The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2026 — THE AFTERNOON EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

Kansas rally recasts French school-funding protest as migrants, jihadists and communists, two weeks before Republicans face voters.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The ledger opens on September ninth, in Dallas, where the president told the party's midterm convention that American adults would receive five thousand dollars each if Republicans held Congress. On the fifteenth, two papers filed two different stories. The Washington Examiner quoted the Treasury secretary saying his department was "examining" whether it could cut that check without a vote from Congress. The New York Times, the same day, ran a separate dispatch on the secretary defending a faltering bond-market intervention — a story that never mentions the five thousand dollars at all. Those are two filings, not one, and this desk keeps them that way. By the week's end, 750,000 Americans had lost their health coverage.

This week the ledger moves to Paris. The Guardian reports the demonstrations there began among high school students, over crumbling schools and the cost of living — a school-funding complaint, filed by the people paying the tuition and the heating bill. By Monday evening, at a rally in Kansas, the president had recast that filing. France, he told the crowd, had been "conquered, looted, and burned to the ground by migrants, jihadists, and commu-

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THE WORD

§67 — 20 OCTOBER 2026

On fire and fury

DEMOCRAT

TACO

REPUBLICAN

FIRE AND FURY

"I brought the calendar. August 8, 2017 — fire and fury. June 2018 — Singapore. February 2019 — Hanoi, no deal, the plane leaves early. August 16, 2026 — "substantially reduce the Joint Military Exercises," his capitals. August 17 to 21 — the drills, five days instead of eleven. August 20 — more than ten missiles from the north, as the drills end. Excuse me, before you go — the fire and the fury, in nine years. Whose was it?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W67

Trump calls fired ambassador's work 'good,' says he 'didn't like what we were reading'

BY MORT
The Records Bureau

The ambassadorship of Kimberly Guilfoyle to the Hellenic Republic died this month, survived by a $100,000 credit card bill, a donor's on-the-record account, and her own denial of what he said. It is preceded in death by the fiction that the post was filled on credentials rather than on her four years engaged to Donald Trump Jr.

On October 8, Eric Deters, a former Republican congressional candidate and a donor to President Trump's campaign, told ABC's "Good Morning America" what Guilfoyle had offered him, he said: access to top officials in the administration, in trade for paying off her $100,000 card debt. "It was all quid pro quo," Deters said, on the record, under his own name.

Five days later, on a Tuesday, the White House announced it had asked Guilfoyle to resign, ending what the Guardian called "the diplomatic career of one of Trump's longest-standing political allies." Reporters were told Trump and Secretary of State Rubio were furious over the reports. That same Tuesday, asked about the decision, Trump told the press Guilfoyle "was doing a good job" — and in the next breath explained he was removing her anyway

... Continued on Page B42

Cornell disputes what the sorority sister heard the president say, while paying a lawyer to review it

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

On October 6th, a Cornell labor historian named Paul Ortiz filed a no-confidence resolution against the university's administration, citing how the school had handled an alleged 2024 gang rape at the Chi Phi fraternity house. The same day, Cornell announced it had hired Sally Yates, a former deputy attorney general, to review how it handles sexual misconduct claims — including the case the no-confidence vote was about.

Three days later, students across the country held a national day of action for the woman at the center of that case, known in her lawsuit as Jane Doe. The broadcast covering it carried a title, not a verdict, just a title: "Entire System of Cornell University Failed Her."

On October 14th, the faculty senate convened and questioned the president directly. NBC News obtained an audio recording of the meeting; the questions were sharp enough, and the scrutiny close enough, that the network built a story out of the tape alone.

In it she said she had heard about an exchange between the university's president and her sorority sister, and that hearing about it left her feeling un-

... Continued on Page A217

France arrests the watchlisted militant it blamed for the fire, curfewing the country into Le Pen's win.

BY LOU
One More Question

My nephew Anthony is two years into law school, and I called him about a parking ticket, which isn't his specialty, but he let me talk anyway. I asked him what it actually takes to put a person's name on a government watchlist, and what it takes to get it off. He said he'd look into it and call back. I'm still waiting, which might tell you something about watchlists, or just about nephews.

I bring it up because France has had people on a watchlist for a while now, and this week one of them got arrested.

Let me walk it in order, because the order matters. On October 8th, Common Dreams reported students marching in France over what it costs to go to school there, with Jean-Luc Mélenchon telling the crowd the Bastille had been retaken — his line, not the government's. By October 17th it had spread: 550,000 people in the streets nationwide, the New York Post's count, enough that President Macron told reporters, word for word, "let them come and get me." Buildings burned that day, including the town hall in Limoges, a hundred and forty years old — Fox News reported the roof came down and

... Continued on Page A217

Rubio says Patriots weren't 'deliberately denied'; Zelensky asks for the ones Washington still won't release.

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One More Question

My nephew Anthony is in his second year of law school, contracts section, the kind of relative who will correct you on the difference between a promise and a term of art before the coffee's poured, and I have learned to let him, because he is usually right about the kind of thing he's right about.

I called him Tuesday night with a question that wasn't really a legal question, except that it kept sounding like one.

Here is where the story stood before Tuesday. On October 15th Zelensky told the Financial Times Ukraine was done honoring the cease-fire on Russian oil refineries — "the block is out," he said — and the next day the president called that a disgrace on television. The same week, the Washington Examiner reported the Pentagon was holding up Patriot interceptor shipments that NATO allies had already paid for, with no explanation given. Representative Fitzpatrick promised "full accountability" on it. A former ambassador, William Taylor, said on CBS the pressure in this belonged on Putin, not Kyiv. Four Republican senators and their Democratic colleagues wrote the Pentagon asking whether anyone had ordered the restric-

... Continued on Page A217

Purge spares senator bribery probe; his namesake sanctions law waived next, Tillis calls it 'beyond irresponsible'

BY MITCH
Investigations

On 19 September the president signed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, the sanctions law that carried the late senator's name two months after he died. On 17 October, the night before those sanctions were due to bind anyone, he signed an executive order waiving them.

Three days later, ProPublica's reporting on an FBI purge ran under a headline that needed no interpretation. In full, it read: "How Trump's FBI Purge Saved Lindsey Graham and James Clyburn From a Bribery Investigation." All together now — an FBI purge, two sitting lawmakers, a bribery investigation, saved. That is ProPublica's sentence, not ours; we are only reading it back clause by clause, the way the agency wrote it.

The waiver did not move quietly through the president's own party. That same week, Senator Thom Tillis called it "beyond irresponsible" — not the opposition's description, his own caucus's. The New York Times reported the administration was floating a separate lifeline alongside it: more Russian gas sales into Europe, the exact market the sanctions law existed to choke off.

Today the same senator went further. Tillis told reporters that Vladimir

... Continued on Page A217

CBO prices war at $38 billion, calls it conservative; farmers get $8 billion relief for its fuel costs.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

On September 15th, the Congressional Budget Office closed its books on the war with Iran and priced it at $38 billion. The office called the number conservative. In accounting, conservative means the number has room above it and none below.

Thirteen days later, on September 28th, the Oval Office opened on a different ledger. The president announced a $15 billion steel plant for Iowa, the largest in the nation's history. Two days after that, on September 30th, South Korea pledged up to $200 billion for American energy: an Alaska gas pipeline, a Texas power plant, eight new nuclear power plants. Two announcements, $215 billion, inside of 48 hours.

Seven days after the South Korea pledge, on October 7th, the Guardian went back to Iowa to check the foundation. Zero is how much of it has broken ground.

On Monday night, the ledger came back to the war's side of the page. In Kansas, stumping for Senator Roger Marshall, the president announced the Harvest Fuel Relief Program: $8 billion in aid for farmers hurt by record

... Continued on Page F122

Executive wrote the harm was "severe enough" to fix; TikTok fixed it for $100 million in Alabama.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

An executive at TikTok, writing in texts that surfaced in a trove of unreported court records made public this week, put it this way: "I have been fighting about fixing this for months with people who didn't think the harms are severe enough."

The problem did not stay internal. The number attached to it was $100 million minimum, plus a list of safety features TikTok agreed to build. Twenty-four days later, the NPR story landed, and with it the texts that explain why Alabama needed a lawsuit to get safety features a company's own staff had already asked for internally, for months, before anyone sued.

So reconcile the ledger. The fix TikTok would not make on an employee's word, it made on a judge's docket, for $100 million minimum. That is not a regulatory cost; it is what it costs to be the company that got caught instead of the company that acted. The fix applies in Alabama, under that one settlement. The alarm, on the executive's own account, was not about Alabama; it was about the harms themselves, severe enough to need fixing regardless of who was suing.

... Continued on Page F122

"Read the page top to bottom and notice what connects it: somebody priced something you thought was yours — your ballot, your checkup, your tank of gas — and mailed you the bill with a flag stamped on it. I started circling the good news. Still holding the pen."

— *Sal*

"Every story on this page is a success that hasn't been explained to you properly yet."

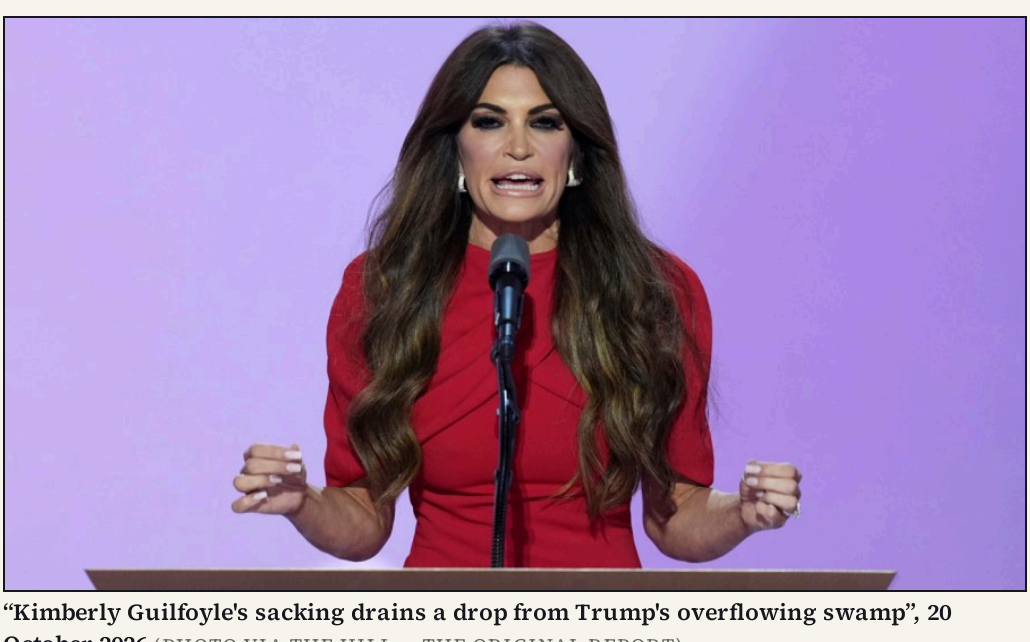
— *Chip*

Snow held the fox's prints till the thaw,
while the farmer mended the door.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Trump calls fired ambassador's work 'good,' says he 'didn't like what we were reading'

By **MORT**
THE RECORDS BUREAU



"Kimberly Guilfoyle's sacking drains a drop from Trump's overflowing swamp", 20 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The White House asked Ambassador Kimberly Guilfoyle to resign October 13 after a donor said her bill bought access.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The public does not get a vote on who becomes an ambassador, and here the only accountability that surfaced came from a donor's interview, not a watchdog or a hearing.

WHAT'S NEXT. No hearing, inquiry or replacement nomination has been scheduled; as of October 20, the ambassador's post to Greece sits open with no date set to fill it.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The ambassadorship of Kimberly Guilfoyle to the Hellenic Republic died this month, survived by a $100,000 credit card bill, a donor's on-the-record account, and her own denial of what he said. It is preceded in death by the fiction that the post was filled on credentials rather than on her four years engaged to Donald Trump Jr.

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...(cont) Five days later, on a Tuesday, the White House announced it had asked Guilfoyle to resign, ending what the Guardian called "the diplomatic career of one of Trump's longest-standing political allies." Reporters were told Trump and Secretary of State Rubio were furious over the reports. That same Tuesday, asked about the decision, Trump told the press Guilfoyle "was doing a good job" — and in the next breath explained he was removing her anyway because the administration "didn't like what we were reading." The relationship that helped get her the posting and the sentence that ended it arrived from the same mouth, on the same day.

Guilfoyle has denied the allegations. The denial survives her. It is, for now, traveling alone.

This week The Hill filed the posting's death notice under a headline about plumbing: Guilfoyle's sacking, it wrote, "drains a drop from Trump's overflowing swamp." Penny-ante, in the old word for it. The swamp the posting was supposedly draining is, by the paper's own account, still overflowing; one potato came out, and the water level did not move.

In lieu of flowers, the State Department is asked to publish, in writing, the standard by which an ambassador is chosen, so the next appointment can be checked against something sturdier than a family tree.

"Guilfoyle got the embassy because she used to date the boss's kid, and she nearly lost it trying to turn access to his administration into cash for her own credit card bill. Trump didn't fire her over the money; he fired her over the headlines about the money, and he said so himself in the same breath he called her work good. One small potato comes off the plate, and the rest of the swamp keeps eating."

— Sal

"This was a personnel matter, nothing more — the President said himself he just didn't like what he was reading, and reading habits aren't corruption, they're taste. Nobody's shown the money ever actually moved, so at most you've got an ambassador networking a little too creatively. Did I just call offering government access for a credit card payoff "networking"? That doesn't sound like me."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

But: The White House ballroom was announced at $200 million and now costs $400 million; the East Wing was demolished for it *Fortune, 6 April 2026*

Kimberly Guilfoyle's sacking drains a drop from Trump's overflowing swamp

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *08:30 EDT*

Guilfoyle is small potatoes.

~~Trump speaks on Kimberly Guilfoyle resignation: 'We didn't like what we were reading' – video~~

Trump's administration pushed out his ambassador over an alleged credit-card bribery scheme

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *14:12 EDT*

When asked about the decision to request US ambassador Kimberly Guilfoyle's resignation, Donald Trump told the press she 'was doing a good job' but that the administration 'didn't like what we were reading', referring to allegations that Guilfoyle had asked a Trump donor to pay her credit card bill. Guilfoyle, who was once engaged to...

Trump distances himself from Kimberly Guilfoyle as she denies allegations

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *09:10 EDT*

Kimberly Guilfoyle resigned as U.S. ambassador to Greece amid allegations she offered access to the Trump administration in return for help paying off her debt. President Trump is distancing himself from Guilfoyle, who was engaged to Donald Trump Jr.

~~'It Was All Quid Pro Quo': GOP Donor Goes on the Record to Accuse Kimberly Guilfoyle of Corruption~~

GOP donor: Guilfoyle offered Trump-world access for a $100,000 Amex payoff, texts show

Common Dreams § *10:51 EDT*

A former Republican congressional candidate and donor to President Donald Trump's campaign went on the record Thursday to level allegations of corruption against Kimberly Guilfoyle, the Trump-appointed US Ambassador to Greece. Appearing on ABC News' "Good Morning America," Eric Deters said that Guilfoyle offered him access to top...

Kimberly Guilfoyle ousted as US ambassador to Greece after alleged misconduct

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *14:16 EDT*

White House told Guilfoyle, who is alleged to have sought a bill payment from a Trump donor, to resign from post Kimberly Guilfoyle is stepping down as US ambassador to Greece after weeks of reports that she sought payment from a Trump donor in exchange for access to administration officials. The decision, announced by the White House on...

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

Cornell disputes what the sorority sister heard the president say, while paying a lawyer to review it

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER



"Cornell's Jane Doe Sent Letter to Faculty Senate Ahead of Vote", 20 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Cornell disputed a sexual-assault survivor's account of a conversation she heard about secondhand, in a letter sent before a no-confidence vote.

WHO GETS PAID. Cornell's administration buys cover: it is paying a former deputy attorney general to review the very case it is publicly disputing.

WHAT SLIPS. The faculty senate votes on confidence in the president before the review Cornell itself commissioned has reported a single finding.

WHAT'S NEXT. The faculty senate's no-confidence vote is on the calendar next; the outside review Cornell commissioned has not reported anything yet.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On October 6th, a Cornell labor historian named Paul Ortiz filed a no-confidence resolution against the university's administration, citing how the school had handled an alleged 2024 gang rape at the Chi Phi fraternity house. The same day, Cornell announced it had hired Sally Yates, a former deputy attorney general, to review how it handles sexual misconduct claims — including the case the no-confidence vote was about.

Three days later, students across the country held a national day of action for the woman at the center of that case, known in her lawsuit as Jane Doe. The broadcast covering it carried a title, not a verdict, just a title: "Entire System of Cornell University Failed Her."...

...(cont) On October 14th, the faculty senate convened and questioned the president directly. NBC News obtained an audio recording of the meeting; the questions were sharp enough, and the scrutiny close enough, that the network built a story out of the tape alone.

In it she said she had heard about an exchange between the university's president and her sorority sister, and that hearing about it left her feeling unsupported. She did not describe a conversation she had with the president. She described one she heard about, between the president and someone else, about her.

Cornell's response to that letter was to dispute her account of a conversation she was not even a party to.

That is where the month lands: a university reviewing, through an outside lawyer it is paying, whether it failed a woman, while contesting — on the record, in writing, to the body about to vote on its president — what she says she was told secondhand about what the president said about her.

The faculty senate still has its vote ahead. The review Cornell commissioned has not reported anything yet. What is already on paper is a denial issued in the same month as the audit, aimed at the same case the audit exists to examine, delivered to the same room that gets to vote, next, on whether it still has confidence in the president.

"They hired a lawyer to find out if they covered up a rape case, and in the same month they're calling a woman a liar about something she never even said happened to her face to face — she heard it secondhand, from her sorority sister, about the guy whose job is on the line. That's not a review, that's a press release with a billable rate attached, and the faculty senate votes on his job before anybody outside Cornell sees a page of it."

— Sal

"Cornell is doing exactly what an institution should do when allegations surface — it brought in outside counsel, a former deputy attorney general, to review the record independently. That a letter disputes one detail of the account doesn't undercut the review; if anything it shows the administration isn't just accepting every claim at face value, which is— actually, I should probably stop there."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

"Entire System of Cornell University Failed Her": Jane Doe Gang Rape Case Enrages Campus Community

Democracy Now! § *08:45 EDT*

University students across the United States held a national day of action in solidarity with "Jane Doe," the anonymous former student whose lawsuit alleging she was gang-raped by seven Cornell University Chi Phi fraternity members in 2024 has reignited outrage over how campuses and local law enforcement mishandle sexual assault cases...

Cornell's Jane Doe Sent Letter to Faculty Senate Ahead of Vote

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *11:43 EDT*

In a letter, the former student said she felt "unsupported" after hearing about an exchange between the school president and her sorority sister. Officials disputed her account of the conversation.

Cornell president faces contentious faculty senate meeting over Jane Doe allegations

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *16:35 EDT*

Cornell University's president was met with scrutiny and sharp questions from its faculty senate Wednesday, when the group convened to discuss a no-confidence vote over the university's handling of an alleged 2024 sexual assault at a fraternity house, according to an audio recording obtained by NBC News.

· Cornell faculty prepare no-confidence vote against administration *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Cornell taps Sally Yates to lead review of its response to sexual misconduct claims *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

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France arrests the watchlisted militant it blamed for the fire, curfewing the country into Le Pen's win.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION



“Limoges Town Hall 'largely lost' after far-left rioters set historic building on fire amid French unrest”, 17 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. France arrested a far-left militant already on a government watchlist for burning down a 140-year-old town hall.

WHO GETS PAID. Marine Le Pen's far-right party is positioned to benefit from the curfews that followed the arrest.

WHAT SLIPS. The curfews now reach whole cities, with no court test yet of whether that lockdown fits the single arrest behind it.

WHAT'S NEXT. The next marker is whether Prime Minister Lecornu lifts the overnight curfews now that he says the protests have cooled, or keeps them running as France's political calendar turns.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My nephew Anthony is two years into law school, and I called him about a parking ticket, which isn't his specialty, but he let me talk anyway. I asked him what it actually takes to put a person's name on a government watchlist, and what it takes to get it off. He said he'd look into it and call back. I'm still waiting, which might tell you something about watchlists, or just about nephews.

I bring it up because France has had people on a watchlist for a while now, and this week one of them got arrested....

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Here's where I wish Anthony would call back. So you had a government naming a movement its own people missed. Does that sound like a government that already knew who it was dealing with, or one still catching up?

Ultra-left, the Post said — the government's own label, landing on a real person this time, for a building that stood since before anybody's great-grandmother was born.

I walk my dog past a corner store most mornings, and Hassan, who runs it, keeps a short list behind the register of people told not to come back, mostly over one incident each. Four names. If one of those four walked in and did something, Hassan would be right to point at his list. But four names isn't every customer who's come through his door, and it isn't a reason to lock the door on the other four hundred who had nothing to do with it. So which is France's curfew closer to — the four names, or the other four hundred?

Because there are curfews now, overnight, in Paris and other cities — ABC News has Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu crediting them, this week, for a measure of calm. Calm's a fine thing. My family isn't against it.

Actually — hold on, one more thing, now that I think of it. The same reporting that has France's spies missing this movement also has Marine Le Pen, this same week, calling for an end to what she terms anarchic immigration, positioned — the Washington Examiner's word, not mine — to benefit from exactly this stretch of curfews. The watchlisted man is real. The fire is real. The curfew is real. So once the lockdown lifts, whose name is left standing in the street it cleared?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

France arrested one man already on its own watchlist for burning down a 140-year-old town hall, then curfewed the cities around him. That is not intelligence catching an arsonist, it is a government building the one conviction it needed to run a lockdown it already wanted. A curfew needs a monster to make the order feel earned, so they produced the one already on file; the curfew that followed reaches people that file does not name, which is the part doing the real work, because an empty street after dark reads as safety right up until you notice who is still out in it, filming for Marine Le Pen's next poll — and the last door locked tonight over a fire this house had nothing to do with is your own front door.

“They told us it was an ultra-left plot the government's own intelligence failed to foresee, and one of them really did burn down a 140-year-old town hall — so that part checks out. The curfews now sitting on cities across France aren't punishing that guy, they're clearing the field for Marine Le Pen. An intelligence service that missed the riot still managed to hand the far right the win.”
— Sal

“This proves exactly what we said from day one — it was an ultra-left militant, the watchlist confirms it, case closed. The curfews aren't political, they're restoring order, and if that happens to poll well for Le Pen, well, facts are facts. Did I say Le Pen benefits? I didn't mean that — order just happens to look like something.”
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *France arrests hundreds over riots its own intelligence missed, and positions the far right to cash in.* By Lou · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *French officials blame the riots on the ultra-left, then admit their own intelligence failed to see them coming.* By Lou · the evening edition, 19 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Limoges Town Hall 'largely lost' after far-left rioters set historic building on fire amid French unrest

Fox News RIGHT § *18:56 EDT*

Rioters set fire to the historic Limoges Town Hall, collapsing its roof and destroying much of the landmark as France's protests rage on.

France protests cool after overnight curfews in Paris, major cities, PM says

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *07:43 EDT*

French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu credited overnight curfews in Paris and other major cities for providing a measure of calm.

~~Violent rioters flood the streets of France, burning buildings and looting luxury goods stores~~

550,000 protest the cost of living and education. Macron's answer: 'Let them come and get me.'

New York Post RIGHT § *16:06 EDT*

Protests in France have spread across the country with massive demonstrations against the cost of education and the cost of living with buildings set on fire and high-price shops vandalized.

Far-left French rioter on national securty watchlist busted over fire that gutted historic town hall

New York Post RIGHT § *08:48 EDT*

An "ultra-left" militant who was already on a security watchlist has been arrested for the devastating fire that gutted a 140-year-old city hall during ongoing riots across France, according to officials.

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Rubio says Patriots weren't 'deliberately denied'; Zelensky asks for the ones Washington still won't release.

By LOU

ONE MORE QUESTION

"Bipartisan senators ask Pentagon to answer for Ukraine Starlink restrictions", 16 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Secretary of State Rubio told Ukraine's president that the U.S. did not deliberately deny Ukraine anything.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Bipartisan senators who demanded Pentagon answers on the Starshield block have not received a response, so congressional oversight is slipping.

WHAT'S NEXT. No hearing date is set. The Senate's bipartisan letter asking the Pentagon to explain the Starshield restriction, still unanswered, is the only marker on the calendar right now.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My nephew Anthony is in his second year of law school, contracts section, the kind of relative who will correct you on the difference between a promise and a term of art before the coffee's poured, and I have learned to let him, because he is usually right about the kind of thing he's right about.

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I read all that to Anthony. He said it sounded like a discovery problem — somebody has the answer, and the answer hasn't been produced. I don't know contract law.

Then Tuesday happened.

Secretary Rubio spent forty-five minutes on the phone with Zelensky, the New York Post says, to tell him that nothing had been "deliberately denied." The same day, in India, Rubio told reporters the delay was because "we have our own needs too." Is holding something back for your own needs the same as not denying anything on purpose?

Zelensky had more to say that same day. He told the Guardian that Washington gave no warning before a Russian missile barrage hit power plants in Kyiv Sunday night — his air force spokesman said eleven o'clock came and went with nothing. On CBS, the same day, he asked for something specific — not new weapons, interceptor missiles European countries had already bought, sitting somewhere, that Washington still hasn't released.

I went out to the garage that night because the porch light needed a bulb and I didn't trust myself with the stepladder in the dark. My neighbor Carl has had my torque wrench — good one, the click kind — going on two months. When I asked for it back he told me he never said I couldn't have it, he just hadn't gotten around to finding it. It's sitting in his garage right now, as far as I know. He's not denying me anything. He also doesn't have the wrench in my hand.

Anthony had his keys out Thursday morning, halfway to the car, when I knocked on the window — one more thing, I said, before you go — because I'd been saving a line from back in September I hadn't read him yet. The Hill, September 25th: Zelensky saying the president had given the "final OK" on the Patriot license, "concrete agreements," his own words, three weeks before the Secretary of State called to say that nothing had been deliberately denied.

So was there an agreement, or wasn't there?

"They say nothing was "deliberately" withheld — the word's doing all the lifting while the Patriots Europe already paid for sit wherever they're sitting, and nobody in Kyiv got a warning before the missiles hit the power plants. That's not a technical delay, that's a choice, and the people paying for both ends of it already wrote the check."

— Sal

"Look, the Secretary was crystal clear, nothing was denied, we just have our own needs — Pentagon needs, allied needs, it's called sequencing, not withholding. Did I say withholding? Forget I said that — the point is sovereign nations prioritize, and prioritizing isn't the same as denying, except for the part where Ukraine still doesn't have the Patriots."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Purge spares senator bribery probe; his namesake sanctions law waived next, Tillis calls it 'beyond irresponsible'* By Mitch · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *Trump's purge spares Graham a bribery probe; weeks later, Trump spares Russia his own sanctions law.* By Mitch · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *Pentagon withholds NATO-paid Patriots with no explanation; a congressman vows to be 'fully accountable'* By The Wrecking Crew · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *Trump administration denies any pause in intelligence sharing with Ukraine for the second time in six days.* By Lou · the evening edition, 19 October 2026
- *Rubio tells Zelensky to end the war Putin is settling with Trump and Xi without him.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 19 October 2026
- *Treasury insists Russia got no sanctions relief, just a waiver pausing the sanctions.* By Lou · the evening edition, 19 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*

Bipartisan senators ask Pentagon to answer for Ukraine Starlink restrictions

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *18:20 EDT*

{beacon} Technology Technology The Big Story GOP senators press Pentagon over Starlink restrictions in Ukraine Four Republican senators joined their Democratic colleagues in pressing the Trump administration for information about whether Pentagon officials ordered restrictions on Ukraine's access to the satellite-based Starshield...

~~Volodymyr Zelensky openly defies Trump's ban on Russian oil refinery strikes, Ukraine will resume attacks: 'We're done'~~

Russia broke Trump's cease-fire first. Ukraine just said it's dead.

New York Post RIGHT § *10:29 EDT*

"The block is out. We're done," Zelensky told the Financial Times during a London visit.

~~Rubio tells Zelensky nothing 'deliberately denied' Ukraine as tensions with US grow~~

Rubio denies 'deliberately' cutting Ukraine's intel access amid reported gaps

New York Post RIGHT § *09:48 EDT*

Secretary of State Marco Rubio sought to reassure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky about US support during a 45-minute call Tuesday amid friction over alleged gaps in intelligence sharing and throttling of Starshield access.

US gave us no warning of Russian strikes on Kyiv power plants, Zelenskyy says

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *02:47 EDT*

Ukrainian president accuses Washington of 'denial of reality' in continuing row with Trump over apparent support for Moscow Ukraine did not receive a warning from the US about an impending Russian missile attack on Sunday evening, Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said, reviving concerns that Washington is withholding intelligence to bully Kyiv...

Trump attacks Ukraine's Zelensky after he says 'we're done' with energy cease-fire: 'That's a disgrace'

New York Post RIGHT § *06:46 EDT*

President Trump lashed out at his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in a Thursday TV interview after Zelensky said Ukraine was "done" honoring Trump's demand.

Rubio defends delayed Patriot shipments to Ukraine: 'We have our own needs too'

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *10:40 EDT*

Secretary of State Marco Rubio hit back at accusations that the United States was holding back Patriot interceptor shipments out of spite, instead saying the U.S. was balancing its own needs and those of other allies. Speaking to reporters Tuesday during a trip to India, Rubio addressed the growing crisis in relations between Ukraine and...

Zelenskyy says if Trump can't stop Putin, help Ukraine do it

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *09:26 EDT*

Ukraine's leader calls on Trump to allow delivery of interceptor missiles already purchased by European allies if the U.S. "cannot rein Putin in."

GOP senators press Pentagon over Ukraine's loss of Starshield data

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *06:00 EDT*

Four Republican senators have joined their Democratic colleagues in pressing the Trump administration for information about whether Pentagon officials ordered restrictions on Ukraine's access to the satellite-based Starshield network, which Ukrainian officials said limited their ability to intercept Russian drones. Ukraine needs access...

· Zelensky says Trump gave final OK on Patriot license for Ukraine *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

THE WAIVER

Purge spares senator bribery probe; his namesake sanctions law waived next, Tillis calls it 'beyond irresponsible'

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS

"Trump Gives Putin an 'Economic Lifeline,' Waives Sanctions on Russia", 17 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA COMMON DREAMS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. On 17 October, Trump waived Russia sanctions from the law named for Senator Graham.

WHO GETS PAID. Russia's sanctioned energy sector keeps selling into European gas markets.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress's sanctions law stops binding the president who signed it.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the waiver holds, Russia keeps the exemption while the war continues; that is what Yemen got after Congress's override failed on 2 May 2019: U.S. support continued 21 more months.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On 19 September the president signed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, the sanctions law that carried the late senator's name two months after he died. On 17 October, the night before those sanctions were due to bind anyone, he signed an executive order waiving them.

Three days later, ProPublica's reporting on an FBI purge ran under a headline that needed no interpretation. In full, it read: "How Trump's FBI Purge Saved Lindsey Graham and James Clyburn From a Bribery Investigation." All together now — an FBI purge, two sitting lawmakers, a bribery investigation, saved. That is ProPublica's sentence, not ours; we are only reading it back clause by clause, the way the agency wrote it....

...(cont) The waiver did not move quietly through the president's own party. That same week, Senator Thom Tillis called it "beyond irresponsible" — not the opposition's description, his own caucus's. The New York Times reported the administration was floating a separate lifeline alongside it: more Russian gas sales into Europe, the exact market the sanctions law existed to choke off.

Today the same senator went further. Tillis told reporters that Vladimir Putin is "playing President Trump like a fiddle," pointing to the president's own shift away from Ukraine as his evidence. Putin's stated reason for the invasion, Tillis said on the record, is a lie. Tillis added that "history" will not judge the president well if he abandons an ally under that pressure.

Line the dates up and the sequence writes itself. A law named for a Republican senator, signed by a Republican president, waived by that same president the night before it bound him, denounced by his own party in sharper language than the opposition used, now explained by a second Republican senator as the direct result of a foreign adversary working the president in real time. Nothing on this page invented a word of it. The document is the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. The waiver is dated 17 October. The quotes are dated 17 October and today. Read the dates in order; they do the rest of the work themselves.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

THE LAW CARRIES A DEAD SENATOR'S NAME, AND THE PRESIDENT SIGNED IT ONE MONTH before he waived it, the night before it would have bound him. That isn't an exemption, it's the White House writing the obituary twice, once for respect and once for revenue. Because the FBI purge took the investigators with it and the sanctions on the same desk went next, the price at pump six on Thursday still tracks the Kremlin's math, not the law with his name on it.

"They put a dead senator's name, Graham's, on a sanctions law so it polls good, and then the guy who signed it waives it before it ever bites — that's not policy, that's a loophole wearing a eulogy. Tillis is out there saying Putin's playing the president like a fiddle, and he's not wrong, but somebody still signed the order that keeps the gas money flowing east. You can't fund the fire department and the arsonist off the same desk and act surprised when it's your block that burns again come winter."

— Sal

"The President has broad national-security waiver authority written right into that same law — did I say 'that same law'? I mean the law critics keep calling 'his own law,' which, fine, technically it is his own law. He submitted a report to Congress laying out the national-interest rationale, that's the process working exactly as designed. Senator Tillis is a respected voice, sure, but one senator's fiddle metaphor isn't a foreign policy brief, it's a metaphor, and last I checked those don't get waived or signed."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Trump's purge spares Graham a bribery probe; weeks later, Trump spares Russia his own sanctions law.* By Mitch · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *Pentagon withholds NATO-paid Patriots with no explanation; a congressman vows to be 'fully accountable'* By The Wrecking Crew · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *Trump administration denies any pause in intelligence sharing with Ukraine for the second time in six days.* By Lou · the evening edition, 19 October 2026
- *Rubio tells Zelensky to end the war Putin is settling with Trump and Xi without him.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 19 October 2026
- *Treasury insists Russia got no sanctions relief, just a waiver pausing the sanctions.* By Lou · the evening edition, 19 October 2026
- *Trump waives his own Russia sanctions the night before they take effect, and hours later more than 320 drones hit Ukraine's grid.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 18 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~Trump faces bipartisan backlash over waiving Russia sanctions~~

Trump waived sanctions that refill Russia's pocketbooks. Its war on Ukraine continues.

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *08:29 EDT*

President Trump is defending his decision to waive sanctions, which will refill Russia's pocketbooks as it attacks Ukraine.

~~Trump Gives Putin an 'Economic Lifeline,' Waives Sanctions on Russia~~

Trump waives sanctions built to choke Putin's war funding, offers no reason why

Common Dreams § *09:53 EDT*

President Donald Trump on Friday signed an executive order that waived new sanctions on Russia that were set to take effect thanks to bipartisan legislation signed into law by the president last month. Trump justified the decision by claiming the sanctions waiver "is in the national interests of the United States," without offering...

Putin makes Trump dance as his useful Muppet

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *13:45 EDT*

President Donald Trump's greatest delusion is that he is a superior president to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson. Perhaps Trump's second-greatest delusion is that Russian President Vladimir Putin respects him. Putin has repeatedly proven his disdain for the president, most recently with an assassination plot in...

But: Trump said he'd settle the Russia-Ukraine war within 24 hours of meeting Putin and Zelensky – CNN counted 53 such promises. *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*

GOP lawmakers bash Trump's decision to waive Russia sanctions: 'Beyond irresponsible'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *09:23 EDT*

Several GOP lawmakers criticized President Trump's move to exempt Russia from the sanctions bill he signed law last month, with Sen. Thom Tillis (R- N.C.) calling the move "beyond irresponsible." Trump signed an executive order Friday evening to waive sanctions against Russia in a legislative package that was meant to put pressure on the...

But: "I'll meet with Putin. I'll meet with Zelensky... And within 24 hours, that war will be settled" - Trump, 10 May 2023 *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*

Tillis: 'Putin is playing President Trump like a fiddle'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *09:20 EDT*

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) said Russian President Vladimir Putin is playing President Trump "like a fiddle" by shifting U.S.

~~Trump waives Russia sanctions ordered by law named for Lindsey Graham~~

Trump waived the Russia sanctions he signed into law last month

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *23:09 EDT*

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday that waived the sweeping Russian sanctions and tariffs enacted by the bill championed by the late Sen. Lindsey Graham. Trump signed the Lindsey O.

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

CBO prices war at $38 billion, calls it conservative; farmers get $8 billion relief for its fuel costs.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Trump announces $8B relief program for farmers", 20 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Trump announced a new farm aid program to cover diesel fuel costs during a Kansas campaign rally.

WHO GETS PAID. Senator Roger Marshall's reelection campaign, the rally stop where Trump delivered the aid announcement as his midterm pitch in Kansas.

WHAT SLIPS. No vote in Congress ties this relief payment to the war that created the fuel costs it covers.

WHAT'S NEXT. If Congress keeps taking no vote on the war's funding, the costs keep compounding unchecked; that is what Washington got after December 24, 2025: the 2001 war authorization still stood with no vote since.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On September 15th, the Congressional Budget Office closed its books on the war with Iran and priced it at $38 billion. The office called the number conservative. In accounting, conservative means the number has room above it and none below.

Thirteen days later, on September 28th, the Oval Office opened on a different ledger. The president announced a $15 billion steel plant for Iowa, the largest in the nation's history. Two days after that, on September 30th, South Korea pledged up to $200 billion for American energy: an Alaska gas pipeline, a Texas power plant, eight new nuclear power plants. Two announcements, $215 billion, inside of 48 hours....

...(cont) Seven days after the South Korea pledge, on October 7th, the Guardian went back to Iowa to check the foundation. Zero is how much of it has broken ground.

On Monday night, the ledger came back to the war's side of the page. In Kansas, stumping for Senator Roger Marshall, the president announced the Harvest Fuel Relief Program: $8 billion in aid for farmers hurt by record diesel prices, the same diesel the war helped set the price of. The Agriculture Department will run the payments.

Here is the reconciliation, hon. The war cost $38 billion, by the government's own conservative count. The extra energy costs charged to households during that war already run to $121 billion. Against that bill, the relief check covers about six point six cents on the dollar. The other $215 billion promised this fall for American jobs has a groundbreaking date of never-yet. The $8 billion has a disbursement date of now. One column of this ledger gets announcements. The other gets invoices. The farmer in Kansas is being handed the invoice column and told it's a check.

"This is the oldest switch in the book: price the war low, pay the farmer back lower, and call the gap relief. Marshall's up for reelection and the check clears in Kansas right before the midterms — that's not generosity, that's rent for a vote. Watch who cashes it and who's still holding $121 billion in higher bills."

— Sal

"Look, the Harvest Fuel Relief Program is real support for real farmers — eight billion dollars going straight to the people who grow this country's food. The Iowa steel plant, the Korea energy deal, those investments are still in the pipeline, pun intended — did I say pipeline? That doesn't sound like me, but the jobs are coming, folks, they're coming."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *With the war priced at $38 billion by its own budget office and $121 billion in extra energy costs charged to households, the House went home a day early for a seven-week recess.* By The Wrecking Crew · the midnight edition, 4 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: The 2025 reconciliation law cut SNAP by $187 billion - the largest cut in the program's history - and SNAP feeds one in five American children *Congressional Budget Office estimate, via CBPP SNAP tracker*

Trump announces $8B relief program for farmers

The Hill MAINSTREAM $ *22:10 EDT*

President Trump announced Monday that a new $8 billion program will help provide temporary relief to farmers during the harvest season. Trump announced the Harvest Fuel Relief Program during his rally in Kansas stumping for GOP Sen. Roger Marshall, who is running for reelection in a competitive race against his Democratic opponent Adam...

But: The 2025 reconciliation law cut SNAP by $187 billion - the largest cut in the program's history, feeding one in five American children *Congressional Budget Office estimate, via CBPP SNAP tracker*

WATCH: Trump announces fuel relief for farmers

ABC News MAINSTREAM $ *04:25 EDT*

President Donald Trump took his midterm pitch to Kansas Monday night, announcing a new fuel relief program for farmers facing record-high diesel prices.

But: The 2025 reconciliation law cut SNAP by $187 billion — the largest cut in the program's history, feeding one in five American children *Congressional Budget Office estimate, via CBPP SNAP tracker*

Trump Announces $8 Billion Plan to Cover Farm Losses

The New York Times MAINSTREAM $ *05:13 EDT*

Under the Harvest Fuel Relief program, the Agriculture Department will provide economic aid for farmers hurt by high diesel prices.

· Skepticism mires Trump's Iowa steel plant project: 'Promises are not the same as jobs' *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· WATCH LIVE: Trump announces $15 billion Iowa steel project *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· South Korea to invest up to $200B in Alaska LNG pipeline, US power plants, Trump announces *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· U.N. experts say U.S. may have committed war crimes with 2 Iran strikes *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump Says 'Big Decision' Coming on Whether to 'Annihilate' Iran *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Pentagon No. 3 frustrates senators in closed-door briefing on Iran war, Trump defense strategy *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Senate Democrats, minus Fetterman, urge Hegseth to provide receipt for Iran war costs *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth on "devastation" to Iran's capabilities *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Trump admits Iran war will not end before midterms *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Iran War Trump Said Would Be Quick Has Now Lasted 6 Months With 'No End In Sight' *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· CBO Finds Trump's Iran War Has Already Cost Nearly $40 Billion—And That's a 'Conservative' Estimate *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Tillis supports Hegseth impeachment resolution: 'He needs to go' *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie Files Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth for Illegal Iran War, Boat Murders *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Massie launches effort to impeach Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Tillis urges Trump to fire Hegseth over 'inept management' of military *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Tillis renews calls for Hegseth's firing after Driscoll's departure: 'I have never witnessed more inept management' *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says farmers are "all just in survival mode" *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says "I can't stay in business" amid rising costs *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie says he's convinced enough Republicans to pass Epstein Files II discharge petition *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie names Epstein 'coconspirators,' discusses new Epstein files legislation *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Read Thomas Massie's eight impeachment charges against Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Fake Republican midterm convention site still redirects to Epstein files *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Trump says he has a 'big decision' coming up on Iran: 'Do I want to go in and annihilate them' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Fox News Poll: 71% think Trump administration lacks plan to end Iran war *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran recently downed at least 2 American drones, officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Big Oil Stocks Surged Due to Iran War—and New Filings Show How President Trump Cashed In *from the morgue, 27 Aug 2026*

· Live updates: Energy secretary downplays rising gas prices as US, Iran trade strikes *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· U.S. Strike on Iranian School May Have Been War Crime, U.N. Report Says *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN Inquiry Finds US Strike on Minab, Iran That Killed 123 Children Was War Crime *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN investigators conclude 'reasonable grounds' to believe certain US strikes in Iran were war crimes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN Suspects US War Crimes in Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· US Condemned for 'War Crimes' After Bombing of Wedding Party in Iran *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· US investigating if missile hit Iranian wedding ceremony, killing 4 *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Trump says he has a 'big decision coming up' on Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· White House issues explosive response to UN-backed report claiming US committed war crimes against world's No.1 sponsor of terror, Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Human rights experts: 'Reasonable grounds' to believe US committed war crimes with Iran strikes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· US Energy Consumers Have Spent $121 Billion Extra Since Trump Launched Iran War: Moody's *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran downed at least 2 American drones in recent days, U.S. officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran: Account of US Air Force colonel's rescue 'fictional' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Burden of Trump Iran War Exceeds $100 Billion as Oil Prices Pass $100 a Barrel *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· 'A Serious and Alarming Threat': US Bombing, Blockade Deepen Iran Medical Crisis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Confidence Hits Lowest Level in Months as US Faces 'Trump's Reckless Tariffs and War With Iran' *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· U.S. Air Force officer rescued from Iran speaks for the first time to 60 Minutes *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Rep. Thomas Massie forcing vote on Pete Hegseth's impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Did Johnson Just Adjourn Congress for 7 Weeks to Avoid Massie's Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth? *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· The Hitchhiker's Guide to Massie saying Johnson is sending the House home early to prevent Hegseth impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'You're Elected to Fight and Kill the Other Side': How Congress Lost Its Way *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Army combat veteran challenging Mike Lawler calls Hegseth national security 'hazard,' backs impeachment *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Former Air Force secretary says he 'couldn't serve' in Trump administration *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Former Air Force secretary: Hegseth's Pentagon 'dysfunctional' *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· House Republicans split over leaving Washington early for campaign trail *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Since 2025, Trump Made More Stock Trades Than All 535 Congress Members Combined *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Fossil Fuel Advertising Contracts Hit Record High as Big Oil Pockets Billions From Iran War *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'How are we gonna get through this?' Many Americans are struggling as prices rise *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Trump's Top Oil Stocks Have Made Him Up to $4.4 Million Richer During Iran War: Analysis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· 'Trump Did It!': At $5.85 a Gallon, Diesel Price Hits All-Time High in US Thanks to War on Iran *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Gas prices reach Labor Day high amid Iran war *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Trump Hammered Over Iran War That Drove Gas Prices Above $4 Per Gallon Every Day in August for First Time Ever *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

· Warsh under pressure as Fed weighs rate hike *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Inflation held at 3.4% in August in consumer price index, creating tough choice for Warsh Fed *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· Warsh indicates Fed could raise rates to cool inflation *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· Key U.S. Bond Rate Near 20-Year High as Oil Prices Keep Climbing *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· 10-year Treasury yield hits highest level since 2007, oil surges above $105 as Fed expected to hike interest rates *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Benchmark mortgage rate hits 14-month high as bond yields keep rising *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Benchmark mortgage rate hits highest mark in over a year *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Goldman Sachs warns oil prices could hit $120 as U.S. fuel costs surge *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Massie Moves to Force Impeachment Vote Against Hegseth, Citing Civilian Deaths *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· GOP Rep Thomas Massie introduces 8 articles of impeachment against War Secretary Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Republican Rep. Massie moves to impeach Defense Secretary Hegseth over Iran war *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Thomas Massie Forces Vote To Impeach Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Pete Hegseth Faces Growing Criticism as War With Iran Rolls On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth Quietly Extends Middle East Troop Deployments Into 2027 as Iran War Drags On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Costco imposes purchase limits on motor oil, hikes prices by nearly double *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· As gas averages $4.31 nationwide, diesel fuel hits all-time high: "It's painful. It's real hard" *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Costco Raises Motor Oil Price, Caps Customer Purchases As Iran War Drags On *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· 'Can't Message That Away': GOP Frets as Trump Administration Desperately Spins Record-High Diesel Prices *from the morgue, 5 Sep 2026*

· European Union member states agree to a natural gas price cap in an attempt to limit economic damage from the global energy crisis. The price cap can be triggered beginning on February 15, if for thre *from the morgue, 19 Dec 2022*

· Spike on 10-year bond yields renews concerns over U.S. debt *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· 10-Year Treasury Yield Reaches 5%, Highest Level in Years *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Treasury reveals $6B in debt buybacks, triple the normal level – but markets slump *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Trump blames rise in diesel prices on Ukrainian strikes against Russian oil refineries *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Trump blames rising diesel price on Russia-Ukraine war *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· What Is Driving Diesel Prices Up? Energy Chaos Caused by Two Wars. *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

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THE INTERNAL MEMO

Executive wrote the harm was "severe enough" to fix; TikTok fixed it for $100 million in Alabama.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. TikTok executives ignored staff warnings that child-safety harms were severe enough to fix, court records show.

WHO GETS PAID. Alabama's state government, which collected $100 million in the settlement its attorney general announced on September 26th.

WHAT SLIPS. The public's only window into the warning was a state lawsuit; without one, the harm stays sealed inside company documents.

WHAT'S NEXT. No other state's lawsuit appears in these receipts yet; the only scheduled event on record was the Alabama trial the settlement avoided on September 26th.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

An executive at TikTok, writing in texts that surfaced in a trove of unreported court records made public this week, put it this way: "I have been fighting about fixing this for months with people who didn't think the harms are severe enough."

The problem did not stay internal. The number attached to it was $100 million minimum, plus a list of safety features TikTok agreed to build. Twenty-four days later, the NPR story landed, and with it the texts that explain why Alabama needed a lawsuit to get safety features a company's own staff had already asked for internally, for months, before anyone sued....

...(cont) So reconcile the ledger. The fix TikTok would not make on an employee's word, it made on a judge's docket, for $100 million minimum. That is not a regulatory cost; it is what it costs to be the company that got caught instead of the company that acted. The fix applies in Alabama, under that one settlement. The alarm, on the executive's own account, was not about Alabama; it was about the harms themselves, severe enough to need fixing regardless of who was suing.

Where does money move when it isn't buying child-safety features? On October 7th, an analysis counted 172 billionaire families' spending in the 2026 midterms: more than $1.7 billion, the most ever recorded for a midterm cycle, most of it routed through the super PACs Citizens United made legal. Thirteen days later, the TikTok filing ran. No receipt here ties the two ledgers to each other; the comparison is just the two numbers, dated and side by side: one company's price for getting caught, one election's price of admission.

That is the whole audit: the price of being asked nicely is zero. The price of being sued is $100 million. And the price of a midterm, this year, is $1.7 billion, paid in full, on time, no settlement required.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

AN EMPLOYEE WROTE IT DOWN: THE HARM WAS SEVERE ENOUGH TO FIX. THE COMPANY didn't fix it; it priced it. Alabama sued, so Alabama got the hundred million and the safety features; the other forty-nine states didn't file suit, so nothing changes yet for the version still running on the phone charging on your kid's nightstand tonight.

🍺

"An executive used the word "severe" in writing and the company still waited for a lawsuit to move before it touched the product. That's not a glitch, that's the business model: don't fix the harm, price the harm, and let Alabama collect the invoice. A hundred million sounds like a number until you remember $1.7 billion just bought a midterm, no settlement required."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, a settlement isn't an admission — TikTok didn't concede anything, they just agreed to pay the state and build the features and call it closed. Nothing here says the company knew and chose the product over the kids using it. ...did I say "chose the product over the kids"? That's not — let's just say the lawyers on both sides were satisfied with the number."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

TikTok staff raised child safety alarms. Court records show executives failed to act

NPR MAINSTREAM § *05:00 EDT*

The warnings surfaced in a trove of unreported court records. "I have been fighting about fixing this for months with people who didn't think the harms are severe enough," wrote one executive.

· Alabama wins $100 million and concessions in TikTok deal concerning child safety *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· 172 Billionaire Families Have Spent Record $1.7 Billion on 2026 Midterms So Far: Analysis *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

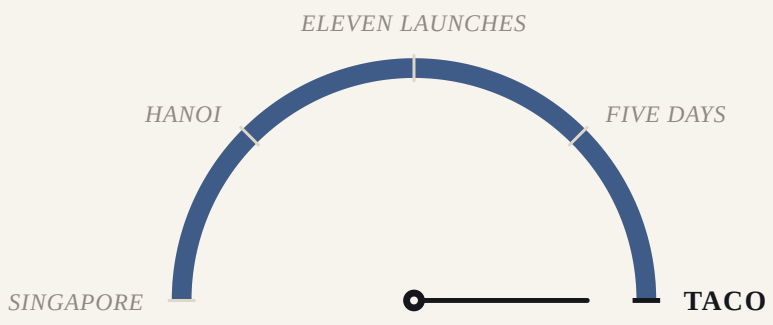
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§67 — 20 OCTOBER 2026

On fire and fury

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



TACO

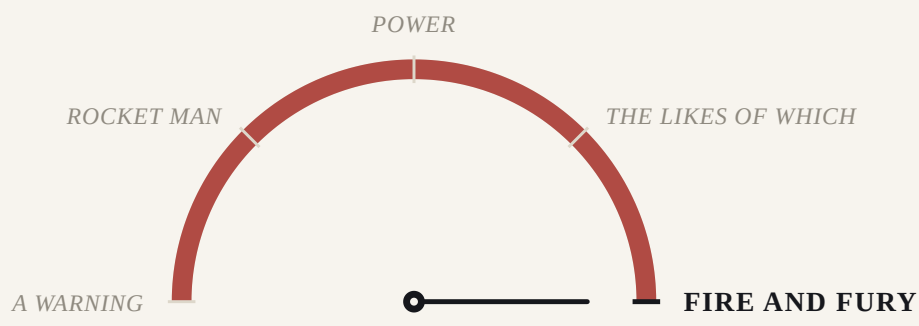
This year's fold came in capitals. August 16: "Based on the fact that it is too late to cancel, I have instructed Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, to substantially reduce the Joint Military Exercises!" — the annual drills with South Korea, cut to please Pyongyang. Seoul's defense ministry said the same day the drills were "proceeding as planned" [1]. Three days later the two militaries announced the compromise: Ulchi Freedom Shield shortened from eleven days to five, August 17 to 21, its second phase canceled [2]. The ally ran the exercise, and ran less of it.

The north kept its own schedule. On August 11 it fired what the South's joint chiefs counted as the eleventh ballistic missile launch of 2026 [3]. On August 20, as the shortened drills ended, it fired more than ten short-range missiles in one salvo [4]. Fire and fury, nine years on: the drills are shorter, the launches are in double digits for the year, and the rockets that got reduced were ours.

SOURCES

1. "I have instructed Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, to substantially reduce the Joint Military Exercises!"; Seoul's defense ministry: drills "proceeding as planned" — NBC News, 16 August 2026 ↑
2. Ulchi Freedom Shield cut from eleven days to five, 17–21 August, second phase canceled — Reuters via Military Times, 19 August 2026 ↑
3. The eleventh ballistic missile launch of 2026, per South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff — The Washington Post / AP, 11 August 2026 ↑
4. More than ten short-range ballistic missiles launched as the drills ended — Al Jazeera, 20 August 2026 ↑

REPUBLICAN



FIRE AND FURY

The sentence was delivered from a golf club in New Jersey on August 8, 2017, at a briefing about opioids, and it is worth having exactly: "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before" [1]. I'll grant the theory, because it is an old one: a small nuclear state is deterred by a large one only if the large one sounds willing. The insults that followed — "Little Rocket Man" — were the same volume knob.

What followed the volume was Singapore in June 2018 and Hanoi in February 2019, where the president walked out with no agreement and no follow-on [2]. The far end of this dial is the sentence itself, nine years old now. The needle has sat on it since, and the other side of the page has what it has been reading in the meantime.

SOURCES

1. "They will be met with fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before" — Bedminster, 8 August 2017 — NBC News ↑
2. The Singapore (June 2018) and Hanoi (February 2019) summits; Hanoi ended without a deal — Wikipedia, North Korea–United States summits ↑

"I brought the calendar. August 8, 2017 — fire and fury. June 2018 — Singapore. February 2019 — Hanoi, no deal, the plane leaves early. August 16, 2026 — "substantially reduce the Joint Military Exercises," his capitals. August 17 to 21 — the drills, five days instead of eleven. August 20 — more than ten missiles from the north, as the drills end. Excuse me, before you go — the fire and the fury, in nine years. Whose was it?" — Lou

🍺

"'Fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before." What the world saw was two summits, a walkout in Hanoi, and nine years later an order to shrink our own drills to please the guy with the missiles. The ally cut the exercise from eleven days to five. Pyongyang answered the last day with ten rockets. Fire and fury turned out to be the drills."

— Sal

🚬

"The president reduced the exercises as a gesture of friendship, the ally ran them anyway as a gesture of alliance, and North Korea launched missiles as a gesture of consistency — everybody in the region gestured, which is what stability looks like."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎