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## Fighting Tears, Trump Ex-Aide Recalls Crises

### Hicks Testimony Could Help Either Side

This article is by Ben Protess, John E. Bromwich, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan.

Her voice low, her posture tense, the woman who spent years steering Donald J. Trump through strife and scandal stepped to the witness stand on Friday carrying a different burden. She was there under the fluorescent lights of a dreary Manhattan courtroom, seated 15 feet from the former president she once fiercely defended, to testify at his criminal trial.

"I'm really nervous," Hope Hicks, the onetime Trump spokeswoman, messaging maestro and all-around adviser, acknowledged to the prosecutor questioning her, declaring what was already obvious to the riveted courtroom.

Ms. Hicks's unease came to a head hours later as Mr. Trump's lawyer began to cross-examine her — and she began to cry. As her voice cracked, Mr. Trump locked his eyes on her.

The question that initially unnerved Ms. Hicks was about her time at the Trump Organization, the family's business, where she had fond memories of working. Ms. Hicks left the stand, and the trial paused so that she could compose herself. She returned minutes later to continue her testimony, occasionally dabbing her eyes with a tissue.

The striking show of emotion reflected Ms. Hicks's discomfort with testifying against a man who launched her career and entrusted her with his reputation.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES  
Donald J. Trump at one point locked eyes on his ex-press aide.

Each time the questioning conjured up another memory of working for Mr. Trump — at his company, on his campaign and finally in his White House — Ms. Hicks appeared to fight back tears.

Ms. Hicks, who fell out of favor with Mr. Trump once it emerged that she had privately voiced anger at the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol by his supporters, said in her testimony that they had not spoken in nearly two years.

Mr. Trump, who faces up to four years in prison if convicted, is on trial for 34 felony charges of falsifying records to cover up a sex scandal involving a porn star. The case, brought by the Manhattan district attorney's office, is the

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LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

### In Taiwan, a Spectacle Grounded in Spirituality

Elaborate pilgrimages for Mazu, a sea goddess, were once dominated by older people but are attracting younger audiences. *Page A8.*

## Congressman Faces Charges Of Bribery Plot

By GLENN THRUSH  
and LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — Representative Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat in a crucial swing district, and his wife were charged with participating in a yearslong \$600,000 bribery scheme involving Azerbaijan and a Mexican bank, according to a federal indictment unsealed in Houston on Friday.

The accusations against Mr. Cuellar, 68, and his wife Imelda, 67, center on allegations of bribery and money laundering in connection with their efforts on behalf of an oil and gas company owned by Azerbaijan's leaders as well as an unnamed bank based in Mexico City, according to the 54-page complaint.

Mr. Cuellar, a Laredo native first elected in 2004, is also accused of acting as an agent of a foreign entity while a U.S. government official — by delivering a speech favoring Azerbaijan in Congress and inserting provisions into aid bills to benefit those who were paying bribes to his family.

The government claimed that Mr. Cuellar, who once served as Texas secretary of state, was paid to back legislation intended to stymie regulation of the payday loan industry, which has been accused of predatory lending practices against the poor. He also tried to weaken money laundering laws that affected Mexico's banking sector, according to prosecutors.

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## Mortar Crews Reporting Signs of Brain Injuries

By DAVE PHILIPPS

After firing about 10,000 mortar rounds during four years of training, one soldier who joined the Army with near-perfect scores on the military aptitude test was struggling to read or do basic math.

Another soldier started having unexplained fits in which his internal sense of time would suddenly come unmoored, sending everything around him whirling in fast-forward.

A third, Sgt. Michael Devaul,

Grim Symptoms After  
Years of Training at  
U.S. Army Bases

drove home from a day of mortar training in such a daze that he pulled into a driveway, only to realize that he was not at his house but at his parents' house an hour away. He had no idea how he got there.

"Guys are getting destroyed,"

said Sergeant Devaul, who has fired mortars in the Missouri National Guard for more than 10 years. "Heads pounding, not being able to think straight or walk straight. You go to the medic. They say you are just dehydrated, drink water."

All three soldiers fired the 120-millimeter heavy mortar — a steel tube about the height of a man, used widely in training and combat, that unleashes enough explosive force to hurl a 31-pound bomb four miles. The heads of the sol-

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TAIWO AINA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

### Played in England, Watched Globally

This season's Premier League title race draws eyes everywhere, including Nigeria, above. *Page B9.*

## Taking His Bronx Cheers to the Kentucky Derby

By JOE DRAPE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — In the world according to Mike Repole, everyone involved in horse racing is a dummy. Except him, Mike from Queens or the Commish, as some of his followers on X call him.

Stuart S. Janney III, chairman of the nonprofit Jockey Club, is

clueless and tone-deaf and has run the sport into the ground, Repole says. Churchill Downs Inc., which hosts the Kentucky Derby, is cheap: The \$5 million purse for America's most famous race should be much more, and the racetrack treats Repole and other owners badly.

Forget about John Stewart, a new owner bringing fresh energy

and big money into the game. He is "arrogant, free-spending" and such a rube that he has an "\$8 haircut."

All the above, and many others, are among Repole's frequent targets on social media and various podcasts. Repole, a prominent horse owner who made his fortune in the beverage industry,

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## As Students Revolt, Some Professors Join Them

By ANEMONA HARTCOLLIS

Earlier this week, some faculty members at the University of California, Los Angeles, had an emergency call with students who were active in the pro-Palestinian protests.

"We just got a really clear message from them: 'We feel unsafe, and we'd like your help in fixing

this,'" recalled Graeme Blair, an associate professor of political science.

In that moment, several dozen faculty activists volunteered to join the students in shifts around the clock at their encampment on campus.

And in the dark hours of Thursday morning, as the police cracked down on the protests,

those faculty members were linking arms with students, allowing themselves to be arrested.

It was one of the clearest instances of a little-noted fact of the student demonstrations against the war in Gaza — that a small fraction of faculty members at U.C.L.A., Columbia and other universities have provided logistical

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### Trouble for U.K. Conservatives

Local election losses absorbed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's party sent an ominous message about its chances in a coming general election. *PAGE A9*

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### NASA Losing Eyes on Earth

Three aging satellites will soon go dark, making it more difficult for scientists to forecast weather, manage wildfires and monitor ozone levels. *PAGE A11*

BUSINESS B1-6

### U.S. Job Market Eases

Employers added 175,000 jobs in April, a milder pace than in the winter months, though layoffs were low and most sectors appear stable. *PAGE B1*

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### On the Piers and in the Street

Stanley Stellar has been documenting gay New York since the 1970s. His photographs are on view this weekend at the Frieze New York art fair. *PAGE C1*

OPINION A22-23

### Michelle Cottle

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