

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Special forces catch Benghazi militant

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. special operations forces captured a militant in Libya accused of playing an instrumental role in the Benghazi attacks, officials say, in a high-stakes operation designed to bring the perpetrators to justice five years after the deadly violence.

President Donald Trump on Monday identified the militant as Mustafa al-Imam and said his capture signified that the four Americans who died “will never be forgotten.” Justice Department officials were escorting al-Imam by military plane to the United States, where he’s expected to be tried in federal court.

“Our memory is deep and our reach is long, and we will not rest in our efforts to find and bring the perpetrators of the heinous attacks in Benghazi to justice,” Trump said.

The Navy SEAL-led raid marked the first publicly known operation since Trump took office to target those accused of involvement in Benghazi, which mushroomed into a multiyear political fracas centered on Republican allegations of a bungled Obama administration response.

Those critiques shadowed Hillary Clinton, who was secretary of state at the time of the attacks, through her presidential campaign.

U.S. forces captured al-

Imam just before midnight local time Sunday in Misrata, on Libya’s north coast, U.S. officials said. He was taken to a U.S. Navy ship at the Misrata port for transport by military plane to Washington, where he’s expected to arrive within the next two days, one of the officials said.

Once on American soil, al-Imam will face trial in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia as the FBI continues to investigate, the Justice Department said. He faces three criminal charges that were filed in May 2015 but only recently unsealed: killing or conspiring to kill someone during an attack on a federal facility, providing support for

terrorists, and using a firearm in connection with a violent crime.

It wasn’t immediately clear how al-Imam was involved in the Sept. 11, 2012, violence. The U.S. attorney’s office said he is a Libyan national and about 46.

Trump said he’d ordered the raid, and thanked the U.S. military, intelligence agencies and prosecutors for tracking al-Imam and enabling his capture. The U.S. officials said the operation was coordinated with Libya’s internationally recognized government. They weren’t authorized to speak publicly on the matter and demanded anonymity.

Mueller probe moves to more serious phase

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller has sent a warning to individuals in President Donald Trump’s orbit: If they lie about contacts between the president’s campaign and Russians, they’ll end up on the wrong end of federal criminal charges.

With the disclosure of the first criminal cases in his investigation, Mueller also showed that he will not hesitate to bring charges against people close to the campaign even if they don’t specifically pertain to Russian election interference and possible collusion with the Trump campaign.

Court papers unsealed Monday revealed an indictment against Trump’s former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and a guilty plea by another adviser, who admitted to lying to the FBI about meetings with

Russian intermediaries.

Perhaps more unsettling for the White House, the plea by George Papadopoulos came weeks ago and his initial arrest has been kept quiet for months, all while he has been cooperating with federal agents. The charges had been sealed specifically to keep the news of his guilty plea from discouraging others from cooperating with the special counsel or from destroying evidence.

At Papadopoulos’ plea hearing early in October, one of Mueller’s prosecutors, Aaron Zelinsky, hinted at the possibility of more to come. The Mueller probe is “a large-scale ongoing investigation of which this case is a small part,” Zelinsky said, according to a transcript unsealed Monday.

The developments, including the unexpected unsealing of a guilty plea, usher Mueller’s investigation into a new, more

serious phase. And the revelations in the guilty plea about an adviser’s Russian contacts could complicate the president’s assertions that his campaign had never coordinated with the Russian government to tip the 2016 presidential election in his favor, the central issue behind Mueller’s mandate.

The Kremlin denied Russia is implicated by the first criminal cases against associates of President Donald Trump.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that connections between Papadopoulos and a man he believed to have links to the Russian Foreign Ministry did not prove any complicity by the Russian government.

Manafort, who steered Trump’s campaign for much of last year, and business associate Rick Gates ended the day under house arrest on charges that they funneled payments through foreign companies and

bank accounts as part of their political work in Ukraine.

Papadopoulos, also a former campaign adviser, faced further questioning and then sentencing in the first — and so far only — criminal case that links the Trump election effort to the Kremlin.

Manafort and Gates, who pleaded not guilty in federal court, are not charged with any wrongdoing as part of the Trump campaign, and the president immediately sought to distance himself from the allegations. He said on Twitter that the alleged crimes occurred “years ago,” and he insisted anew there was “NO COLLUSION” between his campaign and Russia.

The Papadopoulos plea occurred on Oct. 5 but was not unsealed until Monday, creating further woes for an administration that had prepared over the weekend to deflect the Manafort allegations.

Navy warns of energy drink dangers

Sailor's withdrawal highlights the service's workload problems

BY JASON BEHNKE
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Sitting in his air-conditioned hotel room, Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcus Salmon began sweating profusely.

As he was overtaken by body tremors, he could barely muster enough energy to crawl out of his bed. After spending a few minutes with his head in a freezer to cool down, he called a co-worker, who was already on her way to pick him up for work, and asked her to bring him some food and a drink.

"After I called her, I basically crawled over to the door," he said. "I opened it up and crawled back over and just sat there."

He didn't know what was wrong.

He would later learn that the culprit was his daily consumption of energy drinks.

With focus increasing on the Navy's long work schedules and sleep deprivation after collisions that resulted in a combined 17 deaths aboard two ships, the service's medical professionals are warning sailors about the dangers of excessive energy drink intake.

Energy drink abuse has long been reported as a problem within the services, particularly in combat zones. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study in 2010 showed that soldiers and Marines deployed to Afghanistan who consumed three or more energy drinks per day were more likely to sleep less than four hours per night, and more likely to fall asleep during duty.

The Navy's recent accidents led senators to question whether sleep deprivation might be partially to blame. Sen. John McCain asked Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson last month whether some sailors were working 100-hour weeks aboard ships, to which Richardson replied, "I will not deny that."

A Navy internal message in September ordered ship commanders to develop watch schedules that align more closely to natural sleep rhythms. The Navy also is supplementing crews and studying sleep deprivation aboard its ships, Richardson said during Senate testimony.

Besides the potential for hindering operations, excessive energy drinks pose long-term health problems for servicemembers.

With 54 grams of sugar in a NOS En-

'The amount of work with the amount of sleep that you get — honestly, we don't have a choice. We have to have something to keep us up, to keep us going.'

Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcus Salmon

ergy Drink — Salmon's drink of choice — one can exceed the daily recommended limit of 36 grams for men and 25 grams for women. NOS also contains more than 200 milligrams of caffeine. The daily recommended limit for a healthy adult is 400 milligrams.

"The No. 1 thing is cardiac problems," said Lt. Matthew Farnham, health promotions coordinator at the Bahrain naval clinic. "So, you're looking at arrhythmias. You're looking at long-term heart enlargement, because after a while, your heart's beating at such a speed that over time, your heart can enlarge, and that can cause problems over time."

The Navy has long had a reputation for running on caffeine. Years ago, it seemed aboard a ship that half the crew had a coffee cup in their hands. Since ultracaffeinated beverages hit the shelves, the younger generation seems to prefer a quicker pick-me-up and a sweeter taste.

"The marketing is geared toward those younger guys," Farnham said. "And then we supply — if you go to any of the [exchange stores] it's there, and there's tons of it."

Energy drinks were part of Salmon's daily routine for more than five years, with few days off. He said life aboard his ship years before the recent incident helped him form the habit.

"I would wake up in the morning, stop by the store and grab a NOS," he said. "I drink one of those, maybe drink another one during the day, depending on how long the workday was. If I knew it was going to be a long workday, I'd get the 1-liter can of it."

Salmon said he knows many other sailors who ingest the same amount or more daily. A co-worker on the ship showed him his own cache.

"He's got a little spot for socks and shirts, and he's got a whole larger spot dedicated to nothing but energy drinks," Salmon said. "I started looking around,

and it seems like that's a common trend.

"Just the work schedule, you know," Salmon said. "Long hours, short break, long hours, so you got to keep going."

Salmon had just arrived at his new duty station when the tremors began. He hadn't had his usual energy drink intake.

Food helped a little. He was able to walk the short distance to the base medical clinic, but they immediately sent him to the local hospital.

"Once I got there, they thought I had diabetes because my sugar level was at like 256," Salmon said.

Normal blood sugar levels for a person should be less than 100 milligrams per deciliter after fasting for eight hours and less than 140 milligrams per deciliter two hours after eating.

Salmon is a fit, healthy-looking guy. He goes to the gym regularly. He has a relatively healthy diet. He had never been told he had high blood sugar before.

The hospital kept him overnight. He later called his mother, a nurse, to tell her what happened. She mentioned that he might be withdrawing from energy drinks.

"Sure enough, I looked it up online, and the symptoms seemed to match," he said.

Many sailors have no idea how much caffeine they consume in a day. Preworkout drinks and supplements also are very popular and can cause similar problems.

"It's not just the energy drinks but a lot of these preworkouts are just chock full of caffeine," Farnham said. "Who knows what could happen (to Salmon) after consuming caffeine like that after a couple of years, especially to his heart?"

Salmon now closely monitors his caffeine intake, but he says the problem among other sailors isn't going away.

"The amount of work with the amount of sleep that you get — honestly, we don't have a choice," he said. "We have to have something to keep us up, to keep us going."

McCain thanks midshipmen at academy

BY KEN-YON HARDY

Stars and Stripes

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Sen. John McCain thanked U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen Monday for their sacrifice to the nation and urged them to oppose those seeking to sow divisions within the nation.

“We have to fight against propaganda and crackpot conspiracy theories,” the Arizona Republican said. “We have to

fight isolationism, protectionism and nativism.

“We have to defeat those who would worsen our divisions,” he said. “We have to remind our sons and daughters that we became the most powerful nation on Earth by tearing down walls, not building them.”

McCain, a former Navy pilot who graduated from the academy in 1958, told the crowd it was time to “wake up.”

He said he believed Americans are capable of doing better.

“I’ve seen it,” McCain said. “We’re hopeful, compassionate people and we still have leaders who will uphold the values that make America great and are a beacon to the oppressed.”

McCain, 81, who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer in July, has been an outspoken critic of po-

larization in American politics. He stressed the importance of service and American values during his 17-minute speech, his first at the Annapolis campus since 2012.

“I know what you will risk and what you will receive in return,” McCain said. “I know America is lucky to have you and that you think of yourselves lucky to serve America, even in the worst of times.”

China: US should stay out of South China Sea disputes

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

The United States should butt out of territorial disputes in the South China Sea, a Chinese official said ahead of President Donald Trump’s inaugural visit to the region.

Ambassador Cui Tiankai told reporters at his embassy in Washington this week that the U.S. should allow China and its neighbors to agree on a code of conduct in those waters and settle their disputes in a “friendly and effective way,” The Associated Press reported Monday.

Other claimants include Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and Brunei.

China has constructed mili-

tary facilities in the Paracel and Spratly island chains. Both the Trump and Obama administrations have viewed that militarization as a threat to stability in the region.

“[Cui’s statement is] sending a message as Trump is starting his trip to Asia,” said Brad Glosserman, a visiting professor at Tokyo’s Tama University.

While the U.S. has not taken a position on those disputes, it has asserted the right of ships to freely transit the South China Sea, he said.

Beijing protested after the Navy destroyer USS Chafee sailed within 16 nautical miles of the Paracels on Oct. 10, calling the mission “dangerous” and a

violation of China’s sovereignty. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson later said China’s “provocative actions” in the sea challenge international law and norms.

Cui’s statement echoes what the Chinese have been saying about the maritime disputes for years — outside parties should not get involved, Glosserman said. Their goal is bilateral negotiations that would enable China, which dwarfs the other claimants, to bring maximum influence to bear, he said.

America’s position is that the disputes should be resolved peacefully and equitably in accordance with international law, he said.

Last year, an international

court rejected some of China’s territorial claims in a case brought by then-Philippine President Benigno Aquino III. However, the Philippines hasn’t done much to enforce that judgment under new leader Rodrigo Duterte.

Trump’s upcoming Asian tour, which includes a meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing Nov. 8-9, comes at a “very important moment” and will build on progress made when Xi met Trump in Florida in April, Cui said.

Tensions over North Korea’s nuclear program could worsen without efforts to negotiate a solution, he said, adding that the issue will be a focus of the leaders’ talks.

Bergdahl apologizes to servicemembers for ‘horrible decision’

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl took the witness stand Monday, delivering an apology to servicemembers sent searching eastern Afghanistan for him after his “horrible decision” to walk away from his combat post eight years ago.

“I’d like every person who searched for me to know it was never my intention for anyone to be hurt, and I never expected for that to happen,” the 31-year-old former Taliban captive said

on the third day of a sentence hearing at Fort Bragg. “... The words ‘I’m sorry’ are not enough. My words alone can’t relieve the pain [those injured] live with.”

Bergdahl faces up to life in prison after he pleaded guilty to desertion and misbehavior before the enemy charges, admitting he endangered his fellow troops when he left Observation Post Mest in Paktika province, Afghanistan, in June 2009. Bergdahl’s attorneys said they plan to conclude their case seeking lenient punishment for him by Wednesday, and

the military judge overseeing the case, Army Col. Jeffery R. Nance, is expected to sentence the soldier this week.

Bergdahl, under questioning by defense attorney Capt. Jennifer Norvell, detailed his five years in captivity, some of the torture that he endured — such as years confined to a small cage — and the lingering impacts on his life, including permanent injuries and regular nightmares and flashbacks.

The soldier testified he was “accepting responsibility” for his actions after he spent much of Wednesday, Thursday and

Monday listening as prosecution witnesses spoke of the massive recovery effort launched to find him and detailed debilitating injuries suffered by three servicemembers sent on those operations. Prosecutors rested their case Monday morning.

Bergdahl had previously told Nance that he was attempting to walk to a forward operating base some 20 miles away to alert military leadership to concerns that he had about his chain of command when he became lost and was kidnapped by armed Taliban fighters.

Rescued sailors' story in doubt

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Two Hawaii women who say they were lost at sea on a sailboat for months never activated their emergency beacon, the U.S. Coast Guard said, adding to a growing list of inconsistencies that cast doubt on their tale of survival.

The women previously told The Associated Press that they had radios, satellite phones, GPS and other emergency gear, but they didn't mention the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon, or EPIRB. A Coast Guard review of the incident and subsequent interviews with the women revealed that they had an EPIRB aboard their boat but never turned it on.

Jennifer Appel confirmed on Tuesday they had the beacon and did not use it. She said that in her experience, it should be used only when you are in imminent physical danger and going to die in the next 24 hours.

"Our hull was solid, we were floating, we had food, we had water and we had limited maneuverable capacity," Appel said in Japan, where the U.S. Navy took them after they were rescued by a Navy ship.

In retrospect, Appel said there were two times that she would have used it — once when she and Tasha Fuiava were off

Hawaii in late June to early July, and a second time off Wake Island on Oct. 1.

Previously, Appel and Fuiava had said they were close to giving up when the Navy rescued them last week, thousands of miles off course.

The EPIRB communicates with satellites and sends locations to authorities. It's activated when it's submerged in water or turned on manually. The alert signal sends a location to rescuers within minutes.

A retired Coast Guard officer who was responsible for search-and-rescue operations said if the women had used the emergency beacon, they would have been found.

"If the thing was operational and it was turned on, a signal should have been received very, very quickly that this vessel was in distress," Phillip R. Johnson said Monday.

Appel and Fuiava also said they had six forms of communication that all failed to work.

"There's something wrong there," Johnson said. "I've never heard of all that stuff going out at the same time."

The two women planned to take 18 days to get to Tahiti, then travel the South Pacific and return to Hawaii in October. They set off on May 3 along with their

two dogs and were rescued by the Navy last week.

Key elements of the women's account are contradicted by authorities and are not consistent with weather reports or basic geography of the Pacific Ocean. The discrepancies raised questions about whether Appel and Fuiava, could have avoided disaster.

On their first day at sea, the two women described running into a fierce storm that tossed their vessel with 60 mph winds and 30-foot seas for three days, but meteorologists say there was no severe weather anywhere along their route during that time.

The pair said they thought about turning back, but the islands of Maui and Lanai didn't have harbors deep enough to accommodate their sailboat. At 50 feet long, the vessel is relatively small, and both islands have harbors that accommodate boats of that size. Plus, the Big Island — the southernmost island in Hawaii — has several places to dock.

Appel, though, said she modified her sailboat by adding 6 tons of fiberglass to the hull to make it thicker and heavier and extend the keel to a depth of 8.5 feet to give the boat greater stability.

Crews race to restore power in NE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Utility crews scrambled to restore power throughout New England on Tuesday, one day after a severe storm packing hurricane-force wind gusts and torrential rain left more than 1 million customers without electricity and forced communities to postpone Halloween festivities due to damage.

The storm knocked out power to nearly 1.5 million homes and business at its peak Monday across the region. More than 840,000 customers remained in the dark Tuesday morning.

A house was swept away by raging waters in New Hampshire, sailboats crashed onto a beach in Massachusetts and an empty scaffolding truck was blown off of a bridge that's under construction between Maine and New Hampshire.

Thousands of trees were toppled, some falling onto houses and cars.

"Trees were falling all around me. I could hear them crashing down," said John Carroll, spokesman for Central Maine Power, describing his commute to work Monday. "It was terrifying. It was wild."

No serious injuries were reported.

New England bore the brunt of the storm, with winds gusting to 82 mph in Mashpee on Cape Cod in Massachusetts and topping out at 130 mph at the Mount Washington Observatory in New Hampshire.

Nearly 500,000 homes and businesses in Maine lost electricity, surpassing the peak number from a 1998 ice storm.

Officials said the storm left 450,000 customers in New Hampshire without power at its peak and produced wind gusts of 78 mph.

In Warren, N.H., dramatic video captured a one-story house being swept away by a raging river before crashing into a bridge and breaking apart. No one was in the house at the time.

Catalan leader seeks 'safety' in Brussels

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Catalonia's ousted regional president said Tuesday he traveled to Brussels to seek "freedom and safety" after Spain blocked his bid for Catalan independence and sought to bring charges against him that could put him in prison for decades.

A day after he arrived in Brussels, Carles Puigdemont told a packed news conference he would return home "immediately" if a fair judicial process were guaranteed in Spain. He dismissed speculation he would seek political asylum in the Belgian capital.

"Here we have better guarantees for our rights and we

can meet our obligations from here," he said at the Brussels Press Club, which is next to the European Union's headquarters.

Puigdemont said he and his team will stay in Brussels and "continue our work despite the limits imposed on us."

The Spanish government has cracked down on Puigdemont's attempt to take Catalonia, a wealthy region of some 7.5 million people, out of Spain. The government says Puigdemont flouted the Constitution by holding an Oct. 1 independence referendum. The Catalan parliament approved a motion declaring independence last week, but the Spanish Constitu-

tion says Spain is "indivisible."

Spain's chief prosecutor is seeking charges of rebellion, sedition and embezzlement against Puigdemont and his No. 2 Oriol Junqueras before Spain's National Court.

Separately, he is seeking similar charges before the higher Supreme Court for six ex-members of the governing body of the now-dissolved Catalan parliament because they enjoy a degree of immunity and could only be tried by this court. Earlier Tuesday, the Supreme Court agreed to investigate the case against the six.

The National Court has yet to decide in the case against Puigdemont.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man ordered to write nice things about ex

HI WAILUKU — A judge on the Hawaiian island of Maui has handed down an unorthodox sentence to a man who pleaded no contest to violating a protection order preventing him from contacting his ex-girlfriend.

Judge Rhonda Loo ordered Daren Young on Friday to write 144 compliments about his ex-girlfriend in response to the 144 “nasty” text messages and calls that he is accused of sending and making to her.

“For every nasty thing you said about her, you’re going to say a nice thing,” Loo told Young. “No repeating words.”

Young, 30, received time served after spending 157 days in jail before being sentenced, the Maui News reported.

Person dies of rabies following bite by bat

FL SEBRING — Health officials said a Florida resident who was bitten by a bat has died of rabies.

Florida Department of Health spokeswoman Mara Gambineri told Orlando TV station WKMG the victim didn’t seek treatment. She didn’t identify the victim, who lived in Highlands County in southwest Florida, or say when the bite occurred or when the victim died.

Gambineri said it’s important for bite victims to receive treatment as soon as possible.

Deer with head stuck in bucket rescued

OH CINCINNATI — A deer that got its head trapped in an orange plastic pumpkin bucket is free after residents in suburban Cincinnati spent the weekend tracking it.

WCPO-TV reported that the Anderson Township Family Pet Center got calls over four days from residents concerned about the deer with the bucket stuck over its nose.

Daryl Meyerrenke at the pet center warned that it would be dangerous for neighbors to try to rescue the deer, but he said they were determined to help and spent hours following it through wooded areas. Eventually, using animal catch poles, the group was able to encircle the deer, and Meyerrenke’s son freed it from the bucket.

More charges in endangerment case

IA DES MOINES — A woman accused of leaving her children home alone is facing a new assault charge.

Police allege Destinee Miller, 25, stabbed her former boyfriend Saturday morning at the home they had shared in Des Moines. He was treated at a hospital for an arm wound.

Miller was arrested and charged with domestic abuse, assault and display or use of a deadly weapon.

Earlier this month, she was charged with child endangerment after officers found her three young children outside their filthy home. One child was covered with feces and another had a full diaper. Police said she left her 4-year-old boy in charge of his 2- and 1-year-old siblings.

Judge: Self-abortion case can proceed

VA CHESTERFIELD — A Virginia judge has cleared the way for the prosecution of a woman charged with self-aborting her late-term fetus.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported Friday that a Chesterfield Circuit Court

judge has denied a motion to dismiss the charge against Michelle F. Roberts, who was indicted in April. Police have said they found fetal skeletal remains buried in the backyard of the home where Roberts had been living.

Investigators believe the fetus was aborted during the third trimester. The state medical examiner’s office determined the cause of death was penetrating head injuries and Roberts’ use of methadone, alprazolam and amphetamines.

Woman allegedly steals vet school drugs

AL AUBURN — A Georgia woman is free on \$30,000 bond following her arrest for allegedly stealing multiple controlled substances from the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Al.com reported that Caroline Clarke Schroeder, 26, of Macon, turned herself in Thursday for 20 counts of possession of controlled substances.

Police said they received a report from the veterinary college about the thefts that occurred over a period of several weeks.

On her Facebook page, Schroeder states she’s an anesthetist at the veterinary college.

Cops: Woman robs bank while child in taxi

NY ISLIP — Police said a woman is accused of robbing a bank on Long Island while her 6-year-old daughter waited in a taxi.

Suffolk County police said Diana Marini, 28, entered a Chase bank in Islandia at 1 p.m. Saturday and gave the teller a note demanding cash. They said the teller handed over an undetermined amount of money, and Marini fled in a taxi that was waiting for her.

Marini was arrested on charges of robbery and endangering the welfare of a child.

Young jump rope champ killed by car

NJ JERSEY CITY — Police said an 8-year-old boy whose jump rope abilities were featured on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” was struck and killed by a car while walking home in Jersey City.

Authorities said Jeremiah Grant was walking from a team fundraiser Saturday afternoon when he was hit by a Jeep. Grant was a member of the Honey Bees, a champion double-dutch roping group. Police said the Jeep’s 60-year-old driver drove off until witnesses flagged him down. Witness Jose Pimentel said the driver told him he thought he had hit a backpack and then remained at the scene until police arrived.

Man traces his stolen bike on Facebook

MN ST. PAUL — A St. Paul man who spotted his stolen bike for sale on Facebook set up his own sting operation to get it back.

Police said the bike was stolen from the garage of the 29-year-old man in the Summit Hill neighborhood on Oct. 20. Several days later, the man was browsing Facebook Marketplace and there was his hybrid-style bike for sale. The ad said “gently used.”

The St. Paul Pioneer Press said the man set up a time to meet the seller, who pulled the bike from the back of an SUV and asked the man if he wanted to buy it. The owner said the bike had been stolen from him and he’d called police. The two struggled over the bike until the seller gave up and sped away.

From wire reports

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Not-so-special teams haunting squads

Associated Press

When special teams become not just ordinary but inept, teams lose.

Ask the Los Angeles Chargers, New York Jets, Washington Redskins and Oakland Raiders. Their kicking teams pretty much kicked away their chances of winning Sunday.

The worst performance was turned in by the Chargers at Foxborough. The Patriots seemed ripe for a third loss at home. LA made sure that didn't happen by botching punt returns and field-goal attempts.

Most damaging — and somewhat comical — was how Travis Benjamin treated a second-quarter punt. Normally pretty good at the chore, Benjamin muffed a punt at the sideline. Rather than dive on it at the 8, he scooped it up and headed toward the other sideline. On a backward angle.

When the coverage team caught him, he was in front of the Chargers' end zone. He stutter-stepped back and was nailed for a safety.

"Last week, he made a play

on a punt return to help us win the game (against Denver). This week he made a bad decision," coach Anthony Lynn said. "That was a huge play in the game. You have to have some awareness of where you are on the football field. And he did not."

It didn't get much better.

The Chargers also missed a field goal, gave up a 71-yard kickoff return to Dion Lewis and were so bad on their own kickoff runbacks that they rarely got near their 20.

Finally, down by five, they forced the Patriots to punt, but committed two penalties on the return.

"We were off our flow," running back/kick returner Austin Ekeler said. "We weren't as coordinated as well as we were last week, so we just started taking a knee in the end zone and taking the secure route. It wasn't acceptable."

Nor was it acceptable in the Meadowlands, where the Jets had an excellent chance in a driving rain to upend the Falcons. But their special teams flopped, too.

The Jets led 7-0 and recovered a botched snap by Matt Ryan. But Chandler Catanzaro missed a 46-yard field goal.

Catanzaro missed again in the fourth quarter. Both times, Ryan threw for touchdowns on the next series.

"There's no excuse," said Catanzaro, although kicking in a maelstrom might qualify. "My teammates are counting on me to put it through the two yellow pipes, and I didn't do that today."

New York, like LA, also was done in by an inability to field a punt. And, like Benjamin of the Bolts, Jeremy Kerley has been reliable throughout his career.

But his ill-advised decision to field a kick over his shoulder at his 15 set up Atlanta's final field goal in a 25-20 victory.

"You've got a job of trying to catch the ball and make a play," Kerley said. "I'm always trying to do something and make a play. It just so happens to put the team in a bad situation. It definitely changed the momentum."

Oakland's Jalen Richard fumbled a punt return in a 34-14

loss at Buffalo. No, that wasn't a decisive play, but it was indicative of how the Raiders' day was going: nothing special.

Washington's new kicker Nick Rose had a field goal blocked and missed an extra point in a 33-19 loss in the slop against Dallas.

Tyrone Crawford's block might not have been Rose's fault because the snap was low. Orlando Scandrick then returned the ball to the Washington 4, setting up a Dallas TD.

The failed extra point doesn't look so damaging, perhaps, except that it came when the Redskins could have pulled within six points. When they got the ball back, Kirk Cousins threw a pick-6.

Not all the special teams blunders were harmful.

It's a measure of how well things are going for the Eagles that Jake Elliott could miss two extra points. Still, the team with the NFL's best record at 7-1 routed San Francisco 33-10.

Of course, Elliott also hit a 51-yard field goal and has made 5 of 6 from 50 or beyond.

Now that's special.

Butker's 5 field goals help Chiefs down Broncos

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Harrison Butker's five field goals were instrumental to the Kansas City Chiefs' 29-19 victory over the Denver Broncos, especially the way the rest of their offense was faltering.

Don't think he felt any pressure, though.

"When I'm out there, it's really weird. It doesn't seem like a big kick for me," Butker said. "It's just a normal kick, got to go out there and make it."

After missing the first of his career, he has made 18 in a row.

Butker was claimed off Carolina's practice squad in late September after Cairo Santos, a three-year starter for the Chiefs, went down with a groin injury in Week 3. But-

ker impressed the Kansas City coaches enough to earn the job outright, and Santos was waived.

Five weeks later, Butker is averaging nearly four field goals per game.

"I have way more field goals than I ever made in college, probably for my career," said Butker, a standout at Georgia Tech. "It's crazy. In one season in college I'll probably have like, maybe nine field goals or something, and now — I don't know, how many have I made? Eighteen now? It's crazy."

Even though Butker said he settles into more of a rhythm with every kick through the uprights, he has been able to steer himself clear of psyching himself out mentally even with his success.

"We weren't sure exactly what we were getting when he came here," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We knew he was a good kicker in college. ... To have that confidence, that right there at the 35 he's going to be spot-on in that area, that's a great job by him building confidence in all of us."

Charles' return: Running back Jamaal Charles returned to Kansas City for the first time since he was let go earlier this year and signed with the Chiefs' division rival. He ran eight times for 39 yards, and a fumble early in the game was scooped up by Marcus Peters and returned for a touchdown.

Still, Charles enjoyed getting to see some of his former teammates again.

"Jamaal loves football, and

I'm glad he's healthy," Chiefs linebacker Derrick Johnson said. "I'm glad he didn't get off on us tonight, of course. Jamaal's a heck of a player, man. We love him, he loves us, and I'm just glad to see him out there playing."

Peters' big night: Not only did Peters return a fumble for a touchdown, he also had one of three interceptions of Broncos quarterback Trevor Siemian — two of the five turnovers Kansas City forced on the night. The defensive touchdown was the third of Peters' career.

"That guy made so many plays out there, it was ridiculous," Chiefs linebacker Justin Houston said. "When you make plays like that, it speaks for itself. You put points on the board."

49ers get Garoppolo for 2nd-round pick

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers acquired their quarterback of the future on Tuesday by trading for New England backup Jimmy Garoppolo.

The Niners agreed to send a 2018 second-round pick to the Patriots in the deal that will be official once Garoppolo passes a physical. He was expected to be introduced at a news conference later Tuesday.

San Francisco (0-8) had been expected to either draft a quarterback high in the first round next year or try to acquire a proven starter like Kirk Cousins in free agency.

Instead, coach Kyle Shanahan and general manager John Lynch decided to strike early and put the fate of their franchise in the hands of a quarterback who has started just two games in four NFL seasons.

"We are thrilled for Jimmy to join the 49ers family," Lynch said. "Jimmy is a player we have researched extensively since Kyle and I joined the 49ers. I am extremely pleased this came together today and we all think it is a big win for

our organization. Albeit in limited game action, Jimmy has displayed the characteristics and traits that we believe are vital to being a successful quarterback in this league. He has had the rare opportunity to sit and learn from a future Hall of Fame quarterback in a championship atmosphere."

Garoppolo, a second-round pick in 2014, is in the final year of his contract. By acquiring him now, San Francisco gets a head start on negotiating a long-term deal to keep him or can use the franchise tag on him in free agency.

Garoppolo won those two starts in place of a suspended Tom Brady at the start of the 2016 season. He completed 42 of 59 passes for 496 yards, four touchdowns and no interceptions. He got hurt in the second quarter of his second start and has thrown just four passes since then.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for Jimmy," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "I couldn't ask for him to give us any more than he's given us. The 49ers are getting a good player, and they're getting a good person and they're getting

a great teammate. And they're getting a good quarterback. And Jimmy's getting a good coach. His career is moving forward. He's a talented individual. He was a great person to coach. I met with him weekly, and again I have a tremendous amount of respect for him. But as his career moves forward we have to look to our team, both this year and beyond."

The Niners hope Garoppolo can be the quarterback to lead the franchise out of its recent cycle of losing that started when Jim Harbaugh was let go as coach following the 2014 season. San Francisco won seven games the past two years with Colin Kaepernick and Blaine Gabbert sharing QB duties.

The 49ers are off to the worst start in franchise history this season in coach Shanahan's first year at the helm. Veteran Brian Hoyer, who also began his career as Brady's backup in New England, started the first six games and third-round rookie C.J. Beathard has struggled as the starter the past two weeks behind a patchwork line.

Beathard has completed just 52.7 percent of his passes in his limited time, averaging

5.9 yards per attempt with two touchdowns, three interceptions and a 65.2 passer rating.

He has been sacked 11 times on his 110 pass attempts and hit several others, with the Niners' injury-riddled line giving him little time to succeed.

In other trades:

■ The NFL-leading Eagles bolstered their running attack, acquiring Jay Ajayi from the Miami Dolphins for a 2018 fourth-round draft pick hours before the trade deadline.

Ajayi has 465 yards rushing and is averaging 3.4 yards per carry with no touchdowns. He went to the Pro Bowl last season after running for 1,272 yards, including three 200-yard games.

■ The Seattle Seahawks solidified a big area of concern by reaching agreement to acquire veteran left tackle Duane Brown from the Houston Texans for cornerback Jeremy Lane and two draft picks.

Seattle general manager John Schneider confirmed the sides reached agreement on the deal, but it had not been fully finalized.

Judge reinstates Elliott's 6-game suspension

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge cleared the way Monday night for the NFL to enforce a six-game suspension of Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott over domestic violence allegations.

U.S. District Judge Katherine Polk Failla denied the request for a preliminary injunction from players' union attorneys working for Elliott. Failla put the ruling on hold for 24 hours to give Elliott's legal team time to appeal, a likely move.

It's the second time a federal ruling has overturned a reprieve that kept Elliott on the field. Earlier this month, a federal appeals court threw out a Texas court's injunction

and ordered the dismissal of Elliott's lawsuit there.

The NFL briefly enforced Commissioner Roger Goodell's suspension before a judge sitting in for Failla in the Southern District of New York issued a temporary restraining order that blocked the punishment for the second time.

If the suspension holds this time, Elliott will be out starting Sunday at home against Kansas City. He will be eligible to return for the final three games, starting Dec. 17 at Oakland. The Cowboys (4-3), defending NFC East champions, are in second place in the division.

Elliott attended the roughly two-hour hearing in New York on Monday, a day after

rushing for 150 yards and two touchdowns in a 33-19 win at Washington. Last year's NFL rushing leader left court without speaking to reporters.

One of Elliott's lawyers and an NFL spokesman didn't immediately respond to requests for comment after the ruling.

The 22-year-old Elliott was suspended in August after the league concluded following a yearlong investigation that he had several physical confrontations in the summer of 2016 with Tiffany Thompson, his girlfriend at the time.

Prosecutors in Columbus, Ohio, decided not to pursue the case in the city where Elliott starred for Ohio State, citing conflicting evidence.

Elliott denied the allegations under oath during his NFL appeal.

The suspension's announcement led to weeks of court filings, with NFL Players Association lawyers contending league investigators withheld key evidence from Goodell and that the appeal hearing was unfair because arbitrator Harold Henderson refused to call Goodell and Thompson as witnesses.

Unlike three federal judges before her, Failla rejected most of those claims and backed the NFL's contention that it followed the collective bargaining agreement in suspending Elliott, and that those procedures were supported by federal labor law.

NBA roundup

Simmons' career-high 24 boost 76ers

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Houston Rockets allowed Philadelphia 76ers point guard Ben Simmons to take jump shots on Monday night, and he made them pay.

In Philadelphia's 115-107 win in Houston, Simmons made 10 of 15 shots, many of them from mid-range, to score a career-high 24 points, adding nine assists and seven rebounds. When asked why he took more jumpers than he had in his first six games, Simmons' teammate Amir Johnson answered from behind the group of reporters.

"People don't know he can shoot," Johnson said. "Buckets."

Philadelphia head coach Brett Brown said Simmons' ability to reliably make jump shots will complement his ability to drive or use his length in the paint even more effective.

"I'm really leaving the whole evolution of his jump shot — when he wants to shoot it, when

he feels comfortable shooting it — with him," Brown said. "When he feels the confidence to shoot things and people sag off of him, he's going to shoot it. If he doesn't, so be it, he'll go find another way to impact the game. It's coming."

Simmons, the 2016 first-over-all pick, is shooting 51 percent through his first seven games but has struggled at times outside of the paint and has missed all four three-point attempts.

"I'm comfortable taking them," Simmons said of jump shots. "I've got to start doing that more often."

Timberwolves 125, Heat 122: Jeff Teague scored 23 points, Andrew Wiggins scored 22 and visiting Minnesota scored the first six points of overtime before holding on to beat Miami.

Knicks 116, Nuggets 110: Kristaps Porzingis scored a career-high 38 points and Kyle O'Quinn added 15 points and 12 rebounds to help the host

Knicks.

Celtics 108, Spurs 94: Kyrie Irving scored 24 points, Jaylen Brown added 18 and Al Horford had 13 rebounds to help the host Celtics beat the Spurs and lead Boston to its fifth straight victory.

Hornets 104, Grizzlies 99: Kemba Walker scored 27 points and keyed a fourth-quarter rally to erase a double-digit deficit as the Hornets handed Memphis its first home loss of the season with a win over the Grizzlies.

Magic 115, Pelicans 99: Marreese Speights highlighted an 18-point performance by hitting five of his career-high six three-pointers during a decisive 22-6 run, and the visiting Magic soundly defeated the Pelicans.

Speights' second three made it 87-83 in the final minute of the third quarter. He drained four more early in the fourth.

Jazz 104, Mavericks 89: Rodney Hood scored 15 of his

season-high 25 points in the third quarter to help the host Jazz rally.

The Mavs hit nine of 14 three-pointers in the first half and the Jazz struggled to defend their drive-and-kick action. But Utah came alive in the second half thanks to Hood and a 25-4 run to start the third quarter.

Raptors 99, Trail Blazers 85: DeMar DeRozan had 25 points and the shorthanded Raptors beat the Trail Blazers.

The Blazers were foiled at home by a cold second quarter with just six total points and Toronto went on to lead by as many as 26. The win extended the Raptors' winning streak over Portland to five straight games.

Warriors 141, Clippers 113: Stephen Curry scored 31 points and Kevin Durant added 19 to help visiting Golden State rout the Clippers for the Warriors' 11th consecutive win in the series.

NHL roundup

Wedgewood helps Coyotes to first victory

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The struggling Arizona Coyotes finally got their first win of the season, beating the Philadelphia Flyers 4-3 on Alex Goligoski's overtime goal after blowing a two-goal lead in the final minute of regulation Monday night.

Goligoski scored with 14.4 seconds left on the clock in OT and Arizona (1-10-1) avoided setting an NHL record for most consecutive losses to start a season. Jordan Martinook, Christian Dvorak and Brandon Perlini also scored for the Coyotes, who matched the 1943-44 Rangers (0-11) by losing their first 11 games.

Sean Couturier scored twice and Ivan Provorov had three assists for the Flyers.

Arizona was in position to close it out earlier, but Jordan Weal scored on a rebound with 53 seconds left in the third period and Couturier tipped a shot past goalie Scott

Wedgewood with 16 seconds left in the third period to tie the game at 3.

Goligoski scored the winner from a sharp angle in the 3-on-3 overtime period after a pass from Clayton Keller.

Wedgewood made 28 saves in his Arizona debut, and Niklas Hjalmarsson added two assists for the Coyotes. Wedgewood was acquired Saturday from the Devils for a 2018 fifth-round draft pick.

Sharks 3, Maple Leafs 2: Rookie defenseman Tim Heed scored a tiebreaking goal on the power play early in the third period to spoil Patrick Marleau's return by leading host San Jose over Toronto.

Blues 4, Kings 2: Vladimir Tarasenko and Jaden Schwartz each had a goal and an assist to lead host St. Louis past Los Angeles in a matchup between two of the NHL's top teams.

Islanders 6, Golden Knights 3: John Tavares kept up his scoring surge with two

more goals and host New York handed expansion Vegas its second loss of the season.

Lightning 8, Panthers 5: Andrei Vasilevskiy won his ninth straight start and Steven Stamkos scored twice to lift visiting Tampa Bay over Florida.

Blue Jackets 4, Bruins 3 (SO): Artemi Panarin and Oliver Bjorkstrand scored in the shootout, and host Columbus beat Boston after squandering a two-goal lead in the third period.

Canadiens 8, Senators 3: Charles Hudon scored his first two NHL goals and had an assist, helping visiting Montreal roll to a victory over Ottawa.

Stars 2, Canucks 1 (OT): Alexander Radulov scored 2:28 into overtime and visiting Dallas defeated Vancouver.

Ben Bishop made 38 saves and Tyler Seguin had a second-period goal for the Stars, who improved to 3-1 on a five-game road trip.