

A MESSAGE TO THE UNIVERSE
[IS THERE ANY BODY OUT THERE!!!]
WILL YOU RECEIVE THIS MESSAGE??

TO: THE UNIQUE AND ILLUSTRIOUS
VISITOR(S) TO THIS SITE:

Now is the NECESSARY TIME
TO REMEMBER, ESPECIALLY IN THIS "THOUGHT POLICE"
[PC] TIME(S) THAT THROUGHOUT THE ANNALS OF
HUMAN HISTORY: PROFOUND "TRUTHS" HAVE ALWAYS
COME OUT OF "THE PRISON":

ST. PAUL

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535)

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

GAILEO (1564-1642)

Henry David THOREAU (1817-1862)

MAHATMA GANDI (1869-1948)

NELSON MANDELA (1918-2013)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929-1968)

[LETTERS FROM BIRMINGHAM
JAIL]

Ad infinitum!!!

WELCOME TO THE TRUTH FORUM!!

THE TRUTH TELLER

BY: LEON ZIRBY ~~DATE~~: July 05, 2015

WHAT HE SAY:

"The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change."

— Carl Rogers, Psychologist

"To do nothing is in every man's power."

— Samuel Johnson

"The worst prison would be a closed heart"

— Pope John Paul II

"COMMUNICATION IS THE SOLUTION TO ALL PROBLEMS!"

— David R. Faulkner

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: JULY 6, 2015

LET'S SHARE THIS PAST AND FUTURE PICTURES

TWO DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTS...

BILL CLINTON
NAFTA

AND

BARACK H. OBAMA
44th

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP)

PLUS
EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS (GAY RIGHTS)...

Have we glimpsed how SO RICHLY WALL STREET
REWARDED (ENRICHED!!!) the CLINTONS (PERSONAL
AND FOUNDATION)...

Please REIMAGINE how HOLLYWOOD AND WALL-
STREET will throw open the VAULT to former (2017)
President Obama...

NORTH AMERICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT [NAFTA]

CHECK OUT:

Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty will help
Neither workers nor consumers

— BY KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL
is editor of and Publisher of THE NATION. This
appeared at WashingtonPost.com

editorial

Secrets and Lies

— JOEL BLEIFUSS IN THESE TIMES JULY 2015,

P.S. ca.inthesetimes.com

How to Fight TPP at www.stop-tpr.org

"Obama: Debate Senator Warren on Global Economic Pact"... LETTER TO PRESIDENT FROM Hon Ralph Nader
SEE www.nader.org (a) Ralph - Nader

"THE TRADE ENFORCEMENT FAILURE" BY: LEO W. GERARD"... FOLLOW HIM AT TWITTER.COM/USWBLOGGER.

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: JULY 6, 2015

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MESSAGE TO THE UNIVERSE
[IS THERE ANY BODY OUT THERE]??
IS THERE ANY BODY RECEIVING THIS MESSAGE!!

UNIVERSAL COMMUNE WE MUST SHARE
THIS MESSAGE...

UPDATE: # BLACK LIFE MATTER

Commune, Please let us share these
BELOW MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL OUTRAGEOUS
EXPOSE of a long standing organized crim-
inal operation 2013 in Milwaukee City Police
Department (MCPD) of Randomly stopping
and frisking, however; as a pretext to
Rape Black men and Ladies out in the
streets!!

EX-OFFICER - officer gets 26-month term for
Strip Searches - By BRUCE VIEMETTI bviemett@
journal-sentinel.com JUNE 22, 2015
SEE BELOW, p.p. 3-4

Suits filed over Strip Searches
BY GINA BARTON July 11, 2013
gbarton@journal-sentinel.com
SEE BELOW, 5-6

Plaintiffs in suit say they
felt helpless, humiliated

BY GINA BARTON July 12, 2013
gbarton@journal-sentinel.com
SEE BELOW, p. 7

IMAGINE JUSTICE FOR ALL



Asylum decision could take months

U.S. fugitive Edward Snowden's request for political asylum in Ecuador could take up to two months to approve, the country's foreign minister says.

Putin on Snowden: Russian President Vladimir Putin says former U.S. national security contractor Edward Snowden is staying in a transit area at a Moscow airport but will not be extradited.

Ex-officer gets 26-month term for strip searches

Judge calls conduct shocking; his lawyer says aggressive tactics encouraged

By **BRUCE VIELMETTI**
bvielmetti@journalsentinel.com

A former Milwaukee police officer who performed illegal strip and body cavity searches on dozens of drug suspects was sentenced Friday to 26 months in prison and an additional 34 months of extended supervision.

Michael Vagnini, 34, pleaded no contest in April to four felonies and four misdemeanors stemming from his practice but avoided conviction for sexual assault charges, which were dismissed.

Prosecutors and the judge said Vagnini's actions shocked the conscience of the community, but his own lawyer said the whole system was to blame for encouraging and rewarding Vagnini's aggressive tactics, which he said were no secret within the department and the court system.

"He's left holding the bag for everybody," Michael Steinle told the court, noting that all his client ever wanted to do was stop crime.

Vagnini's family, friends and former colleagues packed one half of the gallery, and had submitted numerous letters of support, citing his otherwise exemplary professional and personal life. His wife broke down sobbing when Circuit Judge Jeffrey Wagner finally announced the sentence at the end of the two-hour hearing, and Vagnini was led away in handcuffs. She and Vagnini's other supporters declined to speak with reporters afterward.

Tory Lowe, a community activist, called the prison term a positive step to rebuilding trust among the population and the police.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
June 22, 2013



Former Milwaukee police officer Michael Vagnini looks at the courtroom bailiffs as they come to handcuff him after his sentencing Friday before Circuit Judge Jeffrey Wagner.

"Rogue policing in Milwaukee has to come to an end," he said after the hearing.

While prosecutors agreed to dismiss sexual assault counts as part of the plea deal, Assistant District Attorney Miriam Falk made clear Friday that she believes that offense occurred, repeatedly. She said while Vagnini may not have sought or obtained any sexual arousal or gratification from reaching

into suspects' rectal areas, he knew the victims could not ignore that element.

"I know Michael Vagnini

understood the sexual undertones of what was going on," Falk said. "It was intended to degrade and humiliate them, and that's what makes it a sexual assault."

She also did not believe Vagnini targeted suspects by race, but that their "degradation was exacerbated by the fact that they were black and he was white."

Steinle said the case was never a sexual assault case, and that Vagnini denies he ever penetrated any victim's

anus with his finger. The felony convictions, for misconduct in public office, cost Vagnini his job. The underlying conduct, conducting illegal strip searches, accounted for the misdemeanor charges. Wagner imposed the same sentence — 13 months in prison plus 17 months of extended supervision — on each felony count, but made two of them consecutive, and the rest concurrent. He also imposed concurrent sentences of 90 days for each misdemeanor count.

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Fighting Back Against Government

Spying



Robert Miranda

42

43

broad umbrella known as COINTEPRO, to monitor and interrogate groups that threatened social order.

Though COINTELPRO targeted whites and nonwhites, journalists and researchers have shown that some of the program's most controversial—and life-threatening—targeting focused on African Americans, or what the FBI categorized as "Black Nationalist Groups" and Latino organizations.

The agency also targeted mainstream civil rights groups, like the NAACP, Congress for Racial Equality, and Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as well as mainstream civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., and Cesar E. Chavez.

Though COINTELPRO was eventually dismantled and held up as an example of overbroad, abusive exercise of government surveillance, subsequent administrations have expanded government surveillance programs, including most recently with the aid and abetment of digital technologies.

Former Attorney General Ashcroft, for example, amended guidelines to permit the FBI to purchase data profiles from commercial data mining companies (e.g., Axiom) without cause.

The availability of data has facilitated government efforts to map and monitor American populations of color. To P. 3 AT X

PRISM collects electronic communications and also stores information indefinitely, a process targeting communities of color.

Until there is greater transparency in the nature

kept since the beginning of the uprising.

April. Rami Abdul Rahman, the founder of the Syrian Observatory, said in a telephone interview that the statistics were compiled by adding together the daily tallies his organization has

Death toll in Syrian civil war exceeds 100,000

In its breakdown, the group said the dead included 36,661 civilians, including 8,000 women and children, 13,539 rebel fighters and 2,015 defectors from government forces. It was not immediately clear from the statement how the civilians died.

least 93,000 by the end of April. Rami Abdul Rahman, the founder of the Syrian Observatory, said in a telephone interview that the statistics were compiled by adding together the daily tallies his organization has

London — An opposition monitoring group that has tracked Syria's widening civil war said Wednesday that more than 100,000 people have died so far in the 27-month conflict, with pro-

Wagner, who presided over a John Doe investigation of the illegal searches, didn't buy Steinle's assertions that Vagnini thought he was within the law.

"You did in fact know better," Wagner told him.

Prosecutors had recommended only unspecified prison time; Steinle suggested 12 to 18 months was appropriate.

Assigned to District 5, Vagnini regularly pulled over drivers on a pretense of not wearing a seatbelt or of having darkly tinted windows and searched them without a legal reason, according to prosecutors.

Vagnini conducted searches of men's anal and scrotal areas, often inserting his fingers into their rectums, according to the criminal complaint. Vagnini acknowledged performing one of the searches, and at least one suspect said Vagnini planted drugs on him.

State law and police procedures prohibit officers from conducting body cavity searches. Only medical personnel are allowed to perform them, and police must first obtain a search warrant.

The searches occurred on the street and in district stations over a period of two years.

The Milwaukee Police Department has said it initiated three separate investigations into these allegations, with the first beginning in 2010.

The first investigation could not be substantiated with the available evidence, according to the department. A year later, a second investigation could not be completed because of the death of the complainant. In 2012, a third investigation resulted in Internal Affairs referring the case to the district attorney's office, which began the John Doe.

Three other police officers charged with Vagnini — Jeffrey Dollhopf, Brian Kozelek and Jacob Knight — had their cases separated because they face fewer counts and were not charged with sexual assault. They are charged with misconduct in office and being parties to the crimes of illegal searches, based on their on-duty presence when prosecutors say Vagnini committed them.

They also are suspended with pay, pending trials later this year.

The fallout from the case did lead to revised department policies regarding searches and records of searches. The ACLU of Wisconsin applauded the changes but urged further vigilance, as well as consequences for supervisors who fail to notice, or ignore misconduct, said Chris Ahmuty, executive director.

4 shot at N.C. law firm, Walmart

Greenville, N.C. — A man armed with a shotgun shot one person outside a North Carolina law firm Friday, darted across a busy street and wounded three others outside a Walmart before officers subdued him, police said.

Officers confronted the man outside the store and caught up with him behind a nearby Toys "R" Us. He fired at them and they shot multiple rounds back, hitting the gunman, said Greenville Police Chief Hassan Aden. The suspect was expected to survive as well as the four others whom he is accused of shooting, Aden said. Police were trying to determine the motive.

against self-incrimination. He was then excused from the hearing. Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) released the report on Tuesday that detailed personal ties between Roseman and the president of a Virginia-based government contracting business Strong Castle Inc.

worth millions of dollars. At a U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing, Gregory Roseman, an IRS official involved in awarding IRS contracts, repeated four times that he would not answer questions, invoking his Fifth Amendment right

Washington — An Internal Revenue Service official on Wednesday invoked his right not to answer questions at a congressional hearing, a day after a Republican report accused the official of inappropriately awarding federal contracts

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failed attempts over the years, may now have his eyes on Nuevo Laredo, Trevino's hometown and one of the most lucrative crossing points for the shipment of tons of cocaine and marijuana into the U.S.

Suits filed over strip searches

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel July 11, 2013

Men name chief, city, 7 others and department as defendants

By GINA BARTON

gbarton@journalsentinel.com

If two civil suits filed late Wednesday are successful, illegal rectal searches and strip searches by Milwaukee police could cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages and legal bills.

The two civil suits, filed by five men in federal court, are likely the first of many to be filed by the 30 victims who came forward during a widespread criminal investigation that led to charges against four officers. The suits, which name the city, the Police Department, Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn and seven individual department members as defendants, do not demand a specific damage amount.

A strip search case filed by a Beloit teenager that didn't allege anal penetration or result in criminal charges against officers settled last year for \$265,000.

Seven other people claiming to be victims of illegal searches primarily in the Milwaukee Police Department's District 5 earlier filed notices of claim, which indicates they plan to file civil suits, although they have not yet done so.

The criminal charges against Milwaukee police officers Michael Vagnini, Jacob Knight, Jeffrey Dollhopf and Brian Kozelek are mentioned in the civil suits filed Wednesday and may increase the credibility of the plaintiffs, several of whom were found with drugs.

Vagnini last month was sentenced to 26 months in prison after pleading no contest to four felonies and four misdemeanors in connection with the searches. In 2011, his last full year on the force before the investigation began, Vagnini was paid more than \$93,000 by the Police Department — nearly \$30,000 of that in overtime.

Charges against the other three officers are pending.

Vagnini and Knight are named as defendants in the civil suits, as are Officer Michael Gasser and former Sgt. Jason Mucha, among others. Both Gasser and Mucha were cleared of wrongdoing by internal affairs. Mucha, who supervised some of the officers involved in the searches, has since left the force and is receiv-

ing duty disability payments.

Flynn has acknowledged the department had been receiving complaints for "a couple of years" before opening an investigation.

When the criminal charges were handed down in October, Flynn described the officers' actions as "willful misconduct."

"Crime cannot be fought with criminality," he said then. "A hard-earned reputation has been tarnished."

In addition to illegal search and seizure, the suits allege numerous other civil rights violations, including false arrest, excessive force and conspiracy. The suits detail numerous allegations of illegal searches, including:

■ A search of Leo Hardy on March 13, 2012. Gasser and his partner, Keith Garland Jr., stopped Hardy in front of his home. When Gasser reached into Hardy's pants, Hardy "feared for his safety and ran." The officers caught him and removed his pants and underwear on the street. Hardy did not have drugs. He was charged with resisting arrest and served 21 days in jail. When Hardy complained, internal affairs investigators tried to intimidate him. The internal investigation later cleared the officers.

■ A search of Jerold Ezell in February 2010. Ezell was sitting in his car, which was parked in front of his grandmother's house. Mucha, Vagnini and Knight "approached his car with their weapons drawn." Vagnini first ran his hands over Ezell's scrotum and between his buttocks, then shone his flashlight down Ezell's pants and "began to use his fingers to claw and attempt to penetrate Mr. Ezell's anus." Mucha and Knight watched and did not help Ezell. The complaint does not say whether drugs were found.

■ A search of a man identified only as L.L.R. on Feb. 27, 2010. Vagnini and Gasser stopped L.L.R.'s vehicle and asked him to turn over "the drugs." When he did not, Vagnini put him in a chokehold and "violently probed LLR in his anus." The complaint does not say whether drugs were found. Vagnini pleaded no con-

test to a crime involv-

ing this search and was convicted.

■ A search of Anthony Pettis in July 2011. Pettis and his friends were approached by two officers at a gas station in District 7. The officers



Knight



Dollhopf



Kozelek



Mucha

brought Pettis to the station, where Vagnini arrived from District 5 and "shoved his fingers inside Mr. Pettis' rectum," the suit says. Pettis initially was charged with possession with intent to deliver cocaine, a felony with a maximum possible penalty of 15 years in prison. After his attorney filed a motion to suppress the evidence based on an illegal search, the district attorney's office dropped the charge, saying the officers involved were unavailable to testify, his attorney said.

■ A search of both Ezell and Pettis in November 2011. The two men helped a friend carry her groceries into her house and she made them dinner. The same two officers who stopped Pettis in July knocked on the door, and the woman let them in. Vagnini, Knight and numerous other officers arrived. Vagnini "shoved his bare two fingers into both Mr. Ezell's and Mr. Pettis' rectums one after another without pausing to wash his hands or put on gloves." No drugs were found.

■ A search of a man identified only as SC in spring 2012. He was confronted by a "train" of squad cars, one marked and two unmarked, in the alley behind his home. Vagnini and two other officers approached the car with their guns drawn. "Officer Vagnini then searched S.C., grabbing his testicles with his bare hands." No drugs were found.

Both state law and Milwaukee Police Department policy prohibit police officers from doing a cavity search, which involves penetration, under any circumstances. Such searches can be performed only by a doctor, physician's assistant or registered nurse.

Under state law, a strip search is defined as "a search in which a detained person's genitals, pubic area, buttock or anus, or a female person's breast, is uncovered and either is exposed to view or is touched by a person conducting the search."

Before doing a strip search, an officer must get written permis-



Vagnini



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sion from either the police chief or a supervisor — unless the officer expects to find a weapon. After the search, the officer is required to fill out a report that lists the names of the officers involved and the time and place of the search. The officer is required to give a copy of that report and of the written authorization to the detainee.

Whether drugs were found during an illegal search is irrelevant in a civil case.

The suits allege that Flynn "purposely ignored defendant officers' pattern of misconduct."

"Despite their knowledge of these illegal searches, the policy-makers ... took no action to train, supervise or discipline any officers who committed these knowingly illegal searches," the plaintiffs allege. "Instead, certain of the defendant officers were rewarded with commendations for their aggressive police tactics and jobs well-done by their supervisors, including commendations from Chief Edward Flynn."

At Vagnini's sentencing hearing, his attorney, Michael Steinle, made the same point.

"Unfortunately, he wasn't crossing his T's and dotting his I's. And I say then shame on other people, people that were supervising him," Steinle said of Vagnini. "He's a police officer. A smart one at that. But still he has people watching over his conduct. He has people reviewing his reports. He has lawyers reviewing his reports on both sides of it. And again, not one human being brought it up."

Steinle provided Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Jeffrey A. Wagner with 40 letters of commendation received by his client, some of them signed by Flynn. Numerous people who worked with Vagnini at the department, including Mucha, wrote Wagner letters praising Vagnini's police work and asking for leniency.

"I do not believe the allegations made against him and believe he only plead (sic) ... due to pressure from the DA's office, which was threatening him with so many charges he could have faced life in prison," Mucha wrote. "I believe a good hard working officer is being punished for crimes he did not do just because they gave him no choice."

... He did what his supervisors asked him to do and targeted certain violent drug dealers in the district."

Fla. police officers entangled in sex scandal

Report claims department's problems might be caused by officers being more interested in trysts than their work

Lakeland, Fla. — Authorities are investigating a widespread sex scandal involving nearly a dozen police officers in one Florida city after a civilian crime analyst detailed trysts with the men in police and fire stations, patrol cars, motels and even in a parking lot after a memorial service for a slain officer.

Sue Eberle, 37, has told officials that she had consensual and sometimes coerced sex with the officers and a firefighter, and that she once was propositioned by a city worker in Lakeland. Eberle's accounts of the liaisons were largely corroborated by her sexual partners and others within the police department, and published in a graphic, 59-page report written in an incredulous tone by the county's top prosecutor. It said the department's problems investigating crimes might be caused by some high-ranking officers being more interested in having sex with Eberle than doing their jobs.

"The investigation revealed an extraordinary amount of sexual conduct that was committed both on-duty and off-duty," wrote Jerry Hill, Polk County's state attorney, in the report dated June 25. "We find the conduct of a number of sworn officers, including some officers of rank, to be at best a waste of taxpayer dollars. At worst their actions indicate a moral bankruptcy that exists amongst some individuals within the ranks at the Lakeland Police Department."

Eberle, who has retained an attorney, recounted for Hill how she had sex in police cars, cemeteries and motels with different officers — and in the parking lot outside a reception after the 2011 funeral of an officer who had been shot on duty. She also said officers and some supervisors pressured her for sex, groped her while working and texted her photos of their genitalia.

"She was a target. She was weak. And they knew that they could take advantage of that, so they preyed upon her," Eberle's attorney, David Linesch, said during a recent news conference.

Linesch's spokeswoman said Eberle is not granting interviews at this time. The Associated Press typically does not identify alleged victims of sexual assault. However,

Eberle has gone public with her story, appearing alongside her attorney and husband at the news conference about the allegations.

Eberle, a married mother of two, is on paid administrative leave. Three city employees have resigned, and others — such as the former assistant chief of the department — have retired. Five other officers have been placed on either administrative leave or modified duty.

Weishan voting no. The deal would include Clarke dropping appeals in cases he lost on retaining his management control over the House of Correction and his layoffs of three captains.

It also would settle Whitcomb's fees in those and three other cases. They added up to about \$150,000, but

Clarke's fees may be paid

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel July 12, 2013

County panel agrees to cover legal costs in exchange for sheriff dropping appeals

By STEVE SCHULTZE
sschultze@journal sentinel.com

A deal to pay Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr.'s private lawyer to settle several lawsuits got a reluctant endorsement Thursday from a County Board committee. Supervisors voiced sentiments ranging from disappointment to outrage over the plan to pay Michael A. Whitcomb some \$95,000 in exchange for Clarke dropping appeals of cases where he was at odds with the county.

"It's certainly reasonable, but it's not palatable," said Supervisor Gerry Broderick. Taxpayers deserve a full accounting of all costs associated with Clarke's losing cases, Broderick said.

Supervisor John Weishan Jr. called Clarke's settlement offer "extortion" and said it was improper for a public official to agree to take an official action in exchange for a payment. In this case, however, the payment would be to Whitcomb for legal services, not to Clarke.

The board's judiciary committee voted 5-1 to accept the deal, with only

Whitcomb would accept the discounted \$95,000 payment as part of the deal by accepting \$275 an hour rather than his regular \$350.

Whitcomb said there was no specific deadline for the settlement offer to expire, but the general idea was to request County Board approval this month.

Otherwise, work on Clarke's appeals in the House of Correction and captains cases would have to begin and then "the meter keeps running," Whitcomb said in an interview.

He declined to say why Clarke decided to seek a settlement on the legal cases.

Clarke said in a statement that his use of Whitcomb was triggered by a lawsuit filed in early 2012 by then-Corporation Counsel Kimberly Walker to force the sheriff to lay off deputies who were cut in his budget.

That meant her office had a conflict of interest on other cases involving the sheriff's office, Clarke said.

"That is not only unethical, it is illegal and irreparably destroyed the attorney-client relationship,"

Do Not Submit Photocopies

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Clarke said.

He said work done by Whitcomb eased the load of the corporation counsel's office.

A circuit court judge ruled against Clarke in the House of Correction case, in which Clarke claimed he had constitutional authority over the Franklin lock-up. Whitcomb's bill for that case was \$68,000, though Clarke already paid him \$49,000 of that sum.

The bill on the captain layoffs was nearly \$72,000. Whitcomb's charges for a sheriff's lawsuit seeking to dismiss a court monitor of jail conditions were \$49,000.

Clarke used Whitcomb on two other cases with legal bills of about \$8,300.

In all cases, Clarke bypassed the standard procedure of first seeking legal representation from the county's in-house lawyers.

As part of the deal, Clarke would agree to go back to consulting with the corporation counsel's office before hiring an outside lawyer.

Whitcomb said Clarke was not agreeing to comply with future advice from the corporation counsel on whether he needs an outside lawyer, Whitcomb said.

Supervisor Tony Staskunas said while he dislikes having to vote for the deal, it makes sense to settle the cases to end the appeals.

The full board takes up the issue July 25.

An aide to County Executive Chris Abele said he supported the deal.

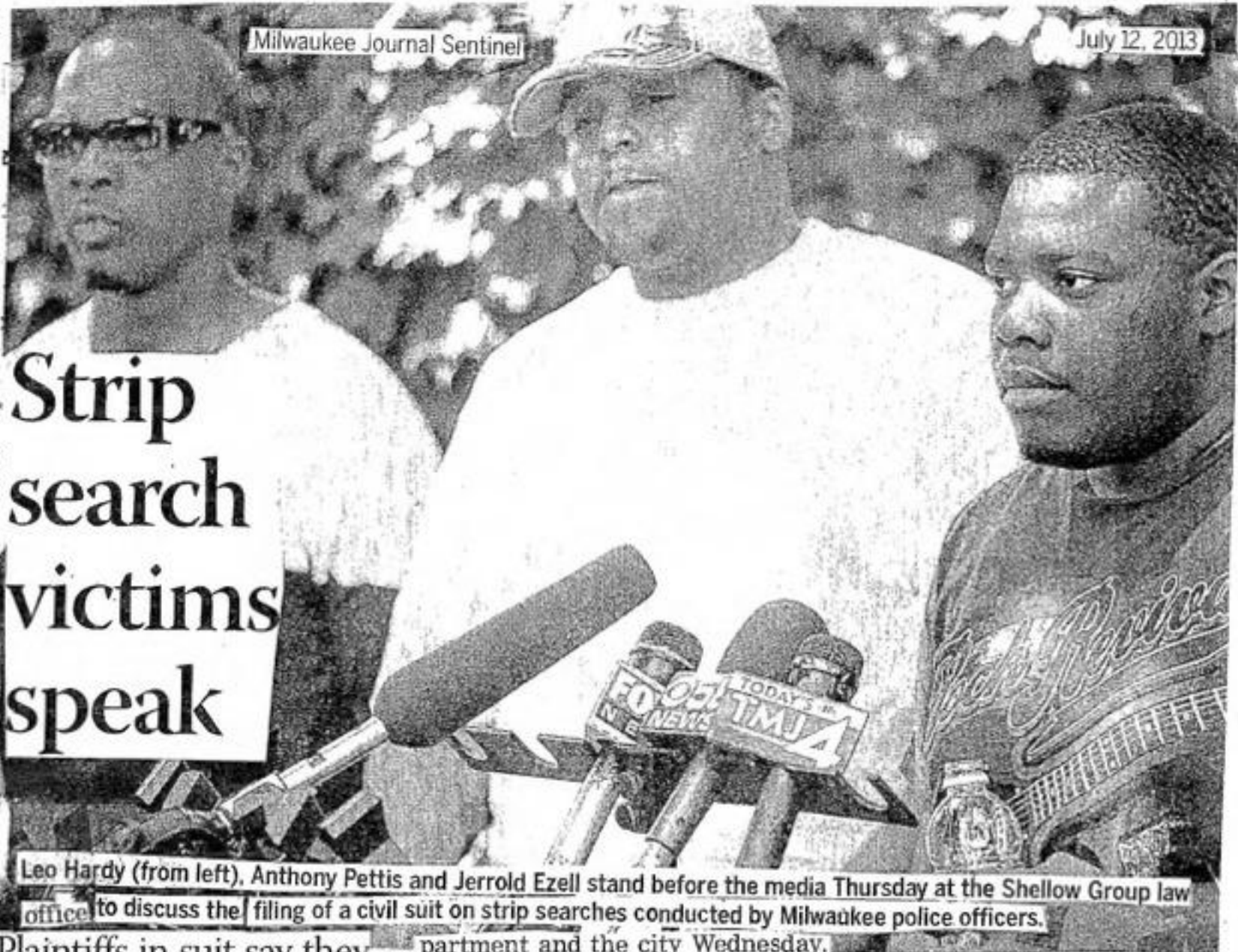
Father's open letter

Meanwhile, Snowden's father, frustrated by his inability to reach out directly to his son, wrote him an open letter, extolling him for "summoning the American people to confront the growing danger of tyranny."

The letter was written jointly by Lon Snowden and his lawyer, Bruce Fein.

Snowden's father said he would like for his son to be able to return to the U.S.

The letter tells Snowden that his actions "forced onto the national agenda the question of whether the American people prefer the right to be left alone from government snooping absent probable cause. . . . You are a modern day Paul Revere."



Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

July 12, 2013

Strip search victims speak

Leo Hardy (from left), Anthony Pettis and Jerrold Ezell stand before the media Thursday at the Shellow Group law office to discuss the filing of a civil suit on strip searches conducted by Milwaukee police officers.

Plaintiffs in suit say they felt helpless, humiliated

By GINA BARTON

gbarton@journalssentinel.com

Jerrold Ezell admits he sold drugs.

One of six children raised by a single mother, with a father in and out of prison and no high school degree, Ezell wanted to be on his own, and the streets were all he knew.

"For me, on a survival level, that's what helped me eat," he said of the money he made from drug dealing.

Anthony Pettis has done plenty of jail time. But the only drug-related incident on his record was a ticket for marijuana possession.

When former Milwaukee Police Officer Michael Vagnini got them in his sights, the men contend, he wouldn't leave them alone. For months, Pettis said, practically every time he went outside, Vagnini performed an illegal strip search or rectal search, purportedly for drugs. Pettis estimates it happened 30 times.

He felt helpless, he said, and humiliated.

"It's rough, man, to not be able to live like a normal citizen, always looking over your back," Pettis said. "It ain't right. I just want it to end."

Ezell, 25, and Pettis, 23, are among five men who filed federal civil rights suits against the Police Department and the city Wednesday.

They spoke publicly for the first time Thursday, in hopes that other victims and witnesses of illegal searches will speak out.

"We are going to make the abuse of citizens of Milwaukee end," said one of their attorneys, Robin Shellow. "People need to have the courage to come forward and talk about it."

Some 30 victims, including Ezell and Pettis, testified during a wide-ranging criminal investigation into the illegal searches that led to charges against four officers: Vagnini, Jacob Knight, Jeffrey Dollhopf and Brian Kozelek.

Vagnini last month was sentenced to 26 months in prison after pleading no contest to four felonies and four misdemeanors. The other three officers have pleaded not guilty.

At his sentencing hearing, Vagnini was characterized as one of the most hard-working officers on the force. In 2011, his last full year with the department before the investigation began, Vagnini earned nearly \$30,000 in overtime.

The first time Vagnini illegally searched Ezell, in 2010, he found cocaine. Vagnini offered to let him go if he agreed to become an informant or to leave a gun in a garbage can where police could retrieve it, Ezell said. He refused and went to prison.

In July 2011, a charge of possession with intent to de-

liver cocaine against Pettis was dismissed after his attorney filed a motion to suppress the evidence based on an illegal search by Vagnini.

After that, in November 2011, Ezell and Pettis were searched again. They were at a friend's house when the same two officers who stopped Pettis a few months earlier knocked on the door.

Vagnini, Knight and numerous other officers arrived. Vagnini "shoved his bare two fingers into both Mr. Ezell's and Mr. Pettis' rectums one after another without pausing to wash his hands or put on gloves," the civil suit says. This time, no drugs were found.

Fear of reprisal

Both men say they were afraid to issue formal complaints with the Police Department.

"It's the police. Who you gonna' call? The police?" Pettis asked.

Pettis finally came forward after news of the investigation broke and Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn urged victims to make themselves known. Pettis spoke with investigators from Internal Affairs for several hours, he said.

BY: LEON IRBY 70 & 7

LEON IRBY HATEN JULY 6, 2015

FREE AMERICA'S HERO SGT. BOWE BERGDahl
FROM POLITICAL SET-UP CHARGES

UPDATE

SHOUT-UP-AND-OUT

TO:

PRESIDENT BARACK H. OBAMA

MR. President Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is NOT TRULY
RETURNED HOME until he sleeps in his own Bed as
a "FREE AMERICAN"....

"HOME OF THE BRAVE AND FREE"!

"Nor have we gotten beyond the domestic Political
Pandor surrounding the War. Bitter invective spilled
again after the Army brought charges on March
25 against Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl. He will face a
Court martial for desertion and Misbehavior
before the enemy after being held by in-
surgents for more than five years!"

— BY MARY SANCHEZ

MAY 1, 2015 "THE CHAOS WE CREATED IN THE MIDDLE
EAST" <http://www.populist.com> MARY SANCHEZ IS
AN OPINION-PAGE COLUMNIST FOR THE KANSAS CITY STAR
MSANCHEZ (A) KCSTAR.COM

FOR ADDITIONAL INFO. PLEASE CHECKOUT:

"The Right's Bergdahl Cabmity:
How Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh Discard America's
S Norms

ONCE UPON a time, PRISONERS OF WAR weren't
treated like terrorist, and people got their
day in court. That's OVER."

— BY HEATHER DIGBY PARTON,

also known as "Digby" is a contributing writer to
Salon.com

THE PROGRESSIVE POPULIST, MAY 1, 2015, P. 10 — <http://>

www.Populist.com / [PBS.ORG/NEWSHOUR](http://pbs.org/newshour) MARCH 25, 2015 6:00pm,
CDT, WEDNESDAY

SEE: OLD NEWS, BELOW, P. 3, P. 4

MR. President Please Do not Abandon
Our America's hero Bowe Bergdahl to those
who stayed Back Safe ON The Home Front !!

OBAMA DEFENDS BERGDahl RELEASE

did not return, the climbing company notified park officials, Bauer said.

Officials have yet to finish family notifications, so the names of the climbers are unlikely to be released until Sunday.

Mount Rainier, southeast of Seattle, stands at 14,410 feet and attracts thousands of climbers trying to reach its summit every year. It is popular with climbers of all abilities, from novices who take guided climbs to experienced alpinists who use the glacier-laden peak to train for attempted ascents on taller mountains in the Himalayas and other mountain ranges.

The search for the missing climbers focused on the northwest shoulder of the mountain at the Liberty Ridge area, near where they were last heard from, Bauer said. Saturday's search included a team of three climbing rangers on the ground and flyovers with a Hughes helicopter. An Army Chinook helicopter then joined the search from Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

The group was scheduled to reach the summit of Mount Rainier on Thursday, with a day to climb down.

Snow flurries and hail hit the mountain Wednesday, Bauer said, but the weather has been clear since then.

Bauer said ground crews on Saturday checked "every possible area" where someone could have sought refuge in the storm.

In a statement from the park, the guides were described as skilled.

In a blog post on the Alpine Ascents website Thursday, the post said the team had turned around at 13,000 feet during their attempt to reach the summit because of weather conditions. The blog post said all team members were well.

Detroit's savior promotes theme park honoring cars

Running Quicken Loans has made Dan Gilbert a lot richer. But these days, he's known in the Motor City as the man who is out to save Detroit. And earlier this week he called for the creation of an automotive-themed tourist destination in Detroit.

He has bought up building after building in the town's historic and architecturally stunning, but abandoned, downtown. But he knows Detroit needs to find a way to appeal to outsiders, to capture its spirit, its history. And the best way to do it is embrace its heritage as home to the car.

"We have to leverage the sexiness of the car, which we've had a hard time doing in the past," Gilbert said.

Gilbert said he has considered hiring an executive from Universal Studios or Disney

to help formulate a proposal, but he is not pitching a theme park.

Gilbert also argued that Detroit's annual North American International Auto Show should lure more technology companies away from the annual Consumer Electronics Show that is also held in early January in Las Vegas.

The two events in some years have overlapped. Many automakers make major announcements at CES instead of Detroit.

Speaking at a forum recently, Gilbert said he's talked with other Detroit business leaders about a "technology hall" during the Detroit auto show at Cobo Center.

He also suggested that the annual Woodward Dream Cruise in Oakland County, an event in which hundreds of historic vehicles parade up one of the city's most prominent boulevards, could be dramatically expanded, though he didn't offer specific ideas.

More than a "million people are willing to come to southeast Michigan on a hot muggy August weekend, in essence, to see nothing," Gilbert said. "What I mean by that is they're bringing their own thing. Imagine if there was a something. We might get 2.8 million."

But there's no glossing over Detroit's problems. His appearance Wednesday came a day after he took part in disclosing the Detroit blight study, which called for the removal of 40,000 abandoned and blighted buildings.

Obama defends Bergdahl release

WARSAW, Poland -- President Obama defended the trade that released Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl last weekend, saying Tuesday that the United States does not leave troops behind on the battlefield.

"Regardless of circumstances ... we still get an American prisoner back," Obama said during a news conference in Warsaw, Poland. "Period, full stop -- we don't condition that."

A reporter asked Obama about Bergdahl on the first day of a Europe trip designed to reassure allies of U.S. support in the face of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Obama said he will ask Congress for \$1 billion to bolster security for Poland and other NATO allies in Europe.

The president said his team pursued the chance for an agreement brokered by Qatar with Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan who had held Bergdahl in captivity for some five years.

To free Bergdahl, the United States released five Taliban detainees from the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Obama said he received assurances from Qatar's government that it would restrict the future

movements by these detainees, who have been involved in terrorist operations.

"We saw an opportunity," Obama said. "We were concerned about Sgt. Bergdahl's health."

Released on Saturday, Bergdahl had been the sole American prisoner of war in Afghanistan.

The Bergdahl deal followed Obama to Europe as Republicans continued to criticize the prisoner swap, saying it could encourage the Taliban to kidnap more people and seek more releases. They also said the released Taliban detainees could return to kill.

"These particular individuals are hardened terrorists who have the blood of Americans and countless Afghans on their hands," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

GOP lawmakers also said the Obama administration may have violated the law by providing insufficient notice to Congress on the release of prisoners from Gitmo.

Asked about those releases during the news conference in Warsaw, Obama noted that the United States is ending combat operations in Afghanistan, and accounting for prisoners of war is a normal part of the process.

Said Obama: "This is what happens at the end of wars."

In announcing the new \$1 billion defense plan, Obama said security in Europe is the "cornerstone of our own security and it is sacrosanct." He added that "it is a commitment that is particularly important at this point in time."

Leaders in Poland and other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have expressed concern about Russia's intentions after it annexed the Crimea region of Ukraine.

Obama, who along with allies has placed economic sanctions on Vladimir Putin's government, said that "further provocations by Russia will be met by further costs for Russia."

The new aid, targeted mostly for NATO allies, would be used for land, sea and air military exercises and training missions throughout Europe, with an emphasis on the east. More U.S. personnel would be rotated throughout Europe under the plan.

"A persistent U.S. air, land and sea presence in the region, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, is a necessary and appropriate show of support to allies," said a White House statement on the \$1 billion proposal.

These allies contributed to counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and "are now deeply concerned by Russia's

BY: LEON IRBY

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DATED: JULY 6, 2015

occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and other provocative actions in Ukraine," the statement said.

There would also be help for non-NATO nations on Russia's border, including Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

The White House said the U.S. will "continue to take actions that increase the capability, readiness and responsiveness of NATO forces to address any threat."

Obama discussed the new security aid in meetings Tuesday with Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski and Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

The U.S. and Polish presidents will also meet with a group of leaders from Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia.

In greeting Obama at the airport, Komorowski said the United States and Poland are a "brotherhood in arms."

The president is visiting Warsaw to help commemorate the 25th anniversary of free elections in Poland.

On Wednesday, Obama meets with the incoming president of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko.

Suspect accused of having explosives arrested near Golden Gate Bridge

The suspect at the center of a days-long manhunt was arrested near the Golden Gate Bridge, accused of having explosive materials in his home, an FBI source said Monday night.

Ryan Kelly Chamberlain II was arrested in Crissy Field, a scenic waterfront area where the iconic bridge spans the Pacific entrance to San Francisco Bay, a U.S. law enforcement official said.

Authorities had been looking for Chamberlain, 42, after searching his neighborhood Saturday.

"We don't know the intent or motive yet," FBI agent Peter Lee said over the weekend, stressing there was no threat to public safety.

But social media postings might provide some clues.

According to CNN affiliate KPIX, Chamberlain posted an apparent suicide note to friends on Facebook titled "Goodbye." The letter describes a history of depression, despair over a broken relationship and career problems.

"In the span of a few months, everything that mattered me to me betrayed me," the writer said.

But the FBI is not calling the letter a "suicide note," a spokesman told CNN.

Peter Lee, the FBI's spokesman in San Francisco, said investigators are trying to verify the origin of the post.

Lee added that there was no ricin found in Ryan's home, contrary to some reports.

His block was closed for some 15 hours over the weekend as investigators searched and cleared the area, CNN affiliate KTVU reported.

Howard Epstein, a former chair of the San Francisco Republican Party, told KTVU that Chamberlain worked with the local GOP before switching to work on the Democratic side.

"The only one I know that he worked with after he left the party was Gavin Newsom," Epstein told KTVU. "He was an organizer when Gavin ran for mayor."

In the letter, the writer says he's had some positive moments in the past few months.

"But so much was broken from this past year-and-a-half, and from moments way back before that, I guess it was insurmountable, and the time's up," the writer says. "Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you."

Holder to renew focus on growing domestic terror threat

WASHINGTON— Attorney General Eric Holder, noting an "escalating danger" posed by self-radicalized domestic terrorist, announced on Monday the re-formation of special Justice Department unit aimed disrupting homegrown threats.

The attorney general said the unit, first established nearly two decades ago in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, would form a collaboration across the Justice Department, to include the FBI, federal prosecutors and other agencies, to thwart potential domestic threats.

"As the nature of the threat we face evolves to include the possibility of individual radicalization via the internet – it is critical that we return our focus to potential extremists here at home," Holder said in a video message posted Monday morning on the Justice website.

"We face an escalating danger from self-radicalized individuals within our own borders," he said.

Domestic terrorists were responsible for more than two dozen terror incidents since the Sept. 11 attacks, including the deadly shooting at Fort Hood, Texas and last year's Boston Marathon bombings, which killed three and wounded more than 260 others, Holder said.

"Tragic incidents like the Boston Marathon bombing and active shooter situations like Fort Hood provide clear examples that we

must disrupt 'lone wolf'-style actors aimed to harm our nation," Holder said.

Holder said the unit was necessary to respond to the changing terrorist threat, notably the "reduced" risk posed by al-Qaeda's core leadership. While significant threat remains from al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen and Somalia, Holder said that the U.S. "must concern ourselves with a different type of threat."

Holder said the unit, first organized under former Attorney General Janet Reno, was set to meet on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, but the session never took place as the nature of the threat turned toward Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Seattle raises minimum wage to \$15 an hour

Martina Phelps says the Seattle City Council's historic vote Monday to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour could change her life.

Phelps, 22, earns \$9.47 per hour working for a McDonald's restaurant near downtown. She wants to move out of her mother's South Seattle home, and she wants to go back to school. She says those things could happen now that the city will have the nation's highest minimum wage.

"It's hard right now," she told USA TODAY hours before the midafternoon vote. "I have been trying to save up for school, but I just can't do it. This would mean a lot."

The council unanimously approved the measure before a packed house.

The plan, which includes a lower training wage aimed at teenagers, will phase in the higher, local minimum over three to seven years, depending on the size of the business and benefits they provide employees. Next April 1, when the plan takes effect, every worker will get at least a \$1-an-hour raise.

City officials estimate that about a quarter of workers earn less than \$15 an hour. Full-time work at that rate translates to about \$31,000 a year.

A trade group representing franchise owners said it would sue to overturn the plan, saying it puts Seattle owners at a disadvantage to other small businesses.

Washington already has the highest state minimum wage at \$9.32 an hour, well above the federal minimum of \$7.25.

Seattle's Chamber of Commerce initially balked at the wage plan. Craig Dawson, CEO of Retail Lockbox in Seattle, was among those suggesting early on that small and minority businesses would be put at risk by the increase in personnel costs.

Compromises were put forward, and a rancorous Council committee meeting last week resulted in some adjustments to the

BERGDahl's DISCIPLINARY FATE IN HANDS OF ARMY GENERAL

movie unless you have a distribution channel," he said.

North Korea has denied hacking the studio, and on Saturday proposed a joint investigation with the U.S. to determine the true culprit. The White House rejected the idea and said it was confident North Korea was responsible.

But the next decision — how to respond — is hanging over the president as he vacations with his family in Hawaii.

Obama's options are limited. The U.S. already has trade penalties in place and there is no appetite for military action.

"I think we've got to recognize that this is not a Sony security problem. This is a national security problem," Boies said.

Boies appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," Graham was on CBS' "Face the Nation" and McCain spoke on CNN.

Bergdahl's disciplinary fate in hands of Army general

The fate of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl now rests with a four-star Army general at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, who will decide whether the soldier, who disappeared from his tiny Army outpost in rugged eastern Afghanistan in 2009, should be court-martialed and what, if any, charges will be filed against him.

A Pentagon statement on Monday said the military's investigation of the sergeant's disappearance had been forwarded to Gen. Mark Milley, the commander of Army Forces Command, who will "determine appropriate action - which ranges from no further action to convening a court-martial."

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Bergdahl - then a private - disappeared on June 30, 2009, and was captured by the Taliban and held by members of the Haqqani insurgent network until last May, when he was released in exchange for five Taliban officials imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Since June he has been assigned to administrative duties at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The Army recently finished its investigation, by Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Dahl, and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were briefed last week on the findings and on how the Army plans to proceed. A military official briefed on the report said that Dahl made "findings of fact" but did not make any specific recommendations on whether or how the Army should discipline the sergeant. Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters Friday that the briefing for Hagel was "informational" only, and that the secretary would not have input into the investigation or make any decisions on the case.

Details about Dahl's findings have been closely held. Some members of Bergdahl's former unit, and some lawmakers, have been critical of the prisoner exchange and said he should be punished. They say he deserted or otherwise voluntarily walked off his base, and that men assigned to search for him were put into harm's way.

Eugene R. Fidell, a lawyer for Bergdahl, said in an interview that his client was "glad to see some forward movement on this matter" and was "grateful to the Army for having taken care of him and for having respected his privacy." Fidell said he assumed the Army would allow him and his military co-counsel to read Dahl's report.

"As the facts become known, as they presumably will at some point, perhaps those who were so quick to condemn Sergeant Bergdahl will have second thoughts, or at least, especially at this time of year, will see his conduct in a different light," said Fidell, who teaches military justice at Yale Law School.

He said Bergdahl answered every question Dahl put to him and had also spent considerable time with other officials describing his captivity.

"He has cooperated fully in debriefings by officials who are concerned with how to prepare Americans for the possibility they may fall into enemy hands," Fidell said. He added, "He has cooperated with the Department of Justice in its efforts to hold accountable those who illegally kept him captive, and most recently he has cooperated with the International Committee of the Red Cross, which asked to meet with him at Fort Sam Houston assess ways to improve the flow of information to and from people held as POWs."

"I'm confident that all of these positive considerations will be taken into account when Milley and his advisers review the matter," Fidell said.

According to a Department of Defense official, there are no travel restrictions on Bergdahl. An earlier Army investigation into his disappearance, conducted by another officer and completed two months after Bergdahl left his unit, concluded he most likely walked away of his own free will from his outpost at night, but it stopped short of concluding that he intended to permanently desert. The report also painted a critical portrait of lax security practices and poor discipline within his unit, and blamed the unit and chain of command for inadequately securing the area around the outpost, two U.S. officials briefed on the classified report said in June.

Greg T. Rinckey, a former Army lawyer who now practices in Albany, New York, predicted the recommended course of action would be an administrative separation from the Army, possibly combined with a nonjudicial punishment.

"I would be very shocked if there were some recommendation to court-martial here, but I've been shocked before," Rinckey said. He noted that it would be unusual to invite the sergeant's parents to the White House when his release was announced, only to "turn around and court-martial him" a few months later. He also said he believed charges requiring a court-martial would be hard to prove, and that Bergdahl's five years in captivity would weigh in the decision.

Preschoolers say goodbye to 300-year-old campus tree

The youngest and the very, very oldest on the University of Wisconsin campus came together to say goodbye Friday, as a campus landmark is set to be removed.

It's known as the President's Tree, an old burr oak named for its proximity to a building that once housed the university's presidents. At 300 years old, it's the oldest tree on campus. Classes from the nearby UW Preschool Lab have spent the last decade or more picnicking under its leaves and learning from it. The latest class, taught by Kris Krystofiak, has been visiting the burr oak for two years.

"They watch the tree grow and change as they have," said Krystofiak. "For them, the tree has become a kind of a partner, a friend, a very special part of their lives."

"I do like to think about what this tree has witnessed over the last 300 years," said Daniel Einstein, a historic and cultural manager with the Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture Department.

Throughout its life, burr oak has seen the history of campus unfold. It's watched settlers come and go, and it saw scenes from the Civil War. Recently, it has also seen a decline.

"We just don't feel it's safe any longer," Einstein said. "Quite a bit of the interior trunk has decayed away. The top of the tree has already been severely pruned back to remove the dead branches. It's just time."

As the tree nears the end of its life, campus architects have scheduled its removal from campus after the New Year. Krystofiak's class said its final goodbye before students left for winter break Friday, singing a song they wrote for their beloved burr oak.

"They do understand the circle of life, that things are born and things die," Krystofiak said.

The preschoolers plan to re-plant a tree in its place and also put a plaque up to commemorate burr oak and ensure no one walks by the space without knowing it once existed.

"It's been an opportunity to learn so many different things," Krystofiak said. "And it continues on, because they won't be done with this until they complete that circle of life."

Low gas prices boosting numbers of holiday travelers

Lower gas prices will drive nearly two million Wisconsinites to travel alongside nearly 99 million Americans this holiday season, according to AAA projections.

"Lower gas prices are filling stockings with a little more cash to spend on travel this year as travelers are expected to pay the lowest prices since 2009," said Victoria Hanson, regional president for AAA Wisconsin. "Lower prices are increasing disposable income and enabling families to set aside money for travel this year."

That sentiment is echoed by the travelers at the BP gas station in Deforest.

So as you're traveling it's getting less and less and less. So it's real great if you're going to visit people," said Minnesota resident Tim Miller. "A lot of cars. A lot of Christmas presents in the back. It's been real nice. The pricing."

BY: LEON IRBY

4 of 4 DATED: JULY 6, 2015

Oldest of zoo gorillas turns 58 at Ohio facility

The first gorilla born in a zoo is turning 58 with a celebration broadcast live to online viewers from her Ohio home.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium says the female western lowland gorilla, named Colo, is celebrating her birthday Monday with an Ohio-shaped cake made of peanut butter, applesauce, honey, shredded carrots with Greek yogurt frosting.

The zoo said its website would have video of Colo receiving the cake, opening presents of tomatoes and clementines and being serenaded by zoo staff and visitors.

Colo was born at the zoo in 1956. Officials there say she is the oldest gorilla in any zoo.

Colo is a mother of three. Her family tree includes more than two dozen descendants living at zoos across the country.

Immigrants granted reprieve by Obama to line up for driver's licenses in Arizona

Many young immigrants who are protected from deportation under new Obama administration policies are expected Monday to begin pursuing Arizona driver's licenses. The Arizona Department of Transportation said it is anticipating a rush of immigrant applicants in the weeks ahead at Motor Vehicle Division offices statewide.

A preliminary injunction issued Dec. 18 by U.S. District Judge David Campbell bars the state from enforcing Gov. Jan Brewer's policy of denying the licenses to about 20,000 immigrants.

The injunction carries out instructions issued in July by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The governor has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review her appeal of the 9th Circuit decision.

Despite her belief that issuing licenses is a state matter, Brewer's office confirmed she would comply. The move in Arizona to deny the licenses was a reaction to steps taken by the Obama administration in June 2012 to shield thousands of immigrants from deportation.

ADOT officials said they will start processing driver's license and identification card applications from qualified immigrants.

Recipients who fall under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program, known as DACA, will get a credential formatted like any Arizona driver's license or identification card.

The move by Obama applied to people younger than 30 who came to the U.S. before turning 16 and have been in the country for at least five continuous years. They also must be enrolled in or have graduated from a high school or GED program, or have served in the military. Applicants also are allowed to pursue a two-year renewable work permit.

Brewer issued her executive order in August 2012 directing state agencies to deny driver's licenses and other public benefits to immigrants who get work authorization under the deferred-action program. Her move marked the nation's most visible challenge to the Obama policy.

Nebraska is the only other state to have made similar denials, and a federal judge this year dismissed a lawsuit contesting that state's policy.

U.S. mulls putting N. Korea on terrorism sponsor list

Honolulu — President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an "act of cybervandalism," not one of war, against a movie company.

North Korea has reacted angrily to Obama's comments blaming it for the hacking of Sony, warning of strikes against the White House, Pentagon and "the whole U.S. mainland, that cesspool of terrorism."

Such rhetoric is routine from North Korea's propaganda machine during times of high tension with Washington. But the long statement from the powerful National Defense Commission late Sunday also underscored Pyongyang's sensitivity about a movie, which has a plot focused on the assassination of its leader Kim Jong Un.

Sony Pictures Entertainment, which said it canceled the theatrical release of "The Interview" after distributors refused to show it, pledged to find a way to get the film out.

"How it's going to be distributed, I don't think anybody knows quite yet," a Sony lawyer said. The comedy involves a plot to assassinate North Korea's leader.

Obama is promising to respond "proportionately" to an attack that law enforcement blames on North Korea. "We're not going to be intimidated by some cyberhackers," he said.

The president said the U.S. would examine the facts to determine whether North Korea should land back on the terrorism sponsors list.

"We're going to review those through a process that's already in place," Obama told CNN's "State of the Union" in an interview broadcast Sunday. "I'll wait to review what the findings are."

While raising the possibility of a terrorism designation, Obama also asserted, "I don't think it was an act of war. I think it was an act of cybervandalism that was very costly, very expensive. We take it very seriously."

Rhw National Defense Commission, led by Kim, warned that its 1.2 million-member army is ready to use all types of warfare against the U.S.

"Our toughest counteraction will be boldly taken against the White House, the Pentagon and the whole U.S. mainland, the cesspool of terrorism, by far surpassing the 'symmetric counteraction' declared by Obama," said the commission's Policy Department in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

Obama's description drew immediate scorn from two Republicans who are longtime critics of his foreign policy.

"It is a new form of warfare, and we have to counter with that form of warfare with a better form of warfare," said Arizona Sen. John McCain.

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina called it "an act of terrorism" and favored reimposing sanctions and adding North Korea to the terrorism list. The U.S. needs to "make it so hard on the North Koreans that they don't want to do this in the future."

North Korea spent two decades on the list until the Bush administration removed it in 2008 during nuclear negotiations. Only Iran, Sudan, Syria and Cuba remain on the list, which triggers sanctions that limit U.S. aid, defense exports and certain financial transactions. But adding North Korea back could be difficult. To meet the criteria, the State Department must determine that a country has repeatedly supported acts of international terrorism, a definition that traditionally has referred to violent, physical attacks rather than hacking.

North Korea threatened to strike back at the United States if Obama retaliated, the National Defense Commission said in a statement carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency. The statement offered no details of a possible response.

The U.S. is asking China for help as it considers how to respond to the hack. A senior Obama administration official says the U.S. and China have shared information about the attack and that Washington has asked for Beijing's cooperation.

The official was not authorized to comment by name and spoke on condition of anonymity. China wields considerable leverage over North Korea, but Obama has accused China of carrying out cyberthefts, too.

In the CNN interview, taped Friday in Washington before Obama left to vacation in Hawaii, Obama renewed his criticism of Sony's decision to shelve "The Interview," despite the company's insistence that its hand was forced after movie theaters refused to show it.

Obama suggested he might have been able to help address the problem if given the chance. "You know, had they talked to me directly about this decision, I might have called the movie theater chains and distributors and asked them what that story was," he said.

Sony's CEO has disputed that the company never reached out, saying he spoke to a senior White House adviser about the situation before Sony announced the decision. White House officials said Sony did discuss cybersecurity with the federal government, but that the White House was never consulted on the decision not to distribute the film.

"Sometimes this is a matter of setting a tone and being very clear that we're not going to be intimidated by some, you know, cyberhackers," Obama said. "And I expect all of us to remember that and operate on that basis going forward."

David Boies, a Sony lawyer, said "The Interview" is "going to be distributed, and what Sony has been trying to do is to get the picture out to the public," while protecting the rights of company employers and moviegoers. Boies said theaters "quite understandably" decided not to show the film as scheduled because of the threats. "You can't release a

Interview

THAT'S WHAT HE SAID!

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

"If there is any kindness I can show,
or any good thing I can do
to any fellow being,
let me do it now,
and not ^{later} deter or neglect,
as it shall not pass this
way again.

— WILLIAM PENN

BY: LEON ZRBY DATED: JULY 6, 2015

"WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY WEPT" !!

SHOUT-OUT

TO: ROSIE PEREZ

ABC.COM / THE VIEW, USA

Last Night DISHINATION.COM JULY 7, 2015, Re-
ported you and Nicole Wallace were being forced
OFF the VIEW.

To Wednesday, July 8th, 2015, You made your GRAND,
but too SAD, ADIOS "While MY GUITAR GENTLY
WEPTS" !!!!!!

You were my "Reality" IN WATCHING THAT
SHOW.

ONE ILLUSTRATION: RAVEN SYMORE: SHE WANTED
Madame Walker ON the "MONEY, MONEY" TO SHOW
SUCCESS, NOT Harriet Tubman.

MY SOUL: You gently, eloquently Remind-
ed this HOLLYWOOD BABY (ZNTHE WOODS) OF
Without "the struggle" their would be NO
Success !! Amen!

Harriet Tuban delivered the slaves from the
Plantation To HOLLYWOOD (NORTH STAR)!

Without You THERE IS NO VIEW INTO OUR
COMMUNAL UNIVERSE!

I Leave with this PRAYER FOR YOU:

YOUR LONG LIFE

SMILE

MINDS TOUCH

SUCCESS

ALL YOUR OWN

PRAYERS

BE ANSWERED!!

GOD LESS

I Pray Barbara Waters show be FIRED!

AMEN!

XOXO!

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: JULY 8, 2015
2 of 2

SHOUT-OUT

To: WHOOPI

ABC.COM / THE VIEW
JULY 7, 8, 2015 USA

WHOOPI, I CAN NOT hate you! This comes in
The NAME OF LOVE!

Thank you - for Reminding The Lynch Mob
that (We - USA) profess to be a government of
Constitutional Laws, NOT PASSION OF MEN ("RED
QUEEN).

DUE PROCESS before (NOT After The LYNCHING)!
Supermodel Dickerson Let the Dick out of the Bag
When telling E.T. com Interviewer Frozier
(A Black man) they want to cut ole Bill's Dick
off ("castrate") (EMMIT TILL) "BITTER FRUIT"

They DON'T understand. "Make me wanna
HOLLER" ... "Throw up BOTH MY HANDS" ... ! They
DON'T understand! HANGTUGH! XOXO!

BY: LEON IRBY / DATED JULY 8, 2015

WISCONSIN STATE REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR
SCOTT WALKER, KOCH BROTHERS AND
RIGHTWING GOVERNMENT USURPATION

UPDATE:

Since 2013, this blogger has been calling
the commune universal mind towards - upon
what Gov. (R.) Walker, Koch, and his GOP
Party was wrongdoing in this State as
a Laboratory - Proving ZERO GROUND - to spread
it into the "WHITEHOUSE" 2017 (January 2017),
and afterwards throughout the NEW GLOBAL
WORLD ORDER...

They've and are ongoing doing too much
for reciting in this site.

So, please mutually interested COMMUNE
GO TO: STEPHANIE MILLS RADIO TALK SHOW;
WPR RADIO TALK SHOWS; "THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE"
FM 92.1 PROGRESSIVE RADIO, MADISON, WI. 2-5
A.M. CDT.

It's actually so bad that Now ... during the Current Budget Process the Republicans are OPENLY in the Media ZNFIGHTING. They were Busted by the State Media, Progressive and Conservative Groups attempting in close SECRET SPECIAL so-called "999" BILL EXEMP ALL STATE OFFICIALS (THEIR OWN) RECORDS FROM THE STATE OPEN RECORD LAW. However, these Groups Forced a RETRACTION.

Senate Leader (R.WI.) Scott Fitzgerald exposed Gov. (R.WI.) Walker's LIE claiming of not participating and knowing thereof. SEE: NBC 15-Com NEWS, MADISON AND "DEVIL'S ADVOCATE" FM 92.

The REPUBLICANS ENACTED A NEW LAW TO REMOVE SUPREME COURT LIBERAL CHIEF JUSTICE SHIRLEY ABRAHAMSON FROM CHIEF IN 2015. HER CIVIL CASE IS IN (7TH) Circuit APPEAL COURT, IN CHICAGO.

FOR MORE GO TO: REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS SPAR PUBLICLY AS BUDGET DEADLINE NEARS; BELOW, P. 3-4

The film was based upon a fictional book by Peter Benchley that featured a huge monstrous man-eating shark that claimed victims off the coast of a New England beach.

There is a remote possibility that many film buffs may have seen the movie for the umpteenth time and their wild and wooly imaginations were working in overdrive. But then sometimes what was thought to be a trick of the mind turns out to be a solid fact of existence.

Madison skatepark promises to draw skateboarders from far and wide

One of the largest skateboard parks in the state is taking shape in Madison's Central Park, and skateboarders say they are ready to roll.

Construction of the \$1 million skate park at 201 S. Ingersoll St. began in April and has been progressing rapidly, a Madison Parks Division spokeswoman said.

Major earthwork operations have been completed and the supporting retaining walls have been constructed, spokeswoman Ann Shea said. The two primary bowls have been poured, and form work and concrete pouring continues on the remaining features.

"It's going to be a skate park that skateboarders will come to from all over the Midwest — and really the country — to skate," said Pat Hasburgh, 37, a founding member of the Madison Skatepark Fund, which has been working on the project for 14 years.

"It has a lot of different things for every skill type and skateboarding preference that you could ask for," he said.

The area the skate park occupies in Central Park is roughly 20,000 square feet, with a skating surface of nearly 19,000 square feet, Shea said.

To pay for part of the construction, the Madison Skatepark Fund received a Dane County Partners for Recreation & Conservation grant of \$200,000. While the skate park is a Parks Division project, the Madison Skatepark Fund handled the fundraising.

"The whole experience has been really funny because we really didn't have any fundraising experience going into this," Hasburgh said.

The Skatepark Fund raised most of the money in 2013, he said. Hasburgh said a \$50,000 contribution from the Willy

Street Co-op served as a catalyst for additional support from local foundations.

"Once the foundations saw that we had a local business, obviously well known, supporting us ... everything just happened really fast," he said.

The Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Foundation donated \$250,000 toward the development of the skate park, and it will be named in their honor.

Public bids for the project were received in December. The low bid, \$980,686, came from Drax Inc., of Sun Prairie, now the project's general contractor. The total cost won't be known until construction is complete, Shea said.

Construction is scheduled to be done by Aug. 19, but no grand opening date has been set, Hasburgh said.

There is still significant work that needs to be done, including finishing the remaining bowl, all of the streetscape features, and the installation of the lighting system.

Skate park advocate Austin Lipinski, a member of the Madison Skatepark Fund and owner of Freedom Skate Shop, 434 State St., said he's "content" with the design.

Lipinski said there are better designs and better skate parks out there. But Madison's skate park has a good mix of terrain and obstacles and "everyone's going to have fun there," he said.

Lipinski predicts the skate park will help boost the image of skateboarding and have a positive effect on the community and surrounding neighborhood.

"It's in such a good location," he said. "People are going to be passing through Central Park so much they'll be able to stop and see what skateboarding really is. And that to me is the most important part."

A skateboarder for more than 20 years, Lipinski said he's always had to travel great distances to find places to skate. Skateboarding is banned in many public places.

"It's a long climb to find legal, safe places, where people can see how positive it can be for kids," he said.

Hasburgh, who's been skating for 22 years since he was 15 years old, said the new park "is going to be fantastic."

"I'm over the moon about it, really," he said.

Republican lawmakers spar publicly as budget deadline nears

Republican legislative leaders remain deadlocked — even sparring publicly last week — on key parts of Wisconsin's next state budget with just over a week left until a deadline to have the two-year spending plan in place.

The current stalemate is over how to divvy up an \$800 million reduction in Gov. Scott Walker's proposal to borrow \$1.3 billion for road construction. Other issues still being hammered out include how to finance construction of a new Milwaukee Bucks arena, alter parts of the tax code and change the state's prevailing wage laws.

GOP legislative leaders were expected to meet Monday in hopes of breaking the impasse. Among the factors affected by the budget passage is Walker's anticipated announcement of his presidential campaign. Walker has discussed making an announcement on the 2016 race next month but now is waffling on whether he will wait until he signs the state budget into law.

One of the co-chairs of the Legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee, Sen. Alberta Darling, said Friday that — despite public squabbling by her and other top Republican lawmakers just a day earlier — it's still possible to pass a budget by June 30, the end of the state's fiscal year.

"We have to get it done on time," said Darling, R-River Hills.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos countered that, while he'd prefer to finish the budget this month, there's less urgency to meet the deadline than to agree on the best possible budget.

In Wisconsin, if a new budget is not in place by June 30, funding levels in the previous budget continue until a new one is enacted.

"I'd rather take a few extra weeks and get it done right," said Vos, R-Rochester.

The road funding issue has been particularly thorny, especially as Walker has foreclosed the possibility of raising transportation revenues such as a gas tax or vehicle registration fees without a corresponding tax or fee cut elsewhere. Republican lawmakers oppose Walker's plan to borrow a record \$1.3 billion over

3 NH Firefighters Hurt Rescuing Woman From Burning Home; Hoarding Cited

MANCHESTER, N.H. (CBS) — Three Manchester firefighters were injured while rescuing a woman from a burning home early Monday morning, and officials say hoarding impeded their efforts.

It was about 3 a.m. when firefighters responded to the home on Walnut Street, where a woman was trapped by heavy fire on the second floor porch. Manchester fire officials said the two-alarm blaze was accidentally sparked in the kitchen by her husband, who was cooking.

The firefighter who pulled the woman off the porch was being treated for burns and monitored for possible smoke inhalation at a local hospital.

Officials said two other firefighters were hurt as they took the woman down a ladder. One suffered minor burns, and the other fell off the ladder and had the victim land on top of him.

The woman was taken to a Boston hospital with non-life-threatening burns.

The accumulation of material in the house delayed firefighters trying to get to the fire, officials said.

The home was extensively damaged and the state fire marshal is investigating.

Hillary Clinton embraces 'first mama' role in second White House bid

Eight years ago, Hillary Clinton believed she needed to project an image of strength and experience to convince voters she could be the first woman president.

The image, her strategist said at the time, was a kind of "tough single parent" rather than a "first mama." But running for president in 2015, the Associated Press writes, Clinton's gender isn't something she seeks to explain or defend. The Democrat's potential to make history as the country's first female president has become one of her biggest applause lines. Clinton's decision to fully embrace her gender, AP writes, is a strategic revision that reflects both a personal evolution and a wider cultural shift in the U.S. It's an approach that also addresses what many saw as a failing of her 2008 campaign, when the former first lady was seen as wooden and overly scripted.

Empathizing with Rubio: Marcu Rubio's personal financial decisions and struggles made news recently when the New York Times wrote about the Florida senator's student loans and credit-card debt. But instead of making him seem irresponsible to some Americans, they have made him easier to relate to. "The numbers may change a little, but that story is quite common," self-described fiscal and social conservative Jonathan Unverzagt tells Politico. Politico talks with Unverzagt, a minister from Wisconsin, as well as Michael Guillemette, an assistant professor of personal financial planning at the University of Missouri. "A lot of Americans can empathize with Rubio — what he's going through is not uncommon," says Guillemette.

"Death spiral": The Supreme Court could gut subsidies for Obamacare customers in 34 states by the end of this month, which would be the first step in the law's "death spiral," experts warn. The Washington Examiner writes the court is expected to rule soon on King v. Burwell, a case that challenges the federal government's authority to provide subsidies for 34 states that did not set up their own health-care exchanges. More than six million people could lose subsidies if the court rules in favor of King. If there is such a ruling and Congress takes no action, there is a "100% chance" of a death spiral for insurance marketplaces in those states, Gary Claxton of the Kaiser Family Foundation tells the Examiner. A death spiral occurs when an insurance marketplace is no longer sustainable.

"Good point, Mitt": President Barack Obama praised his former opponent Mitt Romney after the 2012 Republican presidential nominee tweeted a request to remove the Confederate flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State House. "Good point, Mitt," Obama tweeted Saturday in response to Romney. As USA Today writes, Romney tweeted: "Take down the #ConfederateFlag at the SC Capitol. To many, it is a symbol of racial hatred." He asked for it to be removed to honor the victims of the shooting at an African-American church in Charleston, S.C.

Trump's jury summonses: Presidential candidate Donald Trump ignored five jury summonses in the past nine years from the Manhattan County Clerk, the New York Daily News reported. Trump,

a Republican, was ordered to appear at a March 6 hearing for failing to respond to jury service. He didn't show up, however, and was fined \$250. Michael Cohen, special counsel to Trump, said the reality TV star never got the notifications. "Had he, he would have complied."

GREAT WHITE SHARK SIGHTING IN WELLS LEADS TO POLICE INVESTIGATION

The police department of Wells, Maine is on high alert after a random sighting of what could be a great white shark a few miles off the coast of Moody Beach. The shark was seen on Saturday by a seafaring vessel. And while the exact nature of the bloodthirsty beast could not be determined, it is a dead cert that it might be a great white alright.

According to Jaron Thibault, who was with his family aboard the vessel, they got pretty close to the shark a couple of times. It was apparently upset by the proximity of the boat. "Yea it was really cool. It was spooked very easily," he said, according to WCSH6 News.

Another person who was nearby on another boat also reported seeing what appeared to be the familiar shape of a conical fin rising from the blue waves.

The police department of Wells, Maine have issued a precautionary warning to beach goers regarding the great white shark. Such creatures have been known to attack without any provocation and then they literally bite chunks out of their helpless victims with their razor sharp teeth. It would be better to remain on the safe side and forgo a bit of beach combing instead of becoming the reluctant meal of a great white.

Although a sighting of a great white shark at this time of the year is a rarity, it might not be that far off the mark since sometimes in life, truth is stranger than fiction. And while the beach will not be closed, the life guards will be on the lookout for any signs of the shark with their binoculars glued to their eyes.

There has even been a third confirmation of the great white by a man who was a diving aficionado. He claims he saw the creature and was scared out of his wits.

It might be a coincidence but it is a spooky case of exact synchronicity when you think about it. Saturday, the day when the shark was spotted, was also the 40th anniversary of the movie "Jaws".

the next two years, especially after borrowing nearly \$1 billion in the previous biennial budget for road projects.

But reducing borrowing to \$500 million will mean certain projects get delayed. Road-building funds generally fall into four categories: local transportation aid to municipalities, state highway maintenance, mega-highway projects in southeast Wisconsin and major highway projects elsewhere.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, has developed a proposal for how to distribute the funds but isn't disclosing the details publicly, according to his spokeswoman, Myranda Tanck.

In a press release Thursday, Vos and Nygren criticized the Senate plan, saying legislators in rural areas and smaller communities would feel the brunt of the cuts and many don't think it's fair.

But Sen. Tom Tiffany, R-Hazelhurst, a budget committee member from northern Wisconsin, said he supports Fitzgerald's approach because it distributes the cuts among the Zoo Interchange, a massive highway project in Milwaukee, and others across the state while not reducing transportation aid to municipalities.

Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon, a budget committee member, said he hadn't seen Fitzgerald's proposal but would prefer the reduction to be evenly split between major highway projects and southeastern mega-projects.

That approach could prove difficult as Walker's budget includes \$392.1 million in borrowing for the massive highway projects and \$624.5 million in borrowing for other major highways.

Meanwhile, Democrats blasted Republicans who control the Legislature for failing to make progress in budget talks and conducting them behind closed doors. Budget committee member Rep. Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh, said Fitzgerald should make his transportation funding plan public.

Democrats also warned of dire safety and economic consequences from Republican leaders' plan to slash road funding. The Verona Road/Madison Beltline highway project and the expansion of Interstate 39-90 from the Madison area to the Illinois state line are among the projects that could be delayed.

Such delays would be "devastating to our infrastructure, and it's devastating to our construction industry," said Rep. Chris Taylor, D-Madison, a budget committee member.

The committee already has addressed many contentious parts of the budget, passing proposals to expand the state's private-school voucher program, cut University of Wisconsin System funding by \$250 million and change the state's long-term care programs. Those proposals still await passage by the full Legislature. However, their endorsement by the finance committee means they're likely to become law.

But weeks of negotiation have failed to yield breakthroughs on transportation, the Bucks arena or prevailing wage. At least two GOP senators have said they won't vote for a budget unless it includes substantial changes to Wisconsin's prevailing wage laws, which set rates for workers on publicly funded construction projects.

Lawmakers in recent weeks have discussed various proposals to change the prevailing wage after leaders declared there aren't enough votes to repeal the wage laws, as some conservative lawmakers hoped.

Vos said legislators have discussed exempting all local governments from the prevailing wage, but he doesn't believe such a measure could pass the state Senate.

The tension ratcheted up Thursday when Vos and Rep. John Nygren, R-Marinette, the other joint finance co-chair, took the unusual step of issuing a public statement criticizing their fellow Republican Darling for what they described as "false statements" regarding their position on road funding.

Darling had been quoted saying Assembly GOP leaders wanted to delay the Zoo Interchange project to pressure senators to increase the gas tax or registration fees — a claim Vos and Nygren denied.

Darling responded with her own public statement standing by her remarks. Darling said any funding cuts should not delay work on the Zoo Interchange, the state's busiest highway interchange, since such a delay would jeopardize safety and hamper the state's economy.

"It's a regional project of huge magnitude for our economy," Darling said.

Vos and Nygren say sparing the Zoo Interchange from funding cuts would cause the cuts to fall disproportionately on road projects elsewhere in the state.

"Our position has been, there has to be a fair balance," Vos said.

Hintz said Walker's presidential aspirations have hampered the budget-writing process this year. He said Republican infighting has increased as Walker has been absent from the state Capitol, traveling across the country and abroad in advance of his anticipated presidential bid.

"The fact that the governor is running for president is riddled throughout this budget," Hintz said.

Taliban try to attack Afghan parliament, wounding dozens of civilians

Taliban militants detonated explosives and fired rockets Monday in an attempted attack on the Afghan parliament that wounded dozens of civilians and startled lawmakers.

A large car bomb exploded near the outer wall of the parliament compound, sending a thick plume of smoke into the sky. Six Taliban fighters then tried to storm inside, said police spokesman Ebadullah Karimi.

Afghan security forces managed to fend off the attackers, who then moved into a nearby building, firing rockets and AK-47 machine guns. All six attackers were killed in the ensuing firefight, Karimi said.

Inside the parliament building, lawmakers were gathered in a meeting hall when the first explosion struck, Arif Rahmani, a member of parliament, told CNN.

The blast shattered glass and shook loose a thin layer of the ceiling that filled the hall with a cloud of dust, he said.

The members of parliament had assembled for a general meeting at which Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai, the government's nominee for defense minister, was to be introduced in order to present his plans and policies ahead of a confidence vote.

TO BE CONTINUED
- 4 of 4

BY: LEON IRBY

DATED: JULY 8, 2015

All the lawmakers were evacuated from the parliament building unharmed, Karimi said.

But at least 31 civilians were wounded in the attack, including three children, said Dr. Kabir Amiri, head of Kabul Central Hospitals.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said on his Twitter account that the militant group chose to target the parliament on the day the defense minister was to be introduced to lawmakers.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan condemned the attack, calling it "a clear and deliberate affront to democracy in Afghanistan."

The U.S. Embassy issued a statement saying the assault showed "blatant disrespect for democracy and the rule of law."

Monday's assault is the latest in a string of high-profile attacks by insurgents in the Afghan capital.

Recent targets have included hotels housing foreigners, like the Park Palace Guest House, where more than a dozen people were killed last month.

More broadly, Afghan forces are grappling with a Taliban offensive across different parts of the country. American-led international troops pulled out of Afghanistan last year.

Stanikzai, the defense minister nominee, is the former chief executive of the Joint Secretariat of the Afghanistan High Peace Council, an organization tasked with pursuing peace talks with the Taliban and other insurgent groups in the country.

The introductions of nominees for Cabinet minister positions, particularly the defense minister, were held up for months by squabbling between the two leading Afghan presidential candidates, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah.

A deal was eventually reached under which Ghani became President and Abdullah got the newly created position of chief executive.

Japan, S. Korea mark 50 years of ties with push to overcome strains

SEOUL/ TOKYO--East Asian neighbors Japan and South Korea marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties on June 22 with a push to mend relations strained

for years by feuds over the legacy of Japan's wartime past.

The key U.S. allies are also working toward their first leaders' meeting in three years, hoping to move past tensions that have complicated efforts to improve security cooperation in the face of an unpredictable North Korea and an assertive China.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended a reception hosted by the South Korean Embassy in Tokyo, while South Korean President Park Geun-hye was to attend a ceremony hosted by the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.

Until June 21, the two leaders had been expected only to send messages.

"Let us build a new era for our two countries together, while looking back at the 50 years of history of friendship and development and looking forward at the next 50 years," Abe said at the reception, where guests were serenaded with traditional Japanese and Korean music.

"For that, I would like to join forces with President Park Geun-hye and work together."

In remarks read by South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Park also called for the neighbors to build a new future.

"We should make this 50th year of normalization of ties a turning point so that South Korea and Japan can walk together toward the future of new cooperation, co-existence and co-prosperity," she said.

"To achieve that, it is important to make it possible, with the spirit of reconciliation and co-existence, for us to lay down the heavy burden of the history issue, which is the largest obstacle."

Earlier on June 22, Yun paid a courtesy call on Abe.

"For the peoples in both countries and for the next generation, I would like to work with President Park to improve relations further, with eyes set on the next half-century," Abe told Yun.

Yun said after the meeting that a "spirit of trust and compromise" would help overcome challenges in the relationship and increase the chances of a summit meeting.

Park has not held bilateral talks with the Japanese leader since taking office in

February 2013, two months after Abe became prime minister.

South Korea's Yun met his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, on June 21, the first such visit in four years.

They welcomed recent exchanges, including high-level meetings on trade and defense cooperation, and expressed hope for progress toward a summit, Yun's office said.

However, feuds over wartime history, as well as a row over tiny islands claimed by both countries, still fester.

South Korea says Japan has not atoned properly for its World War II conduct, including its role in forcing women, many of them Korean, into prostitution in military brothels.

Japan apologized to the women, euphemistically called "comfort women," in a landmark 1993 statement acknowledging the role of authorities in coercing them. It says the matter of compensation for them has been settled.

On June 22, descendants of Koreans conscripted to the Imperial Japanese Army or recruited for forced labor under Japanese colonial rule protested outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, demanding compensation and recognition.

In Tokyo, Japanese right-wing activists in trucks with loudspeakers circled the Korea Center amid heavy policing, shouting slogans such as, "Cut ties with South Korea."

Egg shortage cutting into restaurant profits, menu items

DES MOINES (AP) | Those who like to indulge in a good omelet or quiche at the local cafe should prepare to pay a little more — if it's even on the menu.

Restaurants are struggling to deal with higher egg prices and an inability to get enough eggs and egg products in the midst of a shortage brought about by a bird flu virus that wiped out millions of chickens on commercial farms this spring.

Some restaurants are pulling especially egg dishes off menus while others are contemplating raising prices until the supply returns to normal.

Getting eggs from a smaller, local producer — which have largely been spared from the outbreak — has not protected Omaha restaurant owner Nick

WELCOME TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS !!!

Obergefell, et al. v. Hodges, et al!
[S. Ct. June 26, 2015]

EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS
CASE

XOXO !

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: JULY 8, 2015