FROM § EACH

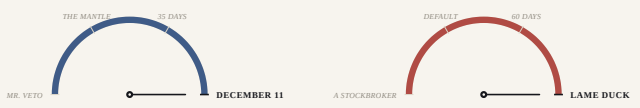
FIRST YEAR · TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION · FREE, FOREVER — EVERY CLAIM LINKED

THE WORD

§87 — 09 NOVEMBER 2026

On lame duck

DEMOCRAT — REPUBLICAN



DECEMBER 11 — LAME DUCK

"I rented from a fella who sold the building. He had till the first of the month, and that last week he signed a lot of paper. Legal, every sheet. I can't stop looking at a date, I'm sorry. December 11. That's when the money runs out this year. December 11, 2018, he said "I am proud to shut down the government." I checked it twice. His party had just lost the House. Thirty-five days. Sorry, one thing before you go. Fifty-five days for them, 803 for him. Which one is the lame duck?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W87

It took ICE years to catch killers abroad, a hack to catch the ones on its own payroll.



PHOTO: NEW YORK POST

BY MITCH
Investigations

Two press releases moved on the ICE wire this week, and both do the same work twice. In Los Angeles, agents picked up Farzad "Tony" Toutouni, an Iranian national ICE describes as driving flashy cars and partying with naked models between felonies dating back to 1989 — kidnapping, robbery, extortion. In New York, agents picked up a man ICE identifies as an illegal migrant from Uzbekistan who had admitted to murdering his girlfriend in Thailand in 2013 and was, by the agency's own account, shacking up in the city in plain sight. Both releases carry the same moral: the system finds the worst men eventually, and here is the proof, dated and bylined.

All together now — turn to the other file, the one ICE did not put out. The Washington Post spent the week going through immigration personnel records exposed in a DHS hack, and what it found is a review, not a press release: officers hired last year, fast, arrived with histories of violence and misconduct the agency's own vetting process did not catch.

So the agency that spent the week telling the public it finally caught two bad men who evaded capture for years is the same agency whose own paperwork says it is currently handing guns to some it never should have hired. ...

... Continued on Page T32

Venezuela's 'Gift to the American People' turns out to be addressed to Exxon.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Start with the entry, because the entry is dated. On August 30, the posted line read "a Gift from Venezuela to the People of the United States," and the Pentagon's book absorbed 35 percent of a nation's oil reserves under that heading. A gift, by the plain rule of any household ledger, costs the giver and costs the receiver nothing. Run the filing against the table and ask who held the deed the day before that gift arrived.

On September 1, Democracy Now! reported that the United States had struck a deal for majority control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's oil, nine months after the U.S. military removed President

... Continued on Page F139

THE FORECAST

On Thursday the White House made Stephen Miller its chief of staff. In August 2025 he told Fox News the Democratic Party "is not a political party. It is a domestic extremist organization."

The attorney general may put the Democratic Party on a domestic-terrorist list and send it to the desk Miller now runs. Federal agents may investigate the party's organizers as terrorists for "anti-capitalism" or "extremism on migration, race, and gender," the memo's own words, and the IRS may hand the nonprofits that pay them to prosecutors. If a state's police will not make the arrests, the president may send the Army to make them.

THE LAW. NSPM-7, Secs. 1, 2(j) and 3, 25 September 2025; 10 U.S.C. §252. No statute makes the list legal; the experts said so the week it was signed. Read it: NSPM-7, Sections 1 to 3 · 10 U.S.C. §252, the Insurrection Act: the armed forces "to enforce those laws", the president the judge of when.

What's next, the Army serving the warrants?

EARL | OPEN · THE SCORE

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE RATION LINE

Chapter 3: Three Prices, One Owner

Clear a space on the table. You have three pieces of paper now and I want them in a row. On the left, the wall of a Tehran bakery, with a sangak loaf at 155,000 rials by order of the provincial authorities as of June 23, 2026. In the middle, Article 12 of a law of January 2010, which sends "all income sources resulting from implementation of this law into a special account titled subsidy targeting account with the General Treasury." On the

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

Today

News, continued	A2
The Wire	A3
The Word	W87
Finance	F1
The Ledger	F2
The Business Desk	F3

SIX MONTHS LATE

Huang lobbied Trump to loosen China chip limits months before intelligence flagged the woman as a spy.



PHOTO: THE NEW YORK TIMES

BY LOU
One More Question

I had the page, I just didn't have the notebook open to it — give me a second. I keep two of these, and I grabbed the wrong one twice this morning before I found the one I wanted. Here. September 28th, I wrote it in red: Nvidia's board authorized another $150 billion to buy back the company's own stock, which brought the total they're allowed to spend buying themselves up to $235 billion. I put a question mark next to that

... Continued on Page F139

Russia increases strikes on Ukraine in the three days before sitting down to end the war.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Let's reconcile the calendar, because the calendar is where this one lives.

On November 3rd, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff posted that the United States would mediate working-level talks between Ukraine and Russia on November 10th and 11th in Abu Dhabi. Europe sat in neither room.

Europe got a room on November 8th, after Le Monde reported that European leaders were uneasy about a security framework Washington had floated covering Russia, Ukraine, and what the framework itself called all of Europe, without first telling Europe what the framework held. The seat arrived after the story ran, not before, hon.

On November 7th, three days before the delegations sat down, Zelenskyy said Russia was stepping up its attacks ahead of the talks. The fighting did not take those three days off.

Tuesday, November 10th, the talks opened in Abu Dhabi: American, Ukrainian

... Continued on Page F139

"Nothing up there is a conspiracy. That's the part that should worry you — it's all on the record, filed, stamped, and in a couple of cases notarized."

— Sal

LOST The starter home. Median new owner now 40 years old. *If found, please hold it another fifteen years.* — **Classifieds**

FOUND 299 mass shootings, year to date, and counting. *Owner not looking. Thoughts and prayers enclosed.* — **Classifieds**

FOUND 35 unpermitted gas turbines, running in a Black neighborhood in Memphis. *Cancer risk four times normal. No reward offered.* — **Classifieds**

"Nothing here is a scandal. A scandal requires surprise, and I can assure you nobody involved was surprised."

— Chip

The second winter, a man watched the pass. Salt came, and no cart brought it.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Venezuela's 'Gift to the American People' turns out to be addressed to Exxon.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



"Exxon Strikes Preliminary Deal to Return to Venezuela", 10 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

★ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by RUT

WHAT HAPPENED. Exxon struck a preliminary deal to return to Venezuela, following Chevron and a Trump donor's drilling company back in.
WHO GETS PAID. Exxon, Chevron and a Trump donor's drilling company gain the Venezuelan oil fields the Pentagon just claimed as a gift.
WHAT SLIPS. The public never gets a price tag on the oil reserves the Pentagon claimed, so no one can check what they are actually worth.
WHAT'S NEXT. If that holds, the reserves' value stays unverified the way other federal "savings" claims have; that is what Washington got after February 19, 2025: an itemized accounting that was cut in half while the headline number stood.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Start with the entry, because the entry is dated. On August 30, the posted line read "a Gift from Venezuela to the People of the United States," and the Pentagon's book absorbed 35 percent of a nation's oil reserves under that heading. A gift, by the plain rule of any household ledger, costs the giver and costs the receiver nothing. Run the filing against the table and ask who held the deed the day before that gift arrived.

On September 1, Democracy Now! reported that the United States had struck a deal for majority control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's oil, nine months after the U.S. military removed President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, from Caracas in a raid, and two months after The New York Times reported that Secretary of State Marco Rubio had become the day-to-day administrator of the country's finances and resources.…

> "They call it a "gift," then the gift shows up on Exxon's books, right behind Chevron's and a Trump donor's drilling outfit. Venezuela's former first lady sits in a Brooklyn jail cell with a heart condition and no exit date, and the oil under her old country keeps changing hands among American companies with a straight face. That is not aid. That's a chop shop wearing a flag."
> — *Sal*

…*(cont)* The next day, Chevron, already the largest foreign oil operator working inside Venezuela, announced it would expand its operations there. Two weeks later, on September 16, Continental Resources, the drilling company controlled by Harold Hamm, a donor to the president, announced a deal of its own to start drilling in the country.

That is where the ledger sat until Tuesday, when The New York Times reported that Exxon Mobil, the largest oil company in the United States, had struck a preliminary deal to return to Venezuela, a country it left behind nearly two decades ago. Chevron never left. Continental Resources had never been there at all.

The reserves get a line in the Pentagon's book, no price attached. Flores, the wife removed from Caracas in that raid, gets a request pending in a Brooklyn jail, asking to be released over a heart condition. Hon, a gift that nets the giver a jail cell and nets the receiver three oil companies is not a gift. It is a receivable, and the collection already started.

> "Look, American companies going back into Venezuela is proof the market's stabilizing, not some kind of carve-up — that's energy security. The reserves entering federal books with no price tag just means it was a gift, which, I'll grant you, is a strange way to acquire 35 percent of anything. And the detention matter is a separate legal process, being handled through the — through the… yeah, I don't actually know what process that is."
> — *Chip*

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Thirty-five percent of Venezuela's oil reserves entered the Pentagon's column with the acquisition line blank, and the public's share of them comes to one barrel in 105,000.* by Ruth · the evening edition, 8 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Exxon Strikes Preliminary Deal to Return to Venezuela
The New York Times · MAINSTREAM · *19:51 EST*

The agreement brings the biggest U.S. oil company a step closer to pumping oil again in Venezuela, nearly two decades after it left the country.

~~Trump Says Venezuela Gave Him 100 Barrels of Oil as "Gift" as Officials Document~~
The US seized Venezuela's oil. Trump calls it a gift to you people.'
Truthout · *16:26 EST*

The president said he is giving the oil, taken by the US as part of its seizure of Venezuela, to "you people."

Hurricane Helene haunts the midterms in North Carolina
Grist · *10:48 EST*

Two years after the deadly storm, voters are frustrated with a slow recovery — and that could carry a political price.

- The Biggest Oil Deal or Theft at Gunpoint? U.S. Claims Majority Control of Venezuela's Oil Reserves *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*
- Chevron to expand in Venezuela, days after the U.S. and Venezuela strike oil deal *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
- White House unveils new details of Venezuela agreement *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*
- Harold Hamm's oil company announces Venezuela deal *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*
- Trump FTC Urged to Prevent 'Two of the Biggest Ripoff Machines in America' From Merging *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*
- Doordash to buy Instacart in $17bn deal it says will expand customer options *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*
- DoorDash buying Instacart for $17B *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*
- DoorDash to buy Instacart for $17bn in major grocery delivery consolidation *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*
- DoorDash reaches $131M deal with NYC for underpaying delivery workers: 'We screwed up' *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*
- Mamdani Hails Landmark DoorDash Deal as 'Largest Settlement for Food Delivery Workers Ever' *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*
- Trump admin's list of US-designated 'foreign terrorist' groups in Latin America expands to 21 *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*
- Top Trump official reveals how 30-minute military op unlocked Venezuela oil windfall for US buyers *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*
- Ex-Venezuelan first lady Cilia Flores seeks release from NYC jail, citing heart ailment *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*
- New York City protest once again demands release of Maduro and Flores *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*
- Trump Official Denies Stealing Venezuela's Oil One Hour After Boasting Country is 'Forced to Work' With US *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
- 'Mobster Language': Trump Says Venezuelan Oil Will Replenish US Reserves *from the morgue, 30 Aug 2026*
- 'Yet Another Trump Grift': Congress Called to Stop US Takeover of Venezuelan Oil Fields *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*
- Tehran threatens attacks after U.S. strikes Iranian tankers *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- US forces take out 3 Iranian oil tankers in retaliation *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Oil prices up as Iran says it will expand control over Strait of Hormuz *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*
- Iran live updates: Trump speaks to MBS, says everything will 'work out fine' *from the morgue, 13 Sep 2026*
- Iran threatens retaliation against U.S. tanker strikes *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- U.S. gas prices hit record high for Labor Day *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Ship tracking websites, including Kpler, MarineTraffic, and TankerTrackers, show that three Iranian oil tankers, including two from the National Iranian Tanker Company, have escaped the blockade that *from the morgue, 17 Jun 2026*
- Iranian state media reports that the United States Navy attempted to capture an Iranian oil tanker. The oil tanker was boarded, commandeered and then returned by Iranian NEDSA marines in a helicopter *from the morgue, 3 Nov 2021*
- US strikes Iranian rocket launchers in first attack since late July *from the morgue, 30 Aug 2026*
- An Iranian Navy commander claims on state television that the Iranian Navy forced a U.S. submarine to surface as it transited the Strait of Hormuz and that the submarine violated Iranian territorial w *from the morgue, 20 Apr 2023*
- Trump Threatens to Rename Strait of Hormuz for Himself as War Pushes Diesel Prices Toward Record High *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
- Trump floats renaming Strait of Hormuz after himself *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
- U.S. strikes targets in Iran near Strait of Hormuz as Iran says it is retaliating *from the morgue, 1 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*
- '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*
- Price of diesel in U.S. hits record as Vance downplays Iran war impact *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
- Diesel prices hit record high as wars disrupt supply *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
- Trump vows response to Iran's retaliatory strikes: 'We're going to hit them hard' *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*
- Trump threatens Iran against retaliation for latest U.S. strikes *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*
- Live updates: US, Iran ramp up strikes; incumbents hold on in Massachusetts *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
- Trump calls Iran conflict "small potatoes" *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Labor Day gas prices are highest ever for holiday *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- How 'Hypermilers' Are Trying to Beat High Gas Prices *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Fuel prices at record Labor Day high in US thanks to Iran War and refinery issues *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Oil Prices Rise Slightly After U.S. and Iran Trade Strikes *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
- USS Lincoln heads home as war with Iran escalates *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*
- Lawler disagrees with Trump on Iran war: 'It is certainly not small potatoes' *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
- OPEC Plus to Keep Oil Production Steady *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
- Iran War Has Cost the Average American More Than $1,200 Over Six Months, Economist Estimates *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*
- Trump says military conflict in Iran is 'small potatoes for us' *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
- Wright: US has 'a lot of leverage' in Venezuela after oil deal reached *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
- Chris Wright explains how Venezuelan crude will 'fill' the Strategic Petroleum Reserve *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
- Energy Secretary Wright says Venezuela oil deal will bring down gas prices in a year or two *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
- Venezuelan oil flows will lower gas prices in 12-24 months, Wright says in Caracas *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
- Trump says Venezuelan oil will replenish Strategic Petroleum Reserves *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*
- 'Wealthy Tax Cheats Reaping the Benefits': IRS Audit Revenue Plummets After Trump Purge *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*
- Vance announces additional $858 million in disaster funding during campaign stop in North Carolina *from the morgue, 19 Oct 2026*
- Western North Carolina Pleaded for Hurricane Help. It Got ICE Instead. *from the morgue, 29 Aug 2026*
- WATCH LIVE: Vance stumps for Michael Whatley in North Carolina *from the morgue, 21 Sep 2026*
- Trump continues calls for Venezuela to be 51st state *from the morgue, 27 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.

SIX MONTHS LATE

Huang lobbied Trump to loosen China chip limits months before intelligence flagged the woman as a spy.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION



"Trump says FBI investigating Nvidia boss's affair with alleged Chinese spy", 10 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA BBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Nvidia's board investigated its own CEO after he admitted an affair with a suspected Chinese spy.

WHO GETS PAID. Nvidia's China chip sales stand to gain from the export limits Huang lobbied Trump to loosen.

WHAT SLIPS. Investors found out the board was still reviewing the relationship only after the stock had already lost $200 billion.

WHAT'S NEXT. The FBI investigation and Nvidia's internal review are both still open, with no findings or hearing date yet announced.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I had the page, I just didn't have the notebook open to it — give me a second. I keep two of these, and I grabbed the wrong one twice this morning before I found the one I wanted. Here. September 28th, I wrote it in red: Nvidia's board authorized another $150 billion to buy back the company's own stock, which brought the total they're allowed to spend buying themselves up to $235 billion. I put a question mark next to that number. I'm still not sure why.

Before I get to today, I want to go back further, because I don't want to get ahead of the page. Last year — this is in the Post, this morning — Mr. Huang, the chief executive, was photographed with a woman named Alice Huang, an executive the Post says U.S. intelligence has since identified as a suspected Chinese spy. The same report says weeks after those photos — still last year — Mr. Huang went to the president and asked him to loosen the limits on how many of Nvidia's chips the company could sell into China. The photos, then the ask. That's the order the Post puts it in, and I keep checking the order because that's the part I'd get wrong if I wasn't careful....

...(cont) Then, this past May, a research shop called Culper flagged the relationship publicly as "uncomfortably close." Wall Street had the name in May.

September 28th, the buyback — I already read you that page.

October 29th, the Times reported Mr. Huang was the target of what it called a Chinese spy plot, and that the president had been briefed on it and taken no action. And this week, CBS reports the board had told people in October there was "no reason to believe" the company's secrets or national security had been compromised. I wrote "no reason to believe" down exactly like that, in quotes, because I wanted to get it right.

November 6th, the Times again: China's top intelligence agency had recruited the woman who targeted him. Not my word, "targeted" — the Times's, in November.

And today — four things, in the order I wrote them down this morning. One, the president told reporters the FBI is now investigating. Two, Mr. Huang told the president he didn't know who she was. Three, Nvidia's own board — the same board that said in October there was no reason to believe anything was compromised — opened its own investigation into its own chief executive. Four, the stock fell more than four percent Monday, about two hundred billion dollars gone in a day.

I keep my toll receipts in the glovebox, dated, in the order I paid them, because that's the only way I've found to prove where I was on a given day. If I lost a week of them, I couldn't tell you whether I paid a toll before or after I picked the dog up from the vet. The dates are the whole proof. The board had a date on its finding — October, no reason to believe. It has another date now — this week, an investigation into the same man. What changed between them that wasn't on the stock ticker?

One more thing, before you get up — I almost let it go. The board found $150 billion worth of confidence in its own company in September. The market found $200 billion worth of doubt about the man running it in November. Same board. Same company. Which of those two numbers was it actually counting?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

NVIDIA'S BOARD CALLED THE RELATIONSHIP NO SECURITY RISK IN OCTOBER, THEN OPENED ITS OWN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SAME CHIEF EXECUTIVE THE WEEK THE STOCK LOST TWO HUNDRED BILLION DOLLARS. That isn't oversight, it's a board that only investigates once the ticker tells it to. Your 401(k) holds an index fund, the index fund holds Nvidia, and the chief executive the board trusted right up until the price moved is the same name on the statement landing in your mailbox this week.

"This isn't a love story, it's an export license with a security problem attached. The board called it "no risk" in October and opened a probe on the same man in November, right after the stock dropped $200 billion — pension money, not boardroom money. He asked Trump to loosen China chip limits the same year he was photographed with the woman U.S. intelligence now calls a spy, and the ask came first."
— Sal

"The President looked him in the eye and said he really believes Jensen had no idea — that's due diligence at the highest level, not that we needed any. The board's investigation is just good governance, completely unrelated to the $200 billion, which is also fine, also a coincidence — wait, did I just call a stock crash "also fine"? Nothing to see here, moving on."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Trump 'really believes' Nvidia chief's spy secret — six months after Wall Street printed it.* By Lou · the evening edition, 9 November 2026
— *Nvidia dismissed the spy allegation, had its chip probe moved to Justice, then confirmed the affair.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 9 November 2026
— *Nvidia dismissed the spy report in October; its own CEO confirmed it in November.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 8 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~Nvidia Investigates CEO Jensen Huang over Chinese Spy Concerns~~

Nvidia board, investigating its own CEO, clears him on security grounds

CBS News | MAINSTREAM | *20:04 EST*

The board of Nvidia said it had no reason to believe that the company's secrets or national security were compromised.

Trump says FBI investigating Nvidia boss's affair with alleged Chinese spy

BBC News | MAINSTREAM | *03:23 EST*

The US president said he spoke with Jensen Huang on Monday and asked him about the affair with the alleged spy.

Jensen Huang lobbied 'very good friend' Trump for more Nvidia sales to China while 'caught in Beijing's honeytrap'

New York Post | RIGHT | *05:00 EST*

The $150 billion AI boss appeared in loved-up snaps with accused communist spy Alice Huang last year — and then weeks later pitched Trump on relaxing export restrictions for the company's chips.

~~Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang Told Trump He Did Not Know Chinese Woman Was Suspected Spy~~

Trump says he doesn't recall the briefing on Huang's suspected-spy liaison

The New York Times | MAINSTREAM | *21:13 EST*

President Trump told reporters Monday that he believed Jensen Huang's account and said he did not recall receiving a briefing warning him about Mr. Huang's liaison.

Nvidia shares drop amid CEO's alleged Chinese spy affair

CBS News | MAINSTREAM | *19:27 EST*

Shares of Nvidia, the world's top AI chipmaker, fell more than 4% on Monday, wiping out about $200 billion in stock market value. The company's CEO admitted to an affair with a woman identified by U.S. intelligence as a former data center executive suspected of spying for China.

· Nvidia Chief, Jensen Huang, Is Seen as Target of Chinese Spy Plot *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Tech Giant Nvidia Announces Largest Stock Buyback in US History as AI Profits Surge *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

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Russia increases strikes on Ukraine in the three days before sitting down to end the war.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



"Melania Trump urges 'enduring' ceasefire at meeting with Ukrainian, Russian officials", 5 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA FRANCE 24 — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Washington opened three-way talks between Russia and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi without seating a European delegation at the table.

WHO GETS PAID. Russia gains a seat negotiating a security framework covering all of Europe without any European negotiators in the room.

WHAT SLIPS. European governments, who would live under any deal on their own security, get no vote on its terms before Washington and Moscow set them.

WHAT'S NEXT. The talks run through a second day; what the two delegations agree to on European security is not public yet, and Europe still has not negotiated any of it directly.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Let's reconcile the calendar, because the calendar is where this one lives.

On November 3rd, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff posted that the United States would mediate working-level talks between Ukraine and Russia on November 10th and 11th in Abu Dhabi. Europe sat in neither room....

...(cont) Europe got a room on November 8th, after Le Monde reported that European leaders were uneasy about a security framework Washington had floated covering Russia, Ukraine, and what the framework itself called all of Europe, without first telling Europe what the framework held. The seat arrived after the story ran, not before, hon.

On November 7th, three days before the delegations sat down, Zelenskyy said Russia was stepping up its attacks ahead of the talks. The fighting did not take those three days off.

Tuesday, November 10th, the talks opened in Abu Dhabi: American, Ukrainian and Russian representatives in the same room for the first trilateral sit-down since the push was suspended when the war with Iran started. Trump said the war could end soon. None of the three wires reported him saying when Europe would see what the talks produce.

The same day, Secretary of State Rubio met his G7 counterparts, the foreign ministers, to turn the group's attention toward Ukraine and how to support its defense. That is a meeting of foreign ministers about a war whose proposed guarantees cover, in Washington's own language, all of Europe. The three delegations negotiating those guarantees did not include a European one. The ministers discussing how to support Ukraine met down the hall, not up at the table.

Run the dates in order: November 3rd, the U.S. sets the meeting. November 5th, the U.S. hosts the ceasefire channel. November 7th, Ukraine reports Russia escalating. November 8th, Europe gets a seat, after a newspaper reports its unease. November 10th, the talks start, Europe at the table at last, three days after the attacks it was warned about and two days after the story that got it invited. Five dates, five actors, and Europe moves only on the date a French newspaper put its name on the record.

"They picked the date to end this war, and Russia spent the three days before it hitting Ukraine harder — that's not bad luck, that's leverage, used right up until the delegations sat down. And the one side that has to help pay for whatever "security guarantee" comes out of that room found out about the whole framework from a French newspaper, not from Washington."
— Sal

"Look, you want a deal done fast, you keep the table small — three parties, clean process, no committee of twenty-seven vetoing every clause. That's not shutting Europe out, that's efficient diplomacy, and the strikes before a ceasefire are just how these things always — did I just call hitting a country harder right before peace talks "how these things always go"? That's not- the administration says Europe will be consulted at the appropriate time."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Europe gets a seat on its own security plan only after Russia's envoy sat at the White House.*
By The Lodgers · the morning edition, 9 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: Trump promised to end the war within 24 hours - CNN counted 53 separate occasions he said it *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*
Melania Trump urges 'enduring' ceasefire at meeting with Ukrainian, Russian officials
France 24 MAINSTREAM 00:23 EST
Russian and Ukrainian officials, including human rights chiefs, met US First Lady Melania Trump at the White House on Thursday ahead of Abu Dhabi talks aimed at ending the Ukraine war. The meeting comes weeks after Melania Trump helped broker a partial ceasefire enabling the evacuation of civilians from the Russian-occupied Ukrainian...

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 counted 53 such promises *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*
US-mediated talks on ending Russia-Ukraine war begin in Abu Dhabi
New York Post RIGHT 05:24 EST
Russia, Ukraine, and the US began two-day peace talks in Abu Dhabi to discuss security guarantees and a way to end the war.

But: Trump promised to end the war within 24 hours — CNN counted 53 separate such promises *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*
U.S., Russia and Ukraine start talks aimed at ending war
CBS News MAINSTREAM 03:56 EST
It is the first such trilateral diplomatic push since negotiations were suspended following the start of the war with Iran.

Zelenskyy says Russia is stepping up attacks ahead of U.S. talks
CBS News MAINSTREAM 09:20 EST
Negotiators from Russia, Ukraine and the U.S. are to meet on Tuesday in Abu Dhabi for talks aimed at ending the war.

G7 attention turns to Ukraine while US-mediated talks get underway in Abu Dhabi
ABC News MAINSTREAM 01:57 EST
U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and his counterparts from the Group of 7 developed democracies are turning their attention toward Ukraine and how to support it in its struggle to defend itself from Russia

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 counted 53 such promises. *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*
Russia, Ukraine and US meet for Abu Dhabi talks as Trump says war can 'end soon'
ABC News MAINSTREAM 04:40 EST
American, Ukrainian and Russian representatives gathered in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday for their latest round of trilateral peace talks.

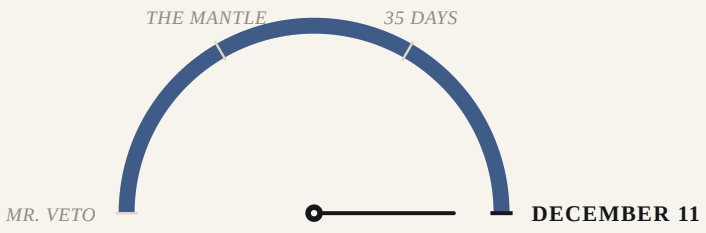
· US to mediate Ukraine-Russia talks in Abu Dhabi next week, Witkoff says *from the morgue, 3 Nov 2026*

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.

On lame duck

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



DECEMBER 11

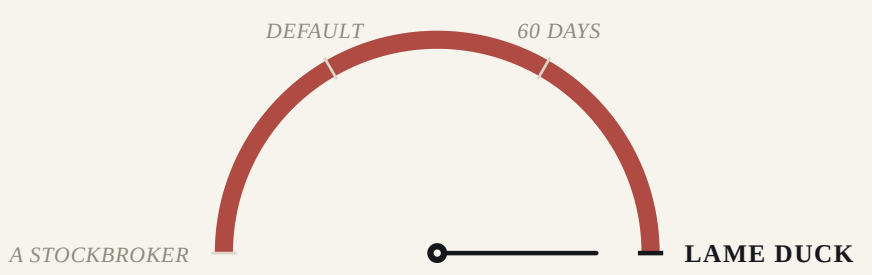
The stopgap runs out on December 11 [1]. The calendar has a memory. In November 2018 his party lost the House [2]. On December 11, 2018, on camera: "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck" [3]. That shutdown ran 35 days and ended on the deal already rejected [4]. The Congressional Budget Office put the cost at $11 billion [5].

He is not the lame duck in this picture. Before the vote he said, "I guess I'll become Mr. Veto" [6]. After it he posted a red cap reading VETO, and Democrats will fall short of the two-thirds to override [7]. The pardon power, on Jamie Raskin's list of oversight targets, has one exception in the text: impeachment [8][9]. Congress has 55 days left from today. He has 803. He has the nuclear codes for all of them.

SOURCES

1. The continuing resolution expires December 11, 2026 — Holland & Knight, October 2026 ↑
2. Democrats took the House majority in November 2018 — Wikipedia, citing the Clerk of the House ↑
3. "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck" — CNN, 11 December 2018 ↑
4. The 35-day shutdown ended with no wall money, on the deal previously rejected — NBC News, January 2019 ↑
5. The partial shutdown cost about $11 billion — Congressional Budget Office, 28 January 2019 ↑
6. "I guess I'll become Mr. Veto" — Newsweek, November 2026 ↑
7. The VETO cap; Democrats short of a two-thirds majority — NBC News live blog, 4 November 2026 ↑
8. Raskin named pardons among potential oversight targets — The Conversation via WLRN, 4 November 2026 ↑
9. Article II, Section 2, the pardon clause — National Archives ↑

REPUBLICAN



LAME DUCK

The term began as a finance word. In the 18th century the London Stock Exchange used it for a broker who defaulted on his debts [1]. The Constitution has been trying to shorten the condition since the Twentieth Amendment set January 3 for the new Congress [2]. The session is scheduled to open today and run toward Christmas [3]. Republicans stay in charge until the new Congress is seated [4].

What it can still do: the debt limit, which Majority Leader John Thune said "could come in the lame duck" [3]. Health department nominees Republicans need confirmed before Democrats take charge [4]. A third reconciliation package, discussed before the election, to fund the Iran war and give states up to $10 billion for stricter voting rules [3]. And a Supreme Court seat, should one open, though neither Alito nor Thomas had announced plans to step down as of November 4. Thune in June: "You're talking about basically 60 days post-election in the lame duck... I certainly wouldn't rule that out" [5]. The duck still votes.

SOURCES

1. 18th-century London Stock Exchange use, a stockbroker who defaulted — Wikipedia, Lame duck (politics) ↑
2. Twentieth Amendment: terms of Senators and Representatives end at noon on January 3 — National Archives ↑
3. The November 9 start; the debt limit; a third reconciliation package — No Labels ↑
4. Republicans in charge until January; HHS nominees — STAT News, 4 November 2026 ↑
5. Thune, June 2026, to Punchbowl News; neither Alito nor Thomas has announced plans to step down — LifeNews, 4 November 2026 ↑

"I rented from a fella who sold the building. He had till the first of the month, and that last week he signed a lot of paper. Legal, every sheet. I can't stop looking at a date, I'm sorry. December 11. That's when the money runs out this year. December 11, 2018, he said "I am proud to shut down the government." I checked it twice. His party had just lost the House. Thirty-five days. Sorry, one thing before you go. Fifty-five days for them, 803 for him. Which one is the lame duck?" — Lou

"Lame duck. Sounds harmless, right? Little limp, little quack. You know where it comes from? The London Stock Exchange. A broker who couldn't pay his debts. So it means somebody busted who's still on the floor, trading. That's Washington till January 3. Fifty-five days, the same gavels, a debt limit, talk of money for a war and up to ten billion for state voting rules. And down the street a man with a red hat that says VETO. He's no duck. He's got 803 days and the codes. Watch the wallet on the way out."

— Sal

"A lame-duck session is simply Congress at its most unburdened, freed from the distraction of voters, and I would expect its work to reflect that."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎