

U.K. LAWMAKERS REJECT THERESA MAY'S BREXIT DEAL FOR THIRD TIME

BRITISH LAWMAKERS ON Friday rejected Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit plan for the third time, deepening Britain's ongoing political crisis as the deadline for the U.K.'s departure from the European Union now looms just two weeks away.

Lawmakers voted down the deal by a tally of 286 to 344 as large crowds of protesters gathered outside Parliament to await the result.

The rejection is a crushing blow for May, whose authority has been badly damaged in recent months and who is now facing calls for immediate resignation. Earlier this week, she promised to step down if her deal was delivered.

If May's deal had passed Friday, the U.K. would have exited the EU on May 22. Without it, the U.K. is facing an April 12 departure from the bloc. If the U.K. does not come up with an alternative plan or ask the EU for a longer postponement of Brexit, Britain will leave the EU without a deal, a prospect certain to cause chaos and economic turmoil.

Asking the EU for another postponement would likely result in a lengthy delay and would mean that the U.K. would have to vote in EU elections at the end of May – something that May and other lawmakers have said they are steadfastly opposed to.

A delay might be the only option, however, if Parliament hopes to avoid a no-deal exit. Lawmakers on Monday will hold a second day of non-binding indicative votes on alternative Brexit options, but votes on those options earlier this week failed to illuminate a plan with majority support.

"The implications of the House's decision are grave," May told Parliament after the vote.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposition Labour Party, demanded May's resignation and a general election unless the prime minister accepts that her plan is dead.

"The House has been clear, this deal now has to change, there has to be an alternative found," Corbyn said. "If the prime minister can't accept that, then she must go – not at an indeterminate date in the future, but now, so we can decide the future of this country through a general election."

Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, called a meeting of the council on April 10.

Claire Hansen, Staff Writer

Nicolas Cage files for annulment 4 days after getting married: report
By Mariah Haas

Published March 29, 2019

Fox News

Nicolas Cage has filed for an annulment four days after getting married, according to a report.

The "Face/Off" star filed for an annulment from wife Erika Koike on Wednesday. Entertainment Tonight reported, citing court documents.

The court record also shows that the 55-year-old actor has requested a divorce if an annulment isn't possible.

According to ET, the former couple — who started dating last April — applied for a marriage license and tied the knot on Saturday in Las Vegas.

Nicolas Cage and Erika Koike filed for an annulment just four days after tying the knot in Las Vegas. (Byrdman/Backgrid)

A rep for Cage did not respond to Fox News' request for comment.

This is Cage's fourth marriage. He previously was married to Patricia Arquette from 1995 to 2001. Following their split, he started dating Lisa Marie Presley. The pair wed in August 2002, but they filed for divorce just three months after their secret wedding in Hawaii, according to People.

Cage went on to marry Alice Kim, a waitress working at a restaurant he frequented, in 2004. They had a child together named Kal-El. Kal-El was Cage's second child after Weston, who was born in 1990 to the actor's then-girlfriend Christina Fulton.

Flatulence in the workplace is not a form of bullying, Australian appeals court rules

By Lukas Mikelionis

Published March 29, 2019

Fox News

Workplace bullying claimant David Hingst covers his face as he leaves the Court of Appeal in Melbourne, Australia Friday, March 29, 2019. The Australian appeals court on Friday dismissed a bullying case brought by the engineer Hingst who accused his former supervisor of repeatedly breaking wind toward him. (Ellen Smith/AAP Image via AP)

An Australian appeals court on Friday ruled that repeated flatulence targeted at another individual wasn't a form of bullying or assault.

The ruling by the Victoria state Court of Appeal came after David Hingst, a 56-year-old engineer, brought a case against his former supervisor for constantly farting toward him, demanding \$1.3 million in damages from his former employer in Melbourne, Construction Engineering.

The court upheld an earlier ruling stating that even if Hingst's allegations were found to be truthful, breaking wind doesn't constitute bullying.

But Hingst remains defiant and says he will take his case to the country's High Court, Australia's final court of appeal.

The court's judges wrote in their ruling that Hingst argued that "flatulence constituted assaults" and "alleged that Mr. Short would regularly break wind on him or at him, Mr. Short thinking this to be funny."

The Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria is expected to decide whether flatulence is a form of bullying. (Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria)

The man testified in court claiming that the bullying forced him to move out of a communal office space to avoid supervisor Greg Short's flatulence.

Yet Short would still enter Hingst's small, windowless office a few times a day just to break wind, he said. This led him to spray Short with deodorant and call him "Mr. Stinky."

"He would fart behind me and walk away. He would do this five or six times a day," Hingst said outside court.

"He would fart behind me and walk away. He would do this five or six times a day."

— David Hingst

Short said he doesn't remember breaking wind in Hingst's office, "but I may have done it once or twice."

But flatulence isn't the only form of bullying alleged by Hingst, adding that Short was also abusive over the phone, used profane language and taunted him.

Rather than focusing on more recognized forms of bullying or harassment, the judges said that Hingst "put the issue of Mr. Short's flatulence to the forefront" of his bullying case.

The court found that Short didn't bully or harass the employee, with Hingst failing to establish that his former employer had been negligent.

Hingst worked at the company between May 2008 and April 2009. He was laid off due to a downturn in construction work due to the global financial crisis in late 2008, the company said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Gorsuch, Kavanaugh on opposite sides again, this time on delay of Texas cop killer's execution

By Lukas Mikelionis

Published March 29, 2019

Fox News

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh on Thursday sided with liberal justices in a ruling that delayed the execution of a cop killer amid claims that religious freedom would be violated if the death-row inmate's Buddhist spiritual adviser wasn't present during his final moments.

The nation's highest court blocked the execution of Patrick Murphy about two hours after he could have been executed. Murphy is a member of the "Texas 7" gang of escaped prisoners who are awaiting the death penalty over the fatal shooting of a suburban Dallas police officer.

Murphy's attorney argued that Texas prison officials were violating his client's First Amendment right to freedom of religion by preventing the inmate's spiritual adviser, a Buddhist priest, from witnessing the execution.

But while Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch said they would allow the execution to proceed, echoing lower courts' view that rejected Murphy's arguments, Kavanaugh -- like Gorsuch, an appointee of President Trump -- found himself on the opposite side from the conservative justices.

This undated photo provided by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice shows Patrick Murphy, a member of the notorious "Texas 7" gang of escaped prisoners who was scheduled to be executed Thursday, March 28, 2019. (Texas Department of Criminal Justice via AP)

This follows the rulings last week, where in two out of three decisions by the high court, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh found themselves on opposing sides.

Kavanaugh wrote in a concurring opinion on Thursday that while the Texas prison system allows a Christian or Muslim inmate to have their religious advisers present in the death chamber or in the viewing room, inmates of other religious denominations can have their adviser only in the viewing room and not in the execution room itself.

"As this Court has repeatedly held, governmental discrimination against religion in particular, discrimination against religious persons, religious organizations, and religious speech violates the Constitution," he wrote. "The government may not discriminate against religion generally or against particular religious denominations."

The justice added that Murphy cannot be executed until the state allows his Buddhist adviser or another Buddhist reverend of the state's choosing to be present in the chamber during the execution.

"What the State may not do, in my view, is allow Christian or Muslim inmates but not Buddhist inmates to have a religious adviser of their religion in the execution room," he wrote.

"As this Court has repeatedly held, governmental discrimination against religion in particular, discrimination against religious persons, religious organizations, and religious speech violates the Constitution."

— Justice Brett Kavanaugh

Officials from Texas argued in court that the reason only Christian and Muslims religious advisers are allowed is due to security concerns, noting that only chaplains who had been extensively vetted by the prison system were allowed within the chamber.

Murphy was one of the inmates who escaped from a South Texas prison in December 2000, despite being just 15 months away from being released on mandatory parole.

During the six-week manhunt, he and his gang committed multiple robberies, including the one in which they shot 29-year-old Irving police Officer Aubrey Hawkins 11 times, killing him.

As they were being captured, one of the gang members killed himself, while six other criminals were convicted of killing the officer and sentenced to death.

Murphy would have been the fifth gang member to be executed. The sixth inmate, Randy Halprin, has not been given an execution date.

Lukas Mikelionis is a reporter for FoxNews.com. Follow him on Twitter [@LukasMikelionis](https://twitter.com/LukasMikelionis).

The Jussie Smollett prosecutor 'misled the public' about the dropped felony charges, a lawyers group says

By [Madeline Holcombe](#), [Joe Sutton](#) and [Holly Yan](#), CNN

Updated 10:51 AM ET, Fri March 29, 2019

(CNN)Prosecutors who dropped felony charges against actor Jussie Smollett over his report of a hate crime attack "have fundamentally misled the public on the law and circumstances surrounding the dismissal," an Illinois lawyers group said.

The way Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx and her office resolved the case also was "abnormal and unfamiliar to those who practice law," wrote the Illinois Prosecutors Bar Association.

The scathing statement, issued Thursday, follows claims by Foxx and her top deputy, Joe Magats, that "alternative prosecution," like the resolution brokered in Smollett's case, is not uncommon and is available to all defendants, celebrity or not. Smollett, 36, agreed to forfeit \$10,000 bail and complete community service in exchange for the dismissal of 16 charges alleging he'd orchestrated a fake racist, anti-gay attack on himself.

Further, Foxx and her office "falsely informed the public" that sealing the criminal case was "mandatory," the prosecutors' organization said. And a special prosecutor should have been appointed when Foxx, citing familiarity with a potential witness, recused herself from the case, the group insisted.

Meantime, Chicago's corporation counsel on Thursday asked Smollett to pay \$130,106.15 to cover the cost of the investigation into his claims of an attack.

Smollett, who is black and gay, told police two men attacked him on January 29, yelling racist and homophobic slurs while striking him, police said. Smollett said the incident ended with a noose placed around his neck and bleach poured on him, police said.

Chicago police investigated the case as a possible hate crime, then later said they believed the attack was staged by Smollett to bolster his profile and career. A grand jury indicted Smollett in March on 16 counts of disorderly conduct.

Following the charges' sudden dismissal this week, officials from the statehouse to the White House have demanded investigations and additional consequences for Smollett.

A state lawmaker said he'll introduce legislation to prohibit any production involving Smollett from receiving the Illinois Film Tax Credit.

"A lot of valuable Chicago Police Department man hours and resources were wasted chasing down a bogus crime arranged by Smollett," state Rep. Michael McAuliffe, a Republican, said. "He has cost Chicago a lot more than a \$10,000 bond. Smollett should not be able to get anything more from the City of Chicago or Illinois."

State House Republican Leader Jim Durkin asked the Illinois attorney general's office in a letter to "complete a thorough review of the prosecution and sentencing determination in the Smollett investigation."

Amid calls by the Chicago police union for a federal investigation to evaluate Foxx's involvement in the case, the FBI and the Justice Department will review the Smollett case, President Donald Trump tweeted Thursday, though neither agency has commented.

"FBI & DOJ to review the outrageous Jussie Smollett case in Chicago," Trump said. "It is an embarrassment to our nation!"

A Chicago Police Department spokesperson confirmed the police department has not been contacted by the FBI regarding any new federal review of Jussie Smollett's actions, nor the actions of local prosecutors.

Smollett's attorney said Thursday she's not worried about a possible federal probe.

"We have nothing to be concerned about because ... to my knowledge, nothing improper was done," Tina Glandian told NBC's "Today" show.

The state's attorney defends dropping charges

Foxx said that although she's confident her office would have landed a conviction against Smollett, a guilty verdict probably wouldn't have led to a harsher punishment, CNN affiliate WLS reported.

"If he's found guilty on a Class 4 (felony), the likelihood was he was going to get some type of, perhaps, restitution, community service -- not prison," she told the station. "And so if we can get to the same outcomes, if we get to the same measures of justice without going through the court process, we do that."

For example, prosecutors frequently offer to drop drug possession charges if defendants agree to treatment and meetings, she said. Such alternate resolutions have been hashed out in thousands of cases, Magats said.

Indeed, resolutions like Smollett's are available to "someone from the neighborhood," Foxx said, stressing that Smollett did not get special treatment because of his celebrity status.

Backlash continues from all angles

But Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel insisted that if Smollett weren't an actor with influence, he would have been held to a different standard. Meantime, an attorney who worked with two brothers who told the grand jury they'd assisted in the fake attack told CNN's Don Lemon that Foxx's office did not notify her about its decision to drop the charges.

"I had just been in touch with the State's Attorney's Office just days ago," Gloria Schmidt said. "They had assigned a victim advocate for each of my clients."

In light of the case, the National District Attorneys Association released a statement on best prosecutorial practices in high-profile cases. Among its recommendations: recusals of chief prosecutors should apply to the entire office; prosecutors should not take advice from politically active friends of the accused; alternative prosecution should include the defendant admitting culpability; and Smollett's record should not have been expunged immediately in the interest of transparency.

CNN's Marlena Baldacci, Melissa Alonso, Brad Parks, Sheena Jones, Faith Karimi, Steve Almasy and CNN law enforcement analyst Josh Campbell contributed to this report.

Robocalls: What AT&T, Comcast and Verizon are doing about them

By Jackie Wattles, CNN Business

Updated 6:42 PM ET, Wed March 27, 2019

New York (CNN Business) AT&T, Comcast, Verizon and other telecom giants want to tamp down on the scourge of robocalls.

Americans are getting bombarded with unwanted phone calls about everything from fake charities and security services to fraudulent tax collectors. More than 47.8 billion robocalls were made in 2018 alone, both legal and illegal — a 57% increase over the previous year, according to YouMail, a third-party

robocall blocking software company. New voice-masking technologies could also be making the calls more dangerous.

Verizon plans to make its spam detection and blocking app free for its wireless customers in the next few days. AT&T and Comcast also recently announced that they tested a new tool for identifying "spoofed" calls, which have allowed robocallers use fake numbers. Most major telecom companies plan to put the new technology to use by the end of the year.

Comedian John Oliver, host of HBO's "Last Week Tonight," blasted regulators during his show earlier this month for not doing more to combat the issue. He pledged to hound the US Federal Communications Commission with robocalls of his own design until they addressed the problem. (HBO, like CNN, is owned by AT&T.)

FCC chairman Ajit Pai had already ramped up pressure on the industry to address the problem on its own.

Companies are taking the problem "extremely seriously," says Jim McEachern, a senior technology consultant at telecom industry association ATIS.

Finding solutions

Verizon announced in January that it planned to stop charging users for an app that can identify and block malicious robocalls and spam. It's expected to make that move official in the next few days. The app, which previously cost about \$3 per month, will be free to download on iPhone and Android devices.

Its competitors, including AT&T and T-Mobile, offer similar services and apps.

But there's a problem: The apps flag and filter calls based on whether the incoming phone number is listed in a database of known spammers, and that database is extremely unreliable, McEachern said.

It was cobbled together based on which numbers customers have complained about. But spammers and fraudsters have long been able to use a technique called "spoofing" to mask their numbers from caller IDs and make it look like they're calling from somewhere else, even your own phone number.

That means some legitimate phone numbers have ended up in the database, while bad actors have been able to slip by spam blockers.

A new tool that AT&T and Comcast successfully tested last week aims to tackle that issue. Called "SHAKEN/STIR," a James Bond reference, the program aims to identify which calls are spoofed and which are placed directly between two customers. Companies will work together to verify calls across the industry, so that a person using an AT&T wireless phone, for example, can be verified when they call a Comcast landline.

Verizon is expected to announce Thursday that it will be the first company to roll out "SHAKEN/STIR" on its wireless network, a spokesperson said.

Regulatory action

FCC commissioner Pai wants telecom companies across the board to roll out the technology by the end of the year. A long list of providers have committed to doing so.

"If these tools are not implemented this year, we are committed to taking regulatory action," an FCC spokesperson told CNN Business in an email Wednesday.

But experts say none of these tools offer a wholesale solution to the robocall problem.

Some legitimate callers use spoofing: Workplaces, for example, often spoof outgoing calls to look like they're coming from a 1-800 number or to mask an employees' direct extension. So the industry will still rely on customers to report which calls are coming from spammers.

But it will build a "concrete foundation" for better combating the problem in the future, said McEachern, the consultant at ATIS, which is spearheading "SHAKEN/STIR" development. It will allow the industry to make drastic improvement to the database of blacklisted phone numbers, he said, and improve robocall blocking over time.

"I liken it to email spam," McEachern told CNN Business. "There was a time when basically everyone was predicting that email would be useless because you wouldn't be able to find your real messages, but a number of new techniques and standards were implemented, and slowly they began to stop the growth."

McEachern predicts that it will take about three to five years before robocalls are considered a thing of the past. And even then, the industry will have to stay vigilant about addressing new technologies.

"Will fraudsters be able to find workarounds? Of course they will," he said.

A tourist taking photos dies in fall at Grand Canyon. It's the 2nd death this week

By **Madeline Holcombe** and **Chris Boyette**, CNN

Updated 2:00 AM ET, Fri March 29, 2019

CNN) Two people died at the Grand Canyon after two separate incidents this week, including a tourist who was taking pictures.

On Thursday, a man from Hong Kong was taking pictures at an overlook of the Grand Canyon when he slipped and fell, according to a spokesman for Grand Canyon West.

A helicopter search began immediately, and a recovery operation is ongoing, according to David Leibowitz, a spokesman for the Eagle Point observation area.

The man was in his late 50s and was part of a tour group visiting the Eagle Point observation area at Grand Canyon West, according to Leibowitz.

Grand Canyon West is owned and operated by the Hualapai Tribe, according to its website. Eagle Point and nearby Skywalk have been closed, Leibowitz said.

"The thoughts and prayers of every Grand Canyon West employee remain with the loved ones of this individual and the members of the tour group," the tourist destination said in a statement.

This was the second death at the Grand Canyon this week.

On Tuesday, according to a statement by the National Park Service (NPS), rangers and special agents responded to a fatality of a visitor near the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

The details of the death were not made immediately clear, but the statement said that the NPS and the Coconino County Medical Examiner are conducting an investigation.

Teen dies of tapeworm egg infestation in brain

By Susan Scutti, CNN

Updated 12:46 PM ET, Thu March 28, 2019

(CNN)An 18-year-old who complained of seizures in the emergency room of an Indian hospital turned out to have parasites in his brain, according to a [case study](#) published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Drs. Nishanth Dev and S. Zafar Abbas of the ESIC Medical College and Hospital in Faridabad reported that the patient, who appeared in the ER with swelling over his right eye, was having tonic-clonic seizures. Formerly known as "grand mal" seizures, these neural disturbances cause stiffened muscles and a loss of consciousness.

His parents said that their son had felt pain in his right groin for a week. A physical exam revealed that he had confusion and tenderness in the right testis.

To learn more about his condition, the medical staff performed an MRI exam and saw damage caused by cysts in his cerebral cortex (the outer mantle of brain tissue) as well as the brain stem, including the cerebellum, which sits at the back of the head above the spinal cord.

Diagnosis: neurocysticercosis, a parasitic disease of the brain caused when someone swallows tapeworm eggs that have passed in the feces of someone who has an intestinal tapeworm. The larvae crawl out of the eggs and into muscle and brain tissues, where they form cysts.

The doctors also discovered cysts in the patient's right eye and right testis.

Because of the number and location of the cysts, his doctors decided against treating the young man with antiparasitic medications. These can worsen brain bleeding and inflammation while leading to loss of vision. Instead, the patient was given an anti-inflammatory drug, dexamethasone, plus antiepileptic medications.

Two weeks after his arrival in the ER, the patient died, Dev and Abbas report.

Cysticercosis infections occur worldwide, though these parasitic invasions of the human body mostly occur in rural areas of developing countries where pigs are allowed to roam and where sanitation practices are poor, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Though these

infections may be rare among people who live in countries where pigs do not have contact with human feces, cysticercosis can be acquired anywhere in the world, including the United States and other western nations.

Symptoms depend on the location of the cysts; sometimes, lumps form under the skin, and sometimes, confusion is the only sign of the damage occurring in the brain. Symptoms can appear months or even years after an infection, usually when the cysts start dying, causing swollen tissue.

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Generally, these infections call for anti-parasitic drugs combined with anti-inflammatory medicines, but surgery may be necessary if a patient doesn't respond or to reduce brain swelling. Symptoms may require care even if the paralytic infection itself no longer needs attention or treatment.

Patients with cysticercosis cannot spread their disease to other people; it is only people with a tapeworm infection in the intestine who can spread the potentially life-threatening eggs when proper hygiene is lacking or ignored.

Phillies' Loaded Offense Will Be About a Lot More Than Bryce Harper

ZACHARY D. RYMER MARCH 28, 2019

The first official test of the [Philadelphia Phillies'](#) new Bryce Harper-infused offense resulted in 10 runs.

Not bad, considering that Harper himself had little to do with it.

If this is an exaggeration, it's only because the one walk that Harper drew in Thursday's opener at Citizens Bank Park played a key role in the Phillies' 10-4 victory over the [Atlanta Braves](#). The [\\$330 million man](#) was walked intentionally in the seventh inning with two on and nobody out, which set up Rhys Hoskins for a grand slam payoff:

Hoskins isn't the only returning member of the Phillies' 2018 lineup—which scored a modest [4.2 runs per game](#) amid the team's 80-win season—who grabbed the spotlight on Opening Day. Odubel Herrera and Cesar Hernandez each pitched in RBI singles, and Maikel Franco drilled a long [three-run home run](#).

As to the new guys, it was the *other* former MVP outfielder the Phillies added this offseason who made the biggest impression. [Andrew McCutchen](#) was Philadelphia's first batter of the 2019 season, as well as its first entry into the home run column:

Elsewhere, newcomer shortstop Jean Segura went 2-for-4 with a pair of singles, while newcomer catcher J.T. Realmuto drew a walk on his own accord and scored a run.

Relative to all this, Harper actually had the worst time of any Phillies hitter on Opening Day. He presumably enjoyed the ovations he got, but he surely would have enjoyed himself more if he hadn't gone 0-for-3 with two strikeouts.

Of course, Harper *will* hit in the long run.

That's made plenty clear by the 26-year-old's track record, which included a .900 OPS and 184 career home runs when the Phillies inked him for the next 13 years in early March. The peak of that output was in his MVP-winning season in 2015, when he led MLB with a 1.109 OPS and co-led the National League with 42 home runs.

It speaks to Harper's offensive upside that he could put up an .889 OPS and 34 homers in 2018 and still have people feeling disappointed. To boot, said upside may go higher with the Phillies than it ever could with the Washington Nationals. In Philly, after all, he'll have the advantage of a bandbox home ballpark.

If Opening Day hinted at anything, however, it's that the Phillies offense will hardly need Harper to carry it.

Matt Slocum/Associated Press

Start with Hoskins, who came into the season with an .889 OPS and 52 home runs in only 203 career major league games. Such numbers practically scream, "Middle-of-the-order hitter!" And between Hoskins' patience and his penchant for pulled fly balls, the goods are there to keep 'em coming.

Then to McCutchen. Though he's not the same hitter he was when he won the NL MVP in 2013, he's been good enough to put up an .820 OPS with 48 homers over the last two seasons. Hence the three-year, \$50 million deal he signed last December.

McCutchen's also yet another hitter who must be thrilled to now be calling Citizens Bank Park home. He spent the first nine-and-a-half years of his career playing his home games at Pittsburgh's PNC Park and San Francisco's Oracle Park, which are both notorious power suppressors.

Ditto for Realmuto, who escaped from the cavernous dimensions of Marlins Park when the Phillies traded for him in February. Between that and the upward trend his power output has been on, the Phillies can expect much more than the .825 OPS and 21 homers that drove his big 2018 breakout.

With Segura, who's a fellow trade acquisition, there might not be as much upside to explore. But based on his last three seasons, the Phillies know they can count on him for a batting average over .300, plus double-digit homers and stolen bases.

Between these five players, the Phillies can at least count on their offense to have a strong backbone this season. That alone would be a night-and-day difference from 2018, wherein Hoskins was the only Phillie to top an .800 OPS or 25 homers.

But if ever there's a time to think that the rest of the lineup shouldn't be sold short, it's right now.

Hernandez may not be the flashiest hitter, but he's quietly gotten on base at a .366 clip over the last three seasons. Herrera's returns have been diminishing of late, yet any center fielder who can average a .763 OPS with double-digit homers and steals is worth his keep.

As for Franco, whether he can hit or field consistently enough to improve the minus-0.3 wins above replacement (per [Baseball Reference](#)) that the Phillies got out of third base in 2018 remains an open question. But at the least, the bomb he hit Thursday is a sign that the power that produced 71 homers over the last three seasons is still there.

From top to bottom, this is a lineup without a true lightweight in it. That obviously doesn't mean the Phillies will realize their current pace of 1,620 runs, but offensive outbursts like the one they enjoyed on Opening Day shouldn't be uncommon.

Because if Harper is not hitting, chances are others will be.

Stats courtesy of [Baseball Reference](#), [FanGraphs](#) and [Baseball Savant](#).

California lawmakers push for reforms to prevent college admissions abuse

(CNN) Some California lawmakers are proposing several new laws in the wake of the college admissions scandal.

The proposals unveiled Thursday by a group of Democratic lawmakers include banning preferential admissions for donors and alumni, evaluating the phase out of the SAT and ACT exams, and regulating private admissions consultants.

The six proposals are intended to reform and curtail abuse in the college admissions process, the lawmakers said at a press conference.

Fifty people -- including Hollywood stars, top CEOs, college coaches and standardized test administrators -- are accused of taking part in the scheme to cheat on tests and admit students to leading institutions as athletes, regardless of their abilities.

"We've all watched in complete disgust by the outright fraud committed in the recent college admissions scandal across the country and in California," said Assemblymember Kevin McCarty. "Further, it stings even more because so much of this was based in California."

He noted that 25 of the 33 families and that 10 of the 17 coaches and university officials were based in California.

Many of the proposals would affect the state's public university and college systems. The University of California enrolls 238,000 students.

Here are the six proposals:

- This measure would require each special admission, known as "admission by exception" to have at least three administrative staff members' approval before the student is accepted. This would introduce checks and balances into the process, McCarty said. If a University of California water polo athlete is admitted, he said, "We should [make sure] 1) they know how to swim and 2) they actually play water polo." He said this would be a triple check to make sure there are no "fradulent side-door admits."

- This bill would ban any California college or university from granting preferential admissions to donors or children of alumni. This would apply to both public and private colleges in the state. Assemblymember Phil Ting likened it to "closing an express lane ..." to "make sure there's an even playing field for everyone."
- The resolution would request the California State University and University of California systems to conduct a study on the necessity of the SAT and ACTs in determining student admissions. The study is to explore the phaseout of those standardized tests from use in the admissions process. McCarty said the tests devalue the academic potential of lower-income students and give the wealthy advantages.

This proposal seeks to regulate college admissions consultants by having them register with the Secretary of State's Office. Assemblymember Evan Low said it's about bringing transparency to these firms and consultants.

- This measure would prohibit any California taxpayers who were named in the college admissions scheme and found guilty from deducting their related charitable donations from state income taxes. Parents accused of taking part in William Rick Singer's college admissions cheating scheme reportedly paid for his services in the form of donations to his nonprofit, the Key Worldwide Foundation. Any deduction already taken must be refunded along with a fine.
- This measure would call for a state auditor to look at the admissions processes for student athletes and other special admits in the University of California, as well as the admissions processes at the state's public universities. Lawmakers said the goal is to improve oversight and determine which admission process requires further scrutiny.

HUD charges Facebook with housing discrimination in ads

By [Kaya Yurieff](#), CNN Business

Updated 9:13 AM ET, Thu March 28, 2019

New York (CNN Business) The Department of Housing and Urban Development is charging Facebook with violating the Fair Housing Act.

HUD on Thursday said the social media giant is violating the federal act by "encouraging, enabling, and causing" housing discrimination through its advertising platform.

"Facebook is discriminating against people based upon who they are and where they live," HUD Secretary Ben Carson said in a statement. "Using a computer to limit a person's housing choices can be just as discriminatory as slamming a door in someone's face."

Last August, HUD filed a formal complaint against Facebook, claiming the company allows landlords and people selling homes to use its advertising platform to "engage in housing discrimination." The

complaint said advertisers can dictate who sees housing-related ads based on race, religion, sex, disability and other characteristics.

Just last week, Facebook (FB) said it would pay about \$5 million to settle several lawsuits that alleged its advertising platform allowed for discrimination in housing, employment and credit ads. It also announced several steps to address the issue, including a separate advertising portal for housing, employment and credit ads that offers significantly less targeting options, and a new page where US users can search for and view current housing-related ads even if they didn't appear on their News Feed.

On Thursday, Facebook said it was "surprised" by HUD's decision and noted the company had been working with the department to address its concerns. Facebook also said it has taken "significant steps" to prevent advertising discrimination.

"Last year we eliminated thousands of targeting options that could potentially be misused, and just last week we reached historic agreements with the National Fair Housing Alliance, ACLU, and others that change the way housing, credit, and employment ads can be run on Facebook," a Facebook spokesperson told CNN Business.

"We're disappointed by today's developments, but we'll continue working with civil rights experts on these issues," the spokesperson added.

Facebook also said it was "eager" to find a solution, but said HUD "insisted on access to sensitive information" such as user data without proper safeguards.

The company has long faced criticism about its advertising platform and whether its systems allow for discrimination. In December 2017, a ProPublica and New York Times investigation found that dozens of major companies ran recruitment ads only for specific age groups. At the time, Facebook said age-based targeting is "an accepted industry practice."

Another ProPublica report in November 2017 found discriminatory ads were making it through Facebook's systems. ProPublica was able to purchase dozens of home-rental ads that specifically excluded "African Americans, mothers of high school kids, people interested in wheelchair ramps, Jews, expats from Argentina and Spanish speakers."

How 5G will transform manufacturing

By Ivana Kottasová, CNN Business

Updated 8:48 AM ET, Mon March 25, 2019

London (CNN Business)5G networks that transform entertainment, communication and transportation may still be years away. But in manufacturing, the technology is already making a difference.

Next-generation 5G networks can be 100 times faster than 4G, making communication between devices and servers much faster. The networks can be installed in relatively small areas — like a factory — without too much fuss.

The combination of speed, practicality and potential cost savings is encouraging factory operators to experiment with 5G. The results have been positive, suggesting the tech may be widely used in factories

before smartphones and other consumer products, especially because surveys show many consumers are not yet willing to pay more for 5G.

Ericsson, one of the world's biggest providers of 5G equipment, teamed up on one early test with the Fraunhofer Institute for Production Technology in Germany.

The experiment involved a factory that makes metal bladed disks for jet engines. The large components are made in a process called metal milling, which takes up to 20 hours to complete and requires extremely precise cuts to be made in metal components.

The procedure has a high error rate: up to 25% of the blades have to be reworked because of faults caused by small vibrations. Often, mistakes are not detected until the end of the process, meaning much effort is wasted on completing flawed blades.

5G sensors were attached to the components in a milling machine.

But by placing sensors that use 5G directly on the components or tools, Ericsson was able to detect faults in real time and reduce the error rate to just 15%. The average production cost of a blade was reduced by €3,600 (\$4,075).

The speed and reliability of 5G networks means there is virtually zero latency, or lag time, between devices and the servers they communicate with. And that's what makes the technology so useful to manufacturers.

"With one millisecond latency, you can sense whether there is a deviation in the process before the tool even hits the blade and you can stop the machine before the error happens," said Åsa Tamsons, a senior vice president at Ericsson.

You can stop the machine before the error happens."

ÅSA TAMSONS

Nishith Tripathi, a mobile wireless technologies expert at Award Solutions, said that only 5G can deliver the performance needed in factory settings.

"4G can simply not do the job, you need the high speed and low latency of 5G to deliver this kind of application," he said.

Two more features make 5G ideal for use in factories: The networks are relatively easy to install, and they can support a huge number of devices.

Buildings the size of most factories can be virtually "wrapped" with a 5G network via an antenna placed on the roof. That's much easier than other potential 5G applications, such as self-driving cars, which would require a huge number of roads to be lined with 5G equipment.

Tripathi said 5G technology also allows for a massive number of connections at the same time. If every piece of equipment in a factory needs to be connected, 5G networks can handle the burden.

Ericsson isn't the only company that's experimenting with the technology. A Bosch factory in Worcester, England started 5G trials last month. And in Austin, Texas, Samsung is working with AT&T, CNN's parent company, to create a 5G manufacturing "innovation zone."

"When you talk about 5G experiences like holograms, virtual reality, the things you and I will experience, we will have to wait a couple of years, but for businesses, it's now and here," said Tripathi.

Wow Air ceases operations, leaving passengers stranded

By Jack Guy and Gianluca Mezzofiore, CNN Business

Updated 2:02 PM ET, Thu March 28, 2019

London (CNN Business) Icelandic budget carrier Wow Air has ceased operations and canceled its flights, leaving passengers stranded on both sides of the Atlantic.

The airline announced the closure in a statement posted to its website on Thursday. It advised passengers to book new flights on other airlines, and said some may be eligible for compensation.

Wow Air CEO Skúli Mogensen told Icelandic state broadcaster RUV that negotiations to save the airline went on until the early morning in Iceland.

"As is normal, people believed we would get the investment," Mogensen told RUV. "We have been very transparent, but it didn't happen."

Mogensen said more than 1,000 passengers had been affected by the grounding of aircraft. He said he didn't have an exact figure on the number of tickets that had been sold.

"I'm very sorry about this as these are people who have supported us," said Mogensen. "I'm disappointed not to honor our commitments."

A Wow Air flight on the tarmac in Frankfurt.

Saurabh Aggarwal, who was due to fly from Toronto to Reykjavik on Wow Air, described a chaotic scene at Toronto airport.

Aggarwal said customers were given conflicting information about the flight's status before it was canceled at 10:55 p.m. on Wednesday. He said passengers were not provided with accommodation and no refunds were issued.

"This really scared everyone, at that point we were finally given back our bags and no money as of now has been issued back to me," Aggarwal told CNN.

It wasn't until Thursday morning that she received an email from Wow Air informing passengers that the airline had ceased operations and all flights were canceled.

Other affected passengers also criticized Wow Air on social media over the lack of communication.

"Just found out about this news," [tweeted](#) Jonathan Koo, who was stuck at Newark Liberty Airport after his flight was canceled. "They didn't even notify any of us directly, had to find out from twitter and reddit."

A second passenger [described](#) "pandemonium at the gate" as he waited for the same flight in Newark. Others tweeted photos of crowds as passengers tried to find out what to do.

20 min to board, [@wowairsupport](#) cancels the flight. But then sends an email that it's just delayed until 9pm. Oh but the crew left because it was cancelled. Updates coming from the guy in the middle of this crowd.

Airlines including EasyJet ([ESYJY](#)), Icelandair, Wizz Air, XL Airways and Norwegian Air were offering reduced fares to stranded travelers because of the difficult circumstances, according to the Icelandic Transport Authority.

The budget airline also said that passengers who bought tickets from a European travel agent as part of a packaged tour were protected. Others with travel insurance may also be entitled to claim compensation.

Wow Air said that it may pay compensation "in accordance with European regulation on Air Passenger Rights." If the airline declares bankruptcy, passengers can make a claim with the administrator or liquidator.

Alex Spence, a Wow Air passenger due to return to Toronto from Berlin on March 30, said she received no advance warning from the airline.

"Now I have to find a last-minute flight home that will likely be incredibly expensive," said Spence. "Honestly the worst part is that Wow hasn't even reached out to inform passengers like myself."

Founded in 2011, Wow Air was known for cheap trans-Atlantic fares on routes via Iceland. It's part of a group of Nordic airlines that drove ticket prices down thanks to no-frills service.

It's the latest in a string of airlines to suffer problems as the aviation industry is buffeted by fierce competition and shifting business models.

Primera Air ceased operations in October 2018. In February, German airline Germania filed for bankruptcy and British airline Flybmi stopped flying.

House perfects FY 2020 budget, endorses GR for roads, uses lottery fund for Fast-Track

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The Missouri House spent the majority of Tuesday rearranging the puzzle pieces that make up the state's nearly \$30 billion budget for the 2020 fiscal year.

During the perfection process, lawmakers traded ideas on the funding levels of programs and different services offered by the state. The House gave initial approval to all 13 bills after more than six hours of discussion and alterations.

This is Rep. Cody Smith's first budget at the helm of the budget committee.

As debate hit the six-hour mark, Rep. David Wood urged his colleagues to pay attention, be engaged, and really understand the tough decisions that need to be made.

"I implore you to look at the budgets and look at these people and know that it is a tough decision. And it is a tougher decision when you have to make it," said Wood, who sits on the budget committee.

By the end of the day, the House had made many decisions with an operating budget of \$29.7 billion — \$10.1 million from general revenue, \$9.9 million from federal funds, and \$9.7 million from other funds — and increasing liability around the board. Compared to FY 2019, fully funding the K-12 education formula alone required an increased \$62 million, and MO HealthNet needed an additional \$500 million.

One of the most notable components to the perfected budget was \$100 million in general revenue funding allotted for road and bridge repairs. That proposal, unveiled in mid-March by Smith, counters a recommendation by Gov. Mike Parson for a \$351 million bond to be paid out over 15 years.

The prospect of using revenue resources outside of the dedicated fund to fix roads and bridges ignited debate when Democrats proposed using the funds elsewhere.

Members of the super-minority party presented an array of amendments that would have decreased the amount of general revenue transferred to the state road fund and increased funding in other areas. The areas that would have seen a funding bump — had the amendments not have failed — were public defenders, developmental disabilities, and libraries.

Since the inception of the dedicated road fund, general revenue has not gone to fund transportation infrastructure, Rep. Jon Carpenter pointed out. He argued that when the body allocates \$100 million of general revenue funding to transportation, it is making a value judgment not to spend it on other virtual state services.

Not only that, but the Missouri Department of Revenue needs to know what funding will be coming their way in the future so that they can plan long-term projects, Rep. Greg Razer said.

"\$100 million whims is not guaranteed each and every years," said Razer. "We are taking this money and are paving our roads on the backs of higher education."

Smith rejected the idea that transportation was taking a higher priority than education. Smith said that funding for K-12 education is at record levels, including fully funding the education formula at \$3.55 billion, increasing school transportation funding by \$5 million to \$108 million, and increasing funding for early childhood special education programs by \$3 million to \$195 million.

But Democrats argued that even with the additional \$5 million, the legislature was still underfunding school transportation by millions of dollars.

"If you adjust for inflation and per-student costs, we are not spending record amounts on our schools," said Rep. Peter Merideth.

With the backing of leadership, Smith defended the general revenue allocation and argued that just because the move has not been done before does not mean it is not a good idea.

Smith said doing the same thing will get the same results, and the conditions of Missouri's roads and bridges need a fix. With citizens rejecting a gas tax increase, and opposition to going into debt, a pay-as-you-go approach was a valid proposal.

"It is a new idea, it is a new approach, but we are in need of new ideas and new approaches," said Smith. "Approach to not raise taxes and not go into debt. And the icing on the cake is that we can save \$100 million in interest as we go."

A majority of the amendments put forward over the course of the day were shot down by the Republican-controlled body.

Lawmakers rejected an amendment preventing state dollars from funding facilities that shackle prisoners while in the midst of labor, an amendment allowing undocumented college students to pay in-state tuition, an amendment allowing law enforcement to use state funds for DUI checkpoints, and an amendment ending the death penalty.

Also rejected were amendments removing language prohibiting Medicaid expansion and language prohibiting toll roads.

Additionally, Republicans shot down proposals that would have decreased funding — ranging from \$2.5 million to \$10 million — for the Fast-Track Grant Incentive program.

Part of the funding for Fast-Track, one of Parson's priorities, was shifted away from general revenue. Instead, a portion of the allocated \$18 million will come from the Lottery Proceeds Fund. The general revenue freed up by that move went to fund other areas such as \$4 million for increased jail reimbursements from the Department of Corrections, a \$2 million increase to the University of Missouri Precision Medicine Initiative, a \$500,000 increase to account for benefit costs associated with state employee pay raises, and \$2.5 million for rural broadband funding increase.

The House did cut budget line items for dozens of full-time employees across departments for positions that had been vacant since at least 2016.

Lawmakers also scaled back funding for several programs to amounts closer to the departments' requests. For instance, the budget committee had put \$1 million to a school safety grant whereas the department only requested \$300,000. After talking with the department, it was determined that "\$1 million was too much, too soon."

Funding for some programs was restored through the perfection process. Some core funding that was inadvertently removed in committee was restored for the Department of Revenue.

The House plans to third read the budget bills — HB [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), and [13](#) — on Thursday.

New York Poised To Be Second State In The Nation To Ban Plastic Bags

States around the country have taken on single-use plastic products in recent years in an attempt to protect the environment.

By Nick Visser

New York lawmakers are close to enacting a sweeping ban on single-use plastic bags in an effort to curb pollution and save denizens from their own worst impulses.

The new proposal could be part of the state's budget bill, which is expected to pass next week. The initiative already has the support of Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who initially proposed the measure last year but failed to get it passed by the then-Republican-controlled state Senate. Democrats won control of the chamber in the last election.

"These bags have blighted our environment and clogged our waterways," Cuomo said in a statement to The New York Times. He said the proposal would "protect our natural resources for future generations of New Yorkers."

The ban, if implemented, would outlaw the use of single-use plastic bags at most stores, but would allow certain industries to continue using them. Restaurants would still be allowed to use bags for takeout and newspapers would still be delivered in them. The proposal would also allow individual counties to opt-in to a 5-cent-per-bag fee for paper bags in an effort to encourage consumers to bring their own reusable totes.

"I think we're going to look back and wonder why this isn't something that was commonplace before now," state Sen. Todd Kaminsky told NBC News. "But I'm glad we're doing it now and leading the way in being one of the first states to do it."

The state would be the second to get an official bag ban on the books after California passed similar legislation in 2016. Hawaii effectively has a statewide bag ban as well after each of the state's counties instituted anti-bag policies.

Several other states have taken steps to outlaw other plastic products in recent months. Lawmakers in Hawaii have proposed a pair of bills that would take a hard-line against most plastic in the restaurant industry and a proposal in Maryland could make the region the first in the nation to completely ban polystyrene food containers.

The Associated Press notes that environmental advocates estimate New Yorkers use up to 23 billion plastic bags a year.

Air Force Needs Almost \$5 Billion To Recover Bases From Hurricane, Flood Damage

March 28, 2019 7:02 AM ET

The U.S. Air Force says it needs \$4.9 billion in new funding over the next two and a half years to cover the costs of rebuilding two air bases hit by natural disasters.

About one-third of Offutt Air Force Base, in eastern Nebraska, was underwater earlier this month as flooding hit large swaths of the Midwest. And Tyndall Air Force Base in the Florida Panhandle was hit hard by Hurricane Michael in October.

The Air Force is asking for \$1.2 billion in supplemental funding for fiscal year 2019 and \$3.7 billion for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. Congress would need to approve the funding.

"This storm, if we don't get a supplemental, is going to affect the rest of the Air Force and our ability to operate," Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said Wednesday [at the Heritage Foundation](#). "We desperately need the supplemental to recover from the natural disaster that hammered Tyndall and Offutt."

She added that 61 projects — consisting largely of operations and maintenance — at air bases in 18 states would not happen if the supplemental disaster funding does not come through.

She estimated the cost of the hurricane at Tyndall was about \$750 million in this year's operation and maintenance funds, with 95 percent of buildings damaged, while "we haven't even begun to estimate fully what the impact at Offutt is going to be."

She said recovery efforts so far at Tyndall have relied on "robbing" funding from other accounts, "just to try to cope and get through."

The request for additional money comes as President Trump has called for repurposing \$3.6 billion in military construction funding to help build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Wilson denied the supplemental funding request was related to the wall. "No no, it's a completely different issue. This is about recovering from the natural disaster, the Hurricane Michael that hit Tyndall and now the flooding in Nebraska," she said.

The Air Force fiscal year 2020 budget proposal is for \$165 billion, Wilson said.

Flooding prompts criticism of way Missouri River dams run

- JOSH FUNK and JIM SALTER The Associated Press

Mar 29, 2019

OMAHA — After this spring's massive flooding along the Missouri River, many want to blame the agency that manages the river's dams for making the disaster worse, but it may not be that simple.

The Army Corps of Engineers says much of the water that created the flooding came from rain and melting snow that flowed into the river downstream of the dams, and at the same time, massive amounts of water filled the reservoirs and some had to be released.

For instance, the National Weather Service estimates that enough water poured into the reservoir behind Gavin's Point Dam on the South Dakota-Nebraska border during nine days in mid-March to fill the reservoir from empty more than twice.

But many people who live near the Missouri River believe the Corps isn't doing enough to prevent floods or is placing too much emphasis on other priorities, such as protecting endangered species and preserving barge traffic.

Republican U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri said Corps officials told him this week that they treat all eight priorities for the river equally.

"I was told point-blank, 'Flood control is not our top priority. It is not. Period.' They were very firm on that point," Hawley said. "I said, 'You've got to be kidding me.'"

Corps officials say they work to balance all the priorities Congress approved when operating the dams, but no single priority outweighs the others. Their operating model tries to maximize the benefit to several priorities when possible.

Hawley said Congress should consider "serious reform," such as deciding if the Corps should be taken out of the Department of Defense and placed under direction of another agency, such as the Department of Transportation or the Department of the Interior.

The Corps manages the Missouri River's system of dams and locks and decides when and how much water is released from reservoirs into the river. The severe flooding this month in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri has renewed criticism of the Corps' management of the river.

Officials estimate that the flooding caused more than \$1 billion of damage to farms in Nebraska and Iowa, destroying stored crops and killing livestock. And the damage total will grow as floodwaters recede and other states assess conditions.

Nearly 400 farmers, landowners and business operators sued the Corps after the historic 2011 floods — and won. U.S. District Judge Nancy B. Firestone's ruling last year determined that severe Missouri River flooding "was caused by and was the foreseeable result" of the agency's management practices.

R. Dan Boulware, the St. Joseph, Missouri-based attorney for the lawsuit's plaintiffs, said those management practices are still in place, contributing to the flooding this month. He said the Corps stores more water in six upper-Missouri River basins than it needs to, and has also modified structures like dikes.

"The river itself is changed," Boulware said. "It spreads out and it doesn't flow like it used to flow. It's like a sluggish drain — it backs up."

Corps officials declined to discuss the lawsuit because it is still ongoing, but they defended the way they handled this spring's flooding. John Remus oversees the dams, including Gavin's Point Dam, for the Corps.

"There was far more water coming into Gavin's Point than we could hold," Remus said.

And the National Weather Service's Kevin Low said significantly more water poured into the Missouri River from rivers in Nebraska and Iowa with no dams, so officials couldn't regulate the flow from those. Low said the Platte River peaked at over 170,000 cubic feet per second of water on March 17.

Most other rivers that feed into the lower Missouri crested around the same time after heavy rains helped melt lingering snowpack that flowed right into rivers because the ground was still mostly frozen.

Emergency management directors in two northwestern Missouri counties that took the brunt of this year's flood damage have differing views on the Corps' responsibility.

Buchanan County Emergency Management Director Bill Brinton said a dam failure to the north sent a surge of additional water into the river, worsening an already bad situation.

"That dam failed and you had billions of gallons of water," Brinton said. "I don't see how you can blame the Corps. But I seem to be in the minority."

Flint Residents Angered After Stockpile of Bottled Water Discovered in Abandoned Building

By [Pam Wright](#)

2 days ago

weather.com

A stockpile of bottled water discovered in an abandoned building by a trio of "urban explorers" has angered some residents in Flint, Michigan.

Kira Sutkay says she and two men were recently exploring the abandoned building; inside, they found dozens of cases of unused water.

"I was outraged, I really was. We needed that water," Sutkay told WNEM.com. "Flint water distribution places have stopped, and to see that amount of water just sitting there for many years – it's really sad."

In 2014, Flint switched its water supply to the Flint River. Blood tests of the city's children revealed dangerously high lead levels after the change was made. However, an emergency was not declared until 2016, when the city began to distribute bottled water.

Water distribution continued until April 2018 when the city declared the water was safe to drink, but many residents were still reluctant to drink the tap water.

Some churches and organizations still continue to distribute bottled water to some neighborhoods.

A project to replace all of the city's lead pipes is ongoing and is expected to be completed later this year, KCCI.com reported.

Sutkay told the news station the water is likely unusable.

"It's been sitting in sewer water – fecal matter ... it's just not good, unfortunately," she said.

Her companion, Jimmy Cowell, who was with Sutkay when the discovery was made, agreed.

"I wouldn't go in there and take a drink out of it," he said. "I wouldn't give it to my dog and I wouldn't water my plants with it either."

This is the most upsetting way to slice a bagel

Apparently, people in St. Louis "bread-slice" their bagels. And it's angering a lot of people.

March 27, 2019, 3:03 PM CDT / Source: TODAY

By Aly Walansky

Though there are a lot of ways to enjoy bagels, there has been one conventionally accepted way to slice them ... until now.

Enter the good people of St. Louis who, apparently, don't really know how to eat bagels.

Today I introduced my coworkers to the St Louis secret of ordering bagels bread sliced. It was a hit!

On Wednesday, Twitter user [@AleKrautmann](#) sparked a fiery debate when he shared a photo of two boxes of bagels from Panera Bread that had been pre-sliced, not horizontally, but vertically ... like tiny loaves of bread. Sad, sad bread.

"Today I introduced my coworkers to the St Louis secret of ordering bagels bread sliced," he posted. "It was a hit!"

But it was most certainly *not* a hit across social media as thousands of people have since weighed in and many are very, very upset.

While the picture may have sparked ire among bagel lovers everywhere, apparently it really *is* a thing to mutilate bagels if you're from The Gateway to the West.

"Slicing bagels like bread is a well-known secret in St. Louis," Sara Burnett, Panera's director of wellness, told [TODAY Food](#). Burnett has lived in the St. Louis area (where Panera Bread is headquartered) for 15 years. She said that customers anywhere in the country can order their bagels sliced "St.Louis style" (no thanks) and added that it's a great way to try different bagel-and-cream cheese combinations in one sitting.

OK, that's fair.

But not everyone in St. Louis is a fan of bread-slicing bagels. George Mahe, the dining editor at [St. Louis Magazine](#), refers to this method of slicing a bagel as an "atrociousity."

"Vertical slicing is a relatively new phenom, to the best of my knowledge, seemingly popularized by the folks at Panera," Mahe told TODAY via email. "We see a lot of bagels in our office and none are sliced that way. But, I must admit, people do tend to hack away at them, leaving only shards and scraps for the latecomers, so ... I see the genesis of all this."

Though not a fan, Mahe admitted that this phenomenon may have rather innocent roots.

"Rumor has it that some time ago, a local mom requested a bagel sliced that way to make it easier for her child to eat," said Mahe. Admittedly, slicing the bagels into a chip-like shape would certainly make it easier for a little hand to grab.

According to St. Louis resident Sarah Osborn Blue, who is now a pastry chef at Niche Food Group, slicing bagels like bread should really be examined as a totally different way of enjoying the bagel since it's meant to be dipped, and not slathered, in cream cheese. Growing up, she said, it was very common to see bagels sliced like bread in her hometown.

However, she warned, this should never be done with a toasted bagel. "I have no idea of a person [who] started this trend but, honestly, I think it might be one of the original St. Louis Bread Co. [which is now Panera] staff. I just know at 32, I have known that at Bread Co. you order your bagel bread sliced. It's just what you do," said Blue.

Though Burnett wouldn't confirm whether a Panera employee had started the slicing trend years ago, the company is having a field day with the attention:

Our team is divided over here. Do other people slice their bagel Bread Co style?

Whether these bread-sliced bagels are a novel St. Louis tradition or not, Twitter (and pretty much everyone in America who doesn't live in Missouri) is not happy about this "secret" revelation:

First, cinnamon raisin bagels with lox and now this. What's next in the war on bagels?

How the Lakers Wasted Year 1 of Lebron

Dave McMenamin ESPN Staff Writer

The Los Angeles Lakers will miss the playoffs for a sixth consecutive season. LeBron James' season will end in April for the first time since 2004-05, his second year in the NBA, snapping personal streaks of 13 straight postseason appearances and eight straight NBA Finals berths.

There is rarely a single moment that derails a team's entire season. For the 2018-19 Lakers, there is plenty of blame to go around. From injuries, to underwhelming player production, to questionable management decisions, the most anticipated season in L.A. in years morphed into a cautionary tale that could be retold around the league for decades. This is how the Lakers got here.

IN THE SUMMER of 2017, long before LeBron slipped on a purple and gold uniform and before Lance Stephenson was the star of "Air Band Cam" on the Jumbotron at Staples Center, Paul George was traded from the Indiana Pacersto the Oklahoma City Thunder.

George, a Southern California native who long stated his desire to return to play near his Palmdale home, was perceived to be a rental player on an expiring contract. Just taking a pit stop with the Thunder before joining the lineage of Lakers greats, many around the league assumed.

When he veered from that course and re-signed with Oklahoma City in the summer of 2018, league sources told ESPN it was always more of what the Thunder did right than what the Lakers did wrong. The Thunder traded for him, after all, taking a chance with no promises of a long-term commitment. Then they worked to make him feel at home, selling a partnership with Russell Westbrook.

George never gave the Lakers an opportunity to take their shot. But he had a wealth of information available to him about the inner workings of the Lakers without ever hearing a word from Magic Johnson. For example, George played in Oklahoma City with Corey Brewer in the second half of the 2017-18 season, after Brewer was waived by L.A. in February. Brewer divulged his Lakers experience to George, sources said.

And George's agent, Aaron Mintz of CAA, was intimately familiar with the organization. Before Rich Paul of Klutch Sports garnered attention representing two clients on the Lakers -- LeBron and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope -- Mintz represented two-fifths of the starting lineup, D'Angelo Russell and Julius Randle. (Mintz and Paul aren't alone with their seeming outsized influence; Jeff Schwartz of Excel Sports Management currently advises both Brandon Ingram and Tyson Chandler, and Joe Branch of Roc Nation Sports reps Moe Wagner and Josh Hart.)

Paul George didn't hide his desire to return to Southern California in 2017 and play for the Lakers. Ohm Youngmisuk/ESPN

Russell, taken with the No. 2 pick in 2015, and Randle, the No. 7 pick in 2014, were drafted by the previous front-office regime, general manager Mitch Kupchak and vice president Jim Buss.

Once Johnson and Rob Pelinka took over in February 2017, their vision was simple: Develop the young talent they already had, but also clear cap space to pursue free agents like James, who they believed could fast-track the franchise's path back to relevance.

Their first task: offloading Timofey Mozgov, signed to a four-year, \$64 million deal just seven months prior by Kupchak and Buss in their final, fatal free agency in charge of the team. Johnson and Pelinka found a taker in Brooklyn, sending Russell and Mozgov east for Brook Lopez and the No. 27 pick in the 2017 draft.

Giving up on Russell -- a pace-and-space guard suited for the modern NBA -- after just two seasons was a risk, but L.A. got back a former All-Star in Lopez and a pick that turned into Kyle Kuzma. Plus, L.A. got out from under Mozgov's monstrosity of a deal.

But rather than leave well enough alone, Johnson couldn't help but take a swipe at Russell on the guard's way out the door.

"He has the talent to be an All-Star. We want to thank him for what he did for us. But what I needed was a leader," Johnson said days after the trade in June 2017. "I needed somebody also that can make the other players better and also [somebody] that players want to play with."

The following season, Randle -- Mintz's other client on the Lakers -- saw his role fluctuate, bouncing from starter to bench player, from playing big minutes to a much more limited role.

Only after pressure from fans and media mounted did the team stabilize Randle's role.

At least that's how it was perceived, stirring questions of just how strong the organization's backbone was if it could succumb to public scrutiny.

Four months later, when the Lakers' pursuit of James to fill the same forward slot Randle occupied had become widely known, the former Kentucky product again became an afterthought.

Even though the Lakers controlled Randle's rights as a restricted free agent, L.A. never made an offer to him, sources told ESPN. This despite coach Luke Walton and his staff's preference to keep Randle, as earlier reported by The Athletic and confirmed by ESPN.

Mintz eventually asked the Lakers to renounce Randle's rights and navigated his client to the New Orleans Pelicans, where he signed a two-year, \$18 million contract with a player option on the second year. Randle was won over, sources said, by the fact that the Pelicans really wanted him -- which wasn't the feeling he got from the Lakers.

L.A. signed Rajon Rondo to a one-year, \$9 million deal with money it theoretically could have offered to Randle. This after the Lakers agreed to a one-year, \$12 million deal to re-sign Caldwell-Pope. Any offer to Randle that was below what Caldwell-Pope received was untenable, considering Randle was more productive the previous season. Especially so with Randle playing in all 82 games and Caldwell-Pope available for just 74 because of legal issues.

And so it was with that background that Paul George, who donned No. 24 when he arrived in the NBA because of his childhood affinity for Kobe Bryant, didn't even grant the Lakers a meeting.

He didn't waste anyone's time, throwing a party with Westbrook in Oklahoma City celebrating his new deal the minute free agency opened that Saturday night. The consequences of George's decision forced L.A. to roll over its cap flexibility in the hopes of landing another star in the summer of 2019 -- and ultimately wasting James' first year with the Lakers.

- June 30, 2018: Los Angeles waives center Thomas Bryant, a 2017 draft-night acquisition from the Utah Jazz along with Hart, because the Lakers do not want to guarantee his \$1.4 million salary.
- July 1, 2018: James agrees to a four-year, \$153.3 million contract with the Lakers.
- July 2, 2018: James embarks on a yacht vacation in Positano, Italy, off the Amalfi Coast, tipping off an atypical offseason with less basketball, skipping USA Basketball's training camp.
- July 6, 2018: Caldwell-Pope signs a one-year, \$12 million contract to re-up with the Lakers, and Rondo signs a one-year, \$9 million contract to come to L.A.
- July 8, 2018: Lopez leaves the Lakers and signs a one-year, \$3.3 million contract with the Milwaukee Bucks. He later tells The Lowe Post Podcast he was "a little surprised" the Lakers didn't work harder to keep him because he "would have wanted to play there."
- July 10, 2018: Stephenson signs a one-year, \$4.4 million contract with the Lakers and JaVale McGee signs a one-year, \$2.4 million deal.
- July 17, 2018: Lonzo Ball undergoes arthroscopic surgery on his left knee.
- July 23, 2018: Michael Beasley signs a one-year, \$3.5 million contract with the Lakers.
- Aug. 5, 2018: Las Vegas opens the line on the Lakers' win total at 48.5, giving L.A. a spot in the Western Conference playoffs.

- Sept. 20, 2018: Magic and Pelinka give a news conference four days before the Lakers hold media day. "As I was talking to Luke [along with Pelinka], we said don't worry about if we get out to a bad start," Johnson said.

IN THE SEASON opener, on the road against the Portland Trail Blazers, the Lakers seemingly couldn't hit a shot.

They were 7-for-30 from 3-point territory (23.3 percent), with Blazers bench player Nik Stauskas nearly matching that output on his own (he hit five of Portland's 13 makes from deep). The Blazers pulled away late to win 128-119.

The Lakers' home opener two nights later was far worse. The Lakers trailed the Houston Rockets heading into the fourth quarter when, halfway through the final frame, James Harden collided with a defending Ingram on a fast-break attempt. Ingram shoved Harden after a whistle, resulting in a technical foul.

Punches thrown, Rondo, CP3 and Ingram tossed

James Harden is shoved by Brandon Ingram while going up for a basket, leading to Rajon Rondo, Chris Paul and Ingram throwing punches, with all three ejected.

Tempers flared. Rondo spat in Chris Paul's face. Paul, in turn, poked Rondo in the head. The two point guards exchanged punches, and then Ingram re-entered the melee, throwing a wild haymaker that didn't land.

A tight game against the Rockets turned into a 124-115 loss, with the Lakers shooting 1-for-9 from 3 in the fourth quarter and 8-for-32 overall (25 percent). L.A. was 0-2. Ingram was suspended four games for the altercation. Rondo was suspended three.

Through just two games, the two most pervasive issues the team would face all season had already emerged: a struggle to connect on 3-point shots and a struggle to keep key personnel on the floor.

The fact that Ball was still recovering from offseason surgery and James was rounding into shape only made the job harder. And with no Lopez or Bryant on the roster and early attempts to play Kuzma and Beasley at small-ball center unsuccessful, there was no choice but to rely on undrafted, 6-foot-9 rookie Johnathan Williams to play backup minutes behind McGee.

Through the first seven games, the Lakers tried 93 different lineups -- second most in the league -- as Walton scrambled to find something that worked.

And after a 2-5 start, Johnson called Walton into a meeting, expressing disappointment and demanding better results from his coach.

Johnson's preseason talk preaching patience to the fan base was just that: talk. The marching orders changed before L.A. had played a tenth of the season.

- Oct. 29, 2018: The Lakers lose 124-120 on the road to the 2-4 Minnesota Timberwolves -- days after the Wolves lost by 30 points against Milwaukee -- as Jimmy Butler scored 32. James, after Walton changes his substitution pattern in the first quarter, appears listless.
- Nov. 5, 2018: Magic dressing down Walton goes public.

- Nov. 6, 2018: Chandler signs with the Lakers after being waived by a Phoenix Suns team helmed by general manager James Jones, LeBron's longtime teammate. Chandler fills the void at backup center, sending Williams back to the G League.
- Nov. 14, 2018: Rondo fractures his right hand trying to stop a fall in a 126-117 victory against the Blazers. He misses the next 17 games.
- Dec. 5, 2018: Ingram sprains his ankle in a 121-113 win over the San Antonio Spurs. He misses seven games.
- Dec. 15, 2018: Stephenson gets a technical foul for playing the air guitar against the Charlotte Hornets. The Lakers win 128-100.
- Dec. 16, 2018: McGee misses the first of seven consecutive games due to a bout with pneumonia.

ON DEC. 18, three days before the Lakers would host the Pelicans for the first time this season, James was asked by ESPN how he would feel about playing with Anthony Davis.

"That would be amazing," James told ESPN in the visitor's locker room at Barclays Center. "That would be amazing, like, duh. That would be incredible."

Even though the season had stabilized -- the Lakers went 18-9 in their previous 27 games coming into the Brooklyn game -- the conversation was a reminder of the big fish L.A. was hoping to reel in.

A source familiar with the three-hour meeting James had at his home with Johnson on the eve of his free-agency decision told ESPN that Davis' name never came up when the two discussed future plans. But when the Lakers signed Rondo, Stephenson, Beasley, et al. to one-year contracts after George stuck with the Thunder, the message was clear: L.A. was hell-bent on pairing LeBron with a max-level free agent in the summer of 2019 -- with the possibility to upgrade the roster via a trade even before that.

L.A., sources said, was one of several teams to inquire about Butler before the swingman was traded to Philadelphia, for instance.

One team source told ESPN that they didn't feel as though James fully engaged with the younger teammates prior to the trade deadline.

Of course, the age gap between James, 34, and players in their early 20s could have contributed to any perceived distance. In October, James said his 14- and 11-year-old sons, Bronny and Bryce, introduced him to a lot of the pop culture that his teammates listened to and watched.

In Miami, James played with two perennial All-Stars, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh. In his second stint in Cleveland, he played with two All-Stars coming into their own, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love. James' L.A. teammates, while rich in potential, didn't fit the same profile. Davis did.

James' discussion of Davis was met with calls of tampering by some general managers, citing a shared connection of the same agent, Rich Paul.

With Davis under contract until 2020, the only way LeBron would get the "incredible" experience of playing alongside him -- without waiting out his first two seasons as a Laker -- would be L.A. trading assets to bring The Brow to the South Bay.

James' endorsement would send shock waves through the Lakers' locker room.

"The only players whose play hasn't been affected by the trade talks are James and Rajon Rondo," a team source told ESPN.

Any player with visions of playing his professional basketball career out in sunny Los Angeles could only wait on circumstances outside of his control.

- Dec. 25, 2018: James suffers a strained left groin against the Golden State Warriors. James misses 17 games over the next five weeks, making it the most significant injury of his 16-year career. The Lakers win 127-101.
- Dec. 28, 2018: James arrives at Staples Center with a glass of red wine before the Lakers' 118-107 loss to the Clippers. Los Angeles goes 3-7 in its first 10 games without James.
- Jan. 19, 2019: Ball, wearing Big Baller Brand sneakers, severely sprains his left ankle after colliding with the Rockets' James Ennis III in the third quarter and is carried off the court by his teammates. The Lakers blow a 21-point lead and lose 138-134 in overtime.
- Jan. 22, 2019: On The Lowe Post podcast, Lakers owner Jeanie Buss urges her front office to resist the temptation to make drastic deals at the trade deadline just to fulfill the organization's goal of getting back to the postseason.

"I think that Magic has been patient, I think Rob Pelinka has done amazing things in terms of giving our roster flexibility and not taking a shortcut to try to just make the playoffs, only to lose in the first round," Buss says. "They see the picture and they're taking those steps. You have to be patient because things can't change overnight. Although, in two years, I find it very remarkable where we are. I think they've exceeded my expectations in turning the program around and they're not going to take a shortcut to try to get a quick fix just to try to make the playoffs and shortchange any of our assets."

- Jan. 28, 2019: Davis publicly requests a trade from the Pelicans. Like several teams around the league, the Lakers prepare a trade package to offer.
- Feb. 2, 2019: Walton calls out several players for their selfish approach after a 115-101 loss to the Warriors.
- Feb. 5, 2019: In the midst of an embarrassing 42-point loss to the Pacers, one of the indelible images of the season emerges: James sitting at the end of the bench, alone, with several empty seats between him and his next-closest teammate. James typically sits at the end of the bench, but with Indiana fans pelting "LeBron's gonna trade you!" chants at Lakers teammates, the perception is damning.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, Luke Walton's time as an assistant coach with the Warriors was an unabashed success -- he won a title in 2015 and guided them to a 39-4 record as interim head coach the following season.

And even if he couldn't take either of the Splash Bros. with him down the coast to Los Angeles, Walton could try to replicate small elements of Golden State's enviable team culture.

His first attempt? Recreating Steve Kerr's competition board, which was used in practice to track individual victories.

Luke Walton used a competition board to try to replicate the team culture in Golden State. Dave McMenamin/ESPN

"It could be anything," Lakers assistant coach Clay Moser -- the man tasked with adding up the daily tallies for the board -- explained when asked how the scoring works. "It could be in a scrimmage. It could be in a shooting competition. It could be if a guy gets an answer to a question correctly. Like, we'll ask them, 'Hey what's [Player X's] weakness,' and if they answer correctly, we might give them a win."

It served as a great equalizer for the group. Even if a decorated player like LeBron came into the season with All-Star appearances, MVPs and championships, none of those credits earned him extra tallies in practice. And vice versa, even if a player had yet to accomplish anything of consequence in the league, he could stand out in practice. To paraphrase Rasheed Wallace, board don't lie.

"When we walk past it and see what the scores are looking like and who is ahead, it hypes us up for next game," Caldwell-Pope said. "Like, 'I'm going to try to get this many deflections or steals.' Whatever it takes."

For second-year center Ivica Zubac, who received 20 DNPs in the Lakers' first 27 games this season, the leaderboard became his lifeline.

"It means a lot," Zubac said in December. "People can't see me playing because I'm not in the rotation. So I know I'm doing a good job when I see myself up on the board and I'm in second place. I know I'm doing something right and it means a lot for my confidence."

When Zubac finally got meaningful minutes, he averaged 17.7 points and 8.7 rebounds, including an 18-point, 11-board effort on Christmas Day.

Zubac -- drafted as a raw 7-1, 240-pound center in the second round in 2016 -- had turned himself into a viable prospect under Walton.

And then, at the trade deadline, that prospect was gone. The Lakers sent Zubac and Beasley to the L.A. Clippers for Mike Muscala, primarily to clear a roster spot for a potential playoff push.

The Lakers had visions of signing a shooter such as Wayne Ellington, or another big man such as DeAndre Jordan or Enes Kanter, or possibly even signing Carmelo Anthony.

None of those things happened.

Giving up Zubac to add an impactful player to the roster would have been a necessary cost. Trading a promising player to free Beasley's spot -- who the Lakers could've simply cut -- for Muscala, who shot 20.8 percent from 3 in his first 11 games with L.A., was a self-inflicted wound.

Shortly after the trade deadline, Clippers consultant Jerry West -- who spent more than 40 years with the Lakers as a player, coach and executive -- got together for dinner with old friends who also had former Laker ties, sources said. He couldn't believe how Zubac fell into his lap. The Clippers, sources

said, never even called the Lakers to inquire about Zubac. The Lakers made the offer and the Clippers gladly accepted.

Sources said those at the dinner table shared a hearty laugh at the Lakers' expense.

- Feb. 8, 2019: After acquiring Reggie Bullock and Muscala at the trade deadline, Pelinka touts the players as the difference-makers L.A. is searching for.

"I almost look at Bullock and Muscala, my hope is, much like [Julian] Edelman was," Pelinka says, referencing the New England Patriots' wideout who overcame an early-season suspension to go on to win Super Bowl MVP. "It's just one player, but that can have such a big impact on overall chemistry and I hope those two guys can come in and have that impact."

- Feb. 9, 2019: Attending a Michigan State game, Johnson tells the media he plans to join the Lakers in Philadelphia to help them cope with the fallout of the trade deadline. "I'm going to hug 'em and tell them that we got to come together and our goal is still in reach, which is to make the playoffs."
- Feb. 10, 2019: Before the game in Philadelphia, Johnson tells the media to stop treating the players like "babies." He also says Ben Simmons requested a workout, but Sixers GM Elton Brand said no. The Lakers lose 143-120, whatever momentum built up from Rondo's winner at the buzzer in Boston the game before promptly ends.

IN THE ILL-FATED 2012-13 season, Memphis, Tennessee, was where all of the Lakers' pent-up dysfunction spilled out.

Bryant, Dwight Howard, Steve Nash & Co. aired their grievances at a morning shootaround, leaving Howard in near tears in the locker room, according to sources. Howard had to be coaxed out to join the team on the court after everyone had said their piece.

On an off day in Memphis following a 128-115 loss to an Anthony Davis-less Pelicans team on Feb. 23, the LeBron James-led Lakers had their own air-it-out session. Rondo organized the players-only meeting to find "a better understanding of one another," a team source told ESPN.

The timing was prompted by James, who aired his grievances to the media one night earlier, openly questioning his teammates' experience and readiness to meet the challenge of making the playoffs. "How many know what's at stake if you've never been there?" James asked, later declaring that he never has been and never will be accustomed to losing. The fact that Davis' home arena was the venue for James' venting only made his words come off stronger, as Davis was the player the Lakers made a run at.

The brand of the Los Angeles Lakers is simply not enough on its own to overcome what has been the most forgettable decade in franchise history.

The meeting in Memphis was a retort of sorts. In what became an open forum, several players spoke up. Players focused on James' inconsistent body language throughout the year. The four-time MVP copped to the critique, telling his teammates that, in essence, cutting out behavior like slumped shoulders and sideways glances has been something he has tried to work on his entire career.

The next night, James seemed to take the criticism to heart, putting his arms around guys during huddles, looking engaged during timeouts, and being vocal on defense -- but the Lakers still lost, 110-105, to a Grizzlies team that had lost 17 of their previous 20 games.

"Just because [the meeting] was positive doesn't mean we're going to win 25 games in a row," a team source told ESPN.

After the Memphis game, the Lakers continued to crumble, going 2-10 over their next 12 games.

The Los Angeles Lakers were eliminated from playoff contention on March 22. ESPN Stats & Info

- March 2, 2019: At the MIT Sloan Analytics Conference in Boston, Jeanie Buss lambasts the media's coverage of the Lakers' pursuit of Davis.

"There was a lot of hype and things written about a potential trade leading into the trade deadline -- all of it false," Buss says. During a different panel discussion, Buss also says, in part, "The biggest challenge for [us is] the 'fake news' about how we were supposedly trading our entire roster for a certain player, which is completely not true. But those stories leak out and it hurt our young players. It wasn't fair." Her comments are made less than a month after Magic Johnson publicly acknowledged the trade talks with the Pelicans and said New Orleans was negotiating in bad faith.

- March 2, 2019: The Lakers lose 118-109 to the Phoenix Suns, and LeBron adds to the season's blooper reel, throwing an inbounds pass off the back of the backboard, resulting in a turnover. "That was just silly on my part," James said. "... That was just stupidity on my part."
- March 6, 2019: Down 13 to the Denver Nuggets with just over two minutes to go, the Lakers rolled the inbound pass up the court. James lets the ball roll past half court, all the way to the 3-point line before trying to gather it. Denver's Paul Millsap makes a stab at the ball, causing James to knock the ball out of bounds. In the final minutes of the game, Rondo checks out of the game and plants himself in a courtside seat, away from the bench. Rondo has done this before, but analyst Mark Jackson rips him during the broadcast, "There's no excuse for that."
- March 8, 2019: The Lakers gather at their El Segundo, California, training center for team photo day. Illustrating the disarray of the season, several members of the coaching staff wear mismatched polo shirts to the shoot -- a detail that is overlooked after the team parted with longtime equipment manager Carlos Maples earlier in the season.
- March 9, 2019: On the same day the Lakers announce Ingram will miss the remainder of the season with a deep venous thrombosis in his right shoulder, it is reported that Ball's ankle sprain and ensuing bone bruise will also end his season. Ingram played in just 52 games, and Ball played in 47. His rookie season was cut to 52 games because of a knee injury. LeBron, Ingram, Ball and Kuzma combine to play just 23 games together. L.A. goes 15-8 in those games.
- March 17, 2019: L.A. blows an 11-point lead with 3:44 remaining in the fourth quarter at Madison Square Garden. Mario Hezonja blocks LeBron's potential game-winning attempt in the final seconds. LeBron goes 4-for-15 from the field in the fourth -- the 11 missed shots representing the most he has ever missed in a quarter.

- March 22, 2019: The Nets officially eliminate the Lakers from playoff contention. Former No. 2 Lakers pick D'Angelo Russell has 21 points.
- March 28, 2019: Brook Lopez goes 2-for-5 from 3, bringing his season total to 181 made 3-pointers. Caldwell-Pope leads the Lakers with the most made 3-pointers in the 2018-19 season with 127 made.

DURING A MORNING shootaround on the Lakers' final extended road trip of the season, James stood on the baseline in Milwaukee and saw teammates get up shots around the perimeter. Some went in, some didn't. Typical shootaround stuff. In a discussion with ESPN, James mulls over how many missed shots L.A. had this season and how things could have been different had more of those 3s fallen.

Those misses on the Lakers' opening night at the Moda Center never seemed to stop -- the Lakers ranked last in the league at making wide-open 3s, defined as the closest defender being more than 6 feet away, as the final couple weeks of the season approached.

For the first time in years, James wasn't surrounded by elite-level shooters. And for the first time in years, his team wasn't going to be playing in the postseason.

What did James think of the Lakers' grand experiment? How did he view the idea of prioritizing playmaking over shooting.

"That experiment?" James said of the roster construction for his first season in L.A.

James stared out onto the court for a moment, turned his attention back to the conversation, pursed his lips and stuck out his tongue as he trumpeted air out of his mouth, making a raspberry sound.

"THBPBPTHPT!"

For 35 years, Garfield phones kept washing ashore in France. Now the mystery has been solved.

POSTED 12:07 PM, MARCH 29, 2019, BY JOE MILLITZER

For 35 years, parts of Garfield novelty telephones have been washing up on the shores of the Brittany region of France, and no one knew why.

Now the mystery has been solved: The cat-shaped phones are coming from a long-lost shipping container, reports the BBC.

Renewed attention to the weird phenomenon prompted a local farmer to come forward to say that decades ago, he had seen the shipping container lodged in a cave by the sea. He led a group of environmentalists to the site at low tide, and voila—there was the container, along with telltale orange plastic phones and parts.

"We found this incredible fissure that is (100 feet) deep and at the very bottom, there were the remains of a container," says the leader of a local beach-cleaning group, per AFP.

"Under the boulders in front of the entrance, we found 23 complete handsets with electronics and wires. They were everywhere."

The phones were hot items back in the 1980s, notes [Gizmodo](#), and they remain collectors' items to this day. (Read more [Garfield](#) stories.)

Today's Forecast

Patchy showers through Friday afternoon but a good amount of dry time. Southerly winds will continue to bring in milder air...afternoon highs in the mid to upper 60°s. Showers and storms expected this evening into tonight. Rain will be heavy at times. Showers continue into Saturday morning and gradually taper off from northwest to southeast through the morning and early afternoon. Saturday morning temps will start off in the 50°s but will fall to the 40°s by the afternoon. Winds will also be a bit gusty. Sunday will be dry and cool with highs in the low 50°s. – Jaime Travers