other than alcohol consumption. For every 100,000 people in Nevada, 360 die before the age of 75.

38. Arizona

Adults drinking excessively: 16.0%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 27.6% (9th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 18.5% (11th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Flagstaff, AZ

Binge drinking or drinking heavily are not healthy habits. Despite this, states with a lower portion of adults who drink in excess tend to report poorer health outcomes than those with larger portions of adults who drink excessively. In Arizona, 16% of adults engage in binge drinking or drinking heavily, less than the national average of 18%. Despite the lower excessive drinking rate, 18.5% of adults in the state report they are in fair or poor health, the 11th highest share of any state.

37. Kentucky

Adults drinking excessively: 16.3%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 28.5% (14th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 20.9% (7th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN

Some 16.3% of Kentucky adults drink to excess, which is less than the comparable national share of 18.0%. Excessive drinking can lead to a slew of health conditions such as hypertension and liver disease. However, states with lower shares of adults who binge drink or drink heavily are typically less healthy than those with higher shares of adults who drink excessively. In Kentucky, nearly 21% of adults report they are in fair or poor health, the seventh highest share of all states. This could be because many of the states that report lower excessive drinking rates have lower incomes — and states with lower incomes and higher poverty rates tend to report less healthful behavior and worse health outcomes than wealthier states.

This appears to be the case in Kentucky, which is one of the poorest states in the country. The state reports 25.9% smoking rate among adults, the highest of any state. Also, 32.9% of state adults are obese, which is well above the national obesity rate of 28%.

36. South Carolina

Adults drinking excessively: 16.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 37.8% (7th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 17.0% (19th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort, SC

Some 16.6% of adults in South Carolina binge drink or drink heavily, which is below the 18% share of American adults who drink to excess. States with low incomes and high poverty rates tend to report worse health outcomes than wealthier states, and this is the case in South Carolina. The median income of households in the state is \$49,501 a year, which is well below the nationwide median household income of \$57,617. The poverty rate in South Carolina is 15.3%, one of the higher state poverty rates.

While drinking too much alcohol is unhealthy, it is only one factor that can cause adverse health effects. Obesity and smoking are some of the other factors. In South Carolina, 31.8% of adults are obese — the ninth highest share of any state — and the smoking rate is higher than the national average.

35. Delaware

Adults drinking excessively: 16.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 37.9% (6th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 16.7% (21st highest)

Drunkest metro area: Dover, DE

Tied with South Carolina, some 16.6% of adults in Delaware binge drink or drink heavily, which is less than the share of American adults who drink to excess at 18%. Typically, states where the excessive drinking rate is lower also have lower shares of deaths from alcohol-involved car crashes. Despite a lower share of adults who drink excessively, 37.9% of all deaths from car crashes in South Carolina are related to alcohol consumption, the sixth highest share of any state.

34. Indiana

Adults drinking excessively: 16.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 23.6% (5th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 18.0% (14th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Bloomington, IN

A total of 16.8% of Indiana adults drink to excess, less than the national excessive drinking rate of 18%. Binge or heavy drinking can lead to many health issues, including high blood pressure, stroke, and long-term memory problems. Like many states reporting lower excessive drinking rates, incomes are lower in Indiana. The median household income of \$52,314 a year, below the national median household income of \$57,617.

Despite the relatively low excessive drinking rate in Indiana, the premature death rate in the state of 387 deaths before the age of 75 for every 100,000 people is the 10th highest. This is likely — at least in part — the result of the high obesity rate in the state, which at 31.7% is also the 10th highest of all states. Earning a low income makes it challenging to afford healthful food and exercise opportunities, and the state's low income helps explain its high obesity rate.

33. Georgia

Adults drinking excessively: 16.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 23.4% (4th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 17.5% (16th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Athens-Clarke County, GA

Similar to Indiana, some 16.8% of adults in Georgia drink excessively. Nationwide, 18% of adults binge drink or drink heavily. Excessive drinking over time can lead to myriad health issues, both mentally and physically, including depression and cardiovascular disease. Despite the lower share of adults who drink to excess, Georgia has a relatively high premature death rate. An estimated 377 of every 100,000 people die before the age of 75 in Georgia. Excess consumption of alcohol is only one factor that can contribute to poor health — obesity can also cause serious health complications. The adult obesity rate in Georgia of 29.6% above the national rate of 28%.

32. Kansas

Adults drinking excessively: 16.9%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 27.3% (8th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 15.1% (22nd lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Lawrence, KS

In this Midwestern state, 16.9% of the adult population drinks alcohol to excess — a lower percentage than the the national rate of 18.0%. Excessive drinking of alcohol can lead to a variety of health issues, including, but not limited to, breast, liver, and colon cancer. Despite the lower drinking rate, Kansas does not report the best health outcomes. For example, 30.8% of adult residents are obese, likely partially due to the fact that 23.5% of adults lead sedentary lives. Both the obesity and physical inactivity rates are above the comparable national rates of 28% and 22%, respectively.

31. Texas

Adults drinking excessively: 17.3%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 29.9% (18th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 19.3% (10th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Austin-Round Rock, TX

Some 17.3% of adult residents in Texas report either drinking heavily or binge drinking, less than the 18% of American adults who drink excessively. Despite a lower heavy drinking rate, 19.3% of adults in Texas

report they are in fair or poor health, which is the 10th highest share among all 50 states. It is likely that the high percentage of adults who are physically inactive in the state contributes to its poor health outcomes. Some 23% of adults in Texas lead sedentary lifestyles, higher than the national average inactivity rate.

30. Virginia

Adults drinking excessively: 17.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 30.5% (20th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.6% (20th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford, VA

The national share of adults who drink excessive amounts of alcohol is 18%. In Virginia, 17.4% of adults report drinking to excess. States with lower portions of adults binge drinking or drinking heavily tend to report less healthy outcomes. That is likely because many of these states are generally poorer — and low income states tend to report worse health than wealthier states. The opposite is true for Virginia, however. The state's median household income of \$68,114 a year is well above the national median, and the poverty rate is just 11%. The nationwide poverty rate is 14%.

Partially due to the state's higher incomes, Virginia adults tend to be quite healthy, reporting below-average obesity, smoking, and premature death rates.

29. Florida

Adults drinking excessively: 17.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 28.2% (12th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 17.1% (18th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL

Similar to Virginia, 17.4% of adults in Florida also drink excessively. Typically, states with below average shares of adults who binge drink or drink heavily have lower incomes and higher poverty rates. In Florida, the median household income of \$50,860 a year is about \$6,800 less than the national figure. Those with lower incomes often lack access to luxuries including alcohol and healthy foods. A diet that lacks a diversity of nutritious foods can result in poor health outcomes, which helps explain why 17.1% of adults in Florida report they are in fair or poor health. For perspective, only 15% of American adults report they are in fair or poor health.

28. Wyoming

Adults drinking excessively: 17.5%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 35.3% (10th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.4% (19th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Casper, WY

In Wyoming, a reported 17.5% of adults drink to excess, less than the comparable national share of 18%. Despite a lower frequency of adults drinking heavily, 35.3% of deaths from car crashes involve alcohol, the 10th highest share of any state. This factor, along with a higher smoking rate, may contribute to the above average premature death rate in Wyoming. Some 347 people die before age 75 for every 100,000 people in Wyoming, which is higher than the nationwide rate of about 333 premature deaths per every 100,000 Americans.

27. New Jersey

Adults drinking excessively: 17.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 24.3% (6th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 15.2% (23rd lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Ocean City, NJ

Some 17.6% of adults in New Jersey drink excessively, slightly less than the national average of 18%. States with lower shares of adults who are excessive drinkers tend to have lower incomes and report worse health outcomes. This is not the case for New Jersey, which is one of the wealthier states. The median household income in the state of \$76,126 a year is the third highest income among all states. Likely because those with higher incomes are able to afford better access to health care and healthy lifestyles, New Jersey reports some of the better health outcomes nationwide. The state's obesity, smoking, and

premature death rates are lower than the comparable national rates.

26. Missouri

Adults drinking excessively: 17.7%
Alcohol-related driving deaths: 31.7% (23rd lowest)
Adults in fair or poor health: 16.6% (22nd highest)
Drunkest metro area: Columbia, MO

A total of 17.7% of adults in Missouri drink to excess, slightly less than the 18% of American adults who binge drink or drink heavily. States with below average shares of adults who drink to excess typically have lower incomes. In Missouri, the median household income of \$51,746 each year is below the national income of \$57,617.

25. South Dakota

Adults drinking excessively: 17.7%
Alcohol-related driving deaths: 35.2% (11th highest)
Adults in fair or poor health: 12.8% (5th lowest)
Drunkest metro area: Sioux Falls, SD

The rate of adults drinking excessively in South Dakota is 17.7%, slightly less than the national share of 18%. Lower excessive drinking rates tend to reflect worse health outcomes, and as might be expected in a state with average excessive drinking, South Dakota's health outcomes appear in line with the national average as well. Out of every 100,000 state residents, 323 die before the age of 75, just slightly below the national rate of 333 per 100,000.

24. Washington

Adults drinking excessively: 17.8%
Alcohol-related driving deaths: 35.0% (12th highest)
Adults in fair or poor health: 14.3% (18th lowest)
Drunkest metro area: Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA

Some 17.8% of adults in Washington state drink excessively, slightly less than the comparable national share of 18%. States with lower shares of adults who are excessive drinkers tend to have lower incomes, and the opposite tend to be true in states where heavy drinking is more common. In Washington, the median household income is \$67,106, somewhat higher than the national figure of \$57,617.

23. Rhode Island

Adults drinking excessively: 17.9%
Alcohol-related driving deaths: 40.4% (3rd highest)
Adults in fair or poor health: 15.8% (24th highest)
Drunkest metro area: Providence-Warwick, RI-MA

A total of 17.9% of adults in Rhode Island drink to excess — just below the national share of adults binge drinking or drinking heavily at 18%. States where adults drink at near the national rate also tend to have to report alcohol-related driving deaths similar to the country as a whole. In Rhode Island, however, some 40.4% of driving deaths were due to alcohol, the third highest alcohol-related driving death rate of any state and well above the national rate of 30%.

22. California

Adults drinking excessively: 18.0%
Alcohol-related driving deaths: 29.0% (15th lowest)
Adults in fair or poor health: 17.8% (15th highest)
Drunkest metro area: Chico, CA

Some 18% of adults in California drink excessively, equivalent to the national excessive drinking rate. Wealthier states tend to report better health outcomes, likely because of better health care access and the ability to afford healthier lifestyles. In California, the median household income of \$67,739 a year is nearly \$10,000 greater than the national income of \$57,617 and one of the wealthiest states in America.

Despite higher rates of drinking excessively, adults in California are some of the healthiest in all the country. Only 22.7% of adults are obese, the third lowest share among all states and well below the

national obesity rate of 28.0%. In addition, only 11.7% of adults smoke, the second lowest share nationwide. Both low obesity and smoking rates may have positively contributed to the state's low premature death rate. At 468 deaths before age 75 for every 100,000 state residents, it is the third lowest premature death rate of any state.

21. Pennsylvania

Adults drinking excessively: 18.1%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.0% (24th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 15.3% (25th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: State College, PA

An estimated 18.1% of adults in Pennsylvania drink excessively, which slightly surpasses the national rate of 18%. Excessive drinking can lead to several serious health issues including cardiovascular disease and liver cancer. In Pennsylvania, where the excessive drinking rate is just slightly higher than the national rate, the premature death rate is also just slightly higher. For every 100,000 Pennsylvania residents, about 342 die before the age of 75, slightly more than the nationwide rate of 333 premature deaths per every 100,000.

20. New York

Adults drinking excessively: 18.2%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 23.0% (2nd lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 16.2% (23rd highest)

Drunkest metro area: Watertown-Fort Drum, NY

At 18.2%, New York's excessive drinking rate is roughly in line with that of the national share of 18%. Despite the fact that a slightly larger share of adults drink heavily or binge drink, driving deaths attributable to alcohol are rare compared to most states. Only 23% of all roadway fatalities involve alcohol, the second lowest share among any state and well below the national rate of 30%.

19. New Hampshire

Adults drinking excessively: 18.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 31.2% (22nd lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 11.5% (2nd lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Manchester-Nashua, NH

New Hampshire's excessive drinking rate of 18.4% is slightly higher than the national figure of 18%. Despite a slightly above average excessive drinking rate, a strong majority of adults in New Hampshire report they are in good health. Only 11.5% report being in fair or poor health — the second lowest share of any state. The premature death rate is also quite low in New Hampshire, with 290 deaths before the age of 75, per every 100,000 residents, also one of the lowest shares among the states. With smoking being one of the leading causes of premature death, it is possible that the low smoking rate of just 15.9% — well below the national smoking rate of 18.0% — contributes to the lower premature death rate and better health outcomes overall.

18. Connecticut

Adults drinking excessively: 18.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 33.4% (18th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.3% (17th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT

Alcohol is not cheap, and wealthy individuals are more likely than lower-income individuals to be able to afford drinking on a regular basis. Connecticut is one of the wealthier states with a median household income of \$73,433 a year, which greatly exceeds the comparable national income of \$57,617. Some 18.6% of adults in the state binge or heavily drink, more than the comparable national share of 18%.

Despite the fact that excessive drinking is a common habit in the state, adults in Connecticut tend to report healthy outcomes. Of all adults in the state, about 1 in 4 are obese, one of the lowest obesity rates among all states and well below the national rate of 28.0%. In addition, only 13.5% of adults reportedly smoke, the third lowest rate of any state.

17. Louisiana

Adults drinking excessively: 18.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.6% (22nd highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 21.0% (5th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Houma-Thibodaux, LA

Some 18.8% of adults in Louisiana drink excessively, more than the 18% of adults who drink to excess nationwide. States with higher excessive drinking rates tend to be wealthier, at least in part because alcohol can be costly. In Louisiana, however, the median household income of \$45,156 a year is well below the comparable national income of \$57,617. The poverty rate in Louisiana is also incredibly high. At 20.2%, it is the second highest poverty rate among states and well above the the national rate of 14%.

Binge or heavy drinking can lead to a slew of health issues such as hypertension and cancer. Perhaps the high drinking rate in Louisiana contributes to the high premature death rate. For every 100,000 residents, 452 die before age 75, the sixth highest share among the states.

16. Oregon

Adults drinking excessively: 18.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 32.8% (19th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 18.3% (13th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA

Some 18.8% of adults in Oregon binge or heavily drink, more than the national share of 18%. States with higher drinking rates tend to report better health outcomes, likely because they are also higher-income states. In Oregon, however, adults report relatively good health outcomes, despite both an average drinking rate and a median household income that is close to the national figure.

For example, only 15.3% of adults lead sedentary lives, the second lowest share among states and well below the national rate of 22%. The high rate of adults in Oregon who routinely engage in physical activity has likely contributed to the state's low obesity rate. Only 26.4% of adults are obese in Oregon — below the nationwide obesity rate of 28%.

15. Colorado

Adults drinking excessively: 19.1%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 34.7% (13th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.7% (11th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Fort Collins, CO

An estimated 19.1% of adults in Colorado drink excessively, a larger share than in most states and more than the 18% excessive drinking rate nationwide. Despite a greater likelihood of alcohol abuse, adults in Colorado are healthier than most Americans by other important measures. For example, just 14.4% of adults in the state lead sedentary lives, the smallest share of any state and well below the 22% physical inactivity rate nationwide. Active lifestyles partly explain some healthy outcomes in Colorado. Just 20.2% of the state's adult population are obese, the smallest share of any state.

14. Ohio

Adults drinking excessively: 19.2%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 34.3% (14th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 15.3% (24th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Columbus, OH

Some 19.2% of adults drink excessively in Ohio, more than the comparable national share of 18%. Binge drinking and heavy drinking are not healthy behaviors and can lead to a slew of health complications and disease, including stroke and cardiovascular disease. Such serious ailments can shorten life. In Ohio, the premature death rate is higher than in most states and above the national average. For every 100,000 residents, an estimated 382 die before the age of 75, the 12th highest share of any state.

Excessive drinking is just one factor that impacts health negatively. Ohio adults also report above average obesity and smoking rates at 31.4% and 21.6%, respectively.

13. Massachusetts

Adults drinking excessively: 19.5%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 27.8% (10th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.2% (15th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Barnstable Town, MA

Nearly 1 in 5 adults living in Massachusetts drink excessively, a larger share than in the majority of states. Aside from a greater tendency to engage in binge drinking or heavy drinking, Massachusetts residents tend to be relatively healthy. For example, just 14% of the adult population smokes, well below the 18% national adult smoking rate. Additionally, just 20.3% of adults in the state get no exercise beyond getting up and going to work, a lower physical inactivity rate than the comparable 22% U.S. share.

12. Vermont

Adults drinking excessively: 19.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 33.4% (17th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 11.4% (the lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Burlington-South Burlington, VT

The excessive drinking rate in of 19.6% in Vermont is one of the highest in the nation and higher than the national average of 18%. Despite the higher excessive drinking rate, a strong majority of adults report they are in good health. Only 11.4% report poor health, the lowest share of any state.

Exercise is an important determinant of good health, and 81.5% of Vermont adults are physically active — more than in most states and above the national average of 78%. The high physical activity rate may have contributed to the low obesity rate of 24.4%, the sixth lowest of any state and well below the national obesity rate at 28%.

11. Maine

Adults drinking excessively: 19.6%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 39.8% (4th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.9% (21st lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Portland-South Portland, ME

Maine is the heaviest-drinking state in New England and the 11th heaviest-drinking in the United States. An estimated 19.6% of adults in Maine either binge drink or drink heavily compared to 18% of American adults. The relatively high excessive drinking rate partially explains the high incidence of deadly car accidents in the state that are related to alcohol. Alcohol is involved in nearly 40% of all roadway fatalities in Maine, a larger share than all but three other states.

10. Michigan

Adults drinking excessively: 20.0%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 29.4% (16th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 16.8% (20th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Lansing-East Lansing, MI

Some 20% of adults drink to excess in Michigan, more than the comparable national share of 18%.

Typically, states with higher rates of adults who binge or heavily drink are wealthier and are more likely to report better health outcomes. Michigan is an exception with a below average median household income and worse health outcomes than most states.

9. Nebraska

Adults drinking excessively: 20.4%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 35.6% (9th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.4% (10th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Lincoln, NE

More than 1 in 5 adults living in Nebraska drink excessively, more than the comparable national share of 18%. Drinking large quantities of alcohol overtime can negatively impact both mental and physical health, leading to anything from anxiety and depression to high blood pressure and liver disease.

Despite the high excessive drinking rate among adults in Nebraska, only 13.4% of adults feel as though

they are in poor health, one of the lowest shares among any state and well below the national average of 15%. The premature death rate is also quite low in Nebraska. For every 100,000 residents, only 306 die before the age of 75, among one of the lowest shares in any state.

Drinking heavily and smoking for years are well-known features of an unhealthy lifestyle. They can also make you look older, according to a new study Time

8. Hawaii

Adults drinking excessively: 20.5%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 38.0% (5th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.1% (7th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI

Some 20.5% of the adult population in Hawaii drinks to excess, well above the comparable national share of 18.0%. Not surprisingly, the state reports one of the highest rates of driving deaths in which alcohol is a factor, at 38% of all fatalities, the fifth highest share in the country.

Wealthier states are more likely to have higher drinking rates and report better health outcomes. In Hawaii, where the median household income of \$74,511 a year is nearly \$17,000 greater than the national income of \$57,617, adults report better health outcomes than almost any other state. For example, only 13.1% of adults report they are in fair or poor health, the seventh lowest share of any state. Also, Hawaii's obesity rate of 22.3% is well below the national rate of 28% and is the second lowest of any state.

7. Iowa

Adults drinking excessively: 21.0%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 25.4% (7th lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 12.3% (4th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Iowa City, IA

Some 21% of adults in Iowa drink excessively, the seventh highest share among all states and more than the national excessive drinking rate of 18%. Frequently drinking to excess can be very detrimental to health, leading to a variety of health issues such as hypertension and digestive complications. Despite the higher drinking rate in Iowa, only 12.3% of adults report poor health outcomes, the fourth lowest share of any state.

6. Minnesota

Adults drinking excessively: 21.1%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 30.9% (21st lowest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 11.9% (3rd lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Mankato-North Mankato, MN

In Minnesota, 21.1% of adults report binge or heavy drinking, one of the highest excessive drinking rates of any state and well above the national share of 18%. Excessive drinking rates tend to be higher among wealthier populations, and Minnesota has a larger median household income than most states at \$65,599 per year, which is well above the national income of \$57,617.

Despite being home to a large adult population who drinks to excess on a regular basis, Minnesota adults appear to be quite healthy. Minnesota has the lowest premature death rate of any state at 262 deaths before age 75 per every 100,000 residents.

5. Illinois

Adults drinking excessively: 21.2%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 34.2% (15th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 15.6% (25th highest)

Drunkest metro area: Bloomington, IL

In Illinois, 21.2% of adults drink to excess, exceeding the national average of 18%. Binge drinking and heavy drinking can lead to various chronic health issues such as heart and liver disease. Still, Illinois adults manage to be in relatively good health, with below average obesity, smoking, and premature death rates.

4. Montana

Adults drinking excessively: 21.8%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 46.3% (2nd highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.2% (16th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Missoula, MT

States with higher excessive drinking rates are more prone to driving deaths that involve alcohol. With 21.8% of adults in Montana binge drinking or drinking heavily, the fourth highest share of any state, alcohol is a very common factor in roadway fatalities. Of all roadway fatalities in the state, 46.3% are attributable to alcohol consumption, the second highest share among all states.

3. Alaska

Adults drinking excessively: 22.1%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 33.8% (16th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.7% (12th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Fairbanks, AK

Some 22.1% of adults in Alaska report drinking excessively, the third highest share of all states and well above the comparable national share of 18%. States with higher excessive drinking rates tend to be wealthier, partially because alcohol can be expensive to buy regularly. In Alaska, the median household income of \$76,440 a year is the second largest of any state, greatly exceeds the national income of \$57,617.

2. Wisconsin

Adults drinking excessively: 24.5%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 36.9% (8th highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 14.0% (13th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Green Bay, WI

Some 24.5% of adults in Wisconsin report binge or heavy drinking — the second largest share of any state and well above the comparable national share of 18%. Drinking alcohol regularly over long periods of time can lead to many serious ailments later in life such as liver cancer and even dementia. Despite high rates of excessive drinking, Wisconsin has a relatively low premature death rate. For every 100,000 residents, about 300 will die before the age of 75, less deaths than in most other states.

1. North Dakota

Adults drinking excessively: 24.7%

Alcohol-related driving deaths: 46.7% (the highest)

Adults in fair or poor health: 13.4% (9th lowest)

Drunkest metro area: Fargo, ND-MN

The state with the highest share of adults drinking excessively is North Dakota, with nearly 25% of adults reporting binge drinking or drinking heavily. Not surprisingly, the state with the highest drinking rate also has the highest rate of alcohol-related driving deaths. A total of 46.7% of all roadway fatalities are attributable to alcohol consumption, much higher than the national share of 30%.

Drinking excessively on a regular basis is not healthy. Still, 13.4% of adults report they are in fair or poor health, despite the state's above average obesity and smoking rates.

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HEADLINE	03/08 US imposes tariffs on steel, aluminum
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/headline/trump-tariffs-steel-announcement/2018/03/08/id/847618/
GIST	President Donald Trump on Thursday slapped deeply contentious trade tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum, swatting aside warnings of a global trade war and protests from allies in Europe and at home. The tariffs of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum will come into effect in 15 days, the White House said. They will not apply to Canada and Mexico initially, an official said, adding that security and trade partners

could negotiate to seek exemption.

The measures are likely to spark retaliatory sanctions from the European Union, China and other economic powers.

Moving to fulfil a protectionist campaign promise, Trump leaned on a little-used national security clause in US trade law.

"This is a promise made, a promise kept," a senior administration official said, "no one should be surprised."

The metals are used in everything from cars to construction, roads to railways. Economists estimate billions of dollars of trade will be affected.

Hours before the signing, Trump told his cabinet that these products were the "backbone of our nation, they are the bedrock of defense industrial base."

The mercurial 45th president compared his action to those of predecessors George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley.

"Our greatest presidents" he said, "they protected our country from outside influence, from other countries coming in and stealing our wealth and stealing our jobs and stealing our companies."

More than 50 percent of steel and aluminum exports come from allies in the European Union, Canada, Japan, and South Korea. But countries from Brazil to South Africa are likely to be affected.

Trump said he would be flexible toward "real friends," touting an exemption for Canada and Mexico as they renegotiate a trade deal with Washington.

If an agreement on NAFTA is reached, he said, "it is most likely that we won't be charging those two countries the tariffs."

Trump added Australia to a list of likely carve-outs, and indicated that other trade and military allies could be exempted.

"We have a very close relationship with Australia," he said. "We have a trade surplus with Australia, great country, long term partner, we'll be doing something with them."

But he singled out Germany for criticism, reviving a longstanding gripe that European NATO allies do not pay their fair share.

"We have some friends and some enemies where we have been tremendously taken advantage of over the years on trade and on military," he said.

"If you look at NATO, where Germany pays one percent and we are paying 4.2 percent of a much bigger GDP -- that's not fair."

Last week Trump stunned the world -- and his own aides -- with an off-the-cuff announcement of his tariff plan, before White House lawyers judged the legality of the move and before it was clear which countries would be targeted.

He cited Chinese overproduction and national security concerns as the main driver.

The European Union, China and Brazil have all warned they will retaliate, with the decision threatening to sour already vinegared trans-Atlantic relations.

HEADLINE	03/09 Crews restore Puerto Rico environment
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/crew-seeds-corals-restore-environment-puerto-rico-53628212?
GIST	<p>As crews re-string electric lines and clear debris from Hurricane Maria, a small group of Puerto Rican and international conservationists is working on rebuilding natural wonders destroyed by the strongest storm to hit the island in nearly a century.</p> <p>Environmental groups and volunteers are gathering native seeds to replant forests across the U.S. territory and grafting broken coral back onto shattered reefs to help repair damage in the largest-ever effort of its kind for Puerto Rico.</p> <p>The Category 4 storm damaged 1.2 billion trees and snapped hundreds of thousands of corals off reefs around the island when it hit on Sept. 20. Despite the widespread destruction, a lack of funding and pressing human needs kept pushing back long-term plans to replant trees and rebuild corals.</p> <p>Now that Puerto Rico is slowly regaining its footing after the storm and initial funding has been secured, conservationists are fanning out across the island and into its waters to repair and restore what's left of the island's flora.</p> <p>"The damage is huge," said Nilda Jimenez, marine ecology director for the island's Department of Natural Resources.</p> <p>Helping nature recover has environmental and economic importance: Puerto Rico's natural beauty is one of its biggest tourist draws. Experts also note that reefs protect coasts from heavy swells and serve as habitat for many species consumed on the island, including red snappers, lobsters and octopi.</p> <p>Last week, a group of divers assembled on a dock in the northeast coastal town of Fajardo, a popular destination for tourists eager to explore reefs that once boasted bright colors and a multitude of fish. Now, hundreds of broken corals that are still alive lay scattered across the turquoise waters, ranging in size from a grapefruit to a car.</p> <p>Armed with buckets of cement, divers pick up the broken pieces and swim to reefs that have been identified as healthy despite the battering they received from the storm. The divers brush away any algae that have built up and push the pieces down into the freshly laid cement.</p> <p>"If you think about what you're seeing, it's broken animals," said Jim Ritterhoff, executive director of Force Blue, a nonprofit organization made up of retired U.S. Special Operations veterans working on coral reef conservation projects.</p> <p>The group is participating in a nearly \$1.5 million project largely funded by the U.S. government to help restore between 100 and 300 corals a day in Puerto Rico for two months. They are focusing on the island's northeast region, where swaths of mostly elkhorn and staghorn corals received the brunt of large swells generated during the hurricane. If further funding is available, divers will target other areas as well.</p> <p>"The sooner we get out there, the better," said Sean Griffin, coral reef restoration ecologist with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "There are still tens of thousands of corals out there that are upside down or even just on their side that we can get out there and save."</p> <p>Similar restoration efforts are taking place on land miles away from the divers.</p> <p>At a greenhouse run by the nonprofit group Para La Naturaleza in the capital of San Juan, volunteers and workers tend to thousands of budding plants that will grow into trees as they're planted across the island. They have planted nearly 1,900 trees since January, with a goal of 750,000 in the next seven years, said Luisa Rosado, the group's habitat manager.</p>

"This is a project where we really won't see the results," she said. "The results will be from now to 100 years."

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HEADLINE 03/08 Asia-Pacific trade deal signed

SOURCE <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-43326314>

GIST Eleven Asia-Pacific countries have just signed the trade pact formerly known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Although the US pulled out last year, the deal was salvaged by the remaining members, who signed it at a ceremony in the Chilean city of Santiago.

Chilean foreign minister Heraldo Munoz said the agreement was a strong signal "against protectionist pressures, in favour of a world open to trade".

The deal covers a market of nearly 500 million people, despite the US pullout.

In the absence of the US, it has been renamed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Extraneous adjectives aside, its supporters say it's hugely significant, and could be a model for future trade deals.

What does it do?
Its main purpose is to slash trade tariffs between member countries.

But it also seeks to reduce so-called non-tariff measures, which create obstacles to trade through regulations.

There are chapters which aim to harmonise these regulations, or at least make them transparent and fair.

There are also commitments to enforce minimum labour and environmental standards.

It also includes a controversial Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism, which allows companies to sue governments when they believe a change in law has affected their profits.

Who's in it?
In alphabetical order: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

The US is conspicuously absent.

Who are the winners and losers?
In short, the biggest winners are expected to be in Asia, while the wealthier countries, on balance, are not expected to receive as much of a boost.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics says Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Vietnam will each receive a bump of more than 2% to their economy by 2030.

New Zealand, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Chile and Australia will all grow by an additional 1% or less.

The same study says the US could be a big loser, foregoing a boost to its Gross Domestic Product of 0.5% (worth \$131bn).

What's more, it could lose an additional \$2bn because firms in member countries have an incentive to trade with each other instead of with American companies.

Donald Trump isn't the only one who has failed to be convinced of its value, though.

Unions (particularly in wealthier member countries such as Australia and Canada) say the deal could be a job killer or push down wages.

Some economists have also suggested that free trade agreements are rigged by special interests, which makes their economic value far more dubious.

Is there any point without the US?
 Yes, but there's no question the deal is diminished without the involvement of the world's largest economy.

The remaining nations' economies account for more than 13% of the global economy - a total of \$10 trillion dollars.

With the US, the deal would have represented 40%.

Australia's Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, says the deal has been set up to allow it to admit new members, possibly including the US.

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HEADLINE	03/08 Israel, US troops conduct military drills
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israel-us-troops-train-counter-missile-threats-53608421?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>If war breaks out in the Middle East, U.S. and Israeli forces are preparing to one day fight alongside one another to defend Israel against missile attacks from across the region.</p> <p>Nearly 5,000 Israeli and American troops have been training together in Israel for that very scenario. The "Juniper Cobra" exercise includes field training, computer simulations and live-fire drills of sophisticated missile-defense systems.</p> <p>"We will practice, train shoulder to shoulder, the same as we will fight in crisis times," Brig. Gen. Zvika Haimovich, chief of Israel's air defense command, told reporters at a briefing at the dusty Hatzor air base in southern Israel.</p> <p>Israel has made missile defense a priority since Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein bombarded the country with 39 Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War.</p> <p>Today, the threat is far more formidable. The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah is now believed to possess well over 100,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking virtually anywhere in Israel.</p> <p>Hezbollah and Iranian forces are also active in neighboring Syria, backing President Bashar Assad. Gaza's Hamas rulers have a vast arsenal of rockets, and Iran has developed long-range missiles that can reach Israel.</p> <p>Haimovich said Juniper Cobra is not aimed at any particular adversary. Instead, it is meant to simulate "very complex scenarios" that include simultaneous attacks from enemy countries and militant groups.</p> <p>"We practice that because this is a real scenario," he said.</p> <p>He said the threats include multiple salvos, more accurate rockets and missiles and a "multidirectional</p>

	<p>threat."</p> <p>"Those are our main assumptions," he said. "It doesn't matter if it's from south, north, east or others."</p> <p>Lt. Gen. Richard Clark, commander of the U.S. troops, said American forces are ready to deploy in Israel at Israel's request. Once Israel gives the green light, he said American forces could start moving from Europe within two or three days.</p> <p>Juniper Cobra has taken place every two years since 2001, adjusting each time to cope with ever-shifting battlefield.</p> <p>With literally "thousands of threats" to prepare for, Clark said the drill is an opportunity for the two allies to improve communication and coordination.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Northeast faces third nor'easter
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/noreaster-moves-area-3rd-storm-hit-early-week/story?id=53603257
GIST	<p>Nearly one million people are without power across the Northeast this afternoon as the region digs out from its second nor'easter in seven days.</p> <p>Two to three feet of snow fell from New Jersey to New England as the major nor'easter swept across the Northeast on Wednesday and it is continuing to bring heavy snow to parts of northern New England.</p> <p>But before the snow turns to slush a third nor'easter may hit by Monday.</p> <p>As of this afternoon over 900,000 customers were without power in the Northeast. The weather also had a big impact on travel: more than 3,200 flights were canceled because of this storm.</p> <p>Here are some of the notable snow totals:</p> <p>NEW JERSEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Montville: 26.8 inches -- Morris Plains: 26 inches -- Oakland: 26 inches -- North Caldwell: 23 inches -- Parsippany: 21.7 inches -- Morristown: 18.1 inches <p>NEW YORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Monroe: 26 inches -- Sloatsburg: 26 inches -- Hillsdale: 24.5 inches -- Highland: 21 inches -- Mahopac: 19.5 inches <p>CONNECTICUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Warren: 28 inches -- New Fairfield: 26.8 inches -- Newtown: 24.3 inches -- Wolcott: 18.5 inches -- Southington: 16.5 inches <p>MASSACHUSETTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Clarksburg: 32 inches

- Cheshire: 31 inches
- Monroe: 24 inches
- Pepperell: 20 inches
- Worcester: 16.4 inches

A third nor'easter?

A possible third nor'easter could impact the hard-hit Northeast by Monday. Two long-range forecast models, the European and American, are not in agreement about the storm's path.

The European model has the coastal storm moving south of the Northeast and sparing the region. That would bring little to no precipitation on Monday.

However, the American model shows the storm moving much closer, potentially bringing another round of heavy snow to the Northeast.

It is still too early to determine which path the storm could take.

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HEADLINE	03/08 Canadians protest Jewish school buses
SOURCE	http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/nation-world/world/article204098614.html#fmp
GIST	<p>A group of about eight Montreal residents who attended a city meeting wearing small yellow badges in protest of Jewish school buses faced a wave of accusations of anti-Semitism. But their leader, Ginette Chartre, says they will not back down, the Canadian Press reported.</p> <p>A growing Hasidic community in the Montreal borough of Outremont uses school buses to drop children off around the city, causing tension with neighbors who say the constant bus traffic causes congestion, noise and pollution, reported the Canadian Jewish News.</p> <p>Chartre and other residents showed up at a public meeting to complain on March 5, wearing small yellow badges on their chests - a display some say evoked Nazi imagery.</p> <p>Prior to the horrors of the Holocaust, the German government required Jewish people to wear six-pointed yellow badges bearing the word "Jude." Propaganda leaflets were distributed to German citizens, saying "Whoever bears this sign is an enemy of our people," according to the Holocaust Memorial Center.</p> <p>There were many different versions of the badge, which was also required in occupied countries. Some had different spellings of Jude or no word at all - but nearly all were based around a yellow Star of David.</p> <p>The protesters in Canada say there is no connection between their choice of protest attire and the historic connection between yellow badges and mass persecution of Jewish people.</p> <p>"[The Jews] always bring up their painful past," Chartre, a leader of the protest, told the Canadian Press. "They do it to muzzle us. We're wearing the yellow square because the school buses are yellow."</p> <p>She said she and the protesters were not willing to remove them.</p> <p>"We'll march down the street wearing them, banging pots and pans if we have to," she said. "We are living an injustice. We are being persecuted by them."</p> <p>Both Jewish and non-religious groups said the badges were not acceptable.</p> <p>"The person who devised such a protest either has no knowledge of history whatsoever, or if they understood, they would surely have realized it was a horrendous way to express one's opinion," B'nai Brith Canada's Steven Slimovitch told the Times of Israel.</p>

	<p>“Those yellow squares evoke the dark history of the Holocaust,” wrote Coun. Lionel Perez, a leader of a local municipal party, according to the CBC. “If that was the intention, it is simply unacceptable, and we have to denounce gestures that plant seeds of division and hate.”</p> <p>Montreal mayor Valérie Plante also said in a statement that it was “unacceptable to launch a political action against children,” the CBC reported.</p> <p>Even during the meeting, some residents expressed their dismay at the protesters wearing the badges.</p> <p>“We asked them to remove the yellow badges, but they continued to wear them,” one non-Jewish resident, who spoke out against the badges at the meeting, told the Canadian Jewish News. “There has to be some modicum of civility and we would have liked to have seen some empathy for the historical wounds of our Jewish neighbours who comprise almost 25 percent of the population in Outremont.”</p> <p>Chartre told the Canadian Press she was unmoved by the opposition, and would continue wearing the badges. “Should we change the colour of school buses now because it reminds (Jews) of their past?” she told the news agency. “What about the yellow street markers on the roads? If we wore a yellow hat, would that be better?”</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	03/08 New technology empowers cybercrime
SOURCE	https://www.meritalk.com/articles/global-cyber-crime-hits-600-billion-gets-its-own-aas-category/
GIST	<p>New technologies and techniques are changing the cybercrime landscape in a significant way, creating new challenges for those entrusted with protecting networks and data.</p> <p>For one thing, you don’t have to be much of a hacker—or even a hacker at all—to be a cybercriminal. Easily available (and affordable) attack and exploit kits will do a lot of the work for you. And if you don’t want to go that far, a budding cybercriminal can just outsource the job via Cybercrime-as-a-Service, a growing sector of the underworld that is established enough to warrant the CaaS acronym, just like Infrastructure-as-a-Service and its brethren.</p> <p>That’s one of the criminal tools outlined in a recent report, Economic Impact of Cybercrime—No Slowing Down, by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a bipartisan, non-profit think tank, and security company McAfee. While the report focuses on the global monetary costs of online criminal activity—bottom line, it’s at \$600 billion a year, up from \$445 billion in 2014—it also identifies some of the latest trends facing cybersecurity pros.</p> <p>Cybercrime-as-a-Service</p> <p>CaaS is an increasingly popular resource for cybercriminals. It offers products such as custom malware and exploit kits; services such as botnet rentals and ransomware distribution; and can supply manpower in the forms of teams that will carry out activities for a price. Not only does CaaS expand the pool of potential cybercriminals, but it can contribute to the sophistication of criminal activities overall. With CaaS, “experienced criminals are able to focus on developing more specialized skill sets, confident in their ability to find others within the thriving darknet ecosystem who can complement their services, and with whom they could collaborate to develop new tools of unprecedented sophistication,” the report says.</p> <p>Bitcoin Bounty</p> <p>Also contributing to cybercrime’s growth is the further emergence of the dark-Web sites such as the Tor (The Onion Router) network and cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, which provides a digital means to</p>

anonymously conduct transactions and launder money. The report says that estimates of cybercrime's costs have been skewed by the fact that criminals didn't always get full value for what they stole; a burgeoning digital black market could change that.

Among other major factors in cybercrime are identity theft and intellectual property (IP) theft, neither of which are very surprising but both are a key concern of any organization. The Office of Personnel Management hack in 2015 netted personal information on four million current and former Federal employees. And China's theft of vendors' intellectual property on the U.S. F-22 and F-35 fighters reportedly contributed to the development of its own aircraft. China, the report says, has been the clear leader in the theft of intellectual property, although a 2015 agreement between the United States and China to limit IP theft—at least with regard to commercial gain—appears to have had a positive impact.

The growth in cybercrime has resulted from some new technologies and new ways of monetizing criminal activity that has made cybercrime easier than ever. Addressing those technologies and techniques is essential to cybersecurity, which as CSIS points out, "is a central facet of national security strategy."

The first mission of the Department of Defense's U.S. Cyber Command, for example, is to defend DoD networks and missions, but it also is there to protect U.S. infrastructure and "national interests"—which would include business and individuals—from significant attacks.

The report notes that cybercrime is the third costliest type of crime globally, behind government corruption and drug trafficking. But it leads in its ability to make victims of hundreds of millions of people. And it's a low-risk, high-payoff crime in which perpetrators, particularly when working across international borders, are unlikely to be caught and jailed, something that applies to cyber espionage as well as crime.

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HEADLINE	03/08 General: US not countering Russia cyber
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/08/politics/scaparrotti-us-not-countering-cyber-threat/index.html
GIST	<p>Washington (CNN)The top US general in Europe has said he does not believe there is a unified effort across the US government to confront Russian cyberthreats.</p> <p>When asked on Thursday how he would assess the whole government response to Russian threats during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti replied, "I don't believe there is an effective unification across the interagency with the energy and the focus that we could attain."</p> <p>Scaparrotti is the latest senior official to signal that the White House has yet to marshal a thorough and focused response to the ongoing threat of Russian cyber-intrusions, particularly into US voting systems. President Donald Trump has only glancingly and grudgingly acknowledged the consensus view of US intelligence agencies that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential campaign with a view to helping him get elected.</p> <p>In late February, US Cyber Command chief Adm. Mike Rogers told lawmakers that he has not been granted the authority by Trump to disrupt Russian election hacking operations where they originate.</p> <p>Asked by Democratic Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island if he has been directed by the President, through the defense secretary, to confront Russian cyber-operators at the source, Rogers said, "no, I have not." He did say that he has tried to work within the authority he maintains as a commander.</p> <p>Rogers, who also appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that while he didn't agree with Reed's characterization of the US as "sitting back and waiting," it is fair to say that "we have not opted to engage in some of the same behaviors we are seeing" with regard to Russia.</p> <p>On March 6, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats told the committee that intelligence agencies are</p>

having conversations with Trump about how to counter the threat of Russian attacks. He told lawmakers that he was describing discussions about combating cyberthreats broadly, not within the context of Russian election interference.

"It is a whole-of-government approach," Coats told the committee. "I have discussed it personally with the President of the United States, and he has said I assume you are doing your jobs ... all of you that head up these agencies relative to cyber, but if you need for me to say, direct you to do it -- do it," Coats told the committee.

Scaparrotti, the commander of European Command and the NATO supreme allied commander Europe, was not speaking specifically about Russian efforts to meddle in US elections but Russian activity more broadly and made clear his command was not responsible for safeguarding US elections.

He said Russian cyber-efforts have concrete targets as well as a larger, more existential goal.

"Typically, when you look at their (Russia's) disinformation, their social media, it is generally targeted at the undermining of Western values, confidence in that government, confidence in their governmental leaders, almost always subtly just hedging away at that," Scaparrotti said.

"Because of today's capabilities and information, where they can use multiple platforms and generate great volume, it can really undermine a nation," Scaparrotti told the lawmakers, "because all they have to do is just sow some confusion primarily, sow enough confusion so there is distrust in the government."

He added that, "it's not an uncommon thing to see," and that it's "subtle but it is constant."

Scaparrotti said Russia's cybertroops have also directed their weapons at US infrastructure.

"I've seen activity related to, you know, infrastructure, reconnaissance, et cetera in the United States, and I'll leave it at that," Scaparrotti said, without offering any more details.

The top US commander in Europe also said the US does not have a have good picture on how Russia is utilizing commercial enterprises in their cyber-activity. "We are getting a better understanding of it. I would not characterize it as a good picture at this point, not satisfactory to me," he said.

However, he did say that he does have the resources needed for the US European Command.

"I have had my cyber-operations center reinforced substantially, we've made good progress, and over the next two years, thanks to the funding both here in Congress as well as CYBERCOM, that will continue to give me the skills that I need in my cybercenter," Scaparrotti said. "I also upon request have the authorities that I've asked for with respect to Russia over the past year to 18 months."

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HEADLINE	03/08 Bitcoin market volatile; drops 10%
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/bitcoin-price-drops-amid-binance-exchange-hacking-rumors/
GIST	Being part of cryptocurrency industry is like constantly riding on a rollercoaster where one minute you feel at the top and suddenly hit the bottom with a big boom. Such is the volatile nature of cryptocurrency industry. Last week it was too calm and quiet and Bitcoin seemed to be gaining the top slot once again after hitting an all-time low with rates going down to \$6,150 earlier in February. But this week, Bitcoin again plummeted significantly as it dropped from \$11,673 on Tuesday to \$9,734 on Thursday representing a 10.8 percent crash.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Gaming servers down multiple regions
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/blizzardcs-ea-servers-are-down-in-multiple-regions/
GIST	<p>You are not alone, currently, Blizzard & EA servers are down and suffering service outage almost everywhere around the world. The EA outage is impacting gaming services including FIFA 18, Battlefield, Battlefield 2, HNL and Star Wars.</p> <p>The impacted countries include United States, Brazil, Israel, UK and other countries across Europe. The reason for ongoing service disruption is an incident involving cutting of several fiber cables making it impossible for the gaming giants to keep up with their service.</p> <p>At the same time, Electronic Arts have acknowledged the issue and sent out two tweets explaining the current situation and what the company is doing to fix it. Remember, fixing fiber cable cuts is not in their hands.</p> <p>“We’ve heard about several fiber cuts making it hard to connect to the internet. That also affects how you connect to our games and help.ea.com. This is still being investigated and we’ll keep you posted when we know more,” tweeted EA Help Team at 19:25 European time.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Google, PlayStation, NRA attacked
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/google-playstation-nra-hit-by-memcached-servers-ddos-attacks/
GIST	<p>By now the vulnerability in Memcached Servers has been exposed to the masses since its proof of concept (PoC) code was recently published online. That exposure would now allow script kiddies to conduct large-scale DDoS attack as if the recent massive DDoS attack on Github and the world’s largest 1.7Tbps attack on an American firm weren’t enough.</p> <p>But other than the aforementioned targets, do you know who else was hit by Memcached servers DDoS attacks? According to a list provided 360Netlab, a Chinese IT security firm, the following companies and websites have been hit by DDoS attacks through misconfigured Memcached servers.</p> <p>This list has been compiled by researchers using their ddosmon platform which is equipped with a dedicated DDoS botnet C&C tracking system to provide insights. Using the data, researchers compute and monitor ongoing DDoS attacks.</p> <p>QQ (qq.com) 360 (360.com) Amazon (Amazon.com) Google (Googleusercontent.com) Avast (Avast.com) Kaspersky Labs (Kaspersky-labs.com) Brian Krebs (krebsonsecurity.com) Epoch Times (Epochtimes.com) PlayStation (PSN) ((Playstation.net) Minecraft (Minecraft.net) GTA developers Rockstar Games Pornhub (Pornhub.com) HomePornBay (HomePornBay.com) NRA Carry Guard (Nracarryguard.com) The NRA Foundation (Nrafoundation.org) The National Rifle Association of America (NRA) (Nra.org)</p> <p>Furthermore, 360Netlab shared a list of targets revealing that other than the United States and China, attackers have also targeted cyberinfrastructure in Brazil, Canada, South Korea, France, Germany, the</p>

	<p>Netherlands and the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Remember, Cloudflare called it amplification attack and explained in their blog post that “Over the last couple of days, we’ve seen a big increase in an obscure amplification attack vector — using the Memcached protocol, coming from UDP port 11211. Unfortunately, there are many Memcached deployments worldwide which have been deployed using the default insecure configuration.”</p> <p>However, the good news is that Corero researchers have identified a kill switch that can mitigate DDoS attacks carried out through Memcached servers. Researchers have already tested it to be 100% effective on live attacking servers.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 New details CCleaner probe
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/ccleaner-incident-investigation-reveals-possible-stage-3-payload
GIST	<p>CANCUN - KASPERSKY SECURITY ANALYST SUMMIT - The investigation into the September 2017 CCleaner incident has revealed what appears to be a stage three payload that attackers supposedly intended to deliver to infected users.</p> <p>The attack was disclosed on September 18, when security firm Avast revealed that 2.27 million users worldwide had downloaded an infected CCleaner installation file between August 15 and September 12. Hackers had added a backdoor to the 32-bit CCleaner v5.33.6162 and CCleaner Cloud v1.07.3191 releases, Avast revealed.</p> <p>What led to this was the compromise of the distribution servers of Piriform, the company developing CCleaner, in the months before Avast purchased the software firm. The code in the modified installers could collect non-sensitive information from the infected machines, and could also deliver a second stage binary.</p> <p>This revealed that the incident was in fact a highly targeted attack, as the second-stage payload was delivered to only 40 computers out of the millions that downloaded stage one. While no stage three binary was found on the affected systems, Avast now says that the attackers, the Chinese hacking group Axiom (also known as APT17 or DeputyDog), apparently had plans to deliver such malware as well.</p> <p>During its investigation of the Piriform infrastructure, the security firm discovered not only stage one and stage two binaries on the network, but also evidence of a third stage on four computers. Dubbed ShadowPad, this is a specialized tool that provides cybercriminals with remote control capabilities.</p> <p>In an August 2017 report, Kaspersky revealed that the ShadowPad backdoor was found in NetSarang’s products, which are used by hundreds of companies in the financial, software, media, energy, electronics, insurance, industrial, construction, manufacturing, retail, telecoms, pharmaceutical, and transportation sectors.</p> <p>“The tool was installed on the four Piriform computers on April 12th, 2017, while the preliminary version of the second stage had been installed on the computers March 12th, 2017,” Avast says.</p> <p>The command and control (C&C) server the older second stage variant was attempting to connect to was no longer up during the investigation and the researchers don’t know exactly what it was supposed to download. However, given the timeline of events, they assume that it “had downloaded and installed ShadowPad on the four Piriform computers.”</p> <p>The fact that ShadowPad is believed to have been developed by the Axiom group, the same actor behind the CCleaner attack, is also a strong indicator that this malware was intended to become the third stage payload, Avast says.</p>

	The ShadowPad version used in the attack was custom-built, leading investigators to suspect it was explicitly created for Piriform.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Study: females still lag behind in STEM
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/international-womens-day-females-still-lag-behind-males-in-stem-education-act-study-says/article/749789/
GIST	<p>While STEM jobs are plentiful—growing 10.5 percent from May 2009 to 2015—and accomplished workers are in high demand, female students continue to lag behind males in STEM education, according to research from ACT.</p> <p>“Women make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce, but they are woefully underrepresented in STEM careers,” said ACT Chief Commercial Officer Suzana Delanghe said in a release.</p> <p>While the non-profit organization's fifth annual STEM report, STEM Education in the U.S.: Where We Are and What We Can Do, cites “promising practices” meant to encourage all students interested in the field, “those practices are not enough,” said Delanghe. “We must accelerate efforts to engage and prepare girls and young women to pursue careers in STEM when they graduate from high school.”</p> <p>The study, which drew from the two million 2017 graduating high school students who took the ACT, found that males and females have almost equal interest in STEM, 50 percent and 47 percent, respectively, but a gap yawns when it comes to overall readiness for college STEM courses. The disparity widens among those who are interested in STEM – 31 percent of males met the ACT's STEM Benchmark, an ACT STEM of 26, while only 22 percent of females do so.</p> <p>“Clearly we have a lot of work to do” said Delanghe. “Encouraging young women to consider pursuing technically challenging careers must be on the top of educators' ‘to do’ lists.” ACT noted that the computer sector alone would likely create in excess of 500,000 between 2014 to 2014.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/05 Cost of malicious cyber on economy
SOURCE	https://publicintelligence.net/us-malicious-cyber-activity-cost/
GIST	<p>This report examines the substantial economic costs that malicious cyber activity imposes on the U.S. economy. Cyber threats are ever-evolving and may come from sophisticated adversaries. Due to common vulnerabilities, instances of security breaches occur across firms and in patterns that are difficult to anticipate. Importantly, cyberattacks and cyber theft impose externalities that may lead to rational underinvestment in cybersecurity by the private sector relative to the socially optimal level of investment. Firms in critical infrastructure sectors may generate especially large negative spillover effects to the wider economy. Insufficient data may impair cybersecurity efforts. Successful protection against cyber threats requires cooperation across firms and between private and public sectors.</p> <p>Overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We estimate that malicious cyber activity cost the U.S. economy between \$57 billion and \$109 billion in 2016. • Malicious cyber activity directed at private and public entities manifests as denial of service attacks, data and property destruction, business disruption (sometimes for the purpose of collecting ransoms) and theft of proprietary data, intellectual property, and sensitive financial and strategic information. • Damages from cyberattacks and cyber theft may spill over from the initial target to economically linked firms, thereby magnifying the damage to the economy. • Firms share common cyber vulnerabilities, causing cyber threats to be correlated across firms. The limited understanding of these common vulnerabilities impedes the development of the cyber insurance

	<p>market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarce data and insufficient information sharing impede cybersecurity efforts and slow down the development of the cyber insurance market. • Cybersecurity is a common good; lax cybersecurity imposes negative externalities on other economic entities and on private citizens. Failure to account for these negative externalities results in underinvestment in cybersecurity by the private sector relative to the socially optimal level of investment. • Cyberattacks against critical infrastructure sectors could be highly damaging to the U.S. economy.
Return to Top	<p><i>Click on source link to download PDF of report</i></p>

HEADLINE	03/08 New massive crypto-mining malware
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2018/03/cryptocurrency-mining-malware.html
GIST	<p>Two days ago, Microsoft encountered a rapidly spreading cryptocurrency-mining malware that infected almost 500,000 computers within just 12 hours and successfully blocked it to a large extent.</p> <p>Dubbed Dofoil, aka Smoke Loader, the malware was found dropping a cryptocurrency miner program as payload on infected Windows computers that mines Electroneum coins, yet another cryptocurrency, for attackers using victims' CPUs.</p> <p>On March 6, Windows Defender suddenly detected more than 80,000 instances of several variants of Dofoil that raised the alarm at Microsoft Windows Defender research department, and within the next 12 hours, over 400,000 instances were recorded.</p> <p>The research team found that all these instances, rapidly spreading across Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine, were carrying a digital coin-mining payload, which masqueraded as a legitimate Windows binary to evade detection.</p> <p>However, Microsoft has not mentioned how these instances were delivered to such a massive audience at the first place in this short period.</p> <p>Dofoil uses a customized mining application that can mine different cryptocurrencies, but in this campaign, the malware was programmed to mine Electroneum coins only.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Yahoo agrees to pay \$80M settlement
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/risk/yahoo-agrees-to-\$80-million-settlement-with-investors/d/d-id/1331219
GIST	<p>Yahoo has agreed to pay \$80 million to settle a class action securities litigation brought against it by shareholders who alleged that the company intentionally misled them about its cybersecurity practices in the wake of massive data breaches in 2013 and 2014 that compromised the personal information of all 3 billion of Yahoo customers.</p> <p>The 2013 breach was not reported until 2016, and the full extent of the damage was not known until October 2017, months after the investors' lawsuit was filed. The listed defendants are the company, and its CEO and CFO at the time of the events, Marissa Meyer and Kenneth Goldman, respectively. The settlement class includes all those who purchased or acquired Yahoo securities on the open market between April 30, 2013, and Dec. 14, 2016.</p> <p>The settlement must now be accepted by the court.</p> <p>A separate class action suit against Yahoo is also being brought by the victims of the breach whose personal data was exposed in the 2013 breach. The incidents forced Yahoo to trim \$350 million off the</p>

	original \$4.83 billion asking price when it sold its main assets to Verizon in 2017.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Olympic Destroyer's 'false flag'
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/olympic-destroyers-false-flag-changes-the-game/d/d-id/1331222
GIST	<p>KASPERSKY LAB SECURITY ANALYST SUMMIT 2018 – Cancun – Researchers from Kaspersky Lab here today revealed new details on how a sophisticated attack group behind the cyberattacks against the recent 2018 Winter Olympics' network posed as an infamous North Korean nation-state group to throw off investigators.</p> <p>The crippling Olympic Destroyer attack that hit several systems supporting the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last month may have forever changed the game of attack attribution: the sophisticated attackers created a convincing forgery of malware associated with the North Korean nation-state Lazarus Group, fooling several experts who initially pinned the blame for the attacks on the DPRK.</p> <p>Olympic Destroyer temporarily disabled the Olympics IT systems, shutting down WiFi, monitors, and the Olympics website such that ticketholders were unable to print their tickets. Kaspersky researchers also found the destructive worm also hit several ski resorts near the Olympics, where it disabled gates and lifts.</p> <p>Vitaly Kamluk, head of Kaspersky Lab's Asia Pacific research team, said in an interview that his team can't positively identify the real attackers, but they found that the attackers used several TTPs normally associated with Sofacy, aka Fancy Bear, a nation-state attack group. The researchers classify Sofacy as a Russian-speaking group, but stop short of calling them a Russian nation-state operation. "We didn't attribute this [Olympic Destroyer] to Sofacy. We looked at the [attack] infrastructure" and spotted TTPs associated with the Russian-speaking attack group, he said.</p> <p>A Washington Post report late last month said US intelligence officials have ID'ed Russia's GRU military hacking unit as the perpetrators of Olympic Destroyer, posing as attackers out of North Korea by using North Korean IP addresses and other false flags.</p> <p>Kamluk says Olympic Destroyer employed the Proton email service, the NordVPN service as well as a hosting provider, MonoVM, all of which Sofacy has been known to use. There were other TTPs his team found as well, but he declined to disclose them for now.</p> <p>In all, Olympic Destroyer hit not only the Pyeongchang2018.com network, but also IT service provider Atos in France, a software vendor that automates some functions at ski resorts, and two ski resort hotels, according to Kaspersky's research. "At those hotels we helped, we found backdoors to deploy the propagation of the worm," Kamluk said.</p> <p>Header Mismatch</p> <p>Igor Soumenkov, principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab, noticed something was fishy about the Lazarus Group malware in the attacks. Looking more closely at the malware wiper file headers, he discovered one of the headers had been forged: it didn't belong to Lazarus. That header was proof that the attackers had tried to hide behind the Lazarus malware as a false flag operation. "We have 100% confidence this is not Lazarus Group," Soumenkov said in a presentation here today.</p> <p>Turns out the attackers may have inadvertently forgotten to encrypt some of the code, leaving it exposed as a fake, according to the researchers. "After the Olympics attacks they made another binary attack and forgot to encrypt, I think," Soumenkov said.</p> <p>But the attacks initially appeared to have all the earmarks of Lazarus Group.</p>

	<p>"They fooled a lot of smart people," Kamluk said of the attackers. "They wanted to be discovered. They didn't clean up after themselves and made the malware easily discoverable. They wanted it to be discovered as Lazarus Group," he said.</p> <p>"They were not just relying on simulation" of Lazarus Group, he said. "This was a game-changer."</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Group targets Turkey financial system
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/north-korea-threat-group-targeting-turkish-financial-orgs/d/d-id/1331223
GIST	<p>Hidden Cobra, a threat group that the US government previously has linked to North Korea, appears to have turned its sights on financial institutions in Turkey.</p> <p>Security vendor McAfee Thursday reported finding malware associated with the group surfacing on systems belonging to three large financial organizations and at least two major government-controlled entities involved in finance and trade in Turkey.</p> <p>The malware, dubbed Bankshot, was last seen in 2017 and is designed to persist on compromised systems for further exploits. Its presence on the systems in Turkey suggests the Hidden Cobra operation is intended to gather specific information that can be used to launch more damaging attacks later, McAfee said.</p> <p>"While we can't definitively establish motivations, it's likely these attacks are part of an ongoing effort on the part of the attackers to compromise major financial institutions," says Ryan Sherstobitoff, McAfee's senior analyst of major campaigns. The goal could be to "surveil their operations, establish functions of their processes, and ultimately compromise funds," he says.</p> <p>Hidden Cobra, also referred to as the Lazarus Group and Guardians of Peace, is believed responsible for the attacks on the SWIFT financial network in 2016 that resulted in over \$80 million being looted from the Bangladesh Bank. It has also been linked to numerous other attacks on media, aerospace, and critical infrastructure organizations in recent years.</p> <p>The FBI and the US Department of Homeland Security have described the group as being sponsored by the North Korean government and having a wide array of attack tools at its disposal, including distributed denial-of-service botnets, wiper malware, and remote access Trojans. Tools associated with the group include Destover, a wiper malware used in the 2014 attacks on Sony Pictures, and Hangman, a malware used in targeted attacks.</p> <p>Bankshot, the group's tool of choice in the Turkey campaign, was previously used in a major Korean bank attack and has been seen on documents purportedly from banks in Latin America.</p> <p>McAfee's investigation shows that the Bankshot implants that Hidden Cobra is using in its campaign against Turkish financial institutions were distributed via sophisticated phishing emails. The emails have contained a malicious Word document with an embedded exploit for a recently disclosed Adobe Flash vulnerability.</p> <p>Sherstobitoff says this is the first time McAfee has observed Hidden Cobra deploying Bankshot in Turkey. It is also the first time that McAfee has seen an entire country's financial system being targeted so systematically.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Studies: video games no link to violence
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2018/03/08/Studies-Video-game-use-not-linked-to-

GIST

March 8 (UPI) -- In the wake of a high school shooting that killed 17, politicians are wondering whether video games lead to increased violence even though research has debunked the correlation.

President Donald Trump is planning a meeting at the White House on Thursday afternoon with video game industry representatives to address "violent video-game exposure and the correlation to aggression and desensitization in children."

Also invited were members of Congress, an author of a book linking mass killings to violent video games, a representative from the Media Research Center and the president of the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

"The video games, the movies, the Internet stuff, it's so violent," the president said, mentioning his 11-year-old son, Barron Trump. "I look at some of the things he's watching and I say, how is that possible?"

But though the games are violent, researchers studies haven't found a correlation between playing the games and exhibiting violent behavior in real life.

In research in 2004 by the U.S. Secret Service, only one-eighth of school shooters regularly played violent video games.

In the study, more than half of the attackers demonstrated some interest in violence, through movies, video games, books and other media. "However, there was no one common type of interest in violence indicated. Instead, the attackers' interest in violent themes took various forms," according to the report.

Also, researchers at the University of York in Britain found no evidence that video games make players more violent. More than 3,000 participants participated in the study.

Video game learning involves exposing players to concepts, including violence in a game, that makes those concepts easier to use in "real life." This is known as "priming." Researchers found video game concepts do not "prime" players to behave in certain ways and the increased realism of violent video games also doesn't necessarily increase aggression in game players.

"If players are 'primed' through immersing themselves in the concepts of the game, they should be able to categorize the objects associated with this game more quickly in the real world once the game had concluded," David Zendle, from the University's Department of Computer Science, said in a university release in January.

In one study, participants played a game in which they were a car avoiding collisions with trucks or a mouse avoiding being caught by a cat.

"Across the two games we didn't find this to be the case. Participants who played a car-themed game were no quicker at categorizing vehicle images, and indeed in some cases their reaction time was significantly slower," Zendle said.

In another, an experiment compared player reactions to two combat games. One used "ragdoll physics" for realistic character behavior and one that did not. Researchers didn't find more violent word associations.

A American Psychological Association task force in 2015 found video game play is linked to increased aggression in players. However, no sufficient evidence exists about whether the link extends to criminal violence or delinquency.

"The research demonstrates a consistent relation between violent video game use and increases in aggressive behavior, aggressive cognitions and aggressive affect and decreases in pro-social behavior, empathy and sensitivity to aggression," says the report of the APA Task Force on Violent Media. The task force's review was the first in the field to examine the breadth of studies.

	<p>"Scientists have investigated the use of violent video games for more than two decades but to date, there is very limited research addressing whether violent video games cause people to commit acts of criminal violence," said Dr. Mark Appelbaum, task force chairman. "However, the link between violence in video games and increased aggression in players is one of the most studied and best established in the field."</p> <p>"No single risk factor consistently leads a person to act aggressively or violently," the report said. "Rather, it is the accumulation of risk factors that tends to lead to aggressive or violent behavior. The research reviewed here demonstrates that violent video game use is one such risk factor."</p> <p>Last year, the American Psychological Association Media Psychology division released a policy statement requesting that politicians stop making the claims.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 She: cyber stalking; He: did nothing wrong
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/months-horrific-cyber-harassment-wrong/story?id=53612324
GIST	<p>Courtney Allen says she has spent a year and a half living in a state of perpetual terror. A wife and mother from suburban Seattle, Allen said what started as an online flirtation led to a dogged, diabolical campaign of cyberstalking.</p> <p>"I'm having nightmares that my husband is dead, that my son is being taken away from me," Allen told "Nightline."</p> <p>She says playful banter in the chatroom of an online video game curdled into a tsunami of threatening phone calls, emails and text messages, as well as intimate videos of her being sent to her colleagues and the police being called to her home to investigate reports of child abuse.</p> <p>She said the months of harassment and humiliation she and her husband, Steven Allen, endured led her to even contemplate suicide.</p> <p>The man the Allens blame for the torment is Todd Zonis, a 44-year-old married man from Arizona.</p> <p>Courtney and Steven Allen got married in 2001, and when they had their son, Rand, Courtney Allen quit her job and became a stay-at-home mom. That's when she said their marriage began to change.</p> <p>"Steve was not home a lot," she said. "I felt abandoned and then having no time to talk to friends or anything, I really just felt very secluded."</p> <p>She began playing an online game called "Grepolis." Set in ancient Greece, the game lets players use the powers of the gods to protect them and forge alliances with other virtual players. It was while playing this game that she met Zonis. At first, she said he was "rude and crude" but she thought he was funny.</p> <p>"And we just began conversing through the online game," she said.</p> <p>Then Courtney Allen said they began emailing each other.</p> <p>"We started flirting and then that turned to texting, sexting," she said. "And that's mainly how the relationship started to evolve."</p> <p>Courtney Allen was having what she calls a secret online affair, even though she and Zonis had never met face-to-face.</p> <p>"I felt like he [Zonis] was my best friend," she said. "I told him very private things about myself, things that I really didn't tell other people. He replaced my husband."</p>

Then, she said, things turned sexual.

“He had this idea where we should exchange some illicit videos of ourselves,” she said. “So he sent me several and then asked for one in return, and I obliged.”

In September 2013, Steven Allen discovered the relationship.

“It was devastating to me,” he said. “You just don’t ever think that your spouse would do that.”

Steven Allen confronted his wife and she told him she would end the affair with Zonis. But, she didn’t and instead hid her and Zonis’ interaction inside a password-protected tablet.

Months later, Steven Allen caught her again.

Disappointed but unwilling to give up on their marriage, Steven said he began searching for answers and found a website called MarriageBuilders.com. The website says that in order to end an affair, it must be exposed to “family, friends ... and especially the lover’s spouse.”

The website’s author says, that while controversial, overall the advantages of exposure far outweigh the disadvantages and that it’s just “a part of [his] complete plan for marital reconciliation.”

So Steven Allen told his parents and then sent individual Facebook messages to “about 40 of our common friends,” telling them, “I feel it is very important to inform you that Courtney has been participating in an internet, sexual affair, which has shattered my heart. I am asking that you pray for us ... and use whatever influence you have to encourage her to work on our marriage.”

But then he took it even further and emailed Zonis’ wife and parents, telling them, “He’s having an internet affair with my wife.... This involves texts, emails ... and shared recorded videos of masturbation.”

According to the Allens, Zonis was furious and he focused his anger on Steven.

Steven Allen said his bosses started receiving anonymous emails “saying bad things about me, lies about me, trying to get me fired.”

Then the couple said there was a death threat sent to Steven's grandmother.

“She called me up and said ... a man threatened to burn down the house with us in it,” he said.

Courtney Allen said the next year and a half was an “all-out attack” on their family. Hundreds of emails began pouring in. One email sent on Dec. 12, 2014, at 9:25 p.m. read, “Where are you? Are you OK? ... Are you just hoping I fade away so you can enjoy twisting the knife?”

Another email that same night at 9:26 p.m. said, “God damn you, why won’t you talk to me?” There were more emails that night, sent at 9:30, 9:42, 10:00 and 10:34.

“I just kept trying to think, ‘There’s got to be a way for me to get rid of this guy in a nice way where he’ll leave me alone,’” she said.

She said she received five more emails. “What the ----? ... Are you joking?” one email said. “You are cruel,” said another. Another asked: “Have you even thought about me at all in the past month?”

More emails arrived, angry and abusive ones, followed by ones looking for sympathy or demanding apologies.

Then came the voicemails.

“Now it’s all just payback and fun. ... Hope Steve’s credit didn’t take a hit. That would be a shame,” was one voicemail received on Feb. 2, 2015.

“I’m telling you, passion is passion. I did nothing wrong. I’m not going anywhere,” said another received on Feb. 26, 2015.

“There’s no job either one of you guys can have that I won’t know about and be there,” was one received on Feb. 27, 2015. “I will tell you, I’m going to make this as painful and expensive as possible.”

Steven Allen said he received so much of this sort of harassment at work that he had to quit his job.

“I remember going to Steve and saying, ‘This is scaring me. I’m not able to sleep anymore,’” Courtney Allen said. “I don’t know what he’s going to do next. ... I tried emailing and saying, ‘Leave me alone,’ and kept getting progressively firmer” but the harassment wouldn’t stop.

Steven Allen said he had his moments where he thought if his wife hadn’t had this affair, they wouldn’t be dealing with this. But he said he knew “she’s not doing this, he’s doing this.”

“He could choose not to,” Steven said. “He, for whatever reason, felt the way to go was to harass and stalk her and that’s on him.”

The Allens changed their phone numbers, but the calls kept coming. One evening, Courtney Allen said she received more than 200 text messages.

“Like a switch was flipped, like he’s just gone crazy,” she said.

But then the cyber torture became even worse. An explicit video of Courtney Allen masturbating was posted to a website called YouPorn and sent to her bosses and Facebook friends from a Facebook account of someone named Jennifer Jones.

“It was a full-out attack,” she said. “It was personal.”

Cyber harassment attorney Carrie Goldberg said, “Sharing an intimate image with one person doesn’t license that person to then share it with the world. But even more importantly in this case, it doesn’t license the recipient to destroy her with the image.”

Sometimes perpetrators can feel that there’s been “some sort of injustice” and they want revenge, Goldberg said, but “it’s also a sadistic need to control and dominate another person.”

The Allens called the police, but said they were told there was nothing the police could do. They live in Seattle and said the officer they spoke to had told them they could try relocating.

“The police officer told us ... because he [Zonis] is in Arizona, ‘Our hands are kind of tied. We don’t really know what to do with this,’” Courtney Allen said. “So he told us ... that a detective would contact us.”

It’s not uncommon for local police department to not know how to handle cyberattack cases, Goldberg said, “but stalking is stalking, whether it’s through a computer or a phone, in person, and certainly this offender broke many, many laws.”

A few days later, the Allens were relieved when a detective did knock on their door, but then they were blindsided again.

“The detective ... says, ‘I’m here on a welfare check for your son. You’ve been reported for child abuse,’”

Courtney Allen said. "And she apologized and said, 'I'm sorry. I need to see your son's body.'"

Courtney was terrified, thinking that her son could be taken away from her.

"And then I think my son was playing with my dog the other day and he's got a tiny scratch, they're going to see that scratch and they're going to take him away," she said. "My son comes down and he sees me upset so he doesn't want to show the detective anything, and so through coaxing, me and the detective are able to take his shirt off and see that there are no bruises."

"I break down and I'm like, 'We've got a stalker. I think this is his doing. He told me something was going to happen and this is it,'" she continued. "And she [the detective] told me ... 'We'll figure this out. I'll call you in a little bit.'"

But the next day, Courtney Allen said their neighbor came over and told her she had gotten a letter in the mail accusing Steven Allen of abusing and psychologically torturing his wife, urging the community to act and hold him accountable. The letter had been sent to the entire neighborhood and was postmarked from Phoenix, Arizona.

"I stopped being able to function. ... There was always a threat hanging over my head and I didn't know what to do," Courtney said. "These threats are not vague threats to me. They're very real because I believe him."

The Allens then went to the FBI and an agent picked up their case. But then death threats started coming in. One message sent on April 25, 2015, at 2:25 p.m. said, "They are going to hurt you, maybe even kill you. You deserve it." Another one sent on May 1, 2015, at 7:05 a.m. said, "You and Steven are garbage and he's gonna die."

Courtney Allen said the FBI agent told her to call 911 if she felt like she was in danger. While she had a documented death threat, she said, the issue was that not all of the messages were traceable. This was because whoever had been harassing the Allens was using Tor, anonymity software that makes tracing emails and identifying the sender impossible.

After months of brutal harassment, Courtney Allen said she considered taking her own life.

"I got ... an anonymous email [that said], 'It's better for you if you just die,'" she said. "And all this guilt came crashing down that I introduced this maniac into the lives of my family and into my life ... and maybe there's some way I can protect my family and maybe this is it. Maybe if I die, you know, if I kill myself, maybe that will be the end."

She said she went as far as to take a gun out of the family's safe.

"And my son popped into my head and I started to think about the times that I would miss if I weren't there. ... I wouldn't get to see [his] first date or to teach him how to drive a car," she said. "And I stopped. Got up, stopped crying and went about my day and I was like passing a test... The thoughts of my son and my husband, that's what saved me."

The Allens took Todd Zonis and his wife, Jennifer Zonis, to court in June 2015. Proving he was responsible for the cyberharassment would have been impossible if it hadn't been for the handful of emails the Allens' attorneys linked to the Zonises' IP address.

One such email that was sent March 17, 2015, at 9:35 a.m., said, "OK, isolation, shaming and ridicule, coming right up." Another that had been sent on March 29, 2015, at 2:05 p.m., said, "I'll be in Washington [state] real soon. I think we will be seeing a lot of each other for quite a while."

The jury found the Zonises responsible for intentional invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress and defamation to the sum of \$8.9 million.

The Zonises agreed to sit down with “Nightline.” Todd Zonis said he had met Courtney Allen while “playing an online game for the first time in my life,” but that’s where his and the Allens’ story diverge.

Todd said he and his wife Jennifer Zonis had befriended Courtney Allen and that Jennifer was even involved in the correspondence with her.

“She [Courtney Allen] sent me gifts,” Jennifer Zonis said. “She made little tags for the things in my garden, stuff like that.”

Todd Zonis said that Courtney Allen’s claims that their online relationship was more emotional and romantic are “not true at all” and that the story they heard in court about the Allens being harassed for months on end was “very difficult to contradict because we’ve never heard [it] before.”

Todd Zonis said that Courtney Allen had told them her husband Steven was “very controlling” and an “abusive kind of guy.” They also said that she had propositioned them for sex. But Jennifer Zonis said, “We turned her down.”

The Allens’ attorneys argued in court that the explicit images of Courtney Allen that were sent to the Allens’ friends from the Jennifer Jones Facebook account was an account that had been logged into from an IP address at the Zonises’ house.

“That wasn’t me,” Todd Zonis told “Nightline.”

He also denied sending the emails that the Allens’ legal team referenced in court. In fact, he said some of the emails accessed from his IP address, and the calls to police alleging child abuse, were actually done by Steven Allen pretending to be him.

Todd Zonis gave “Nightline” a drive containing evidence that he said was proof of his innocence. But “Nightline” found very little on it that hadn’t already been presented in court. He also repeatedly stressed in the interview that he wasn’t good with computers.

“Literally, I’m a computer moron,” Todd Zonis said. “I’ve never done any of this before. So, no, I had no involvement in any of that.”

As for the letter that was mailed to all of the Allens’ neighbors claiming Steven Allen was abusive, Todd Zonis said Courtney Allen had written it herself and asked him to send it for her, which is why the letters were postmarked from Phoenix.

“Because he [Steven Allen] had ... done an exposure of her to all her family and friends,” Jennifer Zonis said. “She was pissed and wanted retribution against her husband.”

When asked about the threatening voicemails the Allens’ received, Zonis admitted that it was his voice on some of them but that, “all of these [voicemails] could be explained if they’re taken in context.”

Todd Zonis claimed that Steven Allen had sent an email to Zonis’ wife and parents claiming he and Courtney were having an affair, “three or four months before any of this happened.”

The voicemail that says, “It’s all payback and fun,” Todd Zonis said, “Do you know what ‘the payback and fun’ was? The Super Bowl was here that year. ... I’m a sound guy and I work those shows. ... That’s a lot of money.”

“Steven Allen ... intentionally hired lawyers down here to move the date of the hearing,” he continued. “He intentionally dragged his feet on it and then switched it to four different times during that week. I lost the Super Bowl [gig].”

The Zonises claim they never got a fair trial because the judge wouldn't let them submit their own evidence or claims. Their biggest claim is they lost out on their inheritance after Steven Allen emailed Todd Zonis' parents exposing the alleged affair.

"I mean in my case, it's \$2.5 million, plus the home that I grew up in," Todd Zonis said. "I mean my parents kept saying we had a great relationship ... and all of that was gone. I was trying to contact them. They wanted nothing to do with us."

"You haven't heard any of this stuff and there's a reason, OK?" he continued. "They didn't want you to. There's a reason that you weren't provided with any of this stuff or that it's not available. That's why I started my blog, which by the way we get death threats on now."

"And some of them are very ... very personal," Jennifer Zonis said.

Today, the Allens said they are trying to move forward.

"What I did ... [wasn't] to try and ruin our life," Courtney Allen said. "Those are his [Todd Zonis'] actions. They're not placed on me. I may have helped with ruining our lives by providing that information but that's not my fault. It's him and his actions."

"We didn't have a stalker until we had one," Steven Allen added. "You may think you're fine now but something [is] going to happen. You've put all that stuff on the internet and it could be there for decades."

Cynthia Hetherington, an expert in internet intelligence who trains military, law enforcement and security professionals, said anyone posting online can make themselves vulnerable.

"Your profile might be set to private. You think you've locked yourself down, but now the person you're commenting about has an open profile. You've just opened yourself up," she said. "All I need is a name and the general area of where you live. And thank you for also putting pictures up there because now I know what you look like ... and I've totally stolen your identity."

Hetherington said posting photos and information online, such as pictures of a car, a new home, the kids' first day at school, a vacation spot or a neighborhood can contain subtle, identifying details that can be used to compromise your privacy and security.

Chances are, she said, your most critical information, such as your address, Social Security number and phone number are already available online. She recommends contacting the major credit reporting agencies and placing a fraud alert on your accounts. This requires them to call you to verify loan or credit applications.

"I've watched every major public record vendor admit to a compromise," Hetherington said. "Everyone in this country has had their information stolen. ... It's just they haven't used your information yet."

The Allens feel this ordeal is far from over. They fear that the media attention on their case could possibly make them targets again, but they also want to warn others.

"We think it's important that people understand what can happen," Steven Allen said. "You don't have to be a celebrity, you just have to meet the wrong person. Put your trust in the wrong person. And this can happen."

And the Zonises have already filed an appeal.

"This is all going to be overturned on appeal," Todd Zonis said.

HEADLINE	03/08 Fake news spreads faster than truth
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/fake-news-lies-spread-faster-social-media-truth-does-n854896
GIST	<p>If it seems like fake news is everywhere, that may be because it is.</p> <p>Falsehoods spread like wildfire on social media, getting quicker and longer-lasting pickup than the truth, researchers reported on Thursday.</p> <p>A deep dive into Twitter shows that false news was re-tweeted more often than true news was, and carried further.</p> <p>“Falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information, and the effects were more pronounced for false political news than for false news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends, or financial information,” the team, led by Sinan Aral of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote in the journal <i>Science</i>.</p> <p>“It took the truth about six times as long as falsehood to reach 1,500 people.”</p> <p>And it wasn’t bots spreading most of the falsehoods, they found. It was real people doing most of it. Usually ordinary people, too, they found: so-called ‘verified’ users and those with many followers were not usually the source of some of the most popular untrue viral posts.</p> <p>It might be because false statements sound more surprising, they said.</p> <p>“We found that false news was more novel than true news, which suggests that people were more likely to share novel information,” they wrote.</p> <p>It should come as no surprise that the internet has spawned a resurgence of fake news. Congress and the FBI are investigating evidence that Russian and other foreign users deliberately flooded social media with untrue reports and posts intended to mislead people about political candidates.</p> <p>And the term “fake news” has taken on its own life, referring not only to untrue reports but being increasingly used to dismiss reports that the user does not wish to agree with.</p> <p>So Aral’s team decided to use the term “false news” instead. They also used a broad definition of “news”. “We refer to any asserted claim made on Twitter as news,” they said.</p> <p>The study started with PhD research by MIT’s Soroush Vosoughi, who was struck by the false reports that spread rapidly after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, in which three people were killed and 264 injured.</p> <p>“Twitter became our main source of news,” Vosoughi said in a statement. “I realized that ... a good chunk of what I was reading on social media was rumors,” he added.</p> <p>To objectively separate truth from lies or mistakes, Vosoughi and colleagues used sites devoted to fact-checking: factcheck.org, hoax-slayer.com, politifact.com, snopes.org, truthorfiction.com, and urbanlegends.about.com. The six sites agreed on which reports were true about 95 percent of the time, they said.</p> <p>For the report, they examined 126,000 stories tweeted by about 3 million people more than 4.5 million times.</p> <p>They found that false news stories were 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than true stories were.</p> <p>Untrue stories also had more staying power, carrying onto more “cascades,” or unbroken re-tweet chains, they found.</p>

When they looked at who was spreading the wrong stuff, they found it was ordinary users of social media.

“We conclude that human behavior contributes more to the differential spread of falsity and truth than automated robots do,” they wrote.

Why retweet that post before you know whether it’s actually true?

Status, Aral said. "People who share novel information are seen as being in the know," he said.

But don’t forget about the bots, argue Filippo Menczer of Indiana University and colleagues. They estimate that 60 million “bots” post automatic updates on Facebook and up to 48 million are on Twitter.

"The spreaders of fake news are using increasingly sophisticated methods," Menczer said in a statement.

Why do people fall for it, whether it’s from a bot or a real friend?

"False news is more novel, and people are more likely to share novel information," Aral said. Plus, people like to repeat information that seems to affirm their beliefs.

“People prefer information that confirms their preexisting attitudes, view information consistent with their preexisting beliefs as more persuasive than dissonant information (confirmation bias), and are inclined to accept information that pleases them,” David Lazer of Northeastern University and colleagues wrote in an editorial.

And fact-checking can backfire, they noted. “Fact-checking might even be counterproductive under certain circumstances,” they wrote. “There is thus a risk that repeating false information, even in a fact-checking context, may increase an individual’s likelihood of accepting it as true.”

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HEADLINE	03/08 Massive DDoS attacks target NRA
SOURCE	https://www.infowars.com/nra-increasingly-targeted-by-massive-ddos-attacks/
GIST	<p>The National Rifle Association has come under an increasingly large number of powerful distributed-denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, researchers revealed Thursday.</p> <p>According to a blog post from the Network Security Research Laboratory, run by Chinese company Qihoo 360, the gun rights organization has recently been targeted by DDoS attacks utilizing memcached servers.</p> <p>The new tactic, which can allow an attack to be amplified by up to a factor of more than 50,000, was recently used against an unnamed U.S. service provider in the biggest ever recorded DDoS attack. That incident came just days after developer platform GitHub was hit with what was then the largest ever attack.</p> <p>The NRA’s top sites, including nra.org, nrafoundation.org and nracarryguard.com, found itself among other more regularly attacked domains such as Amazon and Google.</p> <p>An examination of social media posts by Bleeping Computer’s Catalin Cimpanu, who first reported on the story Thursday, suggests the most successful attack against the NRA may have occurred late last month.</p> <p>“The biggest one appears to have taken place on February 28, when multiple users reported the website down for hours,” Cimpanu said.</p> <p>The attacks follow the death of 17 at a school shooting in Florida last month and widespread debate over firearms.</p>

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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	03/08 FBI: terror plot dismantled
SOURCE	https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/ohio-syria-traveler-sentenced-030818
GIST	<p>Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud was a seemingly aimless young man. He had dropped out of high school, worked intermittent jobs, and spent time hanging out with friends and playing basketball in Columbus, Ohio.</p> <p>Yet Mohamud, now 26, did have a sinister goal for his life—to go to Syria and train to become a terrorist with the al-Nusrah Front, a group designated by the U.S. State Department as a foreign terrorist organization. And then he planned to return to the United States to conduct an attack on American soil.</p> <p>But thanks to the multi-agency efforts of an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force operating out of the FBI’s Cincinnati Division, the attack never happened.</p> <p>With an older brother already fighting in Syria, Mohamud—a naturalized U.S. citizen—used an Internet messaging service to coordinate a trip to Syria to join him in combat. Mohamud opened a bank account to collect funds for his brother, got a U.S. passport, bought a one-way ticket to Athens, Greece (with a layover in Istanbul, Turkey), and purchased an Internet-accessible tablet to take with him to the battlefield.</p> <p>On April 8, 2014, weeks after he’d received his passport, Mohamud boarded his Athens-bound flight. But instead of getting on his connecting flight in Istanbul, he worked with individuals aligned with al-Nusrah who eventually helped get him into Syria.</p> <p>Once in Syria, he trained with al-Nusrah on weapons, combat tactics, and general fitness. He also began researching potential plots for when he returned to the United States. Mohamud gave money to someone affiliated with al-Nusrah to give to his brother.</p> <p>In June 2014, Mohamud’s brother was killed while fighting in Syria. Just a few days later, Mohamud returned to the United States and began attempting to recruit like-minded individuals and gather weapons. His goal was to kill U.S.-based troops or government employees, according to court documents.</p> <p>“One of the greatest threats is when a person who has been trained by an overseas terror group comes back to the United States,” said Special Agent Stephen Flowers, who investigated the case as part of the FBI Cincinnati’s Joint Terrorism Task Force. “He aligned himself with a group that presents a great risk to us domestically.”</p> <p>Investigators also knew that Mohamud kept in touch with those al-Nusrah-aligned individuals who helped get him into Syria, even after he returned to Ohio.</p> <p>During an interview with the FBI in February 2015, he lied, telling agents he had never left Istanbul and had not gone to Syria. He was arrested shortly thereafter.</p> <p>Last year, Mohamud pleaded guilty to providing material support to a terrorist organization and to making false statements to the FBI. In January, he was sentenced to 22 years in federal prison.</p>
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HEADLINE **03/08 What’s next for Islamic State?**

SOURCE <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-09/with-caliphate-gone-what-s-next-for-islamic-state-quicktake>

<p>GIST</p>	<p>Islamic State, the richest and most destructive Islamist militant organization the world has seen, has been subdued in Iraq and Syria by an array of forces ranging from the U.S. military to Iranian-backed militias. Its fighters have been pushed into ever smaller redoubts, and its leaders are in hiding. But the metastatic nature of violent jihad means the story isn't likely to end there. Islamic State's forerunner, al-Qaeda, faced the possibility of destruction in late 2001 when it was driven from its sanctuaries in Afghanistan by invading U.S. forces. It survived and helped inspire a new generation of extremists -- including those who formed Islamic State.</p> <p>1. Is Islamic State finished in Syria and Iraq? Not quite. With its self-declared caliphate -- a state that claims dominion over all Muslims -- in ruins, the group said in a video near the end of 2017 that "jihad had entered a new stage." That probably signaled the group's intention to return to the insurgency tactics it used in its early incarnations following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003: bombings, assassinations and sniper attacks. Its enigmatic leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is thought to be alive.</p> <p>2. How many of its fighters are left there? U.S. intelligence agencies estimate that more than 40,000 foreigners from at least 120 countries flocked to Iraq and Syria to join Islamic State. Many are dead. The Soufan Center, a security intelligence consultancy, estimates that at least 5,600 had returned to their home countries by the end of 2017. Experts think only about 3,000 remain in the remnants of the group's proto-state. Most of those have fled to the desert, in line with the organization's shift toward hit-and-run attacks. Replenishing the ranks will be difficult, as many countries have taken steps since 2015 to make it harder for would-be jihadists to cross international frontiers.</p> <p>3. What's happened to Islamic State's finances? Islamic State's average monthly revenue was about \$80 million in 2015, according to IHS Markit, a London-based information and analytics group. But in losing almost all the territory it controlled, the group has also lost its oil assets, notably the fields of Deir Ezzor in Syria, and its ability to generate revenue through taxation. It can still earn cash from kidnapping and smuggling, but a financial recovery would require the group to reconnect cells and supply lines across its former territory.</p> <p>4. What's happened to its capacity for terrorist attacks? As it came under increasing pressure in Syria and Iraq, Islamic State launched more and more strikes around the world, presumably to demonstrate its continued relevance. Its losses in Syria and Iraq have degraded its ability to orchestrate attacks from there, but not from its many affiliates in other countries. It can also continue to animate attacks by so-called lone-wolf terrorists, who are inspired by but have no formal ties to terrorist groups. Islamic State's propaganda machine has reduced its output but is still functioning.</p> <p>5. How worrisome are its affiliates and allies? Groups around the world that are associated with Islamic State include some that were established directly as franchises, some that existed previously and have rebranded themselves as affiliates, others that operate separately but have sworn allegiance to Islamic State and still others that just share its goals.</p>
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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>03/08 US: \$5M bounty Pakistani Taliban leader</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pakistan-militants/u-s-offers-5-million-bounty-for-pakistani-taliban-militant-leader-idUSKCN1GK30J</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States on Thursday said it was offering a \$5-million reward for information on Mullah Fazlullah, the chief of the Pakistani Taliban militant group that has waged a decade-long insurgency in the South Asian nation.</p> <p>The offer came amid worsening U.S.-Pakistan relations, and coincided with a visit to Washington by Pakistan's foreign secretary for talks expected to focus on boosting counter-terrorism cooperation and the</p>

	<p>U.S. war strategy in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Although Pakistani Taliban militants still unleash attacks, the group has lost control of all territory in Pakistan since its Dec. 2014 attack on an army school that killed 132 children.</p> <p>The U.S. State Department also offered rewards of \$3 million each for information on Abdul Wali, the head of a Pakistani Taliban affiliate, and Mangal Bagh, the leader of an allied Pakistani militant group accused of attacking NATO convoys.</p> <p>“Each of these individuals is believed to have committed, or to pose a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten the security of the United States and its nationals,” the department said in a statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Syria opens new 'humanitarian corridor'
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/03/08/Syria-opens-new-humanitarian-corridor-out-of-Eastern-Ghouta/4241520543773/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=8
GIST	<p>March 8 (UPI) -- The Syrian government opened a new designated crossing area Thursday to allow civilians in the besieged enclave of Eastern Ghouta to leave the area.</p> <p>The "humanitarian corridor" leads to al-Malihah town via the road of Jisreen-Malihah east of the capital of Damascus, the state-run Syrian Arab News Agency reported.</p> <p>Authorities also brought ambulances and buses to transport civilians out of the area to makeshift centers.</p> <p>Forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad took control of nearly half of Eastern Ghouta on Wednesday, essentially cutting off one half of the enclave from the other.</p> <p>About 400,000 people remain trapped in eastern Ghouta and about 700 civilians were reportedly killed in the region in the past two weeks.</p> <p>Civilians were expected to evacuate the area Thursday after 10 days of failed attempts to transport them through the first crossing area in Wafidin.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Pipeline has surprise patrons: Taliban
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-08/a-7-5-billion-pipeline-has-surprise-patrons-taliban-militants
GIST	<p>After decades of talks, Afghanistan finally broke ground last month on a \$7.5 billion gas pipeline that will run through areas controlled by the Taliban. Even more surprising: The militant group is backing the project.</p> <p>The Taliban “deems it its responsibility to revive foundational economic and reconstruction work in the country and asks international construction companies to help the Afghans in this regard,” Zabihullah Mujahed, a spokesman, said in a statement last month, noting that talks on the pipeline dated back to when the Taliban governed the nation.</p> <p>The endorsement from a group that has fought the U.S.-backed government in Kabul for the past 17 years raises a slight hope for a political settlement even as violence continues to rage. President Ashraf Ghani last week presented his most comprehensive peace offering yet to the Taliban, which controls or contests nearly half the country. He’s open to recognizing the group as a political movement and would help remove international sanctions.</p>

“After the project’s completion, it will have some sort of positive impact on peace talks between the Taliban and the government,” said Harun Mir, a political analyst in Kabul. “The Taliban who live there can benefit too and that may open the gate for talks.”

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline will eventually carry an annual 33 billion cubic meters of gas, creating thousands of jobs and generating more than \$400 million in annual revenue for the cash-strapped government in Kabul. State-owned Turkmengaz, Afghan Gas Enterprise and GAIL India Ltd. are among companies working on the project.

The Afghan section of the pipeline -- about 500 miles passing through some Taliban-controlled areas -- is scheduled to be finished in two years. It will then reach Pakistan before crossing its heavily fortified border with India.

Ensuring security will be crucial as its runs along a highway in southern Afghanistan that has been beset by frequent attacks. Its success also hinges on regional cooperation among countries that have less than rosy relations.

“We will have no any enmity relations with any country in the future,” Ghani told a hundreds-strong audience in Herat at a ceremony attended by Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and M. J. Akbar, India’s junior external affairs minister. “We just want to secure our national interest.”

Ghani didn’t detail security arrangements and only briefly suggested that local authorities would be responsible for the pipeline’s safety.

Ghani’s government has expressed skepticism of the Taliban’s intentions. The administration won’t make payments to the Taliban and it’s “premature” to trust their assurances, according to Dawa Khan Menapal, a presidential spokesman.

“Families, friends and relatives of Taliban can use it as well -- so it’s their responsibility to protect and defend any national projects,” Menapal said.

Ghani has a lot riding on the project’s success. His administration has struggled to implement any meaningful economic gains in the midst of worsening violence across the country.

John R. Bass, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, tweeted last month that the project will “energize regional cooperation” and “become an important source of revenue.”

That optimism is being pared with realities on the ground. The conflict killed or wounded more than 10,000 civilians last year, according to the United Nations. In January, the Taliban claimed attacks in the capital that killed and wounded hundreds. Islamic State has also slowly extended its reach in Afghanistan.

“Even if the Taliban has said they won’t cause problems, there are many other militant groups that could,” said Michael Kugelman, a senior associate for South Asia at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington. Also “the Taliban could well change its mind.”

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HEADLINE	03/09 Claim: western tech targets US ally
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/watchdog-western-tech-hacking-turkey-syria-53628374?
GIST	A Canadian company's hardware is being used to hack internet users along Turkey's border with Syria, researchers said Friday, adding that there were signs that Kurdish forces aligned with the United States might have been targeted.

The revelation comes as Turkey presses its offensive against the Kurds dug in along the country's frontier with northwestern Syria — a conflict that threatens to disrupt the American-led effort to extinguish the Islamic State group. The apparent use of Canadian technology to target a U.S. ally was an irony underlined by Ron Deibert, the director of the internet watchdog group Citizen Lab, which published a report on the spying.

"These companies are not closely regulated — and that can lead to a lot of unintended consequences, including consequences that harm our foreign policy interests and human rights interest as well," said Deibert. "It's a strong argument for government control over this kind of technology."

Citizen Lab identified the hardware behind the hacking as PacketLogic devices produced by Procera — a Fremont, California-based company that was recently folded into Canada-based network management firm Sandvine, which is owned by American private equity group Francisco Partners.

In a statement issued before the report's release, Sandvine said it investigates all allegations of abuse but said it had been unable to complete its inquiry because Citizen Lab refused to provide the company with its findings in full.

"Once we have the necessary data, we will conduct a full investigation and take appropriate action," Sandvine said.

The statement also said Citizen Lab's allegations were "technically inaccurate and intentionally misleading," but a representative for the company has yet to supply an example of a misleading or inaccurate claim.

Citizen Lab said it discovered the hacking after a European cybersecurity company reported that network service providers in two unidentified countries were trying to compromise their users using a powerful hacking technique known as network injection. Citizen Lab scoured the internet for signs of the spying and eventually traced the activity to the Turkish provinces of Adana, Hatay, Gaziantep, Diyarbakir and to the Turkish capital, Ankara, as well as parts of northern Syria and Egypt.

Network injection — so-called because malicious software is injected into everyday internet traffic by whoever controls the network — has long been feared as a particularly powerful form of government spying.

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HEADLINE	03/09 Official: Taliban attack Afghan army outpost
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/afghan-official-taliban-assault-outpost-kill-10-policemen-53630067?
GIST	<p>An Afghan official says the Taliban launched a deadly assault on an army outpost in a remote region of northern Takhar province, killing 10 local policemen and wounding nine.</p> <p>Provincial police spokesman Khali Aseir said on Friday that a large number of Taliban fighters assaulted the outpost overnight.</p> <p>He says the members of the local police were ambushed and killed while on their way to the outpost to assist the Afghan soldiers in the remote district of Khwaja Ghar.</p> <p>The soldiers suffered no casualties.</p> <p>Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the assault late Thursday and the police slayings. He claimed the Taliban had inflicted a far higher number of casualties but the insurgents often exaggerate their claims.</p>

	The report couldn't be independently confirmed because of the area's remoteness.
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HEADLINE	03/09 Turkey war on Kurds unsettles ISIS battle
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkeys-war-kurds-unsettles-fronts-northern-syria-53629728?
GIST	<p>Turkey's war on a Syrian Kurdish militia that is closely aligned with the United States is forcing the group to give up positions against Islamic State militants in the Syrian desert to defend against the advancing Turkish troops.</p> <p>Ankara's go-it-alone campaign against the Kurdish People's Protection Units, known as the YPG, in a region called Afrin is reshaping military alignments in northern Syria and forcing the U.S. to pause its mop-up operations against pockets of the Islamic State group.</p> <p>But the U.S. is not supporting the defense of Afrin, and the Kurds are looking to Damascus for help, despite the Syrian government's pariah status in the international community.</p> <p>Washington and many Western nations hold President Bashar Assad's government chiefly responsible for the civil war that has engulfed the country for nearly seven years and still shows little sign of abating. To date, Damascus is the only major player to send forces to defend Afrin.</p> <p>The move gives Assad particular leverage over the Kurdish self-administration at a time when global powers are jostling for influence in Syria.</p> <p>"Afrin is in need of whoever can defend it," said Ilham Ahmed, a senior official in the Kurdish self-administration unit of northern Syria, which the Kurds call Rojava.</p> <p>"We are ready for dialogue with the regime and to resolve our issues with them," she said.</p> <p>The U.S. is naturally hesitant to enter into a military confrontation with NATO member Turkey, but White House officials may have underestimated the Kurds' determination to defend Afrin, says Mutlu Civiroglu, a Kurdish analyst in Washington.</p> <p>"So many major political and military leaders of the Kurds are from Afrin, and Afrin, in the Kurdish heart and mindset, is an inseparable part of Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan," said Civiroglu.</p> <p>Ahmed, a native of Afrin, said the Kurds have been "astonished" by the "global silence" in the face of the Turkish campaign.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Afghan official: suicide bomber kills 7
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-suicide-bomber-targets-hazaras-kabul-kills-53631311?
GIST	<p>An Afghan official says a suicide bomber targeting a gathering of ethnic Hazaras in the capital, Kabul, blew himself up at a police checkpoint outside the venue, killing seven people and wounding 14.</p> <p>The Interior Ministry's deputy spokesman, Nasrat Rahimi, says a police officer was among the dead in Friday's attack, which took place in western Kabul as hundreds of Hazaras gathered to commemorate the 1995 death of one of their leaders, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was slain by the Taliban.</p> <p>No group has immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Afghanistan's minority Shiites, who are</p>

	<p>mostly Hazaras, have lately been frequently targeted in militant attacks, either by the Taliban or the Islamic State affiliate operating in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The Sunni militants consider the Shiites heretics and urge followers to kill them.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Guilty plea for trying to help ISIS
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/alabama-man-pleads-guilty-islamic-state-53616582?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>An Alabama man has pleaded guilty to plotting to help the Islamic State group.</p> <p>Aziz Sayyed pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court in Birmingham, Alabama, to charges that he planned to aid the extremist organization.</p> <p>Federal prosecutors said Sayyed, after watching videos from the terrorist group, purchased the ingredients to make an explosive and told others about his hope to use it in a car bomb or explosive belt.</p> <p>According to the plea agreement, Sayyed, who lives in Huntsville, told people he wanted to attack police stations or the Redstone Arsenal military installation. He was arrested after discussing his plans with an undercover FBI agent.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Nigeria: will recapture Boko Haram chief
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/08/africa/nigeria-recapture-boko-haram-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Lagos, Nigeria (CNN)The Nigerian army is vowing to recapture a Boko Haram commander freed last year in exchange for 82 girls who were kidnapped from a school in the town of Chibok nearly four years ago.</p> <p>An army official told CNN that the Boko Haram commander, Shuibu Moni, would be apprehended again after he taunted the military in a new propaganda video from the militant Islamic group.</p> <p>"He was captured before; he can be captured again," army spokesman John Agim told CNN. "The troops that captured him are still in the northeast, and they will get him."</p> <p>Boko Haram sparked international outrage when the militants captured 276 girls -- between the ages of 16 and 18 -- from a boarding school in Chibok in Borno state in April 2014. Eighty-two of the girls were freed in a May 2017 swap with Boko Haram that also saw Moni's release. More than 100 of the girls remain in captivity, their whereabouts unknown.</p> <p>Agim was responding to Moni's assertions in the terror group's video that insurgents still had a firm grip on Sambisa Forest, an enclave in northeast Nigeria.</p> <p>The video refuted the Nigerian government's claims that it had "technically defeated" Boko Haram and driven its members out of Sambisa Forest.</p> <p>In the video, members of the terrorist organization fired live rounds of ammunition in a display of power while driving a beaten-down truck through a forest that Moni said was Sambisa.</p> <p>"They are spreading fake news around that they collected Sambisa and instructed people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states (that they) should watch out for us.</p> <p>"It is a lie. Where is this place we are in? Is it not Sambisa Forest?" Moni asks in the video.</p>

	<p>Speaking in native Hausa and Arabic, Moni warns that the group is planning something. "Just wait and see soon what will happen," he says in in the video.</p> <p>Boko Haram has wreaked carnage in northeast Nigeria in the last eight years, most recently kidnapping 110 schoolgirls from the town of Dapchi in Yobe state on February 19.</p> <p>Moni did not say anything about the Dapchi girls in the video.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	03/08 FEMA flood maps outdated?
SOURCE	https://psmag.com/environment/fema-has-outdated-flood-maps
GIST	<p>Over the past 30 years, the United States has suffered an average of \$8.2 billion in annual damage from freshwater flooding. Studies show that the destruction is intensifying every year. The August of 2016 floods in Mississippi and Louisiana, for example, inflicted \$10 to \$15 billion in damages.</p> <p>The wrath of Hurricane Harvey sparked debate over how the country manages flood insurance and brought fresh scrutiny on incentives for new construction on the country's precarious floodplains. But meaningful reform faces a hurdle: the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood hazard maps. These maps dictate flood risk management in the U.S., and they've been widely criticized for being outdated and underestimating the country's flood risk.</p> <p>A report released last Wednesday by the University of Bristol, United Kingdom, and the Nature Conservancy concludes that FEMA's maps only account for one-third of the total population that is exposed to serious flooding. Whereas FEMA estimates that 13 million Americans are currently exposed to the devastation of a "100-year flood," the report puts that number at 41 million. (A 100-year flood describes an extreme flooding event that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any year; it is a common benchmark for flood risk management.)</p> <p>"It's pretty daunting," said Kris Johnson, a Nature Conservancy scientist and one of the report's authors.</p> <p>The simulations run for this study used large amounts of data from the U.S. Geological Survey National Elevation Dataset, and were "much more accurate and much more comprehensive than anything we've had available before," Johnson said. FEMA's appraisal of flood risk, on the other hand, relies on time-consuming local assessments of various catch basins and floodplains.</p> <p>"Producing maps the FEMA way essentially misses a lot of flood hazard," said Oliver E.J. Wing, a doctoral candidate at the University of Bristol and another of the report's authors. "And these maps are what inform risk management decisions in the U.S. at the moment." Wing said that FEMA's methods "tend to ignore smaller streams." Smaller streams don't hold the same volume of water as America's largest rivers, but they are numerous, and many run through heavily populated areas.</p> <p>The report finds that FEMA maps overlook risk across the U.S., but but the newly identified exposure areas are concentrated along the Pacific coast, in urban centers around the Great Lakes, and across the inland West. The researchers also projected future changes in population and housing density using the Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Climate and Land Use Scenarios. They found that the proportion of Americans living in flood-prone areas will increase over time.</p> <p>Today, 13.3 percent of the U.S. population is exposed to a 100-year flood, but that number may rise to 15.8 percent by 2050 and 16.8 percent by 2100, according to the report. In some regions, the projected increase is stark. South Dakota, Nebraska, and New Mexico are slated to see a five-fold increase in flood exposure by 2100. In California, Florida, and Texas, exposure is predicted to triple or quadruple, according to the study.</p>

"What's really unnerving," said Johnson, "is that in some cases, there's disproportionately more people and development projected to happen in areas that are at even greater and more frequent risk of flooding. Our policy and planning and incentive structure, our insurance structure—it's not set up to think holistically and disincentivize bad decisions about where to build."

In one scenario modeled by the researchers, the amount of developed land that would lie in the 100-year floodplain in 2100 would equal the size of Colorado and would contain assets roughly equivalent to the current gross domestic product of the U.S. And the study didn't account for how climate change could exacerbate flooding, meaning that these outcomes could be more severe.

Avoiding new construction in these areas will be key to minimizing future flood damage, Johnson said. It could also have another advantage: Instead of being clogged with concrete, these natural drainage areas could do what they're meant to, and absorb a river's excess water.

"We'll get some additional benefit, because those flood waters will be able to spill out on the flood plain instead of being shunted downstream at higher velocity," Johnson said. "In this country, we overlook and undervalue the roll of intact natural features in helping manage risk."

For localities to make granular decisions, like how high to elevate buildings or where exactly to avoid new construction, planners will still have to conduct more specific local models. But the study points to the regions of the country that need to be more critical about their risk assessment. With more data, Wing said, this methodology will be able to better inform localities on flood risk: "With this new modeling, at this stage, we're only scratching the surface."

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HEADLINE	03/08 Deputy heard shots; told cops stay away
SOURCE	http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/broward/article204226584.html
GIST	<p>Roundly vilified for not entering a Parkland high school during a mass shooting, Broward Deputy Scot Peterson insisted publicly that he believed that gunfire was happening outside on campus — not from inside the building.</p> <p>But internal radio dispatches released by the sheriff's office Thursday show Peterson immediately fixated on Building 12 and even radioed that gunfire was happening "inside."</p> <p>And, just as school shooter Nikolas Cruz was fleeing the building after killing 17 people, Peterson warned his fellow officers to stay away — even as wounded students and staff lay inside.</p> <p>BSO policy calls for deputies to engage an active shooter and eliminate the threat.</p> <p>"Do not approach the 12 or 1300 building, stay at least 500 feet away," Peterson said over the radio, according to the records released Thursday.</p> <p>The second-by-second timeline and audio recording of police radio chatter sheds new light on the chaotic and much scrutinized law-enforcement response to the bloodshed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High on Feb. 14, the state's worst school shooting.</p> <p>The records appear to support Broward Sheriff Scott Israel's contention that Peterson, a longtime school-resource officer, should have entered Building 12 to engage Cruz and try to prevent deaths. They also appear to show that other deputies may have refrained from rushing into the school at Peterson's direction. The response by his agency has been the subject of national scrutiny, and is currently under review by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.</p> <p>Jeff Bell, the president of BSO's police union, welcomed the release of the audio and timeline.</p>

“It certainly backs up that he never went into the school,” Bell said of Peterson. “At one point he says to keep back 500 feet. Why would he say that?”

The Broward Sheriff’s Office pieced together the timeline through radio dispatches from Broward and Coral Springs police and video surveillance from the school.

According to the timeline, this is what happened:

Cruz was dropped off at the school by an Uber at 2:19 p.m. Two minutes later, he entered Building 12. He began firing within 15 seconds. Peterson, at the time, was near the administration building.

At 2:22 p.m. the fire alarm was triggered, blaring throughout the entire campus. The first 911 call also went out, via Coral Springs emergency-dispatch center.

“Be advised we have possible, could be firecrackers. I think we have shots fired, possible shots fired — 1200 building,” Peterson radioed at 2:23 p.m.

At that moment, according to the video, Peterson arrived at the southeast corner of Building 12, where he appeared to remain “for the duration of the incident.” “We’re talking about the 1200 building, it’s going to be the building off Holmberg Road,” Peterson said seconds later. “Get the school locked down, gentlemen.”

As the shots intensified, other deputies began racing to the scene, radioing in. One believed he heard shots by the football field, something Peterson mentioned in a statement released last month by his attorney, arguing that the school resource deputy thought shots were coming from outside the 1200 building.

“BSO trains its officers that in the event of outdoor gunfire one is to seek cover and assess the situation in order to communicate what one observes with other law enforcement,” Peterson said.

But Peterson, according to the timeline, remain focused on Building 12.

“All right... We also heard it’s by, inside the 1200,” Peterson said at 2:25 p.m.

Joseph DiRuzzo, Peterson’s attorney, did not respond to an email and a call to his office.

Calls about the shooting began “blowing up” the 911 call centers. Students were spilling out of the campus. Peterson radioed to make sure “no one comes inside the school.”

At 2:27 p.m., six minutes after Cruz went into Building 12, the shooting stopped. Cruz ditched his AR-15 in the third-floor stairwell and left.

Five seconds later, Peterson radioed for officers to “stay at least 500 feet away at this point.” A dispatcher repeated, “Stay away from 12 and 1300 building.”

Coral Springs officer Tim Burton had just arrived at Douglas High. At 2:28 p.m., he radioed out the first description of Cruz: “White male with ROTC Uniform Burgundy Shirt” — exactly what the shooter was wearing when he was arrested later. How Burton obtained the information was unclear from the timeline.

At 2:29 p.m., as officers began encountering wounded students, Burton met with Peterson outside Building 12.

The chaos continued. Deputies tried getting into Building 13 next door, but it was locked. A fleeing student appeared to be stuck in a fence; a deputy asked for bolt cutters. One deputy called for a command post to be set up.

	<p>“We need to get units in here so we can trying to find this guy,” a deputy radioed.</p> <p>It was at 2:32 — 11 minutes after the shooting began — that four Coral Springs officers and two BSO deputies made the first police entrance into the building, helping to “extract a victim.”</p> <p>By 2:35 p.m., officers were seen transporting a victim on a golf cart. One minute after that, 10 officers burst into Building 12 through an east-side entrance.</p> <p>Down the street, Cruz had entered a Walmart and bought a drink at the Subway inside. By 3:30 p.m., a Coconut Creek officer saw Cruz and arrested him without incident. Cruz was indicted Wednesday on 17 counts of first-degree murder and 17 counts of attempted murder.</p> <p>The Broward Sheriff’s Office released the timeline Thursday following weeks of mounting pressure to make the details of its police response public. The Miami Herald, South Florida Sun-Sentinel and CNN sued the agency last month to force it to release surveillance video, and their lawyers argued in court Thursday that it was in the public interest to release the footage.</p> <p>The sheriff’s office tweeted Thursday about the case.</p> <p>“BSO agreed in court today with the media that surveillance video from outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High should be released publicly. Legal exemptions block the release unless a judge approves. The judge took it under advisement and we hope for a ruling shortly.”</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Idaho potatoes set record for value
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/921329/idaho-potatoes-set-record-for-production-value-last-year/
GIST	<p>BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Idaho potatoes were valued at \$1.19 billion last year, setting a record for the crop’s production value.</p> <p>The Capital Press reports the 2017 production value was 23 percent higher than the prior year and 14 percent higher than the previous record value of \$1.04 billion set in 2011.</p> <p>According to Department of Agriculture, Idaho potato farmers harvested 309,000 acres last year, decreasing by 5 percent from the 324,000 acres harvested in 2016.</p> <p>Aberdeen potato grower Ritchey Toevs says famers increased the production value by reducing the supply slightly.</p> <p>Washington state had the second highest potato production with its 2017 crop valued at \$888 million, a 9 percent increase from the prior year.</p> <p>According to the USDA, U.S. potato production increased by 15 percent to about \$4.5 billion last year.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Bombs found downtown Long Beach
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/921799/police-find-bombs-in-washington-state-town/
GIST	<p>LONG BEACH, Wash. (AP) — Police say they have found and detonated two bombs left in downtown Long Beach, Washington.</p> <p>The Chinook Observer reports the devices were found on Monday after receiving a report of a suspicious bag left near public restrooms. Police Officer Jeff Cutting found the bag contained jars filled with a gelatin material and wires. He asked dispatch to contact the State Patrol Bomb squad, which arrived four hours later.</p>

	The bombs contained shrapnel, gunshot shells and rat poison, Cutting said. They were buried in the ground and detonated.
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HEADLINE	03/08 SPD: homeless man \$1,025 littering ticket
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/homeless_in_seattle/article/Seattle-police-issue-tickets-homeless-people-12739671.php
GIST	<p>Seattle police again this week issued a pricey ticket to someone unlikely to be able to pay.</p> <p>Police on Monday contacted a man living in a tent near Green Lake and gave him a \$1,025 ticket for littering.</p> <p>The man and several other people arrived the day before on the site, a greenbelt near Green Lake, with the help of community organizer Matthew Lang and others from two neighborhood action councils, Lang told SeattlePI.</p> <p>Lang, who wasn't present when the ticket was issued but who spoke with the man afterward, said police pointed to the man's tent and other belongings stacked nearby as signs of litter.</p> <p>Police spokesman Sgt. Sean Whitcomb told SeattlePI on Wednesday that the ticket would be canceled and the matter was being referred to the Navigation Team, a group comprised of specially trained police and outreach workers who try to connect homeless people with services and shelter. The officers who issued the ticket weren't connected to the team.</p> <p>Calls and emails to Mayor Jenny Durkan's spokesman for homeless response, Will Lemke, were not returned.</p> <p>A photograph of the ticket shows it was issued at 10:41 p.m. and clearly denotes the penalty of \$1,025. Whitcomb didn't comment as to what drew police to the area.</p> <p>The ticket isn't the first reported case of officers issuing tickets to homeless persons who clearly can't pay them.</p> <p>"Like the city's sweeps, ticketing individuals for living and keeping their belongings outside wrongly criminalizes homelessness," said Doug Honig, communications director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, in January. "And what sense does it make to ticket people who don't have the means of paying the ticket?"</p> <p>It's a question the city has yet to answer.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Nerve agents rare in assassinations
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-russia-nerveagent/complex-and-dangerous-nerve-agents-are-rarely-used-for-assassinations-idUSKCN1GK2JR
GIST	<p>AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Thousands of people have been fatally gassed with nerve agents on battlefields since World War Two, most recently in Iraq and Syria, but they are not a weapon of choice for urban assassinations.</p> <p>Sergei Skripal, a 66-year-old former Russian double agent, and his 33-year-old daughter Yulia were poisoned with a rare toxin on Sunday at a shopping mall in Salisbury, southern England, and remain critically ill in hospital, police said.</p>

Investigators said they had identified the specific agent, but were not disclosing that information.

The attack had the hallmarks of a well-planned hit with the backing of a powerful organization aiming to intimidate opponents, not a lone actor, experts said in interviews with Reuters.

The most recent example was the assassination with VX of Kim Jong Nam, the North Korean leader's half-brother, in the Kuala Lumpur airport in February 2017. Sarin, in a dilute form, was released in the Tokyo subway in 1995, killing 12.

Manufacturing VX or sarin requires sophisticated chemical processing, specialized equipment, access to precursors and knowledge of how to carry out an attack.

Obtaining the raw ingredients would not be too difficult, but producing nerve agents, also known as organophosphorus compounds, must be carried out in a controlled environment, not a crude basement lab, the experts said.

The final product, a highly toxic, colorless and odorless liquid, will kill whomever it comes into contact with, exposing the attacker to serious risk, either through inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact.

If exposed to a powerful dose, a victim will typically die from asphyxiation or cardiac arrest within minutes due to a loss of control of the respiratory system and other muscle functions. Those who survive frequently suffer long-term neurological damage.

AEROSOL SPRAY

Based on police reports of the Salisbury incident, experts said it is most likely that the toxin was delivered with an aerosol spray or a wipe, and transferred to the skin or clothing of the victims. They in turn probably exposed a police officer attending the incident who developed less serious symptoms.

In addition to a wide range of documented nerve agents, there are less well-known varieties, such as tabun and soman. Experts said it should not be ruled out that a sophisticated, less known variety was used in Salisbury.

"If the substance is not a well-known one, or even if it is a known nerve agent like VX, there has to be high technology behind it," said Ake Sellstrom, a Swedish scientist who worked on United Nations missions to dismantle chemical weapons programs in Iraq and Syria.

While it is possible for a well-trained assailant to carry out such an attack, it is highly unlikely that a lone-wolf could have done it. In any case, it would be more useful to try and trace the origin of the nerve agent.

"I would look more towards the source: where did the stuff come from?" Sellstrom said.

The Salisbury attack indicates the use of sophisticated chemistry in production of the nerve agent, suggesting the involvement of a state actor, experts said.

Andrea Sella, a professor of inorganic chemistry at University College London, backed Sellstrom's assessment.

"A key forensic issue here is to identify impurities and residues that might provide clues as to the precise chemical process used to manufacture the material," she said.

"There is no question that the authorities will be looking for the container used to deliver the material as the chemical contents would be a goldmine," Sella said.

Identifying precise chemical markers would be a big step toward pinpointing the source.

	There has been speculation that the Russian state, even though it completed the destruction of its declared chemical weapons stockpile last year, could still be behind the attack - a suggestion dismissed by Moscow.
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HEADLINE	03/08 Russia state TV warns 'traitors' in UK
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/traitors-spy-england-murder/2018/03/08/id/847714/
GIST	<p>Russian state television has darkly warned "traitors" against settling in England because they risk being killed, The Times of London reported.</p> <p>According to the Times, broadcaster Kirill Kleymenov predicted dire consequences for any spies caught in the U.K. during a segment about the poisoning of a former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.</p> <p>"I sympathize with any suffering and certainly do not rejoice in it; what's more, I don't wish death on anyone," he said.</p> <p>"But purely for educational purposes, for those who dream about such a career, I'd like to issue a caution: The profession of traitor is a lot more dangerous than that of a drug courier. It's very rare that those who choose it live out their days in peace and serenity. Alcoholism and drug addiction, stress, grave nervous disorders, and depression are the inevitable professional illnesses of the traitor. And as a consequence, heart attacks, strokes, car accidents, and suicide, after all."</p> <p>He added it was especially unwise to seek refuge in London.</p> <p>"Whatever the reasons, whether you're a professional traitor to the motherland or you just hate your country in your free time, I repeat, no matter, don't go to England," he said.</p> <p>"Something is not right there — maybe the climate — but in recent years there have been too many strange incidents with a harsh outcome. People get hanged, poisoned, they die in helicopter crashes and fall out of windows in industrial quantities."</p> <p>The Times reported Kleymenov was likely referring to the deaths of Russian oligarchs who had sought sanctuary in England and their British friends — including Boris Berezovsky, who was found hanged at his home in March 2013, and Alexander Litvinenko, a former officer of the FSB secret service, who was killed with polonium-210 in November 2006.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 NKorea leader's health woes?
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/08/u-s-south-korean-intelligence-probe-reports-kim-jong-un-health-woes.html
GIST	<p>As U.S. and South Korean intelligence teams investigate the sincerity of Kim Jong Un's newfound willingness to engage in a denuclearization dialogue, they are also tracking reports the North Korean dictator is dealing with a variety of health issues.</p> <p>While there is little hard medical evidence, according to sources, Kim's family history, physical appearance and behavior in recent years have led to speculation he may suffer from a range of conditions including gout, diabetes, high blood pressure, a sexually transmitted disease and psychological issues.</p> <p>"Kim's health is something our own intel community is trying to gain every possible insight on," said Harry Kazianis, director of defense studies at the Center for the National Interest. "There are rumors that Kim might have had plastic surgery and purposely gained weight to look more like his grandfather, the founding ruler of North Korea, and channel some his popularity."</p>

U.S. intelligence sources acknowledged that piecing together an accurate “health profile” of Kim, who is around 35 years old, was not only “critical intelligence,” but also the “bread and butter” of scores of experts.

“Health conditions, including use of medicines or drugs, can impact a foreign leader’s decision-making and an expected death or debilitation of a leader can cause instability in a country with potential consequences for U.S. interests,” Bruce Klingner, senior research fellow for Northeast Asia at the Heritage Foundation’s Asian Studies Center and former CIA deputy division chief for Korea, told Fox News.

So what is known about Kim's health?

North Korean officials in 2014 acknowledged he was suffering from an “uncomfortable physical condition” after footage was captured of him looking evidently heavier and walking with a pronounced limp. Experts quickly pointed to gout, which sparked speculation he also suffered from diabetes and high blood pressure.

“Kim Jong Un has gained a lot of weight, and this weight gain is believed to have brought many side effects, including heart disease and high blood pressure,” observed Eric Yoon, CEO and founder of Television Korea 24. “Kim often enjoys heavy drinking and smoking. In October 2014, he disappeared from the public and media for two months due to arthritic pain in his leg. But his health is top secret due to possible uprising in North Korea. Instead, he often just won’t appear in public.”

There are also unconfirmed reports Kim has a sexually transmitted disease. U.S intelligence sources told Fox News Kim's father was believed to have had a range of STDs, including syphilis, and that it is “possible” the son may have the same.

Then there is the issue of Kim's mental health, and what some see as signs of stress and even paranoia. Korean media regularly report on Kim's “insomnia,” and obsession with potential threats from people who many usurp his power.

Kim Dong Yon, a former Republic of Korea Air Force officer and North Korean analyst, claimed a former chief doctor of Kim's grandfather, Kim il-Sung, asserted the former leader mandated frequent blood transfusions from young men with the same blood type “in order to support and improve the blood circulation.”

“Based on this, Kim Jong Un may go through similar medical treatments in order to improve his physical condition,” Yon speculated.

According to Yoon, Kim has a private doctor who resides in Bong Hwa Clinic and Hospital, located in Pyongyang. Bong Hwa is known to treat “only the top officials,” and the first family of North Korea.

“Kim has a team of doctors who cares for him and sometimes if need be, they will bring in foreign specialists from Russia, China, Singapore and Germany,” he said.

One U.S source said “what is fairly certain is that as far as access to health care and diet goes, he probably has access to the best that money can buy.”

Tom Fowdy, a marketing associate with China Global Connections and a North Korea analyst, concurred that while questions about the leader’s well-being are shrouded in guesswork, his family lineage offers plenty of red flags.

“His father Kim Jong il had serious problems in his final years, including diabetes, rumors of a stroke, cerebral hemorrhage, and of course died of a heart attack,” Fowdy said. “Grandfather Kim il-Sung’s health was best characterized by the presence of a growing calcium deposit on the back of his neck which grew to the size of a baseball. Due to the close proximity to his spine, it could not be operated on.”

	<p>Fowdy noted that North Korean photographers famously went to great lengths to try and hide the growth, with every picture of him taken from the left angle to conceal it.</p> <p>“There are several sneaky photos where people caught it,” Foudy said. “However, if you wish to visit Kim il-Sung’s preserved body in the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, the official state Mausoleum, you can see enough of his head to note the tumor is absent.”</p> <p>When it comes to rogue regimes like North Korea, having proper intelligence reports and plans in place should Kim's health severely fail are crucial, sources said.</p> <p>One former high-ranking Pentagon official stressed contingency plans in the event of a Kim Jong un death are especially vital for a nuclear-armed adversary -- “finding out who would be in-charge or whether a civil war would ensue, finding out who is on what side, and working closely with China and South Korea to seize control of any nuclear sites.”</p> <p>But when it comes to developing an accurate health assessment of the unpredictable leader, distinguishing fact from fiction is no easy feat.</p> <p>“Within the intelligence community, North Korea is acknowledged to be the hardest of hard targets,” Klingner added. “Information, including the heath of Kim Jong Un, is difficult to come by and each intelligence source face considerable constraints in obtaining data on North Korea.”</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 ‘Potentially positive signals’ from NKorea
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/tillerson-says-u-s-getting-potentially-positive-signals-north-korea-n854771
GIST	<p>ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Thursday that the U.S. is receiving “potentially positive signals” from North Korea, but that the two countries are still "a long way" from direct negotiations about Pyongyang's nuclear program.</p> <p>Speaking alongside Ethiopia's foreign minister during a news conference in Addis Ababa, Tillerson said: “I think as President Trump has indicated, there are potentially positive signals coming from North Korea by way of their intra-Korean dialogue.”</p> <p>"In terms of direct talks with the United States ... we're a long way from negotiations," said Tillerson, who cautioned that the first step should be "talks about talks."</p> <p>"We just need to be very clear-eyed and realistic about it," he added.</p> <p>Tillerson’s comments come after the South Korean president’s office said on Wednesday that the North “clearly stated” it is willing to hold talks on denuclearization with the U.S. After a meeting between Kim Jong Un and envoys from Seoul on Monday, the South Korean representatives said the North would suspend nuclear tests while any talks were underway.</p> <p>South Korea’s presidential national security director, Chung Eui-yong, also revealed that the rival neighbors had agreed to hold a landmark third summit meeting between Kim and South Korea’s president at a border village next month.</p> <p>Tweeting on Tuesday about the intra-Korean talks, President Donald Trump lauded the “possible progress.”</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Cape Town to avert ‘Day Zero’?
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/cape-town-completely-avert-day-officials/story?id=53607900&cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Following weeks of tightening water restrictions, Cape Town may not run out of water this year after all, officials said.</p> <p>The water levels of the major supply dams in South Africa's second-most populous city are sourced by rainfall and have plunged due to persistent drought. Local authorities have since warned of "Day Zero," when Cape Town's taps will run dry and residents must queue at standpipes for water.</p> <p>The looming crisis has forced city officials to resort to drastic measures, including setting a limit of 13.2 gallons of municipal water usage per day for each person. By comparison, the average person in the United States uses about 80 to 100 gallons of water per day.</p> <p>But the clamp down on water consumption allowed city officials on Tuesday to push back the estimated date for "Day Zero" from mid-April to Aug. 27. Seasonal rainfall in August should mean that day will be averted altogether -- that is, if the city doesn't relax its water-saving efforts, according to Cape Town Deputy Mayor Ian Neilson.</p> <p>"Provided we continue our current water savings efforts, Day Zero can be avoided completely this year. It is now up to all of us," Neilson said in a statement Tuesday. "If we keep on saving, we will not have to queue for water this year."</p> <p>Neilson urged Capetonians to entrench their water-saving habits and not rely on the arrival of winter rains.</p> <p>"While we are feeling more confident of avoiding Day Zero this year, we cannot predict the volume of rainfall still to come. If winter rainfall this year is as low as last year, or even lower, we are still in danger of reaching Day Zero early next year," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 UK: 21 treated in nerve agent attack
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/08/europe/russian-spy-sergei-skripal-nerve-agent-attack-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>London (CNN)Twenty-one people have received some form of treatment in connection with the attempted assassination of a former Russian spy and his daughter with a nerve agent in England, though only three remain in a hospital, a police official told Britain's Sky News on Thursday.</p> <p>The three are former Russian spy Sergei Skripal; his daughter, Yulia; and Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, said Kier Pritchard, temporary chief constable of Wiltshire police.</p> <p>Regarding the others, Pritchard told Sky News they've been "through the hospital treatment process, there have been blood tests and they're having treatment in terms of support and advice."</p> <p>Police confirmed Wednesday that a nerve agent was used in the attack in the southern city of Salisbury on Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, who remain in critical but stable condition.</p> <p>Western intelligence views Russia as a leading suspect, based on previous attacks using a similar substance and method, a Western intelligence official told CNN. The official cautioned that it is still early in the investigation.</p> <p>In a statement to members of Parliament, UK Home Secretary Amber Rudd refused to be drawn on who might have been responsible.</p> <p>"The use of a nerve agent on UK soil is a brazen and reckless act -- this was attempted murder in the most cruel and public way," Rudd said.</p>

	<p>"People are right to want to know who to hold to account but if we are to be rigorous in this investigation we must avoid speculation and allow the police to carry on their investigation."</p> <p>Rudd said the UK government was committed to "doing whatever we can to bring the perpetrators to justice" and would "act without hesitation as the facts become clearer."</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	03/08 FBI: explosive devices easier to make
SOURCE	http://www.wkow.com/story/37674787/2018/03/Wednesday/fbi-says-explosive-ingredients-are-easily-accessible-after-apartment-explosion
GIST	<p>BEAVER DAM (WKOW) -- The deadly apartment explosion that left one person dead in Beaver Dam is just the latest case of explosive devices being inside a private residence in southern Wisconsin in two weeks. It begs the question: where are the chemicals and other ingredients coming from?</p> <p>First, bomb ingredients were found inside a west Madison apartment building at the end of February.</p> <p>Then, an explosion went off this week at an apartment in Beaver Dam.</p> <p>But explosives being found in residences isn't as rare as you think.</p> <p>According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), 859 explosives investigations were opened in 2014 alone.</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies, including those investigating the Beaver Dam explosion say explosion devices are getting easier to make.</p> <p>"Unfortunately you can make explosives in a variety of different manners with household chemicals. I can't speak directly to that situation, but yes, that is the case in a number of incidents and we're seeing what those materials were and how they were obtained," said Justin Tolomeo, the FBI Special Agent in charge.</p> <p>Those noted household items and materials that could create a bomb were found inside the west Madison apartment two weeks ago.</p> <p>According to a criminal complaint, Brian Campbell had ingredients like Vaseline, coffee filters and antifreeze -- which mixed with other dangerous chemicals could create an explosive device.</p> <p>Investigators are still trying to determine exactly what type of chemicals were found in the Beaver Dam apartment.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Official warns teens: threat consequences
SOURCE	http://www.fox2detroit.com/news/local-news/official-warns-teens-that-making-threats-have-consequences
GIST	<p>(WJBK) - School threats are no joke and the consequences are very serious.</p> <p>Assistant prosecutor Paul Walton is making the rounds to warn kids. His message is that whether they are joking or not - making a threat online or in person is a crime and you will be forced to pay.</p>

From Plymouth Salem to Detroit to South Lyon, we have seen threats against schools in Metro Detroit sky rocket since the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Walton has spent the last several years speaking to students about the consequences of online threats, but his message is in demand now more than ever.

"What we are doing is trying to go out and educate the community, educate the educators, educate the students that online behavior has real world consequences," he said. "If you decide to get engaged, but your tone is advocating violence, then law enforcement will treat it appropriately."

Walton says the numbers speak for themselves - on average in Oakland County they prosecute six to 12 cases of making a terrorist threat per year.

In less than two weeks - prosecutors are pursuing nine cases of threats made against schools.

"If someone is an adult and they engage in this kind of behavior which is posting a false report of an act of terrorism, that is a 20-year felony. If a juvenile engages in this sort of behavior, the court can take jurisdiction of the person until they are at least 19 years old."

Walton says there are many reasons why kids claim they make threats against schools - but their number one defense is "I was just joking."

This he says is nothing to laugh about. As soon as a student presses send, by law it's a threat.

"It is actually written into the statute with the fact that you didn't plan to carry this out, that you were in essence joking, is not a defense," he said.

Walton taught that lesson most recently at South Lyon Community Schools where a 17-year-old is accused of making a false threat. A friend went to authorities after he says Ryan Debruyne allegedly asked him on social media to take part in a Florida-style school shooting.

Police never found guns in the teen or his parents' possession, but he remains in custody and the reality is Debruyne could face up to 20 years in prison.

"Consequences extend beyond that - you are not going to get into a university," Walton said. "You are not going to get job you want and when they check your background, they will see you took part in an act deemed as a form of terrorism."

What else has changed? Walton says the prosecutor's office has encouraged law enforcement to track costs - so they can force the student suspects and their families to pay restitution to tax payers.

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HEADLINE	03/09 Birth of MS13 in New York
SOURCE	https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/birth-ms13-new-york/
GIST	<p>When Edgar Torres came to Long Island, the Mara Salvatrucha did not exist. There was no trace of graffiti with the letters "M" and "S" anywhere. He was barely five years old, and the year was 1985, when the United States saw a large influx of migrants from El Salvador fleeing its bloody civil war. By then, New York was receiving more Salvadoran immigrants than any state other than California, according to figures from the now defunct Immigration and Naturalization Service.</p> <p>Long Island, a large island located east of Manhattan, was the specific point of arrival. It consists of Kings, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties, the first two being considered part of New York City and the second two, suburbs that are referred to simply as Long Island.</p>

It was to these suburbs — some of the most segregated in the United States — where the first Salvadoran immigrants arrived. The recent arrivals were mostly men between the ages of 20 and 35, and they worked in construction and assembly plants or textile factories, just like Édgar's father and uncles.

The town of Hempstead in Nassau county became one of the most important for Salvadorans. Puerto Ricans were predominant migrant community there at the time, and the addition of the Salvadorans created an important part of the great Latin American mosaic. In the early 1990s, there were an estimated 90,000 Long Island residents with Salvadoran origins. Ethnic and economic differences led to the emergence of street gangs, the first of which were the Latin Kings and Ñetas, created by Latin Americans (the latter being specifically Puerto Rican), and the Bloods and Crips, which were African-American. They committed robbery, got into fights and sold drugs in Hempstead and the surrounding areas. The Latin Kings intimidated the Salvadorans while at the same time the Bloods robbed them because their undocumented immigration status meant they often carried cash in their pockets instead of credit cards.

From Hempstead proper they expanded to its villages, like Freeport, as well as to neighboring Suffolk county. Freeport, located between six and seven kilometers to the south of Hempstead, would become the birthplace of the Mara Salvatrucha in New York. There is where Édgar Torres first arrived.

Birthplace: Freeport

Édgar Torres' childhood in El Salvador was bleak, not only due to the civil war, but also because his mother abandoned him. One day she left the house to go on an errand and never returned.

“The time came when I realized, well, that bitch is never coming back,” he recalled with resentment.

Before leaving forever, Édgar's mother told his aunts that she had had a child with her brother.

Édgar's father worked in New York, like much of his family, and he did not learn about the existence of his son until Édgar's mother informed him of it. Neighbors and family occasionally took pity on him, and his childhood was spent hopping from village to village. “I was in the streets, man, all filthy, full of diarrhea with a big stomach full of parasites.” He was homeless, until one day when an accident happened (a television fell on Édgar's foot) and news of the incident reached his grandmother who lived on Long Island. She had only just recently learned of the existence of her grandson. She saw a photograph of him and noticed his resemblance to her son, then asked that he be brought to the East Coast to meet his father. Édgar was barely five years old in 1985, and everything — everything — was new to him.

At that age he went to Freeport to start a new life. With only saline solution to sustain him, he almost died on the long journey through the desert. But he made it. He was one of the many unaccompanied minors who set foot on US soil during the 1980s. His new home would be a building at 45th and Broadway, a building full of people from El Salvador. The surroundings were packed with stores owned and patronized mostly by Salvadorans, and a small 7-Eleven on Broadway was a meeting place for young Salvadorans. It was a community where they could coexist and freely express their national pride.

As time went by, their thinking became more territorial and focused on protection against the African-American and Puerto Rican gangs that had begun to menace them. They decided to create their own crew, naming it “Los 7-Elevens,” but what began as a group of friends grew into a more threatening force in the neighborhood. “Hormiga,” “Cato” and others made up the group that stood outside the store to socialize and defend their territory. Édgar was content to watch from afar without getting involved.

But it would not be long before Édgar fell in love with the streets and developed a taste for thievery and other illegal acts before throwing himself wholeheartedly into the criminal life, or “malandrineda,” as he puts it.

Living under the same roof with his father's wife was not easy for him, so he decided to move from Freeport to Hempstead with his grandmother. His grandmother assumed she would keep watch over him while she cared for children, made food and clothing, and sold false documents and marijuana.

“That’s when I got really bad,” states Édgar. His time in the new city did not stop his new criminal practices. Édgar liked stealing clothing. “I went around robbing kids,” he says recalling his childhood. Instead of trick-or-treating on Halloween, he schemed to strip the other kids of their clothes. With knife in hand, he snatched sneakers and even masks. That satisfied him. No longer attending school, he spent his time on the streets drinking, smoking and stealing. “I was losing it,” he says years later.

Édgar’s behavior wore out his grandmother’s patience. At that time, Salvadoran families in the United States had the idea that sending their relatives to El Salvador during the armed conflict would serve as a lesson and bring awareness to the children. An exemplary punishment, they thought. “According to them, they sent me to El Salvador so I wouldn’t mess up,” he says between laughs. There was no need for the authorities to deport him; his family cast him back to Usulután, where he would inevitably join the MS13.

Los Angelenos

By the beginning of the 1990s in Freeport, the 7-Elevens had changed their name to “La Familia” (The Family). They had also already consolidated into a more organized group with a focus on Salvadoran pride. This would soon change, however, when a handful of young men from Los Angeles blew into the Broadway 45 neighborhood. They were “Negro,” “Indio,” “Chino” and “Grillo,” four members of the Mara Salvatrucha’s Francis Locos clique who had come from Los Angeles to sing the gang’s praises.

Their speech was very appealing. The Familia was seduced and convinced to evolve into a California-style gang similar to the Bloods and Crips, which had also been imported from the West Coast. A new MS13 branch was now established in Freeport. The group changed its name again, this time to “Familia Mara Salvatrucha,” words that spread throughout town in spray-painted script. By 1991 they were the first New York clique, and “Hormiga,” “Secury,” “Curil,” “Cato,” “Durán” and “Homito” were the first members of the new generation. “They taught those guys what the MS was all about. So, you know, the MS was born. The first New York clique was Familia,” Édgar recounted from a state prison.

After replicating the MS13, the men returned to Los Angeles, leaving behind an incubating cancer. The tumor that was Familia Mara Salvatrucha began to grow beyond its original boundaries and into the village of Westbury, and the African-American and Puerto Rican gangs became its potential enemies.

The origin of the gang varies depending on who tells the story. At the beginning of 1991, in a completely unrelated incident, another group of gang members from Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles came to Hempstead. One of them was “Peligro,” a gang member whose name we changed for safety reasons. Peligro traveled from Los Angeles to Long Island to escape the police. “We moved because in the 90s they were deporting a lot of people. And, you know, we were already committing a lot of murders, so a lot left because of the heat from the police. We already had skeletons [murder victims] on top of really not having papers. 1991 was when ‘Triste,’ ‘Santos,’ ‘Curly’ and I arrived,” he remembers.

Meanwhile, Triste says he went to New York out of wanderlust: “I liked the disorder of it all, and I wanted to see new places.” Thus it was that the gang members united and founded the Normandie Locos clique. One of the reasons they did so, according to Peligro, was their rivalry with Puerto Rican gangs.

“We exist thanks to the Puerto Ricans. Racism — that’s why the ‘mara’ started there,” he says. “We would go to the bars, and the first thing the Puerto Ricans would say to us was ‘cantomojado,’” a slur referring to undocumented immigrants.

To combat them, more young people joined the project. With a stronger and larger group, they pitted themselves to death against the Latin Kings and the Bloods. “[Peligro] called us to go all in against the blacks and ‘boricuas,’” Triste explained, the latter term referring to Puerto Ricans. The clique expanded into Brentwood in Suffolk, accumulating more and more territory.

For a brief period, Moisés Humberto Rivera-Luna, alias “Santos,” controlled the Normandie Locos. But he would soon be deported to El Salvador, where he is currently in prison and considered one of the MS13’s highest-ranking leaders. By 1994, Normandie’s first foot soldiers, like Peligro and Triste, had already moved on to seek out other adventures in New Jersey and Virginia. In the same year, though, the city of

Brentwood would witness another surge in gang activity. A young Salvadoran under the alias “Directo” took over the new Brentwood Locos Salvatruchas.

Evidence shows that the Mara Salvatrucha came about as a result of migration, not a planned expansion. It was a side effect of the Salvadoran immigration route that had taken shape in the United States, where family and friends came together and settled down. A gang member might migrate for any one of a number of reasons: some wanted a fresh start, others went in search of girls, and still others were escaping justice.

Expansion

While it is impossible to know the exact order in which it happened, more and more cliques started to appear throughout all of Long Island. Many arose simultaneously in an isolated but parallel fashion, with none of them knowing the others existed. In Nassau county, the cliques appeared as follows: in Freeport, the Centrales Locos and Guanacos Little Cychos; in Mineola, the Mineola Locotes Sureños; in Hicksville, the Pelones Locotes Salvatruchos; in Roosevelt, the Roosevelt Locos Salvatruchas; in Long Beach, the Long Beach Locos; and in Uniondale, the Juniors Unionenses Locos. Meanwhile, in Suffolk county the following cliques emerged: around the hamlet of Central Islip, the Islip Locotes Salvatruchos, the Coronados Locos and the Western Locos; in Huntington, the Huntington Criminales Locotes Salvatrucha; in Brentwood, the Leeward Locos and the Pinos Locos Salvatrucha.

Other already established cliques extended their reach, as was the case with the Familia Mara Salvatrucha. From Freeport, they stretched their tentacles north to the town of Westbury, where the Westbury Familia Mara Salvatrucha sprung forth, and where a certain “Shorty” led the clique Édgar would soon join.

For Édgar, during the first half of the 1990s “the ‘barrio’ exploded in New York.” On that, gang specialist Doctor Al Valdez agrees; he states in his research that the MS13 emerged between 1992 and 1995 in New York.

When the cliques inevitably began to cross paths, the gang grew in number, reputation and violence. Drug sales, armed robbery, car theft, smuggling, microtrafficking weapons, extorting money from clandestine businesses and bars, seizing control of neighborhoods, charging protection money to small time dealers, killings and machete attacks became their modus operandi. Hempstead became the nerve center, the hottest gang zone in all of Long Island.

“Most of the murders were being committed in bars or their exits, but where the gang held the most strength was in Hempstead. That was a place where you felt like you were in El Salvador. There were bars everywhere. People were coming from all over, from Brentwood, Freeport, from all over Long Island, all over the world because that’s where the bars were, the waitresses, the action, the drugs and everything. It was like the nightlife district of Long Island. So, yeah, you know, that’s where the murders were committed,” recalls Édgar. “The Mara began killing and that was when they started to gain more respect, pure murder. When there was no death, the Mara was just any other gang.”

The result of these acts soon led some gang members to see the inside of the state penitentiary. The MS13 used a weapon that differentiated them from other gangs: the machete, which did not take long to become a common tool among them. They believed that attacking with a machete showed more courage than firing a gun. Peligro is convinced that it was cheaper than a firearm, and on top of that they made no sound which gave them more of a chance to escape.

“Anyone can kill with a gun, but to feel the flesh splitting is different,” he remembers. “That’s what we would tell the guys, a gun makes noise, but a machete gives you time to run.” As Édgar maintains, “machetes are like the badge of the MS; they spread fucking terror.”

Spider From Familia Westbury

In 1991, not long before Édgar started using a machete, the 10-year-old showed up in Puerto Triunfo, Usulután, when El Salvador was still at war. His grandmother had sent him from Hempstead to the home of his grandfather, who constantly doled out “some really nasty beatings” that added to the beatings his

father gave him when he came from New York to visit him. His grandfather wanted to keep him from leading a bad life and believed the way to achieve it was through beatings. “The old man did everything possible so I wouldn’t get caught up with the [gang], but he failed. The more he beat me, the more I gave in to my anger.”

The first deported Mara Salvatrucha members began to arrive in Usulután in 1993, and Édgar immediately felt an attraction to those who, like him, had come down from the United States. One of them was Amílcar Galileo Torres Rosales, known on the streets of Los Angeles as “Garrobo.” The gang member had been deported to Puerto Triunfo for possession “of weapons and other things.” He was a homeboy with a strong reputation and an extensive collection of anecdotes, among them his participation in the war as a child soldier. Now incarcerated in Guatemala and a national gang leader there, in those days Garrobo quickly established cliques throughout Usulután, successfully enticing area youth. Édgar was one of them. “I had never seen gangsters like that, so when I did, I liked it,” he recalled from prison. A faithful student, Édgar spent time under Garrobo’s tutelage to graduate as a member of the MS13. “There, I ended up in ruins. I gave my life up to the gang, to the MS, you know?” Édgar went on to become “Araña” (“Spider”) in the South Side Locos.

Garrobo taught him how to make weapons, like makeshift guns, and bombs to take down the gang’s enemies. He trained Édgar to win knife fights, and throw grenades when circumstances called for it. At the time there was still a surplus of explosives in El Salvador. Édgar’s looks changed. He wore baggy clothing, sleeveless shirts and baseball caps, and the first strokes of ink appeared on his skin.

In El Salvador, he committed many crimes that once again worried his family. They wanted to pull him away from the gang’s clutches, so they got him to return to Long Island. “In 1996 they sent me to New York because in El Salvador they couldn’t handle me anymore.”

Once again in Long Island, but now a gang member, Spider enrolled in Westbury High School. But the classroom would again fail to appropriately direct his energy. His experiences in El Salvador had marked him forever. “When I got to Westbury, man, I was getting territory for the [gang] from day one,” he said.

He wanted the street. He needed the street. Shortly after arriving, Édgar noticed several men who looked like gang members prowling his school. Not only were they Salvadoran gang members, but they belonged to the very gang he had joined back in El Salvador. One of them was “Peewee,” a member of Familia Westbury Mara Salvatrucha. He often swung by the high school entrance in his car to pick up girls. Peewee was Spider’s first contact with the MS13 in New York; it was he who introduced him to the gang’s other members.

Spider still remembers that it was in the afternoon when he arrived at Sheridan Street, and the homies were mourning the loss of a fellow gang member who had been killed by African-Americans. He introduced himself. They asked him about his past, then enthusiastically welcomed him. There was Shorty, the leader of the group, plus “Cato Fredy,” “Flaco Escalera,” “Pitbull,” “Oso,” “Popeye” and more.

He socialized more and more with the clique, sharing experiences, stories from his past and knowledge about “las dos letras,” referring to the two letters “m” and “s.” Such was his closeness with the gang members that he began to attend their meetings or misas, where they talked about private clique issues and plans. Spider’s new friends wanted him to join the family and trade his old clique for theirs. Wanting the same, Spider tried to get in contact with Garrobo in El Salvador to inform him of his situation and ask his permission to make the switch. His partners in Freeport would no longer let him attend meetings without being a member and continued to pressure him to change cells. In the end, they succeeded. A new 13-second torrent of blows was his welcome. “I became part of the Familia clique,” Spider says with an air of satisfaction.

One phenomenon Spider soon learned about was that the MS13, despite being one gang, was operating differently depending on geography. After his back-and-forth between El Salvador and the United States, he experienced it firsthand. The clothes the homeboys in New York wore were markedly different from those in Los Angeles or El Salvador. In New York the style took on more of an African-American

influence, Harlem style: tighter jackets and jeans, Nautica, Polo and Versace brand polo shirts, Timberland boots and a variety of hairstyles. Crewcuts or “cabezas de hongo” (“mushroom head” haircuts), baggy pants and Pendelton or other flannel shirts were West Coast style, but not in New York. “New York had its own style,” he said. “In New York our way of dressing was more black.” Their way of speaking too was influenced by their context. The filler “ese” used so much in California was replaced with “nigga.”

Enemies were also very different. In contrast to Los Angeles, it was the Puerto Ricans with whom they exchanged bullets, not Mexican-Americans or Mexicans, and while they and the Barrio 18, their archenemy, mercilessly killed each other in both California and El Salvador, the rival group did not exist at all on Long Island in those early days. Here, the friction with African-Americans was much greater than in the Central American ghetto of Los Angeles. But the scene would change with the appearance of another Salvadoran gang on the map.

Of course, the multicultural environment of New York allowed the ranks of the MS13 to be filled not just with Salvadorans, but also African-Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans. “Crazy Horse” and “Trece” were examples of black “mareros,” or gang members, and “Maleante” was Puerto Rican. On Long Island the MS13 had its own hallmark.

At the time, gang member arrests had increased considerably over the course of three years, according to police figures. In 1996 there were 110 gang member arrests, in 1997 a total of 227, and in 1998 it rose to more than 252. Also at the time, Roosevelt Avenue, which crosses part of neighboring Queens, was considered to be an extensive crime corridor where Mexican, Colombian, Puerto Rican and Dominican organized crime ran drug and prostitution rings. This is the context in which the letters “M” and “S” began to appear on the walls of Queens. The MS13 had extended their networks to a building located between Jamaica Avenue and Linden Boulevard to create the Jamaica Locotes clique.

Competition between Salvadorans and Puerto Ricans was not only gang-related but demographic in nature. In 2000 it was estimated that there were 42,500 Salvadorans residing in Nassau and Suffolk counties, the second largest Latin American population in the area after Puerto Ricans.

Between September and October 2001, drive-by shootings became a trend. In one such shooting, the police discovered just how deep the connections were between MS13 cliques, which by then had extended beyond the state of New York. They learned that the homies had traveled in a van from Virginia to shoot enemy gang members at a store close to the Long Island railroad. Communication between gang members in different states was the same as that used by any Central American non-gang member to be notified of job opportunities, and it could be between New Jersey, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC, any state to which the MS13 had spread.

Communication between Long Island and California cliques mostly had to do with gang ethics. The West Coast homies believed that because they founded the cliques, they should be the ones who guided their brothers in the east. So, when they communicated with them, it was often to correct something they did not approve of. One of the comments they made was to drop the word “Familia” from the clique name Familia Freeport Mara Salvatrucha because in the California penitentiary system it was too similar to the name of a hated rival gang: La Nuestra Familia. And so it happened. Familia Freeport Mara Salvatrucha changed to the Freeport Locotes.

Despite the beginnings of some friction between the east and west, in 2001 the MS13 was considered the largest gang in Nassau County and the most violent in Long Island.

First Mistakes

In 2003 David Vásquez, alias “Gigante,” wanted to stand out within the group. He craved the respect and admiration of the homeboys, but to gain it he had to “meet his quota” — demonstrate the courage and prowess expected of Freeport Locotes members. So, on the afternoon of June 18, he emptied a pistol into a crowd of young people in Hempstead.

Several were injured, among them a person who had no ties to any gangs. Less than an hour later, Gigante

and others headed for Freeport, where their primary enemies were African-American gang members, and found a crowd they believed was made up of the Bloods. Rookie Nieves Argueta “Scorpion” immediately drew a pistol, shooting Carlton Alexander seven times. The assault would mean his initiation into the gang, but also his sentence. They had mistaken their target once again. The youth that Scorpion shot was not a gang member. Many of the participants in the shootings were arrested and received harsh sentences.

Meanwhile, Spider had been released from the juvenile detention center and knew what Gigante and the other homies had done. He knew because they were his “perros” (“dogs”) and he had already collaborated with them a lot. As such, when he found out about the arrests, he was forced to flee from New York.

“Yeah, I got out because I had to escape,” said Spider. “They were going to take me out too. They couldn’t find me at home. I should have gone with them, man, but since they couldn’t find me at home, I ... went to North Carolina.”

Carolina Bound

By 2004, the gang had representatives in North Carolina. The police knew of its existence there at least since 1999, when they noticed that a couple of gang members initiated in El Salvador were committing various crimes.

In the city of Charlotte, Salvadoran national Manuel de Jesús Ayala, alias “Chacua,” commanded the Charlotte Locotes Salvatrucha clique, which focused on vandalism, theft and drug dealing. Shortly thereafter he was deported, but he continued to command the clique from El Salvador. There were also soldiers from various cliques in the counties of Mecklenburg, Guilford, Wake, Durham and Cumberland.

But with Spider’s arrival the list grew. His dedication to the gang was such that in 2004 he had to ask “Master Puppet” from the Hollywood Locos in El Salvador for permission to raise a clique in connection with the Familia Winstone Locotes Salvatrucha to continue spreading violence. And he was given that permission on the condition that he be held accountable to Central America.

But it would not be long before his own arrest. With a laconic tone and clear intentions to withhold information, Spider said from his cell only that he had been imprisoned for shooting a member of the Bloods in revenge for having previously stabbed him.

Spider’s life now serves as a reflection of the dynamics with which the MS13 moves and spreads, a complex phenomenon still running in tandem with globalization.

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HEADLINE	03/09 Police: armed man shot in standoff dies
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/bbcaac05d233406b8c6dfddb9a7880b/Armed-man-shot-during-Southern-California-standoff-dies
GIST	<p>LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — A man who was shot by police after he threatened to blow up a federal building in Southern California has died.</p> <p>Long Beach police say Donald McFarlane of Oregon ranted and waved a handgun Wednesday during a two-hour standoff that prompted the lockdown of nearby City Hall.</p> <p>Negotiators spoke with McFarlane as he stood by a white van but police say officers opened fire after he pointed a gun at them. The 53-year-old McFarlane died at a hospital.</p> <p>Police say the gun turned out to be a pellet gun. No explosives were found in his van.</p> <p>Investigators are trying to determine a motive for the confrontation.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Official: school metal detectors not used
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/b51addabe1d245fda3f5516215a2b751/Official:-School-metal-detectors-not-in-use-day-of-shooting
GIST	<p>BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Metal detectors at an Alabama high school were not in use the day a 17-year-old student was killed in a shooting on campus, the district’s superintendent said Thursday.</p> <p>Birmingham City Schools Superintendent Lisa Herring said the school system is reviewing security measures and protocols that were in place Wednesday, when Courtlin Arrington was fatally shot in a classroom at Huffman High School.</p> <p>“We have not only heightened our procedures, but we are revamping and revisiting, with an extreme amount of urgency, those protocols, not just for Huffman High School, but for every single school in Birmingham,” Herring said at a news conference Thursday.</p> <p>The superintendent said Huffman has more than 43 entry points with a combination of wand and stationary metal detectors in place, but they were not in use Wednesday. She didn’t give details about why.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 School shooting suspect withdraws plea
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/florida-school-shooting-suspect-withdraws-plea/ar-BBK1kut?li=BBnbfcL&ocid=HPCDHP
GIST	<p>TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Latest on the deadly shooting at a Florida high school. (all times local):</p> <p>4:50 p.m.</p> <p>The lawyer for Florida school shooting suspect Nikolas Cruz has filed court papers saying he is withdrawing a preliminary not guilty plea and will enter no plea at all.</p> <p>Assistant Public Defender Melisa McNeill said in the filing Thursday that Cruz "stands mute" before the court. She said the not guilty plea was entered prematurely, before a grand jury indicted Cruz on 17 murder and 17 attempted murder charges in the Feb. 14 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.</p> <p>The public defender's office has said Cruz would plead guilty if prosecutors do not pursue the death penalty, but no decision has been announced on that.</p> <p>The next step will be an arraignment for Cruz, where a judge likely would enter a not guilty plea for him to keep the process moving.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Yakima man pleads guilty to killing
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/922289/man-pleads-guilty-to-shooting-death-of-missionary-student/
GIST	<p>YAKIMA, Wash. (AP) — A 29-year-old man has pleaded guilty to the shooting death of a Tieton missionary student.</p> <p>The Yakima Herald reports that 29-year-old Saul Llamas Rios pleaded guilty on Thursday to the October 2016 death of Trae Olyer.</p> <p>Yakima County Sheriff’s deputies said Olyer was coming from a youth Bible study with two other students when Rios pulled alongside and fired three shots into their car. One bullet struck Olyer in the neck and killed him while his friends were unharmed.</p>

	<p>Rios also pleaded guilty to felony harassment for making threats to kill his girlfriend in an incident on the same day as the shooting.</p> <p>Yakima County Prosecuting Attorney Joe Brusica says he and defense attorneys have agreed to a recommendation that Rios be sentenced to 27 years in prison.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/07 NJ: 7 students charged w/school threats
SOURCE	http://www.nj.com/ocean/index.ssf/2018/03/7_middle_school_students_charged_with_threatening.html
GIST	<p>Stafford police arrested seven middle school students Wednesday on charges they made threats to shoot up their school, and were going to become "active shooters."</p> <p>The students - four 11-year-olds and three 12-year-olds - attend Stafford Township Intermediate School. Each is charged with making terroristic threats, police said.</p> <p>The pupils are accused of making threatening statements in two separate incidents.</p> <p>In one, school officials were alerted through an in-district electronic notification system in which students can report allegations of harassment, intimidation and bullying - also known as a HIB report.</p> <p>Stafford police said the school got the alert when students were being dismissed for the day and they were able to intercept the student who allegedly made the threat, and took him off a school bus.</p> <p>The other incident was not detailed by police, who announced the arrests in statements posted on social media.</p> <p>In the statement, Stafford Township's police chief, Thomas Dellane, and schools superintendent George Chidiac, reiterated to parents that the town has a zero tolerance for any threat of violence in the schools or elsewhere.</p> <p>"All reports will be fully investigated, and all threats will be prosecuted to the fullest extent," the statement said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Officials: more DUIs than just booze
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/03/08/officials-say-duc-drivers-now-being-busted-for-more-than-just-booze/
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. – State police say the three people killed in an early, Thursday morning DUI crash on I-5 near Lakewood were all from Cowlitz County in Southwest Washington.</p> <p>The identities of the three victims have yet to be released by the Washington State Patrol as next of kin notifications had not taken place by Thursday afternoon.</p> <p>“We lost three lives here tonight that shouldn’t have been lost,” said WSP Trooper Travis Joyce.</p> <p>The causing driver, according to investigators, is a 23-year-old man from Tacoma who is now facing drug and firearms charges and is accused of vehicular homicide.</p> <p>It’s yet another avoidable tragedy that officials at the Washington Traffic Safety Commission says happens all too often in our state.</p> <p>More than 550 people in our state died in crashes across the state due to impaired drivers last year, say</p>

officials.

What’s more troubling is that drivers are increasingly not only driving drunk, but both drunk and high on a variety of intoxicants.

It started with a call to 911 Thursday morning around 2:30 a.m. when someone spotted an erratic driver on I-5 in Pierce County.

State troopers said a 1999 Honda CRV was clipped by the suspected causing driver. The Honda hit the barricade and flipped and the crash killed all three people.

“It was a completely preventable crash, it should not have happened,” said WTSC program manager Mark Medalen. “The driver that caused this should never have been behind the wheel.”

WSTC says impaired driving crashes and fatalities are still rising across Washington. Last year, records show drunk drivers caused crashes into the triple digits in Snohomish County - King and Pierce counties saw hundreds more.

In fact, all car crashes involving alcohol across the state haven’t been this high since 2008.

Police say they have seen a new, troubling trend over the past 5 years –impaired drivers are now more than just drunk behind the wheel.

“Some alcohol, some marijuana or other drug,” said Medalen. “So we’re seeing a combination of stuff. And we’re seeing a little bit goes a long way.”

Officials say the cross fade of drugs makes it even harder for impaired drivers to concentrate, leading to even more dangerous conditions.

Tragedies like Thursday morning’s crash on I-5 is a reminder to all of us to not drive while drunk or under the influence of marijuana or other drugs.

“It’s heartbreaking,” said Medalen. “It rips families apart and it’s absolutely preventable.”

So what are you supposed to do to protect yourself if you’re one of the good drivers out on the road?

The safety commission says people should never drive distracted, always wear a seatbelt – and if you can – avoid driving between midnight and 6 a.m., which is statistically the most dangerous time for DUI crashes.

Troopers have yet to determine what substances the suspected causing driver of Thursday’s crash may have been using.

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HEADLINE	03/08 Seattle police: 2 stabbed Int'l District
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/2-stabbed-in-seattles-international-district-police-say/
GIST	<p>Two men were stabbed Thursday morning in the International District, according to the Seattle Police Department.</p> <p>The men, ages 63 and 50, were stabbed about 9 a.m. in Hing Hay Park and taken to Harborview Medical Center, according to police.</p> <p>One man was stabbed multiple times, including the chest, while the other was cut in the face, police said in</p>

	<p>a blog post.</p> <p>The suspect, a 36-year-old man, was found carrying a knife a few blocks away and arrested, according to police.</p> <p>Police booked him into King County Jail on suspicion of assault.</p> <p>No other information was immediately available.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Dozens charged w/drug cash laundering
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dozens-charged-us-conspiring-launders-drug-cash-53619884?
GIST	<p>Federal prosecutors say dozens of people across the U.S. have been charged in connection with an international conspiracy to launder tens of millions of dollars in drug money for Mexican cartels.</p> <p>The U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego unsealed 40 indictments Thursday of defendants accused in the scheme dating back to 2015.</p> <p>Officials say investigators seized more than \$6 million as well as weapons and large quantities of drugs including methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, cocaine and marijuana.</p> <p>Prosecutors say Mexican-based brokers oversaw a network of "money movers" who transported drug proceeds throughout the U.S. and deposited it into so-called funnel bank accounts. From there the funds were wired to accounts in Mexico.</p> <p>Authorities say 75 people are charged in the U.S., with some accused of drug distribution.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Indonesia seizes illegally logged wood
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/indonesia-seizes-illegally-logged-wood-papua-53630046?
GIST	<p>Indonesian authorities foiled the shipment of 21 containers of prized ironwood from Papua, highlighting what environmentalists say is a rampant illegal trade in the country's easternmost region.</p> <p>The Forestry and Environment Ministry's law enforcement agency said the wood from the Kaimana tropical forest was processed and ready for shipment to Surabaya when seized. The city has a major port and is a center of Indonesia's wood furniture manufacturing and export industry on the island of Java.</p> <p>Greenpeace Indonesia said the confiscation, which was made Tuesday and announced Thursday, is small compared with long-standing smuggling from Papua where no "big actors" have been prosecuted. The region has Indonesia's largest remaining tropical forests and is seen by logging and palm oil companies as a new frontier for exploitation after the stripping of most of Java, Sumatra and Borneo of natural forests.</p> <p>Indonesia was admitted in 2016 to an EU arrangement that makes it easier for Indonesian wood producers to export to the bloc if they've been certified by Indonesia's new Timber Verification and Legality System, known by its local acronym SVLK.</p> <p>Some environmental and civil society groups have said the system, meant to provide certainty about the origin of wood, could easily become a conduit for illegal timber from a country where tropical forests have been cut down at an epic rate.</p>

	<p>The ministry said investigations by police and its staff in Papua revealed a scheme for transporting and processing the wood and then shipping it once the desired quantity had been accumulated in warehouses at a West Papua port. Apparently falsified documents were to be used for the transport of the illegal wood.</p> <p>It said police have arrested a suspect, who is a director of one of the companies involved, who could face up to 15 years in prison and a fine of up to \$140,000.</p> <p>Ironwood is prized for its beauty and strength and is used as flooring and in joinery.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/09 Norway, US aid capture cybersex suspect
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/norway-us-philippines-capture-cybersex-suspect-53631307?
GIST	<p>Norwegian and U.S. law enforcers have helped the Philippines capture a man they say exploited children by having them join sex videos which he then showed to paying foreign clients online, officials said Friday.</p> <p>National Bureau of Investigation Director Dante Gierran said Norwegian and U.S. law enforcers joined Filipino authorities in a raid Thursday that led to the arrest of the suspect, Anselmo Ico Jr., and the rescue of five of his alleged minor victims in a poor village in Malolos city, north of Manila.</p> <p>Such arrests and rescues in the Philippines point to lucrative crimes in which children, even toddlers, are made to remove their clothes and touch themselves in obscene ways while adults, often their parents, train video cameras on them in exchange for payment from pedophiles and other customers abroad.</p> <p>Philippine police have collaborated with their counterparts in Europe, Australia and the U.S. to investigate, hunt suspects and prosecute them to fight a crime that thrives in poverty, unemployment and other dire social conditions.</p> <p>"In Norway, the transnational crime of sexual exploitation of children is highly prioritized and we're glad to see that your cooperation in this case so far has given us such tangible results," Norwegian police official Sidsel Isachsen said at a news conference in Manila where Ico, a Filipino, was presented in handcuffs.</p> <p>Norwegian anti-crime officials notified their Filipino counterparts in early January about the arrest of a Norwegian citizen, Ketil Andersen, who allegedly purchased child sex videos made in the Philippines, Gierran said in a statement.</p> <p>Norwegian crime investigators took over Andersen's Skype accounts to communicate with his contacts in an effort that led them to Ico, Gierran said, adding that a private group, the International Justice Mission, helped authorities with the case.</p> <p>When asked by The Associated Press for his reaction, Ico acknowledged he produced the sex videos in which children participated but said the sex acts were staged.</p> <p>"That's fake news. It's not real ... because it can be staged easily," Ico said as he was led away.</p> <p>The suspect will be charged with violating laws against human trafficking, child abuse, child pornography and cybercrime, Gierran said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Ex-NC officer charged w/assault
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/fbi-launches-probe-police-beat-taser-alleged-jaywalker/story?id=53621568&cid=clicksource_81_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>A white former North Carolina police officer, who was captured on body camera video in 2017 beating and using a stun gun on an African-American man stopped for jaywalking, was the subject Thursday in a criminal arrest warrant for assault and communicating threats, the Buncombe County district attorney announced.</p> <p>The warrant against Christopher Hickman was issued by Chief Magistrate D.L. Cowan on charges of assault by strangulation, assault inflictin serious injury and communicating threats, according to a press release from District Attorney Todd Williams.</p> <p>The announcement, which also said no further comment would be forthcoming, comes days after the Asheville Police Department, where Hickman worked at the time of the alleged assault, submitted the results of its investigation into Hickman's actions.</p> <p>The announcement comes after the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, which had declined to open its own investigation into the matter, said the FBI had launched a criminal investigation into the case.</p> <p>Federal agents were asked by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation to conduct the criminal probe against Hickman, officials said.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/08 Claim: 14 school shootings 2018
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/02/us/school-shootings-2018-list-trnd/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)We're only nine weeks into 2018, and there have already been at least 14 school shootings in the US. That averages out to 1.5 shooting a week.</p> <p>The parameters CNN followed in this count are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shooting that involved at least one person being shot (not including the shooter) • A shooting that occurred on school grounds • We included grades K through college/university level • We included gang violence, fights and domestic violence • We included accidental discharge of a firearm as long as the first two parameters are met <p>March 7: Birmingham, Alabama One student was killed and another critically wounded after an accidental shooting during dismissal time at Huffman High School. Police wouldn't elaborate further on how the incident.</p> <p>March 7: Jackson, Mississippi A student was shot inside a dormitory at Jackson State University. His injuries were not life-threatening.</p> <p>March 2: Mount Pleasant, Michigan Two people were shot to death at a dormitory on the campus of Central Michigan University. The victims are not students and police think the incident stemmed from a domestic situation.</p> <p>February 27: Norfolk, Virginia A student at Norfolk State University was shot from an adjacent dorm room while he was doing homework. He was not seriously injured.</p> <p>February 27: Itta Bena, Mississippi A person was shot in a rec center at Mississippi Valley State University. Police said the person was not a student and the injury was not life-threatening.</p> <p>February 24: Savannah, Georgia</p>

A person was shot on the campus of Savannah State University and taken to a nearby hospital where he later died. Neither the victim nor the shooter were university students, the college said.

February 14: Parkland, Florida

A 19-year-old man gunned down students and staff with a rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, slaughtering at least 17 unsuspecting students and adults. The suspect, Nikolas Cruz, had once been expelled from the high school over disciplinary problems, officials said.

February 9: Nashville

A high school student was shot five times in the parking lot of Pearl-Cohn High School.

February 5: Oxon Hill, Maryland

A high school student was shot in the parking lot of Oxon Hill High. The victim was treated and later released. Police arrested two teens and said they are acquaintances of the victim.

February 1: Los Angeles

A 15-year-old boy was shot in the head and a 15-year-old girl shot in the wrist at Sal Castro Middle School in Los Angeles, officials said. Two other students were grazed by bullets. A 12-year-old girl was booked for negligent discharge of a firearm in that shooting, which was considered "unintentional," the Los Angeles police said.

January 31: Philadelphia

A fight led to a shooting in the parking lot of Lincoln High School, fatally wounding a 32-year-old man.

January 23: Benton, Kentucky

A 15-year-old student shot 16 people -- killing two other 15-year-olds -- at Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky, authorities said. The student faces two charges of murder and 12 counts of first degree assault, authorities said.

January 22: Italy, Texas

A 15-year-old student was wounded in a shooting at a high school in Italy, Texas, authorities said. The suspect, a 15-year-old, was quickly apprehended.

January 20: Winston Salem, North Carolina

A Winston-Salem State University football player was shot to death at a campus party. Najee Ali Baker was killed on the campus of Wake Forest University.

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