

Defense attempts to rattle Cohen

Trump’s lawyer paints former fixer, key witness as liar with an ax to grind

BY DEVLIN BARRETT, RACHEL WEINER, SHAYNA JACOBS AND HANNAH KNOWLES

NEW YORK — The central witness against Donald Trump withstood a withering cross-examination Thursday from the former president’s defense lawyer, who accused Michael Cohen of lying as recently as two days ago to realize his dreams of revenge against his ex-boss.

The confrontation between Cohen and Trump lawyer Todd Blanche was the most anticipated moment in the month-long trial, which is now speeding toward a conclusion. Because the trial is off Friday, the jurors will have three days to weigh Cohen’s answers. His cross-examination will continue Monday morning, setting the stage for closing arguments next week.

New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan told the lawyers that he would try to make sure those arguments don’t stretch out over more than one day, but he warned that they might because of scheduling demands of the jurors and other logistics issues.

The day’s testimony was closely watched by a cadre of Trump’s political allies sitting behind him in court, including Reps. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) and Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.). There were so

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Subpoena for tapes: Biden says Hur recordings are privileged. **A3**



PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Rio Grande between El Paso, left, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Mexico has fallen short on its water delivery obligations, determined by a 1944 water treaty, by hundreds of thousands of acre-feet in nearly every five-year period since 1997.

A U.S.-Mexico water conflict brews

A water dispute between the United States and Mexico that goes back decades is turning increasingly urgent in Texas communities that rely on the Rio Grande. Their leaders are now demanding the Mexican government either share water or face cuts in U.S. aid.

In a deepening diplomatic conflict, Mexico is behind in obligations under an 80-year-old treaty that governs cross-border flows of the drought-stricken Colorado River. It has for decades resisted water deliveries to the United States from its reservoirs in the Rio Grande basin as it faces its own drought pressures on thirsty and valuable crops bound for sale across the border.

But some Texas towns are nearing a breaking

Shortages complicate terms of 80-year-old water treaty and diplomatic relations as drought strains border region

BY SCOTT DANCE

point, with two key reservoirs at historic lows.

Water shortages this year already forced a key sugar cane processing plant to shut down, costing the region hundreds of jobs and a major cash crop. And at least one border town faces the prospect of halting new construction, at least temporarily, for lack of water.

Texas leaders are pleading with Secretary of State Antony Blinken to pressure Mexico and calling on Congress to withhold U.S. aid to the country until water flows from behind Mexican dams. At this point, they say, that is their best hope — that, or a hurricane.

“We keep on getting lucky. Right when we’re on the verge of running out of water, we get a

SEE WATER ON A8

Hogan pivots on abortion in Senate race

Md. Republican emerges as ‘pro-choice’ in attempt to thwart chief criticism

BY ERIN COX

Republican Larry Hogan on Thursday sought to undercut Democrats’ plans to eviscerate him on abortion rights and his bipartisan image, with the newly minted Senate nominee and former governor describing himself as “pro-choice” for the first time and releasing an ad with footage of prominent Democrats praising his two-term tenure.

Hogan said on X Thursday that he would support “restoring *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land. No one should come between a woman and her doctor.” After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, Hogan vetoed a Maryland bill in 2022 that expanded abortion access and refused to spend millions designated to train more providers.

Hogan’s pivot on abortion launches the general election fight in Maryland’s high-stakes race for the U.S. Senate, a typically blue seat that his candidacy threw into uncertainty. Maryland Democrats have made abortion

SEE MARYLAND ON A6



SERGEI BOBYLEV/AP

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin walk during a welcome ceremony in Beijing on Thursday. Analysts say the China-Russia alliance is largely transactional.

Putin touts ‘stabilizing’ pact with Xi

BY MICHELLE YE HEE LEE AND PEI-LIN WU

Russian President Vladimir Putin touted his country’s relations with China as a “stabilizing” force in the world as he began a two-day state visit Thursday designed to portray him and Chinese President Xi Jinping as leaders offering an alternative to the U.S.-led world order.

The two leaders are at loggerheads with the liberal democratic order on multiple fronts: West-

Leaders reaffirm goal of developing an alternative to U.S.-led world order

ern governments have been putting pressure on Russia to end its invasion of Ukraine — and for Beijing to stop supporting the war, diplomatically and materially — while China is being accused of unfair trading practic-

es that upset the global economic order.

Many analysts say the relationship is mostly transactional. But meeting in Beijing on Thursday for the second time in seven months, the pair walked in lockstep from the moment Xi greeted Putin in Tiananmen Square with a red-carpet welcome, complete with cannons firing, soldiers marching and a squad of jumping and cheering children. An orchestra played the popular Soviet-era

SEE SUMMIT ON A11

Senior-care referral site stays quiet about neglect

Some facilities with top ratings have been cited for substandard care

BY CHRISTOPHER ROWLAND, STEVEN RICH, TODD C. FRANKEL AND DOUGLAS MACMILLAN

When families search the internet for senior-care homes, they inevitably come upon A Place for Mom. The site says it helps 700,000 people every year.

It calls itself the nation’s leading “trusted advisory service,” but in reality A Place for Mom is a referral service that is paid large fees by assisted-living facilities and does not independently assess their records. More than a third of its most highly recommended facilities in 28 states were cited for neglect or substandard care in the past two years, many of them repeatedly, according to a Washington Post review of inspection reports.

A Place for Mom awarded these facilities its “Best of Senior Living” award for providing “exemplary care and support to aging loved ones” — based, it said, on user reviews, which are often anonymous. Current and former staff of some large chains told The Post that these reviews are often manipulated by the care providers; some claimed they were encouraged to obtain fake reviews from their own friends

and relatives.

As America searches for secure housing for an aging population, assisted living has risen to fill the void, charging an average of \$6,000 a month. But unlike with nursing homes, there are no federal regulations, no mandated inspections and no nationwide report card to help people figure out which facilities are safe, comfortable and committed to providing excellent care.

Enter A Place for Mom, the leading senior-housing referral service in the nation, according to an analysis by the Federal Trade Commission. Its website pops up immediately when people search the internet for assisted-living facilities. Visitors to the site are asked how much daily assistance they need and the size of their monthly budget and offered a list of recommendations for homes in their area.

But the contrast between A Place for Mom’s recommendations and information contained in state inspection reports can be jarring.

For example, Inspired Living at Bonita Springs in Florida won a “best of” designation from A Place for Mom based on 2023 consumer reviews. Yet in 2022, state inspectors said it failed to protect a resident who died after spending more than an hour unattended on a patio on a midsummer afternoon — when the heat index was 100.4 degrees. The facility’s operator did not respond to requests for comment.

SEE SENIOR CARE ON A14

IN THE NEWS

Mining limits The Biden administration will end new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. **A6**

D.C. homelessness Officials cleared out the last remaining large-scale encampment, forcing dozens to relocate to far-flung parks and slivers of turf around the city. **B1**

THE NATION
Sen. Bob Menendez said that his wife, a co-defendant in his corruption trial, has cancer. **A2**
Faculty signaled discontent with Columbia University’s president in a no-confidence vote. **A3**

THE WORLD
An influx of tourists to Japan is putting the nation’s famous politeness to the test. **A9**
The U.S. military anchored its floating pier in Gaza, bringing the promise of aid. **A10**

THE ECONOMY
The IRS said it will again allow North Dakota to assist Native American tribes with collecting child support payments. **A13**
Academic workers in the University of California system could strike over a crackdown on Gaza protests. **A13**

THE REGION
Loudoun County officials considered delaying some class times next year to accommodate new state training requirements. **B1**
Some D.C. Council members are pushing to revive a controversial plan for a Connecticut Avenue bike lane. **B3**

STYLE
Jerry Seinfeld went on a movie promotional tour, and yadda, yadda, yadda, a whole lot of controversy ensued. **C1**

WEEKEND
Rhizome, a music venue in a two-story house in Northwest D.C., survives an eviction threat to live another day.

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