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Exxon Mobil claims its foes are conspiring against it



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Trump says FBI missed signs on Florida shooting due to Russia probe

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump attacked the FBI and lawmakers probing suspected Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, drawing sharp criticism for saying an excessive focus on Russia led investigators to miss signs that could have prevented a deadly school shooting in Florida. In a series of tweets over the weekend from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump said congressional investigations and political "hated" showed Russia had succeeded in sowing "discord, disruption and chaos" in the United States.

He accused his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, of failing to do enough to stop Russian election interference.

"They are laughing their asses off in Moscow," Trump tweeted on Sunday morning.

In a tweet on Saturday night, Trump criticized the Federal Bureau of Investigation for missing warning signs in the case of Nikolas Cruz, 19, who is charged with killing 17 people on Wednesday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, a Fort Lauderdale suburb.

The FBI acknowledged on Friday that it failed to investigate a warning that Cruz possessed a gun and the desire to kill.

"Very sad that the FBI missed all of the many signals sent out by the Florida school shooter. This is not acceptable," Trump wrote. "They are spending too much time trying to prove Russian collusion with the Trump campaign - there is no collusion," he added.

The Republican president offered no evidence of any link between the investigation of Russian meddling and the FBI's failure to prevent the Florida shooting, the deadliest-ever at a U.S. high school.

Student survivors of the massacre slammed Trump for connecting it to the Russia probe, which has shadowed his year-old presidency. Several lawmakers, including a fellow Republican, also rejected Trump's linking of the FBI's missteps in preventing the shooting to the Russia probe.

"So many folks in the FBI are doing all that they can to keep us safe. The reality of it is, is that they are two separate issues," Republican Senator Tim Scott said on CBS' "Face the Nation" program.

Former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates tweeted: "Our president uses the tragedy to attack the investigation of a foreign adversary's interference in our democracy. Shameful."

Yates, who had been a holdover from the Obama administration, was fired early in the Trump presidency for refusing to defend travel restrictions on several Muslim-majority countries.

The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Trump's tweet.



Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher Wray speaks with Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) after testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington

On Friday, Special Counsel Robert Mueller charged 13 Russians and three Russian companies with conspiracy to tamper in the 2016 U.S. election.

Mueller's indictment said the Russians adopted false online personas to push divisive messages and staged political rallies while posing as Americans.

In one of 13 tweets Trump sent after Mueller's indictment, the president said he "never said Russia did not meddle in the election." Trump has on several occasions, however, questioned whether Russia was behind efforts to interfere in the 2016 election.

U.S. spy agencies concluded more than a year ago that Russia used hacking and propaganda to try to tilt the election in favor of Trump. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly denied that.

After Mueller's indictment was made public on Friday, Trump said it backed up his assertion that there was no collusion between his campaign and Russia.

The indictment did not address whether anyone from the Trump campaign coordinated or worked with Russians. Mueller's broader probe is ongoing.

"It wasn't designed to be able to clear everything on the investigation," Republican Senator James Lankford said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"It was designed to say it was very clear these 13 individuals in this set of companies were trying to interfere in our election," said Lankford, who sits on the Senate Intelligence

Committee. Trump, in a Sunday morning tweet, belittled Representative Adam Schiff, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee that is investigating Russia's actions, labeling him a leaking "monster."

Schiff, speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" program, said details of the indictment provided "overwhelming and unequivocal" evidence of the threat from Russian interference and countered Trump's assertions that the Russia inves-

igation was a "hoax." "This is a president who claims vindication anytime someone sneezes," Schiff said. analytics firm Trade Alert data. scheduled to run until midday Friday. President Donald Trump was due to attend on Thursday. Vice President Mike Pence went as scheduled on Wednesday. Trump told reporters at the White House he had spoken to Ryan and others, and that the accident had been "a pretty rough hit."



United States Attorney Carmen Ortiz speaks during a press conference at the FBI's Boston Field Office held to appeal to the public for help in returning artwork stolen in 1990 from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston

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Exxon Mobil claims its foes are conspiring against it

By Kevin Crowley

As climate-change lawsuits against the oil industry mount, Exxon Mobil Corp. is taking a bare-knuckle approach rarely seen in legal disputes: It's going after the lawyers who are suing it. The company has targeted at least 30 people and organizations, including the attorneys general of New York and Massachusetts, hitting them with suits, threats of suits or demands for depositions. The company claims the lawyers, public officials and environmental activists are "conspiring" against it in a coordinated legal and public relations campaign. Exxon Mobil has even given that campaign a vaguely sinister-sounding name: "The La Jolla playbook." According to the company, two dozen people hatched a strategy against it at a meeting six years ago in an oceanfront cottage in La Jolla, Calif. "It's an aggressive move," said Howard Erichson, an expert in complex litigation and a professor at Fordham University School of Law in New York. "Does Exxon really need these depositions, or is Exxon seeking the depositions to harass mayors and city attorneys into dropping their lawsuits?" McKayla Maroney's Lawyer Claims USA Gymnastics Paid her to Keep Abuse Quiet Maroney went public in October with sexual assault claims against former team doctor Larry Nassar. On Wednesday, her lawyer, John Manly, filed a suit on her behalf against USA Gymnastics claiming that they paid her \$1.25 million so she didn't go public with her abuse. "I want people to understand that this kid had no choice. She couldn't function. She couldn't work." "They [USAG] were willing to sacrifice the health and well-being of one of the most famous gymnasts in the world because they didn't want the world to know they were protecting a pedophile doctor." Over 140 women have claimed Nassar abused them during medical exams. Nassar recently pleaded guilty to 10 counts of criminal sexual misconduct and is due for sentencing in January. Experts say Exxon Mobil's combative strategy is a clear sign of what's at stake for the fossil fuel industry. So far, New York City and eight California cities and

counties, including San Francisco and Oakland, have sued Exxon Mobil and other oil and gas companies. They allege that oil companies denied findings of climate change scientists despite knowing that the use of fossil fuels posed "grave risk" to the planet. Attorneys general Eric Schneiderman of New York and Maura Healey of Massachusetts are investigating whether Exxon Mobil covered up information on climate change, defrauding shareholders and consumers. Exxon Mobil, the world's 10th-biggest company, has denied the allegations and says its defense is intended to show that it's being punished for not toeing the line on climate change, even though it agrees with the scientific consensus. "The attorneys general have violated Exxon Mobil's right to participate in the national conversation about how to address the risks presented by climate change," said Dan Toal, a lawyer who represents the company. "That is the speech at issue here - not some straw man argument about whether climate change is real." Plaintiff lawyers and legal experts contend the oil giant's tactics are meant to intimidate while shifting the spotlight away from claims of environmental damage. And they say there's nothing improper with lawyers discussing strategies together. "It's sort of like a big scare tactic: Reframe the debate, use it as a diversionary tactic and scare the heck out of everybody," Sharon Eubanks, a lawyer who was at the La Jolla gathering, said of Exxon Mobil's strategy. In recent years, the most notable attack on a plaintiff lawyer came in 2011 when Chevron Corp., claiming it was target of an extortion scheme, successfully pursued a civil racketeering suit against Steven Donziger, the attorney behind a \$9.5 billion Ecuadorian judgment against the company over pollution in the Amazon. Some experts say Exxon Mobil's strategy goes beyond mere litigation tactics. "People often try to use litigation to change the cultural conversation," said Alexandra Lahav, a professor at the University of Connecticut School



of Law. "Exxon is positioning itself as a victim rather than a perpetrator."

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Southern Television 15.3 2018年2月份電視節目表
Table with columns for days of the week and time slots, listing various programs and their broadcast details.

A Snapshot Of The World



An Afghan Artlord paints a message on a wall at the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul



An FBI mobile command center vehicle is parked at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School following a mass shooting in Parkland



Diggers are pictured at a site where a building was demolished and where a memorial park in honor of the victims of the September 19 earthquake will be built, in the La Condesa neighborhood in Mexico City
MEXICO-QUAKE/



FILE PHOTO: Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori arrives in court during the sentencing in his trial on charges of embezzling state funds to manipulate the media during his tenure as president, in Lima



Demonstrators hold placards at a rally for gun control outside of the White House in Washington, DC, in this still image from video



Mock coffins, symbolising the 65 miners that died in an explosion at Grupo Mexico's Pasta de Conchos coal mine, are displayed at the Angel of the Independence monument during a protest to mark the 12th anniversary of the disaster, in Mexico City



U.S. President Donald Trump rides in a motorcade to Air Force One as he departs for Joint Base Andrews, Maryland from West Palm Beach



Demonstrators lay on the ground at a rally for gun control outside of the White House in Washington, in this still image from video



The son of a garbage recycler holds a sign reading "Election without Lula is fraud" as they take part in a protest against Brazil's President Michel Temer's proposal to reform the social security system in Sao Paulo



Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, new chair of the Houston Community College Board of Trustees.

HOUSTON [Jan.19, 2018] - Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz is the new chair of the Houston Community College Board of Trustees.

"I fully support Chancellor Cesar Maldonado and the HCC administration as they continue to transform the college into a model institution," Evans-Shabazz said.

Dr. Evans-Shabazz, a board member since 2015, is a former teacher and currently a real estate professional.

The board also named Pretta VanDible Stallworth as vice-chair. Elected to the board to represent District IX in December 2017, VanDible Stallworth was named to the post by fellow trustees on the same day of her ceremonial swearing-in.

Trustee Zeph Capo was elected board secretary. Capo has represented District I on the board since his election in 2013 and is the vice president and legislative director for the Houston Federation of Teachers.



Also at the January -18 board meeting, the board passed a "Resolution of Unity and Support" by a vote of 8-0, resolving to work together in a professional and collegial manner and disavowing trustee actions that circumvent the college's policies and procedures, cause unnecessary distraction, or do not support the college's mission.

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Evans-Shabazz Named Chair Of HCC Board Of Trustees

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

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Establishing the historic partnership with Apple and the launching of the iCDS (Coding and Design School)
Retiring more than \$19 million in bonded indebtedness and removing the negative watch by rating agencies

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Invention, Creation And Innovation: HCC Thrives At Houston Maker Faire



HOUSTON [November 2017] - Curiosity, imagination and a desire to make the world a better place through innovation were three of the common denominators shared by thousands of high school and college students who attended the Houston Maker Faire.



The Houston Maker Faire is a massive gathering of students and educators, who show, share and compete with projects designed to solve problems. Houston Community College had its own Innovation Pavilion at the event.

Ravi Brahmhatt, Director of Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship at HCC, took several students to showcase their work. He was inspired to see the growing enthusiasm of young problem-solvers.

"We had one of the largest turnouts this year," Brahmhatt said. "I am so proud of our HCC students for sharing their cool projects and classroom technology. We are also very thankful to our deans and chairs for coming and networking with the community."

One of the participants was Ursela Knox, an HCC Business Management student. Her invention was a transportation system that moves people from rural areas to sectors with better employment and educational opportunities.

"I am pleased at the public's approval," Knox said. "I am glad they thought my project was something needed. I got all thumbs up."

Bhaskar Sarkar, an international student who recently arrived at HCC from Ban-

"By giving them tech and up-skill training, we help students gain tools to inspire action," Brahmhatt added. "We encourage students to come up with innovations. We believe they will trigger others to do the same."

About HCC

Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 15 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society.

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SEATTLE — With little more than a whiff of Amazon's interest in a new business, the company can crater the stocks of potential competitors, prompting them to consider bold acquisitions and other drastic measures in response. Just ask companies in the home improvement, meal-kit and grocery businesses.

The latest category alarmed by the specter of competition from Amazon is the pharmacy market. With huge amounts of consumer spending and frustrating inefficiencies, it is the type of business that invariably attracts Amazon's attention. CVS Health is now in talks to acquire Aetna, one of the nation's largest health insurance providers, a move considered to be partly a reaction to the footsteps of Amazon.

The likelihood of Amazon's eventually getting into the pharmacy business is high, several analysts and a former employee said. But it is not clear when it will make that move or how aggressive it intends to be.

The near-term threat may be somewhat overstated. Amazon has received wholesale pharmacy licenses in at least a dozen states, as The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported on Thursday. But the licenses permit the company to sell other kinds of products too. In Connecticut, for example, the license is for "wholesale of drugs, cosmetics and medical devices," while in Louisiana it was granted to a "drug or device distributor."



Amazon is eying the pharmacy market that has huge amounts of consumer spending and a long list of frustrating inefficiencies.

Brian Tanquilut, an analyst for Jefferies, noted that the company acquired many of the wholesale pharmacy licenses between fall of last year and early this year, around

Analysts Say Likelihood Of Amazon's Getting Into The Pharmacy Business Is High

The Health Care Industry "Hears" Amazon's Footsteps

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



The pharmacy market, with huge amounts of consumer spending and frustrating inefficiencies, could be attractive to Amazon.
Above, Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO. (Photo/Reuters)

when the company started selling medical supplies to businesses. "It's not evidence of a retail entry into the pharmacy business," he said.

An Amazon spokeswoman, Lori Torgerson, refused to comment on "rumors or speculation" about Amazon entering the pharmacy business, but she shared a statement that suggested other motivations for the paperwork. "Wholesale licenses are required for Amazon Business to sell professional-use only medical devices in certain states," she said.

There is little doubt, though, that Amazon is interested in at least some aspects of the pharmacy business. Brittain Ladd, a supply chain consultant who worked at Amazon until earlier this year on groceries and other initiatives, said he participated in discussions about how Amazon could enter the category, including through acquisitions.

"The pharmacy business was always a topic of interest when I was with Amazon, and there was a sincere desire on the part of Amazon to create a better customer experience across pharmacy and health care as a whole," he said.



Speculation is that Amazon is interested in at least some aspects of the pharmacy business.

While Mr. Ladd said he isn't privy to the company's current strategy, he believes existing pharmacy companies are right to be worried. "My advice is that executives at pharmaceutical companies should crush all assumptions when it comes to Amazon and their ability to enter, innovate and reimagine the pharmacy business and health care," he said.

If Amazon decides to enter the market, it could take a variety of avenues, analysts said.

The easiest way in would be to set up a mail-order pharmacy that focused on price-sensitive customers without health insurance or who have high-deductible

plans that require them to pay for some drug costs upfront. To do this, Amazon would need retail pharmacy licenses in every state — a hurdle, certainly, but not an insurmountable one, the analysts said. "They can at least dip their toe in the water with the cash-pay customers, and learn the business," said Ana Gupte, an analyst for Leerink Partners.

She said cash-paying customers account for 5 percent to 10 percent of the \$560 bil-



lion prescription drug business.

The easiest way for Amazon to enter the healthcare business would be to set up a mail-order pharmacy catering to price-sensitive customers without health insurance or who have high-deductible plans.

The idea could prove attractive to customers who already go to Amazon for a wide range of shopping items, from shoes to electronics to diapers. Retailers like Target and Walmart have added pharmacies to bring in extra business for a similar reason. Amazon's recent acquisition of Whole Foods could also provide a physical location for pharmacies.

"A large part of the infrastructure is already there," said David Maris, an analyst for Wells Fargo.

In a call with analysts this week, Timothy C. Wentworth, the chief executive of the pharmacy-benefit manager Express Scripts, indicated a willingness to work with Amazon to reach these cash-paying

customers. "We certainly see that as something where if they wanted to move into a space, we could be a very natural collaborator," he said.

If Amazon wanted to go bigger, Ms. Gupte and others said, it could sell to insured customers and even serve as a pharmacy-benefit manager, overseeing drug coverage for people on behalf of insurers and large employers.

This would be far more complex. It would likely require Amazon to either acquire a pharmacy-benefit manager or enter into a partnership with an existing one. Expanding the pharmacy business without the aid of a major pharmacy-benefit manager would be tough, because the benefit managers serve as gatekeepers to insured patients, deciding which pharmacies they can and cannot use. The benefit managers also operate their own mail-order pharmacies, which might make them less willing



to accommodate Amazon.

Some said they expect that if Amazon chooses to enter the health care business, it would do so in a big way. The company could attempt to provide comprehensive services to patients, doctors and others, far beyond selling drugs.

Nadina J. Rosier, the health and group benefits pharmacy practice leader at Willis Towers Watson, said other areas the company could explore include offering virtual doctor consultations, or using the Amazon Echo, its voice-controlled smart device, for health care applications.

No matter the short-term steps Amazon is taking, Ms. Rosier said, her research has demonstrated that it is "clearly looking to revolutionize how health care is delivered in some way."

But while Amazon has a track record for upending major industries, from books to groceries, she said health care is complicated and there would be intense pressure to get it right. "It is just a sensitive topic," she said. "We don't have as much scrutiny of how much you paid for your jeans, or your shoes." (Courtesy <https://www.nytimes.com>.)

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