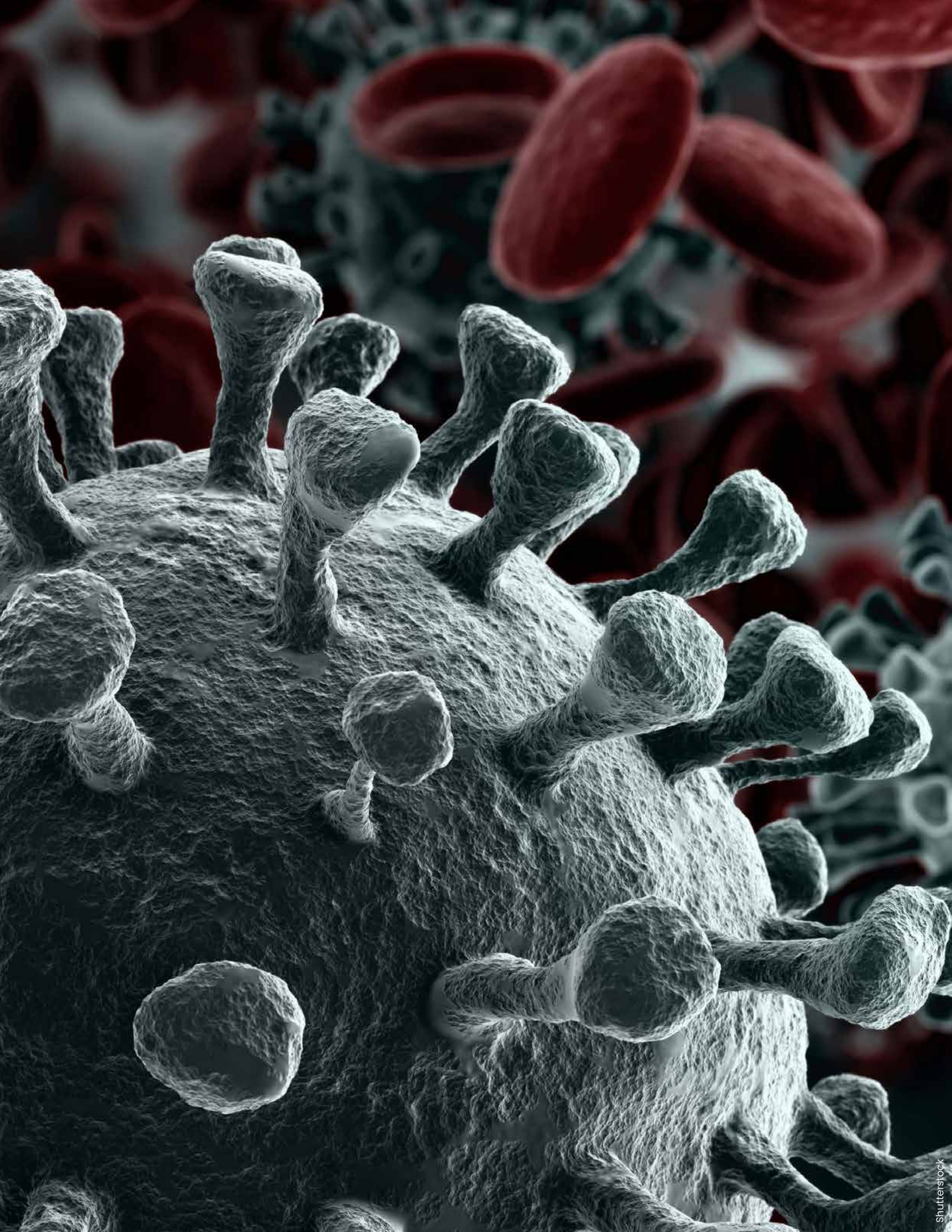




GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST
JULY 2, 2020

'JULY IS GOING TO BE VERY TRAGIC,' SAYS FRESNO COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER »
GOLDEN STATE KILLER ADMITS TO DOZENS OF RAPES, MURDERS »
FAUCI: 100,000 CORONAVIRUS CASES A DAY IF THIS DOESN'T TURN AROUND »



LOCAL 'JULY IS GOING TO BE VERY TRAGIC,' SAYS FRESNO COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

June 30, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

New numbers from the state Tuesday show Fresno County has had a 97.7% increase in hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the past 14 days. During the same time frame, the county has seen a 33.3% increase in ICU cases.

"I think July is going to be very tragic in terms of the number of hospitalizations and the number of fatalities that we see." — Fresno County interim health officer Dr. Rais Vohra

Public health officials report that 200 of 270 ICU beds are occupied (40 of those ICU patients are COVID-19 cases), and some hospitals are moving to

emergency protocols. In addition, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office reports 507 inmates at the jail have tested positive for COVID-19. There are still 186 tests pending. And, sheriff Margaret Mims tells GV WireSM through a spokesperson that she will not enforce the state- and county-ordered closure of brewpubs, breweries, bars, and pubs. However, the county department of health says it will enforce the bar closure.

Fresno County COVID-19 Cases

"Get a mask, and start using a mask," said county interim health officer Dr. Rais Vohra during a media briefing via Zoom on Tuesday. "Our cases are not currently under control." In the past two weeks, Fresno County has seen 1,915 new coronavirus cases. "This last week of having increased case counts, gives me a lot of indigestion going into the rest of summer," said Vohra. "I think July is going to be very tragic in terms of the number of hospitalizations and the number of fatalities that we see."

Jail Quarantine and Testing

A jail quarantine began June 19, leaving several more days to go until the recommended 14-day quarantine period is over. In addition to the 507 positive inmates, the sheriff's office reports that 25 correctional officers and one deputy have contracted the coronavirus. The overwhelming majority of the positive

inmates are housed in the north jail annex, the sheriff's office says. "We want to ramp up testing so we are going to go ahead and try to test every single individual (in the jail), a staff member, an inmate, a medical provider," Vohra said. "We want to set up a paradigm of just testing people regularly." Vohra says there is a silver lining. "Most of the inmates and most of the staff that have been asked to quarantine are asymptomatic or very mildly symptomatic," said Vohra. "I think it just basically highlights what we've already known about this viral infection, which is that asymptomatic spread in crowded settings, especially indoors, is definitely a thing, and it's definitely something that allows this virus to get around."

Sheriff Not Enforcing Bars Closure Order, but Others Will

According to a Fresno County Department of Public Health order Monday afternoon, "Brewpubs, breweries, bars, and pubs, shall close until those establishments are allowed to resume operation per state guidance and local permission, unless they are offering sit-down, dine-in meals. Alcohol can only be sold in the same transaction as a meal." One member of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors says bars could have their ABC license revoked if they don't comply, inferring it's up to the establishment to determine whether they'll abide by the order or not. "The county of

Fresno has been relying on voluntary compliance as we move through this pandemic," supervisor Nathan Magsig tells GV WireSM by email. "The board of supervisors is committed to keeping all residents of Fresno county safe while preserving individual liberties." GV WireSM emailed a question to sheriff's spokesman Tony Botti: "Will the Sheriff's Department enforce the no open bar mandate?" Botti answered: "Negative." The Fresno County Department of Health says its environmental...

"The county of Fresno has been relying on voluntary compliance as we move through this pandemic." — Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig

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FRESNO RESTAURANTS ORDERED TO CLOSE INDOOR DINING AGAIN OVER COVID-19 SURGE

GV Wire/ Jim Jakobs

July 1, 2020 | Randy Reed

Restaurants in Fresno and surrounding counties have been ordered to close indoor dining spaces immediately in response to surging COVID-19 infections across California. Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the rollback of rules for restaurants and other businesses early Wednesday afternoon. The prohibition on indoor dining will remain in effect for at least three weeks, Newsom said.

Other Valley Counties Also Affected

The rollback applies to 19 counties across California that have been on the state's COVID containment "watch list" for three consecutive days. In addition to Fresno, the restrictions also apply to the Valley counties of Tulare, Kings, Merced, and Kern. The counties included in the Governor's revised stay-at-home, including Los Angeles, account for nearly three-quarters

of the state's roughly 40 million population. Newsom's order also requires indoor operations to cease in cardrooms, movie theatres, family entertainment centers, wineries and tasting rooms, museums, and zoos in those counties. The restrictions are effective immediately, Newsom said.

A number of local businesses in these categories had only recently reopened following a loosening of the state's original shutdown order issued in March. Newsom also expanded his Sunday order requiring bars in Fresno and a number of other countries to completely close, to all 19 counties on the state's monitoring list. The order came just days ahead of what is expected to be a busy Fourth of July weekend. That worried public health officials because people were expected to gather in larger numbers than they have for months after the...

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NEED HELP WITH RENT BECAUSE OF COVID? FRESNO GRANTS AVAILABLE

July 1, 2020 | David Taub

Seeking to help Fresno residents stay in their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the city started taking applications for its housing retention program. Fresnans can apply for the \$1.5 million first round of funding starting today. While it will be on a first-come, first-serve basis, more money is in the pipeline. "The city will look to invest \$5 million to try and help our residents in the city avoid displacement of their homes or go into the homeless community," Fresno City Council President Miguel Arias said in a news conference Wednesday via Zoom.

Councilwoman Esmeralda Soria said she is "committed" to spend more than \$5 million to provide assistance. The grants will be \$1,500 for an individual or \$3,000 per family. There are three criteria: an applicant must be a Fresno resident, must face a COVID-19 hardship such as a loss of income, and must meet certain income guidelines. The money comes from federal stimulus funds through the CARES Act. The city will partner with six community organizations to take in applications. "We want to...

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GV Wire/ Jim Jakobs

WITH LIQUOR STORES STILL A PROBLEM, ARIAS WANTS EVEN TOUGHER RULES

June 30, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

The state of California's recommendation for liquor store licenses is one for every 2,500 residents. In Fresno, it's one liquor license for every 1,000 residents. And, in south Fresno, it's one per 300 residents. "When you drive down the street in south Fresno, there's a liquor store on each corner of an intersection," says Fresno City Council President Miguel Arias. In response, Arias is proposing a stronger liquor-license ordinance than the one passed last year by the council. His goal: Turn the tide and provide a more equitable solution for the entire city.

Liquor Store Proliferation

"For decades, Fresno leaders justified saturating south Fresno with liquor stores under the guise of job creation," Arias says. "They saturated south Fresno with liquor stores to the point that liquor stores and convenience stores have to sell alcohol at a cheaper rate than they sell bottled water. Right now, I could walk into Wayne's Liquor and buy a 40-ounce of malt liquor for 89 cents while a 12-ounce bottle of water would cost me...

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AP / John Pedroncelli

STATE

GOLDEN STATE KILLER ADMITS TO DOZENS OF RAPES, MURDERS

June 29, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — A former police officer who terrorized California as a serial burglar and rapist and went on to kill more than a dozen people while evading capture for decades pleaded guilty Monday to murders attributed to a criminal dubbed the Golden State Killer. Joseph James DeAngelo Jr. had remained almost silent in court since his 2018 arrest until he repeatedly uttered the words “guilty” and “I admit” in a hushed and raspy voice as part of a plea agreement that will spare him

DeAngelo, 74, had never publicly acknowledged the killings, but offered up a confession of sorts after his arrest that cryptically referred to an inner personality named “Jerry” that he said forced him to commit the wave of crimes that ended abruptly in 1986.

the death penalty for a life sentence with no chance of parole.

DeAngelo, 74, had never publicly acknowledged the killings, but offered up a confession of sorts after his arrest that cryptically referred to an inner personality named “Jerry” that he

said forced him to commit the wave of crimes that ended abruptly in 1986. “I did all that,” DeAngelo said to himself while alone in a police interrogation room after his arrest in April 2018, Sacramento County prosecutor Thien Ho said. “I didn’t have the strength to push him out,” DeAngelo said. “He made me. He went with me. It was like in my head, I mean, he’s a part of me. I didn’t want to do those things. I pushed Jerry out and had a happy life. I did all those things. I destroyed all their lives. So now I’ve got to pay the price.” The day of reckoning had come for DeAngelo, Ho said.

“The scope of Joseph DeAngelo’s crimes is simply staggering,” Ho said. “Each time he escaped, slipping away silently into the night.” DeAngelo, seated in a wheelchair on a makeshift stage in a university ballroom that could accommodate hundreds of observers a safe distance apart during the coronavirus pandemic, acknowledged he would plead guilty to 13 counts of murder

and dozens of rapes that are too old to prosecute. The large room at Sacramento State University was made to look like a state courtroom with the seal of the Sacramento County Superior Court behind the judge’s chair and U.S. and state flags on the waist-high riser that served as a sort of stage for a proceeding that had a theater-like feel. Large screens flanked the makeshift stage so spectators in the ballroom could follow the livestreamed hearing.

Family Members Wept as the Proceeding Went on for Hours

Temperatures were taken of everyone in the room and even the judge wore a mask at times when he wasn’t speaking. DeAngelo, who wore orange jail scrubs and a plastic face shield to prevent possible spread of the virus, listed to one side and his mouth appeared agape as prosecutors read graphic details of crimes, where he raped and killed and then snacked before leaving. Family members wept as the proceeding went on for hours. A pile of used tissues sat on the floor next to Jennifer Carole, whose father, attorney Lyman Smith, was slain in 1980 with his his wife, Charlene Smith, who was raped before being killed. “This is much harder than I thought it was going to be. And I thought it was going to be hard,” Carole said. “I feel a lot of anger, which I don’t think I’ve felt so powerfully before.” DeAngelo, a Vietnam veteran and a grandfather, had never been on the radar of investigators who spent years trying to track down the culprit. It wasn’t until after the crimes ended that investigators connected a series of assaults in central and Northern California to slayings in...

Prosecutors detailed sadistic acts he committed after slipping into homes undetected and surprising couples in bed by shining a flashlight in their faces and threatening to kill everyone in the house — including young children — if they didn’t follow his orders.

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FACEBOOK BANS VIOLENT ‘BOOGALOO’ GROUPS, NOT THE TERM ITSELF

July 1, 2020 | AP News

OAKLAND — Facebook has banned an extremist anti-government network loosely associated with the broader “boogaloo” movement, a slang term supporters use to refer to a second Civil War or a collapse of civilization.

But the platform didn’t try to name the group, underscoring the difficulty of grappling with an amorphous network linked to a string of domestic terror plots that appears to obfuscate its existence. Among other complications, its internet-savvy members tend to keep their distance from one another, frequently change their symbols and catch phrases and mask their intentions with sarcasm. The move by Facebook desig-

nates this group as a dangerous organization similar to the Islamic State group and white supremacists, both of which are already banned from its service. The social network is not banning all references to “boogaloo” and said it is only removing groups, accounts and pages when they have a “clear connection to violence or a credible threat to public safety.”

The loose movement is named after “Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo,” a 1984 sequel to a movie about breakdancing. “Boogaloo” supporters have shown up at protests over COVID-19 lockdown orders, carrying rifles and wearing tactical gear over Hawaiian shirts — themselves a reference...

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California Highway Patrol

HE’S WAVED AT OAKHURST MOTORISTS SINCE 2004, NOW HE’S MOVING TO CLOVIS

June 29, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

You may not know his name or the reason he waves, but if you’ve driven through Oakhurst anytime since 2004 you’ve probably seen him. Bill Howie sits in his walker just outside the Oakhurst CHP office and inspires honks from cars going by as he waves at them. “He’s been out here waving at motorists since the Ferguson fire just to say ‘Good Morning’ to everyone to brighten their day,” says CHP officer Jason Bettini. The record number of honks he’s counted in a single day is 168. He usually averages 70 to 90 honks per day. “He’s been doing this for years and everyone in the mountains knows he does this,” says Sarah Jackson of the Madera County Sheriff’s Office.

World War II Veteran Is Legally Blind
“I just wanted to say good morning to everybody,” says Howie, a World War II veteran who is 94 years old and legally blind. “It made it kind of hard with my eyesight. I can’t see inside the car and see them waving, so I asked them to beep...”

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CITING RACIAL BIAS, SAN FRANCISCO WILL STOP RELEASING MUG SHOTS

July 1, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco police will stop making public the mug shots of people who have been arrested unless they pose a threat to the public, as part of an effort to stop perpetuating racial stereotypes, the city’s police chief announced Wednesday. San Francisco Police Chief Bill Scott said the department will no longer release booking photos of suspects to the media or allow officers to post them online.

The policy takes effect Wednesday. Booking photos are taken when someone is arrested. They are often made public whether or not the person is prosecuted for the alleged crime, which undermines the presumption of innocence and helps perpetuate stereotypes. Jack Glaser, a public policy professor at the University of California Berkeley who researches racial stereotyping and whose work Scott consulted, said data shows Black people who are arrested are more likely to have their cases dismissed by prosecutors. But the mug shots live on. Numerous websites post photos of mug shots online...

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Kevin Dietsch/Pool via AP

U.S. FAUCI: 100,000 CORONAVIRUS CASES A DAY IF THIS DOESN'T TURN AROUND

June 30, 2020 | AP News

The U.S. is “going in the wrong direction” with the coronavirus surging badly enough that Dr. Anthony Fauci told senators Tuesday some regions are putting the entire country at risk — just as schools and colleges are wrestling with how to safely reopen. With about 40,000 new cases being reported a day, Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, said he “would not be surprised if we go up to 100,000 a day if this does not turn around.” “I am very concerned,” he told a hearing of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee. Infections are rising rapidly mostly in parts of the West and South, and Fauci and other public health experts said Americans everywhere will have to start following key recommendations if they want to get back to more normal activities like going to school. “We’ve got to get the message out that we are all in this together,” by wearing masks in public and keeping out of crowds, said Fauci, infectious disease chief at the National Institutes of Health. Connect the dots, he

With about 40,000 new cases being reported a day, Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, said he “would not be surprised if we go up to 100,000 a day if this does not turn around.”

told senators: When and how school buildings can reopen will vary depending on how widely the coronavirus is spreading locally.

“I feel very strongly we need to do whatever we can to get the children back to school,” he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plans more guidelines for local school systems, Director Robert Redfield said. But in recommendations for colleges released Tuesday, the agency said it won’t recommend entry testing for all returning students, faculty and staff. It’s not clear if that kind of broad-stroke testing would reduce spread of the coronavirus, CDC concluded. Instead, it urged colleges to focus on containing outbreaks and exposures as students return. Lawmakers also pressed for what Sen. Patty Murray of Washington,

the committee’s top Democrat, called a national vaccine plan — to be sure the race for the COVID-19 vaccine ends with shots that really are safe, truly protect and are available to all Americans who want, one.

About 15 Vaccine Candidates in Testing Worldwide

“We can’t take for granted this process will be free of political influence,” Murray said. She cited how President Donald Trump promoted a malaria drug as a COVID-19 treatment that ultimately was found to be risky and ineffective. The Food and Drug Administration released guidelines Tuesday saying any vaccine that wins approval will have to be at 50% more effective than a dummy shot in the final, required testing. That’s less effective than many of today’s vaccines but independent experts say that would be a good start against the virus.

But a vaccine is at the very least many months away. For now, the committee’s leading Republican stressed wearing a mask — and said Trump, who notoriously shuns them, needs to start because politics is getting in the way of protecting the American people.

FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said vaccine makers also must test their shots in diverse populations, including minorities, the elderly, pregnant women and those with chronic health problems. “We will not cut corners in our decision-making,” Hahn told senators. About 15 vaccine candidates are in various stages of human testing worldwide but the largest studies — including 30,000 people each — needed to prove if a shot really protects are set to begin in July. First up is expected to be a vaccine created by the NIH and Moderna Inc., followed closely by an Oxford University candidate. At the same time, the Trump administration’s “Operation Warp Speed” aims to stockpile hundreds of millions of doses by year’s end, so they could rapidly start vaccinations if and when one is proven to work. Redfield said the...

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SEATTLE COPS START CLEARING 'OCCUPIED' ZONE, MAKE ARRESTS

July 1, 2020 | AP News

SEATTLE — Seattle police showed up in force early Wednesday at the city's "occupied" protest zone, tore down demonstrators' tents and used bicycles to herd the protesters after the mayor ordered the area cleared following two fatal shootings in less than two weeks.

Television images showed no signs of clashes between the police, many dressed in riot gear, and dozens of protesters at the "Capitol Hill Occupied Protest" zone that was set up near downtown following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Police swarmed the zone known as CHOP at

about 5 a.m. and a loud bang was heard at about 6:15 a.m. followed by a cloud of smoke. At least 13 people were arrested, said Police Chief Carmen Best.

"Our job is to support peaceful demonstration but what has happened on these streets over the last two weeks is lawless and it's brutal and bottom line it is simply unacceptable," Best told reporters. Police tore down fences that protesters had erected around their tents and used batons to poke inside bushes, apparently looking for people who might be hiding inside. One officer took down a sign saying "we are not..."

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AP/Manuel Balce Ceneta

REPUBLICANS, WITH EXCEPTION OF TRUMP, NOW PUSH MASK-WEARING

June 30, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — In Republican circles — with the notable exception of the man who leads the party — the debate about masks is over: It's time to put one on. As a surge of infections hammers the South and West, GOP officials are pushing back against the notion that masks are about politics, as President Donald Trump suggests, and telling Americans they can help save lives.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican, on Tuesday bluntly called on Trump to start wearing a mask, at least some of the time, to set a good example. "Unfortunately, this simple, lifesaving practice has become part of a political debate that says: If you're for Trump, you don't wear a mask. If you're against Trump, you do," Alexander said. It's a rare break for Republicans from Trump, who earlier this month told the Wall Street Journal that some people wear masks simply to show that they disapprove of him. And the...

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SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FACE A RECKONING OVER HATE SPEECH

June 29, 2020 | AP News

For years, social media platforms have fueled political polarization and hosted an explosion of hate speech. Now, with four months until the U.S. presidential election and the country's divisions reaching a boiling point, these companies are upping their game against bigotry and threats of violence.

What's not yet clear is whether this action is too little, too late — nor whether the pressure on these companies, including a growing advertiser boycott, will be enough to produce lasting change. Reddit, an online comment forum that is one of the world's most popular websites, on Monday banned a forum that supported President-Donald Trump as part of a crackdown on hate speech. Also on Monday, live-streaming site Twitch, which is owned by Amazon, temporarily suspended Trump's campaign account for violating its hateful conduct rules. YouTube, meanwhile, banned several...

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AP File

WORLD

RUSSIAN BOUNTIES FURTHER STRAIN TRUMP'S BOND WITH VETERANS

July 1, 2020 | AP News

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — They didn't like it when then-candidate Donald Trump criticized John McCain for being captured in combat. They were angrier when Trump, as commander in chief, abandoned Kurdish allies in the Middle East. And they were upset again last month when he threatened to deploy troops against American protesters. Trump's relationship with the nation's military community has been frequently strained. But just four months before the November election, reports that

"I don't think he cares about troops at all. If he didn't know about Russia, it's because he didn't do his damn homework. And that's despicable."
— **Shawn LeMond, a Navy veteran who served his country in the Middle East and then his state of North Carolina as a Republican legislator**

he either ignored, or was unaware of, a Russian plot to kill U.S. troops could intensify the tension and create new political risks. "I don't think he cares about troops at all," said Shawn LeMond, a Navy veteran who served his country in the Middle East and then his state of North Carolina as a Republican legislator.

"If he didn't know about Russia, it's because he didn't do his damn homework. And that's despicable."

After sitting out the 2016 election, LeMond has withdrawn from the Republican Party and plans to vote for Trump's Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, this fall. It's difficult to gauge how widespread LeMond's sentiment is among veterans, but there was a significant outcry this week from a collection of retired service members, elected officials in both parties and families of fallen soldiers who have lost confidence in the president's commitment to the troops. That's just four weeks after Trump's former defense secretary James Mattis, a Marine general, described the president as a threat to the Constitution. Any erosion in Trump's support from the national security community, long a pillar of the GOP base, could damage his reelection prospects, particularly in swing states with large concentrations of veterans,

including Florida, Virginia, Texas and North Carolina. Rep. Richard Hudson, R-N.C., whose district includes Fort Bragg, acknowledged the troubling nature of the revelations, but like many other Republicans on Capitol Hill, he sidestepped Trump's role. "There is no consensus on the intelligence yet, but as Fort Bragg's congressman, I'm deeply troubled by the reports," he said. "And if they are verified to be true, I believe there needs to be swift and severe consequences on Russia."

Trump on Wednesday Dismissed the Allegations as 'Fake News'

American intelligence has assessed that Russia offered militants bounties to kill American troops in Afghanistan. Initial intelligence was shared with the White House and included in one of Trump's daily briefings in early 2019. In spite of that, Trump has maintained a warm relationship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin throughout his presidency. Trump on Wednesday dismissed the allegations as "Fake News." The White House initially said Trump wasn't briefed on the intelligence. But on Tuesday, press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said Trump was indeed briefed, though there were reservations about the veracity of the allegations. "Make no mistake. This president will always protect American troops," she declared. Those words rang hollow to some who serve the military community, like Rep. Paul Cook, R-Calif., a Marine veteran who represents several military installations and is...

"When they sign up and they go — any soldier, a Marine, Navy, Air Force, Army — I'm sure they want to believe that the government is 100% in their corner. And if any of this is true, how could a soldier actually believe that anymore? How could this government let one soldier go on patrol out there knowing this is true?"
— **Erik Hendriks, who lost his 25-year-old son in an April 2019 attack that intelligence officials believe may be tied to the Russian bounties**

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AP INTERVIEW: US ENVOY CALLS FOR IRAN ARMS EMBARGO RENEWAL

AP File

July 1, 2020 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An expiring United Nations weapons embargo on Iran must remain in place to prevent it from “becoming the arms dealer of choice for rogue regimes and terrorist organizations around the world,” the U.S. special representative to Iran said Sunday.

Brian Hook told The Associated Press that the world should ignore Iran’s threats to retaliate if the arms embargo set to expire in October is extended, calling it a “mafia tactic.” Among its options, the Islamic Republic could expel international inspectors monitoring Iran’s nuclear program, deepening a crisis created by President Donald Trump unilaterally

withdrawing from Tehran’s 2015 atomic accord with global powers. The U.N. arms embargo so far has stopped Iran from purchasing fighter jets, tanks, warships and other weaponry, but has failed to halt its smuggling of weapons into war zones. Despite that, Hook argued both an import and export ban on Tehran must remain in place to secure the wider Middle east.

“If we let it expire, you can be certain that what Iran has been doing in the dark, it will do in broad daylight and then some,” Hook said. Iran’s mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment on...

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AP/Ariel Schalit

WEST BANK ANNEXATION WILL HAPPEN AFTER TRUMP STATEMENT, LIKUD MINISTER SAYS

July 1, 2020 | [Jerusalem Post](#)

Israel will annex portions of the West Bank in July but only after US President Donald Trump has made a statement on the matter, Regional Cooperation Minister Ofir Akunis (Likud) told Israel’s Army Radio on Wednesday. Sovereignty (annexation) “will certainly happen in July,” but it has to be done in partnership with the US, Akunis explained, noting that Israel and the US were still ironing out their differences on the contours of an annexation plan.

A U.S. declaration was initially scheduled for the end of last week, but was then delayed, he explained. Israel is waiting for that declaration to be rescheduled before it takes any action and to date, it has not yet received word of when that will be, Akunis said. Last week, senior Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway spoke about an announcement on Israeli annexation that never happened. US special envoys Avi Berkowitz and Scott Leith have been in Israel this week holding meetings with Israelis with regard to a sovereignty map...

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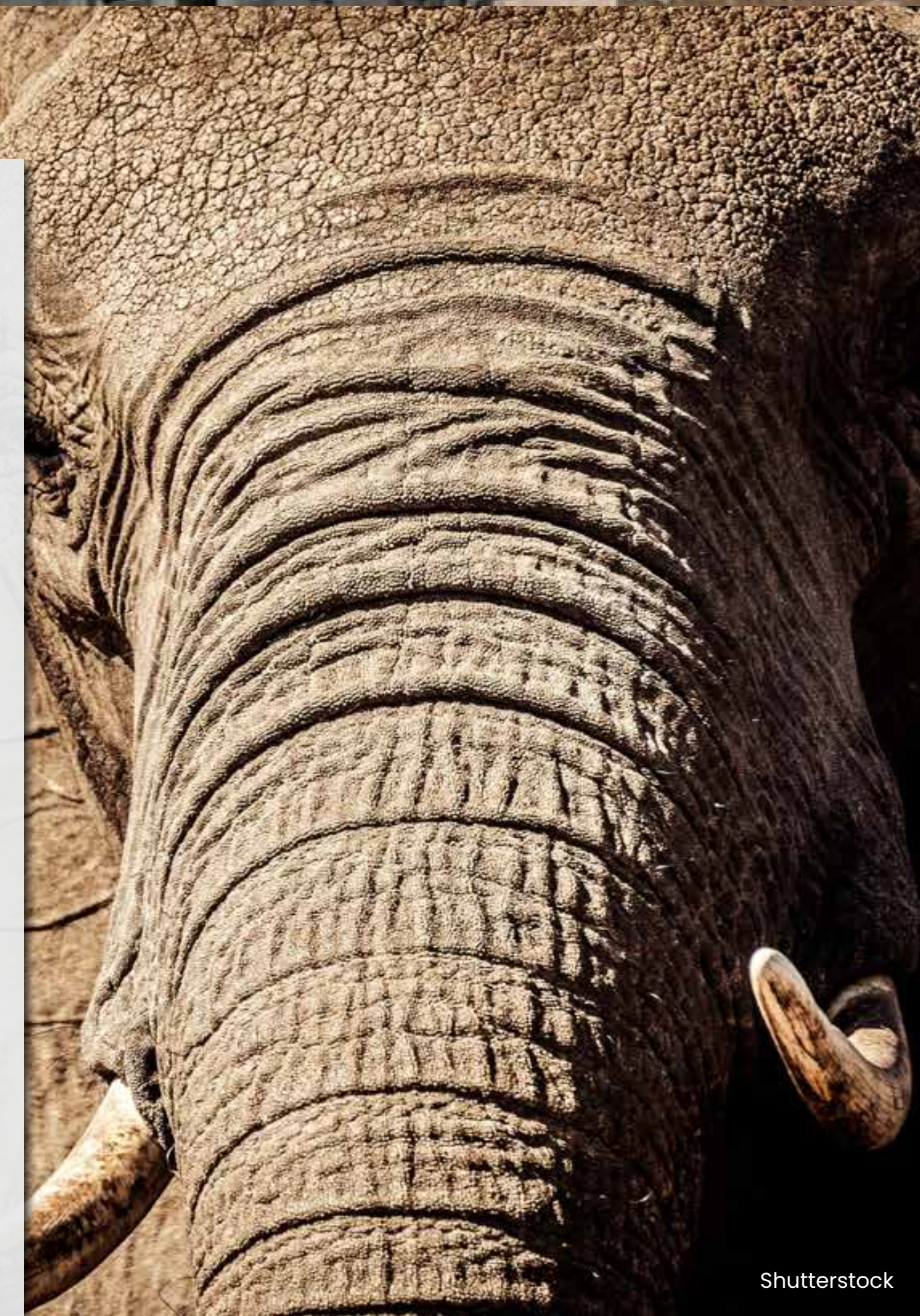
HUNDREDS OF ELEPHANTS DEAD IN MYSTERIOUS MASS DIE-OFF

July 1, 2020 | [The Guardian](#)

More than 350 elephants have died in northern Botswana in a mysterious mass die-off described by scientists as a “conservation disaster”. A cluster of elephant deaths was first reported in early May, with 169 individuals dead by the end of the month. By mid June, the number had more than doubled, with 70% of the deaths clustered around waterholes, according to local sources who wish to remain anonymous.

“This is a mass die-off on a level that hasn’t been seen in a very, very long time. Outside of drought, I don’t know of a die-off that has been this significant,” said Dr Niall McCann, the director of conservation at UK-based charity National Park Rescue. Local witnesses say some elephants were seen walking around in circles, which is an indication of neurological impairment. “If you look at the carcasses, some of them have fallen straight on their face, indicating they died very quickly. Others are obviously dying more slowly, like the...

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