

JESSE

O'NEILL

NEW YORK POST & Page Six®

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Jesse O'Neill wrote and reported for The New York Post from 2020 to 2024, speaking truth to power and giving a voice to victims in the five boroughs and far beyond while delivering on-camera news updates, breaking news for Page Six and covering his favorite artists and television shows.

His work ranged from exposing Capitol rioters and penning reports that helped lead to the shocking downfall of a powerful governor, to chasing Metro scoops and the total solar eclipse while pushing the boundaries of news jokes suitable for publication.

Jesse's more than 3,000 articles for the nation's third largest newspaper and eighth largest news website have been read by hundreds of millions of people, both online and in print. This is a compilation of some of his favorites, broken down into clickable categories with hyperlinks.



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ASSORTED VIRAL & MISCELLANEOUS BANGERS

Some of my stories can't be so easily categorized, and oftentimes, those are the ones that go viral.

It was always kind of surprising when one of my web articles would soar into seven figure click territory, but sometimes I could see why — like when a former president flew to the city to [surrender to prosecutors](#).

[Sex](#) and [drugs](#) were often topics that spread like wildfire. This [salacious tale](#) of a married female cop who hooked up with basically her whole small town department was a big hit — read by some seven million people domestically, or one in 50 Americans!

When three football fans [froze to death on their friend's porch](#) while he passed out on the couch for two days, everyone had a theory about the inexplicable incident, after seeing [my report](#), of course.

Another must-read was my [extensive piece](#) on Barack Obama's epic COVID-era party on Martha's Vineyard — millions agreed, including the ex-prez himself, I'd imagine. Wouldn't you click on The Post's paparazzi-fueled coverage of your birthday party?

Corretta Scott King's cousin [told me](#) that the MLK statue in Boston looked "like a penis," to the interest of millions of readers. It was a slow news cycle that holiday.

Lil Nas X [shared his take](#) on this story of mine with 34 million TikTokers. They loved it on the 'gram too.

People read in droves when the teenage daughter of a Jan. 6 rioter [outed her mom](#) to me.

[This](#) was one of the first "stories" I wrote that got three million views — I still have no idea why; it's really stupid.

Remember the mysterious [monolith craze](#)? [That](#) was my first viral banger.

A lot of my [personal favorites](#) that don't fit into any of the next 14 categories didn't get as much attention, but that's okay.

In no particular order, I thought this piece exploring [ketamine treatment](#) came out pretty well. This story, however, taught me [more than I ever wanted to know](#) about the zombie drug tranq.

Who knew there was such a market for [Amish romance novels](#)?

This was a strong Page Six [J-Lo report](#) amid the Benifer wedding.

This is less of an article and more of a food fight [photo essay](#).

[Goonies](#) never die.

Did you know you can make a teacher's yearly salary in just a [few days on OnlyFans](#)? (Well maybe not YOU.)

I'm a fan of [this TikToker](#), who does massive excavation projects in full makeup, pearls and designer dresses.

And here's a [heartwarming story](#) that came just in time for Thanksgiving.

EDUCATION

I was often thrown on the education beat to cover the nation's largest and most complicated school district at a time when it grappled with [remote learning](#), ushered in by the pandemic.

Charter schools [were booming](#) in the boroughs, largely [to the benefit of](#) black and Hispanic [students from motivated families](#), and to the chagrin of the [teachers' union](#).

A new heightened (perceived by many as [over](#)) sensitivity to [gender identity](#) and [discrimination issues](#) made a lot of [education headlines](#), but officials often didn't know how to respond when [real hatred](#) reared its [ugly head](#) in the classroom (and on [Ivy League campuses](#).)

The battle to save a prestigious public high school theatre program got some [help from famous alums](#), who rushed to the rescue after my [first report](#) on the issue.

And of course, [politics](#) were often [front and center](#) on this important metro beat.

FUNNY HEDS

One of the parts of writing for The Post I enjoyed the most is that some story assignments essentially functioned as [vehicles for jokes](#), many of which [tested the boundaries](#) of acceptable taste for publication.

From [anal retentive](#) suspects with [cockamamie excuses](#) to Florida [Men](#) and [Women](#) behaving badly, (an [unseemly trope](#) that has become legendary due to the availability of the public records in the large) sometimes it felt like I was fulfilling my lifelong dream of writing for The Onion.

I was eager and gratified to deploy [humorous takes](#), when appropriate, on airplane [high jackings](#), rural [drug rings](#) and general [udder madness](#).

[Royal infighting](#), [spaceship bathrooms](#) and [religious edicts](#) were also not spared from the dad joke treatment. As the homepage headline to a [story of mine](#) about murder hornets read: you've got to be kidding me!

HIGH PROFILE CRIME & TRAGEDIES

If it bleeds, it ledes. Covering high profile crimes and disasters made up a healthy chunk of my output at The Post.

As many US cities grappled with [record high crime rates](#) during the pandemic, the fatal [Astroworld crowd crush](#) and the [Surfside, Florida condo collapse](#) were making tragic headlines.

Months later, the [Uvalde, Texas](#) school [massacre](#), and the [very slow response](#), [shocked](#) and [saddened](#) a nation that had unfortunately [grown desensitized](#) to [school shootings](#) to its core.

Post readers could not get enough coverage of [Gabby Petito](#), the missing Long Island woman whose #vanlife adventure with a [murderous boyfriend captivated the nation](#). Her saga, and its [unbelievable aftermath](#), brought overdue attention to the [missing persons cases](#) of less privileged women, and illustrated the pitfalls of [social media fame](#).

One of the most outrageous stories I covered in depth was the [brazen murders](#), [theft](#) and [abused privilege](#) surrounding South Carolina [legal scion Alex Murdaugh](#) and his family. As a [victim's](#) lawyer told me, it was like "something out of a Grisham novel."

While the stars [Alec Baldwin](#) and [Brittney Spears](#) found themselves on different sides of the legal system, killers like [Robert Durst](#), [Bryan Kohberger](#) and [Kyle Rittenhouse](#) became household names due to incessant media coverage of their depraved acts.

Actor [Jussie Smollett](#) thought he could [take advantage](#) of a [political climate](#) that had sent [hate crimes](#) soaring to bolster his profile. He should have thought [twice](#).

Some [con artists](#), though, are [so talented](#) that they [demand admiration](#).

And sometimes all it takes for a [crime](#) to become [big news](#) is for it to occur [in a public venue](#) and be [caught on camera](#).

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INTERNATIONAL

As the world turns, so does the news cycle — in a blink of an eye.

I was often thrown on international political stories of huge consequence as they broke, like the [historic resignation](#) of a UK prime minister, and was tasked with filing the obituaries of world leaders like [Pope Benedict XVI](#) and [Mikhail Gorbachev](#), the last leader of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev had eschewed the totalitarian tactics embraced by his second successor Vladimir Putin, who used any means necessary to eliminate threats to his power, including [poisoning](#) and [wrongfully imprisoning political opponents](#) and [blowing up the plane](#) of a [mercenary leader](#) who had [staged a failed coup](#) on the Kremlin.

After [political opponents](#), and his own wife, turned on Haitian President Jovenel Moise and assassinated him in his own home in 2021, [anarchy reigned](#) on the streets of the impoverished Caribbean nation as the political void was filled by criminal [gangs and warlords](#).

Suspected radiation attacks known [deployed against Americans](#) in Cuba spread to Europe, where US dignitaries were also targeted, as North Korea continued to [flirt with armageddon](#) in an [endless string](#) of [military provocations](#).

When the pandemic-era [Title 42 measure expired](#), Central America and Mexico were flooded with migrants trying to [seek asylum](#) in [the US](#), an international trend that [wasn't confined](#) to the Americas.

As the [deadliest natural disaster](#) in modern history [struck Turkey and Syria](#), [conflicts raged](#) in [much of](#) the [Middle East](#), and the US finally [pulled out of Afghanistan](#) in a [botched evacuation](#) as the Taliban retook the country and demonstrated that its [promise of a kinder gentler regime](#) was just a [PR stunt](#). Meanwhile, [political upheaval](#) in Israel preceded a new right wing [warring government](#).

[Adventurers](#) who paid \$250,000 for [a tour of the Titanic ruins](#) in a submersible controlled by a video game joystick ended up [getting the full experience](#) as the world watched for days in fascination and horror.

The world was also peeled to the seemingly [endless parade](#) of [pomp and circumstance](#) for the late [Queen Elizabeth II](#), the longstanding [beloved](#) monarch whose death left her family [more splintered](#) than ever.

The [drug trade](#) was infiltrated with super-deadly [fentanyl](#) and associated [brutal narcotics crackdowns](#) continued to make international headlines.

Canada was not spared from the [debate over gender identity](#) that was perceived to have consumed the US and the state department still considered much of Mexico [off limits to Americans](#), although 1.2 million of them still go south of the border for [medical tourism](#) each year.

There were plenty of reasons to be optimistic though. Just [ask residents](#) of the world's [perennially happiest country](#).

METRO

New York City. Gotham. The Rotten Apple. There are nine million stories in the naked city, and I was lucky enough to get to tell some of them for its most storied tabloid's famous metro section.

Life in the [demanding](#), [always expensive](#) and [gentrifying](#) city can [break your heart](#) in the same day you [fall in love](#) with it all over again.

It's a place where [great music](#) and [art](#) and [stage](#) scenes can flourish, and leave reverberations that inspire the world.

It's home to those who [have plenty](#), and those [who have little](#), where some of the country's wealthiest congressional districts are situated [right next to its poorest](#).

In a place that can sometimes seem [plagued](#) by [random violence](#), there are no shortage of brave strangers to jump in to [come to the aid of a stranger](#), or [publicly shame](#) their attackers.

For [better](#) or [worse](#), New Yorkers [aren't shy](#) to stand up for what they believe in, or [flaunt a few rules](#) in the [name of fun](#) and [business opportunities](#).

It's a city with [proud traditions](#), both [wholesome](#) and [unseemly](#), where legends [are made](#) and [honored](#).

It's still the celebrated melting pot that ([usually](#)) [welcomes newcomers](#), where [fortunes can turn](#) on a dime thanks to the [generosity of strangers](#).

It's a city where [eccentric characters](#) rule the roost and [animals](#) can provoke [strong enough emotions](#) that even they can [become superstars](#).

It's still a [beach town](#) at heart.

And of course, it's that place where overzealous yuppie pickle ball players believe they are entitled to [steal precious public park space from children](#).

It's home.

MUSIC

Music is a guiding force and passion of mine and I've spent untold hours studying my favorite artists with every sense available to me. While my ears, heart and mind and fingers have helped me bring sounds to life, getting the chance to write about [musicians I love](#) while discovering [new ones](#) was a part of my tenure at The Post that really made my [writing sing](#).

Whether it was a [failed lawsuit](#) against Nirvana that smelled [like a shakedown](#), or a legal agreement between Hall and Oates that the singers [couldn't go for](#), I covered the litigious side of the industry without missing a beat.

It was a profound honor to be tasked with writing the [obituary of DMX](#) and breaking [the news](#) of the [passing](#) of other [rappers](#) and [rockers](#) that defined my [formative years](#), or to pay tribute [to Jimmy Buffet](#) through the words of Margaritaville Parrotheads.

When the [#MeToo](#) and [BLM movements](#) awakened [industry standards](#), a 1985's hit surprisingly [ran up the charts](#), or CSN told Spotify ['not in our house.'](#) I was there to pen a Post or Page Six story on [the developments](#).

[Many](#) of these stories were [also outrageously fun](#), and [funny](#). I had to add some humor and levity to an otherwise disgusting story of a former idol's shocking [race to the bottom](#), just to remind myself and the readers of the good tunes before his [runaway disaster](#). Also, no other published writer I'm aware of has ever squeezed so many [puns](#) into an otherwise innocuous Linsley Buckingham [Page Six update](#).

POLICE

My tenure at The Post began as the national reckoning with [racist police brutality](#) and [prosecutorial misconduct](#) was in full force. The callous [police murder](#) of George Floyd while he cried out for the [right to breathe](#) was [caught on camera](#), offering undeniable evidence of what for many [black suspects](#) was [de rigueur](#) and prompting [protestors](#) to [clash with police](#) in the city and all over the nation.

As [COVID-19](#), [public backlash](#) and controversial [bail reform laws](#) led to [frustration](#) and [sagging morale](#) among the ranks of New York's Finest, the department saw [shakeups](#) at the administrative level as former cop Eric Adams tried to restore [respect in policing](#) during his tenure.

Amid these developments, there was [no shortage](#) of [police heroism](#) and [sacrifice to cover](#), as well as plenty of cops [behaving badly](#) and [abusing their power](#).

POLITICS

I started at The Post just days before the 2020 presidential election, and I covered the [violent transition](#) and the vast majority of [Joe Biden's \(first?\)](#) term in the White House, from the COVID-19 recovery and escalating [culture wars](#) that seeped into [all corners](#) of politics to the [migrant crisis](#) that engulfed New York City and began to define the reign of a new mayor.

As City Hall transitioned from the [de Blasio administration](#) to leadership under [Eric Adams](#) — a former cop, lawmaker and flashy [nightlife aficionado](#) — the [flood of migrants](#) into the boroughs and the perception of decreased [quality of life](#) threatened to derail his tenure, and made for [icy relationships](#) with his fellow Democrats in Washington.

Before Adams [easily](#) rose to power, a longtime foil of [Hizzoner](#) had already been taken out — partly due to a series of [articles](#) I penned that ultimately helped push Andrew Cuomo — widely respected nationally for his [pandemic](#) leadership a year before — to resign in disgrace [amid allegations](#) of sexual misconduct. His [brother](#) was also removed from the anchor desk at CNN in the fallout, which I [reported on extensively](#). The incident harkened back to the sex scandal of [another New York governor](#), who ironically might of survived his first scandal in today's climate.

Underlying all the political shakeups and [history](#) being made in Albany, [Washington](#) and City Hall were politicians [behaving badly](#), [worse](#), and in [some cases](#) just [criminally fabricating](#) their entire personal and business identities while likely [killing dogs](#) — was the [sinister return](#) of Donald Trump's [strongman ambitions](#) as he ensnared the GOP in a stranglehold, even [while facing](#) nearly a hundred [felony](#) charges and an array of [civil cases](#).

I believe I covered these leaders and their [accomplishments](#) and [shortcomings](#) honestly and fairly, which isn't always the perception at a conservative tabloid known for its editorial takedowns. As is pertains to my coverage of The Post's boogymen numero uno, [Hunter Biden](#), I would in particular like to stand by my string of articles [criticizing](#) the first family for [not hanging up](#) a Christmas stocking for their [illegitimate granddaughter](#). Finally, they just stopped hanging up any of the grandkids' stockings.

That's messed up.

SPACE

Space, [the final frontier](#). I had the pleasure of writing about the [cosmos](#) frequently for The Post, most recently in a series of articles I penned about the total solar eclipse in the spring of 2024.

I drew upon [my experience](#) seeing the astronomical event seven years prior and [interviewed astronauts](#) in the run-up to my [extensive coverage](#) of the [event](#), before being [dispatched](#) to the [zone of totality](#) to view the eclipse with a sitting governor and NASA officials.

Prior to that, I often wrote about [life on Mars](#), [solar system eccentricities](#) and [black holes](#) while chronicling efforts to [divert asteroids](#) before they could [catastrophically collide with Earth](#).

I [spilled ink](#) on the [Perseverance](#) and [Juno](#) missions while covering many a [SpaceX launch](#) and reporting on the new [Space Force](#) branch of the armed forces.

Also, a [bombshell congressional report](#) on [unexplained aerial phenomena](#) convinced me beyond a shadow of a doubt that yes, they are out there.

SPORTS

As a teenager, I first started reading The Post for its epic back page.

As a lifelong Knicks, [Mets](#) and Giants fan, its sports section offered the most exhaustive coverage of my hometown teams, and when I was occasionally called off the bench to write for the storied department, I left it all on the field.

My sports stories, while sometimes [colorful](#) and [funny](#), often collided with the intersection of topical news, whether it was covering [blowback](#) to a [controversial trans swimmer's](#) college championship, climate change [protesters disrupting](#) the world's largest bike race, or the [Ukraine War's impact](#) on another prestigious contest.

[Murder schemes](#) and allegations of [sexual abuse](#) surrounding top-tier athletes were another common thread. Baseball was also marred by [gun violence](#) under my watch, and a football star [continued to be blacklisted](#) for his decision to assert his constitutional right to protest police brutality as [racism persisted](#) in the sporting world.

Also, let's not forget the time when a former US president [called for a boycott](#) of America's pastime, before eventually [tomahawk chopping his way](#) through a game, as teams nationwide [canceled mascots](#) deemed by some to be offensive to Native Americans.

One of my favorite sports stories was about an [obscure and sadistic](#) Tennessee ultra marathon that attracts some of the world's best athletes despite being almost impossible to enter, let alone finish or win.

One day I want to try my hand at that contest and report on it gonzo-style. For now, you'll more likely find me trying to independently verify [this article](#).

TELEVISION

As a former Emmy-nominated TV producer, I had grown tired of watching it before the pandemic led me to rediscover my love for the boob tube.

When I was given the opportunity to write about some of my favorite TV shows at The Post, it was an honor.

More specifically, it was a [dream come true](#) to be able to [recap](#) and [review](#) “Saturday Night Live,” a [favorite of mine](#) going back to childhood, [in real time](#). For two years, [these articles](#) were the [first hits](#) that would [pop up](#) when you [Googled “SNL”](#) on Sunday morning.

It was a [fun time](#) to be a “Jeopardy!” [fan](#) in the wake of [Alex Trebeck’s death](#), as hosts vied [for the opportunity](#) to fill his legendary shoes.

When Will Smith [attacked](#) Chris Rock [at the Oscars](#), it was a [live television moment](#) that would live forever [in infamy](#) and kept me busy [covering the fallout](#).

[News anchors](#) and [TV hosts behaving badly](#) was also a [consistent](#) topic on [the beat](#).

And life often [imitated](#) the small screen, as I noted in this [Page Six piece](#) that was the first article to foretell the relationship of SNL’s Pete Davidson and Kim Kardashian, and link it to their [recent onstage kiss](#).

Sorry to have tipped off [Ye](#), guys.

VICTIMS SPEAK

One of the most meaningful and emotional parts of working at The Post was giving a voice to victims, many of whom had internally wrestled with their traumatic experiences for decades before tearfully [sharing their terrible ordeals](#) with me.

In many cases, [victims](#) of sexual abuse were often dismissed by the [hospitals](#), [churches](#) and [children’s organizations](#) that [enabled](#) or tried to cover up the horrific misdeeds.

As it seemed like more and more [celebrities](#) and [well-connected pedophiles](#) were finally being [held accountable](#) for their [abusive reigns](#), many more stories of [unspeakable child abuse](#) came to the forefront, a trend that was in part accelerated by the popularity of [streaming documentaries](#).

WAR

When the largest war in Europe broke out since [World War II](#) in the spring of 2022, I was on the news desk late at night covering every [sordid](#) and [harrowing](#) detail of Russia's [unprovoked invasion of Ukraine](#) as the latest word of the [overseas attacks](#) the next day came across the wire in real time.

While George Bush momentarily confused [Vladimir Putin's](#) atrocities with [his own unprovoked catastrophic war](#), the Ukraine's [upstart ragtag army](#), with the support of [most of the world](#), overcame [mountains of propaganda](#) to [largely fend off](#) the Kremlin's apparently not-so-well-oiled war machine.

As the Ukraine War continued to plod on, Hamas launched a [horrific attack](#) on Israel [in 2023](#), the worst [terror campaign](#) to [target the Jewish state](#) in decades.

Israel quickly squandered widespread goodwill from the international community by [retaliating tenfold](#) against the terror organization that rules the disputed Palestinian territory, [flattening](#) the densely populated Gaza Strip and plunging its millions of residents into a [brutal humanitarian crisis](#).

The tensions quickly reverberated [in New York City](#), and tore apart [high schools](#), [college campuses](#) and [political parties](#), with pro-Palestine activists labeling Israel's war a genocide while being widely accused of [inflaming antisemitism](#).

The Biden administration continued to flood both its [staunch warring ally](#) in the Middle East and besieged [European partner](#) with billions of dollars worth of aid and weapons, in an [increasingly controversial](#) attempt to shape history on the other side of the world.

WEATHER

Let's [talk about](#) the weather.

What starts as a [sunny mood](#) could quickly [turn dangerous](#) without warning, as well as a "once in a generation" deadly storm that can keep you barricaded in your house, as the mayor of Buffalo [explained to me](#) one blustery Christmas morning.

Of course, [blizzards](#) in the boroughs have been rare of late, with many winter storms recently causing [devastating flash flooding](#) instead.

Natural disasters can also make the weather in New York City [look like Mars](#).

Is [global warming](#) to blame? Meteorologists I interviewed usually pointed to more [immediate explanations](#), but that goes with the territory.

I always loved [interviewing forecasters](#) for weather stories. It would remind me of all the fascinating meteorological nuggets I learned working with weathermen and women when I produced at TV news stations.

And everyone reads these stories. As they say about the city, the weather is usually either [too hot](#), or [too cold](#). That basically sums up my forecast.

WOODS & SPREADS

"The Wood" is what they call the front page at the New York Post, a callback to when wood block letters were used to stamp the headlines on the tabloid's front page when the paper was typeset, because metal letters wouldn't suffice for the [massive "200 point," often sensational copy](#).

I had more than a few woods in my day, and many times I wouldn't even know I had the cover story until I glanced at the rack in the bodega while grabbing coffee the next morning. That was always pretty cool.

Most are long lost or forgotten, but I saved a few of the physical copies, as well as some page spreads of mine, as proof that it actually happened!



guns felt hardest by black you

By JESSE O'NEIL
and CRAIG MCCARTHY

The number of US children killed by guns skyrocketed by 50% between 2019 and 2021 as the country grappled with the pandemic and the defund the police movement — a grim increase that was felt hardest among black youth in cities governed by Democrats.

Only a small fraction of the soaring gun violence involved school shootings, and black children were five times more likely than their white counterparts to die at the hands of a shooter, according to a new Pew Research Center report.

Overall, fatal gun violence rose across the country and among all age groups during the pandemic, with a 23% increase in shooting deaths among Americans recorded during the three years.

There were 48,830 gun deaths recorded in 2021 — the most in a single year since 1999, when the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first began keeping such stats, the report said.

Although children under 18 made up a small fraction of the overall rise in gun fatalities for the three-year period, their age group suffered the worst rate of increase.

In the year before the pandemic hit, 1,732 children in America died from guns. Two years later, that figure was up to 2,590, the report said.

Boys accounted for 83% of the firearm fatalities in 2021, and 46% of the total young victims were black, even though black children constituted only 14% of the US minor population at the time, according to the study.

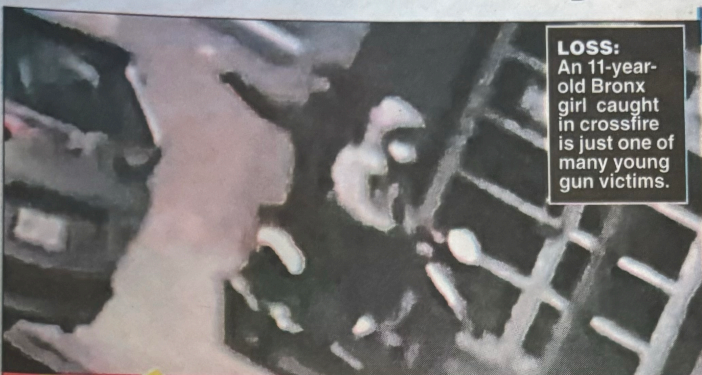
Sixty percent of the young lives lost in 2021 involved homicides, and 32% were suicides, with the remaining deaths falling under the categories of accidents or "other," researchers said.

But the causes of death were starkly different among racial lines: The vast majority of gun deaths among black teens and children, or 84%, were caused by homicides, while most gun deaths among white children, 66%, were ruled suicides, researchers found.

The gun-death rate among Hispanic youth was the same as among white children.

School shootings accounted for less than 2% of the total related death toll in 2021, when 49 people were killed in 202 gun incidents at US schools, according to Everytown Research & Policy, an independent gun safety organization.

In New York City, 21 kids were fatally shot in 2021, a significant in-



LOSS:
An 11-year-old Bronx girl caught in crossfire is just one of many young gun victims.

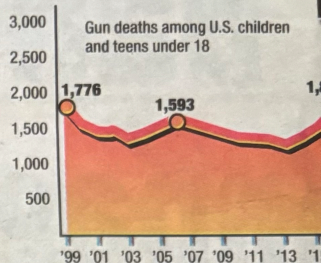
THE POST SAYS:

Even a quick glance at the map kept by the Gun Violence Archive shows the bulk of deaths of under-18s clustered — no shock — in NYC, Philly, Los Angeles, San Francisco and other liberal urban enclaves. And they're concentrated among black children.

See Editorial: Page 28

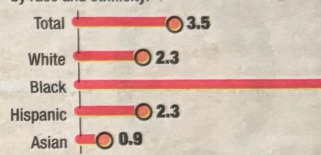
Grim statistics

Gun deaths among US kids increase between 2019 and 2021



Black kids are about five times as likely to die from gunfire

Gun deaths per 100,000 U.S. children and teens by race and ethnicity:



Note: Includes homicides, suicides, accidents and all other deaths. White, Black and Asian children and teens include one race and not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center, Centers for Disease Control

KIDS SHOT DEAD SO

crease from 11 young victims reported in 2020 and five in 2019, according to the NYPD.

But children were safer from gun violence in the Big Apple than the nation as a whole for the three years: Almost 3% of the US population lives in the five boroughs, but less than 1% of the country's youth shooting deaths happened there, an evaluation of the statistics showed.

The toll of deadly youth gun violence was far higher in compar-

able US cities in 2021. In Philadelphia, 36 minors were killed by guns, a grim new murder record for the City of Brotherly Love, according to WCAU-TV. In Chicago, at least 106 people under the age of 20 also died at the hands of shooters, the Chicago Tribune reported on New Year's Eve that year.

The newspaper noted that the majority of the young victims were black males and that the violence was concentrated in Windy City neighborhoods that

are effectively racially segregated.

A poll conducted by the Pew Research Center found that Democratic-leaning voters were almost twice as concerned about their children getting shot than their Republican counterparts.

Twenty-seven percent of Democrats polled by the group said they were "extremely" or "very" concerned about the bleak trend, while only 14% of Republicans felt the same way.

Only 10% of high-income par-

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SPEAKING UP

Heastie's Bx. voters back bail & charters

By ZACH WILLIAMS
and JESSE O'NEIL

State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie's own heavily Democratic district disagrees with the power and giving judges discretion when it comes to bail, a new Post poll shows.

Most voters in Heastie's Bronx district support charter schools, even as their top local lawmaker moves to block a proposal to lift the cap on the publicly funded, privately run schools in New York City.

Heastie also is opposed to fellow Dem Gov. Hochul's plan to give judges more leeway to set bail to curb crime — while many of his constituents disagree.

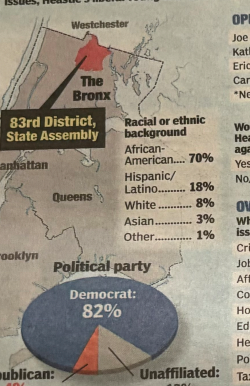
"It's so obvious that people not only in Carl's district, but in the whole city of New York, they are just against some of Carl's policies," state Assemblyman Alex Brook-Krauss (D-Coney Island), a former Democrat, told The Post on Tuesday.

"But again, he cares about the progressives" because he hopes to avoid a political challenge from the left, the poll said.

Charter school expansion is opposed by the

Out of touch

Yet a new poll by McLaughlin & Associates, commissioned by The Post, shows that on key issues, Heastie's liberal voting base disagrees



city's powerful teachers union, which has donated \$146,000 to Heastie and another \$1.3 million to his caucus' campaign committee since 2015.

Yet according to the McLaughlin & Associates poll commissioned by The Post in Heastie's northern Bronx district, 62% of the 400 likely voters surveyed last week said they support charters and 68% want to increase their numbers.

Only 16% were even aware that Heastie was blocking legislation to expand charters statewide.

Minority support

Charter schools have proliferated in the South Bronx and northern Manhattan, but they are comparatively sparse in Heastie's 83rd Assembly district. A total of just four charters are located in the sections of Williamsbridge, Eastchester and Wakefield, according to a map from New York Charter Schools Association.

Yet support for New York City public schools was much lower among residents of Heastie's district. Only 46% of those surveyed had a positive opinion of them.

Heastie, asked by The Post earlier this month

with him. A sampling of 400 likely voters among the roughly 135,000 residents of District 83 shows strong support for charter schools — even though Heastie opposes allowing more of them to open. He also blocks any changes to the bail reform laws, despite his constituents favoring giving judges more discretion.

Gov. Hochul has introduced a budget proposal that would both lift the charter cap and tweak the bail laws. Will Heastie listen to the people he represents? Here are some of the poll results:

OPINION OF POLITICIANS	
Joe Biden job approval	72%
Kathy Hochul job approval	69%
Eric Adams favorability	66%
Carl Heastie favorability	47%
*Never heard of	30%
Would you vote to re-elect Carl Heastie, regardless of who ran against him?	
Yes	43%
No/Don't know	57%
OVERALL ISSUES	
What is the most important issue facing New Yorkers today?	
Crime/drugs/safety	27.8%
Jobs/economy	14.5%
Affordable housing	12.5%
Cost of living/inflation	12.5%
Homelessness	4.5%
Education	3.2%
Healthcare cost/access	3.0%
Politics/government	2.2%
Taxes	1.5%
Racial inequality	1.2%

Heastie, who has said he believes the controversial statute isn't tied to the increase in crime.

Many of his constituents disagree. Poll respondents said crime is the top issue in their community and 64% approve of requiring anyone committing a crime with a gun to be held without bail.

"Crime concerns are real," state Assemblyman Ed Ka (R-Garden City, LI) told The Post on Tuesday. "It's not just a suburban GOP talking point but something New York City residents are very concerned, which is why I'm not surprised it came out

Tough on crime

Additionally, 37.5% of the poll's respondents said Albany's bail reforms went too far, although only 17% of them were aware that Heastie was moving to change Hochul's proposed block. Hochul's proposed changes that would put violent suspects behind bars ahead of their day in court.

"As I've always said,

SPEAKER CAL

Do you approve or disapprove of changing state law to require that anyone who is charged with committing a crime with a gun be held in jail without bail until their trial or crime is decided?

Approve 63.5%
Disapprove 30.2%
Don't know/refused 6.2%

SHOPLIFTING

How serious of a problem would you say shoplifting is in your area?

Serious 61.2%
Not serious 25.8%
Don't know/refused 13.0%

When shopping in your community, have you had to contact a store clerk or manager to purchase a product that has been locked behind a cabinet to prevent shoplifting?

Yes 71.0%
No 26.2%
Don't know/refused 2.8%

Do you approve or disapprove of giving judges the discretion to reject bail requirements for repeat shoplifters?

Approve 60.0%
Disapprove 31.2%
Don't know/refused 8.8%

EDUCATION

Do you have a positive or negative opinion of the New York City public school system?

Positive 46.2%
Negative 42.0%
Don't know/refused 11.8%

Do you have a positive or negative opinion of charter schools?

Positive 61.8%
Negative 16.0%
Don't know/refused 22.2%

Do you approve or disapprove of giving judges discretion in setting bail for repeat offenders or other factors?

Approve 56.9%
Disapprove 28.8%
Don't know/refused 14.5%

Would you disapprove or approve of increasing the number of charter schools in New York City?

Approve 67.8%
Disapprove 19.8%
Don't know/refused 12.5%



been saying for some time," state Conservative Party Chair Gerard Kaspar told The Post.

"Public safety and charter-schools changes are universally accepted as important issues affecting all constituencies in the metropolitan area.

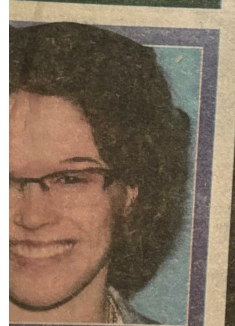
"Even in the speaker's district, voters want a reversal of cashless bail and more charter schools. We need to listen to them a little more."

—joneil@nypost.com

Charters / Page
Goodwin / Page



**2023
Baseball
Preview**
pages inside



**Shville
ler's
cret
pons**
PAGES 12-17

HE DOESN'T 'SPEAK' FOR US

EXCLUSIVE POST POLL

Voters in Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie's Bronx district disagree with him on two key issues: 57% want to give judges discretion on bail, and 68% favor lifting the cap on charter schools, a Post poll finds, yet he continues to block them in Albany.

PAGES 6-7

Assembly leader Carl Heastie out of touch with his voters on crime, charters



You takin' from me?

Serial burglar gets into De Niro's apartment

PAGES 8-9

BIRD IN THE HAND

How the FBI pressured Twitter to censor Hunter story agency knew was TRUE

CENSORED

Facebook and Twitter block Post expose on Hunter Biden files

The latest Twitter Files show how the FBI repeatedly warned the social media company that "misinformation about Hunter Biden was coming — even though the feds had been given Hunter's laptop in 2019."

PAGES 4-5

THE TWITTER FILES

FBI TWIT SQUEEZE

PLAY ON THE POST

By JESSE O'NEILL

The FBI pressured Twitter to suppress The Post's blockbuster scoop about Hunter Biden's laptop by warning it could be part of a Russian "hack and leak" operation — even while knowing the concern was unfounded, according to internal company records made public Monday.

The latest release of the Twitter Files authorized by new owner Elon Musk also provided more examples of former top FBI lawyer Jim Baker's role in cracking down on The Post's reporting while he worked as Twitter's deputy general counsel. Musk fired Baker earlier this month.

Documents posted on Twitter by independent journalist Michael Shellenberger showed that former head of trust and safety Yoel Roth was contacted by FBI Agent Elvis Chan just hours before The Post published the first laptop story on Oct. 14, 2020.

Chan used a one-way communication channel to send Roth and at least one other person 10 documents on the night of Oct. 13, 2020 and asked them to confirm receipt, Shellenberger found.

Approximately 2½ hours earlier, Hunter Biden attorney George Mesires called and emailed Delaware computer repair shop owner John Paul Mac Isaac after learning from The Post that the article based on files recovered from the laptop would be published the next day.

"I am a lawyer for Hunter Biden and I appreciate you reviewing your records on this matter," Mesires wrote to Mac Isaac. At 5 a.m. on Oct. 14, The Post published the first of many scoops exposing questionable overseas business dealings conducted by Hunter Biden.

Although the contents of the documents Chan sent are unknown, the timing is suspicious and was in keeping with the FBI's efforts to squelch speech on the platform on grounds of guarding against "foreign interference in elections," Shellenberger said.

Chan's move came after he arranged "temporary Top Secret security clearances for Twitter executives" so the FBI could flag purported threats beginning 30 days before the 2020 election.

The Post's story was suppressed by Facebook and Twitter, which suspended the paper's account. It was also ignored or discredited by mainstream outlets, many of whom quietly substantiated the report months later.

Roth has since testified that the feds had primed him to view any reporting on Hunter Biden's laptop as a "Russian 'hack and leak' operation." And Chan later admitted under oath that the FBI warnings were exaggerated.



"Through our investigations, we did not see any similar competing intrusions to what had happened in 2016," Chan said, referring to the hack of the Democratic National Committee.

Chan's testimony came in a sworn deposition last month tied to a lawsuit — filed by the attorney general of Missouri and Louisiana — that alleges the federal government and the Biden administration leaned on social media sites to suppress free speech.

Chan insisted that no one had mentioned Hunter Biden's laptop to him before The Post broke the story and that he had not discussed it with anyone at Twitter.

Roth occasionally pushed back against Chan's concerns about foreign meddling ahead of the 2020 election, and he "resisted" FBI efforts to get Twitter to share data outside of the normal search warrant process" early that year, documents published by Shellenberger showed.

In June 2020, Roth responded to one of Chan's inquiries about an NBC report that foreign-controlled bots had spread misinformation about a purported government communications blackout amid protests in Washington, DC, following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

"Our review thus far shows a small-scale domestic troll effort ... but not a significant bot or foreign angle," Roth wrote to Chan on June 2.

On Aug. 31, Roth told Chan that there was no evidence to support a Washington Post story that made "a lot of insinuations about

foreign interference" on political messaging on the platform.

Undeterred, the FBI "repeatedly" requested information that company executives refused to volunteer, before arranging for security clearances, emails released in the data dump revealed.

There were so many former FBI employees working at Twitter in the run-up to the 2020 election, says Shellenberger, that they had their own private Slack channel.

By mid-September, Chan and Roth agreed to set up a "virtual war room" for tech executives and the FBI and Office of the Director of National Intelligence, according to internal emails.

After The Post broke the laptop story, Roth seemed reluctant to take any action, writing "it isn't clearly violative of our Hacked Materials Policy, nor is it clearly in violation of anything else."

Baker pushed back hard, insisting there were "some facts that indicate the materials may have been hacked." Baker made his claims despite The Post's publishing a computer store receipt signed by Hunter Biden and a 2019 FBI subpoena for the laptop.

By that point, the computer had been in the bureau's possession for 10 months.

INFLUENCERS:

The Aspen Institute, a government-funded elite nonprofit, hosted a "digital hack-and-dump" exercise (right) focusing on how to handle potential revelations about Hunter Biden, weeks before the info was leaked, according to the latest Twitter files release

Aspen Digital Hack-and-Dump Working Group — September 2020

EXERCISE: The Burisma Leak

Day One: Monday, October 5th

- Anonymous website, BIDENCRIMES.info, and a Twitter account, @HUNTERLOLZ, begin posting documents that purport to be from Burisma, tied to Hunter Biden. Splashed across the top of the site, in English, is "Joe Biden betrayed America before for \$\$\$." He'll do it again." Initially, the documents, mostly in Ukrainian, appear to be minutes of various Burisma board meetings, internal emails, and financial records. There is initially no sign of a smoking gun.
- NOTE: The website appears to have been first registered in 2016. No ownership information is public. The Twitter account was created in 2014, oddly just before Hunter joined the Burisma board. It has tweeted once and follows one person.

Day Two: Tuesday, October 6th

- The Drudge Report links to the anonymous website, BIDENCRIMES.info, and the site is quickly picked up by other fringe media and begins to circulate.

Group prepped

By BRUCE GOLDING

A US government-funded nonprofit known as "the mountain retreat for the liberal elite" sponsored a "tabletop exercise" intended to influence coverage of a leak of documents related to Hunter Biden, the latest installment of Elon Musk's "Twitter Files" reveals.

Independent journalist Michael Shellenberger on Monday posted confidential documents from the Aspen Institute's September 2020

policy and top national security reporters from The New York Times and The Washington Post.

The exercise by the "Aspen Digital Hack-and-Dump Working Group" involved an 11-day scenario in October 2020 that began with the imaginary release of falsified records related to Hunter Biden's controversial employment by the Ukrainian energy company Burisma, which paid him as much as \$1 million a year to serve on its board.



THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023 / Clouds & sun, 75° / Weather: P. 18 ★★ LATE CITY FINAL nypost.com \$2.00



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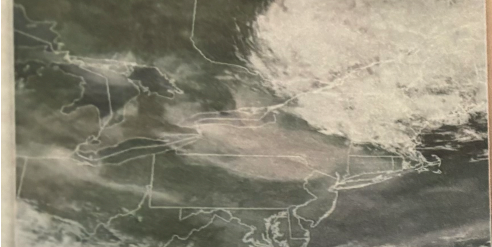
It's the unhealthiest thing to come out of Canada sinceoutine. Smoke from fires up north gave New York the worst air quality in the world yesterday — and residents inhaled the equivalent of six cigarettes.

SEE PAGES 4-5

Canuck wildfires plunge NYC into eerie, smoky hell

BLAME CANADA!

Our Canadian export smogs



TODAY	TOMORROW	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
AQI: 100-200 range* Orange skies 75° A shower in the afternoon	AQI: 50-150 range* Pinkish tint 72° An afternoon thundershower	AQI: around 100 Slight haze 77° Afternoon showers	AQI: around 50 Clear of orange 83° A mix of sun and clouds

By JESSE O'NEILL, BERNADETTE HOGAN and NATALIE O'NEILL

What the H-E-double hockey sticks? Smoke from wildfires in Canada turned New York City into an apocalyptic hellscape of thick, eerie fumes Wednesday — causing the worst air quality of any city in the world and the worst air in the Big Apple since the 1960s, including on 9/11.

The orange haze from the Great White North — where more than 400 wildfires were burning — got so bad that Mayor Adams urged New Yorkers to stay indoors and, if they had to go out, to don an N95 mask.

At the same time, the choking smoke proved it was the worst thing to come from Canada since Nickelback, hockey mullets and poutine by causing flight stoppages at La Guardia and Newark airports, closures at the city's zoos and even the postponement of the evening Yankees game.

"This is something that has never impacted the city on this scale before," Adams said at a press conference Wednesday.

"From the gloom over Yankee Stadium to the smoky haze obscuring the skyline... we could see it, we could smell it and we felt it."

The city's air quality index had spiked to 484 out of 500 by Wednesday afternoon as winds pushed smoke from 110 uncontained Quebec-area wildfires into the Big Apple, according to city officials. By contrast, an AQI of about 50 is normal in New York City during the month of June.

It's a "health concern that is clearly alarming for all New Yorkers," Adams said. "This is the highest level of air quality index of our knowledge since the '60s."

Historically hazy

The levels were far worse than the second-most polluted major world city, Delhi, India, which reached only 190 on Wednesday afternoon, according to the air quality site IQAir.com.

The figures were worse than after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, although the present air debris was not as toxic, said Fox Weather meteorologist Brian Mastro.

"It looks like Mars out there," he said, adding that the city was redolent of a giant campfire. "It smells bad, like the fire is right nearby."

The smoke was being fueled by scores of wildfires in Canada, many of which were burning out of control. Prime Minister Justin



Trudeau's office did not return a request for comment on what the nation was doing to battle the blaze.

The only good news in the midst of the tangerine-colored haze — which many compared to the look of various post-apocalyptic films — was that relief was expected to come soon. The smoke was expected to be lower Thursday, and lessen further. Friday as rain comes, with an end to the conditions expected Sunday.

up NY skies to levels worse than 9/11



BREATHE QUEASY: Drifting haze from Canadian wildfires obscures the Manhattan skyline with New Yorkers urged to dust off their (inset left) amid health concerns.

ORANGE IS THE NEW BLECK

Meanwhile, on Wednesday afternoon, flights bound for La Guardia Airport in Queens were halted and landings at Newark Airport in New Jersey were delayed, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA issued the ground stop at La Guardia due to "reduced visibility" from the thick haze as it choked Gotham for the second day in a row, an FAA official told The Post.

The Bronx, Central Park, Queens and Prospect Park zoos each shuttered at 3 p.m. for the

safety of guests and critters amid unhealthy air pollution levels, zoo officials said, with animals moved inside amid the air risk.

"We have been monitoring the rising air quality index & will close the WCS parks: Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, NY Aquarium, at 3pm today out of concern for our staff, visitors and animals," the Bronx Zoo announced on Twitter.

The New York Aquarium and city beaches were also closed, while carriage-horse operators

were asked to stop working.

The Yankees-White Sox game slated for Wednesday night in The Bronx was also postponed due to air-quality concerns and rescheduled as a doubleheader beginning at 4:05 p.m. on Thursday.

Sorry, kids, no recess

Earlier in the day, New York City public schools suspended outdoor activities along with an outdoor concert at Prospect Park's bandshell Wednesday night due to the city's "unprecedented air quality."

Even alternate side parking was suspended Thursday "due to the air quality."

Many New Yorkers masked up and refrained from exercising outdoors as health officials warned that even healthy New Yorkers should avoid the outdoors.

"This was for the pandemic but now I use it for air," Tamari Zviadze, 37, said of her face mask, as she pushed her patient in a wheelchair in Prospect Park.

"I rode my scooter yesterday. When I got home, my throat was



NEW YORK POST

METRO EDITION

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DEATH OF PIONEERING POPE EMERITUS
PAGES 8-11



Benedict XVI

1927-2022

POPE BENEDICT XVI 1927-2022

By TAMAR LAPIN
and JESSE O'NEILL

Pope Benedict XVI, a fierce defender of church dogma who became the first pontiff in six centuries to abdicate the papacy, died Saturday morning. He was 95 years old.

Benedict XVI died at 9:34 a.m. local time in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in Vatican City, where he lived following his 2013 resignation, according to Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni.

Benedict XVI's body will lie in state at Saint Peter's Basilica beginning on Jan. 2.

The funeral service for Pope Emeritus is scheduled to take place in St. Peter's Square on Monday.

Pope Francis will preside over the funeral.

Benedict's death came after Pope Francis asked his flock for "prayers" for his predecessor at the Vatican on Wednesday.

"I want to ask you all for a special prayer for the pope emeritus Benedict, who sustains the Church in his silence. He is very sick," Francis, 86, said during his weekly general audience.

"We ask the Lord to console and sustain him in this witness of love for the Church to the very end."

The German spiritual leader — born Joseph Ratzinger on April 16, 1927, in Bavaria — succeeded the sainted Pope John Paul II in April 2005.

Known for his staunchly conservative views and the nearly 25 years he spent as the powerful head of the Vatican's doctrinal office, Benedict was the first German pope in 1,000 years — although he only served for eight years before stepping down in February 2013.

"I think that if he had been able to decide his own future, he would have been quite happy to spend his life as a college professor, teaching and writing books," the New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan told The Post in December 2018.

"But he was called to greater service... And he accepted all of this as one who follows not his own will, but God's will."

As a quiet, unassuming intellectual who mostly stayed out of the limelight, Benedict seldom commented on political issues, but he will be remembered for his extensive writings and teachings about the love of God and the love of one's neighbor.

Benedict produced more than 60 books between 1963, when he was a priest, and 2013, when he resigned the papacy.

His short tenure was also marred by the clergy sex abuse crisis, which reached a peak in the public sphere during this

time, and the subsequent "Vatileaks" scandal.

Paolo Gabriele, Benedict's butler, leaked secret documents to an Italian journalist in 2012 that revealed corruption and feuding within the Vatican.

The stolen documents uncovered power struggles inside the Vatican over its efforts to show greater financial transparency and comply with international norms to fight money laundering.

After Gabriele was arrested, he admitted that he'd given the papers to reporter Gianluigi Nuzzi because he believed the pope wasn't being informed of the "evil and corruption" in the Vatican.

He insisted that he believed exposing it would get the church back on track.

Historic decision

A year after the scandal rocked the Holy See, Benedict, at the age of 85, stepped down.

He said he had to step aside because his health prevented him from being of sound enough mind and body to lead the world's 1.2 billion Catholics.

"In today's world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the bark of St. Peter and proclaim the gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary," he said.

"Strength which in the last few months has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me."

Everyone, even the Vatican's own spokesman, was taken aback by the announcement: The head of the church was quitting — the first since Pope Gregory XII in 1415.

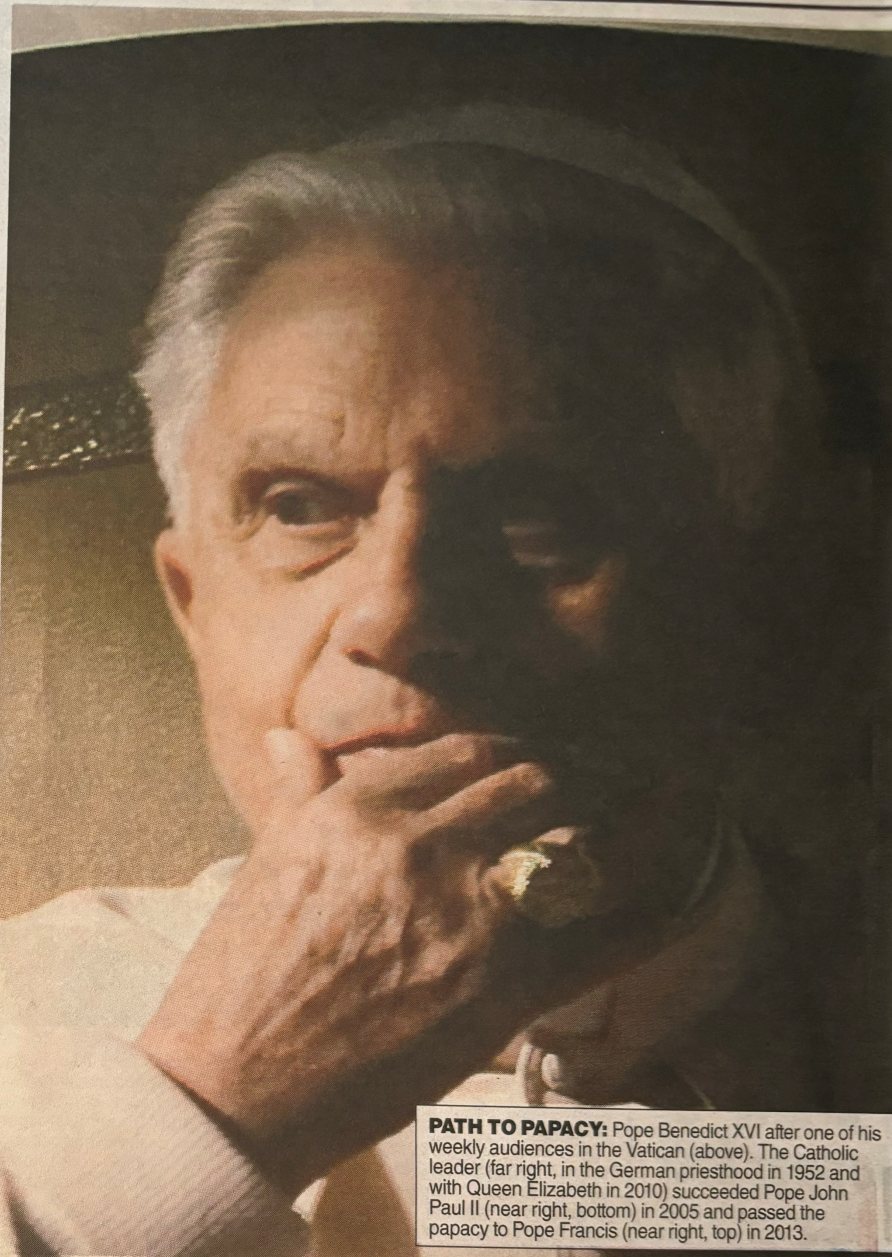
Years later, Benedict's stunning decision was lauded by church leaders and experts as courageous and a sign of true humanity — to be able to recognize one's own failings.

"It was really a moment of humility. He admitted his own weakness and kind of demystified the papacy," Christopher P. Vogt, chair of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at St. John's University, told The Post in December 2018.

"He didn't try to hide behind the mystic of the papacy. He was clearly a man of faith dedicated to serving the church the best way he could."

Cardinal Dolan said, "The effect on the Church has been, I think, a positive one, in that it was such a display of humility; it's been a reminder to me that I should not be too attached to the things of this world."

Following Benedict's resignation, the pope emeritus spent the



PATH TO PAPACY: Pope Benedict XVI after one of his weekly audiences in the Vatican (above). The Catholic leader (far right, in the German priesthood in 1952 and with Queen Elizabeth in 2010) succeeded Pope John Paul II (near right, bottom) in 2005 and passed the papacy to Pope Francis (near right, top) in 2013.

last years of his life in near seclusion at a Vatican City monastery, blind in his left eye and unable to walk unattended.

Benedict had endured other health setbacks in his life. In 1991, he'd suffered a hemorrhagic stroke and suffered another stroke in 2005. He was also fitted with a pacemaker as a cardinal, although this was only revealed following his resignation.

A church insider told The Post Benedict largely spent his days reading, praying, doing a little writing and occasionally meeting

with old friends.

He was succeeded by a charismatic Argentinian cardinal who became Pope Francis.

John Paul II's footsteps

At the time of Benedict's election, he'd been a natural choice within the college of 115 cardinals who chose him, as the man who shared his predecessor John Paul II's traditionalist ideology, having served as his right-hand man for two decades.

When he donned the papal robes on April 19, 2005, at the age

of 78, he became the oldest pontiff to be elected since 1730.

Born on Holy Saturday, in the committed Catholic German village of Traunstein to a policeman father and hotel cook mother, Benedict was 6 when Adolf Hitler came to power.

He was a 12-year-old student about to enter a seminary when Germany invaded Poland, igniting World War II.

In 1941, Benedict was pressed into the compulsory Hitler Youth movement, a fact that caused widespread criticism upon his

NEW YORK POST

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Free the charters!

How they offer NYC kids a better future

**SPECIAL
SERIES
BEGINS**
PAGES 10-13



UPWARD

FREE THE CHARTERS

New York City's charter schools have lifted the fortunes of thousands of schoolkids, leading Gov. Hochul to push for more new charters and the revival of some "zombie" licenses of those closed. This week, *The Post* reveals the success city charter schools have had by examining data and talking with those most closely involved in the system. To oppose more charters is simply racist, say some supporters, including former Gov. George Pataki.

By CARL CAMPANILE,
JESSE O'NEILL,
GEORGETT ROBERTS
and KRISTINA NARIZHNYA

NEW York City's black charter-school students significantly outperform their public-school counterparts — leading to claims that the battle to hold back charters is racist.

Proponents argue the stunning data indicate charters provide families of color a crucial educational choice, while many progressive lawmakers and politically powerful teachers unions gripe the schools siphon off resources from the public education system.

"The charter schools took the kids that people said couldn't learn. These kids are getting scholarships and going to college," said Democratic former Gov. David Paterson, who helped increase the number of charters in New York in 2010.

Republican former Gov. George Pataki, asked by *The Post* if it is racist not to increase the number of charters, responded, "Absolutely!" "It's immoral," said the ex-governor, who approved the 1998 state law allowing charter schools in New York.

"It is hypocritical of leftist Democrats to talk about income inequality and then prevent minority parents the opportunity to enroll their kids in a charter school."

Ruben Diaz Sr., a Democratic former city councilman and state senator who now heads the Bronx-based Hispanic Clergy Association, agreed that "it's racist to stop charter schools."

"Stopping charter schools is against the benefit of black and Hispanic children," he said.

Earlier this month, Democratic Gov. Hochul heated up the debate by proposing to expand charter numbers, calling for allowing up to 85 more new privately run, publicly funded schools in the five boroughs.

The Big Apple currently has 275 charters, vastly more than any other area of the state.

The proposal angered some state lawmakers in Hochul's own party who rely on political donations from the anti-charter teachers unions.

But Stephen Nemhard, 17, a senior at Comp Sci High charter school in the Soundview section of The

Bronx, wasn't having any of it. "The charter school that I go to ... they actually give students work-based learning that give them jobs, internships," he said last week, as he dropped off his little brother Hugo, 9, to his fourth-grade class at South Bronx Classical Charter School in the Longwood section. "They put more resources into the students."

Autonomous boards

New York's charter schools are funded by taxpayers but governed by not-for-profit boards of trustees, which have the autonomy to establish their own policies and design curriculums free from oversight by the local Department of Education.

Charters are held accountable through a five-year "performance contract" with the state focusing on student achievement. Low-performing schools are closed by state officials if they don't meet performance thresholds after that period.

About 15% of New York City public-school-age children attend charter schools, which cover pre-K through 12th grade. The overwhelming majority of those 141,000 charter students, 80%, are economically disadvantaged, according to the nonprofit New York City Charter School Center.

About 41% of city charter students, nearly 58,000, are black, with another 49% Hispanic.

By comparison, in city public schools, nearly 72% of students were considered disadvantaged in the 2021-22 school year. Nearly 24.5% were black, 41% Hispanic, 16.6% Asian and 14.7% white.



Stephen Yang

Opportunity knocks

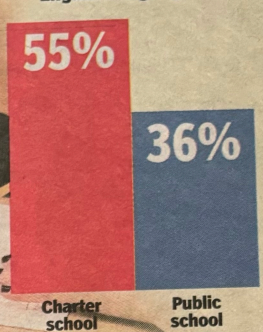
15% of all NYC students, or 141,000, attend charters

80% of them are economically disadvantaged

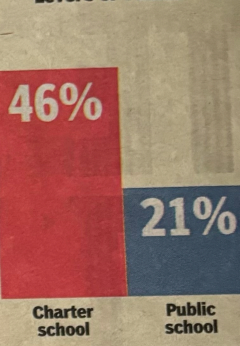
41% are black 49% Hispanic

In 2021-22:

Black students in NYC testing proficient in Level 3 or 4 English Language Arts



Black students in NYC testing proficient in Level 3 or 4 math



Source: NYC Charter School

PROOF: New stats show that black New York City charter-school students significantly outperform their public-school counterparts, leading former Councilman and state Sen. Ruben Diaz Sr. to say "stopping charter schools is against the benefit of black and Hispanic children."



Stephen Yang

Mayor Adams says there's a "perception of fear" in NYC because newspapers "put [crime] on the front page." So here's some teddy bears, rainbows and a unicorn.

PAGES 4-5

FANTASY LAND

City is unsafe? It's just media and false 'perception,' mayor says

CITY IN CRISIS

Party boss Eric: I do it for the city

Mayor Adams has defended his late-night party lifestyle — insisting in a new interview his constant merrymaking is helping to fuel the Big Apple economy. "My nightlife is a multibillion-dollar industry," Adams told CNN's "Who's Talking to Chris Wallace."

"People are afraid to go back out to restaurants; now they see our mayor going out saying 'Come back out to our city.' That is what the whole theme is."

Hizzoner insisted the city's economic downturn made it more important than ever for him to show solidarity with workers around the boroughs while he paints the town red.

"It's a 24-hour city. When I go out I am patronizing my restaurants, my hotels, my dishwashers, my cooks," he said on the show set to air on HBO Friday and the cable news network Sunday.

The 62-year-old Democrat has won praise from nightlife insiders for routinely hitting nightclubs and high-end restaurants long after the business day at City Hall wraps up. But his party lifestyle has also drawn condemnation from critics, who question how he affords to hang out at the swanky members-only Noho club Zero Bond and pricey Midtown eatery Osteria La Baia — the high-end restaurant Adams visited 14 times in one month over the summer.

Commish phony transparency

NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell announced Thursday that she'll be taking questions from New Yorkers on Instagram — then turned her back on a Post reporter just hours later. Sewell launched the "Ask the PC" initiative as a supposed attempt at transparency, the department announced in an email shortly after 8 a.m.

At 11 a.m., the commissioner presided over an NYPD event at Pelham Bay Park in The Bronx — where she dodged questions from a reporter. "We're not doing this," department spokesman Carlos Nieves said — while physically blocking his boss from the press.

Tina Moore

ADAMS: MED OVERPLAYS CRIME ...

We have an average of less than six crimes a day on a subway system with 3.5 million riders ... But if you write your story based on a narrative, then you're going to look at the worst of those six crimes and put it on the front pages of your paper every day.

— Mayor Adams

By CRAIG MCCARTHY, REUVEN FENTON, GEORGETT ROBERTS and BRUCE GOLDING

For Mayor Adams, the city's subway crime wave isn't front-page news — it's just a fairy tale. Hizzoner used a new TV interview to downplay the increase in violence underground — and blamed the news media for creating a false "perception" that the subway situation is out of control.

Adams took his dismissive tone about mayhem in the train system — where violent crime this year through August was up 39% compared to 2019 — during a talk with CNN's Chris Wallace that was recorded just a day after the year's ninth homicide occurred in the subway.

"We have an average of less than six crimes a day on a subway system with 3.5 million riders," Adams told Wallace.

"But if you write your story based on a narrative, then you're going to look at the worst of those six crimes and put it on

the front pages of your paper every day. "So, I have to deal with those six crimes a day — felony crimes — and the perception of fear."

The mayor's effort to casually wave off crime left New Yorkers confounded. Clement Tucker — whose wife, Elizabeth Gomes, was badly beaten in an unprovoked attack in a Queens station last month and may now go completely blind — ripped Adams on Thursday.

"The mayor don't take the train, the mayor don't walk ... He needs to think about the people out here suffering," Tucker said. "Tell the mayor to ride the train from my house to Far Rockaway and to Howard Beach. F—king train by himself over there with no security."

Subway rider Sabryna Davis, who commutes to her job as a health aide in Ozone Park, Queens, said Adams was "coming at it the wrong way, saying there's just six crimes a day and

people shouldn't worry." "That's just a statistic," she said. "That's not taking into account the unreported crimes. That's not taking into account the warning signs — the threats, the crazy looks in people's eyes."

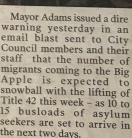
"The subway is full of ticking time bombs, and just because six go off today, it doesn't mean 12 aren't going off tomorrow."

Perception & reality
Even Wallace seemed surprised by Adams' comments, and asked the mayor if he really meant the crime problem was "more perception than reality."

"No, it's a combination of both," Adams said, seeming to backtrack a bit.

"But mayor, the New York City crime statistics are that year to date, crime in the subway is up 41% over the same period last year, and serious crime — major felonies — are up even more than that," Wallace interjected. "That's not perception. That's reality."

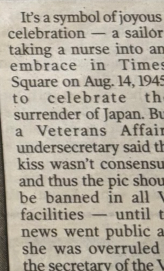
City Hall in a panic over migrant flood this week



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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024 / Cloudy, rainy, 54° / Weather: P. 26 ★★ **LATE CITY FINAL** nypost.com

Veterans Affairs tries to ban iconic WWII victory picture



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The true-love tale behind iconic kiss



CELEBRATION: US sailor George Mendonsa (left, with wife Rita) kissed nurse Greta Zimmer (above) on V-J Day, Aug. 14, 1945, but Rita didn't mind — she was there and went on to marry him, after all.

BY JESSE O'NEILL

attacked the USS Bunker Hill, killing hundreds.

He ran from Petry, his future wife, and grabbed Zimmer, spun her around, dipped her and kissed her — a now-iconic moment captured by Life magazine photog Alfred Eisenstaedt that came to be etched into the American psyche as a symbol of joy over the end of the war.

'Everybody was loaded'

"They were just coming off those trains, and everybody was partying," recalled Sharon Mollieur, 67, the daughter of Mendonsa and Petry, to The Post on Tuesday. "All the sailors were kissing [women]; everybody was loaded, jumping up in the air. They were having a wonderful time."

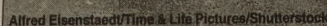
was in the picture, I think he kissed her first." Molleur said.

Mendonsa ended up becoming "very good friends with Zimmer, according to his daughter. Zimmer, a 21-year-old dental assistant from Queens, had fled to America from her native Austria in 1939.

When she got word of the end of the war, she walked from her office to Times Square, not knowing that her parents had been killed in concentration camps. She stood in the chaos alone for several minutes before photo history was made.

The photo was buried on page 7 of *Life* when it was originally published – without IDs of anyone involved.

Thirty-five years later, Menonza finally recognized himself in the snap, and Zimmer immediately knew it was her in the famed photo, as well.



By JESSE O'NEILL
and MELISSA KOENIG

Woke officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs banned the iconic photo of a World War II Times Square kiss from agency buildings last week — claiming it no longer fit the “values” of the VA.

But the move apparently blindsided their furious boss, VA Secretary Denis McDonough, who very publicly reversed the edict on X Tuesday morning — after seemingly learning of it through a tweet.

The photo — which captures an ecstatic US sailor kissing a nurse passing by to celebrate the end of war with Japan in 1945 — was deemed “inappropriate behavior by VA higher-ups because it depicts a nonconsensual act.”

Displaying the snapshot in U.S. hospitals "could be construed as tacit endorsement of the inappropriate behavior it depicts," warns RimaAnn Nelson, the agency's assistant undersecretary for Health for Operations, in a Feb. 29 memo to staffers around the country.

"Employees have expressed discomfort with the display of photograph" — and "to foster more trauma-informed environment," it should be removed, the missive said.

Doing so "reflects our dedication to creating a respectful and safe workplace, and in keeping with our broader efforts to promote a culture of inclusivity and awareness," Nelson wrote.

'Cooperation is vital'

The administration honcho suggested staffers instead find "alternative photographs that capture the spirit of victory and peace without compromising the VA's commitment to a safe and respectful environment."

"Your cooperation in this matter is vital," the memo added. "Please ensure that these photographs are promptly removed."

But the ban is believed to have infuriated Nelson's boss when he learned of it — apparently from a social media post.

“Let me be clear: This image was not banned from VA facilities, and we will keep it in VA facilities,” McDonough wrote on X Tuesday — an hour and a half after a copy of Nelson’s memo surfaced on a website account titled End Wokeness.

6. Your cooperation in this matter is vital. Please ensure that these promptly removed and facilities explore suitable replacements that and veterans in a manner consistent with our values.

**Official said
famed pic
could cause
'discomfort'**

New front in war

By POST EDITORIAL BOARD

THE left's war on history continues apace. Google AI making the pope a woman and George Washington black, and schools want to mark 1619, not 1776, the birth of a nation, so why not throw out an iconic picture of American victory?

A busybody undersecretary at the Department of Veterans Affairs, RimaAnn Nelson declared the famous Aug. 14 Times Square kiss picture "appropriate" because

The VA chief had no

made aware of the memo
it was issued and never
it, sources familiar with
ter told The Associated

The celebrated snap-
by famed Life magazine
pher Alfred Eisensta
14, 1945, the day the J
nounced they were su
It garnered contro
cent years, particula

said it needed to be "promptly removed from all VA properties."

Never mind that Greta Zimmer, the nurse, didn't have a problem with the photograph and understood that George Mendonsa was up in the joy of Japan's surrender when he rushed to kiss her. Zimmer had come friends with Mendonsa and his wife, Rita.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis R. McDonough said the removal decision was "found out about it. Very early on you wonder how middle managers and

been #MeToo movement
before woman in the ph

before
approved
the mat-
Press.

But critics of Tuesday incident said that her father

Bezos' long-delayed \$500M yacht sets sail

FINALLY SHIPS FROM AMAZON



By JESSE O'NEILL

Hoist up the Jeff B sails. Amazon honcho Jeff Bezos' \$500 million superyacht Koru — code named Y721 — is finally sea ready.

The vessel was spotted in the North Sea after leaving Rotterdam in The Netherlands on Feb. 13, footage from the organization Dutch Yachting shows.

The 417-foot boat's test run came months after it was originally set to be delivered to the 47-year-old billionaire.

The vessel requires a 250-foot support vessel that houses a helicopter landing pad for the Blue Origin rocket.

Bezos' mega boat created controversy last year after a report that Dutch officials would have to dismantle the historic Koningin Wilhelmina Bridge because the 130-foot steel structure wouldn't allow the vessel and its 229-foot mast to pass underneath.

Mast protest

Following an uproar from local residents, city leaders decided the bridge was too far — and that it was towed without its construction location. Another shipyard in a town, according to Jalopnik, backlash likely played a role in how and when the vessel would float away.

Rotterdam reported in February that Bezos' superyacht traveled

SCHOONER LATER: Jeff Bezos' (below) superyacht, built months ago (above), on its maiden voyage.



shipbuilding yard, the decision was made to tow it away under cover of darkness, The Cut reported.

Hardly on 'sail'

Koru costs about \$25 million a year to run. The pleasure boat can accommodate 18 guests — and requires a crew of 40 sailors.

Yet it is far from the world's most expensive yacht.

That dubious honor is reserved for the \$4.8 billion History Supreme — a gold and platinum-plated vessel featuring a Tyrannosaurus rex bone wall made of meteoric stone. It was bought in 2011 by an anonymous Malaysian businessman, according to The Richest.

But the half-billion price tag is still a relative drop in the ocean for the Amazon founder, whose net worth was valued at \$181 billion by Forbes.

It gets 'boater'

Koru will join a fleet of super-yachts, helicopters and planes already owned by the entrepreneur and his millionaire girlfriend, Lauren Sanchez. The aluminum and steel schooner reportedly boasts three decks including one with a swimming pool.

The smaller 250-foot support vessel that will sit alongside the mammoth one will include a helicopter landing pad for Bezos or his celebrity guests.

This smaller yacht is also expected to be loaded with an array of vehicles, including luxury cars, jet skis, speedboats and perhaps even a personal submarine, the Daily Mail has reported.

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nypost.com

October 31, 2022

Nazi punk walks into Soho bar

And gets Das Booted

By JESSE O'NEILL

A man in a Nazi uniform was intimidated into leaving a Soho bar as patrons shamed and threatened him.

The incident was captured on a video posted to Twitter on Saturday night as costumed Halloween revelers imbibed across the city.

In the clip, the smiling young man, donning full regalia including a swastika armband, sidles up to the bar at Fanelli Cafe, leaving other patrons aghast.

"What is wrong with you?" one woman calls out.

The would-be customer shrugs as he appears to be denied service, before he exchanges words with a patron who tells him to leave in vulgar terms.

"F-k you, mate," the offensively costumed man retorts.

"You want to get f-ked up? [Leave] for your own safety," the woman implores as a man walks up to the neo-nutsy and points to the door, prompting him to exit.

The hostess working the brunch shift at Fanelli on Sunday morning said no one that works at the bar

had seen the man before.

The 18-second clip has since been viewed more than 1.7 million times.

"Perfect response from the people in the bar," one viewer wrote.

"Shocked no one punched his smirking face," another said.

"Honestly is so disgusting to still see stuff like this in 2022. People seem to think it was a long time, when in fact I'm only the 2nd generation after the Holocaust," one woman replied.

The Manhattan incident harkened back to Prince Harry's ill-considered Nazi armband at a 2005 costume party, a controversy that reportedly started a rift with his big brother, Prince William, that continues to this day.



GET THE HEIL OUT: An unidentified man sporting Nazi regalia is heckled (above) and denied service (inset) before being shouted out of a Soho bar on Saturday — echoing Prince Harry's swastika stupidity in 2005 (right).

Twitter/Danixiv

The Sun

INN-SANE!



Activists stoke migrant refusal to leave hotel for Brooklyn shelter

It was so-called advocates and not actual migrants who encouraged dozens of asylum-seekers to stand their ground and set up camp at a three-star Manhattan hotel rather than go to a new mega-shelter set up by Mayor Adams, City Hall sources said yesterday.

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nypost.com
New York Post, Friday, October 21, 2022

ANARCHY IN THE UK

PM TRUSS IS TOAST

44 days a record brief Brit tenure

By JESSE O'NEILL

Embattled British Prime Minister Liz Truss announced she would step down from office Thursday after just 44 days in office — making her the UK's shortest-serving leader ever.

Truss' tumultuous stint was ultimately brought down by a fiscal fiasco over her proposal to cut taxes on the wealthy while raising corporate taxes — which faced hostile opposition from her own Conservative Party and sent financial markets into a weeks-long slide.

The shunned leader has left office with a miserable 10% favorability rating among the British public, according to a recent YouGov poll. Predecessor Boris Johnson, who resigned in disgrace in July, has an approval rating of 29%.

If her downward spiral continued, she could have been on track to match Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, who has a favorability rating of 4% among the British public, according to a previous YouGov poll.

Truss' resignation takes hold in a week, which means lawmakers are scrambling to endorse candidates to replace her in an internal election. The shortlist of possible new leaders even includes Johnson, who is expected to revive his political life and stand in the contest to replace his successor, sources told The Times of London.

"I cannot deliver the mandate on which I was elected," said Truss, 47, a day after pledging to remain in office as "a fighter, not a quitter."

Truss' resolve started to collapse Wednesday after her senior minister, Home Secretary Suella Braverman, stepped down and a House of Commons vote on a controversial fracking proposal, endorsed by Truss but opposed by members of



'Leafy Liz' is longer-lasting head of state

In the end, Liz Truss was the one who wilted.

The Daily Star British tabloid declared Thursday that a head of lettuce had won a cheeky contest to see who or what would last longer — the leafy green or the embattled prime minister.

The newspaper set up a live YouTube feed last Friday showing the unrefrigerated iceberg lettuce, purchased for 68 cents at a Tesco supermarket, next to a photo of Truss and asking readers: "Which wet lettuce will last longer?"

The gag's masterminds later added a blond wig, a pair of googly eyes, a cartoon mouth and plastic hands to the vegetable, and decorated the tableau with two British flags, a "pasty" on a plate and a red mug bearing the phrase:

"Keep Calm and Carry On."

More than 12,000 Twitter users were watching the feed Thursday as Truss announced her resignation outside the prime minister's residence at 10 Downing Street in London.

After touting her supposed achievements during her 44 days in office — the shortest-ever tenure for a British PM — Truss acknowledged that she "cannot deliver the mandate" on

which she was elected by the Conservative Party.

Moments later, Britain's national anthem, "God Save the King," blared as a hand reached across the table and set Truss' photo on its back, and the caption "This lettuce outlasted Liz Truss" appeared.

A remix of "Celebration" by Kool & the Gang was then played to convey the jubilant mood.

Snejana Farberov

Top of the list to take over

Here are the favorites to be next PM, according to political pundits and British bookmakers:

Former Finance Minister **RISHI SUNAK** was the runner-up to Truss in the previous leadership battle, and the current favorite, according to online bookmaker Betfair. He's been praised for warning of previous UK economic crises.

Ex-Defense Secretary **PENNY MORDAUNT** won plaudits for her performance in Parliament Monday, arguing in defense of the government even as it reversed most of its ground-shaking policies.

Truss had turned to **JEREMY HUNT** to try to save her doomed economic policies — and now many believe his party will look to him to take the helm. While he has been treasury chief for just three days, Hunt is seen as a safe bet given his vast experience, including stints as both health and foreign minister.

Quirky, Manhattan-born ex-PM **BORIS JOHNSON** grudgingly quit in July after a show of no confidence — but he has made no secret of his ongoing political ambitions. However, political insiders believe he is far too great a risk to be voted back into office, especially as his scandals — including his festive get-togethers in defiance of his own COVID lockdown policies — sparked the current leadership crisis.

Defense Secretary and ex-soldier **BEN WALLACE** is one of the few ministers to emerge from political turmoil with his credibility enhanced. But some are wary of his lack of experience with the economy.



JESSE O'NEILL

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About the Author

Jesse O'Neill is an experienced journalist who covers metro, national and international stories for The Post across an array of subjects including breaking news, public affairs and pop culture. The SUNY Oneonta graduate is also an Emmy-nominated television news producer with stints at WPIX and NY1, as well as a multi-instrumentalist with a lifelong passion for writing and performing music. He once outpaced an NFL wide receiver in the New York City Marathon, but ultimately failed to win the race.

