



Ga. judge in Trump trial boots 6 counts

Charges in election case found to lack sufficient detail, but 35 remain

BY HOLLY BAILEY

ATLANTA — A Georgia judge dismissed three of the 13 charges against former president Donald Trump and some of the charges against his allies in the sweeping election interference case, but declined to dismiss the entire indictment.

In a nine-page order issued Wednesday, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee dismissed six of the 41 counts in the indictment against Trump and his allies, who are accused of conspiring to try to overturn the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. All of the dismissed charges are related to pressure that Trump or five of his co-defendants allegedly put on state officials to change the results.

“As written, these six counts contain all the essential elements of the crimes but fail to allege sufficient detail regarding the nature of their commission, i.e., the underlying felony solicited,” McAfee wrote.

The judge added: “This does not mean the entire indictment is dismissed.” McAfee pointedly declined a defense request challenging the overt acts tied to charges — meaning they are still part of the overall indictment. Prosecutors can still present evidence related to the dropped charges as they argue that Trump and his allies criminally conspired to try to overturn the election.

The six counts — which also implicate former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, and former Trump campaign attorneys Robert Cheeley, John Eastman and Ray Smith — were related to an alleged pressure

SEE GEORGIA ON A10

What comes next: The fate of the case rests with a young judge. **A9**

Classified files case: Hearing will address requests for dismissal. **A10**

Cherry trees have blossoms aplenty — for now



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Diana Castellon poses for photos among cherry blossoms at the Enid A. Haupt Garden near the Smithsonian Castle for her quinceañera. The region’s cherry trees could see peak bloom as soon as early next week thanks to warm, mild weather, but for some trees, it could be their last blossom: The National Park Service said it will remove 158 trees to rehabilitate crumbling sea walls around the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park. **Story, B1**

ELECTION 2024

At rallies, Trump fixates on resentments, revenge

BY ASHLEY PARKER, MARIANNE LEVINE AND ROSS GODWIN

A Donald Trump rally is a freewheeling extravaganza. A festival of grievance and retribution. A dystopian vision of darkness and despair. A political rock show. A bacchanalia of lies and mistruths. A pitch to voters.

Since bursting onto the presidential scene in 2015, Trump has transformed the American public’s conception of a political rally, taking the stage after hours of eardrum-shattering decibels of a self-curated playlist and offering a spectacle that changes depending on the place, the news cycle

A speech in S.C. typifies his grim promises and grievances old and new

and the former president’s mood.

On the last Friday in February, the day before the South Carolina primary, Trump took the stage in Rock Hill, S.C., where he spoke for just over an hour and a half. A close examination of his remarks that day offers an anatomy of a Trump rally speech.

Like many of his recent speeches, it was long and laden with resentments, offering a dark vi-

sion for the nation that alarms Democrats and animates his Republican base. It touched on recurring themes, including his election denialism, his promise of a sudden transformation in another Trump term and his claims of persecution and martyrdom.

Perhaps more importantly, Trump’s stump speech provides a road map of what a second Trump term might look like — fulfilling his promises to root out the so-called “deep state” of civil servants, harshly cracking down on illegal immigration and crime, and pulling back from the world stage. It also reveals many of his weaknesses as a candidate, such as sometimes slurring his words,

confusing names of world leaders and attacking minorities in offensive ways.

At times, Trump hews to a teleprompter, while at others he careens gleefully off script. He can channel both comedy and rage, charisma and revenge.

Over time, his stump speech has evolved, though certain hallmarks remain. One constant is that it is certain to contain a slew of falsehoods and mistruths, ranging from hyperbole to outright lies, such as his false claim that the 2020 election was stolen.

The Washington Post’s Fact Checker found that in the four years of his presidency, Trump

SEE TRUMP ON A4

DORIE LADNER 1942-2024

Activist braved racism’s ‘battlefield’ for equality

BY EMILY LANGER

Dorie Ladner, who joined the civil rights movement as a teenager in Mississippi, braving gunfire, tear gas, police dogs and Ku Klux Klansmen in an undaunted campaign for racial equality, died March 11 at a hospital in Washington. She was 81.

The cause was respiratory failure, said her sister Joyce Ladner, a constant companion in her activism and former interim president of Howard University.

Dorie Ladner was 11 months younger than Emmett Till, an African American who was 14 when he was lynched in the Mississippi Delta in 1955, his mutilated body tethered with barbed wire to a cotton gin fan and submerged in the Tallahatchie River.

For their entire lives, Ms. Ladner and her sister, her junior by a year, had endured the indignities of life as African Americans in the Jim Crow South — the rides in the back of the bus, the restrooms



BILL O’LEARY/THE WASHINGTON POST

In a hostile Mississippi, Dorie Ladner led sit-ins, marches and voter registration efforts.

and drinking fountains for Black people only, the segregated schools, the secondhand textbooks passed down by White students.

But with Till’s death, “I was enraged, but I did not know what to do with that anger,” Dorie Ladner told an interviewer years later. “His murder made me aware of my Blackness.”

SEE LADNER ON A5

Vulnerable teens coerced into self-harm online

The person in the online chat introduced himself as “Brad.” Using flattery and guile, he persuaded the 14-year-old girl to send a nude photo. It instantly became leverage.

Over the following two weeks in April 2021, he and other online predators threatened to send the image to the girl’s classmates in Oklahoma unless she live-streamed degrading and violent acts, the girl’s mother told The Washington Post.

They coerced her into carving their screen names deep into her thigh, drinking from a toilet bowl and beheading a pet hamster — all as they watched in a video chatroom on the social media platform Discord.

The pressure escalated until she faced one final demand: to kill herself on camera.

“You just don’t realize how quickly it can happen,” said the mother, who intervened before

Editor’s note: This article describes extremely disturbing events that may be upsetting for some people.

Top digital platforms are struggling to control an emerging network of sadists

BY SHAWN BOBURG, PRANSHU VERMA AND CHRIS DEGHANPOOR



SOURCE: TELEGRAM/ILLUSTRATION BY LUCY NALAND/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK

Messages posted on Telegram, where moderation efforts can be complicated by fully encrypted communication.

her daughter could act on the final demand. The mother agreed to talk about the experience to warn other parents but did so on the condition of anonymity out of concern for her daughter’s safety.

The abusers were part of an emerging international network of online groups that have targeted thousands of children with a sadistic form of social media terror that authorities and technology companies have struggled to control, according to an examination by The Washington Post, Wired Magazine, Der Spiegel in Germany and Recorder in Romania.

The perpetrators — identified by authorities as boys and men as old as mid-40s — seek out children with mental health issues and blackmail them into hurting themselves on camera, the examination found. They belong to a set of evolving online groups, some of which have thousands of members, that often splinter and take on new names but have overlapping membership and use the same tactics.

Unlike many “sextortion” schemes that seek money or

SEE PREDATORS ON A6

IN THE NEWS

St. Patrick’s Day tensions The Irish leaders set to visit the White House on Friday strongly disagree with President Biden’s stance on Israel’s war in Gaza. **A7**

U.S. Embassy in Haiti A crisis-response unit of Marines was sent to protect the facility in Port-au-Prince as conditions deteriorate. **A14**

THE NATION President Biden and Donald Trump clinched nominations with just 1 in 10 eligible voters. **A2** **A third trial awaits** a former Louisville police officer in the death of Breonna Taylor. **A3**

THE WORLD France’s consumption of frog legs is contributing to species decline, scientists warned. **A11** **Ukraine launched** a new wave of drone strikes against oil facilities inside Russia. **A13**

THE ECONOMY Hershey’s response to a cocoa shortage shows it’s getting harder for companies to raise prices when costs for raw materials go up. **A15** **Interlune announced** its goal to be the first private company to harvest resources on the moon’s surface. **A16**

THE REGION A failed nomination for fire chief has the Montgomery County executive and firefighters union trading blame. **B1** **A teacher** at a Maryland church sexually abused four girls, two of whom he fondled during prayers, authorities alleged. **B3**

STYLE Getting clothing from the runway to your closet is no small effort for the buyers at Ssense. **C1**

LOCAL LIVING Like eating well or quitting smoking, getting organized at home can be a years-long journey, according to industry professionals.

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