

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, mostly sunny, light and variable winds, high 88. **Tonight**, partly cloudy, light and variable winds, low 69. **Tomorrow**, hot, mostly sunny, high 90. Weather map, Page 30.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$6.00



MERIDITH KOHUT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Lifeline Being Tied in Knots
As the Trump administration claws back federal funding, New Mexico will acutely feel the strain in a wide array of programs. Page 22.

AFTER DONATIONS, POLICY IS PAUSED

Health Executive Given
Access to President

This article is by **Kenneth P. Vogel, Sarah Kliff and Katie Thomas.**

Oliver Burckhardt came prepared for the dinner that President Trump hosted for a small group of major donors at his private Mar-a-Lago resort in South Florida on March 1.

A week earlier, one of Mr. Burckhardt’s biotech companies had donated \$5 million to MAGA Inc., a pro-Trump political committee, that paved the way for him to attend the event.

At the dinner, Mr. Burckhardt got a chance to speak briefly to the president and other guests about himself and the work of his company, Extremity Care, which makes pricey medical products including paper-thin bandages made of dried bits of placenta, according to three people who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the private event.

He also brought copies of a flier urging the Trump administration to reverse a plan to restrict Medicare reimbursement for the bandages and criticizing former President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for having “rammed through a policy that would create more suffering and death for diabetic patients on Medicare.”

The next morning, Mr. Trump posted the flier on his social media site.

It was not just symbolic. About one month later, the Trump administration announced it would delay until next year the Biden administration plan to limit Medicare’s coverage of the bandages, known as skin substitutes, saying that it was reviewing its policies.

It was the culmination of an expensive influence campaign by Extremity Care that underscored Mr. Trump’s willingness to grant access and preferential treatment to people and companies that fill the coffers of his political groups.

The February donation by Mr. Burckhardt’s company, which was revealed in a report filed recently with the Federal Election Commission, was among dozens of seven- and eight-figure contributions to MAGA Inc. from donors,

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A Festering Sexual Assault Problem for Uber

By **EMILY STEEL**

Uber received a report of sexual assault or sexual misconduct in the United States almost every eight minutes on average between 2017 and 2022, sealed court records show, a level far more pervasive than what the company has disclosed.

Publicly, the ride-sharing service proclaimed it was one of the safest options for travel, with aggressive media campaigns and polished reports on its website about the rarity of serious attacks.

Inside Uber, teams of data scientists and safety experts spent years studying the problem. The company tested tools that proved effective at making trips safer, in-

As Reports Poured In,
Company Prioritized
Its Business Model

cluding sophisticated matching algorithms, mandatory video recording and pairing female passengers with female drivers.

Still, Uber delayed or did not require its drivers to adopt some of the most promising programs, nor did it warn passengers about factors it linked to attacks, according to interviews with more than a dozen current and former employees, internal documents and court records. Hundreds of the records

have been under seal as part of large-scale sexual assault litigation against Uber.

Uber’s decisions about safety came as it prioritized growing its user base, avoiding costly lawsuits and protecting its business model, which classifies drivers as independent contractors rather than employees, the records show.

The distinction is important to Uber. Contractors are much cheaper than employees because the company does not need to pay benefits or overtime, and drivers are minimally supervised and not subject to the same labor rules as traditional employees.

“Our purpose/goal is not to be the police,” stated a 2021 brain-

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DAVID GUTTENFELDER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Summer Offensive in Ukraine
Russia’s attacks have been ramping up, as President Trump plans to meet Vladimir V. Putin. Page 6.

WILLIAM H. WEBSTER, 1924-2025

F.B.I. Reformer Who Became C.I.A.’s Spymaster

By **TIM WEINER**

William H. Webster, the only person ever to lead both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, switching from lawman to spymaster while the bureau was investigating high crimes at the White House and the C.I.A., died on Friday in Warrenton, Va. He

was 101.

A family spokesman, Jim McGrath, confirmed the death, at a care center, but did not specify a cause.

Mr. Webster was born two months before J. Edgar Hoover took command of the F.B.I. in 1924. Hoover, who governed the bureau for almost half a century, was not yet six years in his grave when Mr.

Webster was sworn in as the F.B.I.’s third director on Feb. 23, 1978, a time when Hoover’s shadow still darkened Washington.

Senate hearings had exposed the bureau’s Cold War history of warrantless wiretaps and burglaries and laid bare its vendettas against the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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Inside the Smuggling Ring Directing Fentanyl Traffic

Secret Compartments and Cartel Lookouts
Try to Foil U.S. and Mexican Agents

By **PAULINA VILLEGAS and MARIA ABI-HABIB**

CULIACÁN, Mexico — The fentanyl packer moved with precision, his headlamp casting a sharp glow on the swift work of his gloved hands.

Hoodless carcasses of old vehicles sat gutted under a pitch-black sky. Car jacks, coils and greasy rags littered the ground.

The man sprayed six aluminum-wrapped packets with a liquid that smelled like chlorine, a compound that he said would help disguise fentanyl from search dogs. Underneath the foil, the deadly drug was wrapped in carbon paper to try to avoid basic methods of X-ray detection, he said.

The 58-year-old man, a mechanic by day and drug packer by night, had been working for the Sinaloa Cartel for over 20 years, fixing and loading cars with cocaine, meth and now fentanyl.

In all of that time, he said, his job has never been as dangerous as now. “Hopefully this is my last gig,” he said.

The cartel, which as one of the world’s most formidable drug syndicates had once seemed immune to challengers, has been pushed into survival mode. President Trump has vowed to crush the fentanyl trade — directing the Pentagon to begin using military force against certain cartels that his administration considers terrorist organizations.

Mexico, pushed hard by Mr. Trump, has launched its own aggressive crackdown, deploying hundreds of troops to combat the Sinaloa Cartel, a U.S.-designated terrorist group. While under intense pressure from both governments, the cartel has also been plagued by infighting.

But even in that weakened state, the cartel continues to adapt. Its smugglers are shifting to smaller loads, devising creative methods and adjusting in real time to changing threats — showing how extraordinarily difficult it would be for any government to dismantle such an entrenched

criminal organization.

And despite the campaign against them, cartel operatives said they had no intention of giving up the trade. Most expressed no compunction over the devastating toll in the United States, where fentanyl has fueled an addiction crisis and become a leading cause of death.

Those operatives said that they were simply running a business, and argued that if they did not meet the American demand, someone else would.

This summer, The New York Times interviewed five operatives of the cartel. They spoke to The Times on the condition of anonymity because they would otherwise be subject to arrest or danger. The Times’s reporting included documenting how fentanyl packages were hidden in cars in Culiacán, in western Mexico, in order to show in greater detail how fentanyl trafficking unfolds.

The car’s subsequent journey into the United States was reconstructed through interviews with the five operatives: the mechanic, a driver, a high-ranking cartel member and two traffickers based in Arizona.

The mechanic was hired this
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ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
A Sinaloa cartel operative hiding drug packages in a car.

An AriZona Can Over 99 Cents? Tariffs Put the Pinch on Tallboys.

By **REMY TUMIN**

WOODBURY, N.Y. — Don Vultaggio leaned over a table and spun a giant lazy Susan until a 22-ounce can of Arnold Palmer appeared before him. It was 2 p.m. and time for Mr. Vultaggio, the founder and chairman of AriZona Iced Tea, to hold his daily two-hour lunch and board meeting in his Southwest-themed office in central Long Island.

Behind him was a wall of dozens of bottles and cans from the company’s deep roster of products, and a security monitor showing a live feed of the robot-powered storage and retrieval operations of its largest factory, which is in New Jersey.

It has been from this perch that Mr. Vultaggio has spent the last few weeks contemplating what he’s insisted, for most of his company’s three decades of existence, he would never do: raise the 99-cent price of its canned iced teas, AriZona’s calling card since 1997.

The Trump administration’s 50 percent tariff on aluminum imports may leave him no choice.

If the price of a tallboy of AriZona Iced Tea had kept pace with inflation, the company would today be selling it for \$1.99. Instead, the 99-cent price remains so central to the company’s identity that the numbers are displayed on the can boldly and prominently.

AriZona uses more than 100 million pounds of aluminum a

year for its cans, and about 20 percent of that comes from Canada. Mr. Vultaggio is hopeful that the tariff dispute will be resolved, but if it is not, he said, “at some point the consumer is going to have to pay the price.”

“I hate even the thought of it,” Mr. Vultaggio, 73, said, adding, “It would be a hell of a shame after 30-plus years.”

AriZona’s affordability has its roots in Mr. Vultaggio’s childhood



in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, where his father managed an A.&P. grocery store. Dinner conversations, he recalled, focused on retail and labor issues, theft and profit.

“Know your costs and sell it

for more than that,” Mr. Vultaggio said, reciting one of his father’s business principles. “Most companies to this day still don’t understand that.”

After high school, Mr. Vultaggio got a job at a brewery in Bushwick, where he quickly became more interested in the price of the bottles and other materials than in the actual brewing process. He started his own beer distribution business instead.

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INTERNATIONAL 4-13

The Trade Logic of Lobster

Europe struck a deal that protected political priorities, like meat standards, while allowing concessions. PAGE 11

Who Will Govern Gaza?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel faced criticism after unveiling his postwar plan for the region. PAGE 12

NATIONAL 14-23

Trump Attacks Intel’s C.E.O.

The president said the executive should resign over his past ties to China, adding to the company’s challenges to build factories in Ohio. PAGE 19

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A Bunch of Fan-Friendly Ideas

The Savannah Bananas’ wacky brand of baseball offers lessons for the M.L.B. on deepening engagement. PAGE 24

Welcome to The Show

Jen Pawol, 48, made M.L.B. history as the first female umpire to work a regular-season game. PAGE 25



SUNDAY BUSINESS

Seeking to Undo Racism Case

A Consumer Financial Protection Bureau lawsuit against a Chicago mortgage lender shows how the two Trump administrations have used the agency in different ways. PAGE 1

Last Supper That Never Ends

An artist said he lost the will to live and asked people to invite him to dinner before he ended his life. Many meals later, he is still going. Mental health experts are appalled. PAGE 6

SUNDAY OPINION

David Wallace-Wells

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METROPOLITAN

Connecting Neighborhoods

The proposed Interborough Express could alter the face of the city. PAGE 1

ARTS & LEISURE

Momoa’s Hawaiian Story

In the series “Chief of War,” the actor is portraying a hero from history. PAGE 8



SUNDAY STYLES

Dr. Phil Has More to Say

The daytime TV fixture known as a tough-loving mediator of family dramas has taken a rightward turn against “the woke left.” Some of his friends have been wondering why. PAGE 10

They’re 16, and Want to Vote

After Britain announced plans to lower the voting age, some American teenagers now want to have their say on issues at the ballot box. PAGE 2

