



ELECTION 2024

Trump derides Harris over her heritage

To African American journalists, he says VP ‘happened to turn Black’

BY BRIANNA TUCKER AND HANNAH KNOWLES

CHICAGO — Former president Donald Trump on Wednesday accused Vice President Harris of once hiding Black heritage she has routinely highlighted in her career, escalating his attacks on her racial identity in a combative interview with Black reporters.

Trump drew audible gasps and disbelieving laughter over the roughly 35-minute sit-down session as he berated a Black reporter who pressed him about past offensive comments, falsely claimed that undocumented immigrants were “taking” attendees’ votes, and suggested Harris “was Indian all the way” before “all of a sudden she made a turn” and “became a Black person.”

By the end of the day, Trump had renewed his broadsides, with a social media post that suggested Harris, who is Black and Indian American, had rejected her Black identity because she once described herself as Indian while discussing Indian food.

Harris — who belongs to a historically Black sorority — condemned Trump’s comments in a Wednesday night speech to a crowd of Black women at another sorority’s convention. “It was the

SEE TRUMP ON A4

Harris: Attack is a reminder of her campaign’s historic nature. **A4**

Up for grabs: VP energizes voters in swing-state Nevada. **A6**

School taught Vance to see — and exploit — nation’s divides

BY HANNAH NATANSON

On a trip home to Ohio soon after starting at Yale Law School, JD Vance stopped for gas and noticed a woman in a Yale T-shirt. When he asked about it, she said her nephew attended the Ivy League school — and asked whether Vance did, too.

“I had to choose: Was I a Yale Law student, or was I a Middle-town kid with hillbilly grandparents?” Vance recalled in his memoir, “Hillbilly Elegy.”

If he admitted going to Yale, he and the woman “could exchange pleasantries,” Vance wrote. But if he denied his Yale ties, the woman would deem him one of “the unsophisticates of Ohio [who] clung to their guns and religion.” An unbridgeable gap would open: The woman would move to “the other side of an invisible divide,” Vance wrote.

His fear in that moment has since become a theory he often repeats: that America is a divided nation, split between liberal elites and regular, conservative people. It was a keynote theme of his best-selling book, which earned national acclaim, became a movie and paved his way to the U.S. Senate — and, this summer, helped him earn the vice-presidential nod from Donald Trump.

In a speech accepting the nomination at the Republican

SEE VANCE ON A7

Hamas leader’s killing adds to turmoil



MAJID SAEEDI/GETTY IMAGES

Iranians in Tehran’s Palestine Square protest the killing of Ismail Haniyeh on Wednesday. Haniyeh, the political head of Hamas, was targeted while visiting the city for the presidential inauguration. Iran and Hamas blamed his death on Israel and pledged to avenge it.

Deadly strikes cast shadow over talks on Gaza cease-fire, hostage release

BY KAREN DEYOUNG

The killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday has set back and may have struck a death knell for U.S. hopes of reaching agreement in already failing negotiations on a cease-fire and hostage-release deal to end the Gaza war.

Haniyeh — the chief negotiator for the militants in indirect Israel-Hamas talks mediated

since November by the United States, Qatar and Egypt — was widely viewed as more realistic about the advantages of reaching a deal than Hamas military chief Yehiya Sinwar, according to Arab and U.S. officials closely familiar with the negotiations, some of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity about the sensitive issue.

“It definitely means that the guys in Gaza,” where Sinwar is believed to be hiding in a

Hamas tunnel, “will have even more sway now,” one Arab official said. The official charged that Israel had launched an airstrike that killed Haniyeh to try to “sabotage the talks.”

Israel has not acknowledged the strike that killed Haniyeh, who was in Tehran for the inauguration of the newly elected Iranian president, and U.S. officials said they were informed after it occurred. In a televised statement, Prime Min-

ister Benjamin Netanyahu said only that Israel had dealt “crushing blows” to Hezbollah — in a Beirut airstrike Tuesday that killed a senior official of that group — and to Hamas.

In public statements, the Biden administration deflected questions about it — beyond stipulating that the United States was — as Secretary of State Antony Blinken said — “not aware of or involved in” it.

SEE NEGOTIATIONS ON A14

THREATENS WIDER WAR IN MIDDLE EAST

Israel’s enemies blame it for strike within Iran

BY STEVE HENDRIX, MISSY RYAN AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

JERUSALEM — The brazen killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, an attack Iranian and Hamas officials blamed on Israel, plunged the Middle East into greater turmoil on Wednesday, unleashing fears of a wider regional conflict and upending months-long efforts to reach a cease-fire deal in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli officials declined to comment on the operation, even as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government had dealt “crushing blows” to Hezbollah and Hamas in recent days, including a strike that killed Hezbollah’s chief military officer in a Beirut suburb on Tuesday. Both groups are backed by Iran.

In a televised address, Netanyahu, facing intense global pressure to conclude his war against Hamas in Gaza, said that Israel would not tolerate aggression by any party. “Israel will exact a very heavy price for aggression against us from whatever quarter,” he said.

The attack, a stunning security and intelligence failure, targeted Haniyeh as he visited Tehran for

SEE HAMAS ON A13

Hamas’s future: Leader’s death could empower hard-liners. **A14**

Obituary: Haniyeh was a key figure in war diplomacy. **B3**



Haniyeh

PARIS OLYMPICS



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Ledecky, now the doyenne of American swimming, is golden again

Katie Ledecky, once the youngest U.S. Olympian, is now among the team’s senior swimmers in Paris. That didn’t stop her from winning her signature event, the 1,500-meter freestyle. **Story, D1**

Accused 9/11 plotters reach deal to avoid death penalty

BY ELLEN NAKASHIMA AND PRAVEENA SOMASUNDARAM

The man accused of plotting the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and two of his co-defendants have reached plea agreements that will allow them to avoid the death penalty, the Defense Department announced Wednesday — a dramatic development in the decades-

long cases for the prisoners at the U.S. military detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi will all plead guilty, according to a letter sent to families of the victims by a senior U.S. defense official overseeing the cases. A panel of military officials eventually will determine the

men’s sentences.

“In exchange for the removal of the death penalty as a possible punishment, these three accused have agreed to plead guilty to all of the charged offenses, including the murder of the 2,976 people listed in the charge sheet,” according to the letter, signed by Rear Adm. Aaron Rough, the chief

SEE SEPT. 11 ON A2

An MLB pitcher’s overdose and a search to place blame

Five years after the death of Tyler Skaggs, records suggest a complicated truth

BY GUS GARCIA-ROBERTS

One spring day a decade ago, after another long day at the ballpark, Eric Kay finished work and headed to a nearby condo.

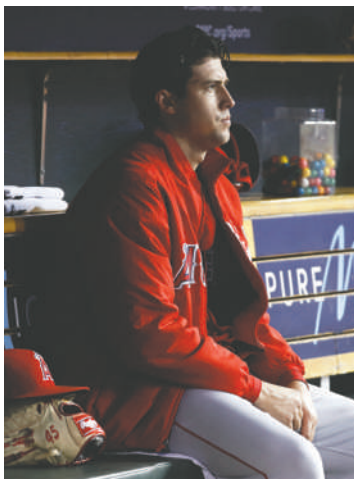
Kay was a chummy, ubiquitous presence behind the scenes for the Los Angeles Angels, with whom he had spent virtually all of his adult life in the communications department. He had recently been named its director — Kay’s dream job.

But over the previous several years, Kay had grown addicted to opioids, typically in the form of 10-milligram Norco pills. Now he was in Arizona for spring training and a planned pill shipment had fallen through. So Kay went looking for a source — and landed on a young pitcher recently traded to the team. His name: Tyler Skaggs.

Kay said he arrived at the address Skaggs gave him to find the ballplayer and a buddy chopping up 30-milligram Percocet pills and snorting them. Kay had only ever swallowed pills, he said. But he leaned in and inhaled.

Kay later described this encounter to federal agents and The Washington Post — establishing the origin, or at least his version of it, of a years-long, drug-fueled relationship between two men that would spiral toward the darkest imaginable outcome.

It has been five years since Skaggs, 27, was discovered dead in a hotel room in Texas with



PAUL SANCYA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Los Angeles Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs, a first-round pick in 2009, died of a drug overdose in 2019. He was 27.

fentanyl in his system, rocking baseball and adding another celebrity casualty to a public health crisis that has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, with no solution in sight.

To the authorities and Skaggs’s family, Kay’s role in the ballplayer’s death was simple: Kay was a “pill pusher,” as a prosecutor put it, who used his big league access to prey on Skaggs and other players whose profession made them vulnerable to the allure of painkillers. In 2022, a Texas jury convicted Kay of giving Skaggs the fentanyl-laced pill that killed

SEE SKAGGS ON A8

IN THE NEWS

Almost there The Fed held interest rates steady but signaled that a long-awaited cut could come as soon as September. **A19**

A ‘chaotic’ response William P. Barr did not order the removal of racial justice protesters in 2020 — despite a Justice Department claim at the time that the attorney general did. **B1**

THE NATION
The Trump rally gunman stopped firing after a local offer shot at him, officials say. **A3**
In Oakland, Calif., a run of bad news has cast a pall over the proud city and created division. **A20**

THE WORLD
Palestinians and their lawyers recounted violence and deprivation in Israeli prisons. **A12**
Riots erupted in Southport, England, after false claims about a recent mass stabbing. **A16**

THE ECONOMY
Welcome to “Snark Tank,” where start-up founders receive blunt feedback in the form of comedy roasts. **A17**
Boeing, which is facing safety scandals and steep losses, named Robert “Kelly” Ortberg as its next chief executive and president. **A18**

THE REGION
A man was convicted of illegally accessing Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s medical records but acquitted of posting them online. **B1**
The D.C. attorney general sued StubHub, alleging the online ticket provider hits customers with surprise fees. **B1**

STYLE
A legal battle dividing the Murdoch family may dictate the path forward for Fox News and other media properties. **C1**
LOCAL LIVING
There is a villain lurking in some antique books: They can contain pigments made with toxic heavy metals.

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The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53930

