



LOREN ELLIOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Storm’s Power and Sweep
The reach of Tropical Storm Helene extended all the way to eastern Tennessee, where catastrophic flooding obliterated a bridge.

In Defiant Trip
Back to Butler,
Risks Abound

By SHAWN MCCREESH and KATE KELLY

Five days after being shot by a would-be assassin in Butler, Pa., former President Donald J. Trump stood onstage at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, surrounded by images of his blood-streaked face. “I will tell you exactly what happened, and you’ll never hear it from me a second time,” he said, “because it’s actually too painful to tell.”

And then he spent the next 12 weeks talking about it. He stitched the shooting into his campaign narrative about the “them” — the Democrats, the Deep State, the Marxists and the news media — trying to stop him at all costs.

On Saturday, that effort was set to culminate in a dramatic return to the scene of the shooting. It is a moment Mr. Trump has been hyping for weeks as a one-time-only, can’t-miss event. “We’re going back to Butler, too, by the way,” he said at a rally in Harrisburg, Pa., on July 31. “People said to me, ‘Are you serious?’ I said: ‘I’m serious. We’re going back.’”

A few days later, he told the people of Bozeman, Mont.: “We’re going back to Butler. You know that, right?”

“We’ve got to go back to Butler,” he said.

There is little precedent for what Mr. Trump is set to do. Other presidents have been shot and shot at. None have returned to the scene of the crime 12 weeks later to throw a huge campaign rally.

The moment illustrates the contradictions between Mr. Trump’s public statements about his security concerns and his private willingness to take risks. He insists on going back to Butler even as he complains that the U.S. Secret Service and the Biden administration have not properly protected him, and he has suggested, without evidence, that there are political motivations behind the security failures.

Since the first Butler rally, on July 13, there have been more threats on Mr. Trump’s life. There was a second assassination attempt.

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Secret Service Stretched Thin as Agents Burn Out

By ERIC LIPTON and DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD

WASHINGTON — In November, Michael Ebey, a Secret Service special agent, found himself working another 12-hour shift. Like so many before, it was grueling.

This time, he was part of the detail protecting President Biden at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. Pangs of fatigue snaked up his legs from hours of standing on a concrete floor of the Moscone Center in San Francisco, about 3,000 miles from his home.

“I got to the point where I just said, ‘You know, I don’t think I want to do it anymore.’” Mr. Ebey put in his papers to retire in January. He was 52 years old.

For months, alarm had been spreading through the executive offices on the eighth floor of the Secret Service headquarters in Washington over the flight of experienced talent like Mr. Ebey.

The agency knew it would face an avalanche in 2024. There would be presidential campaigns. Political conventions. A NATO summit. It was looking to be one of the busiest years in the Secret Service’s recent history, even as threats of violence against political leaders were rising.

The service was not ready.

“Now more than ever, it is critical that we retain employees,”

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Unexpected Problem
In the Rise of Marijuana

The drug, legal in much of the country, is widely seen as safe. But for some users, those assumptions are dangerously wrong.

This article is by Megan Twohey, Danielle Ivory and Carson Kessler.

In midcoast Maine, a pediatrician sees teenagers so dependent on cannabis that they consume it practically all day, every day — “a remarkably scary amount,” she said.

From Washington State to West Virginia, psychiatrists treat rising numbers of people whose use of the drug has brought on delusions, paranoia and other symptoms of psychosis.

And in the emergency departments of small community hospitals and large academic medical centers alike, physicians encounter patients with severe vomiting induced by the drug — a potentially devastating condition that once was rare but now, they say, is common. “Those patients look so sick,” said a doctor in Ohio, who described them “writhing around in pain.”

As marijuana legalization has accelerated across the country, doctors are contending with the effects of an explosion in the use of the drug and its intensity. A \$33 billion industry has taken root, turning out an ever-expanding range of cannabis products so intoxicating they bear little resemblance to the marijuana available a generation ago. Tens of millions of Americans use the drug, for medical or recreational purposes — most of them without problems.

But with more people consuming more potent cannabis more often, a growing number, mostly chronic users, are enduring serious health consequences.

The accumulating harm is broader and more severe than previously reported. And gaps in state regulations, limited public health messaging and federal restraints on research have left many consumers, government officials and even

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U.S. Presence in Mideast
Spurs Debate at Pentagon

Questioning Whether Deployments Contain
the Fighting or Embolden Israel

By HELENE COOPER and ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON — As the Israeli offensive in Lebanon expands to include ground incursions and intensifying airstrikes, senior Pentagon officials are discussing whether the enhanced U.S. military presence in the region is containing a widening war, as they had hoped, or inflaming it.

In the 12 months since Hamas attacked Israel, launching a conflict that includes Yemen, Iran and Lebanon, the Pentagon has sent a bristling array of weaponry to the region, including aircraft carriers, guided missile destroyers, amphibious assault ships and fighter squadrons.

The Pentagon announced this week that it would add a “few thousand” more troops to the equation and essentially doubled its air power in the region.

President Biden says the U.S. hardware and extra troops are there to help defend Israel and to protect other American troops on bases throughout the region. In an interview on Thursday, the deputy Pentagon spokeswoman, Sabrina Singh, said the Defense Department’s leadership remained “focused on the protection of U.S. citizens and forces in the region, the defense of Israel and the de-escalation of the situation through deterrence and diplomacy.”

The larger American presence, she said, is meant to “deter aggression and reduce the risk of a broader regional war.”

But several Pentagon officials expressed concern that Israel was waging an increasingly aggressive campaign against the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, Iran’s most powerful proxy, knowing that an armada of American warships and dozens of attack planes stand ready to help blunt any Iranian response.

“Right now, there’s enough posture in the region that if the Iranians step in, we can and would support Israel’s defense,” said Dana Stroul, the Pentagon’s top official for Middle East policy until last year. Of Israel’s aggressive campaign against Hezbollah, she said, “If you’re Israel and you’re a military planner, you want to do all that while things are in the region, not after it leaves.”

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has raised the issue in meetings at the Pentagon and at the White House, officials said. General Brown, a former F-16 pilot who commanded U.S. air forces in the Middle East, has also questioned the effect of the expanded American presence in the region on overall combat “readiness,” the ability of the U.S. military to respond quickly to conflicts, including with China and Russia.

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HAMAS FRUSTRATION Its leader, Yahya Sinwar, is still awaiting aid from Hezbollah and Iran. PAGE A5

NEW TARGET Israel struck a meeting presumed to include the new Hezbollah leader. PAGE A6

Harris Distant
From a Father
Much Like Her

By ROBERT DRAPER

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Kamala Harris recalled a childhood memory of her father in her convention speech two months ago, when she said he exhorted her in an unnamed park to “Run, Kamala, run. Don’t be afraid. Don’t let anything stop you.”

It evoked a golden moment between a father and his older daughter and seemed a tribute to what he had helped her become. The reality is a great deal more complicated.

Donald J. Harris, 86, a distinguished economist, lives with his second wife only two miles from the vice president’s official residence in Washington, yet he has been estranged for years from his daughter and the two seldom speak. Ms. Harris’s convention speech was a rare instance when she named her father publicly — a striking contrast to the praise she showers regularly on her mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, a biomedical scientist who died in 2009.

To the extent that Dr. Harris has been mentioned during his daughter’s presidential campaign, it is Ms. Harris’s detractors who have brought him up.

“Her father’s a Marxist professor in economics,” former President Donald J. Trump said derisively during his debate with Ms. Harris last month. “And he taught her well.”

Interviews with more than a dozen friends and former colleagues of Dr. Harris reveal two notable themes. First, Ms. Harris’s father, a Jamaican-born emeritus professor of economics at Stanford University, has been a critic of mainstream economic theory from the left but is hardly a Marxist. Second, Dr. Harris has been a mostly absent figure from his daughter’s life but not an irrelevant one.

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Robust Legacy
Of Pandemic:
Entrepreneurs

By BEN CASSELMAN and SYDNEY EMBER

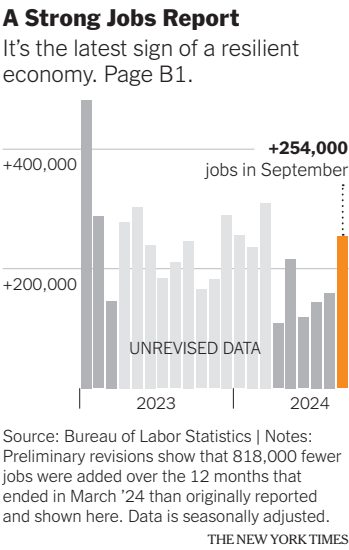
Hector Xu was on track for a career in academia when the pandemic upended his plans.

Tired of endless Zoom meetings and feeling cooped up in his Boston apartment, Mr. Xu decamped for New Hampshire, where he began taking lessons to fly helicopters. That led to a business idea, converting traditional helicopters into remotely piloted drones.

Mr. Xu’s company, Rotor Technologies, now has nearly 40 employees — including his former flying instructor — and about \$1 million in revenue this year, a figure it expects to increase twentyfold next year. Gov. Chris Sununu was present for the first test flight of one of its drones.

“Covid hit, and it really changed my perspective,” Mr. Xu said. “You ended up spending most of your time in front of your computer rather than in the lab, rather than interacting with people, going to

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Needing Help, but Wary
Language and other barriers are hobbling the flow of assistance to Latino communities devastated by Tropical Storm Helene. PAGE A9

Most Want Adams to Quit
Just 26 percent of New York City residents approve of the mayor and 69 percent of them want him to step down, according to a new poll. PAGE A21

Opening for Trump in Georgia
Most Black men in the key battleground will back Vice President Kamala Harris, but polls show that their support for Democrats is dwindling. PAGE A14

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Tariffs Raised on China’s E.V.s
European Union officials aim to protect the region’s automakers from what they say are unfair trade practices. PAGE B1

U.S. Ports Rush to Reopen
Just days after longshoremen walked out, their union and their bosses struck a tentative deal on wages. PAGE B1



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Gang Rape Clips Shock Court
Gisèle Pelicot fought for the graphic videos her husband made to be publicly shown at the trial in France. PAGE A8

Deadly Gang Attack in Haiti
At least 70 people were killed in a key agricultural region north of the capital. Around 50 others were injured. PAGE A8

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Detective With Superhero Tale
With steel hooks for hands and a flamboyant personality, Jay J. Armes captured the attention, and scrutiny, of reporters. He was 92. PAGE B11

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With Money Comes the Boos
Newly compensated college football players face heat from fans. But from their coaches, too? PAGE B7

A Big Milestone Left to Go
Shohei Ohtani thrived in his first season with the Dodgers, but can he top it with a World Series championship? PAGE B6



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A City’s Ravaged Cultural Hub
Much of the River Arts District of Asheville, N.C., was washed out by the floodwaters of Hurricane Helene. PAGE C1

Russian’s Roulette
A fan of Dostoyevsky’s novels followed his footsteps through three spa and gambling towns in Germany. PAGE C7

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David Brooks PAGE A22

