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BREAKING NEWS: Julian Assange gets 50 weeks in jail for skipping bail in 2012

'BOYZ N THE HOOD' DIRECTOR

JOHN SINGLETON DIES AFTER STROKE



Director John Singleton died Monday. File Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI | License Photo

By Karen Butler and Danielle Haynes
UPI

Boyz N the Hood director John Singleton died Monday, 12 days after having a

stroke, in Los Angeles, his family announced. He was 51.

The filmmaker died hours after his family announced plans to remove him from life support at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

"We are sad to relay that John Singleton has died," his family said in a statement. "John passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family and friends."

See SINGLETON, page 4

Shooting at UNCC campus leaves two dead, suspect in custody

By Danielle Haynes & Darryl Coote
UPI

One person was in custody following a shooting on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Tuesday that left two people dead and four injured, police said.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police identified the suspect as 22-year-old Trystan Andrew Terrell. Charges were pending.

The suspect, who was armed with a pistol, was apprehended by two or three campus police

officers who rushed into the building where the shots originated from, Police Chief Jeff Baker said in a news conference.

"We were able to get into the building quick enough to where we actually took custody of the suspect," Baker said. "He was disarmed and he was taken into custody by our officers."

Two people died at the scene and three of the injured were in critical condition, Baker said.

"I can't tell you the sadness of the entire

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S.C. teachers take off for capital rally, seek more funds, reforms
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Fox renews 'Empire' for Season 6; 'no plans' for Jussie Smollett to return
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Donald Trump turns the screw on Iran

By Struan Stevenson
UPI

U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to cancel the temporary waivers that had enabled countries like Iraq, Turkey, India, Japan and China to continue purchasing Iranian oil without breaching U.S. sanctions has hammered the final nail into the mullahs’ coffin.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo explained that the decision had been taken to “deprive the outlaw regime of the funds it has used to destabilize the Middle East.” The U.S. administration’s goal is to reduce Iranian oil exports to zero. Coming on top of Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from Barack Obama’s failed nuclear deal and the re-imposition of tough sanctions against the theocratic dictatorship, the Iranian economy was already in free-fall, with the rial collapsing and inflation soaring against a background of nationwide protests, which have continued on a near-daily basis for the past 16 months.

Last week, the United States also announced that it had added Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps to its list of foreign terrorist organizations. The IRGC controls almost 90 percent of the Iranian economy, so it will be virtually impossible for anyone to trade with Iran without breaching U.S. sanctions or facing severe penalties for dealing with a listed terrorist organization.

Now there are calls for the United States to blacklist Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence & Security, the network of spies and assassins responsible for extraterritorial terror attacks. In June last year a trained MOIS agent posing as an Iranian diplomat from its embassy in Vienna was arrested by German police and charged with handing a bomb to two other MOIS agents, instructing them to detonate it at a peaceful opposition rally in Paris.

In December, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama expelled the Iranian ambassador and his first secretary on the grounds that they posed a risk to Albanian security. Once again, these so-called diplomats were revealed as trained MOIS agents who had been plotting bomb attacks and assassinations of opponents of the regime in Albania. There are growing demands for Iran’s embassies, which are clearly being used as bomb factories and terrorist cells, to be closed down throughout the European Union.

Following the blacklisting of the IRGC, the mullahs orchestrated a protest in the Iranian parliament, where MPs dressed in IRGC uniforms shouted “death to America.” Their catcalls are not being echoed by the Iranian people, however. Cries of “the enemy is here, not in America” are routinely heard in the daily street protests.

Iranians are sick to death of the repression and brutality they have been forced to suffer for four decades under the medieval fascist dictatorship. They have watched as the elderly, bearded, misogynistic mullahs have corruptly enriched themselves while also sponsoring international terrorism and proxy wars.

The mullahs support for Bashar al-Assad in Syria, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, the brutal Shi’ia militias in Iraq and the terrorist Hezbollah in Lebanon have turned Iran into a pariah state. Protesters can be heard shouting “forget Syria, forget Hezbollah, what about us?”

The mullahs’ response to the protests has been to send in the IRGC, their equivalent of the Gestapo, to arrest thousands of the demonstrators, who are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Several have been tortured to death. Rather than reimbursing striking truck drivers, sugar cane workers and teachers, whose wages haven’t been paid for months, the IRGC has crushed the industrial disputes, assaulting and arresting the strikers.

Widespread protests about government inaction following catastrophic floods that left towns and villages inundated and scores dead were similarly crushed by the IRGC.

When the protests began to threaten the regime, the mullahs even resorted to mobilizing foreign mercenaries to reassert control, sending in Iraqi Shi’ia militias and Lebanese Hezbollah units, who came bearing weapons rather than shovels, to repress the flood victims.

This has caused outrage throughout Iran, where the tipping point to trigger a new revolution will rapidly be reached.



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OPINION

Why political emancipation without economic independence

I recently had the pleasure of being invited by D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser to speak at a breakfast gathering honoring D.C. Emancipation Day. We would be celebrating the 157th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s formal emancipation of over 3,000 enslaved individuals in the district (on April 16, 1862). Several months later, on Jan. 1, 1863, Lincoln would go on to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which legally emancipated the nation’s estimated 4 million slaves. In this year’s commemoration, the district’s political leadership and distinguished citizens pushed for what they consider the last frontier in the quest for emancipation -- the establishment of statehood for the district.

In one sense, I was somewhat surprised to be invited to the event because I am not a supporter of statehood for the district. I believe the founders of our nation had wise and practical reasons for leaving the district out of the American federation of states. They rightly reasoned that including the district within any state’s boundaries -- as had been originally done -- would reduce the district’s role as neutral ground where state representatives could come together to hash out the nation’s business. They did not want the district’s laws and taxes to impact representatives of the other states, thereby creating political pressure on one state to do another state’s bidding. I believe the soundness of this decision has stood the test of time.

However, that does not mean that many of the district’s residents have yet to experience full “emancipation.” I do not mean emancipation in the political and legal sense but rather

emancipation in the form of economic independence.

As I prepared my remarks for the breakfast, I realized that I might be marching into somewhat hostile territory, as most in attendance were supporters of D.C. statehood. However, I did feel that I had something important to contribute to the discussion of emancipation and what it truly means. I thought back to my own family. My earliest known ancestor, my great-great-grandfather Luke Howard, had been born a slave on a plantation in Marion County, South Carolina, in 1805. During his lifetime, he witnessed not only the height of the cotton aristocracy in the American South but also Lincoln’s election, the founding of the Republican Party, the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, most of my slave ancestors stayed at the plantations where they had been formerly enslaved. Some, who fought as Union soldiers in the Civil War, believed that Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, would award them land taken from the plantations of their former owners. This was not to transpire. Several black Civil War veterans wrote to General Oliver Otis Howard (after whom D.C.’s famed historically black university is named) to complain that the federal government in Washington had betrayed them.

One of them wrote to General Howard in 1865: “If the government Having concluded to befriend its late enemies and to neglect

to observe the principles of common faith between Its self and us Its allies in the war you said was over, now takes away from them all right to the soil they stand upon saving such as they can get by again working for your late and their all time enemies. If the government does so we are left In a more unpleasant condition than our former (condition of slavery).”

In other words, the returning veterans knew that without the ability to build an economic foundation, the emancipated would be reduced to a condition that was in many ways worse than their former condition. The federal government did not respond to their requests and essentially abandoned them. Then-President Andrew Jackson, who wanted to heal the deep wounds of the war, restored the lands to their original owners, the very people against whom the federal government had just waged a bitter internecine war.

This was a painstakingly slow progress that would take several generations to produce fruit. There was very little in the way of redemption. Shortly after the war, the Ku Klux Klan and other white vigilante groups began terrorizing blacks. Laws were passed, including the Jim Crow laws, that denied blacks the basic rights of citizenship: They were restricted from voting, participating on juries and even bringing lawsuits in state courts. When you have stolen from someone, it is not enough to merely stop the theft. Justice requires that you redeem the value of what was taken. In many cases, this was not done, and the lasting effects of slavery and de jure segregation continue to this day in the form of entrenched poverty and social stigma.

The former slaves found themselves nominally “free” but abandoned by the government and practically still enslaved. They did own, at least nominally, the fruits of their own labor, though. And so they started from nothing, working harder than they had ever worked to establish some form of economic foundation. Not only did they continue to toil in the fields of their former enslavers -- albeit now for wages -- but many even developed sharecropper and other forms of land-lease arrangements, where they did extra work to secure their own land and capital.

This legacy lasted up until my own generation. My father was eventually able to save up enough money from laboring and sharecropping to purchase his own farm, which eventually became self-sufficient and produced wealth for our family. It took almost five generations from when Lincoln formally emancipated the slaves for my family to finally discover true freedom.

The painstaking work it took over successive generations to bring forth a viable black middle class should not be taken for granted. It is not enough to merely be proclaimed “emancipated” without also providing some method of redress. That is why, in the absence of some sort of redemption, it is very difficult -- if not impossible -- to achieve true freedom.

Armstrong Williams is manager and sole owner of Howard Stirk Holdings I & II Broadcast Television Stations and Executive Editor of American Current See online magazine. Watch our Right Side Forum every Saturday on NewsChannel 8 TV 28, 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., with repeats at 6:30 p.m. EST.

Missing school is a given for children of migrant farmworkers

By: Aggie Ebrahimi
Bazaz, Georgia State
University
UPI

In the summer of his junior year, Luis Miguel was struggling to stay in high school. He and his family of four -- who work various agricultural jobs from picking blueberries and cherries to pruning grapes and canning tomatoes -- live in one of California’s 24 migrant family housing centers.

As a documentary filmmaker, I have been studying these housing centers and the rhythms of life for families who reside in them since I first arrived in a center in 2014 during fieldwork for an oral history project with former bracero farmworkers.

Tucked in the shadows of county jails and water treatment plants, these centers provide tile-floored apartments at subsidized rents to migratory farmworkers and their families during peak harvest season. The centers house as many as 1,890 farmworking families, mostly from Mexico.

Given California’s affordable housing shortage, these housing centers are a coveted option for farm-

working families. Outside the housing centers, migrant farmworkers might reside in less-favorable conditions -- sleeping in cars, garages, old motels or under tarps in the fields.

But while the centers resolve the affordable housing problem, they create another: second-class citizenship.

State-mandated annual move

A 2016 survey of the housing centers noted that more than half the families residing in centers across the state -- 1,037 families to be exact -- have school-age children, many of whom, like Luis Miguel’s sister, are natural-born U.S. citizens.

In late fall or early winter when harvest season ends, families must vacate their apartments and move at least 50 miles away for three to six months. The rationale behind this rule is to ensure that the housing serves families who are truly migratory.

Most families cannot afford unsubsidized housing in California and thus spend the off-season months in their Mexican hometowns. While in Mexico, the youth either miss school or attend inconsistently.

“It all depends where

the students live,” Migrant Education Program counselor Laura Aguayo says. “Some students don’t have a chance because they live too far away from a school. Others can’t go because the schools don’t take them in.”

This is because they will only be enrolled for a couple of months before they return to the United States, she says.

This means that each year, school-age children living with their families in California’s migrant family housing centers, many of whom are U.S. citizens, miss between three to six months of schooling.

‘Moving makes things complicated’

Migrant education counselors, administrators and teachers try to help migrant students make up whatever academic credits they’re missing.

But “moving makes things complicated,” says Luis Miguel. “We lose a lot of time, and it’s hard to concentrate.”

The summer of his junior year, Luis Miguel got so discouraged by the routine of moves and having to make up credits that he lost motivation and began to veer off the path to graduation.

To help students like Luis Miguel make up credits, California has developed an online program called Cyber High.

But Cyber High has its own issues. “There are a lot of Internet problems,” Aguayo explains. “All the schools in California are using Cyber High so the system slows down. Students can be taking a test and it kicks them out.”

Impact on student achievement

The move also makes it hard for students to succeed in the kinds of extracurricular activities that can make students more attractive to colleges.

While in high school, Luis Miguel had joined cross-country to work with the coach, Rick Cuevas, who is himself Mexican-born and the child of a farmworker. Cuevas understands the students better than almost anyone, calls them “mihija” or “mihijo,” Spanish terms for “my daughter” or “my son,” respectively.

“Running changed my life,” Luis Miguel says. “Before running, I never thought about my future. And now that I run, I take things more seriously.” But he ruminates on losing his conditioning.

ECC Honor Society inducts twenty-seven students



Angelica F. Staggers
Matthew G. Strickland
Jessica B. Taylor
Miccah M. Tillery
Twain R. White
Nora R. Wilson
Tamara Frank-Pourvady, a professional tutor at the College, serves as advisor to the honor society.
To be a member of Phi Theta Kappa, students must have completed 12 credit hours in an associate degree program and have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher.
Students must then maintain at least a 3.25 grade point average to remain in the group.

From left, new Phi Theta Kappa honor society members at Edgecombe Community College include (front, from left) Jessica Duff, Maria Mata-Reyes, Angelica Staggers, Katie Skinner, Nora Wilson, Destiny Sexton, Taylor Redwine, Twain White, (back) Tamisia Lynch, Suzanne Peaden, Jessica Taylor, McKayla Davis, Kaitlyn Evans, Karah Joyner, Miccah Tillery, and William Duff.

Edgecombe Community College’s Alpha Omega Nu chapter of Phi Theta Kappa inducted twenty-seven students into its membership during an April 10 induction ceremony held on the Rocky Mount campus.

Phi Theta Kappa is an honor society for students attending two-year schools.

The guest speaker at the induction ceremony was Dr. Greg McLeod, president of ECC. The event marked a milestone for the ECC chapter, which celebrates 25 years this academic year.

Spring 2019 Phi Theta Kappa inductees are:
La’Kira R. Bullard
Azella Carr
McKayla M. Davis
Jessica L. Duff
William B. Duff
Amy J. Edmondson
Kaitlyn R. Evans
Te’quisha S. Farrow
Shamanda T. Harris

Sarah K. Heath
Lynn H. House
Karah H. Joyner
Bailey N. Lamm
Tamisia D. Lynch
Maria G. Mata-Reyes

Emilie F. Moore
Joseph P. Moseley
Suzanne H. Peaden
Taylor E. Redwine
Destiny N. Sexton
Katie E. Skinner

I wish to congratulate Allen Thomas for winning the Democratic Nomination for the North Carolina 3rd Congressional District on Tuesday, April 30, 2019.

To all that voted for me, thank you from the bottom of my heart. God Bless!

Respectfully submitted,
Ernest T. Reeves
Captain,
US Army, Retired,
Former Candidate,
U.S. Congress, D-NC-03, 2019

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Julian Assange gets 50 weeks in jail for skipping bail in 2012

By Nicholas Sakelaris
UPI

A British court on Wednesday sentenced WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to 50 weeks in jail for skipping bail in 2012, when he began seven years of asylum at Ecuador’s Embassy in London.

At the Southwark Crown Court sentencing Wednesday, Judge Deborah Taylor said he cost British taxpayers £16 million (about \$21 million) while he hid away at the embassy compound. A Westminster court last month found him guilty of violating Britain’s Bail Act just days after he was expelled by the Ecuadorian Embassy and his asylum revoked.

Assange’s attorney Mark Summers argued the 47-year-old Australian didn’t want to surrender to British authorities at the time because he feared extradition to Sweden and possibly the United States. Last month, U.S. authorities unsealed an indictment that accuses Assange of conspiring with former

Army intelligence officer Chelsea Manning to break into Defense Department computers. He faces an extradition hearing Thursday.

Summers said Assange feared being detained at the U.S. Navy prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which has housed suspected terrorists for years. The attorney called Assange a “desperate man” who was afraid he’d be “kidnapped” by the United States, and had lived at the Ecuadorian Embassy “under overwhelming fear of rendition.”

“It matters little whether his fears were reasonable or unreasonable,” Summers said. In a handwritten letter to the court, Assange apologized “unreservedly” for hiding at the embassy.

“I found myself struggling with terrifying circumstances. I did what I thought at the time was the best and only solution,” his letter said. British authorities secured Ecuador’s Embassy during the seven-year stay -- as Assange mocked them from inside,



Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange arrives at Southwark Crown Court in London on May 1, 2019. Photo by Neil Hall/EPA-EFE

Taylor said.

Assange’s father has asked British authorities

to return him to Australia. He said in an interview last month the Ecuadorians

made a deal with the United States -- to expel Assange in London in exchange for

a loan through the International Monetary Fund, The Washington Post reported.

Singleton

continued from page 1

“We want to thank the amazing doctors at Cedars-Sinai Hospital for their expert care and kindness and we again want to thank all of John’s fans, friends and colleagues for all of the love and support they

showed him during this difficult time.” Singleton was hospitalized April 17 when he began experiencing leg weakness on a long flight.

He was non-responsive and in a medically induced coma before his family removed life support.

The Hollywood Reporter said Singleton’s mother, Sheila Ward, recently ap-

plied for temporary conservatorship on his behalf.

Singleton was the first black and youngest filmmaker to be nominated for an Oscar for Best Director in 1991 for Boyz n the Hood. Singleton’s other credits include the films Abduction, Poetic Justice, Higher Learning, 2 Fast 2 Furious and Shaft as well

as the TV series Snowfall, which was recently renewed for a third season. Regina King, who starred in three of Singleton’s 1990s movies, mourned his death on Instagram, sharing a photo of the two together.

“Rest in Power, my friend. One of the greatest to ever do it. Thank you GOD for blessing us with

this gift better known as John Singleton.

Having trouble finding enough words to share just what you mean to me,” she wrote.

To the right, Director John Singleton arrives on the red carpet at the 82nd Academy Awards in Hollywood on March 7, 2010. File Photo by David Silpa/UPI License Photo





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Shooting

continued from page 1

munity to know that a situation like this has occurred on our campus,” he said. “We are all pretty much devastated to know anything like this.”

Baker said Terrell was not someone who was on his “radar.” Police dispatch received a call around 4:40 p.m. of a shooting on campus and put the school immediately under lockdown with the push of a button, he said. As the shooting began, the school tweeted out “Run, Hide, Fight. Secure yourself immediately.”

School officials said the campus was under lockdown from around 6 p.m. At around 6:45 p.m. buildings were being swept by police. And at around 11 p.m., remaining occupants on campus were permitted to leave, UNCC said on Twitter.

“Our officers’ actions definitely saved lives, there’s no doubt about that,” Baker said. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said it was a “tragic day for Charlotte.” “We mourn the lives lost and we will all be here to support each other,” he said in a tweet. “I commend the first responders for their quick action and am grateful that the campus is now secure.”



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S.C. teachers take off for capital rally, seek more funds, reforms

By Daniel Uria
UPI

Thousands of teachers in South Carolina gathered outside the state's Department of Education on Wednesday calling for more funding and reforms to the school system.

Activist group SC for Ed organized the coordinated event, called "All Out May 1: A Day of Reflection." For the demonstration, thousands of teachers are taking a personal leave day to rally in Columbia asking for better pay, smaller classes and more counseling for students.

There were an estimated 10,000 at the rally by early Wednesday afternoon, The State reported.

"This is not a walkout. It is a day of reflection and an opportunity for teachers, parents, students and community members to express their concern about the state of education in South Carolina," the group said in a statement.

Organizers expected as many as 5,000 people



-- including teachers and supporters -- to rally at the department's offices for speeches by educators, activists and state legislators. The event will then move down to the State House to appeal to lawmakers.

Seven South Carolina school districts closed Wednesday because there weren't enough substitute teachers to fill the void. Most schools in the state, however, were expected to open.

South Carolina Superintendent Molly Spearman criticized the teachers this week -- and pledged to help make up for the shortage by filling in as a substitute teacher herself.

"I support teachers using their voice to advocate for needed change and share in their commitment to ensuring reforms become reality," she said. "However, I cannot support teachers walking out on their obligations to South Carolina

students, families and the thousands of hardworking bus drivers, cafeteria workers, counselors, aides and custodial staff whose livelihoods depend on our schools being operational." SC for Ed said the reforms it advocates would make a positive impact on students, and the cost of the event Wednesday is small.

"Days of instruction are lost due to PTO parties, field days, assemblies, benchmark testing, standardized testing, discipline issues, to name a few," the group said.

"One day to advocate for our current students and the students we will teach in the future is a small price to pay."

The group also said achieving full funding for education would be a focus of the rally Wednesday.

Despite increases to teacher salaries in recent years, advocates say in-

creases in funding were more than \$500 short, per-student, of what's considered full funding.

Fully funding the education system, they say, would allow the state to make good on increased teacher salaries, reduce class sizes, hire more counselors and persuade teachers to stay in their jobs.

Teachers will also call for changes to a sweeping education bill proposed by South Carolina House Speaker Jay Lucas that would raise teacher pay by \$3,000 per year, improve training and dissolve under-performing school districts.

The legislation stalled in the state Senate last week. The teachers want a pledge from legislators to introduce a new bill, aided by a committee of educators.

Wednesday's event follows a number of successful teacher strikes nationwide over the last year. Educators walked out in Denver, Los Angeles and Oakland this year demanding similar changes with wages and class sizes.

Venezuela protests turn violent as Guaido calls for end of Maduro regime

By Clyde Hughes and
Danielle Haynes &
Darryl Coote
UPI

Demonstrations turned violent Tuesday after opposition leader Juan Guaido declared he was starting the final phase of the process to oust President Nicolas Maduro.

Those supporting the National Assembly leader took to the streets calling for the fall of Maduro. Military forces loyal to President Maduro have responded at times with violence.

One demonstrator, Vic-

tor Zabala, 25, told The Guardian he was struck multiple times by rubber bullets.

He accused the National Guard of also using live fire on groups of protesters.

In one video, military vehicles appeared to mow down Guaido supporters, who responded by throwing objects.

CNN and BBC reported a number of cable companies in Venezuela received orders to stop airing the networks after they aired the graphic footage.

Venezuelan media reported at least 69 people were hospitalized with injuries Tuesday, including two with gunshot wounds.

Guaido called for non-violent protests to support what he called "Operation Liberty."

He made the announcement in a video in which he is flanked by Venezuelan military forces.

"People of Venezuela, the end of usurpation has arrived," Guaido said in the video, taken at the La Carlota air base.

"At this moment, I am with main military units of our armed forces, starting the final phase of Operation Liberty."



Supporters of opposition leader Juan Guaido clash with the National Bolivarian Police during a protest on Francisco de Miranda Avenue in Caracas, Venezuela, on Tuesday. Photo by Rayner Pena/EPA-EFE

BID REQUEST

RPC Contracting is requesting bids from any interested NCDOT Certified MBE &WBE firms for Contract DA00463 in Camden Co. bidding on 5/15/19. There will be a pre-bid conference at 3:00 PM on Monday 5/6/19 at the office of RPC Contracting, 934 W. Kitty Hawk Road, Kitty Hawk, NC. Plans and specifications are available for review at the same location or may be downloaded from NCDOT's Project Letting website at <https://connect.ncdot.gov/letting/Pages/Division1Letting.aspx>. For more informatino, please call 252-261-3336, ask for Jay. RPC Contracting is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

BID REQUEST

RPC Contracting is requesting bids from any interested NCDOT Certified DBE firms for Contract DA00461 in Currituck Co. bidding on 5/8/19. There will be a pre-bid conference at 3:00 PM on Monday 4/29/19 at the office of RPC Contracting, 934 W. Kitty Hawk Road, Kitty Hawk, NC. Plans and specifications are available for review at the same location or may be downloaded from NCDOT's Project Letting website at <https://connect.ncdot.gov/letting/Pages/Division1Letting.aspx>. For more informatino, please call 252-261-3336, ask for Jay. RPC Contracting is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Biden enters presidential race bringing white supremacy to the forefront of issues

Calls campaign against Trump as ‘battle for the soul of America’ – but will he get the Black vote?

By Hazel Trice Edney
Trice Edney Wire

Former Senator and Vice President Joseph Biden, after much suspense, has finally entered the Democratic campaign for president – immediately surging ahead of a crowded field with a message against White Supremacy.

“We saw Klansmen and White supremacists and Neo Nazis come out in the open, their crazed faces illuminated by veins bulging and baring the fangs of racism”, Biden said in a video announcement with images of the violent 2017 White supremacist march in Charlottesville, Va. juxtaposed with images representing America’s promise that “all men are created equal.” He called the incident in Charlottesville in which the young activist Heather Higher was killed,

“a defining moment of this nation.”

Biden’s entry not only brings a new voice to the field of at least eight candidates who have announced so far, but a voice taking direct aim at incumbent Donald Trump.

He continued in the video, “And they were met with a courageous group of Americans. And a violent clash ensued. And a brave young woman lost her life. And that’s when we heard the words of the President of the United States that stunned the world and shocked the conscious of this nation. He said, there were quote, ‘some very fine people on both sides.’”

Biden said with those words, “the President of the United States assigned a moral equivalency between those spreading hate and those with the courage to stand against it. In that mo-

ment, I knew the threat to this nation wasn’t like any other I’d ever seen in my lifetime. I wrote at the time that were ‘in the battle for the soul of this nation.’”

He said eight years of the Trump Presidency would “forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation, who we are. And I cannot stand by and watch that happen.”

Biden has since catapulted to the forefront of the other Democratic candidates. But his race will not be easy. Trump has already taken aim, calling him, “sleep Joe” an attempt to pin a nickname on him as Trump has successfully done to many other candidates.

Trump spokespersons have defended his words about Charlottesville, saying he did in fact condemn racism and antisemitism as well. But despite his



Biden campaign video screenshot. Trice Edney Wire

successes with maintaining economic growth started by President Obama, the Trump years have been so far full of insults to people of color including calling members of the National Football League “Sons of Bs” for protesting unwarranted police violence against Black people.

No viable Republican candidates have challenged Trump so far. And most Black Republicans and even conservative Chris-

tians have remained silent amidst what some deem as deplorable conduct; such as the SOB remark as well as hundreds of documented untruths. So far, Democratic candidates have dealt mainly with key issues with little or no mention of Trump’s leaning on a base that often appears largely White nationalists.

Among the dominant issues dealt with thus far have been the economy, whether all incarcerated

people should be allowed to vote while in prison and whether there should be a commission to discuss ways to issue reparations for slavery.

CNN reports that Biden now tops the field with more than 37 percent of Democrats saying they would vote for him if the election were elected today. He is followed in diminishing order by Sen. Bernie Sanders Sanders of Vermont; South Bend, Indiana

Foreign interference in American democracy specifically targeted African Americans

By Marc H. Morial
Trice Edney Wire

“In the days leading up to the election, the IRA [Russian Troll Farm] began to deploy voter suppression tactics on the Black-community targeted accounts ... As the election became imminent, themes were tied into several varieties

of voter suppression narratives: don’t vote, state home, this country is not for Black people, these candidates don’t care about Black people.” – U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee Report, “The Tactics and Tropes of the Internet Research Agency”

The U.S. Intelligence community announced

it was “confident” that it happened. A Senate Intelligence Committee report confirmed it. And now the Mueller Report has documented its scope in breathtaking detail. Russia interfered to disrupt American democracy on a massive scale.

An administration official recently falsely downplayed this unprecedented act of sabotage as “a few Facebook ads.” This year’s State of Black America®, due for release on May 6, will show how wrong that characterization is.

We’ve taken a close look at the state of the Black vote, from racially-motivated voter suppression laws, to wrong-headed U.S. Supreme Court decisions that hampered voting rights, to the race-based manipulation of African American voters by Russian trolls.

What we determined is alarming. The report will be released at a special event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., starting at 10 a.m. Eastern Time. The event will feature presentations by our partners in the report, the Brennan Center for Justice and the German Marshall Fund, and a dynamic panel discussion featuring the nation’s top journalists.



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ASSAULT ON A FEMALE - MISDEMEANOR
ASSAULT ON A FEMALE - MISDEMEANOR
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FTA- POSSESSION OF FIREARM BY FELON - FELONY



JOHN AUSTIN VINES

BANDE MV - FELONY
LARCENY - MISDEMEANOR
LARCENY OF FIREARM - FELONY
LARCENY OF CHOSE IN ACTION - FELONY
SAFE CRACK - FELONY
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FTA-POSSESS MARIJ PARAPHERNALIA - MISDEMEANOR
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Fox renews 'Empire' for Season 6; 'no plans' for Jussie Smollett to return



Actor/singer Jussie Smollett is not expected to return for Season 6 of "Empire," although his contract has been extended to leave the door open for the possibility. File Photo by Christine Chew/UPI | License Photo

By Karen Butler UPI

Fox has renewed its music drama Empire -- starring Taraji P. Henson and Terrence Howard -- for a sixth season.

The show's future had been in doubt after cast member Jussie Smollett was accused of hiring two men to perpetrate a fake, racist and homophobic assault on himself.

He was initially charged in Chicago, but prosecutors ultimately dropped the case.

Smollett maintains he was the victim of an attack and has refused to pay the \$130,000 accrued in overtime as police investigated the alleged crime against him.

Two men are also suing Smollett's lawyers for defamation because the attorneys have repeatedly said Smollett did not hire the brothers to pretend to assault him when they allege he did.

Created by Lee Daniels and Danny Strong, Empire is set in New York and follows the Lyon family, who run a hip-hop music and entertainment company.

Smollett plays Jamal, the son of Henson's and Howard's characters, Cookie and Lucious.

Smollett was written off of the remainder of Season 5 amid his legal troubles. Fox said in a statement to Deadline.com Tuesday that Smollett's contract has been extended to Season 6, but there are "no plans" to bring Jamal back.

Smollett's representatives released a statement, thanking his cast-mates for their support and confirming, "We've been told that Jussie will not be on Empire in the beginning of the season but he appreciates they have extended his contract to keep Jamal's future open."



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Reuniting with Javier Bardem on 'Dune' is 'really fun'

By Anne Martin UPI

Josh Brolin says reuniting with Jarvier Bardem on Dune is a "really fun" experience.

The 51-year-old actor discussed Bardem, Jason Momoa and director Denis Villeneuve during Monday's episode of Jimmy Kimmel Live! Brolin co-starred with Bardem in the 2007 film No Country for Old Men and previously worked with Villeneuve on the 2015 movie Sicario. "It's cool," Brolin told host Jimmy Kimmel. "Denis Villeneuve is doing it, the guy who I did Sicario with, he's an amazing director. "Javier Bardem's in it, who I haven't seen in a while. So there's a thing between he and I, which was really fun," he teased. Brolin said Momoa's involvement gives him extra confidence in the film. "I love [how] there's always a new actor in town where you can say it and you know everything's gonna be good. It's like, if everything goes crappy right now, I could say Jason Momoa and everything will go well," the star said.

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Unaccompanied migrant teen dies while in U.S. custody

By Daniel Uria
UPI

An unaccompanied migrant teenager died while in the custody of the U.S. government in Texas on Tuesday, Department of Health and Human Services officials said.

The 16-year-old boy died in a children's hospital's intensive care unit after he received treatment for an unspecified illness beginning April 22, HHS spokeswoman Evelyn Stauffer said in an emailed statement to UPI.

"The cause of death is currently under review and, in accordance with standard [Office of Refugee Resettlement] policies and procedures, the case will be subject to a full review," Stauffer said.

The child was transferred to an ORR center by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on April 20 and clinicians observed no health concerns nor did the child report any himself upon arriving at the shelter, Stauffer said.

The next morning the

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services photo shows rooms inside the facility at Casa Padre Shelter, in Brownsville, Texas. An HHS official said that a 16-year-old boy died while in U.S. custody after becoming ill while at a Texas shelter. Photo by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/EPA/UPI

boy became "noticeably ill," exhibiting fever, chills and a headache and shelter personnel brought him to a hospital emergency department where he was treated and released back to the shelter.

His condition did not improve after being re-

turned to the shelter and he was taken to another hospital emergency department the morning of April 22, before being transferred to the intensive care unit.

Stauffer added that arrangements were made for the boy's brother and Guatemalan consular officials to visit him while he was hospitalized and that his family received "frequent updates" from hospital staff about his condition.

Ciara, Dan + Shay to perform at 2019 Billboard Music Awards

By Wade Sheridan
UPI

Ciara, country duo Dan + Shay, Halsey and Tori Kelly have been tapped to perform at the 2019 Billboard Music Awards on May 1.

Ciara will be debuting her new single titled "Thinkin Bout You" at the

event while Dan + Shay will be performing with Kelly.

Halsey, meanwhile, will be performing her hit single "Without Me."

The new artists join already announced performers Madonna with Maluma, the Jonas Brothers, Kelly Clarkson, Khalid, Sam Smith with Normani,

Panic!

At the Disco, Lauren Daigle and BTS who will be sharing the stage with Halsey.

Clarkson, who is hosting the ceremony for a second year in a row, will be debuting a new single during her performance.

Dan + Shay are nominated for seven Billboard

Ciara has been added to the list of performers for the 2019 Billboard Music Awards along with Dan + Shay, Halsey and Tori Kelly. File Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI | License Photo

Music Awards including Top Duo/Group, Top Country Artist, Top Country Duo/Group, Top Country Album for their self-titled release, Top Country Song for both "Speechless" and "Tequila" and the Billboard Chart Achievement Award.

Halsey is nominated for Top Female Artist and Top Selling Song for "Without Me" while Kelly is nominated for Top Gospel Artist, Top Gospel Album for Hidden Place and Top Gospel Song for "Never Alone" featuring Kirk Franklin.

Cardi B, Ariana Grande, Drake, Travis Scott and Post Malone are each nominated for Top Artist. Mariah Carey is set to receive the Icon Award and will also be performing.

The 2019 Billboard Music Awards will air live from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas at 8 p.m. ET on NBC.

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