



LENA MUCHA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Frankfurt, Germany. After 16 years, Angela Merkel leaves behind a changed country full of pride and prosperity — and anxiety.

F.B.I. Informer Was Amid Mob At Capitol Riot

By ALAN FEUER and ADAM GOLDMAN

As scores of Proud Boys made their way, chanting and shouting, toward the Capitol on Jan. 6, one member of the far-right group was busy texting a real-time account of the march.

The recipient was his F.B.I. handler.

In the middle of an unfolding melee that shook a pillar of American democracy — the peaceful transfer of power — the bureau had an informant in the crowd, providing an inside glimpse of the action, according to confidential records obtained by The New York Times. In the informant's version of events, the Proud Boys, famous for their street fights, were largely following a pro-Trump mob consumed by a herd mentality rather than carrying out any type of preplanned attack.

After meeting his fellow Proud Boys at the Washington Monument that morning, the informant described his path to the Capitol grounds where he saw barriers knocked down and Trump supporters streaming into the building, the records show. At one point, his handler appeared not to grasp that the building had been breached, the records show, and asked the informant to keep him in the loop — especially if there was any violence.

The use of informants always presents law enforcement officials with difficult judgments about the credibility and completeness of the information they provide. In this case, the records obtained by The Times do not directly address whether the informant was in a good position to know about plans developed for Jan. 6 by the leadership of the Proud Boys, why he was cooperating, whether he could have missed indications of a plot or whether he could have deliberately misled the government.

But the records, and information from two people familiar with the matter, suggest that federal law enforcement had a far greater visibility into the assault on the Capitol, even as it was taking place, than was previously known.

At the same time, the new information is likely to complicate the government's efforts to prove the high-profile conspiracy charges it has brought against several mem-

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A Nation Transformed Under Merkel Moves On

By KATRIN BENNHOLD

STUTTGART, Germany — The small silver star at the tip of Aleksandar Djordjevic's Mercedes shines bright. He polishes it every week.

Mr. Djordjevic makes combustion engines for Daimler, one of Germany's flagship carmakers. He has a salary of around 60,000 euros (about \$70,000), eight weeks of vacation and a guarantee negotiated by the union that he cannot be fired until 2030. He owns a two-story house and that E-class 250 model Mercedes in his driveway.

All of that is why Mr. Djordjevic polishes the star on his car.

A CONTINENT'S POWER VACUUM

France's president has ambitions, but Europe may not have a central figure after Merkel. Page 9.

"The star is something stable and something strong: It stands for Made in Germany," he said.

But by 2030 there will be no more combustion engines at Daimler — or people making combustion engines.

"I'm proud of what I do," Mr. Djordjevic said. "It's unsettling to know that in 10 years' time my job will no longer exist."

Mr. Djordjevic is the picture of a new German pride and prosperity — and German anxiety.

As Chancellor Angela Merkel prepares to leave office after 16 years, her country is among the richest in the world. A broad and contented middle class is one facet of Ms. Merkel's Germany that has been central to her longevity and her ability to deliver on a core promise of stability. But her impact has been far greater.

To travel the country she leaves behind is to see it profoundly transformed.

There is the father taking paid parental leave in Catholic Bavaria. The married gay couple raising two children outside Berlin. The woman in a hijab teaching math in a high school

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MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

First Lt. Sukhbir Toor is the first Marine in the Corps's 246-year history to wear a turban on duty.

Marines Allow Sikh to Wear Turban, Sometimes

By DAVE PHILIPPS

Almost every morning for five years, First Lt. Sukhbir Toor has pulled on the uniform of the United States Marine Corps. On Thursday, he also got to put on the turban of a faithful Sikh.

It was a first for the Marine Corps, which almost never allows deviations from its hallowed image, and it was a long-awaited chance for the officer to combine two of the things he holds most dear.

"I finally don't have to pick which life I want to commit to, my faith or my country," Lieutenant

Toor, 26, said in an interview. "I can be who I am and honor both sides."

His case is the latest in a long-running conflict between two fundamental values in the United States military: the tradition of discipline and uniformity, and the constitutional liberties the armed forces were created to defend.

While Sikh troops in Britain, Australia and Canada have long worn turbans in uniform, and scores of Sikhs do so now in other branches of the military, Lieutenant Toor's turban is the first in the 246-year history of the Marine Corps. For generations, the Corps

has fought any change to its strict appearance standards, saying that uniformity was as essential to a fighting force as well-oiled rifles.

The Marine Corps has made the allowance only to a point. Lieutenant Toor can wear a turban in daily dress at normal duty stations, but he cannot do so while deployed to a conflict zone, or when in dress uniform in a ceremonial unit, where the public could see it.

Lieutenant Toor has appealed the restrictive decision to the Marine Corps commandant, and he says that if he does not get a full accommodation, he will sue the

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Fabled Police Force Shows Limits of Death Inquiries

When Officers Kill, Texas Asks the Rangers to Step In. Their Record Is Spotty.

By MICHAEL LaFORGIA and JENNIFER VALENTINO-DeVRIES

When the Texas Rangers learned that a woman had died in a jail south of Dallas, they put Adam Russell on the case.

He found that there had been a struggle between the woman, Kelli Leanne Page, 46, who was being held on drug charges, and two guards, who entered her cell because they said she would not stop banging a hairbrush against the door.

One jailer threw her to the floor, punched her in the face while they scuffled and piled atop her as blood streamed from her nose. The other, a trainee weighing 390 pounds, pinned her down until she stopped breathing.

Six hours into his investigation, Ranger Russell indicated in his notes, he was not inclined to blame the guards for her death. And when an autopsy later determined that Ms. Page was the victim of a homicide — having died on Oct. 8, 2017, of a form of asphyxiation — Ranger Russell appeared not to reconsider.

Instead, he obtained a second opinion from a retired chief medical examiner, who read the forensic report and said he believed that heart disease might have led to her death while she was being restrained. Ranger Russell later testified that the initial autopsy was a rush to judgment and that "something inside Kelli" had killed her. The guards were not charged.

For many years, Texas has made its state investigators, the fabled Rangers, available to review deaths that occur in the custody of local authorities, filling a need that is especially pressing in

rural areas. After the murder of George Floyd last year by a Minneapolis police officer, at least seven other states have embraced a similar approach to Texas, reasoning that outside inquiries are more likely to hold wrongdoers accountable.

But state agents do not necessarily lead to better investigations or greater accountability, according to a New York Times examination of the record in Texas. Drawing on dozens of interviews and more than 6,000 pages of investigative files, autopsy reports, police records and court filings, The Times found that state investigations can be afflicted by the same shortcuts and pro-police biases that outside interventions are meant to eliminate.

State investigators in Texas review deaths in custody more often than in any other state, records show, making it a rich laboratory for studying how the investigations play out. The Rangers, in response to a public records request, provided The Times with roughly 300 case files completed since 2015, while other documents were obtained from local police departments, medical examiners and court proceedings.

Some of the Rangers' investigations offer a textbook example of dogged police work, like the one into the overdose death of James Dean Davis, 42, in the La Salle County jail in 2017. Ranger Randy Garcia meticulously documented the neglect of guards who mocked Mr. Davis as he screamed for help from the floor of his cell, interviewing more than a dozen wit-

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Split on Vision, Democrats See Fate in Big Bills

By JONATHAN MARTIN

WASHINGTON — With President Biden's approval ratings falling below 50 percent after the most trying stretch of his young administration, pushing through his ambitious legislative agenda has taken on a new urgency for Democratic lawmakers.

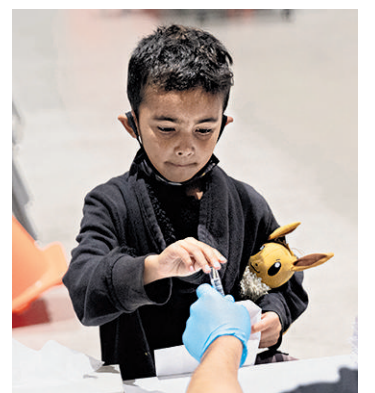
Recognizing that a president's popularity is the best indicator for how his party will fare in the midterm elections, Democrats are confronting a stark prospect: If Mr. Biden doesn't succeed in the halls of Congress this fall, it could doom his party's majorities at the polls next fall.

Not that such a do-or-die dilemma is itself sufficient to stop Democrats' intraparty squabbling, which the president on Friday termed a "stalemate." Divisions between moderates and liberals over the substance, the price tag and even the legislative timing of Mr. Biden's twin priorities, a bipartisan public works bill and broader social welfare legislation, could still undermine the proposals.

But it is increasingly clear to Democratic officials that beyond fully taming the still-raging pandemic, the only way Mr. Biden can rebound politically — and the party can retain its tenuous grip on power in the Capitol — is if he and they are able to hold up tangible achievements to voters.

"For us to be successful in the midterm elections next year, tens of millions of Americans need to see that giving Democrats the ability to pass big bills makes a difference in their lives," said Senator Christopher A. Coons of Delaware, a close Biden ally, pointing to the infrastructure bill and ele-

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SCOTT BALL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A student in San Antonio preparing to take a Covid-19 test.

Schools Cram For Covid Tests Across America

By EMILY ANTHES and SABRINA IMBLER

SAN ANTONIO — One recent Thursday, Ciara Brown, a junior at Fox Tech High School in San Antonio, stepped up to a small white table, pulled down her face mask and took a test that is still far from standard in American schools: a cotton swab up the nose.

"Testing is super-easy," she said. "It's not as scary as I thought it would be — it's not a huge thing going up in your brain."

The United States has struggled with Covid testing since the earliest days of the pandemic. Now, nearly two years in — and weeks into another Covid-disrupted school year — school systems across the nation are struggling with the role of testing in keeping children safe and in class.

Some, like Ciara's in Texas, have gone all in; others offer no Covid testing at all. And still others say they want to do more testing but lack the resources or have been

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INTERNATIONAL 4-11

Eyes Fixed on English Channel

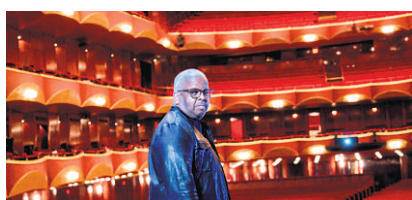
The southeastern coast of England is increasingly the focal point of Britain's migration debate as more asylum seekers arrive by boat. PAGE 4

Whiskey and Nerves of Steel

Few countries have been willing to fly dangerous rescue missions into Afghanistan since the Americans left. Ukraine is an exception. PAGE 10

Revisiting a Downed Warplane

Thirty-three years after his first trip, a photographer traveled to Papua New Guinea in search of a World War II plane that crashed in 1944. PAGE 11



ARTS & LEISURE

A Black Composer at the Met

Terence Blanchard, a jazz trumpeter best known for scoring Spike Lee films, reopens the opera house and ends a 138-year drought. PAGE 6

SUNDAY REVIEW

Jonathan Malesic

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NATIONAL 12-21

Cities Step Up on Reparations

While legislation in Washington remains stalled, state and local governments are breathing new life into the reparations movement. PAGE 13

Lives in Limbo in a 'Tent City'

About 8,500 people evacuated from Afghanistan are temporarily living on a military base in central New Jersey as they wait to be resettled. PAGE 12

Hochul May Call In the Guard

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York is weighing calling in the National Guard to cover any staffing shortages caused by the state's vaccine mandates. PAGE 21



THE NEW YORK TIMES FOR KIDS

What School Is Really Like

Students say returning to class is weird, exciting, scary and magical. PAGE 1

SPORTS 25-27

A Quarterback's Big Leap

Josh Allen's development has fueled the Bills into the N.F.L.'s elite. PAGE 25

SUNDAY BUSINESS

Workers Under Stress

The ranks of home care aides are expected to grow more than any other job in the next decade, but nearly one in five lives in poverty. What kind of work are they being asked to do? PAGE 1

A Secret to Productivity

Despite conventional wisdom and metrics, remote work shows that the best way to be productive just might be to stop trying. PAGE 1

