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Navy's top NCO retires amid probe

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy said it would complete its investigation into Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Steven Giordano after he announced Thursday that he would retire amid the probe into allegations he fostered a hostile work environment in his Pentagon office.

In a message to the Navy's force, Giordano said he would leave to "avoid distraction" as the Navy inspector general's office completes its misconduct investigation. He had served as the Navy's top enlisted sailor since September 2016 and had taken leave during the IG's inquiry.

"I have informed the chief of naval operations [Adm. John Richardson] that I intend to step aside and submit my retirement request, in order to allow the CNO, our [enlisted leadership], and our sailors to continue to move forward with the initiatives we have begun," Giordano wrote Thursday on the Navy's Facebook page.

Richardson accepted Giordano's retirement request.

"I appreciate his recognition that the situation had become untenable," the Navy's top officer wrote on his public Facebook page.

Richardson announced Friday that Fleet Master Chief Russell Smith would assume Giordano's duties temporarily.

The investigation was initiated last month after a formal complaint by a sailor working for Giordano. The sailor alleged that Giordano created a toxic work environment and belittled people who worked for him, often demanding they perform menial tasks, Navy officials said.

Navy Capt. Darryn James, spokesman for Richardson, said the investigation had not been completed as of Friday and would continue even after Giordano retired.

He could face repercussions if the probe substantiates the alleged misconduct.

"The Navy takes all allegations of wrongdoing seriously," James said.

In his note to the force, Giordano made no mention of the allegations against him. He wrote his tenure in the sea service was a "privilege" and an "honor."

"My family and I have felt extremely blessed to have had you [sailors] in our lives over the 29 years," he wrote. "My love for our Navy and our sailors is absolute."

A Baltimore native, Giordano, who enlisted in 1989, is the 14th master chief petty officer of the Navy, according to his official biography. In addition to multiple deployments aboard surface ships and subma-

rines in the Pacific and European areas of responsibility, Giordano has served in Guam and Bahrain. He was the force master chief for Navy Information Dominance Forces and fleet master chief for U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa.

As the Navy's senior enlisted leader, Giordano serves as a chief adviser to the chief of naval operations, develops policy and advocates for the sea service's enlisted force.

Master chief petty officers of the Navy typically serve two-year assignments, which can be extended to four years.

On Friday, Richardson was set to begin the process to find a permanent replacement for Giordano, James said.

His temporary replacement, Smith, will retain his role as the senior enlisted leader for Navy Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education, a position he has held since January 2017.

"Master Chief Smith is an established leader and I thank him for accepting these important temporary duties until I select a new MCPON," Richardson said in a statement. "He will represent our sailors and families well."

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Military officials cite progress on opioid epidemic

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The military is seeing significantly lower levels of opioid abuse and use as it installs a series of reforms in the midst of a drug epidemic that has gripped the nation, two service health officials told lawmakers.

Less than 1 percent of active-duty servicemembers are abusing or addicted to opioids and its rate of deadly overdoses is a quarter of the national average, Vice Adm. Raquel C. Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency, told a House panel Wednesday.

This, as military prescriptions for opioids has fallen 15 percent as alternative

forms of treatment are increasingly explored, said Capt. Mike Colston, director of mental health policy and oversight for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Opioid use by active-duty servicemembers has declined from 3.2 percent to 2.7 percent during the last year, he said.

"This crisis is touching the lives of so many of our fellow citizens and the department is committed to playing its part to help combat the epidemic and ensure our patients receive the finest care we can provide," Bono told the House Armed Services Committee on military personnel issues. The Defense Department "is making headway, but there is more to be done."

In recent years, the military has in-

stalled a series of reforms to address the epidemic within its ranks, but it continues to see concerns. Bono said work remains in educating servicemembers and veterans on opioid addiction threats and implementing new strategies to reduce abuse.

For example, there are specific groups that need increased attention, such as servicemembers transitioning to civilian life, veterans and retirees, military officials and lawmakers said. In those cases, there's more likelihood of a patient falling through the cracks or higher incidents of concern.

Nationally, the opioid epidemic claims an estimated 116 people from drug overdoses each day.

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Bases set to house up to 20K migrant kids

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Up to 20,000 migrant children could be housed on U.S. military bases under a plan being considered by President Donald Trump's administration, according to U.S. officials. The children would be unaccompanied minors who cross the border without family members, not children separated from families.

The Department of Homeland Security requested the space to hold the children younger than 18 at military installations, two defense officials said Thursday on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss ongoing planning.

DHS is considering four military installations — Fort Bliss, Goodfellow Air Force Base and Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, and Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas — to house the children. The officials said DHS completed a site inspection of

Little Rock AFB on Thursday after previous visits to the other installations.

No decisions about which of the installations would be used to hold the unaccompanied minors had been made as of Thursday, officials said. Under the current plan, the installations would not be used to house 2,500 migrant children who were separated from their families in recent weeks before Trump signed an executive order Wednesday halting that policy. Pentagon and DHS officials remain in discussion about the potential to house families detained at the border at those military sites.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., on Thursday said he had been advised of the plan, but questioned how DOD could hold 20,000 children.

"How will that work? Is it even feasible?" he asked on the Senate floor.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Wednesday dismissed concerns about holding children on military bases, con-

firming the Pentagon would provide the space DHS requested. He referred questions about the policy to DHS, telling reporters the Pentagon has supported such programs in the past.

"We have housed refugees. We have housed people thrown out of their homes by earthquakes and hurricanes," he said. "We do whatever is in the best interest of the country."

The military has hosted unaccompanied migrant minors in the past. In 2014, space at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, was used to house thousands of unaccompanied children. The officials said any use of military facilities would be similar to that.

Mattis has said that DHS would only use space on installations that is not needed for military use. He said no Defense Department personnel would be involved with caring for or securing the children.

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Confusion swirls after Trump reversal on families

Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas — President Donald Trump's order to stop separating migrant children from their parents spread confusion along the border, with officials still working on a plan to reunite families while sending conflicting signals about the state of the administration's "zero tolerance" policy.

Parents who remained locked up struggled to get in touch with children being held, in many cases, hundreds of miles away. Some said they didn't even know where their children were. Others said they had been deported without them.

Trump himself took a hard line on the crisis, accusing the Democrats of telling "phony stories of sadness and grief."

"We cannot allow our country to be overrun by illegal immigrants," he tweeted.

A senior Trump administration official said that about 500 of the more than 2,300 children taken from their families at the border in recent weeks have been reunited since May.

Federal agencies are working to set up a centralized

reunification process for all remaining children at a detention center on the Texas side of the border, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

There also were signs that the administration is dialing back, for now at least, its "zero tolerance" policy of prosecuting all adults caught crossing into the U.S. illegally.

The federal public defender's office for the region that covers El Paso to San Antonio said Thursday that federal prosecutors would be dismissing cases in which parents were charged with illegally entering the country and separated from their children.

"Going forward, they will no longer bring criminal charges against a parent or parents entering the United States if they have their child with them," wrote Maureen Scott Franco, public defender for the Western District of Texas, in an email shown to the AP.

In the Texas border city of McAllen, federal prosecutors unexpectedly did not pursue

charges against 17 immigrants Thursday. A prosecutor cited Trump's executive order Wednesday ending the practice of separating families.

But the Justice Department denied "zero tolerance" has been rolled back.

"There has been no change to the department's zero tolerance policy to prosecute adults who cross our border illegally instead of claiming asylum at any port of entry at the border," spokeswoman Sara Isgur Flores said.

Outside the federal courthouse in McAllen, immigration attorney Efren Olivares said 67 people were charged Friday morning with illegal entry, but none were parents with children.

Meanwhile, a 7-year-old boy and his mother, separated a month ago, were reunited Friday after she sued in federal court and the Justice Department agreed to release the child.

They were brought back together about 2:30 a.m. at Baltimore-Washington International Airport in Maryland, hours after the government

relented.

The mother, Beata Mariana de Jesus Mejia-Mejia, had filed for political asylum after crossing the border with her son, Darwin, following a trek from Guatemala. She said that she cried when the two were reunited and that she is never going to be away from him again.

But a 31-year-old Brazilian man held in Cibola County Correctional Center in Milan, N.M., said he didn't know when he would see his 9-year-old son again.

The father told the AP in a phone interview that he spoke to his son once by phone since they were separated 26 days earlier. The man, who is seeking asylum, spoke on condition of anonymity because, he said, a gang is looking for him in Brazil for failure to pay an \$8,000 debt.

The man said he worries about his son, who speaks only Portuguese.

"He cried. He was so sad," the father said. "I had promised him it would only be three to five days."

Gitmo preps for new prisoners, maybe ISIS

Miami Herald

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba — Earlier this month, in a drill shrouded in secrecy, prison guards practiced for something that hasn't actually happened at Guantanamo in a decade. They rehearsed receiving a new war-on-terror detainee.

Medical evaluation? Check. Notification of the International Red Cross? Check. Assignment to a cell? Check. Security and more security. Gone are the iconic orange uniforms that made Camp X-Ray infamous. The man who played the role of new captive wore white.

Navy Rear Adm. John Ring, the prison commander, said he hasn't gotten any word that new prisoners are coming. But since President Donald Trump signed an order keeping the prison open, Ring's staff is now preparing for what spokeswoman Navy Cmdr. Anne Leanos

calls an "enduring mission."

"I have not been told we're getting new people. I have no order to receive new people. I've been asked some hypothetical questions about capacities and things like that, but we are not imminently expecting anybody," Ring told reporters in early June.

Guantanamo today has 40 prisoners and a staff of 1,800 troops and civilians. With the maximum-security Camp 5 prison just reopened, after a cellblock was remade into a clinic and mental health ward, the detention center can now take in another 40 men.

One wrinkle is that any new detainees are likely to be members of Islamic State, not al-Qaida. And while some people see Islamic State, or ISIS, as an offshoot of al-Qaida, the militant movements are not allies and have vastly different aims.

"Unless we got some al-Qaida from Afghanistan, which

is possible, most of the conversation is about Syria, and most of those guys, I understand, are ISIS," said Ring, who doesn't decide who comes and goes from Guantanamo. "So it's possible we could get folks from either place."

Any new prisoner would be the first to arrive at Guantanamo since the CIA delivered an Afghan "high-value detainee" in March 2008. That was years before ISIS declared its worldwide caliphate, invaded and controlled a huge swath of Iraq and Syria and released a series of brutal videotaped killings of captives in orange jumpsuits.

Al-Qaida has "a different ideology" than ISIS, said Leanos, the prison spokeswoman. Besides, after more than a decade in military detention, there's also a "different mentality" among the captives — who are profiled as al-Qaida members or affiliates and have come to understand Guantanamo pris-

on's incentive system, said the admiral's cultural adviser who is identified with one name, Zaki. Captives who follow the guards' commands get to live communally, pray and eat in groups, take art, language and gardening classes and read more books, for example.

"If suspected ISIS fighters are transferred to Guantanamo I would expect that a legal challenge to their detention would be filed within days if not hours of their arrival," said Wells Dixon of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which has been at the forefront of representing and finding attorneys for military detainees.

He and other opponents of Guantanamo detention argue the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, Congress' permission for the president to wage war on al-Qaida and the Taliban over the Sept. 11 attacks, does not apply to ISIS.

Official: AF vet charged in leak case reaches deal

Associated Press

ATLANTA — A woman charged with leaking U.S. secrets to a news outlet plans to plead guilty, a federal official confirmed Thursday.

Online court records show a change-of-plea hearing is scheduled Tuesday for former National Security Agency contractor Reality Winner. U.S. Department of Justice spokesman Ian Prior confirmed by email that Winner plans to plead guilty.

The docket shows a plea agreement was filed Thursday, but it isn't publicly accessible.

Winner previously pleaded not guilty and has been in custody since her arrest.

Defense attorneys didn't immediately respond Thursday afternoon to an email seeking comment.

Winner is a former Air Force linguist who speaks Arabic and Farsi and had a top-secret security clearance. She worked

for the national security contractor Pluribus International at Fort Gordon, Ga., when she was charged in June 2017 with copying a classified U.S. report and mailing it to an unidentified news organization.

Authorities have not publicly described the document Winner is charged with leaking, nor have they identified the news organization that received it. But the Justice Department announced Winner's arrest on the same day online news outlet The Intercept reported it had obtained a classified NSA report suggesting Russian hackers attacked a U.S. voting software supplier before last year's presidential election. The report was dated May 5, the same as the document Winner is charged with leaking.

Winner's mother, Billie Winner-Davis, told The Associated Press by phone Thursday that she understood her daughter planned to plead guilty, but didn't have any other details.

US worker confirmed hurt in mystery Cuba incidents

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Medical tests have confirmed that one additional U.S. Embassy worker has been affected by mysterious health incidents in Cuba, the State Department said Thursday, bringing the total number to 25.

The new "medically confirmed" worker is one of two who were evacuated from Cuba recently after reporting symptoms. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the other worker is "still being evaluated" by doctors. Prior to the newest incident, the most recent medically confirmed case from Cuba had been in August 2017, Nauert said.

"All of this is still an ongoing investigation," Nauert said.

The confirmed Cuba patients have been found to have a range of symptoms and diagnoses including mild traumatic brain injury, also known as concussions. They and others

suspected to be affected have been brought for testing to the University of Pennsylvania, where specialists in brain injury enlisted by the U.S. government have been screening, treating and studying American personnel evacuated from both Cuba and China.

The workers affected in Cuba are in addition to one American government worker at a U.S. consulate in China who also confirmed to have been affected, raising concerns that the incidents occurring in Cuba have spread. Dozens more U.S. workers at diplomatic outposts in China are being tested, including some returned to the U.S. for more advanced testing.

The U.S. has said that the Cuba incidents started in late 2016. The State Department calls them "specific attacks" but has not said what caused them nor who was behind them. Cuba adamantly has denied involvement or knowledge.

Hundreds rescued from floods in Texas

Associated Press

DALLAS — Hundreds of people had to be rescued Thursday from floodwaters in South Texas, where rainfall has inundated communities all week.

In the border city of Mission, Mayor Armando O'cana said about 200 water rescues had been performed, while Texas Department of Public Safety Lt. Johnny Hernandez said authorities were sometimes using helicopters to get to people. O'cana said people had been rescued from homes, cars, an adult day care center and local motels.

"We're still conducting life-saving rescues as we speak," O'cana said Thursday afternoon.

He noted his community had been spared from rain that hit the area a day earlier.

The National Weather Service said some areas in far South Texas got more than 15 inches of rain over the last four days. Meteorologist Tim Speece said that throughout the week, "different areas received the heavy rainfall." Speece added that the rain was expected to move out of far South Texas on Friday.

Thunderstorms that have moved across Texas this week also have brought heavy rains to areas that less than a year ago were hit by flooding from Hurricane Harvey, including the Corpus Christi area and the Beaumont-Port Arthur area, east of Houston.

Gov. Greg Abbott on Thursday issued a disaster declaration for six counties hit by flooding: Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties in far South Texas and Aransas, Nueces and San Patricio counties in the Corpus Christi area.

Shelters in far South Texas include three set up by the American Red Cross, which housed more than 200 people on Wednesday night, a Red Cross spokeswoman said.

North, South Korea agree to resume reunions of families

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North and South Korea agreed Friday to hold a new round of reunions for families left divided by the 1950-53 war, an emotional issue for aging survivors wishing to see their loved ones again.

The talks, which were held in North Korea, were the latest step toward improving relations in tandem with broader nuclear negotiations.

The reunions of 100 families from each side will take place at North Korea's Diamond Mountain resort from Aug. 20 to 26, the two sides said after a daylong meeting between Red Cross officials. The announcement follows through on a promise made by President

Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during their first summit.

They agreed to hold the reunions to mark the Aug. 15 anniversary of the Korean Peninsula's independence from Japanese colonial rule after World War II.

The joint statement said "participants with mobility difficulties may be accompanied by one family member."

North Korea's chief delegate, Pak Yong Il, noted the significance of the location, where the officials met Friday and past family reunions have been held. He used the Korean name, Mount Kungang.

"We have returned to a precious place ... and we have a second chance at reconciliation and unity," he said at the start of the nine-hour meeting.

Pak led a delegation to the preparatory talks on the mountain on the scenic east coast, which can be seen on a clear day from an observation point in the South.

The South Korean side was led by the country's Red Cross chief, Park Kyung-seo.

Some 20,000 Koreans have come face-to-face with relatives in 20 rounds of reunions held since 2000. But the effort stalled as tensions rose over the North's nuclear weapons program.

The number of South Koreans who have registered with hopes of finding their loved ones in the North was 132,124 as of May, with about 57,000 still alive, according to Yonhap News Agency. It said 86 percent are at least 70 years old.

Campers trapped, bears swim in Mont. floods

Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Helicopters rescued people stranded by flooding in Montana, including 140 children and counselors stuck in a mountain Bible camp for two days, as severe storms swept the Rockies and the Midwest.

Campers attending the Montana Wilderness School of the Bible near the small town of Augusta were lifted out Thursday after a washed-out road cut off the only exit. Montana was just drying out from spring flooding caused by near-record snowfall over the winter when a storm unleashed rain during the past three days.

Floodwaters running through two cabins and staff housing woke up the Montana campers Tuesday, counselor Dustin Steele said.

"The dryers were going constantly trying to keep the sleeping bags and clothes dry," he said Thursday from the airport in Great Falls, shortly after campers were dropped off to

meet their families. "It was hectic, but it was good."

They had enough food and supplies to stay until Friday, but the decision was made to get them out. The Montana Army National Guard flew in two Chinook helicopters and made two trips each with about 30 campers and their luggage, Steele said.

The 25-minute flight "was actually pretty loud," said Steele, 19. "You could hardly hear the person next to you."

Meanwhile, great swaths of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado were experiencing extreme or exceptional drought, forcing recent closures of national forests and other public lands because of fire danger.

In Montana, the remnants of Hurricane Bud met up with moisture from the Pacific Ocean to create a storm that hung over the western half of the state for the past three days, said National Weather Service meteorologist Megan Syner in Great Falls.

"I can't point to any single

thing that would make us an anomaly in the western half of the U.S.," Syner said. "We had a record winter season, and we had a storm track that just continued to bring weather systems over Montana."

That led to 9 inches of rain falling on the Rocky Mountain Front, causing waterways to overflow and to wash out roads, bridges and even to sweep away wildlife.

The mother of one camper, Teresa Lane, had an adventure of her own when she and her 9-year-old daughter saw a grizzly bear that had been swept away by a fast-running creek on her ranch near Augusta.

"I thought it was a dead cow originally — it was something big and black and floating," Lane said. "Then it flipped around, and it looked at me, and I said, 'Tiffany, it's a bear!'"

She and her daughter followed the bear for about a quarter-mile as it tried to get out. When it finally did, it limped and appeared agitated before running away.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Waitress paid with her stolen card

AR PINE BLUFF — Authorities say an Arkansas thief got his just deserts when he tried to pay for a meal using the waitress' stolen credit card.

Police spokesman Lt. David De Foor said in a news release that officers arrested Shamon West, 21, on Tuesday at Shannon's Restaurant in Pine Bluff. He said that "having no desire to pay for the fellow's meal," waitress Flora Lunsford called to report that the man had tried paying for his meal with her stolen credit card.

De Foor said officers found other items on West that had been in Lunsford's purse when it was stolen from her car Sunday at a nearby gas station while she was inside, including her Social Security card and her driver's license.

West is being held at the Jefferson County jail in lieu of \$2,840 bond on forgery and theft-by-receiving charges.

Teacher's trial delayed in 'Fight Club' case

CT NORWICH — A Connecticut judge has postponed the trial of a former substitute teacher charged with organizing a student fight club.

The Norwich Bulletin reports that Judge Nuala Droney granted Ryan Fish's lawyer's request for a continuance until July 25. Attorney Paul Chinigo said his client has been attending counseling sessions.

He previously pleaded not guilty to multiple counts of risk of injury to a child and reckless endangerment.

Prosecutors say Fish, 23, organized fights between students inside a math classroom at Montville High School. He was fired in October.

Man finds rattlesnake under hood of car

NY HANCOCK — An upstate New York man trying to jump-start his car was greeted by an unusual sound coming from his engine — the rattle of a venomous timber rattlesnake.

The man said the snake slithered across the engine block and curled up on the battery as he opened the hood of the car earlier this month in rural Hancock, on the Pennsylvania border 115 miles northwest of New York City. State environmental conservation police officers were called out to remove the reptile.

Lt. Nate Ver Hague untangled the snake's tail from the engine as Officer Mark Vencak carefully pulled it from the vehicle.

They released it nearby.

Home getting struck by mystery arrows

MA WORCESTER — A couple want to know who's shooting hunting arrows at their house.

Accurzio and Loretta Schlafani, both in their 70s, said three arrows with razor tips have struck on or near their Worcester home since June 15.

The first arrow remains stuck in their garage roof because they are physically unable to climb up and pull it out.

They found a second arrow on their rear deck on Saturday.

A third arrow struck in their backyard on Sunday.

Loretta Schlafani said she's concerned because young relatives often visit their home.

The couple reported the mysterious arrows to police, who took one away as evidence. Lt. Sean Murtha called the situation "odd" and said police have not received any other reports of stray arrows.

Swerving front-end loader spurs DUI arrest

AK ANCHORAGE — A man suspected of weaving through traffic while driving a front-end loader has been charged with driving under the influence of alcohol.

Daniel Hughett, 35, also is charged with consuming alcohol in violation of a previous release from custody.

A caller told Anchorage police Tuesday night that an intoxicated man nearly hit a convenience store as he parked a front-end loader. Police received a second call that said the driver was back on the road, swerving into and out of lanes and bouncing off the curb.

Officers found the unoccupied loader parked in the middle of a busy street. A witness followed Hughett into a neighborhood, where he was arrested.

Police said Hughett had driven the loader from his workplace.

Police: Trucker with branch leaves wrecks

NY NEW YORK — The New York Police Department says an oblivious driver with a large branch stuck to his truck wrecked multiple cars, leaving behind a five-block path of destruction.

The NYPD says the 36-year-old driver was in Queens late Tuesday when he hit a tree and got a large branch stuck between the truck's cabin and its trailer. WNBC-TV reported the driver didn't realize the branch had become stuck and kept driving, hitting at least a dozen unoccupied cars.

A person who lived on the street eventually got the driver to stop and to get out of the truck.

The driver was issued two summonses by police.

Thrown concrete breaks woman's jaw in dispute

OH AKRON — Police say a motorcyclist involved in a road rage confrontation in Ohio threw a piece of concrete into a car and broke a woman's jaw.

The woman, 29, and her boyfriend, 25, told police they were driving in Akron about 7 p.m. Monday when they honked their horn at a motorcyclist stopped at a green light.

The man got off his motorcycle and started arguing with the woman, which escalated to his pushing her before the boyfriend separated the two. The motorcyclist drove away, but the couple encountered him again as they drove over a bridge. Police said the motorcyclist threw a piece of concrete through the passenger-side window, striking the woman in the face.

The woman has been hospitalized for treatment. A search for the motorcyclist is ongoing.

Man runs from police, abandoning daughter

PA PITTSBURGH — Police say a man suspected of public intoxication abandoned his daughter at an ice cream shop, and then fought with officers in an attic where he was hiding before falling through the ceiling.

State police responded to a Dairy Queen in Fallowfield Township on Thursday after the man walked in with his daughter. Employees reported the man was making odd statements and falling asleep at the cash register.

Troopers tried to arrest the man, but he slammed the shop's door on an officer and ran away without his daughter. Investigators tracked the man to his sister's home. He is facing multiple charges.

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Suns take Ayton with No. 1 draft pick

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Phoenix Suns stayed close to home for their first No. 1 pick. The Dallas Mavericks looked all the way to Slovenia for the player they hope can be their next European superstar.

Shortly after the Suns took Deandre Ayton to start the NBA Draft on Thursday night, the Mavericks traded up two spots for the rights to Luka Doncic.

The Atlanta Hawks swapped the rights to Doncic, the No. 3 pick who spent the past year winning championships all over Europe, to Dallas for Trae Young, the No. 5 selection from Oklahoma.

The Mavericks also gave up a future first-round pick to draft Doncic, who only arrived in New York on Wednesday after helping Spain's Real Madrid win its league championship after he won Euroleague MVP and Final Four MVP honors when they won that title this year.

His lengthy European season kept him from working out for teams but he knew the Mavericks were interested in having him on their team for what's expected to be Dirk Nowitzki's final NBA season.

"I've been talking to Dallas a lot. They really wanted me, and they were very, very nice," said Doncic, 19. "They were very nice to me, and I think we had a very good relationship."

The Hawks will get perhaps the most exciting player in college basketball last season in Young, the first player to lead the nation in scoring and assists in the same season.

"Whatever city I went to, I was going to be able to be comfortable in," said Young, who wore suit shorts with his burgundy-colored jacket. "I was just really excited to get to Atlanta."

Otherwise, the top of the draft was dominated by big men, starting with a pair of former high school teammates.

The Suns made the 7-foot-1 Ayton the first No. 1 pick in

franchise history. The center from Arizona averaged 20.1 points and 11.6 rebounds in his lone season in Tucson, tying for the national lead with 24 double-doubles in 35 games.

He joined Mychal Thompson — father of Golden State All-Star Klay Thompson — in 1978 as the only players from the Bahamas to be the No. 1 pick in the NBA Draft.

"Having my name called to be the first pick for the Phoenix Suns was mind-blowing," Ayton said. "Having all that confidence and leading up to that point when I saw Adam Silver came out, I was just waiting for my name, and when he called it, my mind went blank."

The Sacramento Kings followed by taking Marvin Bagley III, the Duke big man who played with Ayton at Hillcrest Prep Academy in Phoenix in 2015-16.

With Jaren Jackson Jr. going fourth to Memphis, Texas center Mo Bamba going No. 6 to Orlando and Wendell Carter Jr. following to Chicago, it was an

early run of big men in what's increasingly become a perimeter-based league.

Then it was another guard with Alabama's Collin Sexton going at No. 8 to Cleveland, triggering chants of Michael Porter Jr.'s name by Knicks fans who hoped they would take him with the No. 9 pick. But they ended up disappointed as New York went with Kentucky's Kevin Knox.

"They booed (Kristaps) Porzingis (on draft night) and look where he is now. That's the same mindset I'm going to have," Knox said. "They can chant Michael Porter all they want. But they got Kevin Knox, and I'm willing to work and I'm willing to get better."

With concerns over back problems that limited him to only three games at Missouri last season, followed by a recent hip injury that he believes scared off teams, Porter ended up falling all the way to Denver at No. 14, the last lottery position.

Defending champ Florida ousts Texas Tech from CWS

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Florida carried a five-run lead into the bottom of the seventh inning against Texas Tech. Gators coach Kevin O'Sullivan never let himself get comfortable.

"We knew they weren't going away," O'Sullivan said. "They hung in there with us, and we knew it would be a nine-inning ballgame."

It was every bit a nine-inning game Thursday night.

Fortunately for the Gators, JJ Schwarz hit a two-run homer and Florida built enough cushion to survive Texas Tech's six-run outburst over the seventh and eighth innings and eliminate the Red Raiders from the College World Series with a 9-6 win.

The Gators (49-20) have won two straight following a loss to Tech in their CWS opener and

moved to the Bracket 2 final against Southeastern Conference rival Arkansas. The No. 1 national seed would have to beat the Razorbacks on Friday and again Saturday to return to the best-of-three championship round next week.

Florida freshman Jack Leftwich (5-5) allowed seven hits, walked two and struck out five in 6¹/₃ innings. He escaped trouble in the second and fourth innings before leaving with two runners on base in the seventh.

That's when Tech (45-20) and its high-scoring offense started to make trouble for the Gators and their bullpen.

"Right now, you don't feel too good," Tech coach Tim Tadlock said. "They compete and they love playing, and we're proud of how they go about and play the game. We thought we could get through this and get to next week. Right now, we probably

need to process all of it."

Tech scored three times against four pitchers in the seventh to make it a two-run game. The Gators got those three runs back in the top of the eighth, with Brady Smith tripling off the center-field wall.

Tech came back with three more runs in the eighth against three relievers to make it 8-6. Florida got one of those runs back in the ninth.

O'Sullivan was forced to go to closer Michael Byrne with two outs in the eighth, and he pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his 16th save.

"It would have been nice not to use him," O'Sullivan said. "We're going to need somebody else to step up and get us some outs if we want to advance here the next couple games."

Schwarz broke his right hand May 18 and returned to the lineup for Florida's first CWS

game. The Oakland Athletics' eighth-round draft pick was 1-for-11 in Omaha, and 1 for his last 20 overall, when he sent a 1-1 pitch from Ty Harpenau into the left-field bullpen for a 5-0 lead in the sixth. It was his 13th homer of the season and 50th of his career.

"I wouldn't have missed this for the world," Schwarz said about making it back from his injury. "I definitely felt a little better at the plate, more comfortable. Today was a good step in the right direction. I wasn't very comfortable the first couple games. I was a little rusty. I'm getting the hang of things again."

The Gators went up 1-0 without getting a hit against Caleb Kilian (9-3) in the fourth when Jonathan India walked, took second on a wild pitch, stole third and came home on another wild pitch.

Brazil scores late to beat Costa Rica

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — After more than 90 minutes of aggravation and exasperation, Neymar and Brazil finally broke through Costa Rica's smothering defense.

Philippe Coutinho scored in the first minute of stoppage time, and Neymar followed six minutes later to give Brazil a 2-0 victory over Costa Rica on Friday at the World Cup.

Unlike Argentina and Lionel Messi, Brazil is still in a good position to advance to the round of 16. Costa Rica has been eliminated.

"The responsibility is huge when you are playing for the national team," Coutinho said. "You have to be mentally strong from the beginning until the end. We fought until the end and we were rewarded."

Neymar dropped to his knees after the final whistle, sobbing in his hands as his teammates surrounded him and then lifted him off the ground.

"We know he had a difficult injury, he went through a very bad patch," Coutinho said through a translator, referring to Neymar breaking a bone in his right foot four months ago. "But his joy at being on the pitch is contagious."

A few minutes before the end, Neymar flopped backward to

initially earn a penalty, but the contact was so exaggerated that the referee reversed the call after using video review. Neymar then angrily punched the ball a short time later as Costa Rica's players tried to waste time. It earned Brazil's biggest star a yellow card. "The joy, the satisfaction and the pride of representing the national team is a lot," Brazil coach Tite said, defending Neymar. "He has the responsibility, the pressure. Everyone shows it in their own way."

Neymar seemed panicked for most of the second half as his shots sailed over the bar or simply missed the mark, and he complained over nearly every call. In danger of ending in a draw, Brazil seemed nervous but composed itself through the seven minutes of injury time.

Coutinho was first to get the ball past goalkeeper Keylor Navas. Rising superbly to meet a header from Marcelo's cross, Roberto Firmino nodded the ball down to striker Gabriel Jesus, who then flicked it to a sprinting Coutinho in the penalty area.

In the seventh minute of injury time, Douglas Costa whipped in a cross from the right and Neymar deftly tapped it into the net.

Both Firmino and Costa had come on as substitutes in the

second half.

"I think Brazil's changes made an impact," Costa Rica coach Oscar Ramirez said. "It became very difficult for us."

Brazil has four points in Group E and plays Serbia in its final match in Moscow on Wednesday. Costa Rica has zero points and cannot advance.

After a drab and scrappy first half at St. Petersburg Stadium, Brazil came out energized and the chances piled up. Jesus put a header onto the crossbar, and Neymar's hurried shot curled wide.

In Brazil's opening 1-1 draw against Switzerland, Neymar had been fouled 10 times, sometimes harshly. But he was also in theatrical mode against Costa Rica, tumbling over dramatically when touched.

"We never tried to hurt him," Ramirez said. "We tried to play fairly but stop him fairly as well."

Referee Bjorn Kuipers twice waved away Neymar's claims for fouls in the first half. He also ignored a Brazilian claim for a penalty after midfielder Paulinho bounced off defender Oscar Duarte contesting a high ball.

Several players, including Neymar and Marcelo, complained to Kuipers at the end of the first half. Once again, he just waved them away.

"We don't need referees' decisions to win a game," Tite said. "Brazil doesn't need any help."

Group dynamics: The match between Brazil and Serbia in Moscow on Wednesday could yet determine which teams finish in first and second place in Group E.

Costa Rica will play Switzerland on Wednesday in Nizhny Novgorod in its final group match.

Key to success: With Neymar still short of his best following the foot injury, Brazil once again turned to Coutinho for inspiration.

He was at the heart of Brazil's best moves and kept the tempo going with his crisp passing and darting runs.

Although left back Marcelo had an average game in defense, his constant runs down the flanks ultimately helped when his dangerous cross led to the opening goal.

Serious stats: With his 56th international goal, Neymar is now one ahead of Romario — which could be a useful omen for Brazil. Romario was the team's top striker when Brazil won the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Neymar is third on Brazil's all-time scorers' list, behind Pele (77) and Ronaldo (62).

Musa's 2 second-half goals lead Nigeria past Iceland

Associated Press

VOLGOGRAD, Russia — Ahmed Musa gave Nigeria its first win at this year's World Cup, and gave Argentina a gift.

Musa scored two second-half goals to help the Nigerians beat Iceland 2-0 Friday and move into second place in the group behind already-qualified Croatia.

Nigeria will face Argentina in its final group match on Tuesday in St. Petersburg. If Nigeria wins, it will advance to the round of 16. But if Argentina claims all three points, it can still advance depending on

the result of the other match between Croatia and Iceland.

Musa gave Nigeria the lead in the 49th minute after Victor Moses sprinted deep into the Iceland half and curled a cross to the near post. Musa deftly controlled the ball before slamming it past Iceland goalkeeper Hannes Halldorsson.

He doubled the lead in the 75th. Picking up the ball on the left side of the Iceland penalty area, Musa mazed his way past Halldorsson and picked his spot in the Iceland goal.

Iceland had a chance to get one back but Gylfi Sigurdsson

sent a penalty kick way over the Nigeria bar in the 83rd minute. The penalty was awarded after a video review showed that Alfred Finnbogason had been brought down by Tyrone Ebuehi.

Iceland held Argentina to a 1-1 draw in its opening match, with Lionel Messi missing a penalty. And with Croatia routing the Argentines 3-0 on Thursday, it opened the way for Iceland to claim the group's second spot in the round of 16.

But Nigeria's second-half display in Volgograd was arguably as good as any in the World Cup

and came after a fairly dour first half in which the Super Eagles did not register a shot on target.

Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr made some tactical changes, including bringing Musa into the starting lineup to inject some pace into the attack. Also, Nigeria captain John Obi Mikel played in a more defensive role in midfield, his presence helping to shore up the defense against Iceland's two-man forward line.

In Iceland's 1-1 draw against Argentina, the team played with a lone striker.

Homers help Yankees sweep Mariners

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Boone bristles at the notion his New York Yankees are all or nothing, built entirely on home runs.

“I think it’s a silly argument,” the manager said. “That does bother me, actually.”

Maybe, but it’s sure a quick way to light up the scoreboard.

Aaron Judge and Miguel Andujar hit two-run homers off James Paxton in the first inning that sent the Yankees over the Seattle Mariners 4-3 on Thursday for a three-game sweep.

Luis Severino and the Yankees boosted the best record in the majors to 50-22. They’ve won four in a row and 17 of 21.

“We’ve obviously played well, racked up a lot of wins,” Boone said. “We’ve played well against some of the elite teams.”

Seattle, which was 20 games over .500 coming into the

Bronx this week, has lost a season-high four straight.

New York launched eight homers in the sweep and tops baseball with 122 long balls. Andujar sliced a drive the other way, and it barely settled into the short right-field porch.

“Both teams play in the same park. I thought it was a fly ball because most places we play, it’s probably a fly ball,” Paxton said. “But it got out of here and that’s just the ballpark and you’re going to have that sometimes. You just have to deal with it and move on.”

Giancarlo Stanton homered in the first two games of the series and almost added another, but Mariners center fielder Mitch Haniger jumped to reach above the wall to rob him in the opening inning.

Severino (11-2) wasn’t at his best. He gave up Kyle Seager’s two-run homer in the second

and permitted eight hits overall, matching a season most. He was pulled with two outs in the sixth after Ben Gamel’s RBI single cut Seattle’s deficit to one run.

“Today, I wasn’t the best,” Severino said.

Severino improved to 7-0 at home this season. David Robertson and Dellin Betances protected the lead, and Aroldis Chapman struck out Dee Gordon on three pitches with a runner on second for his 22nd save in 23 chances.

Paxton (6-2) vigorously pawed at the dirt in front of the rubber for 15 seconds before throwing his first warmup pitch. Coming off his shortest start of the year against Boston, he never got settled in his first career start against the Yankees.

Clint Frazier led off with a single and Judge followed with

his 19th homer. Gleyber Torres singled with two outs and Andujar’s fly became the rookie’s 10th home run.

Paxton drifted a few steps onto the grass as the ball flew and gazed toward center field when it left the park. Andujar was among several New York hitters who successfully went the opposite way against the big lefty.

“Just kind of had trouble getting it going today,” he said. “I didn’t really have much going, early especially, and just had to battle. I didn’t have much. Made some better pitches late, but just really, not much command. Just a tough day.”

Paxton had been 5-0 in 10 starts since April, including a no-hitter at Toronto. He went five innings and threw 107 pitches, the same total as Severino.

MLB roundup

Bumgarner pitches 8 innings to earn 1st win of season

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Madison Bumgarner isn’t easily impressed in pregame warmups.

Thursday night was different.

“I don’t put a lot of stock into the bullpen before the game, but today I could tell that the stuff was picking up a little,” the 2014 World Series MVP said.

Bumgarner pitched eight innings of three-hit ball for his first win this season, Mark Melancon earned his first save in a year and the San Francisco Giants beat the San Diego Padres 3-0.

“It was the Madison we know,” Giants manager Bruce Bochy said.

San Francisco won for the fourth time in five games and sent the last-place Padres to their fifth consecutive loss.

Bumgarner (1-2) struck out eight and walked two in his best start since coming off the dis-

abled list. He also drove in the first run with a sacrifice fly

Bumgarner outdueled Tyson Ross (5-5), who gave up one run and four hits in seven innings. Ross struck out three and walked three.

Red Sox 9, Twins 2: Rick Porcello allowed one hit in seven innings, Mookie Betts and Andrew Benintendi homered, and visiting Boston avoided a series sweep.

Xander Bogaerts had two RBIs for the Red Sox, who had a season-high 16 hits, and finished 6-4 on a road trip through Baltimore, Seattle and Minnesota.

Rockies 6, Mets 4: Nolan Arenado homered for the third consecutive game and drove in five runs to help host Colorado beat New York.

Arenado also doubled to back another strong outing from Kyle Freeland (7-6). Freeland has pitched at least six innings in 10 of his past 11 starts and has emerged as the team’s most

reliable starter.

Nationals 4, Orioles 2: Juan Soto hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the eighth inning, and host Washington beat Baltimore in the deciding matchup of a three-game interleague series.

Anthony Rendon homered for the Nationals, who received seven strong innings from starter Max Scherzer and flawless work from their bullpen.

Diamondbacks 9, Pirates 3: Ketel Marte and Alex Avila each hit two-run homers and visiting Arizona scored eight runs in the first three innings to power its way past Pittsburgh.

Marte’s blast capped a three-run first, while Avila’s shot in the third extended the NL West-leading Diamondbacks’ advantage to 8-0.

Reds 6, Cubs 2: Jesse Winker hit his first career grand slam during a big sixth-inning rally, putting Matt Harvey in line for his second win for host Cincinnati.

The Reds sent 11 batters to the plate and scored six times in the sixth, matching their biggest inning of the season. Kyle Hendricks (5-7) walked three to set up the two-out rally, including Eugenio Suarez with the bases loaded.

Brewers 11, Cardinals 3: Brent Suter pitched seven strong innings, Manny Pina homered and host Milwaukee capitalized on a season-high four errors by St. Louis.

Suter (8-4) retired 12 straight after Matt Carpenter’s leadoff home run. He went a career-high seven innings for the second time this season.

Angels 8, Blue Jays 5: Luis Valbuena homered twice, Kole Calhoun connected for the second consecutive game and Los Angeles defeated visiting Toronto.

Mike Trout went 0-for-2 with three walks in his 1,000th career game, ending his hitting streak at eight games.