

In Shootings,
Focus Widens
To the Parents

Georgia Officials Take
Cue From Michigan

By SHAILA DEWAN and JACEY FORTIN

In a landmark criminal case in Michigan earlier this year, James and Jennifer Crumbley became the first parents convicted in connection with killings carried out by their child in a mass shooting. Now, in the first mass school shooting in the United States since those convictions, Georgia officials appear poised to try the same tactic. On Thursday, prosecutors filed charges, including two counts of second-degree murder, against the father of the suspect, saying he had provided a gun to his son “with knowledge that he was a threat to himself and others.”

Such charges were all but unheard-of before the Michigan case, and the Georgia prosecution will test the emerging push to hold parents responsible for mass shootings by young people. The bigger test may be whether the prospect of criminal prosecution spurs parents to do more to seek help for troubled children and to keep them away from guns in a country awash in firearms.

Proponents of such prosecutions have said that charging parents can help prevent young people from carrying out such shootings. But critics say it’s a misguided effort that scapegoats parents while lawmakers fail to act to reduce gun violence. And its effectiveness as a deterrent may be limited by the deep dysfunction already at play in the families of some of the young people implicated in mass shootings.

The prosecution of the Crumbleys, after their 15-year-old son killed four people in 2021 at a high school outside Detroit, was seen as a long shot. But in separate trials, the Crumbleys were convicted of involuntary manslaughter and were sentenced to 10 years in prison.

“I’m not a big fan of fingerprinting, post tragedy, but we have an accountability problem in this country,” said Michele Gay, a founder and the executive director of Safe and Sound Schools, which seeks to help schools prevent crises and respond to them. Her daughter, Josephine Grace, was killed in the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary

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A WARNING The mother of the suspect said she had called the school, her sister said. PAGE 22



KIANA HAYERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A decade after her country’s ban on female genital mutilation, a grandmother named Yassin Fatty, 96, became the first Gambian cutter to be convicted.

Gambia Banned Female Cutting.
But She Didn’t Stop.

By RUTH MACLEAN and MATTY JOBE

BAKADAJI, Gambia — There were young girls, sitting nervous and excited in new clothes under the afternoon sun. There were musicians, dancing and plates of food. There were old hand-made knives and bright new razor blades.

For the 30 traditional practitioners of female genital cutting, who swayed to somnolent melodies in their matching print dresses, the event was a little like the mass cutting parties that they and their ancestors had held for centuries, in the forests of the tiny West African nation of Gambia.

These women were prominent practitioners in their communities, and cutting girls provided them with an income and respect.

But this party, in 2013 in the town of Wassu, sig-

nified the renunciation of their calling. The women carried signs that read: “I have stopped female genital mutilation,” below a drawing of a girl’s tear-stained face. One by one, they stepped forward and swore never to cut a girl again. One by one, they dropped their knives and razor blades down on a red cloth embroidered with cowrie shells.

For these women, it was the end of an ancient, socially important and, to many, horrific practice. Or was it?

One of the 30 cutters present that day, a grandmother named Yassin Fatty, would over a decade later become the first Gambian cutter ever to be convicted of female genital mutilation.

Gambia passed a law banning the practice in

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Russian Cash,
And Influence
On Influencers

U.S. Says Kremlin Was
Steering Messaging

This article is by Steven Lee Myers, Ken Bensinger and Jim Rutenberg.

In early 2022, a young couple from Canada, Lauren Chen and Liam Donovan, registered a new company in Tennessee that went on to create a social media outlet called Tenet Media.

By November 2023, they had assembled a lineup of major conservative social media stars, including Benny Johnson, Tim Pool and Dave Rubin, to post original content on Tenet’s platform. The site then began posting hundreds of videos — trafficking in pointed political commentary as well as conspiracy theories about election fraud, Covid-19, immigrants and Russia’s war with Ukraine — that were then promoted across the spectrum of social media, from YouTube to TikTok, X, Facebook, Instagram and Rumble.

It was all, federal prosecutors now say, a covert Russian influence operation. On Wednesday, the Justice Department accused two Russians of helping orchestrate \$10 million in payments to Tenet in a scheme to use those stars to spread Kremlin-friendly messages.

The disclosures reflect the growing sophistication of the Kremlin’s longstanding efforts to shape American public opinion and advance Russia’s geopolitical goals, which include, according to American intelligence assessments, the election of former President Donald J. Trump in November.

In 2016 and 2020, Russia employed armies of internet trolls, fake accounts and bot farms to try to reach American audiences, with debatable success. The operation that prosecutors described last week shows a pivot to exploiting already established social media influencers, who, in this case, generated as many as 16 million views on Tenet’s YouTube channel alone.

Most viewers were presumably unaware, as the influencers themselves said they were, that Russia was paying for it all.

“Influencers already have a level of trust with their audience,” said Jo Lukito, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin’s journalism school who studies Russian disinformation. “So, if a piece of information can come through the mouth of an existing influencer, it comes across as more authentic.”

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REHEARSAL STAGE
AND SOME IMPROV
AHEAD OF DEBATE

CAMPAIGNS STRATEGIZE

Trump Is Peppered on
the Issues as Harris
Plans for Attacks

This article is by Jonathan Swan, Maggie Haberman, Katie Rogers and Reid J. Epstein.

Vice President Kamala Harris is holed up for five days in a Pittsburgh hotel, doing highly choreographed debate practice sessions ahead of Tuesday night’s clash. There’s a stage and replica TV lighting and an adviser in full Lee Strasberg method-acting mode, not just playing Donald J. Trump but *inhabiting* him, wearing a boxy suit and a long tie.

The former president’s preparations are more improv. They are pointedly called not “debate prep” but “policy time,” meant to refresh him on his record. Nobody is playing Ms. Harris; sometimes his aides sit at a long table opposite him and bat questions back and forth, or other times he pulls up a chair closer to them. Mr. Trump has held just a handful of sessions so far, interrupting one at his Las Vegas hotel so he and his advisers could go up to his suite to watch Ms. Harris’s convention speech.

While the two camps’ preparations for the big night in Philadelphia could not be more different, both sides view the debate the same way, according to interviews with nearly two dozen people close to the candidates, many of whom insisted on anonymity to discuss the private preparations. The Harris and Trump teams see it as a crucial moment to define Ms. Harris for millions of swing voters who know what they think about Mr. Trump but are still curious about her.

Bringing out Mr. Trump’s most self-destructive instincts is a priority for Ms. Harris, as is coming across as coolheaded and presidential.

“She should not be baited, she should bait him,” Hillary Clinton, the last woman to debate Mr. Trump, said in an interview on Thursday. “When I said he was a Russian puppet, he just sputtered onstage. I think that’s an example of how you get out a fact about him that really unnerves him.”

In Mr. Trump’s debate prep sessions, Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida has embraced the role of posing tough questions to Mr. Trump, including on uncomfortable

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Keeping Courtside Order in a Sea of Affluence

By COREY KILGANNON

Arriving late to Arthur Ashe Stadium, four cocktail-cradling fans waltzed toward their courtside U.S. Open seats like it was an extended happy hour.

Then, they ran into Edwin Westley.

Mr. Westley, 80, a veteran usher, explained politely but firmly that no one gets to their place without showing their tickets. And no one can walk up to a courtside seat in the middle of a game, lest they distract the players.

The four fans groused but everyone, even the rich and famous, follows the rules at Mr. Westley’s gate. Mr. Westley, who has been working the Open for 20 years, maneuvered them into their seats, wiping them first with his green rag, unperturbed at the fans’



HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Patrick Tarantino, the longest serving U.S. Open usher.

grumbings.

“It just rolls off your back,” he said, pocketing the rag. “A sense of humor works too.”

For two weeks a year, a narrow slice of New York’s power structure is upended as fashionable

and soignée fans tramp out to Queens where they fall under the direction of New Yorkers who are barely making minimum wage.

“No one wants to get kicked out of a place they’re paying \$1,000 a ticket to be in, so most fans don’t want to escalate things,” said another usher, Jason Ashby, 36, from the Bronx. He is one of several hundred people who work long hours directing and seating ticket holders in the lower sections of Ashe, as well as Louis Armstrong Stadium and several smaller courts at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens. The tournament ends this weekend with the women’s singles final on Saturday and the men’s on Sunday.

The ushers are easily spotted in their blue polo shirts and white

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GRAHAM DICKIE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Top of the Heap in New York, Finally

After losing last year’s championship match, Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, the world No. 2, claimed her first U.S. Open singles title on Saturday, beating Jessica Pegula of the U.S. 7-5, 7-5. SP8.

INTERNATIONAL 4-11

Russia’s Suspect Missile Supply
Despite warnings of sanctions by the U.S. and European countries, Iran sold weapons to Russia to fight the war in Ukraine, Western officials say. PAGE 7

METROPOLITAN

Pollution Amid the Progress
New buildings continue to be constructed along the Gowanus Canal, which was first listed as a national Superfund site in 2010. PAGE 1

SUNDAY BUSINESS

A Coup at the Magic Kingdom
The story of how Bob Iger undermined his chosen successor and returned to power at Disney, just as its industry faced historic upheaval. PAGE 4

ARTS & LEISURE

The Haunting Michael Keaton
The actor returns to his otherworldly character in “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” with 35 years of ups and downs and an Oscar nomination under his belt. PAGE 8

SUNDAY OPINION

Jamelle Bouie PAGE 3

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BOUCHERON

PARIS SINCE 1858
NOW IN NYC
ON MADISON AVENUE