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## Acquittal elevates fatal-force debate

Rittenhouse case hits a nerve on self-defense, further dividing nation

BY MARC FISHER AND MARK BERMAN

On the streets through the night after the verdict, the acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse played out as one more battle in a long-running war for the nation's identity: With marches, signs and chants, one side shouted against racists and the gun-obsessed, while the other yelled back that the teenager who shot three people — two of them to death — on a hairy night in Kenosha, Wis., was a hero who had stood up for gun rights and law and order.

On TV, politicians, celebrity lawyers and pundits bickered over the impulsive acts of a young man: Could this country afford to define itself as a place where any earnest, naive or troubled soul in any public place gets to decide in an instant to deploy fatal force against another — possibly without consequences?

But in U.S. courts, law schools and state legislatures, a quieter yet still fitful struggle has waged over the past couple of decades, focused on the central dilemma raised anew by the Rittenhouse verdict: What does a right to self-defense really mean? When can Americans choose to use deadly force? Who gets to decide?

As often happens in the legal realm, these essentially moral

SEE RITTENHOUSE ON A10

## Verdict firms up long-held fears on bias in courts

BY GRIFF WITTE, HANNAH KNOWLES AND KIM BELLWARE

Kyle Rittenhouse, a White man, shot three other White men and was determined by a nearly all-White jury in Wisconsin on Friday to have committed no crime because he was acting in self-defense.

Halfway across the country, in Georgia, a White man has claimed self-defense as he stands trial before a nearly all-White jury for killing a Black man, Ahmaud Arbery.

Race has not been the focus of lawyers' arguments in either trial. But in both, it looms large.

And now that Rittenhouse has been acquitted, the stakes may be even higher in the Arbery case, with Black Americans who protested police violence and racism during the summer of 2020 saying the integrity of the court system is now on the line.

"Is there any real justice in this system?" asked Barbara Arnwine, a civil rights activist who has been rallying demonstrators in Brunswick, Ga., and attending the trial with Arbery's family.

She said the verdict in that case — expected as soon as this coming week following closing arguments on Monday — will go a long way toward providing an answer. If the defendants are acquitted, she said, it would be nothing less than "a disaster."

SEE RACE ON A10

Three decades after the Soviet era, a Moscow thoroughfare echoes what was, and hints where Russia is heading



RUSSIAN STATE DOCUMENTARY FILM AND PHOTO ARCHIVE



ARTHUR BONDAR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Welcome to Tverskaya Street

BY ROBYN DIXON, ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN, MARY ILYUSHINA AND NATALIA ABBAKUMOVA IN MOSCOW

Thirty years ago, the Soviet Union ceased to be. The flag was lowered for the last time on Dec. 25, 1991. That moment still raises deep questions for the U.S.S.R.'s heirs: "Who were we as Soviets, and where are we going as Russians?"

Many of the answers can be found on Moscow's main thoroughfare — named Gorky Street, after writer Maxim Gorky, from 1932 to 1990, and renamed Tverskaya Street, a nod to the ancient city of Tver, as the Soviet Union was awash in last-gasp reforms.

It was the Soviet Union's display window on the bright future that Kremlin-run communism was supposed to bring. It was where the KGB dined, the rich spent their rubles, Vladimir Lenin gave speeches from a balcony, and authorities wielded their power against one of the most famous Soviet dissidents, Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

In the 1990s, Tverskaya embodied the fast-money excesses of the post-Soviet free-for-all. In later years, it was packed with hopeful pro-democracy marchers. And now, under President Vladimir Putin, it is a symbol of his dreams of reviving Russia as a great power, reliving past glories and crushing any opposition to his rule. Join a tour of Moscow's famed Tverskaya Street.

SEE MOSCOW ON A15

Tverskaya Street is seen in 1938 and in 2021.

## With policy gains, Biden team turns to inflation stance

PLAN MAY AMPLIFY CORPORATE BLAME

Economists unsure tactic would yield lower prices

BY JEFF STEIN

After nearly eight months of gridlock, President Biden's push to overhaul the economy is finally gaining momentum as congressional Democrats overcome their internal divisions and advance their signature legislative initiatives.

Long stymied by seemingly intractable divisions, Biden in the same week signed into law a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill while also pushing through the House of Representatives a separate, \$2 trillion-plus social and climate policy measure that has become the centerpiece of the president's vision to change the American economy. The president is also expected to pick the new chair of the Federal Reserve within days, a major decision shaping the nation's economic fate.

The burst of progress on

Biden's economic agenda comes amid unresolved strains that the administration in recent months has struggled to confront, with high inflation emerging as a top concern for American voters amid the biggest price hikes in nearly three decades. Republicans have blamed the inflation problems on Biden's economic agenda, but there are signs that the White House could soon push back more forcefully, saying that large corporations are partly to blame for the dramatic increase in costs.

White House aides are hopeful that coronavirus booster shots, the authorization of vaccines for younger children and predictions of fast economic growth for 2022 could mark a major turnaround. They have spent much of their first year in office refereeing legislative infighting and dealing with the pandemic's continued economic impact.

"Consumers are out there in the economy buying goods; initial claims for unemployment [benefits] are almost where they were before the pandemic, and a

SEE ECONOMY ON A14

Seeking reelection: Biden tells allies he plans to run in 2024. A12

## Fake beagle-research claim deluges Fauci's phone line

Animal rights group rides wave of conservative ire that amplifies its message

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND BETH REINHARD

Anthony S. Fauci was swamped by so many angry messages and threats that in late October his assistant quit answering the phone for two weeks. The U.S. coronavirus chief got 3,600 phone calls in 36 hours, just as he and other Biden administration officials were preparing for the campaign to vaccinate young children.

Much of the onslaught stemmed from a viral and false claim that the agency Fauci leads, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, had funded a medical experiment in which beagles were trapped in mesh cages filled with diseased sand flies, according to four National Institutes of Health officials familiar with the calls. The outrage was supercharged by a bipartisan letter signed by 24 members of Congress that ques-

tioned the agency's funding of medical research on dogs.

"You worthless piece of s---, you should be put in prison. Torturing animals!" said a caller in one of 15 voice mails obtained by The Washington Post. "I'd like to take you out in the sand, tie you down, put them fleas all over your a--."

Fauci has been a controversial figure during the pandemic, in part because of his public clashes with President Donald Trump over Fauci's support for masks and opposition to unproven covid cures. But a surge of harassment and threats in recent weeks has forced staff at his agency to spend significant time debunking misinformation and grappling with security concerns, according to three of the NIH officials and four senior administration officials, who like some others interviewed for this story spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

"The constant harassment in the form of ridiculous accusations and outright lies makes doing my job and that of my staff of fighting the covid-19 pandemic all the more difficult," Fauci, who also serves as President Biden's chief medical adviser, said in an

SEE FAUCI ON A6



SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST

A U.S. service member holds an Afghan girl's hand at Aman Omid Village, a camp housing Afghan evacuees at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico.

## Afghans bide time in N.M. 'village'

Thousands of evacuees still await relocation to cities across the U.S.

BY ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — The U.S. government calls the 50-acre sprawl of tents on this desert Air Force base a "village." The 4,300 Afghans temporarily housed here are the government's "guests." And the landscape of tents and trailers is called Aman Omid, which in Persian means "peace and hope" — the feelings U.S. officials say they are trying to foster here.

More than two months after the United States' chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, the federal government is still in the process of resettling roughly 45,000 Afghans housed in temporary camps on U.S. military bases after they were airlifted from their home country.

Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico is

among eight facilities that became hubs for one of the largest humanitarian resettlement operations in U.S. history. Biden administration officials say about 73,000 Afghans have arrived in the United States since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Holloman received 7,100, half of them children, between late August and early October. They include Afghans who risked their lives to aid the U.S. government during its two-decade war effort in their country, officials say. Others are relatives of those who served or of U.S. citizens, as well as many others who felt at risk in Taliban-held Afghanistan.

"We are this generation's Ellis Island," Curtis Velasquez, the Air Force colonel who serves as

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