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Inside C2

Monday, Febuary 20 2023

Exclusive: Crypto giant Binance moved \$400 million from U.S. partner to firm managed by

EO Zhao

Feb 16 (Reuters) - Global cryptocurrency exchange Binance had secret access to a bank account belonging to its purportedly independent U.S. partner and transferred large sums of money from the account to a trading firm managed by Binance CEO Changpeng Zhao, banking records and company messages show.

Over the first three months of 2021, more than \$400 million flowed from the Binance.US account at California-based Silvergate Bank to this trading firm, Merit Peak Ltd, according to records for the quarter, which were reviewed by Reuters. The Binance.US account was registered under the name of BAM Trading, the U.S. exchange's operating company, according to the records. Company messages show the transfers to Merit Peak began in late 2020.

Reuters couldn't determine the reason for the transfers or whether any of the money belonged to Binance.US customers. The exchange's public terms of use at the time said its customers' dollar deposits were held at Silvergate and a Nevada-based custodian firm called Prime Trust LLC. Prime Trust made \$650 million in wire transfer deposits into the Binance. US account during the quarter, the bank records show.

A Binance.US spokesperson, Kimberly Soward, did not address Reuters' questions about the transfers detailed in the bank records. In a statement, she said Reuters' reporting used "outdated information" without elaborating further. She added: "Merit Peak is neither trading nor providing any kind of services on the Binance. US platform" and "only Binance.US employees have access" to the bank accounts of the U.S. company. Soward didn't specify when Merit Peak's activities ceased.

Japan to launch pilot programme for issuing digital yen The Binance global exchange, Binance CEO Zhao and Prime Trust did not respond to detailed questions about the transfers. A Silvergate spokesperson said the bank does not comment on individual customers.

Binance.US's executives were concerned by the outflows because the transfers were taking place without their knowledge, according to messages reviewed by Reuters. The CEO of Binance.US at the time, Catherine Coley, wrote to a Binance finance executive in late 2020 asking for an explanation for the transfers, calling them "unexpected" and saying "no one mentioned them."

"Where are those funds coming from?" she wrote in one message.

In a response to Coley, seen by Reuters, the Binance executive, Susan Li, did not explain the transfers. Li wrote that Merit Peak was a "vendor that facilitated trading" on Binance.US and also provided loans and capital injections to the American exchange.

Coley, who left Binance.US later in 2021, didn't respond to



questions sent via her legal reprethe U.S. The SEC and the Justice

Reuters was unable to trace what became of the \$400 million. An unspecified portion of the money was subsequently sent to the Silvergate account of a Seychelles-incorporated firm called Key Vision Development Limited, according to a person with direct knowledge of the transfers. A 2021 corporate filing by another Binance unit identified CEO Zhao as a director of Kev Vision. A former Silvergate executive confirmed that Key Vision held an account at Silvergate at the

Key Vision's local registered agent did not respond to requests for comment.

The money transfers suggest that the global Binance exchange, which is not licensed to operate in the United States, controlled the finances of Binance. US, despite maintaining that the American operates as its "US partner." The Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission have sought information from Binance and Binance.US about their relationship as part of ongoing investigations into potential breaches of financial rules, including whether Binance is using the American exchange as cover for doing business in

sentatives. Li also didn't respond. Department declined to comment for this article.

> Reuters reported last year that Binance created Binance.US as a de facto subsidiary in 2019 in order to draw the scrutiny of U.S. regulators away from the global exchange. Binance. US's operator, California-based BAM Trading Services, is registered with the U.S. Treasury as a money services business, a category that includes foreign currency traders and money transmitters. BAM's beneficial owner is Zhao.

Binance.US's chief financial officer, Jasmine Lee, told the Wall Street Journal on Feb. 8 that "the extent of our relationship" with Binance.com is a shared name and a licensing agreement for technology. "We do not transfer our funds back and forth," Lee

Susan Li, the Binance finance executive, had access to the entity is entirely independent and Binance.US Silvergate account, however, along with several senior Binance. US employees, according to the messages and the person with direct knowledge of the transfers. In one message, a Binance.US finance manager asked Li to give another Binance. US employee authority to approve payments from the account. A 2021 Binance.US document that described the American ex-

change's technology architecture identified Silvergate as a payment channel controlled at the time by Binance.com.

The Binance.US account records reviewed by Reuters detail each transaction between January and the end of March 2021. Reuters has not reviewed account records for other periods.

The transfers to Merit Peak took place on the bank's proprietary Silvergate Exchange Network (SEN), which Binance.US joined in November 2020 to serve its corporate clients. SEN allows these clients to transfer dollars between their accounts at the bank. Silvergate's investor prospectus says SEN transfers are "push only," which means they must be authorized by the account's controller.

The former Silvergate executive told Reuters the movement of funds from a company account without approval of that firm's management would be a breach of the bank's compliance rules. Silvergate's prospectus says "multiple steps are required to create, authorize and approve a SEN transfer." The Silvergate spokesperson didn't address the transfers in their response to Reuters.

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LOCAL NEWS

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates: ChatGPT 'will change our world'

Feb 10 (Reuters) - Florida lawmakers on Friday granted Governor Ron DeSantis effective control of the board that oversees development in and around Walt Disney Co's (DIS.N) central Florida theme parks, escalating the Republican's battle with the company.

State Republicans targeted Disney after it publicly clashed with DeSantis last year over a law that restricts classroom instruction of gender and sexual orientation, known by its opponents as the "Don't Say Gay" measure.

Legislators in Florida gave final approval on Friday to a bill authorizing the governor to appoint five supervisors to run what is now known as the Reedy Creek Improvement District, a quasi-government entity with oversight of the 25,000 acres surrounding the Walt Disney World resort.

The state Senate will confirm board members, and the board will have no role in day-to-day operations of the theme parks.

DeSantis' spokesperson Bryan Griffin said the prior system, under which the Florida legislature in 1967 gave Disney sole control over the district, lacked accountability.

"Florida is ... beginning a new era of accountability and transparency," he said.

Disney World is the largest employer in central Florida with close to 75,000 employees and drew 36.2 million visitors in 2021, according to the Themed Entertainment Association.

The legislature voted last year to dissolve the special district, which for more than a half-century gave Disney the autonomy to govern itself, providing such government services as fire protection, water, sewer and waste removal services and infrastructure.

The action, seen as retaliation for Disney's then-Chief Executive Officer Bob Chapek speaking out against the state law limiting classroom discussion of LGBTQ issues, came with unintended consequences.

Tax experts and legislators warned that eliminating the district in



June 2023 would leave county taxpayers liable for nearly \$1.2 billion in bond debt.

The new bill preserves the Reedy Creek special district, though within two years it will be renamed Central Florida Tourism Oversight District. It will have the authority to collect revenue, pay off debt and provide a range of government services. The district is prohibited from operating its own airport or building nuclear power plants.

The legislation also expressly bars anyone with ties to the theme parks over the past three years from serving on the board.

Walt Disney World President Jeff Vahle praised the Reedy Creek district, saying it had helped the theme park grow and contribute to the state's economy. "We are focused on the future and are ready to work within this new framework," he said in a statement.

The state Senate debated the bill for about an hour on Friday, with a handful of lawmakers voicing opposition.

"This all seems a retaliation by the governor for Disney voicing its support for the LGBTQ community," said Senator Linda Stewart, a Democrat who represents Orange County.

Southern Make Today Different

Children display their artworks in a camp for victims of the earth-quake in Iskenderun, Turkey, February 17, 2023. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

Editor's Choice



People impacted by the earthquake are seen at Refaat Daho school, which houses many refugees, in Latakia, Syria, February 15, 2023. REUTERS/ Amr Alfiky



Huseyin Elfarac from Syria sits in a temporary camp in Antakya, Hatay province, Turkey, February 15, 2023. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



A woman paints a girl's face during an activity to entertain and support the mental health of children affected by the earthquake in Osmaniye, Turkey, February 16, 2023. REUTERS/Suhaib Salem



A child carries a bag of bread at a school that shelters families impacted by the earthquake in Jableh, Syria, February 16, 2023 REUTERS/Amr Alfiky



The son of a Syrian refugee Mohammed al-Kashif stands at the entrance of a tent, where Mohammed lives with his family on a public park ground, after his house collapsed from the earthquake in Adiyaman, Turkey, February 15, 2023. REUTERS/Thaier Al-Sudani

"We Can Now Train 160 New Hires A Week"

United Airlines Opens New \$24M Training Center In Houston

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



Flight attendant trainees demonstrate water evacuation training in the new United Airlines Inflight Training Center at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston, (Photo/Melissa Phillip/Chronicle Staff Photographer)

Alexis Bushnell, a United Airlines flight United's presence in the Houston area attendant based in Houston, didn't really is expanding, with the opening of a new know what she was getting into when she training center for future flight attenapplied for the job.

glamorous people who get to travel around Training Center at Bush Intercontinental the world and do all these amazing things," Airport, which officially opened Tuesday. Bushnell said. "And that quickly changed The center, which cost some \$24 million, when I realized all of our jobs as a flight adds 56,000 square feet of classroom and

rightly so. There have been glamorous parts Chicago-based airline. of the job; she was able to use her travel "Back in 2019, when we originally benefits, for example, to take her parents to pitched, it was really to improve our new-Peru. But there's a lot more to being a flight hire training experience and our flight attendant than pouring drinks on a Boeing attendants that come through here for 787 Dreamliner, said Bushnell, who is also continuing qualification," said Mo Quinn from Houston.



Evacuation training is shown at the new **United Airlines Inflight Training Center** at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston. (Photo/Melissa Phillip/Chronicle Staff Flight attendant trainees with Michael Photographer)

dants. Going forward, all new hires will "In my head, flight attendants are these spend six and a half weeks at the Inflight training spaces to United's existing train-The training was intense, she continued, but ing center in Houston, one of seven for the

> Mariano, United's director of in-flight training. "Now, with that being said, having this new facility we have the ability to train much larger volumes. We can have 160 new hires a week.'



Allen, instructor evacuation specialist,

BUSINESS

right, demonstrate evacuation door training in the new United Airlines Inflight Training Center at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston. (Photo/Melissa Phillip/Chronicle Staff Photogra-

To handle the volume — and because airline crews don't generally work Monday through Friday, 9-to-5 — the center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays.

The center includes several life-size cabins, specially equipped with a full planelength set of windows, so trainees can practice for real-world situations, such as turbulence or smoke in the cabin and familiarize themselves with the doors, jump seats and configurations of the various aircraft in United's fleet.

'You never want your training to just be, we're hitting the mark," said Ben Rose, United's manager for in-flight training programs. "We always want to exceed



Flight attendant trainees put on life vests in the aquatic training area at the new United Airlines Inflight Training Center at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston. (Photo/Melissa Phillip/Chronicle Staff Photographer)

A centerpiece of the new facility is an aquatic center, where trainees can practice evacuating a cabin full of passengers onto inflatable slides and rafts.

The slide — which you can probably visualize from movies, or news footage of 2009's "miracle on the Hudson," when US Airways Flight 1549 safely landed in that river along Manhattan — detaches from the cabin after being loaded with passengers, instructors explained. Additional passengers, wearing flotation devices, then escape onto the raft. Previously, instructors explained, trainees practiced for such situations in a dry room, which let them experience the equipment, but not the added challenge of handling the equipment while it's bobbing in the water. Flight attendant trainees demonstrate



evacuation door training in the new United Airlines Inflight Training Center at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston. (Photo/Melissa Phillip/Chronicle Staff Photographer)

"Of course, it's highly unlikely we will have a water landing, but we're testing so much more than that," said Ricky Ramos-Rodriguez, senior manager of the center, as several dozen trainees in black swimsuits prepared for the next exercise. 'We're testing critical thinking, and how you act in an emergency when you're under stress."

The center opens as United expands its footprint in the Houston as part of a growth strategy that is expected to bring as many as 1,800 additional jobs to the area. Last month, for example, the airline and Boeing announced an order for 100 of the jet-maker's 787 wide-body aircraft, with the option to order 100 more.



Flight attendant trainees are shown at the new United Airlines Inflight Training Center at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Houston. (Photo/Melissa Phil-

lip/Chronicle Staff Photographer)

"Houston obviously is a very important hub for United," said Quinn Mariano. "This [center] is only a fraction of what United is doing when it comes to Hous-

For the trainees, the new center will help them be prepared for whatever their workday might bring.

"Our job is so multifaceted," said Josh Tanner, a trainee who's worked for other airlines previously and expects to be based in Chicago after completing United's course. "One day I'm a chef; one day I'm a firefighter; some days I'm trying to calm people.'

Related

United To Expand New Flight

Attendant Training Center In Houston United Airlines on Thursday began a \$20 million expansion of its flight attendant

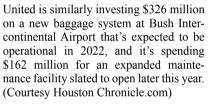


training facility in Houston. Pictured is a rendering of that new facility.

United Airlines on Thursday began a \$20 million expansion of its flight attendant training facility in Houston. More than 26,000 flight attendants work for the Chicago-based airline, and they were all required to complete six weeks of safety and service training in Houston. The project will add about 50,000 square feet of new classrooms, training spaces, storage and, eventually, a commercial-sized swimming pool where flight attendants will practice using inflatable emergency rafts in the event of a water landing.

"This supports our future growth plans and is part of United's ongoing commitment to provide our flight attendants with state of the art safety and service training," John Slater, United's senior vice president for inflight services, said in a statement. "It also reflects our ongoing commitment to our local customers and the city of







The More Resources We Can Harness On The Red Planet, The Fewer We Need To Bring With Us

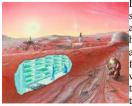
Almost Everything We Need To Live On Mars Is Already There

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



We continue to learn that Mars is rich with resources that could be vital to supporting astronauts on the Red Planet for modules. Digging out habitats would also be an efficient any extended period of time. Instead of launching resources such as water and materials to build a habitat to Mars, it could potentially be much more cost effective to send automated robots to harvest resources from the Martian surface and atmosphere in preparation for the arrival of humans.

NASA scientific and technical information (STI) paper titled. "Frontier In-Situ Resource Utilization for Enabling Sustained Human Presence on Mars," which argues that the information we have gleaned from rovers and orbiters suggests that and duckweed, along with many others." The STI paper there is an abundance of useful resources already on Mars. What's more, we are on the cusp of developing the technology that would be required to extract resources on Mars with robotic systems so they would be immediately available to arriving astronauts. From The Paper



In recent years, measurements by rovers and satellites at Mars have indicated massive amounts of water in the form of ice beneath and within the regolith. At times, during the Marian year, liquid water is

observed on the surface of Mars. If the planet were flat and the ice melted, there would be an ocean many meters deep on the entire planet. These huge deposits of water can be extracted in several ways and combined with the large amounts of carbon residing in the 95% CO2 atmosphere to produce life support fluids, fuels, oxidizers, and plastics for equipment, including rovers and spare parts.

The tentative plan all starts with water. By sending in-situ resource utilization (ISRU) equipment to regions of Mars with subsurface water ice deposits, we could extract the water that

is key to producing other materials. Carbon extracted from the atmosphere could then be used to make a wide range of things, from plastics to rocket propellant to habitat-heating

Mineral resources are in abundance as well, including iron, titanium, nickel, aluminum, sulfur, chlorine and calcium. 'Clay-like minerals are also ubiquitous in the Martian surface soils, making the manufacturing of ceramics for pottery and similar purposes a straightforward enterprise," reads the STI paper. 'The most common material measured by the Viking landers on Mars was silicon dioxide (SiO2)... the basic constituent of glass, which thus can readily be produced on Mars using sand-melting techniques similar to those that have been used on Earth for thousands of years." SiO2 could also be used to make "many important glass products, including fiberglass, an excellent material for constructing various types of structures."



To protect Martian settlers from cosmic radiation and intense cold, the most logical thing to do is build nabitats underground, ultinately filling the caverns inflatable habitat

way to expose subsurface water ice and other resources needed for ISRU.

Food could also be produced on Mars in a "protected atmospheric environment using sunlight," or possibly using an artificial light source. "Earth independence requires that the This colonization strategy is the subject of an April 2016 astronauts grow their own food or that the food be grown for them robotically. Such robotic agriculture exists now. Possible food sources which could be produced on planet include mushrooms, insects, cyanobacteria (e.g. spirulina) also mentions the possibility of developing a "rice paddy aquaculture" or "taking a plethora of insect species to



If this all sounds familiar that is because, yes, this is pretty much exactly how it all goes down in Kim Stanley Robinson's Red Mars. To actually realize a Martian outpost anything like what is outlined in the STI

paper (and/or Red Mars), we would rely on advances in robotics technology and automated systems. Basically, we would need to send robots to start building our Martian settlement for us before we arrive, and continue to maintain the habitat, food-production systems, and other equipment.



be minimized to an oversight role of robotic automated tasks," reads the STI paper. We are starting to scratch the surface of developing robotic systems that could break ground on our new Martian home

COMMUNITY

the Mars 2020 rover for extracting oxygen from the Martian atmosphere. NASA is also considering a plan to launch an orbiter to Mars in 2022 that would search for ice deposits near the surface of the Red Planet, helping scientists pick the ideal location for a Martian outpost.

The point is, the resources we need are already there waiting for us. We just need to figure out how to use them. (Courtesy/NASA via Aviation Week) Related

Future Work: Will Your Career Of Tomorrow Be On Mars?

Look around the space where you are sitting. How many of the things you see were not available to you as a child? Perhaps you note a laptop, smart phone or Wi-Fi connection? Now imagine these things vanished. What would your life be like? Think back to when you were a child. Could you have imagined the items you now can't live without? This same dynamic may soon be on the horizon for jobs on Mars—we may one day wonder how we ever confined



Advancing technology continues to create more unique and interesting jobs-for now, all of them based on plan-et Earth. But change may be upon us.

"If the human race is to continue for another million years, we will have to boldly go where no one has gone before." -- Stephen Hawking

As Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, NASA scientists and others continue to bring the possibility of living on another planet into the foreseeable future, the reality of an inter-planetary economy and job market could be just around the corner. By 2024, Musk's SpaceX aims to send the first astro-nauts to Mars. President Trump's 2020 budget included funding for a manned Mars mission to launch as soon as 2026, with a goal of bringing back samples of the Red Planet. Such studies of rock, soil and atmosphere sam-ples could bring new insights into the sphere's geology and water presence, and may even locate evidence of past or current life. In fact, multiplanet set-



tlements maybe crucial for the long-term survival of humans. Amazon's found er and CEO Jeff Bezos believes that expanding our living options

in our solar system "is not some-thing that we may choose to do: this is something we must do." Colo-nizing another planet could lift the barriers Earth may present to the continued expansion of humani-ty. Why Mars? While planets in our solar system are subject

to extreme temperatures and the dangerous el-ements of space, Mars has some similarities to Earth. It is also in what is called the Habitable Zone, an area where conditions might poten-tially support life. While its air is too thin to breathe and its surface temperature too cold for unsheltered life, Mars-unlike other planets in our solar system-has the benefit of a 24-hour day, four seasons, can-yons, volcanoes, polar ice caps, river beds, dried lakes and even some liquid water. Based on our current ex-ploration and understanding of our solar system, there is no planet better suited to interplanetary migration than Mars.



Available On Mars? Initially, a strong background in science and mathe-matics will be most desirable. Howver, as a vearn—ing see more of Mars accelerates, films, television programs, and reality shows marketed on Earth will attract talent of all kinds to the Red

Planet. The opportunity to be highly innovative on Mars will be another aspect of work on the planet and a strong additional talent attractor. An early Mars colony could generate a lot of income by being an inventors colony. Isolated from the distractions of Earth and challenged to come up with solutions to problems on the planet, Mars will be a pressure cooker for innovation with inhabitants being free to innovate without the bureau—cracy on Earth," explains Dr. Robert Zubrin, founder of the Mars Society and author of the new book The Case for Space.



nizations such as SpaceX. Bezos's Blue Origin and NASA. Also helpful will be specialized industry job sites like Space Individuals and Space Careers. NASA has even released poste advertising jobs on Mars for surveyors, farmers, teachers and technicians. While most jobs working in space are currently based on Earth, space exploration companies require people in every career discipline. Opportunities in engineering, design, soft-ware development, manufacturing, human resources, finance, IT, legal, marketing, sales and many other jobs that exist on our planet will be available. How Will I Get To My New Job? To make Mars a viable option for a new economy, affordable, safe, reliable and frequent transportation must be available to the general public. Reusable rock-et technology like Musk's will be essential to creating the equivalent of an airline industry in space. Initial passenger rockets could potentially carry up to 100 people or more and 450 tons of cargo



Will It Be Safe To Live And Work On Mars? If terraforming, or any transformative other process, is used in an

attempt to alter the environment to make Mars habitable, there is no guarantee of a positive out-come. Warming the planet could awaken previous or current Martian life forms, with unknown consequenc—es. A lower gravitational pull could weaken our bones and muscles, and increased radiation may heighten our chances of cancer. In all cases, safety is a concern and the loss of life is a distinct possibility for early settlers. Initial isolation from larger groups of people or a sustained dramatic change to social, living and dietary conditions, along with sleep disorders due to slightly longer days, could present a challenge to the mental and emotional well-being of those living and working on Mars. How Will I Communicate With Those On Earth? Eventually, near-real-time holoportation capable of virtually placing people in the same room, even if they are on different planets, will make communicating with family, friends and co-workers on Earth a natural and seamless experience. As image and personal bot technologies advance, your physical location may not matter all that much.

Are Earth Visits An Option? With the doubling of technological advancement about every 12 to 18 months, return visits to Earth will certainly be in the cards someday. Until then, holo-gram rooms and other technologies could pro-

like you are back on Earth. If you decide to break up your travels and live on the moon first, as Bezos advises, the chances of an Earth holiday are pretty good. Where Will I Live



Eat and Shop? Initially, all living, eating and shop ping spaces will be indoors to insulate humans from un-

favorably in our attempts to inhabit it, future communities could mirror those on Earth, and familiar activities could even include grabbing lunch at McDonalds. But con-sidering the likely cost of raising cattle on Mars or de-veloping and producing lab-grown meat, you should expect to pay a lot more for your Big Mac. Vegetables will most likely be the first crops grown on Mars, so a salad may be the best choice for your budget. As for shopping, Amazon could still be your desired option: Bezos is already planning deliveries to the moon. Healthcare On Mars? Recruitment decisions will need to be thoughtful and measured, and contingencies must be in place for re-deploying skills and talents to other meaningful work when a person no longer fulfills his or her job respon-sibilities or the position isn't needed. This will also lead to considerations of disability and retirement. To ensure a high quality of life for all Mars citizens, pro-grams must be in place to house and care for those who can no longer do these things for themselves, and a universal health care and universal basic income model could guarantee health care and a minimum liv-able income to everyone, regardless of circumstance. However, the social-economic dynamic on the Red Planet could change as a space airline industry devel-ops, as noted earlier.



Will I Feel Like I Belong On Mars? Once a homogenous Martian population evolves, will those from Earth be welcome on Mars? Will an inde-pendent Mars economy evolve, or will Earth be fiscal-ly strengthened and positioned as the central economic hub of our solar system? If Mars does develop an independent economy with little to no reliance on an import/export market, will it become sovereign from Earth? Will such sovereign-ty create political and power struggles, divided ideals and, ultimately, lead to a scenario like that in H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds? Education and understand-ing will be key as humans seek to inhabit other planets in our solar system and, perhaps someday, beyond. Organizations like the National Space Society, a non-profit group dedicated to the creation of a spacefaring civilization, has been leading the charge in this area since 1974 and is a good source for research, articles, publications and general information about how those on Earth can leverage "the vast resources of space for the dramatic betterment of humanity." The Mars Society, founded in 1998, is another helpful source of information specifically related to human settlement on the Red Planet. On Mars. humans will discover unique ways to con-tribute meaningfully to our cosmos and perhaps even sustain the human race (Courtesy forbes.com)

About the Author Louis Efron (LouisEfron.com) is a globally recog-nized thought leader, speaker, writer and Fortune 200 HR Executive.