

Alleged Effort  
To Strike Back  
At Star Actress

Lively Said a Director  
Crossed Boundaries

This article is by Megan Twohey,  
Mike McIntire and Julie Tate.

Last summer, as the release of “It Ends With Us” approached, Justin Baldoni, the director and a star of the film, and Jamey Heath, the lead producer, hired a crisis public relations expert.

During shooting, Blake Lively, the co-star, had complained that the men had repeatedly violated physical boundaries and made sexual and other inappropriate comments to her. Their studio, Wayfarer, agreed to provide a full-time intimacy coordinator, bring in an outside producer and put other safeguards on set. In a side letter to Ms. Lively’s contract, signed by Mr. Heath, the studio also agreed not to retaliate against the actress.

But by August, the two men, who had positioned themselves as feminist allies in the #MeToo era, expressed fears that her allegations would become public and taint them, according to a legal complaint that she filed Friday. It claims that their P.R. effort had an explicit goal: to harm Ms. Lively’s reputation instead.

Her filing includes excerpts from thousands of pages of text messages and emails that she obtained through a subpoena. These and other documents were reviewed by The New York Times.

There have long been figures behind the scenes shaping public opinion about celebrities — through gossip columns, tabloids and strategic interviews. The documents show an additional playbook for waging a largely undetectable smear campaign in the

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Justin Baldoni, left, was accused of misconduct by Blake Lively while working on a film.



ANNEGRET HILSE/REUTERS

Mourning Sunday in Magdeburg, Germany, where an S.U.V. plowed into a Christmas market, killing five and wounding over 200.

In Some Parts, It’s Christmas Adam Before Eve

By ELIZABETH DIAS

Some 2,000 years ago, on a holy night in Bethlehem as stars were brightly shining, a young woman gave birth to a baby and laid him in a manger. The baby Jesus was a thrill of hope for a weary world, the gospel story goes, and Christians ever since remember his birth in the candlelight of Christmas Eve.

Then, much more recently, though no one can seem to recall exactly when or where, came the birth of a new celebration. Adherents call it Christmas Adam. And they celebrate on Dec. 23.

Why? They have a universal reply: “Because Adam came before Eve.”

It’s hard to define Christmas Adam, aside from the date. Unlike Christmas Eve, Christmas Adam is not part of an official Christian calendar. The Vatican certainly

Churches Are Adding  
a Day to the Holiday,  
With a Side of Ribs

does not recognize it, and many churchgoers have not heard of it. There is not one way to celebrate.

But some evangelically minded and social-media-savvy Protestant churches and families have embraced the celebration, making up Christmas Adam traditions as they go, one joke at a time.

For some, Christmas Adam is purely a chance to share a clever pun. For others, it is a practical way to compete in a crowded holiday season, by offering church services a day before the holiday actually starts.

To be clear, the “eve” in Christmas Eve refers to the evening before the holy day. It does not refer to the biblical Eve, whom God

formed from Adam’s rib in the Book of Genesis. Still, this play on words has paved the way for Adam, the first man, to creep into the modern Christmas story.

Christmas Adam is just a “silly generic term,” said the Rev. Sean G. Morris, 35, of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

“Dec. 24 gets an official title — it gets called Christmas Eve,” he explained. “So what the heck, let’s give December the 23rd a semiofficial imprint as well.”

Mr. Morris, 35, has started his own Christmas Adam ritual. On Dec. 23, he shares a photo of a McDonald’s sandwich, the McRib (rib — get it?), dripping in sauce. Then he downs one. And his children roll their eyes.

“It’s become a ridiculous personal tradition of mine,” he said in an interview. “I only eat it one day a year.”

Some friends, including fellow pastors in the Presbyterian

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Trudeau Path:  
Liberal Darling  
To MAGA Joke

By MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF

TORONTO — Justin Trudeau’s career is the stuff of 21st century political drama, with an arc that has taken him from glamorous liberal standard-bearer to the butt of jokes by President-elect Donald J. Trump and his acolytes.

He burst onto the international scene in 2015, a newly elected young leader of Canada.

And he spent the next decade building a brand around being a feminist, an environmentalist, a refugee and Indigenous rights advocate, pursuing the same message of change and hope as Barack Obama.

While he drew fawning reviews in the news media — including over his poster boy looks — his honeymoon with Canadians only really lasted about two years; by 2017, a series of controversies had already tarnished his picture-perfect image.

His party went on to lose the popular vote in two elections, in 2019 and 2021, requiring him to form minority governments propped up by a small opposition party. That support, too, has now evaporated.

But the pandemic, during which Canadians endured tough restrictions followed by an economic

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Still a Few Kinks Before Robots  
Can Manage the Dinner Rush

By JULIE CRESWELL

The robot in the kitchen was upset.

Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Steve Ells ignored the noise as he expounded on the future of the restaurant industry (hint: robots!) and how his food chain, Kernel, will play a leading role.

Mr. Ells is best known for starting Chipotle, the burrito giant, in the mid-1990s. Now, with Kernel, which has two locations in New York City and a third on the way, “we are reinventing the kitchen job,” he said.

On a warm day in late October, he nibbled on a chicken-salad sandwich that had been partly prepared by a robot that looked as if it might have relatives welding cars at Toyota. The machine was

quickly swiveling, extending its arm to remove chicken thighs and carrots from an oven heated to 515 degrees and deposit them on a steel counter where human employees assembled sandwiches and salads before bagging them for customers, also presumably human.

But as the robot continued to beep its displeasure, Mr. Ells stopped speaking, cocked his head and listened carefully as he chewed. “Well, that’s a new sound,” he said, sighing.

The robot revolution still has some kinks to work out, at least when it comes to cooking.

In recent years, restaurants have dabbled with ways to auto-

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RICKEY HENDERSON, 1958-2024

The Big Leagues’ Master Thief  
Could Enchant, and Befuddle

By MICHAEL S. ROSENWALD

Rickey Henderson, the thrilling and charismatic Hall of Fame outfielder who, with his signature crouched stance, blazing speed and unlikely home run power, was widely regarded as the greatest leadoff hitter in Major League Baseball history, died on Friday. He was 65.

His death was announced by his family. They did not cite a cause or say where he died, but they thanked the staff at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center.

Often called “the man of steal” by sportswriters, Henderson holds the career record for stolen bases with 1,406 — a mark unlikely to be swiped from him anytime soon, or perhaps ever. He stole more than 100 bases in three seasons, and his 130 in 1982 is still the single-season record.

Henderson also owns the record for runs scored, with 2,295. Eighty-one of those runs were the result of leadoff home runs — another record. His 2,190 walks rank him second behind Barry Bonds.

“Without exaggerating one inch, you could find 50 Hall of Famers who, all taken together, don’t own as many records, and as many important records, as

Rickey Henderson,” the baseball statistician and historian Bill James once wrote.

Henderson played for nine teams over 25 seasons, but he spent most of his career with his hometown Oakland A’s (on four separate occasions) and the New York Yankees.

In addition to being one of baseball’s most exciting players, Henderson was legendarily eccentric.

He was unaware of many of his teammates’ names. During the 1993 season, he missed three games in August with frostbite after falling asleep with an ice pack on his injured foot. He framed a \$1 million bonus check instead of cashing it.

Though he was frequently accused of being self-centered, Henderson wasn’t strictly an “I” kind of player. He often referred to himself in the third person; he once said, “Rickey don’t like it when Rickey can’t find Rickey’s limo.”

Another time, while Henderson

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HOMETOWN LEGEND Rickey Henderson was part of Oakland’s long baseball legacy. PAGE D1



ERIC RISBERG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rickey Henderson after stealing the 939th base of his career in a game against the Yankees in 1991, breaking Lou Brock’s record.

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Iran Plunges Into Darkness

The country is in an energy emergency, coping with more blackouts as demand rises and temperatures fall. PAGE A4

Left on Their Own in Lebanon

Domestic workers brought in from other countries had few options when their employers fled war. PAGE A8



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Bracing for Refugee Cuts

As Donald J. Trump returns to office, a rebuilt resettlement program is under threat and many vulnerable people could be stranded abroad. PAGE A10

Democrats Talk About Faith

Some top figures in the increasingly secular party say discussing deep beliefs can speak to voters. PAGE A11

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A Nun Turned F.B.I. Pioneer

Joanne Pierce Misko in 1972 was one of the first two women to become agents. She was 83.

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Rival for Uber in Washington

A company called Empower is trying to take on Uber, Lyft and local regulators as it piles up fines and draws new passengers to its service. PAGE B1

Egg Prices Soaring Again

The bird flu outbreak has wiped out flocks of egg-laying hens, causing wholesale prices to surge as shoppers prepare for holiday cooking. PAGE B1

Bezos Ramps Up Space Race

A new rocket from Jeff Bezos’ company Blue Origin and a satellite system from Amazon could heat up competition with SpaceX, owned by Elon Musk. PAGE B1

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George Bailey’s Dark Thoughts

A celebration of “It’s a Wonderful Life” discussed issues related to its main character’s attempted suicide. PAGE C1

Secrets to a Disney Hit

Lin-Manuel Miranda, who wrote songs for the “Mufasa” soundtrack, reflects on making music that has appeal. PAGE C1



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College Football Playoff Fallout

The first-ever 12-team setup has kicked off, but is there something already wrong with the system? PAGE D4

Sky’s Limit for Thunder Player

Jalen Williams, a versatile 23-year-old, could develop into the second superstar that the N.B.A. team needs. PAGE D2

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