

News Roundup

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As WRAL [reports](#), former state congressman and state Republican Party chairman Robin Hayes pleaded guilty in federal court this week to lying to the FBI during a [bribery investigation](#) involving political donor Greg Lindberg. Hayes was accused of helping Lindberg, who also has been indicted along with two associates, attempt to bribe North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey for favorable treatment of Lindberg's insurance businesses. Causey reported the scheme and worked with federal authorities during the investigation. Conspiracy and bribery charges, as well as additional charges of lying to the FBI, were dismissed as part of a plea deal that requires Hayes to cooperate with the government in related prosecutions. Keep reading for more news.

Lindberg. The Wall Street Journal [reports](#) that at the same time that the investigation into the bribery scheme was coming to a head, Greg Lindberg was employing "dozens of surveillance operatives" to track several different women that he was dating or interested in dating. The report says that the women were trailed up to 24 hours a day and that some had GPS tracking devices placed on their vehicles. The extent of the women's knowledge of the surveillance is not entirely clear from the article, though one woman said that she had some awareness of it. A spokesman for Lindberg told the Journal that one of the reasons that the women were being surveilled was to ensure that Lindberg did not inadvertently enter into "a long term relationship with anyone who was breaking the law."

Collins Resigns and Pleads. Four-term congressman Chris Collins of New York resigned from the House of Representatives this week and [pleaded guilty](#) to conspiracy to commit securities fraud and lying to federal investigators. Collins, who was one of the wealthiest members of Congress, tipped off his son Cameron that a drug produced by a company of which they both owned stock had failed a clinical trial and urged his son to sell his shares before that information became public. Remarkably, Collins called his son with the illicit tip while standing on the White House lawn – a moment that coincidentally was [captured on video](#) by news outlets covering a congressional picnic.

Doctor Convicted. NPR [reports](#) that a doctor who lives in Greensboro and had an office in Martinsville, Virginia, was sentenced to 40 years in federal prison this week after being convicted by a jury in May of more than 800 offenses related to running an opioid pill mill. Between 2015 and 2017, Joel Smithers prescribed more than 500,000 Schedule II controlled substances at his office, a destination that attracted people from hundreds of miles away seeking easy access to drugs.

Guyger. As the Associated Press [reports](#), former Dallas police officer Amber Guyger was convicted of murder this week for shooting and killing Botham Jean in his apartment after she mistakenly entered it thinking it was her own. Guyger was sentenced by a jury to 10 years of imprisonment, and, at the conclusion of the sentencing hearing, was hugged by both Jean's brother and the trial judge. Despite the hugging inside the courtroom, some members of the public reacted with indignation to what they perceived as a lenient sentence in a racially charged case (Botham was black and Guyger is white). The AP says that about 50 people took to the streets of Dallas to criticize the sentence in marches and other demonstrations.

White Supremacist Terrorism. The Department of Homeland Security is stepping up its efforts to combat white supremacist terrorism according to a [recent article](#) in the New York Times. In a recent strategy document and in public appearances by Kevin K. McAleenan, the acting secretary of the department, DHS has made it clear that it now views white supremacist ideology and organizations as significant domestic threats. The Times piece notes that some have

criticized the department for not focusing more attention on the issue sooner.

The Juice. National Pancake Day took a violent turn at an Asheville IHOP late last month when a group of customers became upset upon learning that orange juice refills were not free. The customers reacted to this news, apparently first coming to their attention when they received their bills, by flipping a table and assaulting a restaurant manager. The Asheville Citizen-Times [says](#) that the APD is reviewing security footage of the incident to identify suspects, though no arrests had been made at the time of writing.