

# [***AP News in Brief at 6:04 p.m. EDT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWH-T4M1-JC5B-G27Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

April 26, 2024 Friday 10:04 PM GMT

Copyright 2024 Associated Press All Rights Reserved

**Section:** DOMESTIC NEWS

**Length:** 2149 words

**Body**

Trump's lawyers try to discredit testimony of prosecution's first witness in hush money trial

NEW YORK — Donald Trump's defense team attacked the credibility Friday of the prosecution's first witness in his hush money case, seeking to discredit testimony detailing a scheme between Trump and a tabloid to bury negative stories to protect the Republican's 2016 presidential campaign.

Returning to the witness stand for a fourth day, former National Enquirer publisher David Pecker was grilled about his memory and past statements as the defense tried to poke holes in potentially crucial testimony for prosecutors in the first criminal trial of a former American president.

Pecker’s testimony has provided jurors with a stunning inside look at the supermarket tabloid’s “catch-and-kill” practice of purchasing the rights to stories so they never see the light of day. It's a critical building block for prosecutors' theory that Trump sought to illegally influence the 2016 race by suppressing negative stories about his personal life.

Under cross-examination, Trump's lawyers appeared to be laying the groundwork to make the argument that any dealings Trump had with Pecker were intended to protect Trump, his reputation and his family — not his campaign.

The defense also sought to show that Trump's arrangement with the tabloid was not unique to him, and that the National Enquirer was publishing negative stories about Trump’s 2016 rival, Hillary Clinton, long before an August 2015 meeting that is central to the case.

\_\_\_

The Latest | Trump speaks with reporters after 4th day of witness testimony in hush money trial ends

NEW YORK (AP) — Defense lawyers in Donald Trump’s hush money trial dug Friday into assertions of the former publisher of the National Enquirer and his efforts to protect Trump from negative stories during the 2016 election.

David Pecker returned to the witness stand for the fourth day as defense attorneys tried to poke holes in his testimony, which has described helping bury embarrassing stories Trump feared could hurt his campaign.

Pecker has painted a tawdry portrait of “catch and kill” tabloid schemes — catching a potentially damaging story by buying the rights to it and then killing it through agreements that prevent the paid person from telling the story to anyone else.

The prosecution later called to the stand Rhona Graff, Trump’s former longtime executive assistant who has been described as his “gatekeeper,” and Gary Farro, a private client adviser who previously worked at First Republic, which was used by former Trump attorney and fixer Michael Cohen. Farro will continue his testimony Tuesday when the trial resumes, with Monday being a long-scheduled day off.

Testimony from the prosecution's three witnesses capped a consequential week in the criminal cases the former president is facing as he vies to reclaim the White House in November.

\_\_\_

Columbia protesters say they're at an impasse with administrators and will continue anti-war camp

NEW YORK (AP) — Columbia University students who inspired pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country said Friday that they had reached an impasse with administrators and intended to continue their encampment until their demands were met.

The announcement after two days of exhaustive negotiations came as Columbia's president faced harsh criticism from faculty. The development puts more pressure on university officials to find a resolution ahead of planned graduation ceremonies next month — a problem that campuses from California to Massachusetts are facing.

As the death toll mounts in the war in Gaza and the humanitarian crisis worsens, protesters at universities across the country are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies they say are enabling the conflict. Some Jewish students say the protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to set foot on campus.

The clock is ticking as May commencement ceremonies near, putting added pressure on schools to clear demonstrations. At Columbia, protesters defiantly erected a tent encampment where many are set to graduate in front of families in just a few weeks.

Student negotiators representing the Columbia encampment said that after meetings Thursday and Friday, the university hadn't met their primary demand for divestment, although they had made progress on a push for more transparent financial disclosures.

\_\_\_

The Latest | Israeli drone strike kills 2 in Lebanon after Hezbollah fires at an Israeli convoy

An Israeli drone strike on a car in eastern Lebanon killed two people Friday, Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency says. The strike came after Lebanon’s militant Hezbollah group carried out an attack along the border that killed an Israeli civilian.

Hezbollah and Israel have traded fire on a near-daily basis along the border since the start of Israel-Hamas war nearly seven months ago.

Egypt sent a high-level delegation to Israel on Friday for talks seeking to push through a cease-fire agreement with Hamas and avert an Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip city of Rafah, officials said.

More than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in Rafah. The city is on the border with Egypt, which warned that a possible Israeli offensive focused on Rafah could have catastrophic consequences to regional stability.

The Israeli military has massed dozens of tanks and armored vehicles in the area in what appears to be preparations for an invasion of the city.

\_\_\_

US announces new Patriot missiles for Ukraine as part of new $6 billion aid package

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will provide Ukraine additional Patriot missiles for its air defense systems as part of a massive $6 billion additional aid package, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced Friday.

The missiles will be used to replenish previously supplied Patriot systems. The package also includes more munitions for the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, or NASAMS, and additional gear to integrate Western air defense launchers, missiles and radars into Ukraine's existing weaponry, much of which still dates back to the Soviet era.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy discussed the need for Patriots early Friday with the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, a coalition of about 50 countries gathering virtually in a Pentagon-led meeting. The meeting fell on the second anniversary of the group, which Austin said has “moved heaven and earth” since April 2022 to source millions of rounds of ammunition, rocket systems, armored vehicles and even jets to help Ukraine rebuff Russia's invasion.

Zelenskyy said at least seven Patriot systems are needed to protect Ukrainian cities. “We urgently need Patriot systems and missiles for them,” Zelenskyy said. “This is what can and should save lives right now.”

At a Pentagon press conference following the meeting, Austin said the U.S. was working with allies to resource additional Patriot systems but did not commit to sending more U.S. versions. He said he has been speaking one-on-one with a number of his European counterparts in recent days to hash out this issue and others.

\_\_\_

Dozens of deaths reveal risks of injecting sedatives into people restrained by police

Demetrio Jackson was desperate for medical help when the paramedics arrived.

The 43-year-old was surrounded by police who arrested him after responding to a trespassing call in a Wisconsin parking lot. Officers had shocked him with a Taser and pinned him as he pleaded that he couldn’t breathe. Now he sat on the ground with hands cuffed behind his back and took in oxygen through a mask.

Then, officers moved Jackson to his side so a medic could inject him with a potent knockout drug.

“It’s just going to calm you down,” an officer assured Jackson. Within minutes, Jackson’s heart stopped. He never regained consciousness and died two weeks later.

Jackson’s 2021 death illustrates an often-hidden way fatal U.S. police encounters end: not with the firing of an officer’s gun but with the silent use of a medical syringe.

\_\_\_

#MeToo advocates vow the reckoning will continue after Weinstein's conviction is overturned

NEW YORK (AP) — #MeToo founder Tarana Burke has heard it before. Every time there’s a legal setback, the movement is declared dead in the water. A legal success, and presto, it’s alive again.

So Burke, who nearly two decades ago coined the phrase “Me too” from her work with sexual assault survivors, found herself again declaring after New York's highest court on Thursday overturned Harvey Weinstein’s 2020 rape conviction: The #MeToo reckoning is greater than any court case. It’s still there, and it’s working.

The most obvious proof, Burke said: “Ten years ago we could not get a man like Harvey Weinstein into the courtroom." The movement, she said, was responsible for that huge cultural shift — regardless of the Hollywood mogul's ultimate legal fate.

Also seeking to take the long view, following a legal setback that stunned many survivors and advocates, was Anita Hill, who famously testified against Clarence Thomas during his 1991 Supreme Court confirmation hearing, becoming the face of the fight against sexual harassment more than a quarter-century before the Weinstein case launched the #MeToo movement.

Alongside her academic career, Hill now heads the Hollywood Commission, which seeks to fight harassment in the entertainment industry. She sought on Thursday to reassure survivors that progress is real.

\_\_\_

New leaders take on Haiti's chaos as those living in fear demand swift solutions to gang violence

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — It has been only a day since the transitional presidential council was installed in Haiti, and the list of demands on the Caribbean nation's new leaders is rapidly growing. Haitians want security, food, jobs — and they want them now.

The members of the council, tasked with with bringing political stability to Haiti, are under immense pressure to produce quick results, despite a deep-seated crisis that has been years in the making.

Making Haiti safer is a priority. More than 2,500 people were killed or injured from January to March alone, and more than 90,000 have fled the capital of Port-au-Prince so far this year amid relentless gang violence.

“The task is really monumental,” said Robert Fatton, a Haitian ***politics*** expert at the University of Virginia.

Gangs have burned police stations, opened fire on the main international airport that has been closed since early March, and stormed the country’s two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

\_\_\_

Biden officials indefinitely postpone ban on menthol cigarettes amid election-year pushback

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden’s administration is indefinitely delaying a long-awaited menthol cigarette ban, a decision that infuriated anti-smoking advocates but could avoid a political backlash from Black voters in November.

In a statement Friday, Biden’s top health official gave no timeline for issuing the rule, saying only that the administration would take more time to consider feedback, including from civil rights groups.

“It’s clear that there are still more conversations to have, and that will take significantly more time,” Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement.

The White House has held dozens of meetings in recent months with groups opposing the ban, including civil rights organizers, law enforcement officials and small business owners. Most of groups have financial ties to tobacco companies.

The announcement is another setback for Food and Drug Administration officials, who drafted the ban and predicted it would prevent hundreds of thousands of smoking-related deaths over 40 years. The agency has worked toward banning menthol across multiple administrations without ever finalizing a rule.

\_\_\_

Jerry Seinfeld's commitment to the bit

NEW YORK (AP) — Jerry Seinfeld has been responsible for more movies than you think.

Yes, he co-wrote and lent his voice to 2007's “Bee Movie." But before that, “Seinfeld” — where going to the movies, with or without the aid of Moviefone, was nearly as regular a destination as the coffee shop — gave birth to dozens of (fake) films. “Rochelle, Rochelle." “Prognosis Negative.” “Sack Lunch."

But nearly three decades after Seinfeld was, in one episode, cajoled into bootlegging “Death Blow," he has finally made his first film. Seinfeld directed, co-wrote and stars in “Unfrosted,” a star-studded comedy about the invention of the Pop-Tart premiering May 3 on Netflix.

The film, which co-stars Melissa McCarthy, Jim Gaffigan, Hugh Grant and others, is an outlandish, “Mad Men”-inspired ‘60s-set satire in which Kellogg’s and Post Cereal are engaged in a cutthroat race to “upend America’s breakfast table.”

“When you see any scene of it you go, ‘What is that?’ And I was very happy about that,” Seinfeld said in a recent interview. “I like that you look at it and go, ‘I don’t know what this is.’”

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2024

**End of Document**