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Record reservoir flood predictions kept secret before Hurricane Harvey hit Houston

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

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| Southern News Group

U.S. jobless claims near 45-year low as economic outlook brightens

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell to a near 45-year low last week, pointing to strong job growth in February and solid momentum in the economy.

The economy's brightening prospects were also underscored by other data on Thursday showing a gauge of future economic activity increasing for a fourth straight month in January. Labor market strength should continue to underpin consumer spending, despite a drop in retail sales in January.

"Firms are extraordinarily unwilling to part company with workers reflecting, in all likelihood, the difficulty of replacing them," said John Ryding, chief economist at RDQ Economics in New York.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 7,000 to a seasonally adjusted 222,000 for the week ended Feb. 17, the Labor Department said on Thursday. Claims fell to 216,000 in mid-January, which was the lowest level since January 1973.

Claims for six states, including California, were estimated because of Monday's Presidents Day holiday. While that probably distorted last week's data, the underlying trend in claims was consistent with a robust

labor market.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims unchanged at 230,000 in the latest week. It was the 155th straight week that claims remained below the 300,000 threshold, which is associated with a strong labor market. That is the longest such stretch since 1970, when the labor market was much smaller.

The labor market is near full employment, with the jobless rate at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent. Tightening labor market conditions are starting to push up wage growth, which could help to lift inflation toward the Federal Reserve 2 percent target.

Minutes of the U.S. central bank's Jan. 30-31 policy meeting published on Wednesday showed policymakers upbeat in their assessment of the economy and a number "judged that the continued tightening in labor markets was likely to translate into faster wage increases at some point."

The minutes also noted that "several others suggested that the upside risks to the near-term outlook for economic activity may have increased."

The dollar was trading lower against a basket of currencies. Prices for U.S.



Job seekers line up to apply during "Amazon Jobs Day" at the Amazon.com Fulfillment Center in Fall River

Treasuries rose, with the yield on the benchmark 10-year note retreating from a more than four-year high. Stocks on Wall Street rose after two days of losses.

The Labor Department said the Virgin Islands had still not claimed for California, Hawaii, returned to normal, months Maine, Virginia, West Virginia after the territories were and Wyoming were estimated. It also said claims-taking slammed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. procedures in Puerto Rico and

China's Fosun snaps up France's Lanvin in fashion expansion

PARIS (Reuters) - Fosun (0656.HK) is taking control of Lanvin, France's oldest surviving couture label, in the Chinese conglomerate's most prominent fashion investment yet.

Fosun, which owns French leisure company Club Med, is the latest Chinese firm to expand into fashion labels at a time when consumers in China - the world's second biggest economy - are driving a global revival in luxury goods spending.

Lanvin, until now majority-owned by Taiwan-based media magnate Shaw-Lan Wang, had struggled financially in recent years after switching designers.

But the 129-year-old brand, named after founding couturiere Jeanne Lanvin, remains one of fashion's best-known labels, and has long been considered an epitome of Parisian chic.

Fosun gave no financial details of the transaction. It said current shareholders - who include Wang, with 75 percent of the firm, and Swiss businessman Ralph Bartel, who has 25 percent - would retain a minority stake in Lanvin.

The Chinese group will invest around 100 million euros (\$123 million) in the business,

a source close to the matter said. Fosun added in a statement that with its resources Lanvin would "enter a new phase of expansion."

The brand had enjoyed a revival under star designer Alber Elbaz, but his surprise sacking in 2015 marked a turning point for Lanvin, which changed artistic director twice but was still having trouble with slumping sales and facing a cash crunch.

Lanvin does not publish earnings. It made an 18.3 million euro loss in 2016, sources with knowledge of the situation had told Reuters. Losses had been forecast to rise to at least 27 million euros in 2017, they said.

Fosun saw off competition from Qatari investment fund Mayhoola, the owner of Italy's Valentino, to take control of Lanvin, according to people with knowledge of the discussions. Fosun already had stakes in Italian high-end menswear label Caruso and U.S. knitwear firm St. John Knits and it said on Thursday that it had a mandate to "strategically deepen its root in this sector."

China's Shandong Ruyi (002193.SZ) - a shareholder in French group SMCP (SMCP.PA) which owns the Sandro, Maje and Clotilde Pierlot labels - has also been expanding its fashion



FILE PHOTO: The logo of Lanvin, luxury clothing and accessories, is seen on a box in a store of French fashion house Lanvin in Paris

empire. This month it took control of Swiss luxury shoe and accessories firm Bally.

The luxury fashion industry is still dominated by European

firms, however, including French conglomerates LVMH (LVMH.PA), which owns Louis Vuitton, and Gucci-parent Kering (PRTP.PA).

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Record reservoir flood predictions kept secret before Hurricane Harvey hit Houston

By Andrea Rumbaugh

A day before Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast last August, an internal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers forecast predicted that the storm would fill Houston's Barker Reservoir to record levels, flooding neighborhoods on the reservoir's western border for two weeks or more, government records show. That projection was made Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017 - before Harvey hit Houston. The next day's Army Corps forecasts got worse and worse: Both Barker and Addicks reservoirs would spill beyond government-owned land, engulfing nearby homes and businesses.

But the Corps did not share these predictions with the public. It wasn't until Saturday, Aug. 26, that au-

thorities in Fort Bend County - after being briefed on the that day's confidential Army Corps forecast - issued a flooding advisory for neighborhoods adjacent to Barker.

It took Harris County officials until late Sunday, Aug. 27, to begin issuing similar warnings for communities upstream of both Barker and Addicks.

By then, some neighborhoods were already inundated. Many residents - most of whom had no idea they lived in reservoir "flood pools" - ended up fleeing on foot or being rescued in boats or military vehicles.

The documents are emerging six months after Harvey because the Corps has been compelled to produce records in response to lawsuits filed by thousands of flooded out homeowners.



Residents of the Cinco Ranch and Kelliwood areas of Ft. Bend and Harris Counties evacuate from the west side of the Barker Reservoir along Westheimer Parkway in Katy, TX on August 29, 2017.

Texas named the most lustful state in America, according to new Wallethub study

On Wednesday, Wallethub announced America's Most Sinful States for 2018, and Texas ranked high on the annual list. Overall, Texas landed in the 4th position as most sinful, but the Lone Star State was named the most lustful in all of America. Wallethub took seven sin categories - anger and hatred, jealousy, excesses and vices, greed, lust, vanity, and laziness - to compile their overall vice ranking. Along with lust, Texas ranked high in vanity and jealousy at the number seven spot of each category.

Texas ranked low in excesses and vices and greed at the number 42 and 43 spot, respectively, overall. The Lone Star State was right in the middle of the ranking for anger and hatred (number 19 overall) and laziness (number 27 overall) categories. Tourists in Amsterdam will soon have to turn their backs on sex workers in the city's iconic Red Light District. For the overall rank of America's most sinful, Florida, California, and Nevada ranked a the number one, two, and three spots ahead of

Texas. The top ten is rounded off by Georgia (5), Tennessee (6), Illinois (7), Michigan (8), Arkansas (9), and Louisiana (10). In order to determine the most sinful states in America, Wallethub took the seven categories mentioned above and analyzed data from 38 different relevant metrics, including sex offenders per capita, thefts per capita, obese rates, teen birth rates, beauty salons per capita, volunteer rate and several other factors. To see the full methodology breakdown, review the full Wallethub study here.



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Saturday, February 24, 2018

A Snapshot Of The World



Iraqi forces deploy during a campaign searching for weapons and wanted people, to impose order in Basra



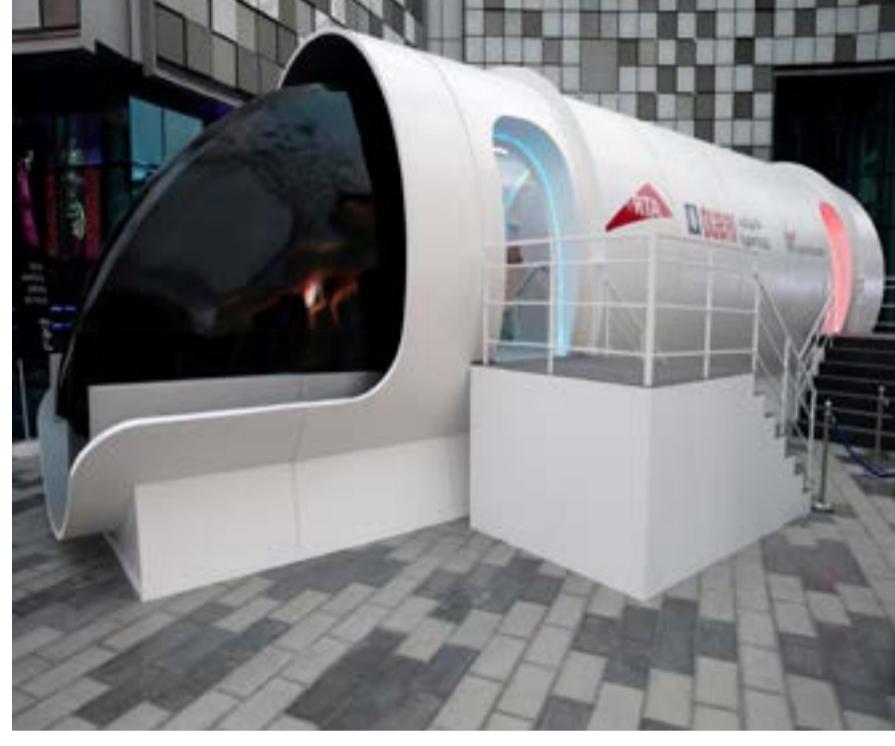
Ice Hockey - Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics - Women's Gold Medal Final Match - Canada v USA - Gangneung Hockey Centre, Gangneung, South Korea - February 22, 2018 - Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson of the U.S. celebrates with the U.S. flag after their win.



Short Track Speed Skating Events - Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics - Men's 5000m Relay Final - Gangneung Ice Arena - Gangneung, South Korea - February 22, 2018 - Silver medallists Wu Dajing, Han Tianyu, Xu Hongzhi of China and Chen Dequan of China carry their national flag



Nordic Combined Events - Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics - Men's Team 4 x 5 km Final - Alpensia Cross-Country Skiing Centre - Pyeongchang, South Korea - February 22, 2018



Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) unveil the design model of the hyperloop in Dubai, United Arab Emirates February 22, 2018. Hyperloop technology uses an electromagnetic propulsion system to accelerate the movement of goods and services through a vacuum tube. The system is designed to assist the levitation of the capsule slightly off the track within the tube and move it at speed up to 1200 km/hour. Accordingly, the hyperloop could travel between Dubai and Abu Dhabi in 12 minutes (about 90 minutes in a car),



People play on the giant frisbee during Spring Festival holiday in Beijing



A man wearing a dog mask visits Confucian Temple as a celebration for Chinese Lunar New Year of the Dog in Nanjing



A performer wears a costume during Spring Festival celebrations marking Chinese New Year in Badachu park in Beijing



Chinese people make a gesture of prayer as they walk past a Tibetan family at a Buddhist temple in Badachu park during Spring Festival celebrations marking Chinese New Year in Beijing

The Chinese New Year, Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, as it's been called since the 20th century, remains the most important social and economic holiday in China, and today is celebrated by Chinese people and people of other cultures and ethnic origins all around the world.

This most happy, joyful and ancient of all holiday for Chinese all started out of fear, according to centuries-old legend. While the origins of the New Year celebration varies from teller to teller, all legends include the story of a terrible mythical monster who preyed all the villagers of the land. The lion-like monster's name was Nian (年) which is also the Chinese word for "year." The stories also all include a wise old man who counseled the villagers to scare off the evil Nian by making loud noises with drums and firecrackers and hanging red paper cutouts and scrolls on their doors because, for some reason, the Nian was very fearful of the color red. As legend has it, the villagers took the old man's advice and the Nian was conquered. So on the anniversary of the date, the Chinese recognize the "passing of the Nian" known in Chinese as guo nian (過年), which is shared with the new year celebrations.



Today, Chinese New Year is celebrated in China and in countries and territories with significant Chinese populations, including Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Mauritius, The Philippines and Chinatowns all over the world.

Based On The Lunar Calendar

The date of Chinese New Year changes each year because it is based on the lunar calendar. While the western Gregorian calendar is based on the earth's orbit around the sun, China and most Asian countries use the lunar calendar that is based on the moon's orbit around the earth. Chinese New Year always falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice. Other Asian countries such as Korea, Japan and Vietnam also celebrate new year using the lunar calendar.

Originally tied to the lunar-solar Chinese calendar, the holiday was a time to honor household and heavenly deities as well as ancestors. It was also a time to bring family together for feasting. With the popular adoption in China of the Western calendar in 1912, the Chinese joined in celebrating January 1 as New Year's Day.

Chinese History Comes Alive

Today, the spirit of the traditional Chinese New Year lives on in the 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival (www.texaslunarfest.net), the largest celebration of Asian culture in the south central part of the United States, being

held this year on Saturday, February 24, 2018, in front of the Southern News Group Building in Southwest Houston, located at 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, Texas 77072.

This year's Festival will have an international theme highlighting the many countries and cultures of the world and will include cultural displays, international food and vendor booths, international entertainment, acrobats, lion dances, martial arts demonstrations, music and dancing by international performers, carnival rides, games and door prizes for every age group. The festival's activities are carefully selected to complement this great and exciting celebration with lively international entertainment that reflects the many diverse groups living here in the Houston community.

We not only celebrate an important part of Asia but also include International performances. In the Chinese lunar calendar a different animal or mythological beast represents every year in a twelve year cycle. The year of 2018 is the year of the Dog.

At the annual Texas Lunar Festival, we celebrate the impressive qualities of every culture while celebrating the Asian Lunar New Year. For the past 21 years, community leaders and volunteers have worked hard to promote the remarkable diversity and impressive leadership of the greater Asian community while fostering friendship among nearly every culture.

The 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival is being hosted by Southern News Group, Chinese New Year Festival Inc., International Trade Center, International Management District, and STV 15.3. For more information please contact Jennifer Lopez at 281-983-8152 or jenniferit@gmail.com

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COMMUNITY

Ancient History Of Asian Culture Will Come Alive At The 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival

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

新年快樂

Happy Chinese New Year

China, however, continues to celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year, although in a shorter version with a new name—the Spring Festival. Significantly, younger generations of Chinese now observe the holiday in a very different manner from their ancestors. For some young people, the holiday has evolved from an opportunity to renew family ties to a chance for relaxation from work.



Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner (center) joined Southern News Chairman Wea H. Lee and participants in the 21st Annual Texas International Lunar Festival in 2017.

Chinese History Comes Alive Today, the spirit of the traditional Chinese New Year lives on in the 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival (www.texaslunarfest.net), the largest celebration of Asian culture in the south central part of the United States, being



Lunar Festival Dragon Dance in the 1920's in the U.S.



You will even find zesty traditional German dancing at the 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival!

Thanks to the remarkable success of previous festivals, we have expanded this year's festival! Our commitment to cultural diversity and the promise of a stronger tomorrow starts at our festival. The success of previous festivals has proven our dedication and enthusiasm to expand above and beyond our former festivals.



Thousands of citizens across the great State of Texas visit our festival every year. From the exciting entertainment to the remarkable cuisine, the Texas Lunar Festival not only celebrates Houston... but every culture across our beautiful planet.

Since 1979, Southern News Group has not only built the largest Asian media complex in the southwestern United States, but has also reached out to the broader community of southwest Houston with programs that respond to the growing ethnic diversity of this unique section of one of America's fastest growing cities. We have initiated and been the driving force behind many community projects, programs and events that include the Texas Lunar New Year Festival, the McDonald's Education Workshops, the Texas African Summit, the ITC Education Institute and have aired many more educational, cultural and business-related television programs on our digital television station, STV 15.3, as well as having hosted over 200 international business related meetings and events at our International Trade Center.



The 22nd Annual Texas International Lunar Festival is being hosted by Southern News Group, Chinese New Year Festival Inc., International Trade Center, International Management District, and STV 15.3. For more information please contact Jennifer Lopez at 281-983-8152 or jenniferit@gmail.com

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In the fever swamps and extremist fringes of the internet, the outspoken student survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School are now being depicted as mouthpieces of the FBI, pawns of left-wing activist billionaire George Soros, stooges of the Democratic Party — or all of the above.

The students, who have called for stronger gun control measures, are now the subject of conspiracy theories that have spread far and wide, even reaching cable news and spurring the firing of a Florida lawmaker's aide.

The speed with which these groundless claims spread points to a troubling digital ecosystem in the era of fake news. In this shadow media network, unfounded information shows up on dubious sites, churns through the news aggregation site Reddit, and works its way into Facebook feeds — and to the mainstream media.

Conspiracy theory claims Parkland survivor a 'crisis actor'

The accusation that the students are paid "crisis actors" has gained the most velocity online, trending on YouTube at one point and racking up tens of thousands of shares on Facebook. The spread of disinformation comes as Silicon Valley faces increasing pressure to crack down on propaganda and fake news.

"In the conspiracist mindset, everything is potentially a deception," David Carroll, an associate professor of media design at The New School, said in an email. "And a supposed secret cabal that orchestrates the liberal conspiracy against the American right-wing would have to involve paid actors, who allegedly appear at staged school massacres, as an elaborate hoax performance to justify gun confiscation."

As of 6 p.m. ET Tuesday, more than 111,000 Facebook users had shared a since-deleted post claiming the Parkland students were performers who exploit tragedies. The post, along with others that had tens of thousands of shares, was later taken down.

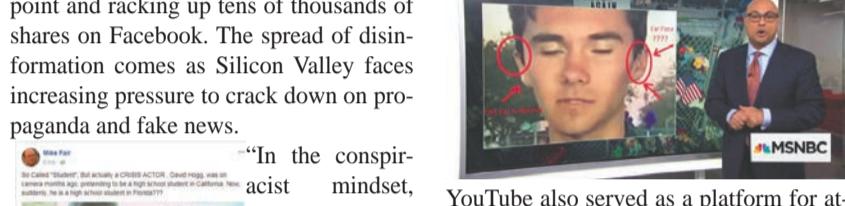
In the post, the Facebook user included a screenshot of David Hogg, a 17-year-old

YouTube also served as a platform for attacks on students, particularly Hogg. As of Wednesday morning, videos alleging he was a crisis actor dominated the YouTube search results for his name. One such video was the top trending clip on the platform early Wednesday morning.

A YouTube spokesperson confirmed the situation and acknowledged that the video had been erroneously added to its Trending section.



Parkland survivor, from an August 2017 television news report that aired on CBS Los Angeles. He had been interviewed by a news crew about a confrontation between a lifeguard and a surfer in Redondo Beach, California. The Facebook user wrote that Hogg, who has said he was visiting Los Angeles at the time of the report, was "pretending."



Hogg was the top trending clip on the platform early Wednesday morning. A YouTube spokesperson confirmed the situation and acknowledged that the video had been erroneously added to its Trending section.

Hella Tight O. Hilton

It's still early in The Great Fakening* but surely the progression to the next era begins with teenage school shooting survivors being forced to declare they are not crisis actors.

*The Great Fakening is a future in which events we recently lived through will need to be proven

5:35 PM - Feb 20, 2018

"This video should never have appeared in Trending," a YouTube spokesperson wrote in an email. "Because the video contained footage from an authoritative

Donald Trump Jr., for instance, liked two tweets that suggested Hogg, who has emerged as one of the most vocal surviv-

news source, our system misclassified it. As soon as we became aware of the video, we removed it from Trending and from YouTube for violating our policies. We are working to improve our systems moving forward."

Facebook also took action to remove the posts.

"Images that attack the victims of last week's tragedy in Florida are abhorrent," Mary deBree, head of content policy at Facebook, said in an email. "We are removing this content from Facebook."



Internet conspiracy theorists accuse 17-year-old Parkland survivor, David Hogg, of being a 'crisis actor.'

A national issue

Inflammatory claims like these now accompany just about every major American tragedy. Alex Jones, the controversial conspiracy theorist and Infowars host, suggested on his radio show that the Parkland shooting was a "false flag," or staged, operation. Jones has pushed similar views about the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre, including the idea that the people shown in news reports from the scene were actors. Once fodder for the darker corners of the internet, absurd claims and wild rumors have been making their way into the mainstream media and the social media accounts of prominent individuals in politics, which lend the theories the appearance of credibility.

Another student, Kali Clougherty, blasted the conspiracy theorists:

Kali Clougherty@kali4change WE ARE. NOT. CRISIS. ACTORS. wow. just because most

of the people in the media are a part of the drama program at MSD doesn't mean we are paid actors. WE LIVED THROUGH THIS. you should be ashamed of yourselves.

Donald Trump Jr., for instance, liked two tweets that suggested Hogg, who has emerged as one of the most vocal surviv-

vors, was railing against the Trump administration to cover for his father. Hogg has said his father is a retired FBI agent. And in an appearance on CNN, former Georgia congressman Jack Kingston asked, "Do we really think — and I say this sincerely — do we really think 17-year-olds on their own are going to plan a nationwide rally?"



"I would say to you very plainly that organized groups that are out there, like George Soros, are always ready to the charge, and it's kind of like instantly rally, instant protest," Kingston added, before he was challenged by anchor Alisyn Camerota.

A representative for Kingston did not respond to a request for comment, citing Kingston's role as a contributor to CNN. CNN did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the news value of airing Kingston's views.

The evolution of a conspiracy theory

By early Monday, far-right websites began to run with the crisis actor theory.

Gateway Pundit, a pro-Trump blog that has been criticized for publishing false reports, uploaded a YouTube video Monday morning titled "David Hogg Can't Remember His Lines When Interviewed for Florida school shooting."

In the video, Hogg appears to stumble over his words during an exchange with a reporter. It was not clear if the footage had been edited or altered, and it lacked basic context. YouTube has since removed the video for violating its policy on harassment and bullying.



Gateway Pundit and other sites that appear to traffic in conspiracy theories — True Pundit, NorthCrane.com, Infowars.com — followed up that video with articles that cast aspersions on Hogg and his purported connection to the FBI. Donald Trump Jr. liked tweets that linked to two of those articles.

Meanwhile, on the Reddit channel for ardent supporters of President Trump, users circulated unsubstantiated information, dark jokes, and memes about Hogg and his classmates.

The pushback

In an appearance on CNN on Tuesday morning, a Parkland survivor sharply criticized Kingston for suggesting he and his fellow classmates were coached by left-wing financial backers or handlers.

"I think it's very despicable that he would even have the audacity to say that," said Brandon Abzug, the student. "Young people all across this country and over the world should feel that they have the power to make things right."



Twitter

And in Florida, the speedy resolution of a small-scale political scandal suggested there are penalties for spreading baseless information.

Benjamin Kelly, a Florida legislator's aide, was fired on Tuesday after reportedly sending an email to a Tampa Bay Times reporter in which he claimed Hogg and Emma Gonzalez, another Parkland survivor, were "actors that travel to various crisis [sic] when they happen."

A few hours later, state Rep. Shawn Harrison tweeted that Kelly had been "terminated" from his post. "I am appalled at and strongly denounce his comments about the Parkland students," Harrison tweeted. During an interview with MSNBC on Wednesday afternoon, Hogg appeared to dismiss the trolls who have targeted him and his classmates.

"The only time you're ever doing anything that actually matters is when people try stopping you," he said. (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news>)

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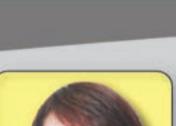
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