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Report: Sailor suspected of warship fire

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

Investigators are questioning a U.S. sailor considered an arson suspect in the fire that left the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard extensively damaged while moored at Naval Base San Diego in July, according to reports published Wednesday.

No one has been charged and no motive has been discovered, according to The New York Times. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have focused on one sailor from the ship, according to a report Wednesday in the Times, which cited an unnamed Navy official.

The Associated Press, citing an unnamed senior defense official, said Thursday that investigators are questioning a sailor con-

sidered a suspect.

The fire started aboard the vessel on a Sunday morning and burned for four days. Wind and explosions spread and intensified the flames, causing extensive damage. Eleven of 14 decks were damaged by fire and water, and the ship's superstructure was nearly gutted, according to a July email from Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday to admirals and master chiefs.

The fire has clouded the warship's future. Replacing the Bonhomme Richard could cost \$4 billion, according to the AP, which cited defense analysts.

A scant crew of 160 sailors, far from the full complement, were aboard the ship when the fire was first reported around 8:30 a.m.

"The fire started in the lower vehicle storage area — six decks below the flight

deck and near the middle of the ship — spreading aft, forward and up," Gilday wrote in the email.

One of the ship's fire suppression systems was down for maintenance, Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 3, which includes the Bonhomme Richard, said at the time.

No one died in the fire, but 38 military and 23 civilian firefighters were treated for injuries such as heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation. More than 400 sailors from 16 ships at the base fought the fire.

The investigation into the fire remains underway. A Navy official told U.S. Naval Institute News that the service didn't "want anyone to jump to conclusions."

"We are going to be thorough and methodical," the unnamed official said, according to USNI News.

Powerful Hurricane Laura slams into Gulf Coast

Associated Press

LAKE CHARLES, La. — Hurricane Laura pounded the Gulf Coast with ferocious wind and torrential rain Thursday and unleashed a wall of seawater that could push 40 miles inland as the Category 4 storm roared ashore in Louisiana near the Texas border.

Laura arrived as one of the strongest hurricanes ever to strike the U.S. based on its wind speed of 150 mph. Louisiana took the brunt of the damage when the system barreled over Lake Charles, an industrial and casino city of 80,000 people, and nearby low-lying fishing communities. Powerful gusts blew out windows in tall buildings and tossed around glass and debris.

Police spotted a floating casino that came unmoored and hit a bridge. Drone video showed water surrounding homes with much of their roofs peeled

away. Gov. John Bel Edwards reported Louisiana's first fatality — a 14-year-old girl who died when a tree fell on her home in Leesville, more than 100 miles inland.

"It looks like 1,000 tornadoes went through here. It's just destruction everywhere," said Brett Geymann, who rode out the storm with three family members in Moss Bluff, near Lake Charles. He described Laura passing over his house with the roar of a jet engine around 2 a.m.

Hours after the system made landfall, initial reports offered hope that the destruction might be less than originally feared, but a full damage assessment could take days. Wind and rain blew too hard for authorities to check for survivors in some hard-hit places. Meanwhile, Laura began weakening as it churned toward Arkansas, which was under an unusual tropical storm warning.

Hundreds of thousands of people were ordered to evacuate ahead of the hurricane, but not everyone fled from the area, which was devastated by Hurricane Rita in 2005.

"There are some people still in town, and people are calling ... but there ain't no way to get to them," Tony Guillory, president of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, said over the phone from a Lake Charles government building that was shaking from the storm.

More than 600,000 homes and businesses were without power in the two states, according to the website PowerOutage.Us, which tracks utility reports.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson declared an emergency ahead of Laura and set aside \$250,000 for the state to prepare for the hurricane's impact in his state. Hutchinson said the state will have search-and-rescue teams on standby.

Forecasters had warned that the storm surge of 15 to 20 feet would be "unsurvivable" and the damage "catastrophic" along a stretch of coast from Lake Charles to Port Arthur, Texas. Damaging winds extended outward as far as 175 miles, according to the hurricane center.

FEMA has plenty of resources ready to help survivors, Gaynor said. Edwards mobilized the National Guard to help, and state Department of Wildlife crews had boats prepared for water rescues.

Forecasters expected a weakened Laura to cause widespread flash flooding in states far from the coast. Little Rock, Ark., expected gusts of 50 mph and a deluge of rain through Friday. The storm was so powerful that it could regain strength after turning east and reaching the Atlantic Ocean, potentially threatening the densely populated Northeast.

Esper details efforts against Chinese threats

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

China is the “pacing threat” and the focus of much planning and training in the U.S. military, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in a speech Wednesday from Honolulu.

Beijing is putting the world order “under duress” by disregarding international norms, he said at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. His speech was livestreamed on Facebook.

Esper said that during his year in office, he has focused the Defense Department on China, creating a new defense policy office focused solely on the communist nation and a China Strategy Management

Group to integrate the department’s efforts.

He also said he had directed the National Defense University to “refocus its curriculum by dedicating 50% of the coursework to China” and told the military to make China “the pacing threat in all of our schools, programs and training.”

Esper’s speech follows a formal State Department announcement July 13 denouncing China’s claims to resources and territory in the South China Sea as “completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them.”

On Wednesday, Esper said, “Beijing has repeatedly fallen short of its promises to abide by international laws, rules

or norms, despite continuing to reap the benefits of the international system and free markets.”

The United States disputes Chinese claims of sovereignty over the 1.4 million square miles of the South China Sea and 27 islands and reefs it has built up and militarized there.

The speech came the same day that the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security imposed sanctions on 24 Chinese companies for their part in constructing and militarizing the South China Sea features, according to a Commerce Department statement Wednesday.

Beijing, the defense secretary said, fails to “honor the commitments it made to the in-

ternational community, including promises to safeguard the autonomy of Hong Kong and not to militarize features in the South China Sea.”

China’s actions threaten the rights and sovereignty of regional partners and allies, Esper said, so the U.S. has been working with nations such as Bangladesh, Mongolia and the Philippines to “develop their national security policies, strategies, plans and laws.”

Looking forward, Esper said his department is “prioritizing the development and deployment of game-changing technologies, such as hypersonic weapons, 5G and artificial intelligence” that could prove vital to security in the region.

Russia blames US troops after incident in Syria

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Russian military on Thursday blamed the U.S. troops for a collision of Russian and U.S. military vehicles in Syria’s northeast.

U.S. officials said Wednesday that a Russian vehicle sideswiped a light-armored U.S. military vehicle, injuring four Americans, while two Russian helicopters flew overhead, one as close as 70 feet.

U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Ulyot said in a statement that a Russian vehicle struck the American vehicle near Dayrick, in northeast Syria. He blamed the Russian military for “unsafe and unprofessional actions” that breached deconfliction protocols between the two countries.

In Thursday’s statement, the Russian Defense Ministry said Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the Russian military’s General Staff, had a phone call Wednesday with Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to discuss the incident.

In the call, Gerasimov pointed out that the Russian military had notified the U.S.-led coalition about the route of a Russian military police convoy.

“Despite that, in violation of the existing agreements, the U.S. troops attempted to block the Russian patrol,” the ministry said in a statement. “In response to that, the Russian military police took the necessary measures to prevent an incident and to continue the fulfillment of their task.”

Russia, which has waged a military campaign in Syria that helped President Bashar Assad reclaim control over most of the country following a devastating civil war, has long bristled at the presence of the U.S. troops deployed in the country to fight Islamic State and have called for their pullout.

While there have been several other recent incidents between the American and Russian troops who patrol eastern Syria, U.S. officials described the latest incident as the most serious one.

Chinese drill in South China Sea won’t deter Navy’s efforts

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The commander of the Navy’s 3rd Fleet said Wednesday that he was aware of reports China had launched two ballistic missiles into the contested South China Sea, but that America’s naval presence in the region is robust.

“In terms of their launching missiles, the U.S. Navy has 38 ships underway today in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea,” Vice Adm. Scott Conn said during a telephone news conference. “And we continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international laws allow to demonstrate our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and reassure our allies and partners.”

Conn is heading the two-week Rim of the Pacific exercise in waters off the Hawaiian Islands, which is slated to conclude Monday. Navies from nine nations have joined the United States for the biennial exercise, which was vastly scaled down

from past years due to the coronavirus pandemic. The entire exercise is being held at sea.

The news conference was intended to focus on the exercise, but in the wake of rising tensions in the South China Sea, where China is conducting its own naval exercise this week, Conn spent most of his time fielding questions about Beijing.

“Our forces continually monitor exercises throughout the region, to include the recent [China] exercise that you mentioned,” Conn said in response to a question about China launching two medium-range missiles into the South China Sea on Wednesday.

“Our naval forces are ready to respond to any threat to our allies or partners throughout the region,” he added.

One of the two Chinese missiles, a so-called “aircraft-carrier killer,” was meant as a “clear warning” to the U.S., according to the South China Morning Post, which cited a “source close to the Chinese military.”

Pence defends police in convention speech

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Vice President Mike Pence forcefully defended law enforcement but made no mention of the Black Americans killed by police this year as he addressed Republican convention proceedings that unfolded amid new protests against racial injustice following the latest shooting.

Wednesday evening's featured speaker, Pence argued that Democratic leaders are allowing lawlessness to prevail from coast to coast. He and others described cities wracked by violence, though protests in most locations have been largely peaceful.

"The American people know we don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement and standing with African American neighbors to improve the quality of life in

our cities and towns," he said. He assailed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden for saying there is an "implicit bias" against people of color and "systemic racism" in the United States.

"The hard truth is ... you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America," Pence said. "Let me be clear: The violence must stop — whether in Minneapolis, Portland or Kenosha."

Absent from Pence's 37-minute speech: a direct mention of Jacob Blake, the Black man who was wounded by police on Sunday in Kenosha, Wis.. There was also no reference to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or other Black people who have been killed by police this year, spurring a protest movement.

As their convention nears its conclusion Thursday, Republicans are seeking to reconcile their depiction of President

Donald Trump as a smooth, stable leader with the reality that the U.S. is facing a series of crises that include the demonstrations, a potentially catastrophic hurricane and a pandemic that is killing more than 1,000 Americans a day.

The historic convergence of health, economic, environmental and social emergencies is only increasing the pressure on Trump, as he looks to reshape the contours of his lagging campaign against Biden with Election Day just 10 weeks off and early voting beginning much sooner.

The convention keynote gave Pence another opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to Trump. The vice president, who is also the chair of the White House coronavirus task force, defended the administration's handling of the pandemic, a political liability that was oth-

erwise largely absent from the convention program. He also delivered sober, encouraging words to Gulf Coast residents as Hurricane Laura neared.

Positioning himself as a potential heir to Trump in 2024, Pence delivered sharp attacks against Biden but also presented an optimistic vision of the country's future. He spoke from Baltimore's Fort McHenry, where an 1814 battle inspired the national anthem — which has been at the center of a cultural debate, fueled by Trump, over athletes who kneel rather than stand in protest of racial injustice.

Trump made an unannounced appearance after Pence's remarks for a performance of the anthem. The president, the vice president and their wives later greeted guests, some of whom were in walkers and stood for the anthem.

Homeowners fighting fires in California urged to flee

Associated Press

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. — With California firefighters strapped for resources, residents have organized to put out flames themselves in a large swath of land burning south of San Francisco, defending their homes despite orders to evacuate and pleas by officials to get out of danger.

They are going in despite California's firefighting agency repeatedly warning people that it's not safe and actually illegal to go into evacuated areas, and they can hinder official efforts to stop the flames. The former head of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said the effort near a cluster of wildfires around the city of Santa Cruz is larger and more organized than he recalls in previous blazes.

"People are frustrated with the lack of resources available. People are always going to try to sneak back in, but it sounds like this is growing to a new level," said Ken Pimlott,

who retired as director of Cal Fire in 2018. "I haven't seen people re-engage to this scale, particularly with the level of organization."

The group of wildfires near Santa Cruz has burned 125 square miles and destroyed more than 500 buildings. While those fires are 20% contained, firefighters have been pushed to the breaking point since lightning ignited more than 500 blazes in one night last week, most of them in the central and northern parts of the state.

In Boulder Creek, a community at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains near a state park filled with towering redwoods, some people call the group of residents fighting the flames the "Boulder Creek Boys." They say the group, which includes former volunteer firefighters, has been protecting homes and extinguishing blazes behind fire lines for over a week, at times using nothing but dirt and garden hoses.

17-year-old arrested after 2 killed in Wis. protests

Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. — A white, 17-year-old police admirer was arrested Wednesday after two people were shot to death during a third straight night of protests in Kenosha over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake.

Kyle Rittenhouse, of Antioch, Ill., about 15 miles from Kenosha, was taken into custody in Illinois on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide in the attack Tuesday that was largely captured on cellphone video. The shooting left a third person wounded.

In the wake of the killings, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers authorized the deployment of 500 members of the National Guard to Kenosha, doubling the number of troops in the city of 100,000 midway between Milwaukee and Chicago.

Protesters marched past the intersection where two people were shot Tuesday night, stopping to gather around the spot where one person was shot, and

to pray and lay flowers. Dajon Spann said he joined the demonstration because one of those killed was a friend.

"I couldn't take it any more," he said. "I couldn't just sit there and watch my friend die."

The dead were identified only as a 26-year-old Silver Lake, Wis., resident and a 36-year-old from Kenosha. The wounded person, a 36-year-old from West Allis, Wis., was expected to survive, police said.

According to witness accounts and video footage, police apparently let the gunman walk past them and leave the scene with a rifle over his shoulder and his hands in the air as members of the crowd were yelling for him to be arrested because he had shot people.

As for how the gunman managed to slip away, Sheriff David Beth described a chaotic, high-stress scene, with lots of radio traffic and people screaming, chanting and running — conditions he said can cause "tunnel vision" among law officers.

Over 1M Americans applied for jobless aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just over 1 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, a sign that the coronavirus outbreak continues to threaten jobs even as the housing market, auto sales and other segments of the economy rebound from a springtime collapse.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that the number of people seeking jobless aid last week dropped by 98,000 from 1.1 million the week before. The number of initial claims has exceeded 1 million most weeks since late March. Before the coronavirus pandemic, they never topped 700,000 in a week.

More than 14.5 million are collecting traditional jobless benefits — up from 1.7 million a year ago — a sign that many American families are depending on unemployment checks to keep them afloat.

Until July 31, the unemployed were receiving an extra \$600 a week in federal money on top of regular state unemployment benefits, part of an extraordinary lifeline extended to help them through the crisis. The loss of that money is putting the squeeze on many families.

After passing a massive financial rescue package in March, congressional Republicans and Democrats have been unable to agree on more aid. President Donald Trump signed an executive order Aug. 8 offering a stripped-down version of the expanded unemployment benefits. At least 39 states have accepted or said that they would apply for federal grants that let them increase weekly benefits by \$300 or \$400.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gyms across metro Phoenix and Tucson are expected to reopen Thursday as coronavirus transmission numbers in three major Arizona counties are likely to drop to moderate levels that allow them to restart their businesses.

Arizona Department of Health Services Director Dr.

Cara Christ said earlier this week that three large counties that include those cities should fall from “substantial” to “moderate” spread levels when the state releases its weekly metrics Thursday morning. The counties are Maricopa, Pima and Pinal.

Gyms aren’t waiting for the numbers to be posted, with many reopening well before the expected 9 a.m. posting.

Gyms, bars and nightclubs, movie theaters and water parks were ordered to close on June 29 by Gov. Doug Ducey as the state experienced a huge surge in coronavirus cases. As cases ebbed in late July the health department issued reopening guidelines for affected businesses.

California

SACRAMENTO — California will more than double its coronavirus testing to up to 250,000 people a day while reducing costs and providing faster results under terms of a contract with a Massachusetts company worth up to \$1.4 billion, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Wednesday.

California and other states have worked to boost the number of tests they can process each day to help identify outbreaks and guide public health officials’ decisions on how to slow the spread of the virus. California now averages about 100,000 tests per day and has administered nearly 11 million to date, by far the most in the nation.

But this week, in a move that surprised state and local health officials, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it’s not necessary to test asymptomatic people who have had close contact with others who are infected.

Indiana

SOUTH BEND — The University of Notre Dame has added security personnel at its COVID-19 quarantine and isolation sites after students were observed leaving the off-campus apartments and hotels

in violation of safety protocols, officials said Wednesday.

Notre Dame provides secured rooms off-campus to isolate students who test positive for coronavirus and quarantine those who’ve had close contact with them or are awaiting test results.

University spokesman Denis Brown told the South Bend Tribune that students under quarantine or isolation agreed to a code of conduct requiring them to remain in their designated rooms. Brown said the university has contracted with two security services to provide eight people to monitor the sites around the clock. He says students who don’t adhere to the code of conduct will face sanctions that could include dismissal.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — A Nevada hotel that was fined for hosting a Trump campaign event in defiance of coronavirus restrictions sued the state and the city of Las Vegas over the health mandates.

The lawsuit filed by Ahern Hotel and Convention Center in Clark County District Court on Monday also names Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak and Las Vegas planning director Robert Summerfield as defendants, The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

The company, which held an “Evangelicals for Trump” event earlier this month, claims in the lawsuit that Sisolak’s directive limiting gatherings to 50 people represents “disparate treatment” of Ahern and similar businesses.

The lawsuit says there is no rational basis that a hotel or convention center should be treated differently than restaurants and casinos, which are allowed to operate at 50% capacity.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare the ban on gatherings of more than 50 people invalid and unenforceable.

The lawsuit also seeks to force the governor to amend the directive to allow hotels, convention centers and res-

taurants to host events, conferences or meetings if they meet the standards under a phase of Nevada’s reopening plan.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Supreme Court upheld the authority of the state health secretary to restrict or close businesses because of the coronavirus pandemic, in a unanimous 4-0 decision Wednesday spurred by restrictions on indoor dining at restaurants.

In the decision announced by Justice Judith Nakamura, the court also rejected assertions by the restaurant industry that a July 13 ban on indoor dining service was arbitrary and capricious.

“Bottom line, it is well established that differing opinions do not make an action arbitrary and capricious,” Nakamura said. She invoked recent statements by Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts that the judiciary should not normally second-guess decisions regarding health emergencies.

West Virginia

MORGANTOWN — Seventeen West Virginia University students have been placed on probation for conduct violations related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Office of Student Conduct made the decision following hearings for the students, the university said Wednesday in a statement.

An additional 15 students will undergo similar hearings and could face probation if found responsible, while another student with a history of repeated COVID-19 related violations could be suspended or expelled if found responsible, the statement said.

Classes on the Morgantown campus began Wednesday. Students began moving in earlier this month for the start of the fall semester. The university began identifying potential students involved in off-campus parties as part of an investigation into violations of health and safety policies.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 charged after stolen boat found on sandbar

DE DAGSBORO — Two Pennsylvania men have been charged with boating violations after they were discovered in a stolen vessel that was stuck on a sandbar in a Delaware river, according to Delaware's natural resources department.

Matthew Tortu, 24, and Travis Gooding, 21, both of Coatsville, Pa., were found in a small skiff that was aground in the Indian River Bay early Saturday morning, Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police said in a statement Tuesday. Officers determined the boat had been taken from Dagsboro, according to the statement.

Tortu and Gooding were charged with one count each of felony theft, felony conspiracy, criminal mischief, no boating safety certification, no navigation lights and negligent operation of a motor vessel, officials said. Gooding was also charged with failure to maintain a proper lookout.

Man charged with killing elephant seal on beach

CA LOS ANGELES — A 30-old-man was charged Tuesday with shooting and killing a protected northern elephant seal on a California beach, federal prosecutors said.

Jordan Gerbich, of Santa Maria, faces one count of taking a marine mammal, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office. The elephant seal was found dead from a gunshot to the head on a beach near San Simeon last September.

The area is popular viewing area along the central coast where visitors can observe the enormous seals, which can weigh more than 1,000 pounds.

Investigators did not name

a possible motive for the shooting.

City undeterred in plan for 9/11 commemoration

WV SUMMERSVILLE — At a time when festivals, concerts and other events are being called off due to the coronavirus pandemic, one West Virginia community is forging ahead with plans to honor law enforcement officers and first responders.

The city of Summersville will host a parade, music and fireworks on Sept. 11, the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the U.S., WCHS-TV reported.

According to a post on Summersville's Facebook page, the city is joining efforts with the city of Richwood and the Nicholas County Commission to invite residents to participate. Attendees are being asked to observe social distancing along the parade route. Prior to the fireworks, a moment of silence will be held for law enforcement officers and first responders.

Woman helped son sell drugs from prison

RI PROVIDENCE — A Rhode Island woman has pleaded guilty to helping her son continue to sell crack cocaine even while he was serving a state prison sentence on drug charges, federal prosecutors said Tuesday.

Lisa Ellis, 52, of Pawtucket, pleaded guilty in federal court in Providence to cocaine distribution charges, according to a statement from U.S. attorney for Rhode Island, Aaron Weisman. Ellis in 2018 acted as point-of-contact for her son, James Gomes, 33, as he continued to arrange drug sales from behind bars to people on the outside, prosecutors said. Ellis, when taking phone calls from

her son, conferenced in his associates on her cellphone, who were then directed by Gomes to make crack sales, even specifying customer, quantity and price, authorities said.

She would then collect the proceeds of the sales, keep some for herself, and deposit the rest in her son's prison account.

Grand Canyon rock fall reveals fossil footprints

AZ FLAGSTAFF — It's something like a modern-day chuckwalla, strolling in sand dunes on an island in what now is the Grand Canyon region.

That's how Steve Rowland, professor emeritus of geology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and his fellow researchers interpret fossil footprints that were revealed in a rock fall near a popular Grand Canyon hiking trail. They estimate the tracks are 313 million years old, give or take a half-million years.

At that age, they'd be among the oldest tracks of animals that lay eggs with a protective hard or leathery shell and the earliest evidence of vertebrate animals walking distinctively in sand dunes, Rowland, Mario Caputo and Zachary Jensen wrote in a research paper published this month.

"I think our interpretations will hold up very well," Rowland said Monday.

7-foot-long triceratops skull excavated

SD SIOUX FALLS — A seven-foot-long triceratops skull has been unearthed in South Dakota, a Missouri college has announced.

A geology professor and students from Westminster College were excavating fossil remains last year at Grand

River National Grassland when they were alerted that a rancher had discovered something unusual poking out of the earth. The group found it was the tip of a triceratops horn, leading them to believe it could lead to a significant excavation.

The professor returned with students and alumni this summer, and they unearthed a skull that weighed 3,000 pounds.

The skull was transported back to Missouri, where Westminster College is hoping to restore it.

Police officer's wife dies trapped in SUV

FL MIAMI SHORES — A Florida police officer's wife died after becoming trapped in the back of his patrol vehicle for several hours during a hot afternoon, police said Monday.

Investigators are treating the death of Clara Paulino, 56, as an accident, the Miami Herald reported.

Aristides Paulino, 58, who works for the city of Miami, was asleep in the couple's Miami Shores home Friday afternoon after finishing a midnight shift, the Herald reported. Clara Paulino had climbed into the backseat of his marked SUV to find something when the doors somehow closed, and a self-locking mechanism engaged, officials said. Temperatures reached over 90 degrees Fahrenheit as Paulino spent about four hours stuck inside the SUV until her family discovered her body, police said.

The SUV has a cage that separates the back seat from the front seat and has bars on the windows, Matthew Reyes, the vice president of the Miami Fraternal Order of Police, told NBC-6. He said the vehicle's doors lock and can only be opened from the outside.

From wire reports

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NBA players boycott games in protest

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — NBA players didn't come to Disney solely for a restart. They wanted social reform.

The Milwaukee Bucks showed how far they're willing to go to get it by opting not to play in their playoff game Wednesday. Two more games were postponed later in the day, the second time this season NBA basketball came to an immediate halt.

Other sports followed, just as they did in March when the season was suspended four months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

This time, the players will decide how long the stoppage lasts.

"The biggest thing that we all understand is if we're not playing, what are we doing? What are we doing to show and to help what's going on outside this bubble?" Boston Celtics forward Grant Williams said, shortly before the Bucks were scheduled to tip off their game against the Orlando Magic.

Instead, the Bucks players remained in the locker room, finally emerging hours later to read a statement demanding action from lawmakers and encouraging voting by citizens.

They changed the narrative across the entire sports landscape, putting the focus squarely on social justice reform in protest of the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by police in Kenosha, Wis., while three of his children in his car looked on.

Major League Baseball games between the Cincinnati Reds and Brewers in Milwaukee, Seattle Mariners and Padres in San Diego and the Los Angeles Dodgers and Giants in San Francisco were called off hours before they were set to begin, and players and teams from the WNBA, MLS and tennis sat out their competitions Wednesday night.

The Stanley Cup playoffs were played as scheduled Wednesday with two games preceded by moments of reflection, but NHL players are discussing options to protest,

according to a person with knowledge of those talks. Two prominent Black NHL players expressed frustration that the predominantly white league went ahead.

The U.S. Tennis Association, along with the ATP and WTA Tours, announced play would be paused after two-time Grand Slam women's champion Naomi Osaka had already said she wouldn't play her semifinal match at the The Western & Southern.

"I don't expect anything drastic to happen with me not playing, but if I can get a conversation started in a majority white sport I consider that a step in the right direction," Osaka tweeted. "Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hand of the police is honestly making me sick to my stomach."

The Bucks' decision to sit out will not lead to the end of the league's postseason, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

NBA players from the 13 teams still remaining at the

NBA's bubble at Disney World met Wednesday evening and Thursday morning to discuss whether to resume play or to cancel the balance of the playoffs, which are set to run through mid-October. After an 11 a.m. players meeting, which ran concurrently with an emergency meeting of the NBA's Board of Governors, the players decided to continue playing.

Coaches met for nearly three hours in a Disney hotel Wednesday night to determine next steps, including whether the season should continue. They did not come to a consensus, a person with knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because details weren't revealed publicly.

The NBA's board of governors were scheduled to meet Thursday morning to address whether the playoff games scheduled for that day would be played. More lost NBA games would be another punishing financial blow.

NFL practices canceled in response to Blake shooting

Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Empty practice fields made for loud and powerful statements at facilities across the NFL.

The Arizona Cardinals, Chicago Bears, Denver Broncos, Green Bay Packers, Indianapolis Colts, New York Jets, Tennessee Titans and Washington Football Team all chose to not practice Thursday in response to the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Wisconsin.

"Instead, the team will use the day to discuss and work toward making a lasting social impact and inspiring change in our communities," the Colts said in a statement posted on Twitter.

Blake, 29, was shot by police, apparently in the back, on Sunday in Kenosha as he leaned into his SUV, three of his chil-

dren seated inside. The shooting was captured on cellphone video and ignited new protests in the U.S. three months after the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer touched off a nationwide reckoning over racial injustice.

The Detroit Lions canceled their practice Tuesday, protesting the incident involving Blake, and racial injustice. They were on the field Thursday, but the impact of their actions was clear across the rest of the league.

"I think that if there's any chance that we got everybody to maybe stop and think for a minute, that's really great," Lions coach Matt Patricia said Thursday during a video call. "I think we have a simple saying as 'Just listen.' Right now, that's all we want people to re-

ally do is listen. We understand that this isn't a sprint, it's not a race; it's a marathon."

On Wednesday night, the Washington Football Team announced it would not hold its practice at its home stadium on Thursday afternoon. It was supposed to be broadcast live on local radio and televised at night.

"In place of our practice at FedEx Field, the players, coaches and football staff will meet as a football family and we'll continue our open dialogue on the issues of racism and social injustice in our country," coach Ron Rivera said in the statement.

Washington, which recently dropped its longtime name of Redskins, last week hired Jason Wright as the first Black team president in NFL history.

The Packers also announced

Thursday they would not hold their scheduled practice.

Jets coach Adam Gase and a few players said Wednesday they spoke about the shooting of Blake and racial injustice on Tuesday night.

Wide receiver Jamison Crowder and safety Bradley McDougald said the Jets were still discussing how they would handle the situation as a team.

"This is definitely something that I don't want — and a lot of my brothers in the locker room don't want — we don't want it swept under the rug," McDougald said. "This is not just a one-day topic or when it happens, we need to talk about it. This is something real in our community that we're dealing with."

"And I'm going to deal with it for the rest of my life, and my kids are going to deal with it."

NHL roundup

Flyers blow 3-goal lead, recover to top Islanders

Associated Press

TORONTO — Philippe Myers scored 2:40 into overtime to give the Philadelphia Flyers a 4-3 victory over the New York Islanders on Wednesday, tying the second-round playoff series at a game apiece.

The Islanders overcame a 3-0 first-period deficit, with Jean-Gabriel Pageau getting the tying goal with 2:09 left in regulation.

Myers ended it quickly, connecting on a shot from the right point that glanced off the stick of the Islanders' Anders Lee on the way in.

"(Sean Couturier) gave me to the puck low to high there, and I saw that I had a lane," Myers said. "I was just trying to get it on net, and it went in. I'll take it. Good feeling."

Kevin Hayes scored twice in the first period for Philadelphia, Couturier also had a goal, and Carter Hart made 31 saves.

"We've been very good at

protecting leads," Philadelphia coach Alain Vigneault said. "And tonight it got a little bit away from us, but we found a way to get it done in overtime."

Lee and Anthony Beauvillier also scored for the Islanders. Semyon Varlamov had seven saves before he was benched late in the first period. Thomas Greiss finished with 20 stops the rest of the way.

The Flyers scored three times in the first 15:09, chasing Varlamov. He had shut them out in Game 1 and built an Islanders' playoff record shutout streak of 138:17 before Philadelphia broke through in the first period.

Hayes scored off a rush with a wrister from the left circle that rattled in off the post 1:57 into the net. He got his second when he beat Varlamov with a sharp-angle shot from the left at 9:43.

Lightning 7, Bruins 1: At Toronto, Ondrej Palat, Mikhail Sergachev and Alex Killorn scored power-play goals to give

Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead in its Eastern Conference semifinal series with Boston.

Killorn finished with two goals and an assist, Nikita Kucherov had a goal and three assists, and Sergachev and Brayden Point each added a goal and two assists. Palat and Yanni Gourde had a goal and an assist each. Andrei Vasilevskiy had 23 saves.

The Lightning ended an 0-for-16 drought in man-advantage situations that began in Game 1 of Tampa Bay's first-round victory over the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Brad Marchand had his fourth goal of the series for Boston, scoring on the power play at 4:56 of the second period. Jaroslav Halak was pulled after giving up four goals on 16 shots. He was replaced by 23-year-old Dan Vladar, who stopped 12 of the 15 shots he faced in his NHL playoff debut.

Avs outlast Stars, thrive in Game 3

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Nazem Kadri scored the go-ahead goal with 6:06 remaining in a wild third period as the Colorado Avalanche regrouped to beat the Dallas Stars 6-4 in Game 3 on Wednesday night.

Dallas has a 2-1 advantage in the second-round series. Game 4 will be Friday.

Leading 3-1 in the third, Colorado saw the Stars rally for three straight goals, including one that caromed into the net off the leg of Jamie Benn to put Dallas up.

Mikko Rantanen and Kadri responded with goals 1:52 apart to give the Avalanche a 5-4 advantage. Kadri tipped in the winner off a pass from Kevin Connauton.

Pierre-Edouard Bellemare added a late empty-netter to seal the win. It was Bellemare's first playoff goal.

"It's a character win," Kadri said. "It would've been easy for us to get down on ourselves. We're pretty comfortable playing in every situation. Obviously, blowing the lead, it wasn't our best. But this is a game that could definitely give us some momentum and hopefully change the series."

Briefly

Mickelson wins in his Champions Tour debut

Associated Press

RIDGEDALE, Mo. — Phil Mickelson chose to make his PGA Tour Champions debut at Ozarks National this week so he could avoid a two-week break right in the middle of his preparations for the U.S. Open at Winged Foot.

If he was going to show up, Mickelson thought, he might as well win.

He closed with a 5-under 66 on Wednesday to reach 22 under, leaving him three shots clear of Tim Petrovic. The wire-to-wire victory made Mickelson the 20th

player to win on the 50-and-over-tour in his debut, not to mention gave him some much-needed confidence after a missed cut at The Northern Trust knocked him from the FedEx Cup Playoffs.

NCAA: LSU's Wade may have made offers to 11 players

BATON ROUGE, La. — NCAA enforcement officials say LSU basketball coach Will Wade is suspected of offering or providing "impermissible benefits" to 11 prospective recruits or people associated with

them.

The allegation is detailed in documents made public Wednesday by LSU.

No. 4 Georgia loses WR Blaylock to knee injury

ATHENS, Ga. — Georgia wide receiver Dominick Blaylock will miss the 2020 season following his second serious knee injury in two years. Blaylock, a part-time starter in 2019, was one of the team's top returning receivers and return specialists.

Three MLB games called off

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Three Major League Baseball games were postponed Wednesday as players across the sports landscape drove the decisions in the wake of the weekend shooting by police of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Wisconsin.

Games between the Cincinnati Reds and Brewers in Milwaukee, Seattle Mariners and Padres in San Diego and the Los Angeles Dodgers and Giants in San Francisco were called off hours before they were set to begin.

“There are serious issues in this country,” Seattle’s Dee Gordon tweeted. “For me, and for many of my teammates, the injustices, violence, death and systemic racism is deeply personal. This is impacting not only my community, but very directly my family and friends. Our team voted unanimously not to play tonight.”

Other MLB games had finished, were in progress or just about to start as the announcements were made. Outfielders Jason Heyward of the Cubs and Matt Kemp of the Rockies, sat out while their teams played.

Kemp, who is Black, announced on social media he would skip Colorado’s game in Arizona “in protest of the injustices my people continue to suffer.”

All three postponed games were to be made up as doubleheaders Thursday. There was the possibility, too, that other games around the majors could be affected.

The baseball postponements came after the NBA’s Milwaukee Bucks didn’t come out on the floor for Game 5 of their first-round playoff series with the Orlando Magic on Wednesday afternoon. NBA officials later announced that all three of the day’s scheduled playoff games had been postponed.

“Given the pain in the communities of

Wisconsin and beyond following the shooting of Jacob Blake, we respect the decisions of a number of players not to play tonight. Major League Baseball remains united for change in our society and we will be allies in the fight to end racism and injustice,” MLB said in a statement.

Said players’ union head Tony Clark: “At this critical time, players have been deeply affected by the recent events in Wisconsin and by similar events in other parts of the country. We are proud of the stand that our players have taken, and we remain committed to supporting their efforts to effect change in MLB communities and beyond.”

Brewers star Christian Yelich said he exchanged texts with Bucks guard Pat Connaughton to let him know they wouldn’t be playing at Miller Park and that “we wanted to be united with them in what they started.”

MLB roundup

Rays squeeze past Orioles with rare homer by Perez

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Michael Perez hit a go-ahead solo homer in the eighth inning and the AL East-leading Tampa Bay Rays beat the Baltimore Orioles 4-3 on Wednesday night.

Perez homered to center off Mychal Givens (0-1). It was his first long ball since Aug. 10, 2018.

Ryan Sherriff (1-0) worked a perfect eighth in his first big league game since May 7, 2018, due to Tommy John surgery.

Diego Castillo pitched the ninth to get his first save. Ten Tampa Bay relievers have a save this season.

Blue Jays 9, Red Sox 1: Rowdy Tellez drove in four runs with two homers and a double, and host Toronto beat Boston.

Vladimir Guererro Jr. hit a pair of doubles, including a three-run bouncer down the left-field line that keyed a four-run seventh inning. Randal Grichuk also homered and drove in two runs.

Five Toronto pitchers combined to allow three hits, struck out seven and walked three.

Mets 5, Marlins 4: Wilson Ramos singled home the go-ahead run in the eighth inning after hobbled Mets closer Edwin Diaz and the bullpen blew another lead provided by Jacob deGrom, and host New York beat Miami.

DeGrom set the Mets up nicely by matching a career high with 14 strikeouts and handing off a 4-1 lead to begin the eighth inning, but the Marlins loaded the bases with one out against Justin Wilson. DeGrom set a career high with his 10th consecutive start allowing two or fewer runs.

Indians 6, Twins 3: Mike Clevinger pitched effectively in his first start since breaking COVID-19 protocols and Tyler Naquin doubled home the go-ahead run in a three-run eighth inning as host Cleveland beat Minnesota to tighten the AL Central.

Clevinger gave up a homer to Max Kepler on his third

pitch, but settled in and held the Twins to two runs in six innings in his first start since Aug. 5.

Tigers 7, Cubs 6: Niko Goodrum hit a two-run double to cap his team’s five-run sixth inning, and host Detroit held on to beat Chicago.

Detroit finished with a season-high 18 hits. Jonathan Schoop, Miguel Cabrera, Cameron Maybin and Austin Romine had three each.

Phillies 3, Nationals 2: Aaron Nola threw seven strong innings, and visiting Philadelphia took advantage of Washington’s sloppy outfield defense to rally for a victory.

Bryce Harper delivered the go-ahead RBI single in the seventh to help the Phillies win their third in a row. The defending World Series champion Nationals have dropped three consecutive games.

Braves 5-2, Yankees 1-1: Freddie Freeman hit a two-run homer in the sixth inning off Chad Green and host Atlanta, led by another strong start from

Max Fried, rallied to beat New York to sweep a doubleheader.

In the opener, Ian Anderson dazzled in his big league debut, holding the Yankees hitless into the sixth inning and ending Gerrit Cole’s 20-game winning streak.

Cardinals 6, Royals 5: Kolten Wong drew a bases-loaded walk to cap off a four-run rally in the ninth inning that lifted host St. Louis over Kansas City.

White Sox 10, Pirates 3: Jose Abreu homered, Dallas Keuchel pitched six dominant innings, and surging Chicago pounded visiting Pittsburgh to win for the ninth time in 10 games.

Athletics 3, Rangers 1: Mike Fiers extended his mastery over Texas, allowing only an unearned run in six innings to lead visiting Oakland.

Rockies 8, Diamondbacks 7: Charlie Blackmon hit a grand slam to help host Colorado build a big lead and hold on during a tense ninth inning to beat Arizona.