



Debris from a collapsed building in Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, after Friday’s earthquake. Shaking was felt in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand and China. AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

VIRAL VIGILANTES  
GET MORE VIOLENT

‘Pedophile Hunters’ Face  
Few Online Curbs

By ARIC TOLER and NEIL BEDI

A vigilante phenomenon has been playing out on the open web for almost a decade: Content creators in the United States pose as minors on dating apps and websites, then target the people who message them. Many of these vigilantes, commonly known as pedophile hunters, were inspired by “To Catch a Predator,” a popular television series that ran until 2007. The “hunters” have copied the show’s format, exposing their targets on social media.

But in the past two years, a growing number have gone a step further and violently attacked the targets in their videos, a New York Times analysis has found.

In one of the most brutal cases, a masked man who referred to himself online as “realjuujika” allegedly broke into the home of a 73-year-old man in Pennsylvania last year, then tied him up and beat him with a hammer.

In a video, realjuujika stands over the bloodied man and claims he caught him trying to solicit sex from a 15-year-old boy. He robs the man and films his credit cards, sharing the information with his thousands of followers.

Realjuujika, at one point, turns to the man and says, “You will probably die tonight.” When the footage was streamed online weeks later, viewers cheered the violence.

The man was hospitalized, according to police reports, and needed surgery to stop the bleeding in his brain. The attack was part of a small but disturbing trend that has spread on social media and attracted millions of viewers.

There have been more than 170 violent vigilante attacks by pedophile hunters since 2023, according to a Times analysis of hundreds of videos and social media posts. The footage shows hunters chasing their targets through retail stores, beating people bloody on public streets and shav-

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High Toll Feared After Major Quake Strikes Myanmar

This article is by Sui-Lee Wee, John Yoon, Richard C. Paddock and Michael Levenson.

BANGKOK — A powerful earthquake struck central Myanmar on Friday, gouging open roads, toppling century-old religious monuments and destroying multistory buildings as it shook a vast expanse of Southeast Asia and dealt another severe blow to a country that has been ripped apart by civil war.

While the death toll remains unclear, expert estimates warned it could be extraordinary, given the dense population and vulnerable structures near the epicenter, just outside Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city. Modeling by the United States Geological Survey estimated that the death toll was likely to surpass 10,000, and that there was a strong possibility of a much higher toll.

Stunning Devastation in  
a Nation Still Reeling  
From a Civil War

A preliminary count from Myanmar’s military government said that at least 144 people had been killed and 732 injured in just three cities — but that did not include Mandalay.

The quake, measured by the U.S.G.S. at magnitude 7.7, was strong enough that it leveled a 33-story building that was under construction more than 600 miles away in Bangkok, in neighboring Thailand. At least eight people were confirmed dead there, and dozens more were missing, according to the authorities. They were all presumed to be members

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Patients lay in the 100-degree heat outside Mandalay General Hospital, where nurses were running out of supplies on Friday. THE NEW YORK TIMES

Retorts From the White House  
Reliably Blame a Predecessor

By SHAWN MCCREESH and DYLAN FREEDMAN

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration was engulfed in a mess of its own making, and the president knew just whom to blame.

It was Wednesday — two days into Signalgate — and President Trump was speaking to reporters from behind the Resolute Desk. In some grand sense, he argued, the true culprit behind the fiasco was none other than one Joseph R. Biden Jr.

“Joe Biden should have done this attack on Yemen,” Mr. Trump said. “This should have been done by Joe Biden. And it wasn’t.”

This was certainly a novel theory of the case. Mr. Trump seemed to be saying that if only Mr. Biden had launched this attack on the Houthis in the first place, then Mr. Trump’s defense secretary would not have even been in the position to post the attack plans in a group chat for The Atlantic’s editor in chief to see. Yet it was also an entirely predictable response from Mr. Trump.

By this point in his presidency, it

With Biden as Trump’s  
Boogeyman, There’s  
No Issue Too Small

is a central dictum that Mr. Biden is to blame for just about anything and everything. There is really no topic too small that Mr. Trump won’t try to trace it back to his predecessor.

An analysis conducted by The New York Times found that during the first 50 days of Mr. Trump’s presidency, he mentioned the name “Biden” 6.32 times a day on average. It is among his most frequently used terms (he said “Biden” in more speeches than he had said “America,” for example).

Many a president has fixated on the guy who had the job before him, but when it comes to talking about it out loud, Mr. Trump is, as usual, in a league of his own. Is it an all-consuming obsession — or is there a political strategy at play from a man who considers himself a master marketer and who un-

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GIVE IN OR FIGHT?  
ELITE LAW FIRMS  
SPLIT ON TRUMP

EXECUTIVE ORDER BLITZ

Constitutional Concerns  
vs. Worries About  
Losing Access

This article is by Michael S. Schmidt, Matthew Goldstein and Devin Barrett.

The nation’s legal profession is being split between those that want to fight back against President Trump’s attacks on the industry and those that prefer to engage in the art of the deal.

Two big firms sued the Trump administration on Friday, seeking to stop executive orders that could impair their ability to represent clients. The lawsuits filed by Jenner & Block and WilmerHale highlight how some elite firms are willing to fight Mr. Trump’s campaign targeting those he doesn’t like, while others, like Paul Weiss and Skadden, have cut deals to appease the president.

In recent weeks, Mr. Trump has issued similarly styled executive orders against firms that he perceives as enemies and threats to national security. The orders could create an existential crisis for firms because they would strip lawyers of security clearances, bar them from entering federal buildings and discourage federal officials from interacting with the firms.

“I am heartened by the fact that Jenner and Wilmer are joining Perkins in pushing back on these illegal executive orders. It shows that capitulation is not the only route,” said Matthew Diller, a law professor and former dean of Fordham University School of Law. “In the long run, it will strengthen their reputations in the market as forceful advocates who stand up for principle, a quality that many clients will value.”

Jenner & Block said in a statement that its suit was intended to “stop an unconstitutional executive order that has already been declared unlawful by a federal court.” A third firm, Perkins Coie, has also sued the Trump administration over the same matter, and had some early success in stopping the executive order.

Jenner & Block also created a website — Jenner Stands Firm —

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Private Appeals  
To Musk Shield  
G.O.P. Districts

By MAYA C. MILLER

WASHINGTON — Representative Tom Cole, Republican of Oklahoma, learned that his district might lose a Social Security Administration field office and the National Weather Center’s primary storm prediction hub the same way many other Americans did: through a public webpage the Department of Government Efficiency calls its “wall of receipts.”

Mr. Cole, the chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which controls federal spending, quickly swung into action to try to head off the cuts. He and his aides started dialing their staff contacts at DOGE, the White House and the federal agencies in charge of the facilities on the chopping block, which also included a field office for the Indian Health Service.

Within days, a DOGE staff member had reassured Mr. Cole that the three buildings housing the offices had been removed from a lease cancellation list. Mr.

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**Exiled Producer Plans Return**

Scott Rudin stepped away from show business four years ago amid reports that he had bullied assistants. Now he is aiming to stage shows on Broadway. PAGE C1

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**36 Hours in Hilo, Hawaii**

Each spring, the world’s best hula dancers converge on this nostalgic harbor town, where you might even witness a volcano eruption. PAGE C9

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**Tufts Case Spotlights Tactics**

Forceful actions by federal agents on a video that shows a student’s arrest are not new, but as fear increases, so does scrutiny. PAGE A19

**Putting a Ban on Fluoride Use**

Despite warnings from medical experts, Utah has become the first U.S. state to prohibit adding the mineral to public drinking water. PAGE A21

**A Campus Scales Back D.E.I.**

As part of an overhaul, the University of Michigan will eliminate its central program for diversity that it had cast as a model for higher education. PAGE A19

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**Israeli Airstrikes in Beirut**

The attack in the southern outskirts of the Lebanese capital, an area where Hezbollah holds sway, was the first since a cease-fire was called. PAGE A10

**Vances Visit Greenland**

As Vice President JD Vance and his wife arrived, residents were skeptical. “He’s not welcome,” one said. PAGE A8

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**Winning It All, and Reloading**

The Los Angeles Dodgers, looking to be the first repeat World Series champ in 25 years, have bigger aims. PAGE B8

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**A PLACE TO CALL HOME**

THIS WEEKEND

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**Lydia Polgreen** PAGE A24

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**Rebuilding Computer Building**

Tech companies are revamping computing — from how chips are built to the way they are arranged and powered — in the race to build A.I. that recreates the human brain. PAGE B1

**Love for Tesla Is Turning Sour**

New Yorkers’ embrace of the electric vehicles has, for some who bought them, turned into regret as fury at Elon Musk, the company’s owner, prompts acts of vandalism and protests. PAGE B3



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