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The People's Hour

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SOURCES Feds search Rep. Ilhan Omar's home in immigration probe, How the price of gas, groceries and heating oil could impact control of Congress, Trump's Russia deal leaves GOP candidates with a Putin problem, ANTHROPIC admits: Houthis used Claude AI to make rockets, ballistic missiles correct themselves..., Trump expresses doubts about livestreaming execution

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- [Axios] Feds search Rep. Ilhan Omar's home in immigration probe
<https://www.axios.com/2026/10/12/ilhan-omar-search-immigration>

Why: Federal agents searched a sitting congressman's home in a probe tied to her immigration paperwork. The audience will want to know whether anyone is above the law, and Democrats are already calling it an abuse of power weeks before the midterms.

- [Washington Times] How the price of gas, groceries and heating oil could impact control of Congress
<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/oct/12/gas-grocery-heating-oil-prices-cost-republicans-control-congress/>

Why: Pump, grocery and heating bills are what working families feel every week, and they may decide who controls Congress. It lets the host ask both parties why prices are still squeezing households.

- [Axios] Trump's Russia deal leaves GOP candidates with a Putin problem

<https://www.axios.com/2026/10/12/trump-russia-diesel-deal-republicans-midterms>

Why: The Russian diesel deal splits the right, with critics like Bolton calling it a serious mistake and Republican candidates left to defend it. Listeners can weigh cheaper fuel against giving Putin a win while the Ukraine war drags on.

- [Drudge Report] ANTHROPIC admits: Houthis used Claude AI to make rockets, ballistic missiles correct themselves...

<https://www.dailymail.com/news/article-16202851>

Why: A major AI company admits its tool helped a terror-linked militia improve missiles, just as Houthi strikes hit Riyadh's airport. It raises hard accountability questions about Big Tech and AI safety that ordinary Americans never got a vote on.

- [Axios] Trump expresses doubts about livestreaming execution

<https://www.axios.com/2026/10/12/trump-livestream-execution>

Why: The Fort Hood shooter's execution touches military families and justice for the victims. Republican concerns about livestreaming it, and a military archbishop saying Catholic soldiers shouldn't serve on a firing squad, make it a live debate over justice versus spectacle.

01 — OPENER JINGLE

[STING — markford_open.mp3]

02 — COLD OPEN (DATE SLATE + ROADMAP)

Good evening, America. It's Monday, October twelfth, two thousand twenty-six, and this is The Mark Ford Show.

We have four stories tonight, and they all come back to one question. Who is looking out for you?

First, Washington. Before sunrise, federal agents searched the home of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar as part of an immigration paperwork fraud investigation. The Justice Department says a judge authorized the warrant. Omar says she is being targeted for her politics. Here is what we know. There is a court-approved warrant, and there is an ongoing federal criminal investigation that border czar Tom Homan confirmed last month, though he would not give details. An investigation is not a conviction, and I will keep that straight all night. But the election is less than a month away, the Justice Department has usually steered clear of moves like this so close to a vote, and Trump has called her crooked and a terrible person for years. Nobody is above the law. The public still deserves evidence, not headlines.

Second, your fuel bill. Diesel is averaging six dollars and twenty-eight cents a gallon, up seventy-one percent from a year ago. Farm-state Republicans begged the White House for relief, and the answer is a deal to buy diesel from Vladimir Putin. This is the same president who signed sanctions on Russia and pledged to the G7 that he would keep them. Murkowski, Collins, Tillis, Bacon and Fitzpatrick are against it. Tillis warns the deal may break the law that requires notice to Congress. Energy analysts doubt it will lower prices at all. Meanwhile, Pew says forty-four percent of voters see their midterm vote as a vote against Trump. Working people are paying at the pump and getting politics instead of answers.

Third, rocket science for rent. According to a Daily Mail report on a disclosure from Anthropic, Houthi-linked actors in northern Yemen allegedly used the Claude chatbot to work on three weapons programs. That's a guided rocket, a long-range ballistic missile, and a hypersonic glide variant. Anthropic says its safeguards blocked many requests but not all, and it has no evidence a working weapon was ever fielded. One test-fired rocket appears to have failed. Over the weekend the Houthis hit Saudi Arabia hard, including King Khalid Airport, where fourteen people died. The Strait of Hormuz is still locked down, and oil keeps climbing. It is not established that the chatbot played any role in those attacks, and I will separate what is confirmed from what is not. The bigger questions are who is responsible when powerful technology lands in the wrong hands, and whether tech companies can police their own products. The American driver ends up holding the bag either way.

Fourth, and this one is hard. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that the firing-squad execution of former Army Major Nidal Hasan would be livestreamed. Hasan murdered thirteen people at Fort Hood in two thousand nine. Trump first said he absolutely approved. Now he says he will make the final call, and privately he has doubts. Vice President Vance says he won't be watching. No execution in this country has ever been livestreamed. Justice for those thirteen victims is not in doubt. The question is whether the public needs to watch, and whether we turn a punishment into a spectacle or hand a killer the martyrdom he wants.

Four stories, and one standard. You deserve the facts, and you deserve the truth.

This is The People's Hour, on The Mark Ford Show, right here on WRZF.

A note on the close: your brief asked for "Stay with us" and "We'll be right back" as the sign-off, but the standing production rule bans break-toss phrases anywhere in the copy because the system injects them automatically. I followed the ban and ended on the show ID. Tell me if you want the break-toss lines added back.

03 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

04 — SEGMENT A: DIESEL FROM PUTIN

Let's start with a number. Six dollars and twenty-eight cents. That's what a gallon of diesel averaged across this country yesterday, October eleventh. A year ago it was seventy-one percent lower. Seventy-one percent. If you drive a truck, run a farm, haul freight, or buy anything that got hauled by a truck, and that is everything, you are living inside that number.

And here is what Washington came up with. On Friday, President Trump announced a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia will supply diesel to American and global markets. Diesel. From Putin. The man whose army is bombing Ukrainian cities as we speak.

Let's walk through how we got here, because the timeline matters. A few weeks ago, Trump signed a sweeping Russia sanctions law. Last year, he slapped an extra twenty-five percent tariff on India for the crime of buying Russian oil. His own words, his own policy. Then on October second, just over a week ago, he and the other G7 leaders pledged to keep sanctions on Russia. A week later, he's shaking hands on a fuel deal with the guy.

So which is it? Is Russia a pariah that has to be squeezed, or is Russia our new gas station? You don't get to be both. At least you shouldn't.

Now, I'm a practical guy. If there were a clean way to get cheap diesel into this country tomorrow and put money back in the pockets of working people, I'd listen. I don't care much where the barrel comes from if the price at the pump drops. But that's the question, isn't it? Does it drop?

The energy analysts say probably not. Axios reports that analysts are questioning whether this deal will deliver the relief Trump is promising. They doubt it will do much for diesel prices. So the price is up seventy-one percent, the president makes a deal that makes the Republican Party squirm, and the

experts say it may not even work. That's the trade. All the political cost, and maybe none of the relief.

Let's talk about how this started, because it didn't start with Putin. It started with farmers. Farm-state Republicans have been pleading with the White House for diesel relief. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa and others urged Trump to ban diesel exports. Keep the fuel here, keep it cheap for American producers. And Trump embraced the idea. He liked it. Then the White House abruptly reversed itself and ruled out a ban. No explanation that satisfied anybody. Just a flip.

Think about that. The ask was simple. Keep our diesel at home. The answer, a few weeks later, is to go buy more from Moscow. A farmer in Iowa asked for a lifeline and got a geopolitical science experiment.

And the reason prices are this high in the first place is not a mystery. There's a war with Iran, and the Strait of Hormuz has been in effective lockdown for months. That war has rattled oil markets all year. Now, Republicans in some of the toughest Senate races in the country have noticed that the war is poison on the campaign trail. Ashley Hinson in Iowa and Mike Rogers in Michigan have both called for ending the Iran war, after previously supporting it. Think about that. Candidates who backed the war are now running away from it, because their voters are paying for it at the pump.

And what does Trump do? He doubles down. He's defended the war in vivid terms, saying Iran might have attacked Los Angeles and San Diego if not for his war. Maybe. Maybe not. But a guy in Des Moines paying six dollars and twenty-eight cents a gallon for diesel, up seventy-one percent from a year ago, doesn't care about hypotheticals in San Diego. He cares about what's on the pump.

Now, the day after announcing the Putin deal, Trump did something that made the whole thing even harder to defend. On Saturday, he blamed Ukraine for soaring diesel prices. He called for President Volodymyr Zelensky to be replaced. And all of this happened while Russia continued attacking Ukrainian cities.

So let me get this straight. Russia invades, Russia bombs, and the president's response is that the guy being bombed should be replaced, and the guy doing the bombing should sell us fuel. I don't know what you call that. I know it isn't America First.

The White House, for its part, is pushing back. Spokesperson Davis Ingle put it this way: "President Trump has consistently proven his doubters wrong." End quote. That's it. That's the argument. Trust him, he's been right before.

A senior administration official went further and said Trump is, quote, "laser-focused on bringing down costs, whether it's diesel with the Russians or importing Argentine beef. Some people might not like it, but he's thinking of what Americans are paying and what he can do about it." End quote.

Fair enough. Thinking about what Americans pay is a good thing. I'd love to see more of it. But thinking about it is not the same as lowering it. And notice that the official lumps in Argentine beef, as if it's all one big grocery list. Russia's war machine is not a grocery item.

Now here's where it gets interesting, because the pushback isn't coming from Democrats. It's coming from inside the house. Republicans were swift, and they were loud.

Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania vowed to force a House vote to block the oil purchases. That is a Republican promising to put his own president's deal up for a vote. Congressman Don Bacon of Nebraska and Congressman Michael McCaul of Texas both criticized the deal. In the Senate, Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, and John Curtis of Utah all criticized it by Sunday. That's a long list for a deal that was only announced Friday.

Tillis went on NBC's Meet the Press, and he raised a real problem. He said the deal may violate a law that requires the White House to notify Congress before lifting sanctions. Now, that's not an opinion about whether the deal is smart. That's a claim that it may be illegal. There is a law. The law says Congress gets told before sanctions are lifted. If the White House skipped

that step, then this isn't just bad politics, it's the executive branch deciding the rules are optional.

And you don't have to be a fan of congressional procedure to see why that matters. Congress is supposed to be the check. When a president can quietly cut a deal with an adversary and let the legal notice slide, the check stops being a check.

Even some of Trump's most loyal supporters are uneasy. Laura Loomer, no one's idea of a squishy moderate, denounced the deal. She said it doesn't just fund Russia, it indirectly helps Iran by putting, quote, "money back into the coffers of the Islamic regime of Iran." End quote. Think about what she's saying. We're in a shooting war with Iran, and the argument from a MAGA ally is that this deal might float Iran's economy. When Laura Loomer is on your case, you've got a messaging problem.

To be fair, not everybody in the party is against it. Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna of Florida backed the deal. So did Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso. So there are defenders. But look at the ratio. A long list of senators and House members calling it a mistake, and a couple of names holding the line.

Axios boiled the Republican choices down to three. Defend Trump's reversal, break with him, or stay quiet. And we are three weeks from Election Day. Three weeks. Candidates are knocking on doors right now, and every door has a person behind it who just filled a tank.

Here's the bigger problem for them. This isn't the only thing they're being asked to defend. Take the data centers. Senator Jon Husted of Ohio has been hit with Democratic attacks over them, and his own party's Senate campaign committee has flagged data centers as a vulnerability. Then Trump showed up at a Husted rally last week and defended the projects anyway. He said, quote, "Look, there's so much money to be made for Ohio. You can't just turn them off. They'll go to China." End quote. Maybe he's right on the economics. But that's a guy at a rally for a candidate who's trying to distance himself from the issue, and the president walked right into it.

Then there's the five thousand dollar dividend checks Trump has floated. Analysts say they'd cost one point three trillion dollars. Voters said no. A September Reuters/Ipsos poll found sixty-three percent of Americans disapproved. Nearly two out of three people looked at a check for five thousand dollars and said, no thanks. That tells you something. People aren't stupid. They know a check like that gets paid back in higher prices, and they'd rather see the price come down in the first place.

And that's the heart of it. Working people don't want a gimmick. They want diesel to cost less. They want groceries to cost less. They want heating oil to be something they can afford this winter. And what they're getting is a shell game, a new headline every few days, a new fix that creates a new fight.

At last month's convention, Trump told Republicans to, quote, "pretend that I'm on the ballot." End quote. He wants the midterms to be a referendum on him. Well, voters may be taking him up on it. A Pew Research Center poll released Thursday found that forty-four percent of registered voters see their congressional vote as a vote against Trump. Only nineteen percent see it as a vote for him. That is better than two to one against. If you are a Republican candidate and you wanted a referendum, you may have just gotten the result before the election.

Texas Senate nominee Ken Paxton reportedly knows it. Axios reports that Paxton has privately blamed oil prices, the Iran war, and the midterm convention for his falling poll numbers. Privately, folks. And look at what he's pointing to: the three things driving his numbers down are the three things the president keeps pushing.

So let's go back to the pump. Diesel is six dollars and twenty-eight cents. The president says he'll fix it by buying from the Russian government, the same government the G7 pledged to keep under sanctions ten days ago. The analysts doubt it will work. Senators say it might be against the law. Republican members of the House are lining up a vote to stop it. A MAGA ally says it helps Iran. And the president spent Saturday blaming Ukraine for the whole mess.

And the real kicker is the timing. Even if this deal does somehow work, even if Russian diesel flows and prices tick down, it won't happen before ballots are cast. The proposals won't materialize before voters decide. So the political damage is immediate, and the relief, if it ever comes, is down the road.

Here's what I'd say to anyone in Washington who wants to know what the truck driver thinks. Don't tell me a deal with Putin is a cost-of-living plan. Don't tell me the problem is Zelensky. The problem is a war you started with Iran, a Strait that's been shut for months, and a price at the pump that has gone up seventy-one percent while you ran around chasing headlines.

If Putin ends up with the money and the American trucker ends up with the same six-dollar diesel, then this wasn't relief. It was a gift to a dictator, wrapped in a campaign slogan, and working people got the bill.

We'll be right back.

05 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

06 — SEGMENT B: THE RAID ON ILHAN OMAR

This morning, before the sun came up, federal agents showed up at the Washington home of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a Democrat from Minnesota. They had a search warrant, and they carried out a search. That is the story. I want to start with exactly that, because by tonight there will be a thousand versions of it out there, and most were written by people who decided what they think before the sun was up.

So let's walk through what we actually know. A Justice Department spokesperson confirmed the search to Axios. Fox News reported it first, citing a Justice Department statement, and said the agents were from Homeland Security Investigations. According to the Justice Department, those

Homeland Security agents, quote, executed a judicially authorized search warrant secured by the Department of Justice, end quote. They did it as part of an ongoing federal criminal investigation. Homeland Security itself had nothing to add and sent reporters back to the Justice Department.

Notice the phrase "judicially authorized." That matters, and I'm not going to wave it away. In this country, agents can't just decide to go through a person's home. Prosecutors have to go to a judge and show probable cause that a crime was committed and that evidence of it is likely to be found in that place. A judge has to sign off. That is a real check, and it is the same check everybody else is supposed to get.

Now, in fairness, let's be honest about how that process works. A warrant request is one-sided. The government makes its case. Nobody from the other side is in the room to push back. Judges sign warrants every single day. So a signed warrant tells us a judge was satisfied with what prosecutors put in front of him or her. It does not tell us the case is strong, and it sure doesn't tell us she did anything. Both of those things are true at once.

Here is where it gets thin. Fox reported that the search is tied to a fraud investigation into Omar's immigration paperwork. That is a report. The Justice Department has not stood up and laid out what the allegation is. We don't know what agents took out of that home. We don't know whether the paperwork in question is her own, or someone else's. And as of tonight, no charges have been announced. None. Not one.

The question that has been hanging around for a while is whether this came out of nowhere. It didn't. Last month, border czar Tom Homan confirmed that there is an ongoing criminal probe into Omar. He declined to give any details. So the existence of an investigation was already on the record before this morning. What changed today is that agents physically went to her door.

Let me say something plainly, because it needs saying. An investigation is not a conviction. A search warrant is not an indictment. An indictment is not a verdict. I've watched this country forget those differences over and over, and I'm not going to forget them tonight just because the name in the

headline is one that gets people riled up. Ilhan Omar is innocent unless and until the government proves otherwise to a jury. That is the rule. It's the rule for you, it's the rule for me, and it's the rule for a member of Congress.

And that works in both directions. If a sitting member of Congress lied on immigration paperwork, that is a serious thing, and nobody should shrug it off. Think about the regular people you know. A guy gets a number wrong on a federal form, or leaves something off, and suddenly he's buried in letters, fines, and lawyers. Ordinary Americans do not get a pass when the paperwork is wrong. So if the government has a real case against a powerful person, it should bring that case, in the open, and let the facts land where they land. Nobody in Washington is above the law. Nobody.

But here is the part that has people's antennas up, and they have good reason. Axios points out that searching the home of a candidate less than a month before an election is unusual. The Justice Department has typically avoided it. That is not written in the Constitution. It's a tradition, an unwritten rule, and it exists for a reason. When the government makes a big, public move against someone who is on the ballot, the accusation lands with voters long before the answer does. A search makes headlines in a day. A court clearing someone can take a year. By then the election is long over. That is why prosecutors have usually held back during the final stretch, and why a move like this one is getting so much attention.

Omar is a candidate, and the election is weeks away. Maybe the evidence was ripe and the timeline of the case simply landed here. That can happen. Prosecutors don't always control the calendar. But when you break a long-standing norm, you take on the burden of showing it wasn't political. That burden falls on the Justice Department, and it has not met it yet.

Then there's the president. Trump was asked whether he knew about the search ahead of time. He said authorities are looking at Omar, quote, "very carefully," end quote. Then he kept going. Quote, "I've always found her to be totally crooked personally, but that has nothing to do with me." End quote. And then, quote, "I think she's a terrible person. She comes from a country that is a non-country." End quote.

Think about that for a second. The president of the United States, whose own administration runs the Justice Department and Homeland Security, is talking about a person those agencies are investigating. He says it has nothing to do with him, in the same breath that he calls her crooked and a terrible person. If you want to know why people are suspicious, you could start right there. A president who is supposed to stay out of an open criminal matter is instead handing out a character verdict before there's a single charge.

And that line about a "non-country." Ilhan Omar was born in Somalia. She came to the United States in nineteen ninety-five, as a twelve-year-old refugee. That is a kid, running from a country that fell apart. Whatever you think of her politics, and plenty of people on this show's audience think plenty, that is not a thing a president needs to sneer at.

It is also not new. Axios reports that Trump has made Minnesota's Somali community one of the most frequent targets of his anti-immigration rhetoric, and he has made Omar the face of it. Just last week, he called on Minnesotans to, quote, "fight back," end quote, against the state's Somali population. He has also specifically demanded that Omar leave the country, and that she be deported. He has said that out loud, more than once.

Now put those pieces next to each other. For years, the president says she should be deported. Last week he tells her neighbors to fight back against her community. This morning, his Homeland Security agents, the same department that runs immigration enforcement, are going through her home in an immigration paperwork case. You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to raise an eyebrow at that. You just have to be paying attention. And I want to be careful here. Suspicion is not proof. Looking bad is not the same as being wrong. A person can be disliked by the president and also be guilty of something. A person can be disliked by the president and also be the target of an unfair process. We don't know which one this is, and that is exactly the problem.

Now, Omar has answered. In a post on X this afternoon, she wrote, quote, "I'm ok. Make no mistake: this is an attempt to target political enemies and weaponize federal law enforcement." She went on, quote, "For ten years,

Trump has targeted me with baseless lies and smear campaigns. This is just the latest escalation in his campaign of political intimidation. I will not be silenced." End quote.

Her spokesperson, Jacklyn Rogers, put out a harder statement. She called it, quote, "an outrageous abuse of power and an unprecedented escalation in the weaponization of federal law enforcement to target political enemies." And she added, quote, "The Congresswoman has done nothing wrong." End quote.

House Democratic leaders put out a joint statement as well. They called the search "deeply disturbing" and part of a "rogue abuse of power" by the administration.

Let me treat those statements the way I treated the Justice Department's. They are statements. They are not evidence. Politicians say "political witch hunt" about everything, including cases where the evidence is overwhelming. Omar and her office say she did nothing wrong. Of course they do. That claim has to be tested just like the government's claim. The difference is that she hasn't been handed a badge and a warrant. The government has. Power carries the burden of proof, not the person on the other end of it.

So what should happen next? I'll tell you what I think regular people are owed here, and it's not complicated.

First, show your work. If there is a real case, the government should say what it is. Prosecutors can seek to unseal the documents that persuaded the judge, to the extent the law allows. Citizens are entitled to know why their government kicked in the door of an elected representative. Not every detail, not right away, but enough to tell the difference between a serious case and a stunt.

Second, make a decision. If agents found what they were looking for, bring charges, and let a jury hear it. If they didn't, say so. What cannot happen is a vague cloud, hanging over a candidate straight through Election Day, with nobody forced to put up or shut up. That is the real danger of a pre-election raid. It lets an accusation do the work that a conviction is supposed to do, without ever having to prove anything.

Third, keep the president out of it. If this is a clean case, then the cleanest thing the White House can do is stop commenting on it. Every time Trump calls her crooked and a terrible person, he hands her lawyers a gift, and he hands every future juror a reason to wonder. If you actually want a conviction to stick, you don't want the commander in chief running a smear campaign next to your prosecution.

And fourth, and this is for all of us, hold off on the verdict. I know how this goes. Half the country will decide by dinner that she's a criminal. The other half will decide by dinner that she's a martyr. Both halves will be working from the same few paragraphs and a lot of feelings. Neither has seen a single page of the evidence.

Here is what bothers me most as someone who talks to working people every day. You already feel like the system has two sets of rules. One for the powerful, and one for everybody else. A raid like this makes people ask which set is being used. If a powerful person broke the law, they want to see her held to account like anyone else would be. And if a powerful person is using the machinery of the government to go after an enemy, they want that stopped just as fast. Both of those are the same demand, which is one standard of law for everybody, applied in the open, with proof.

This week, the country got a warrant, a statement, and a lot of loud opinions. It did not get evidence. Until it does, treat Ilhan Omar like what she is under the law, a person under investigation and not a person convicted, and treat the Justice Department like what it is, a government agency that has to prove its case and not a campaign operation.

If there's a crime, charge it. If there isn't, clear her name. But nobody in this country should have to wonder whether a search warrant was just a very expensive campaign ad.

We'll be right back.

07 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

08 — SEGMENT C: ROCKET SCIENCE FOR RENT

Here's a story that sounds like science fiction, and it is not. Tonight the Daily Mail in Britain is reporting on a disclosure from the American company Anthropic, the maker of an artificial intelligence tool called Claude. According to that disclosure, a group operating in northern Yemen used the tool to work on rockets and missiles. Not to write a poem. Not to plan a vacation. To work on weapons. There is a lot of heat in this story and not much of it has been sorted out, so I want to be careful. I'm going to separate what is confirmed from what is not, because the headline writers are not going to do it for you.

Start with the source. The Daily Mail story was written by Mark Nicol, the paper's defence editor, and published tonight. It leans on a report Anthropic put out last month. That report has a section titled "Disrupting a Yemen-based guided weapons engineering cell." So this is not a leak and it is not a rumor from some anonymous source. The company wrote it down itself. The Daily Mail says the actors are understood to be Houthis, the Iranian-backed fighters. Anthropic's own language says threat actors based in northern Yemen. Keep that difference in your head, because the company's words are a little more careful than the paper's.

Here is what the report says they were doing. Quote. "Threat actors based in northern Yemen were running three weapons development programs: a guided rocket that used a commodity, phone-class flight computer with final phase homing guidance, a multi-stage ballistic missile with a stated range goal of more than fifteen hundred miles, and a multi-variant missile, referred to as the R two thousand, that included a hypersonic glide vehicle variant." End quote. Read that again slowly. A rocket steered by something close to a smartphone computer. A missile aimed at fifteen hundred miles. And a design

with a hypersonic glider, the kind of thing we usually associate with the biggest militaries on earth.

Now, how did the tool come in? According to the Daily Mail's account of the report, the group used Claude Code, a version built for writing software, in place of human software engineers. It was used to develop the guidance, navigation and control software, which is the part that steers and stabilizes a flying vehicle. The paper says it produced position estimation software, tuned the control settings, ran a firmware build pipeline, and when warheads missed their targets, adapted to improve their accuracy. That is the Daily Mail's description. Notice the word "when." We'll come back to that.

Now the part Anthropic deserves some credit for, and also the part that should worry you. Quote. "Our safeguards blocked many of their requests, but not all of them. They used a variety of tactics to evade our safeguards and split their work across multiple sessions." End quote. Think about that. Many blocked. Not all. And the trick was breaking the job into small pieces so that no single piece looked like a weapon. Even after the company realized what was going on, the Daily Mail reports, the group was able to take what it had been taught and make adaptations.

Here is where I want to slow down, because the claims are running ahead of the facts. Anthropic wrote, quote, "We do not have evidence the actors succeeded in fielding an operational device; but they did test-fire a guided rocket. This field test appears to have failed. Within hours, the actors returned to Claude to work out why it failed." End quote. So the best evidence we have is one test shot, and it appears to have flopped. The Daily Mail headline says these rockets correct themselves after missing targets. The company's own report says it has no evidence of a working device in the field. Those two things do not sit comfortably together, and you should know which one comes from the people who actually watched it happen.

There is another line in the report that cuts both ways. Quote. "We have evidence that the actors had already built an offline simulation toolkit that does not rely on Claude or other engineering computing environments such as MATLAB." End quote. If you are an optimist, that says this group was not helpless without the tool. They had their own gear. If you are a skeptic, it says

these are serious people running a real engineering effort, and the AI was a helper in a program already underway, not some magic wand. Both of those can be true at the same time.

Now the second story, which is a different story. Over the weekend the Houthis hit Saudi Arabia harder than they ever have. The Daily Mail says there were two attacks on King Khalid International Airport, and fourteen people were killed. The airport was forced to close. Saudi security officials, the paper reports, were shocked by the range and the accuracy of the warheads. The Saudi energy minister has vowed a "serious" response. And the strikes have set off discussions inside the White House about increasing American military support for the Kingdom. Fourteen human beings are dead. That part is not in dispute.

Here is what is in dispute, or at least unknown. The Daily Mail itself says it is unclear whether the Houthis used Claude as part of the attacks on the airport. Read that sentence twice. Unclear. The Anthropic report was published last month, and it describes a test rocket that appears to have failed. It does not say the weapons that hit that airport came out of this program. It does not say they were designed with this tool. A newspaper can put two stories side by side. That does not make them one story. If somebody produces proof that connects them, I will tell you so. Tonight, nobody has.

So why does it matter, if the connection is not established? Because of what the report shows about the direction we are headed. For most of history, building a guided missile took a team of trained engineers, years of work, and access to expertise that was hard to find. This report describes a group in a war zone, a force the Daily Mail notes is often seen fighting barefoot or in sandals, reaching for that expertise through a chat window. You can argue about how much help they really got. But they tried. They got past some of the blocks. And they came back within hours of a failed test to ask what went wrong. That tells you the door is not shut.

Now somebody out there is saying, this is all in books already. Rocket science is not a secret. And that is partly right, which is why the offline toolkit detail matters. But a library does not sit with you at three in the morning and debug your code. A textbook does not tune your control settings. What makes

expertise rare is that it takes time and money and people. Take that away, and a small group with bad intentions can do the work of a much bigger one. That is the concern, and it is a reasonable one.

Now bring it home, because this whole thing has a price tag, and you are the one paying it. The Daily Mail reports the Houthis are also trying to disrupt shipping through the Suez Canal, in a bid to damage Saudi Arabia's economy. And the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow passage where a huge share of the world's oil moves, has been in effective lockdown for months because of the conflict between the United States and Iran. The paper says those efforts are pushing international oil prices up. Wars on the other side of the world do not stay there. They show up at the gas station.

Look at diesel. Axios reports that diesel averaged six dollars and twenty-eight cents a gallon yesterday, October eleventh. That is up seventy-one percent from a year earlier. Diesel is not a luxury. It moves the grain, the groceries, the lumber and the packages. Farm-state Republicans, Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa among them, have been pleading with the White House for relief. On Friday, President Trump announced a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin to bring Russian diesel to American and global markets. Energy analysts told Axios they doubt it will do much for prices. Several Republican senators were already criticizing it by Sunday.

So here is how it works for regular people. A rebel group, a regional war, a blocked strait, a missile fired at an airport. None of those people live in your town. None of them asked your opinion. But your trucker pays more, your grocer pays more, and the price on the cereal box goes up. Nobody in that chain sends you a check. And the idea of a five thousand dollar dividend check from Washington, which analysts say would cost one point three trillion dollars, was disapproved of by sixty-three percent of Americans in a September Reuters and Ipsos poll. People understand that a check does not fix a price problem.

Now the big question. Who is responsible? Start with the obvious. The people who build and fire the weapons are responsible. Full stop. If a missile hits an airport and kills fourteen people, the blame lands first on the men who launched it and the powers that arm them. Nobody is letting them off. But

responsibility does not end there. Somebody built the tool. Somebody decided to release it to the public. Somebody set the rules for what it will and will not do. When you build something this powerful and put it out into the world, you own at least part of what happens next.

Can tech companies police their own products? Let me give you an honest answer. Credit first. Anthropic caught this group, blocked a lot of what they asked for, and then put it in a public report. Plenty of companies would have buried it. Now the other side. A lock that works most of the time is not much of a lock when what sits behind the door is a missile. Many requests were blocked, not all. And remember the tactic: split the work into pieces. Guidance software for a drone that delivers pizza and guidance software for a warhead can look an awful lot alike. That is what makes this so hard to police from the inside.

And here is the part that bothers me most. We know about this because the company chose to tell us. That is it. I have not seen any government agency that required the disclosure, or any independent inspector who went in and checked the work. A company wrote the rules, enforced the rules, graded its own performance, and decided how much of the grade to publish. I am not accusing anybody of lying. I am saying that is not a system. That is a promise. And if there are other tools, from other companies, in other countries, with fewer scruples and no report at all, we may never hear about it.

So I would like somebody in Washington to tell me what the rule is. If a product can be asked, in plain English, to help design a flying weapon, what must the company do? Who checks? Who gets told? Who pays when it goes wrong? We are three weeks from an election, and candidates are fighting over diesel deals and dividend checks, and I have not heard one of them answer a single one of those questions. Maybe they will have to now.

Let me say it plainly one more time, so nobody misunderstands. Confirmed: the Daily Mail reports that a company's own report says a group in northern Yemen used its tool to work on three weapons programs, that its safeguards stopped many requests but not all, that it has no evidence a working weapon was fielded, and that one test rocket appears to have failed.

Confirmed: the Houthis hit Saudi Arabia hard over the weekend, and in recent days two attacks on King Khalid International Airport have killed fourteen people. Not confirmed: any link between the two.

The Houthis will answer for what they launch, and they should. The companies that build these tools will have to answer for what they release, and they should too. But the person with no seat at either table is the one standing at the pump, paying six dollars and twenty-eight cents a gallon for diesel because of a lockdown and a war she never voted for. She always gets the bill first, and nobody in Silicon Valley or Washington has said who will ever pay her back.

We'll be right back.

09 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

10 — SEGMENT D: SHOULD AN EXECUTION GO LIVE

Last Thursday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth went on a network called Real America's Voice and announced something no American government has ever done. The firing-squad execution of former Army Major Nidal Hasan, set for December third at Fort Hood, Texas, would be livestreamed. Not witnessed by a few reporters. Not shown to the families in a private room. Streamed, so the public could watch.

Here is what Hegseth said, and I'm quoting him. "We'll make sure that people are able to watch it. That it's public. Because people need to understand that there's serious consequences for these types of things." End quote.

Now, before I get into whether that is a good idea, I want to be clear about who this man is. Nobody should walk away from this segment thinking I'm soft on Nidal Hasan. I'm not. Nobody in this conversation is.

On November fifth, two thousand nine, Hasan was an Army major, a man who wore the uniform and took the oath. He walked into the Soldier Readiness Processing Center at Fort Hood. That is the place where soldiers line up for medical checks. They were doing paperwork. They were waiting their turn. Hasan yelled "Allahu Akbar," and opened fire. Thirteen people were killed, including a pregnant woman, and thirty two others were wounded.

Thirteen people died. One of them was a pregnant woman. Thirty-two others were wounded. Those were American soldiers, shot down on an American base, by a man who was supposed to be looking after their minds and their well-being. It was the worst terrorist attack on American soil since September eleventh, two thousand one.

And it didn't have to happen. A special Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee report went back through the record and criticized the military for what it called "political correctness." The warning signs were there. The major's Islamist radicalization was getting clearer and clearer. The people around him saw it. And the system was so worried about how it would look to act that it did nothing. Thirteen people paid for that.

That was seventeen years ago. Hasan is fifty-six now. He was shot during his capture and permanently injured, and he sits in a wheelchair. The sentence is going to be carried out. Everybody in the administration agrees on that. The president, the vice president, the Pentagon. Nobody is wavering on the punishment. So let's get that off the table. Hasan dies on December third unless something unexpected happens, and for the families who have waited nearly two decades, that day is long overdue.

The only question left is a narrow one. Does the rest of the country need to watch?

And that is where this thing has gotten messy, because the commander in chief can't seem to decide.

Start with Friday evening. Reporters asked President Trump about Hegseth's announcement. Early in the evening, he was all in. His words: "Absolutely, I approve." No hedging at all.

Then later that same night, the tone changed. He said, and again I'm quoting, "They want to do that because they want to set an example. I wasn't involved in that decision, but I understand the decision." End quote. Notice what happened there. Hours earlier it was "I approve." Now it was "they" want to do it, and "I wasn't involved." That is a man taking one step back from the edge.

Then came Saturday. At the White House, Trump told reporters he would be the one to decide. "There are two thoughts. Don't show it and show it. 'Cause you know, by showing it, maybe other people won't be doing what he did. So I'll make a decision, ultimately. I know what the military would like to do, but we'll make a decision." End quote.

So in the span of about a day, we went from a flat yes, to "I wasn't involved," to "I'm the one who decides." That's three positions in roughly twenty-four hours.

Behind the scenes, it sounds like he's leaning toward no. Axios reporter Marc Caputo spoke with four people who have talked to the president. According to them, Trump has privately shared misgivings. He has been, in the words of a senior administration official, deluged with "negative input." That input is coming from a bipartisan chorus of lawmakers and from advisers both inside and outside the White House. And the condemnation hasn't only been domestic. It has come from overseas too.

One confidant who isn't in the administration said the president told him the livestream, quote, "might not happen." End quote. That same person said Trump didn't sound particularly enthusiastic. And then he explained the president's process. Quote, "That's why he's calling around, doing the Trump thing, asking people what they think." End quote. Anyone who has followed this president knows exactly what that means. He polls his friends. He takes the temperature. And so far the temperature on this one is cold.

Even inside the administration, there is a sense of where this is headed. One official put it this way: "If I had to bet, I would bet the president doesn't authorize this." But that official also said he wasn't going to get ahead of the boss and predict what he'll do.

Then there is the vice president. On Friday, speaking off the cuff to reporters, J.D. Vance said, quote, "I don't know if that's actually going to happen." End quote. According to a source, he has repeated that privately to others. And then he added the line that tells you everything. "I'm not going to be watching it." End quote.

Think about that. The number two man in the government, a man who supports the execution, says he won't tune in. That is not the language of someone who thinks the broadcast is a great idea.

It also puts Vance on the other side of Hegseth again. Axios notes the two have been on opposite sides over the use of military force in Yemen and Iran, and over the leadership of the Army. Advisers insist they have a good relationship. Maybe so. But on this one, the Pentagon chief is out front on a limb, and the vice president is standing a few feet back from the tree.

Now, let me give the other side its due, because the argument for the livestream isn't stupid, and it isn't coming from a bad place.

The first argument is deterrence. Trump said it himself. By showing it, maybe other people won't do what he did. Hegseth said it too. People need to understand there are serious consequences. And there is something to the idea that justice should be seen. For most of human history, punishment was public. If the state is going to take a life in the name of the people, there is a case that the people ought to be able to look at what is being done in their name, rather than have it hidden behind a wall.

The second argument is about the victims. One confidant described the thinking in blunt terms. "The president wants the bastard to pay, and a public execution might be that extra humiliation Hasan deserves." End quote. I understand that feeling. Thirteen people are in the ground. Thirty-two were carrying wounds. Their families sat through years of appeals and delays and watched this man live. A lot of them want to see the sentence carried out, and they want him to feel the weight of it. I'm not going to lecture anybody who lost a son or a daughter or a wife that day about what they should want.

But the families already have a way to watch. And that is the key fact in this debate.

Whether it is a state execution or a federal one, the people who see it are usually family members and a small group of media. That's how it works now. There is a long and quiet tradition behind that. Executions used to be held in public squares, with crowds. According to NPR, that practice was discontinued in the nineteen thirties. The country looked at what those spectacles had become, the carnival atmosphere, the crowds, and decided it wasn't worthy of a serious nation.

Even in the biggest case of modern times, the government found a middle path. When Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was executed in two thousand one, loved ones and bombing survivors could watch by private closed-circuit television. The people with a stake in it saw it. The rest of the country did not.

So the question isn't whether victims can witness justice. They can. The question is whether strangers, with no attachment to this case at all, should get a front-row seat on the internet. And on that, I have real doubts.

Here's my problem. Once you livestream an execution, you don't control where it goes. It doesn't stay on a government website. It gets clipped. It gets reposted. It gets set to music. It lands in the feeds of teenagers and kids who didn't ask to see it. It becomes content. And a punishment that is supposed to be solemn turns into a thing people share and argue about and watch for entertainment.

And then there's the martyr problem, which one of the president's own confidants raised. The president wants Hasan to pay, but at the same time, quote, "he doesn't want to make the guy a martyr." End quote.

This isn't a hypothetical worry. Hasan shouted a religious slogan while he killed. He did it because he believed in a cause. There are people out there who share that cause. Give them a polished, public, worldwide broadcast of his death, and you hand them a recruiting video. You give them a story to tell. You let a killer who deserves to be forgotten become a symbol. The best way to deny a man like this any glory is to carry out the sentence quietly, with the families present, and then move on.

And then there's the image itself. Another person who spoke with the president said it bluntly. Quote, "This is an old dude in a wheelchair we're shooting. We want to livestream that?" End quote. It's crude, but it points at something real. The man is fifty-six, permanently injured, and in a wheelchair. He deserves the sentence he got. But the picture the world will see isn't the picture of the massacre. It's the picture of the execution. And a lot of people overseas, who already condemned this plan, will decide what they think of America based on that single image, rather than on what Hasan did to those soldiers.

That matters, because the story should stay about the thirteen. Right now, with every day this debate goes on, the headlines are about the broadcast. They're about Hegseth versus Vance. They're about the president's changing answers. Nobody is talking about the soldiers in that processing center. A livestream would pull even more attention onto the machinery of the event, and away from the people it's supposed to honor.

I also think there's a basic point about deterrence that's being overlooked. Does anyone really believe a man willing to walk into a room full of soldiers and open fire is going to be stopped by a video? This is someone who expected to die. Many attackers like him do. The threat of death does not stop a person who has already made peace with it, or who even wants it. What stops these attacks is catching them early. And that's the lesson of Fort Hood. The Senate report didn't say the system lacked a harsh enough punishment. It said the system was too timid to act on what it saw. If the government wants to honor the thirteen dead, the best thing it can do is make sure the next warning sign gets acted on. That does more than any broadcast ever could.

I'll give Hegseth credit for one thing. He's angry, and he should be. So should everyone. The anger is righteous. But a sentence is not a stage show. When a government starts designing punishments around the optics, around the clicks and the message, it starts to look like it's more interested in the performance than the justice.

So where does this stand? As of tonight, the decision belongs to the president. He told us so himself. He has lawmakers from both parties telling

him no. He has advisers telling him no. He has a vice president saying he won't watch. He has an administration official who would bet against it. And he has a defense secretary who already told the country it was happening.

My advice to the president is simple. Skip the livestream. Let the families watch. Let a small group of reporters bear witness, as has always been done. Carry out the execution, now set for December third, with the dignity those thirteen people are owed. Say their names, not his. As one administration official put it, Hasan will be executed for his crimes, and that is what matters.

Justice for the victims isn't up for debate. Whether the whole country needs to watch it happen is. And a country that is confident in its justice doesn't need to put it on a livestream to prove it.

We'll be right back.

11 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

12 — CLOSING / SIGN-OFF

Well, that's the show for tonight, and it was a heavy one.

Look at what we covered. The price at the pump. A Justice Department making moves that sure look like they were timed for the campaign trail. And a firing squad, of all things, in the headlines in modern America. Three different stories with one common thread.

Powerful people are making big decisions, and they're keeping one eye on the polls while they do it. That's what bothers me. Making decisions is their job. The problem is when those decisions get shaped by what plays well on the evening news instead of what's right or what works.

You pay for it at the pump. You pay for it when justice looks like it depends on who's asking. And you pay for it when life and death get treated like a talking point.

So what do we do? We ask better questions. We demand straight answers in plain English, without the runaround. We demand real evidence, not a press release and a smiling face on a podium. And we judge them on results, not spectacle. Did gas get cheaper? Did the system treat people fairly? Did the thing they promised actually happen?

That's not too much to ask. You're the one footing the bill, and you've earned the right to know where the money is going and why.

Nobody in Washington or in any statehouse is going to hand you accountability. You have to ask for it. Call your representatives. Show up at the town hall. Vote like it matters, because it does.

I want to thank you for spending your evening with me. You've got a lot of choices, and you chose to be here. I don't take that lightly. It means a great deal to me and to everyone who works on this show.

Now go get some rest. Hug your family. Be ready for tomorrow, because we're back at seven, and there's plenty more to talk about.

I'm Mark Ford. Good night, America.