

JULY 2024 ISSUE 169

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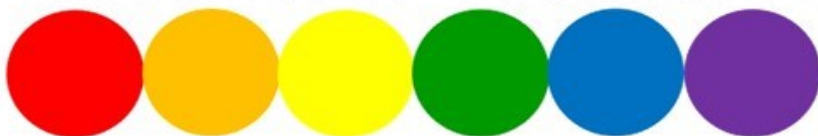
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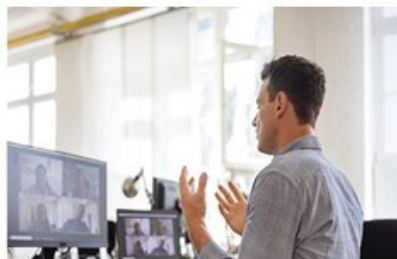
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WHO WE ARE

Jax Gay Inc. is a Community Marketing and Events organization incorporating Jax Gay Magazine, Rainbow Events, and Drag Queen Aholic.

Our mission as a 502(c)3 non-profit is to promote North Florida and especially in Jacksonville, as a welcoming LGBTQ+ destination through marketing and events. Jax Gay produces many events a year, including Jax Equality Festival in Jacksonville. Other events include the Rainbow Awards Show, White Party, Big Gay Picnic, Taste of Pride and Red Party. Visit www.JaxGayMag.com for more information.

Jax Gay Inc. also plans to launch our Jax Event Center & LGBTQ+ Art Gallery in Fall of 2023.

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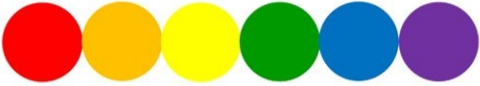
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UNITY GAY JAX
By David Vandygriff



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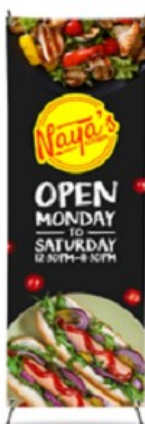
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News & Politics

'Bombshell' Texts By Ex-Trump Staffer Hint At Secret Payoffs

By Joe Sampson



On Thursday, in the midst of the July 4th holiday, a former Donald Trump staffer who worked on his 2016 campaign went public with a series of texts she allegedly made with Trump attorney Jenna Ellis asking about secret lawsuit settlements for accusations of "sexual harassment and gender discrimination" within the campaign.

In replies to those texts from attorney A.J. Delgado, who posted them on-line, Ellis appears to reply, "Yes off record — Boris, the campaign settled multiple lawsuits. Have your investigator contact [campaign staffer] Michael Glassner. I will of course tell you the truth."

As the Daily Beast's Josh Fiallo wrote, the "bombshell" texts were included in a filing by

Delgado as part of a lawsuit she filed against Trump campaign adviser and her supervisor, Jason Miller, whom she has accused of raping her while they were having an affair.

According to the report, "As part of that lawsuit, Delgado, a lawyer who's representing herself, filed a motion Thursday that included a text thread she claims to be between her and Jenna Ellis, another ex-Trump staffer who is a co-defendant in his election subversion case in Georgia."

Ellis pleaded guilty in the Georgia case.

The report adds that the Boris in question appears to be Boris Epshteyn, who has been at Trump's side during his courtroom appearances.

The report states, "The Daily Beast has not independently verified the authenticity of the texts, and neither Ellis, Delgado or a Trump representative responded to questions messaged and emailed on Thursday night. It's the second time the texts were submitted as evidence by Delgado, after the Trump campaign's lawyers asked her to re-submit them without names redacted and an offer to mark them as "confidential" appeared to be ignored."

Fiallo added, "The texts did not specify what sort of lawsuits "Boris" may have faced, but Epshteyn was accused of repeatedly groping two sisters at an Arizona bar in 2021 until a bouncer and cops intervened to remove him. "

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OUT & HEALTH

Carl Nassib's 3-Year Of Coming Out & Making NFL History
By Bernard Jefferson



Now that's what we call HISTORY!

On June 21, 2021, Carl Nassib came out as gay and made history as the first-ever active player in the National Football League (NFL) to do so. Nassib was playing for the Las Vegas Raiders at the time and shared the announcement via Instagram.

Earlier this week, Nassib shared a series of Instagram posts attending a London concert of Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour. That particular show, which took place on June 21, 2024, also served as a moment for Nassib to celebrate his three-year anniversary since coming out.

"Best night of my life," the former NFL star wrote in an Instagram story.

Nassib's second Instagram story was a video showing the packed Wembley Stadium with fans freaking out over The Eras Tour. Considering that Nassib is a certified Swiftie himself, it's safe to say that he was getting his life at the concert, too.

Lastly, Nassib re-shared an Instagram post from ESPN that acknowledged his three-year

anniversary of coming out and making NFL history.

"Only a [Taylor Swift] concert would make me forget yesterday was three years! Happy Pride everyone! [Pride flag emojis]."

The original ESPN post re-shared by Nassib read:

"Three years ago today, Carl Nassib became the first active NFL player to publicly come out as gay. The support he received from around the league was amazing to see."

It might feel like yesterday — those lockdown years still feel like a blur! — but Nassib did come out three years ago. Between playing for the Cleveland Browns, the Las Vegas Raiders, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, he was still very much an active player in the NFL at the time.

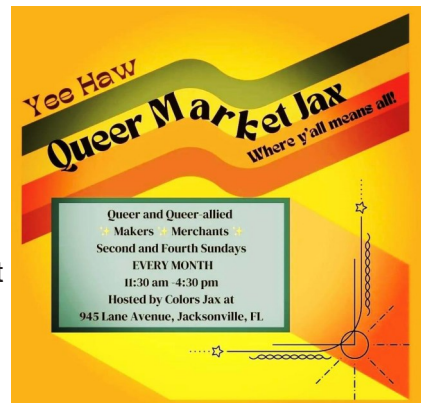
Nassib said in his coming-out video:

"What's up, people? I'm at my house in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I just wanted to take a quick moment to say that I'm gay. I've been meaning to do this for a while now, but finally feel comfortable getting it off my chest. I really have the best life; the best family, friends, and job a guy can ask

for. I'm a pretty private person, so I hope you guys know that I'm not doing this for attention. I just think that representation and visibility are so important."

He added, "I actually hope that one day, videos like this and the whole coming-out process are not necessary. But, until then, I will do my best and my part to cultivate a culture that's accepting and compassionate. I'm going to start by donating \$100,000 to the Trevor Project. They're an incredible organization. They're the number one suicide-prevention service for LGBTQ+ youth in America, and they're truly doing incredible things. I'm very excited to be a part of it and help in any way that I can, and I'm really pumped to see what the future holds."

We love to love the legendary Carl Nassib!





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Participants can register for Reza Ride and learn more about sponsorship opportunities by visiting RezRide.org.

ABOUT US

RezaRide.org is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and advocating for the LGBTQ+ community in Jacksonville, Florida. Through initiatives like Reza Ride, we aim to raise awareness, funds, and support for LGBTQ+ organizations and initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and accepting community for all.




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Science & Technology

U.S. Hypersonic Vehicle Achieves 5 Times The Speed Of Sound

By Frank Newton

Kratos Defense & Security Solutions (Kratos) has announced the successful test flight of its Erinyes hypersonic test vehicle.

Developed by the company's Space & Missile Defense Systems Business Unit, the test was completed on June 12, 2024, according to the announcement.

The test vehicle reached Mach 5 in its first test flight. Erinyes is being developed under the auspices of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC).

According to a press release, the vehicle was launched at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) in Virginia.

This successful inaugural flight of the Erinyes vehicle demonstrates a new and innovative platform capability for rapid hypersonic experimentation for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

The Hypersonic Test Bed-1 (HTB-1) exercise demonstrated hypersonic flight and collected data for multiple experiments to

provide to test teams for design validation and evaluation of new technologies.

Erinyes reaches Mach 5 This announcement comes weeks after the MDA announced the first successful test of its hypersonic missile tracking satellites, launched in February of this year. The MDA did not mention the test's target, but Kratos has now filled in on the missing piece of information.

"Hypersonic experimenters now have a robust and affordable path across the TRL [Technology Readiness Level]. The ability to demonstrate experimental technologies on a real hypersonic flight testbed, without adding risk to programs of record, is game-changing," stated Dave Carter, President of Kratos' Defense and Rocket Support Systems (DRSS) Division.

"Following this success, we will turn to preparing for our next test, incorporating a new set of experiments. I couldn't be prouder of our team," he added.

Kratos developed Erinyes in three years for under \$15

million with a combination of internal investment and congressional funding. Josh Peterson, senior vice president for space and missile defense systems at Kratos, stated that the company built the system mainly in response to concerns within the DoD.

The concerns were that their existing hypersonic test infrastructure was overtaxed and not well-positioned to meet demand.

The test was 100% successful "The 100% successful flight of the Kratos Erinyes hypersonic vehicle with our MDA and Navy partners is representative of the power of Kratos' approach to be first to market with leading technology systems and products, which accelerates development and delivery schedules, while significantly reducing cost," Eric DeMarco, President and CEO of Kratos, said in a press release.

DeMarco went on to explain that Kratos is now better positioned to upset the market.

"Kratos' Rocket and Hypersonic systems development programs are



positioned to disrupt the market with affordable, relevant systems, and we expect Kratos' hypersonic franchise, including Erinyes, Zeus, Oriole, and other systems, to be a key contributor to our expected future organic growth trajectory," he added.

He also explained that the

company is now looking to expand its defense business.

"Kratos is laser-focused on expanding the U.S. National Security Industrial Base, increasing competition, reducing cost, and delivering significant value to all Kratos stakeholders, including the MDA, U.S. Navy, and other

Government customers. Kratos has served the U.S. hypersonic community for decades through novel system and vehicle flight testing," he explained.

Going forward, the company is now eyeing its second flight for MDA, which is slated for later this year.



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ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

Jude Law & Alicia Vikander Bring Royalty To Life In 'Firebrand'

By Glenda Bergman



We love a period piece, especially one that bends the rules of history! The new film *Firebrand* is just that, as it takes you on a journey through the relationship of King Henry VIII and his most understated wife Catherine Parr.

In the historical drama, Oscar winner Alicia Vikander takes the spotlight as Catherine. Set against the backdrop of Henry VIII's (Jude Law) reigning years, Catherine finds herself navigating dangerous situations, all while dealing with the king's degrading health and vile temper and her connection to childhood friend Anne Askew (played by Erin Doherty) that creates danger for Catherine and her marriage.

As if managing a broken marriage to the King of England wasn't enough, Catherine must also balance her motherly responsibilities to Henry's children. Although King Henry has been seen in the media before, this is the first time Catherine's story is being told on screen, and *Out* had the chance to speak with the film's stars about their characters.

While speaking to Law, we

asked how he approached playing this vile king while also trying to humanize him.

"It was such an interesting part of his life to be able to play because obviously he has a history of tyranny and violence, but he's also kind of on the way out," Law told *Out*. "He's weakening, he's dying, which makes him in many ways more dangerous. Like a kind of wounded, I always saw him as a wounded gorilla that his legs don't work, but he's got this big powerful upper body but nothing kind of works underneath. And so just trying, I suppose to bring a plausibility to that. There was, I wasn't trying to get sympathy for him, but just trying to understand perhaps why, or rather how these wounds on his legs and this sense of self disgust would affect him. And especially having been this kind of golden god as a young man who was revered for his dancing and his sportsman agility on the sports field and his music. And it was a kind of crushing weight, I suppose, on where he found himself. And let's not forget also her ego. I mean, I don't think he went about expecting

to have this sort of unbelievably dramatic love life. And so here he is 30 years on from his first marriage and he's got two beheadings, a divorce, a death on his conscience. And I think that had a huge effect on him too. So Catherine was up against it. She was up against someone with a damaged ego, physically damaged emotionally, and absolutely he had to be authentic rather than just sort of a monster."

Because Catherine Parr had never been depicted on screen before, Alicia Vikander, who we know best from *Tomb Raider* and *The Danish Girl*, had a lot to play with, so we asked her what aspects of her character she found the most compelling to play.

"I mean, there are the clear aspects that this was such an incredible woman, not only of her time. Now most people don't know that she was a published author and that she was very politically involved for a woman of that time, obviously then she survived living with of this man. And that's just worth highlighting," she said. "But I think to kind of get in the headspace of what it must

have been like for women throughout history. I mean, we just live in a now thank society that has changed. It's like aspects of women of just how to kindly move yourselves. It was moments when I had just that feeling of being a young woman, of just knowing how to kind of tiptoe around sometimes how men could approach you or talk to you and you would just try to just tone it down, don't upset anyone, just don't make a thing out of it. And here you have that kind of same feeling, but it was depending on your life every day and that you shouldn't shy away from how this woman kind of had to Knowing going into the marriage that obviously the truth of what happened to the previous wives, but also knowing that this, I think she wanted to succeed. I think she wanted to kind of obviously survive and therefore she had to create this relationship that both not him needed to believe, but I think she too needed to believe because otherwise you can't get up in the morning. You have to justify your own self in this reality. And I think that kind of struggle with having to live that life was what really kind of interests me to try and tell."

Both Vikander and Law are captivating and fully immersive themselves in this time period, and there is never a shortage of talent when these two names are involved!

Firebrand is playing in the theaters and will be available for VOD on July 2.



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OUT & HEALTH

Court Rules To Keep PrEP Coverage Under Obamacare

By David Vandygriff

PrEP access has been maintained for most Americans after an appeals court ruling ended a lawsuit that challenged the medication's coverage.

In a ruling that upholds crucial components of the Affordable Care Act, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Friday in *Braidwood Management, Inc. v. Becerra*, mandating that most insurance providers continue to cover preventive services, including PrEP medication.

We reported in 2022 that the plaintiffs, led by Jonathan Mitchell, ultraconservative TX lawyer with a history of Challenging LGBTQ+ rights, argued that the ACA's requirement for insurance plans to cover preventive services violated their religious freedom. They specifically objected to covering PrEP, pre-exposure prophylaxis, a medication that prevents HIV transmission, citing their Christian beliefs against homosexuality.

Judge Reed O'Connor of the US District Court for the Northern District of TX, who has also been allergic to LGBTQ+ causes, initially sided

with the plaintiffs, ruling that the ACA mandate infringed on their religious freedom. The DOJ Justice quickly appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over TX, LA & MS.

In its ruling, the Fifth Circuit upheld the lower court's decision but limited the scope of the exemption to the plaintiffs in the case. This means that the broader mandate requiring most insurance providers to cover preventive services, including PrEP, remains in effect for the rest of the nation.

The court also addressed constitutional issues regarding the appointments of the United States Preventive Services Task Force members. It determined that these members are principal officers under Article II of the Constitution and must be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. While this raised constitutional concerns, the court reversed the district court's decision to vacate all agency actions enforcing the preventive care mandates, deeming the remedy overly broad.

Lambda Legal, an advocacy



group for LGBTQ+ rights, responded to the decision with cautious relief. "Lambda Legal is relieved after the recent narrow decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in the case of *Braidwood v. Becerra* that ruled most of the nation's insurance providers must continue to cover PrEP medication and other preventative services," said Jose Abrigo, Lambda Legal's HIV project director.

Abrigo pointed out that the ruling's limitation to the plaintiffs ensures broader protections and national healthcare policies remain intact. However, he expressed concerns about the potential for future legal challenges that could threaten healthcare rights and protections for millions of Americans.

He emphasized the importance of preventative care, noting that PrEP plays a critical role in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Access to such preventive measures is crucial for reducing preventable diseases and promoting public health. "Lambda Legal will closely monitor any further developments related to this case and similar legal challenges," Abrigo said.

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Life and Style

Season Store-Bought Pasta Sauce & Make It Taste Homemade

By Drew Bennett



Sometimes, you just need to pull a meal together quickly with the ingredients you have on hand. Unless you have a constantly restocked refrigerator, chances are that means you're grabbing something from your pantry staples — and for many people, a jar of pasta sauce is a necessity to have on hand for those moments; they simply find a pasta sauce brand that uses high-quality ingredients and tastes great then try to keep a jar available for the next time they need it. However, it's a mistake to think of jarred pasta sauce as the finished product. Instead, consider it the starting point, a base to layer your extra flavors of choice onto.

However, you do want to taste the sauce first. Jarred sauces can be a bit high in both sugar and sodium, so you probably won't need to add much of these ingredients. The best place to start is your collection of herbs and spices, either dried or fresh.

To liven up something like a marinara sauce (we've ranked a few store-bought sauces from worst to first, if you're looking for recommendations), just
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think of the flavors you'd add if you were making your own version from scratch. A bit of extra garlic is never a bad idea, and tomatoes always work beautifully with herbs such as oregano and basil. Or, for a bland sauce, something like red pepper flakes can add just a touch of heat that brings a whole different dimension of flavor.

Out-Of-The-Box Additions

Perhaps you've already tried adding a healthy dose of herbs and spices, and the sauce is still a bit bland or one-note in terms of flavor. There are a few other options you might want to consider, and most of them are common enough that you likely have them on hand. For a subtle depth of flavor, the secret ingredient you should be using in your spaghetti sauce is instant coffee granules. While it seems like an odd combination, it works wonders in balancing tomato-based sauces (and no, it won't taste like you've poured a shot of espresso on your pasta).

For a bit of richness and creaminess, consider tossing in a dollop of dairy, such as a scoop of ricotta, a splash of cream, or a knob of butter.

These seemingly simple additions can make your sauce's texture silky smooth and amp up the complexity of flavor in your dish.

While tomato-based pasta sauces are often the ones that need a bit of livening up, there's one ingredient that will work wonders for creamy jarred pasta sauces: a splash of lemon juice. It's likely not the best fit for tomato-based sauces since those often skew a bit acidic, but a squeeze of lemon can help improve the texture of creamy sauces and enhance the overall flavor of just about anything, bringing some much needed freshness and brightness.

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What is Project 2025? The Scary Extremist Plan for the Next GOP Presidential

By Debbie Davis



A closer look at how conservatives aim to reinvent the government.

Republicans are pushing for a plan that could dramatically reshape America's balance of power by putting virtually every part of the federal government under the control of Donald Trump should he take back the White House.

Led by the right-leaning think tank The Heritage Foundation and former Trump officials, Project 2025 is aimed at creating a "government-in-waiting" for the next Republican presidential administration, with "institutionalizing Trumpism" as the ultimate aim. This includes centralizing power in the White House by putting independent agencies like the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission under direct presidential control.

Some public policy experts are already sounding the alarm about what it would mean if the plan is carried out: "Democracies have crumbled before, and that's on the verge of happening here," says Mary

Guy, a professor at the University of Colorado Denver's School of Public Affairs.

As the project draws both attention and criticism, we're taking a closer look at what it would entail — and what it could mean for our democracy.

What is Project 2025?

First proposed in April 2023, the \$22 million presidential transition agenda would pave the way for a conservative administration by preparing policies, personnel lists, and transition plans. If he wins, this blueprint would allow Trump to kickstart his time in the White House.

The main goal of the plan is to avoid the pitfalls of Trump's first years in office when his team found itself ill-prepared for the realities of Washington and the resistance to their ideas — including from some of Trump's own appointees, who refused to bend protocol (or, in some cases, violate laws) to achieve his goals.

But it's worth noting that Project 2025 isn't the first plan of its kind: Experts say it mirrors the playbook the

Heritage Foundation produced 50 years ago for Ronald Reagan. It went on to become very influential in his administration: Reagan adopted nearly two-thirds of the blueprint's 2,000 recommendations, which shaped both his domestic and foreign policy, including anti-communism initiatives in Soviet-aligned governments in Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia.

"If Trump returns to the White House in January 2025, Trump will be well prepared to hit the ground running and to carry out his objectives," says Philip Wallach, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan American Enterprise Institute.

What would this plan do?

In centralizing powers, the project aims to advance a mission Republicans have long pursued: creating a smaller federal government.

Trump's campaign and those behind the plan intend to rein in independent agencies—including the Federal Trade Commission and Federal Communications Commission—and put them under direct presidential

control. There's even an idea to strip the Justice Department of its autotomy that was normalized during the Watergate era and make it subject to White House control. This could potentially stymie its ability to ensure a fair and impartial administration of justice, including of the president himself.

They're also proposing to gut the "administrative state" from within by ousting federal workers who they believe are standing in the way of the president's agenda and replacing them with other like-minded officials. This includes reinstating Trump's executive order, Schedule F, which would reclassify tens of thousands of civil service employees as at-will workers who could be fired more easily.

Critics worry that this could lead to arbitrary dismissals, though ex-Trump campaign official James Sherk, who came up with the idea of Schedule F that's included in Project 2025, told The New York Times that it wouldn't destroy the protections in place that shield these workers from unfair practices. "Schedule F expressly forbids hiring or firing based on political loyalty," Sherk explained. However, Axios reported last month that Trump allies are already pre-screening thousands of potential employees and appointees by political ideology — and they're checking to see if would-be candidates are loyal to Trump.

While most of the public

attention has been focused on the plans to restructure the government, the blueprint also revives a failed push to add a citizen question to the census, which would ask for the U.S. citizenship status of every person living in every household in America. This was first proposed by the Trump administration in 2019 before it was later shot down by the Supreme Court for being "implausible and legally inadequate." At the time, critics argued that making such a change would discriminate against minorities and scare off immigrant households from participating in the census over concerns that their response could be used against them to scrutinize their legal status. In turn, this could lead to immigrants being undercounted, meaning some states — particularly Democratic — could get less representation in Congress and less funding.

Is it legal?

While presidents usually rely on Congress to implement policies, Project 2025 leans heavily on what legal scholars refer to as a unitary executive theory, which suggests that Congress cannot limit the president's control of the executive branch.

Critics of that theory, like Columbia University law professor Peter Strauss,



believe this way of thinking is a fundamentally misguided and limited interpretation of the Constitution.

"The Constitution can only properly be understood as making the president the overseer of the government that Congress creates, not its commander," he says. "The President is the commander of the military, but the power explicitly defined for him over ordinary domestic government is much less."

Ultimately, the fear is that applying the unitary executive theory in this way would usher in a return of a political spoils system and lead to the development of an autocracy, in which one ruler has absolute power.

"Project 2025 is the brainchild of American extremists who want to convert the nation from a democracy to an autocracy," says Guy. "The plan does this by concentrating power in the Presidency and sidelining Congress and the Judiciary. Without the President's power being counterbalanced by Congress and courts, he will do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. He would be King,

not President.”

As concerning as the initiative may sound, Wallach believes some of these ideas around expanding presidential powers won’t come to fruition.

“Presidential campaign rhetoric has a tendency to promise the moon without that much

reference to what’s actually legally empowered as a part of the office,” he says.

Despite its controversy, the theory poses some legitimate questions about the rule of law, according to Wallach, who studies the separation of powers.

“Those behind Project 2025 would say that they’re trying to vindicate the rule of law against people who are determined to thwart it,” he says. “But critics of the project would say these folks are just hoping to empower themselves beyond what the law actually allows.”

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Science & Technology

Spy Drone ULTRA Flies 80 Hours Nonstop

By Paige Griffin



The United States Air Force has revealed its new long-endurance reconnaissance drone, ending the extended suspense over its name and capabilities.

The new drone made by DZYNE is called the Unmanned Long-endurance Tactical Reconnaissance Aircraft (ULTRA). It is being touted as a cheaper alternative to the expensive MQ-9 Reaper drones being used by the Air Force and Marine Corps for surveillance.

ULTRA was conceived by the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Center for Rapid Innovation (CRI) and developed in conjunction with DZYNE Technologies.

One of the specialties of ULTRA is that it is built by repurposing a previously manned commercial sport glider and converting it to a military hardened unmanned air vehicle, according to AFRL.

ULTRA's Capabilities & Cost

According to AFRL, it is an ultra-long endurance Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

platform.

It can fly for over 80 hours without needing a recharge and can carry a payload of up to 400 pounds (181 kg).

ULTRA can carry a variety of electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR), radiofrequency (RF), and other low-cost intelligence collection payloads and sensors to provide a reconfigurable platform for various missions.

The long endurance allows wider and longer coverage of the desired areas with fewer airborne UAVs. Moreover, it is also touted as an economical option compared to other similar-performing drones, thereby reducing acquisition costs.

The secret behind the low-cost drone is using commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) UAS technology, existing manufacturing and supply channels, and limited custom avionics to ensure costs remain low.

The drone is also capable of operating at lower altitudes, which cuts the need for expensive and large optics or high-power radio frequency for effectiveness.

"The ULTRA system is truly unique in its ability to conquer the tyranny of distance that inhibit operational use of current unmanned platforms at excessive ranges required in areas of operations such as the Pacific," the AFRL says.

It can also be operated across the globe through satellite-based command and control links, and can send the data to the command center in real time.

US' Push For Drones

All branches of the US military are pushing for multiple drones for different purposes – ranging from kamikaze (suicide) to surveillance.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and China's tricky maneuvers in the Indo-Pacific region have shown that the US needs to be well-prepared for all circumstances.

Drones have played a central role in many of the ongoing war theatres and will continue to be a central figure in the years to come.

The Indo-Pacific-focused 'Replicator' program is a shining example of the US' push for drone supremacy.

Deliveries began in early May, marking the first phase in a multi-year strategy to deploy thousands of expendable drones to counter adversaries like China.

Quite recently, the Marine Corps also added an

electronic warfare pod to its small fleet of MQ-9 Reaper drones, which can help in making it untraceable from enemy sensors.

The pod, known as the Reaper Defense Electronic Support System / Scalable Open

Architecture Reconnaissance (RDESS/SOAR), is a broad spectrum, passive Electronic Support Measure (ESM) payload designed to collect and geo-locate signals of interest from standoff ranges, according to General Atomics.




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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

LGBTQ+ Business Owner More Interested In Community Impact Than Profits

By James Joshlin

Small businesses play a vital role in their communities, providing valuable goods, services and jobs. In the US, 99 per cent of businesses – those with fewer than 500 employees – are considered to be a small-to-medium enterprise (SME).

A new report has highlighted that LGBTQ+ business owners in the US are just as focused on community impact as they are on profits.

Forty-six per cent of Americans work for an SME.

A new study from payroll specialists Gusto has shed light on a particularly dedicated group within the entrepreneurial landscape: LGBTQ+ founders.

Gusto's 2024 New Business Formation Report surveyed more than 1,300 entrepreneurs who launched businesses in 2023, revealing some insights into the motivations and priorities of queer business owners.

The study revealed that members of the LGBTQ+ community are represented among new business owners at the same rate they are within

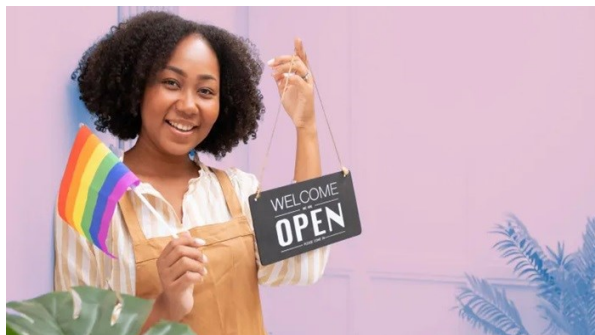
the US population. The LGBTQ community makes up eight per cent of the US population, and that's the percentage of entrepreneurs who started a business last year. That share is similar to 2021, when seven per cent of new business owners identified as queer.

LGBTQ+ Business Owners Want To Make An Impact

The report noted that for 70 per cent of LGBTQ+ business owners, having a positive effect on the local communities was a driving factor in creating their business, compared to 53 per cent of all business owners who took part in the survey.

Gusto's research also found that LGBTQ entrepreneurs are about one-third more likely to start their businesses with the explicit goal of having a positive impact in their community.

According to Nich Tremper, a senior economist at Gusto, the LGBTQ+ community's history of creating a "found and chosen community", based on shared experiences of broad discrimination, is a key driver for queer business owners wanting to make a positive impact.



"No matter where folks come from, queer people have had to create a community," Tremper said. "That really creates a sense of ownership and wanting to support that community."

The Financial Resiliency Of LGBTQ+ Business Owners

The survey also found that queer business owners tend to need less start-up funding than their heterosexual peers. In 2023, 40 per cent of LGBTQ+ owners started with less than \$1,000 (£786). Another disparity shows that only 17 per cent of LGBTQ+ business started with more than 10 times that, compared with 31 per cent of all new businesses.

However, that disparity may come from the fact that queer founders start smaller than average businesses. In 2023, 27 per cent of new LGBTQ+-owned businesses had no employees, compared to 20 per cent of all new businesses.

The data pointed to another funding disparity, with 86 per cent of LGBTQ+ business owners launching their venture using their own assets. Only 26 per cent of queer founders used external funding,

funding, compared with more than 30 per cent of all entrepreneurs.

Tremper acknowledged that fear and discrimination could make queer business owners shy away from seeking external funding from banks or investors. He cited data points from the regional Federal Reserve Banks which revealed that LGBTQ+ business owners were “eight per cent less likely to receive the full funding they

asked for”.

He stressed how important that funding can be, and how developing personal relationships can influence getting that loan or investment.

“A key part is building personal relationships, and, if you can’t build that relationship, by sharing personal pieces of yourself,” he said.

Overall, Tremper was encouraged by the

representation of new LGBTQ+ business owners.

“I think entrepreneurship is an optimistic act, one [where] somebody is taking a bet on themselves,” he said. “What our survey shows is that LGBTQ+ owners are taking their place in that community and bringing their ideas to market in a way that is really exciting.”

HARDWICKS

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03

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THU
04

RAINBOW REVOLUTION | HOTSPOT HEROINES

WATCH THE FIREWORKS AND TRY OUR ROCKET POPPERS SHOT | 10PM

SUN
07

LEATHER NIGHT | DJ MIKE BITAR

FEATURING GEOVAN, ERNESTO, AND ISAIAH | 9PM

SUN
14

UNDERWIRE & SAPPIC SUNDAY WITH LES VIXENS

UNDERWIRE LAUNCH AT 4PM, FOLLOWED BY GIRL’S NIGHT AT 7PM

FRI
19

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SUN
21

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MUSIC BY
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SAT | MIKE BITAR



Kesha Drops Summer Banger With 'Joyride'

By Roy Williams



Kesha decided to celebrate Independence Day by celebrating her own with the release of a brand new single.

"Joyride" marks her first release after finally, finally, finally parting ways with Kemosabe Records and RCA, with whom Kesha has been signed since 2009.

"My first song as a free woman on my record label," she wrote in all caps on X after the single made Spotify's New Pop Picks playlist. "WTF Im sobbing thank uuuu for the support I

just cant even @spotify."

Kesha's split with Kemosabe—the record label founded by producer Dr. Luke—in particular has been a long time coming. The two were locked in court battles from 2014 up until last year after the singer accused Dr. Luke of drugging and raping her, among other misdeeds. Various claims and counterclaims were made between them over the course of nearly a decade, until it was announced they reached a settlement last June.

During that time, the "Die Young" singer released three studio albums under RCA and Kemosabe, in addition to the two she had released in 2010 and 2012. The title of her last album, *Gag Order*, referenced the situation with lawsuits.

But now it's clear Kesha is back and ready to celebrate everything that's still to come. "Joyride" is already being praised as an evolution of her artistry while still throwing it back to the dance-pop hits that put the \$ in Ke\$ha in the first place.

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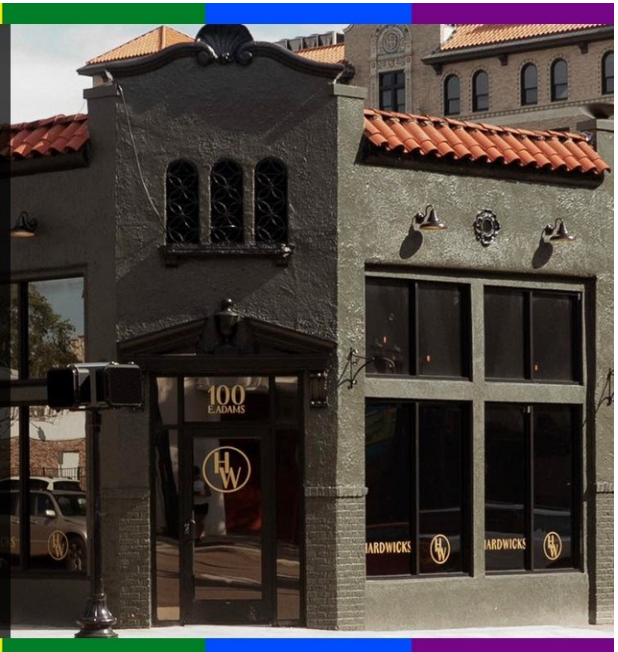
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Life and Style

Sweet Origins Of Cake Pops

By William Bishop



Is there anything that embodies little treat culture more than a cake pop? Comprised of bite-sized balls of icing-infused cake dipped in colorful chocolate and served on a stick, the whimsical dessert is the perfect thing to turn to when you want to reward yourself for accomplishing a task on your to-do list, and as you bite into one, you might find yourself wondering who we have to thank for such a delectable dessert.

No, it's not Starbucks — though we don't blame anybody for thinking that the coffee giant might be behind the sugary morsels. Rather, the sweet origins of cake pops are rooted in the internet, on a blog called Bakerella run by Angie Dudley. On February 1, 2008, the graphic designer from Atlanta, Georgia, hit publish on a post detailing how she made a batch of cake pops fashioned to look like cupcakes. The concept went viral, eventually

landing in front of the eyes of none other than Martha Stewart.

One month later, the blogger appeared on Stewart's program to demonstrate how to make her cupcake pops alongside the homemaking queen, and the rest, as they say, is history. Dudley and her cake pops were featured on other television programs and in magazines, and she's even authored several books about the sweet treats. Meanwhile, cake pops began showing up in bakeries and coffee shops like Starbucks, where they debuted in 2010 and are still readily available to order from pastry display cases to this day.

Before Cake Pops, There Were Cake Balls

What's a cake pop without its stick? A cake ball, which was actually the predecessor to Angie Dudley's claim to fame. The blogger first posted about this clever way to repurpose

leftover cake in December 2007. She had tried them at a party two years before. So how did the sticks come into play? According to a Bakerella blog post published three days before Dudley's infamous cupcake cake pop post went live, she decided to return to her cake ball recipe, but that time, with a twist.

"Just to make them even a little cuter, [I] stuck them on lollipop sticks ... Cakesicles anyone?" she wrote. Of course, "cake pop" was the name that stuck for these bite-sized treats. In fact, these days, cakesicles are considered an entirely different dessert that might even give cake pops a run for their money. And while the stick-y versions (get it?) have earned most of the attention, cake balls still deserve just as much love, especially since they're the perfect alternative for when you don't have any sticks to make cake pops.



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RPDR France Star Kitty Space Comes Out As Trans

By Michael Brayson



Kitty Space, a Vietnamese-French drag artist best known for competing in the second season of Drag Race France, has come out as a trans woman in an emotional post.

"My name is Kiara [trans flag emoji; heart emoji]. I'm so happy to come out as trans. It was hard to hide, but today I want to live free; to be happy by being myself."

She continued, "What am I, deep inside: a woman living hidden while being unhappy? Or [someone who can] live free and be fulfilled? That question

has been asked at length. Protect my loved ones who would take [the news of coming out as trans] badly, or protect myself?"

"I chose to protect myself, and also protect those who hide and who don't dare [to come out]," Kitty concluded. "Let's live free. It's our body, our gender, our choices."

From Lyon, France, Kitty became the first Asian queen to compete on Drag Race France following her casting in season 2. Unfortunately, she went on to have a rocky journey in the competition —

having to lip sync for her life in episode 1 (which she won) and ultimately being asked to sashay away in episode 3.

However, given the very strong cast and competitive nature of Drag Race France season 2, Kitty still captured the hearts of many Drag Race fans around the world. As of this writing, she has over 38,000 followers on Instagram.

Toutes nos félicitations to Kitty Space, who's now living life as her most authentic self!

Drag Race France is now streaming on WOW Presents Plus.



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News & Politics

Jordan Report Reveals CIA Official Feared Trump's 'Deep Narcissism'

By David Vandygriff



National security expert Marcy Wheeler is probing a report recently released by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) that targets the intelligence officials who discounted the Hunter Biden laptop story during the 2020 election as Russian interference.

While those intelligence officials agreed that the laptop had been tampered with, Jordan feared a "deep state" conspiracy — and dug into every aspect of the officials' identities and responsibilities in contracts with U.S. intelligence agencies.

In the interviews with the officials, Wheeler found a number of details previously unknown to the public. At one point in the questioning, former U.S. Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Michael Morell revealed he was concerned about Donald Trump's "deep narcissism."

Speaking to the House Judiciary Committee on April 4, 2023, Morell had already retired from government but

was questioned about signing onto an intelligence letter dismissing the laptop concerns, along with a number of other communications he had despite being a private citizen.

At one point, the committee asked about an email that he sent to others who signed the letter in which Morell called the 2020 election, "The most important election since 1860 and 1864 when the very existence of the country was on the ballot."

"You know, it's funny, reading the letter from the generals supporting President Trump, I agree with a number of the points that they make," Morell said when asked why he thought the election was so important. "I'm as concerned about the defense budget. I'm a pretty conservative guy when it comes to national security.

"But I have to tell you that, you know, spending 33 years at CIA and watching literally hundreds of world leaders during that time, President Trump's personality traits

deeply concerned me, what I believed to be deep narcissism, what I believed to be deep paranoia, what I believe to be a type of sadism where you — not sexually, of course, but a type of sadism where you, you know, are happy when your opponents have been injured in some way — I'm talking politically — that those were all traits that I saw in foreign leaders who did significant damage to their country and significant damage to the democracies of their country," Morell continued.

He specifically cited leaders he felt match that kind of Trump personality: Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Vladimir Putin in Russia.

"So, I was deeply concerned about the potential impact of President Trump on our democracy," Morell explained. "And, you know, my fear, in my view, was borne out by his failure to act on January 6, 2021. So that's what I meant when I wrote that. That's what I was thinking."



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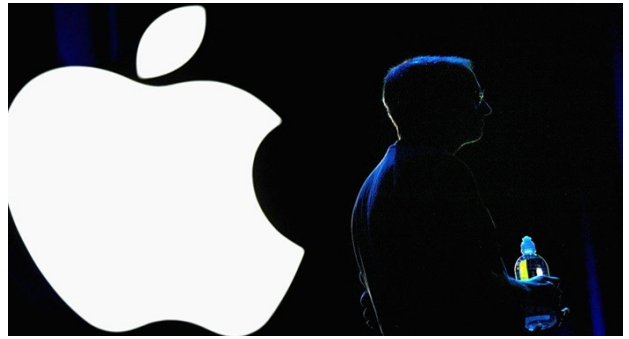
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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

Apple Partners With OpenAI As It Unveils 'Apple Intelligence'

By Brandon Moore



Apple unveils "Apple Intelligence," its suite of new AI features for its coveted devices -- and a partnership with OpenAI -- as it seeks to catch up to rivals racing ahead on adopting the white hot technology.

For months, pressure has been on Apple to persuade doubters on its AI strategy, after Microsoft and Google rolled out products in rapid-fire succession.

But this latest move will take the experience of Apple products "to new heights," chief executive Tim Cook said as he opened an annual Worldwide Developers Conference at the tech giant's headquarters in the Silicon Valley city of Cupertino, California.

To help towards that end, Apple has partnered with OpenAI, which ushered in a new era for generative artificial intelligence in 2022 with the arrival of ChatGPT.

OpenAI was "very happy to be partnering with Apple to integrate ChatGPT into their devices later this year! Think you will really like it," posted the company's chief Sam Altman on social media.

Apple Intelligence will also be added to a new version of the iOS 18 operating system, similarly unveiled Monday at the week-long conference.

Apple executives stressed privacy safeguards have been built into Apple Intelligence to make its Siri digital assistant and other products smarter, without pilfering user data.

The big challenge for Apple has been how to infuse ChatGPT-style AI -- which voraciously feeds off data -- into its products without weakening its heavily promoted user privacy and security, according to analysts.

The system "puts powerful generative models right at the core of your iPhone, iPad and Mac," said Apple senior vice president of software engineering Craig Federighi.

"It draws on your personal context to give you intelligence that's most helpful and relevant for you, and it protects your privacy at every step."

But Tesla and SpaceX tycoon Elon Musk lashed out at the partnership, saying the threat to data security will make him ban iPhones at his companies.

"Apple has no clue what's

actually going on once they hand your data over to OpenAI. They're selling you down the river," Musk said in a post on social media.

Musk is building his own rival to OpenAI, xAI, and is suing the company that he helped found in 2015.

Apple Intelligence, which runs only on the company's in-house technology, will enable users to create their own emojis based on a description in everyday language, or to generate brief summaries of e-mails in the mailbox.

Apple said Siri, its voice assistant, will also get an AI infused upgrade and now will appear as a pulsating light on the edge of your home screen.

Launched over 12 years ago, Siri has long since been seen as a dated feature, overtaken by the new generation of assistants, such as GPT-4o, OpenAI's latest offering.

GPT-4o grabbed the headlines last month when actress Scarlett Johansson accused OpenAI of copying her voice to embody the assistant after she turned down an offer to work with the company..

OpenAI has denied this, but suspended the use of the new voice in its products.

ChatGPT On Offer

In its deal with OpenAI, users can choose to enhance Siri on certain requests with ChatGPT, Federighi said.

"It sounds like it's Apple -- then if it needs ChatGPT, it offers it to you," Techspontential analyst Avi Greengart said.

"The implementation is what is special here."

The partnership with OpenAI was not exclusive, unlike Apple's landmark tie-up with Google for search, which has drawn the scrutiny of antitrust regulators.

Apple said it expected to announce support for other AI models in the future.

The company founded by Steve Jobs had remained very quiet on AI since the start of the ChatGPT-sparked frenzy, with Apple for a while avoiding

the term altogether.

But the pressure became too great, with Wall Street propelling Microsoft past Apple as the world's biggest company when measured by stock price, largely because of the Windows-maker's unabashed embrace of AI.

Wall Street investors were not overly impressed by the AI announcements with Apple's share price down nearly two percent at close on Monday.



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