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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Comedian Bill Cosby convicted of sexual assault in retrial

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Reuters) - Comedian Bill Cosby was convicted on Thursday of drugging and sexually assaulting a onetime friend in 2004, marking the first such conviction of a celebrity since the #MeToo movement that has brought down rich and powerful men for their treatment of women.

Cosby, 80, best known as the lovable father from the 1980s TV hit "The Cosby Show," faces up to 10 years in prison for each of three counts of aggravated indecent assault against Andrea Constand, 45, following a three-week trial at the Montgomery County courthouse in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

After weeks of maintaining decorum during the trial, Cosby exploded following the verdict when prosecutors asked the judge to take him into custody, saying he was a flight risk in part because he owned a plane.

"He doesn't have a plane, you asshole!" Cosby responded in a booming voice as he leapt to feet. Moments earlier, as the verdict was read, Cosby looked down with a sad expression. Lili Bernard, one of his many accusers, began sobbing. Constand sat stone-faced.

Judge Steven O'Neill ruled that Cosby could remain out of jail on \$1 million bail pending sentencing at a later date, as long as he surrendered

his passport and remained at home.

Cosby then left the courthouse with his lawyers and publicist.

"The fight will go on," defense lawyer Thomas Mesereau told reporters, insisting on Cosby's innocence.

The conviction marks the downfall of a man once celebrated as "America's Dad" but whose reputation was ruined after some 50 women accused him of similar offenses going back decades.

Only one of those cases was recent enough to be eligible for prosecution, that of Constand, a former administrator for the women's basketball team at Temple University, Cosby's alma mater.

Attorney Gloria Allred, who represents 33 of the Cosby accusers, rejoiced that Cosby was found "guilty, guilty, guilty."

"We are so happy that finally we can say, women are believed, and not only on #MeToo, but in a court of law," Allred told reporters.

Other Cosby accusers celebrated the verdict with hugs, cries, and applause.

"It's a victory not just for the 62 of us who have come forward but for all survivors of sexual assault, female and male," Bernard told reporters, using a high estimate of the number of Cosby's accusers. "I feel like my faith in humanity is restored."

The seven-man, five-woman jury reached a unanimous verdict after deliberating for 14 hours over two days.



Actor and comedian Bill Cosby exits Montgomery County Courthouse after a jury convicted him in a sexual assault retrial in Norristown

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Today we learned that used caskets can be sold for scrap metal

By Craig Hlavaty

Houston scrap metal king Dennis Laviage has seen everything in his time as owner and CEO of C&D Scrap Metal over the decades. He's the guy who will pay you in \$2 bills, as he shouts in his TV commercials.

On Wednesday afternoon, he received a used casket from an area funeral home. This isn't especially rare. Many times funeral homes will come around to recycle dented or damaged products that have only been used for viewings for the deceased, who were cremated later. Sometimes they are obsolete floor models that have been used in showrooms, where grieving family members need to decide how their loved ones will spend their eternal slumber. We don't plan on taking these money-saving secrets to the grave with us.

"We've had very expensive damaged copper caskets come in as well," Laviage says. It's treated like any other large piece of scrap metal, he notes.

Wednesday afternoon was the first time, he tells Chron.com, that he received a casket that had been used for an extended period of time.

A woman had been buried inside it for three years before her husband decided to exhume her remains and have her cremated so he could travel with her cremains.

According to Laviage, the steel casket arrived sealed and closed inside plastic on a wooden pallet.

"I needed to have it opened to make sure it didn't have a body in it," he says. Upon opening it he discovered that it had been occupied for some time. The stench was unbearable, he says. "The odor was bad enough that even I wanted to die," he says. Laviage says that there were remnants of hair still inside the casket lining.

Laviage and C&D didn't end up paying the funeral home for the scrap casket, but they did take it off the company's hands. It was subsequently crushed and shredded and will be recycled into rebar material.

He made sure to document the proceedings for his Facebook followers with detailed video. Thankfully, Mark Zuckerberg hasn't perfected a smelling option for Facebook.

"I've bought lots of crazy stuff in my time," Laviage says. "But this takes the cake."

In 2004 he received a portion of the stage from Janet Jackson's infamous Super Bowl performance in Houston, where she flashed her bare, pierced nipple and breast to the chagrin of millions. He later sold it on eBay for \$6,800. Bloomberg News reported in March last year.



Residential projects prop up Houston area construction starts

The value of new construction projects started in the Houston area fell in March, even with the residential component experiencing a 25 percent spike, Dodge Data & Analytics reported.

New construction projects totaled \$1.59 billion in March, down 7 percent from \$1.7 billion in March 2017. New residential projects totaled \$979.2 million in March, up from \$786.2 million in March 2017. The figures include the value of single-family and apartment construction.

Amy Goldstein, a member of the United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston, prepares for the Rosh Hashanah holiday, which started Wednesday. The synagogue was heavily damaged by Hurricane Harvey, as were hundreds of homes of its congregants. This year, they're holding services in a small, elevated hall that was salvaged after the storm.

The value of new nonresidential building projects - including office, retail, hotel, health care, churches and other categories - fell 33 percent

year-over-year to \$611.7 million in March.

Year to date, the value of residential projects is up 27 percent to \$2.86 billion, while the value of nonresidential projects fell 47 percent to \$1.49 billion. Overall, the construction starts total is down 14 percent year to date to \$4.35 billion.

The Dodge Data numbers reflect projects in the 10-county Houston metro area.

In a separate report tracking the value of City of Houston permits in March, both residential and commercial rose.

City building permits totaled \$509.1 million, up 8.1 percent from March 2017.

The value of commercial permits increased 5.1 percent to \$319.6 million, while residential permit values increased 13.5 percent to \$189.4 million, the Greater Houston Partnership said in a report. for a new CPA or tax preparer, would you blindly send your important tax documents as an attachment?

But that's part of the scam. Crooks want tax professionals to download a virus onto their computers.

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Editor's Choice Pictures



Terri Irwin, wife of late Steve Irwin, speaks next to Bindi and Robert Irwin, Irwin's children, during the posthumous unveiling of a star for television personality and nature enthusiast Steve Irwin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame outside the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, U.S., April 26, 2018.



Attorney Gloria Allred stands with accusers of actor and comedian Bill Cosby after a jury convicted him in a sexual assault retrial at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Norristown



Britain's Prince William and Prince Harry attend the opening of the Greenhouse Sports Centre in central London



People shout slogans during a protest outside Ministry of Justice after a Spanish court condemned five men accused of the group rape of an 18-year-old woman at the 2016 San Fermin bull running festival to nine years in prison each for the lesser crime of sexual abuse in Madrid, Spain, April 26, 2018. REUTERS/Sergio Perez



Europa League Semi Final First Leg - Olympique de Marseille vs RB Salzburg



Employees prepare to check Binh Yen, a female moon bear, during her rescue from a bear farm for bile trading to a bear sanctuary, an animal welfare project by Four Paws in Ninh Binh province



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visits Switzerland



Models wait at the backstage before Amapo collection show during the Sao Paulo Fashion Week



U.S. President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Michael Cohen departs federal court in the Manhattan borough of New York



Worried About Your Facebook Data? Many Facebook Users Aren't Worried

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Last weekend, the New York Times revealed that data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica misused data from as many as 50 million Facebook profiles to aid messaging tied to the Trump campaign in the 2016 presidential election.

The Federal Trade Commission has since opened an investigation into Facebook, but the entire incident has left social media users concerned about their own privacy online and how their information is being used. The Cambridge Analytica case has revealed the extent to which Facebook collects and sells user data. What does this mean for the average social media user?

At this point, if you've already given Facebook information, then the horse is out of the barn and you're not going to get it back in. One of the problems with the design of the programming interface these Facebook apps use is that sometimes your own settings don't protect you. By default, when someone installs a Facebook app, it can access not only your data but all your friends' data.

It also means you've given data away not only to Facebook but probably to even more subtle sources. If you wanted to be able to share your photos from iPhone, for example, so that you can post those photos directly to Facebook, that means that iPhone got access to data about you, including things like employment history. Hopefully the Cambridge Analytica story can help people realize the extent to which their information is being used, and that they need to limit what is known about them online moving forward. What are some practical steps that users can take to protect themselves?

There's a spectrum of what people can do to protect themselves. You can take it to the extreme and delete your Facebook profile and all other social media. There are a lot of people saying that's what people should do in response, but I don't think that's entirely practical. Facebook and some other platforms like Twitter are actually essential for the things we do, and at some point it's really the main way that people access vital information.

Instead, the first thing you can do is de-authorize those apps you don't need. If you participated in a personality survey like the one that Cambridge Analytica used, you probably want to turn that off and revoke access. Facebook has a settings interface that allows you to lock down information being shared and restrict apps installed by your friends that can see your own information. That's a concrete thing you can do to at least

limit the data collection going forward. Another thing to be aware of is that if you're still in Facebook and you didn't explicitly log out of the site, then anytime you visit a website that has a Facebook 'like' button, your browser is actually communicating with Facebook to let it know that you and your specific profile, not just an anonymous person, is visiting that website. So, these privacy protections that you've set within the Facebook interface only protect you within Facebook, but it doesn't mean they're not still collecting data about you as you go elsewhere on the web.

It's important for people to realize that just trying to improve privacy in one place on the internet is generally not going to protect you from things like profile-based targeting. Should these precautions be taken on all social media platforms, not just Facebook?

Absolutely. Everybody is focusing on Facebook right now because it's been in the news, but the way every social media platform makes money is by selling your data. It's important to be aware that most apps you use have some type of tracking software built in. Some of it can be controlled by restricting the data you make available to social network platforms, but only to the extent that the platforms have privacy settings limiting how they can share that data.

The general recommendation, though, is this: when you decide to install and use an app, think twice about whether you need the app. And, if you do use the app, think twice about the information that you provide to it. You should assume that any information you provide may be shared with other parties. Think of your online privacy like you think of any other hygiene — if you don't brush your teeth, they'll fall out. If you don't take practices to protect your privacy, your data is going to get out there. (Courtesy <https://phys.org/news/>)

Related

Facebook Meets Congress: Zuckerberg Goes To Capitol Hill



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg leaves the office of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., after meeting with her on Capitol Hill on Monday. (Photo/Getty Images)

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg will face Congress in two separate hearings this week, as his company grapples with intense scrutiny over privacy and security on the social media site. It will be Zuckerberg's first appearance on Capitol Hill.

On Tuesday afternoon, more than 40 senators crowded into a hearing room, where members of the Senate judiciary and commerce committees will have four minutes each to question Zuckerberg. A similar scene will play out Wednesday, when he is set to appear before members of House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Both hearings are expected to be lengthy spectacles following in the long tradition of widely televised congressional inquisitions into corporate scandals — like the 1994 testimony of tobacco CEOs, the probe into steroids in baseball in 2005 and the interrogation of banking executives after the 2008 economic crash.

Five Points To Know About The Facebook Hearings

1. Congress wants answers on what Facebook really knew about Cambridge Analytica.

The high-profile hearing was announced in response to widespread public outcry over the news that the private information of some 87 million users was shared with a political data firm, Cambridge Analytica, in violation of Facebook's policies. The information was gathered through an app created in 2013 that invited people to take a personality quiz, while also collecting some data from friends of the quiz takers.

TECHNOLOGY

The data breach took a political turn because Cambridge Analytica, a British firm, has ties to former White House adviser Steve Bannon and Republican megadonor Robert Mercer. The firm played a role in the 2016 presidential election, first working with Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and then with the Trump campaign. A source close to the Trump operation says psychological profiling was not part of that effort. Cambridge Analytica released a statement on its website on Monday denying the company provided any "polling, data analytics and digital marketing for the Trump campaign."

Democrats in particular want to know whether the firm exploited users' private information to influence the outcome of the presidential election.

Facebook now says it had stopped these kind of data grabs back in 2014, but news reports suggest Cambridge Analytica did not destroy the data as it had certified to Facebook.

POLITICS

Some lawmakers, including Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Select Committee on Intelligence, raised questions about Cambridge Analytica in the past and say they are frustrated that Facebook dismissed their concerns.

Now lawmakers want answers directly from Zuckerberg about what he knew and did not know about how firms like Cambridge were using and accessing user data.

2. Congress wants to make a public show of grilling Zuckerberg ...

The hearings on Tuesday and Wednesday are expected to be a massive spectacle with TV cameras lining the staid chamber. The room will be jam-packed with lawmakers angling for their sliver of airtime.

The hearings are a chance for each lawmaker to show voters that they care about the public outrage surrounding the Cambridge Analytica scandal, even if Congress fails to pass any laws in response to the outcry.

THE TWO-WAY

Congress has grown increasingly worried about the role of social media sites in politics since it was revealed that Russia used platforms like Facebook and Twitter to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. Lawmakers have repeatedly questioned Facebook, Twitter and Google on issues like online security, online extremism and privacy, but Zuckerberg himself has not yet appeared for questioning. That has lots of lawmakers fuming.



Congressional hearings with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg will be held Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

THE TWO-WAY

Zuckerberg got a first taste of the congressional hearing circus on Monday when he met privately with individual senators ahead of the hearing. While he faced questioning inside the offices, a sprawling crowd of reporters, tourists and onlookers gathered in the office building halls.

3. ... and they want to know about far more than just Cambridge Analytica

Lawmakers are also concerned about how Facebook regulates its massive online ad platform and what the company is doing to keep bad actors out of users' daily feeds.

Louisiana Republican Sen. John Kennedy, who is on the Judiciary Committee, said Sunday that the first question Zuckerberg should answer is: "Does he really know who is running ads on his platform?"

"Facebook's lawyers say they have 500,000 unique advertisers a month," Kennedy said in an interview on CBS' Face The Nation. "I don't think they know who is running ads and issue campaigns. We need to talk about how we're going to find out."

POLITICS

Long-Divided Federal Election Commission Unites On Digital Ad Transparency

When it comes to digital advertising, Facebook and Google completely dominate the field, sometimes even being criticized as a duopoly on digital ad sales. This has prompted calls for an antitrust investigation of the industry.

Cable and telecom companies, for example, have historically pointed to the vast reach of Facebook and Google to present them as direct competitors, though competitors who don't face the same amount of regulatory oversight. In recent days, some broadband companies have been publicly calling for Congress to regulate privacy and the Silicon Valley giants.



Facebook CEO faces grilling from Congress like no tech boss ever before.

4. Zuckerberg may not have the kind

of answers they're looking for. Most lawmakers say they want clear and specific answers from Zuckerberg about what the company knew, when they knew it and what they're going to do to prevent privacy violations in the future.

THE TWO-WAY

In prepared remarks, Zuckerberg indicates he is grappling with the bigger identity of Facebook. For years, he has presented the social network as a neutral platform. Zuckerberg argues the company is not a media arbiter, but a tech firm firmly rooted in a law that shields Internet companies from legal responsibility for what people say and do online.

But now, Zuckerberg is expected to tell lawmakers that Facebook made a "big mistake" in taking such a narrow view of its responsibility.

"It's not enough to just connect people, we have to make sure those connections are positive," he says in prepared testimony. "We have a responsibility to not just build tools, but to make sure those tools are used for good."

NATIONAL SECURITY

5. Some lawmakers say it's time to regulate how social media companies handle personal data. Facebook agrees — sort of

There isn't much Congress can do right now to change the way Facebook — or other social media companies — handle user data or who can buy ads on their platforms. Facebook is a private company and is not subject to existing rules about political advertising or user data — at least not in the United States. (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org>)

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Which U.S. companies and industries will suffer if President Donald Trump's plan to impose stiff tariffs on aluminum and steel imports comes to fruition? It may depend on how other countries react, and whether a trade war ensues.

Mr. Trump's proposal to launch across-the-board tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum last week is still drawing strong reaction from trading partners and Corporate America alike.

Companies from brewer Miller Coors (TAP) to professional associations like the National Association of Homebuilders warned the tariffs will push prices higher for them, and by extension, Americans. "You can win a trade war if your narrow objective is to protect one very small sector of the economy," said GZERO Signal writer Alex Kliment. "But the question that we have to ask, and which everyone is asking, is at what cost to other sectors of the economy, to U.S. allies?"

European officials are preparing to target \$3.5 billion in American goods through a 25 percent "tit-for-tat" levy across consumer, agricultural and steel imports, Bloomberg reported, citing a list compiled by the European Commission. This came after EC President Jean-Claude Juncker on Friday mentioned targeted products like Harley-Davidson (HOG) motorcycles, Levi's jeans and bourbon if the U.S. tariffs are implemented. Canada President Justin Trudeau called Mr. Trump Monday evening to register his "serious concern."



Which U.S. Companies Would Suffer In A Trade War?

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



"Retaliation by trading partners is likely," Goldman Sachs (GS) economists wrote in a note. "In the past, retaliatory tariffs have focused on the product in dispute (in this case steel and/or aluminum), consumer goods with a particular focus on luxury items and agriculture. We expect a similar pattern this time." While retaliation is likely to come in tariff form, "more subtle changes to tax and regulatory policies targeting U.S. companies could also follow," the economists wrote.

Ford (F) and GM (GM) could feel a pinch of about \$1 billion each, or 12 percent and 7 percent of each company's respective operating income for 2017, if the 25 percent steel tariff is implemented and prices rise at a similar rate, Goldman Sachs analysts estimated in a recent separate report.

U.S.-based machinery companies would get squeezed as costs increase. Well-known brands with good distribution, like Deere (DE) and Caterpillar (CAT)

might do better than Terex (TEX) and Oshkosh (OSK), Goldman said. Oshkosh is based in House Speaker Paul Ryan's home state of Wisconsin.

Ryan said Mr. Trump's plan was "more prone to retaliation" and today urged the administration to take a more "surgical" approach to tariffs because some Republicans argue the duties could have negative impacts on the U.S. economy. The plea comes after Mr. Trump on Monday said Mexico and Canada may be able to avoid tariffs -- if they agreed to make concessions during renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement, known as NAFTA.



There is clearly abuse occurring, clearly there is overcapacity dumping in transshipping of steel and aluminum by some countries, particularly China, but I think the smarter way to go is to make it more surgical and more targeted," Ryan said. Canada was America's second-biggest trading partner last year, while Mexico was third. China was the first.

The U.S. is the world's biggest steel importer. Last year, China was the 11th-biggest steel exporter to the U.S., according to the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration. China has been accused of flooding the market with cheap exports. Yet steel and aluminum make up less than 3 percent of total U.S. imports, according to Capital Economics. So trading partners like Canada, Mexico and the EU aren't happy with the proposed across-the-board tariffs.

Industrial firms with a high percentage of sales from outside the U.S. include

Expeditors International (EXPD), 3M (MMM) and Boeing (BA), Goldman said in the report.

Boeing, typically the U.S.'s biggest exporter, has rebounded slightly after its stock slipped on Mr. Trump's announcement. Suppliers to the planemaker, which competes directly with Europe's Airbus in the large commercial aircraft market, could have a harder time coping as the company looks to trim costs, according to a recent note from Melius Research.



Defense companies Lockheed Martin (LMT), General Dynamics (GD) and Raytheon (RTN) should have "limited" problems because of the way long-term supply contracts are structured, Melius analysts wrote. Private-jet makers Textron (TXT) and Gulfstream, a division of General Dynamics, may run into trouble if the global economy slows. Countries can be expected to immediately appeal the tariffs to the World Trade Organization under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT agreement, said Jennifer Hillman, a former member of the WTO's appellate body. She spoke on a call with reporters organized by the Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank.

"The challenges will come immediately and will come from all affected countries," Hillman said. The WTO, seen largely as a U.S. created entity, will then form a panel of three people that aren't from the U.S. or any of the involved parties.

How that plays out, she said, may depend on how the U.S. claim that the tariffs are needed as part of America's national defense is viewed. (Courtesy cbsnews.com)

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