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RUDER FINN SCORES TOUCHDOWN

[Ruder Finn](#) has acquired [Touchdown](#), a 65-member technology PR shop based in Austin.

Touchdown has offices in the UK, Netherlands, Germany, France and Australia.



RF CEO Kathy Bloomgarden said Touchdown's "expertise in championing emerging enterprise technologies through expert storytelling will bring additional competitive edge to our global technology and innovation practice."

Touchdown employees will continue to work under the firm's brand.

James Carter, CEO, will report to Bloomgarden. He said RF's core values centered around transparency, decency and honesty made the acquisition decision an easy one.

Ruder Finn ranked No. 4 in O'Dwyer's technology rankings with fees of \$46.2M.

Touchdown weighed in at No. 26 with \$6.3M in fees.

VENTURONI SAILS TO CARNIVAL

Jody Venturoni has joined Carnival Corporation as chief communications officer of the world's No. 1 cruise line company. She is responsible for internal and external PR, as well as outreach for the Carnival Foundation philanthropic arm.



Jody Venturoni

Venturoni reports to Josh Weinstein, president/CEO and chief climate officer.

She joins Carnival from LDWW, where Venturoni was founding partner at Dallas' biggest independent marketing communications shop.

Venturoni was executive VP at Hill+Knowlton Strategies and did a 14-year stint as president of [Weber Shandwick](#)'s southwest region. While at Weber, Venturoni was on-site corporate communications consultant for American Airlines. She helped manage American's response to the 9/11 attack, crash of AA Flight 587 in Queens and the 2001 failed shoe-bomb plot.

Carnival is the parent company of Cunard, Carnival, Princess, Holland America, P&O Cruises, AIDA, Costa and Seabourn brands. The company reported a more than 80 percent surge in Q3 revenues to \$4.3B as post-pandemic travel rebounded. It posted a \$770M loss.

MWW HIGHLIGHTS UKRAINIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Poland's national bank has hired MikeWorldWide for a global campaign to inform the general public about the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, particularly about the humanitarian crisis and challenges resulting from the wave of refugees.

The major focus of the campaign "is to boost awareness in the international community of the actual dimension of the war in Ukraine and the scale of the damages," according to MWW's services agreement with Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego.

The United Nations reports that 5.4M Ukrainians fled to neighboring Poland since Russia attacked on Feb. 24.

Poland is currently hosting the most Ukrainians, 1.4M. Germany is second at 998K people, followed by the Czech Republic at 442K.

BGK has budgeted \$3M for the MWW effort.

Of that amount, MWW's fee and out-of-pocket expenses are capped at \$500K each.

Spending for paid media channels (e.g., ads on Facebook, Twitter, NPR, USA Today, Spotify, Vox) is set at \$1M if the campaign reaches an audience of 40M.

Another \$1M goes for influencer spending as long as 10M people are reached.

MWW's Richard Tauberman, executive VP, and Shelley Noeldechen, senior VP, handle the effort.



WASH. STATE SEEKS ASPARAGUS PROMOTER

The Washington State Asparagus Commission is looking for a firm to handle promotional and marketing services in the US.

The Evergreen State is America's No. 1 producer of asparagus, a crop that in 2020 had a \$52M economic impact for growers and packers.

The Commission's mission is to support the growth and environmental sustainability of Washington's asparagus sector.

The RFP calls for strategic communications, advertising/media planning, video production, social media outreach, research and brand strategy services.

America is the world's top producer of asparagus, topping Peru, China and Germany.

WSAC plans to issue a one-year contract. Proposals are due Nov. 11.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\).](#)



PURPOSE WILL DRIVE BRAND LOYALTY IN 2023

Political polarization continues to be a top concern among Americans, yet despite this—or perhaps, because of it—more say they plan to support companies next year that share their values, according to the latest “[Relevance Report](#)” released by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations.



USC’s annual report, which seeks to identify emerging issues and trends that could affect the communications sector in the coming year, found that 60 percent of Americans surveyed want corporations to advocate for causes they care about. Nearly half (44 percent) want corporations to donate to nonprofits and 27 percent want them to lobby for regulations and legislation. More than a third (34 percent) want companies to speak out publicly on social issues.

When it comes to the social issues Americans care most about, mental health took the top spot, at 34 percent, followed by abortion (31 percent), education and climate change (both 30 percent), gun legislation (29 percent), healthcare reform (28 percent), racial equality (23 percent) and homelessness (22 percent).

Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of those surveyed said a company’s involvement with social causes at least sometimes influences their purchasing decisions. About the same number (72 percent) said they’d pay more for a product whose brand aligns with their social values, and about a third of those consumers said they’d pay 25 percent or more for that product.

Additionally, 46 percent said they’d take a pay cut to work for a company that actively supports causes that are important to them. For respondents under the age of 30, that percentage stood at more than half.

The USC report also says political division continues to be a major concern for Americans. More than half (56 percent) of those polled said polarization has them worried about the future of the country, and 52 percent also said they believe the U.S. will be more polarized in 2023 than it is now. More than a third (38 percent) admitted it that our state of political division has made them angry at times, and 34 percent said it had left them afraid to speak their minds in public.

The USC Center for PR’s 2023 Relevance Report surveyed 900 Americans in September. The survey was conducted via online survey company Survey Monkey.

TEAM LEWIS HIRES WEBER’S SAM MAZZARELLI

[TEAM LEWIS](#) hires Sam Mazzarelli as an SVP in its consumer practice. Mazzarelli joins the agency from [Weber Shandwick](#), where he held the same title.

He has worked with clients across technology, hospitality, retail and consumer packaged goods.



Sam Mazzarelli

At TEAM LEWIS, Mazzarelli will serve as head of the Boston office, in addition to supporting global growth across integrated accounts.

“Sam’s varied client experience deepens and diversifies our reach across consumer sectors,” said TEAM LEWIS executive VP Noah Dye. “He brings a fresh perspective to our growing client roster, and his expertise will strengthen our client engagement strategy.”

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[rbb Communications](#) adds [Emera Technologies](#) and [eCombustible Energy](#) to its energy and renewables practice. The two are part of the practice’s commitment to marketing innovative renewable energy solutions. The agency’s work for the new clients will include media relations, paid digital/social, thought leadership, crisis/reputation management, ESG, creative services and predictive intelligence analytics. Emera Technologies is developing decarbonized, digital energy solutions such as BlockEnergy, the world’s first distributed renewable energy microgrid for new residential communities of all sizes. eCombustible Energy has created the next generation of 100 percent carbon-free, hydrogen-based fuel.



[Crowe PR](#) is now working with social wellness platform [Vizer](#). The agency will handle media relations, thought leadership strategies and creative campaigns to build visibility for the company. Launched in 2019, the Vizer platform lets users convert workouts into community meals and rewards. Each day that a user reaches their fitness goal, they have the option to donate a meal through national food banks to someone in need at no cost through the free app. The workout also converts into reward points for the user that can be redeemed for products in digital, restaurant and retail spaces.

[Brandon](#) gobbles up [Idahoan Foods](#), a manufacturer of potato products. The agency will provide strategic, creative and community management support for Idahoan’s social needs as well as utilizing its in-house video and photography capabilities to provide content for the company and its social channels. “We are excited to partner with Brandon on our social media strategy and content,” said Idahoan Foods creative manager Jeffery Stafford.

[Apples & Oranges Public Relations](#) is named agency of record for [The Butterfly Mark](#) powered by [Positive Luxury](#), a platform that provides independently verified evidence to stakeholders of an organization’s ESG+ performance. This is the first North American agency relationship for the platform. AOPR will work with Butterfly Mark to help define its PR strategies, brand expressions, consumer engagement and messaging for potential members, partners and media. Its efforts will include messaging, event activation, partnerships, and PR.



[Lou Hammond Group](#) adds independent living residence [The Peninsula of Charleston](#) to its client roster. LHG will be handling public relations/corporate communications, strategic planning, branding and digital marketing for the Robert A.M. Stern-designed property, which features concierge and healthcare services. The agency also has signed on to work with [The Town of Kiawah Island, South Carolina](#), a residential community incorporating a resort and shopping village, and [etúHOME](#), a national home décor collection.

[Forberger Communications](#) is selected by [LoyaltyLion](#), an e-commerce loyalty platform based in London, to represent it in North America. The B2B tech PR and communications firm will be responsible for media relations, building and executing a thought leadership program, and supporting strategic messaging.

GETTING PAST THE HEALTHCARE STATUS QUO

Modern healthcare was already at a breaking point before the pandemic. Now, two-plus years since COVID-19 first made the news, the structural and social pressures on the



Steve Halsey, Anne Green

healthcare system have only accelerated.

Doctors, nurses and other frontline professionals are fighting the physical and mental burnout associated with years of continu-

ously battling the pandemic—and the structural challenges associated with the healthcare workforce that preceded it. Meanwhile, healthcare administrators are facing a host of operational and business issues.

Yet it's not just the point of healthcare delivery that's stressed. The entire system is under tremendous pressure to change and evolve. This is as technology's transformative impact continues to drive fundamental changes across the entire ecosystem.

Big shifts, big opportunities

In 2021, G&S Business Communications fielded a [consumer survey](#) and identified significant opportunities for improving healthcare communications, particularly when it comes to engaging with patients. These include:

Reducing healthcare disparities. The pandemic opened the door to virtual business-to-individual telehealth, which has the power to break down language and location barriers and open the door to wider and faster access and more equitable healthcare services.

Skyrocketing healthcare mobile apps. Increased use of mobile healthcare apps appears—finally—to be here to stay.

Embracing digital business-to-individual communication. Consumers confirmed they expect to be more reliant on digital communications in the future.

Among the most important findings of the research is the impact of the ongoing evolution toward using telehealth and other digital B2I communications to provide patients with the services they need, how and when they need it.

A tapestry of issues

The intensity of today's healthcare landscape and associated challenges require a commensurate shift in how we approach communications.

Savvy communicators must view these issues as a tapestry of inherently interrelated pressures. While it may seem more manageable to try to address them one at a time, the reality is that none exist in a vacuum. There's significant intersectionality among them.

Given the challenges of the current environment, we offer eight considerations for healthcare communicators:

Break silos: Seek to continuously break down internal silos and cross-discipline silos.

Set the context: Establishing context is especially important when communicating major shifts in healthcare delivery, as well as managing crisis communications.

Prioritize preparedness: Apply a crisis communications mindset to all aspects of communications.

Activate commtech: Dig into the fast-emerging areas of [CommTech](#) to activate critical digital tools and processes.

Live omnichannel: Recognize that we now live in a fully omnichannel world and it has implications for communications strategies and execution. Deepen your understanding of how your stakeholders are consuming information across a variety of mediums, platforms and devices.

Lean into the benefits of B2I: Telehealth is the most cost-effective means of solving many healthcare disparities issues. Tell stories not just about its convenience, but also about how telehealth can help provide access to patients.

Feature your heroes: Doctors, PAs, nurses and medical research scientists still have a solid reputation among most of the American public, so leverage this positive view.

Center comms on patients and your workforce: It's critical to keep patients at the center of any communications strategy. They're the North Star. But a healthcare organization's workforce is equally vital to center at the heart of our work.

It can be difficult to plan effective communications strategies when each day seems to bring an urgent crisis with lives at stake. Yet it's in this struggle, and at the intersection of the digitization, humanization and transformation of healthcare, that great storytelling and powerful communications can make a profound and lasting impact on people's lives.

Steve Halsey and Anne Green are Principals at [G&S Business Communications](#).

WASHINGTON POST NAMES BAIRD COO

The Washington Post names Kathy Baird COO. Baird was most recently at Nike, where she was senior director of global communications. Her previous positions include managing director and head of Ogilvy's Washington, DC, and SVP and partner at FleishmanHillard.

Baird is Sicangu Lakota and Oneida, and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She also serves on the advisory board of IllumiNative, a nonprofit working for accurate and authentic portrayal of Native people.

In her new position, Baird will oversee corporate communications, public relations, live events, and brand marketing, reporting directly to Post publisher and CEO Fred Ryan.



Kathy Baird

MZ NA NETS NATURALSHRIMP'S SPAC DEAL

MZ North America is handling NaturalShrimp's merger with Yotta Acquisition Corp. in a SPAC deal worth about \$275M.

Dallas-based NaturalShrimp and Yotta plan to kick off a global marketing campaign to educate institutional and other investors about its system for growing shrimp in enclosed, land-based, salt-water systems to produce fresh seafood without the use of antibiotics and probiotics.

CEO Gerald Easterling expects the merger will fund facility expansion to Florida, Nevada and the Northeast. NaturalShrimp currently has production plants near San Antonio and Webster City, IA.

He sees the potential to roll out NaturalShrimp's products across the Top Ten markets in the US.

Chris Tyson, executive VP at MZ North America, is working the deal.



STAGWELL GREW 11.6% IN Q3

Stagwell reported Q3 net revenues grew 11.6 percent to \$555.8M and 11.3 percent on an organic basis.



Mark Penn

CEO Mark Penn said high-growth digital services drove Stagwell's performance, increasing net revenue by 21 percent.

The firm chalked up \$86M in net new business as Stagwell's units expanded client relationships and "won new mandates based on digital, creative and strategic excellence," said Penn.

That included wins or expanded business from Microsoft, Bud Light, 3M, General Mills and Salesforce.

Stagwell chalked up Q3 net income of \$10.6M compared to a \$2.1M year-ago loss.

Penn projects full-year net organic revenue growth in the 16 percent to 20 percent range.

SKDK, [Sloane & Co.](#), [Allison+Partners](#), KWT Global and [Hunter](#) are part of Stagwell.

KEKST CNC WORKS AVISTA'S 'BIORAT' DEAL

[Kekst CNC](#) is handling media for Avista Capital Partners as it acquires Taconic Biosciences, the global leader in the production of genetically engineered rats and mice.



Founded in 1952, Rensselaer, NY-based Taconic ships its rodents worldwide for use in drug discovery and scientific research. It counts 40 of the top 50 pharmaceutical companies as clients.

Avista Capital Partners, a private equity firm, specializes in the healthcare sector. It has more than \$8B invested in more than 40 companies.

Rob Girardi, Avista partner, said Taconic is poised to continue its growth trajectory in the genetically engineered market due to its "reputation for high-touch consultative services, diversity of high-quality models and proven track record of innovation."

Kekst CNC's Daniel Yunger and Hallie Wolff are working the deal.

Publicis Groupe owns Kekst CNC.

INTERMARKET'S MOSBACHER TO COGNITO

Cognito names Intermarket founder Martin Mosbacher as a senior advisor. Mosbacher led Intermarket for four decades, most recently as president of Lansons Intermarket, which was formed when Lansons acquired Intermarket in 2019.



Martin Mosbacher

At Cognito, he will advise the consultancy and its US team as it continues to deepen its presence and capabilities in the US market. Cognito has been present in the US since 2004, and serves a range of banking, asset management, infrastructure, fintech, and professional services clients from offices in London, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sydney and Amsterdam.

"Martin brings exceptional knowledge of the institutional capital markets and financial PR landscape in the US," said Cognito CEO Tom Coombes.

AMERICANS NOT UP ON ELECTION PROCESS

Just in time for the midterm elections. Most Americans know very little about how the U.S. election process works, and this lack of knowledge affects their faith in the election process as well as what they think should be done about America's misinformation crisis, according to a [recent report by Reboot Foundation](#), a Paris-based critical thinking advocacy group.



Reboot's report suggests that Americans' faith in our election system is highly vulnerable to manipulation. Despite social media companies' pledges to tamp down on the conspiracy theories and misinformation that flow on their platforms, the spread of this content hasn't stopped, particularly when it comes to election disinformation. A [New York Times investigation](#) detailed how hundreds of Republican candidates slated to appear at the ballot box in November have expressed doubt or deliberately spread misinformation surrounding the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election.

Sadly, Reboot's report revealed just how effective these lies can be.

The Reboot survey included a quiz on basic election and voting facts. Some questions included: "Is a citizen's right to vote guaranteed by the Constitution?" and "Are elections for President and Congress overseen by the Federal government, which sets voting rules that all states must follow?"

The result? When it comes to elections, most Americans barely get a passing grade. The average score in Reboot's quiz was 66 percent—or a test grade of a D. Only 14 percent of respondents earned a B grade or better.

The survey also links knowledge about how our elections work to confidence in the electoral system as well as the opinion that more needs to be done to combat misinformation. While a third (32 percent) of respondents said they're not confident in the integrity of the U.S. electoral system, those who scored well on the election-fact quiz (a grade of B or better) were almost twice as likely to express confidence in the integrity of our elections and were also more likely to view election misinformation as a serious problem.

While the survey found that only 28 percent of respondents considered themselves "very confident" in their abilities to identify election misinformation, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) claimed to use their own critical thinking skills when assessing misinformation.

What sources do these "critical thinkers" rely on when verifying information? The report discovered that many Americans turn to outlets that aren't the best. While more than half (52 percent) claim they check the information that's reported in the mainstream news, more than 40 percent said this "research" consists of podcasts, YouTubers, newsletters or websites not affiliated with a mainstream news organization.

Finally, while more than two-thirds (67 percent) of the survey's respondents overall agreed that social media platforms have a responsibility to fight election misinformation, self-described "critical thinkers" were 160 percent more likely to believe that social media companies don't bear that responsibility.

The Reboot Foundation's report, "Misinformed & Mislabeled: Uncertainty, Mistrust and Disinformation Frustrate Voters," was based on a survey of more than 350 U.S. adults in September. The survey was conducted using Amazon's crowd-sourcing service Mechanical Turk.

ALBERTA'S SYLVAN LAKE SEEKS PR

Sylvan Lake is seeking a firm to develop a destination management plan to guide long-term strategic planning and investment in tourism over the next decade.



Located in central Alberta, the town of 16K attracts about 750K visitors each year.

The lake, which is noted for its water quality and size, acts as a tourism magnet to the region best known for its rolling prairies and mountains.

The town is the only urban commercial development on the shores of the lake.

Sylvan Lake wants a DMP that is geared towards achieving sustainable community-beneficial tourism.

It will follow a community-led and public-private commercial partnership model towards inclusive community development, according to the RFQ.

The selected firm will recommend brand-building strategies for Visit Sylvan Lake to connect with potential visitors and influence their purchasing decisions.

Proposals are due Nov. 14 at <https://sylvanlake.bidsandtenders.ca>.

[Read the RFQ \(PDF\).](#)

BROADHEAD ACQUIRES FAME

Broadhead, a Minneapolis-based firm, acquires Fame, an agency that creates data-backed “multi-dimensional experiences” for clients. Broadhead picked up HMH Agency in Portland, OR, earlier this year. The Fame acquisition is intended to beef up its experiential marketing capabilities.

Lynne Robertson, who purchased Fame from Omnicom Group in 2015 and has since served as chief executive officer, will remain president of Fame and serve on broadhead’s executive leadership team.

“Experiential engagements are some of the most important touchpoints in a consumer’s experience with a brand, and no one knows how to engage them as powerfully and authentically as Fame,” said broadhead CEO Dean Broadhead.

FESTA O'BRIEN NAMED GREENOUGH PREZ

[PAN Communications](#) executive vp Nikki Festa O'Brien moves to [Greenough](#), where she will take on the role of president.



Nikki Festa O'Brien

Festa O'Brien had been with PAN since 2011, playing a key role in developing the agency’s integrated marketing, content and creative offerings, as well as its global expansion. Before joining PAN, she worked at Sonicbids, fama PR and Lois Paul & Partners.

At Greenough, Festa O'Brien will focus on driving creativity, deepening the agency’s offerings and expanding its digital marketing and strategic communications teams to support clients’ integrated campaigns.

“With her expertise in helping leading global brands scale and achieve financial success, Nikki’s deep experience in innovative brand marketing and PR makes her the ideal candidate to lead our team,” said Phil Greenough, Greenough CEO.

PRINT NOT DEAD YET AT NYT

The *New York Times* added 180,000 digital subscribers in Q3 and lost 20,000 print subscribers.

The slide in print subscriptions leaves the paper with 740,000 print customers. While that’s an 8.2 percent drop from the 806,000 print subscribers the paper had in last year’s quarter, print remains a significant presence on the company’s balance sheet.

The \$138.8M in print subscription revenues that the NYT racked up in Q3 still accounted for 36.2 percent of the \$382.7M the paper pulled in from subscriptions to all its products.

Almost 90 percent of the print sales were through home delivery. Print also made up 36.4 percent of the NYT’s overall advertising revenue.

On the digital side of the equation, the biggest headwinds the company faced were from costs related to The Athletic, the sports vertical that it acquired in January. While the paper reported \$24.1M in Q3 revenues for The Athletic, its \$33.7M in adjusted operating costs resulted in a \$9.6M loss.

Overall, however, operating profit for the NYT was up six percent for the quarter and the Times says it is expecting to reach a total adjusted operating profit of \$320M to \$330 M for the year.



ON THE MOVE

Burrell Communications Group, a multicultural marketing communications agency, brings on **Tuwisha Rogers-Simpson** as VP of brand development. Rogers-Simpson was previously VP of brand and partnerships at the National Museum of African American Music. She has also served as VP, strategic partnerships at Urban One Media and is the founder of Wish Factor, a strategic relationship and purpose-driven marketing consulting enterprise. In her new role, Rogers-Simpson will guide the overall alignment of Burrell’s business objectives and brand communications, while strengthening its position as a worldwide brand. “Her experience and expertise will contribute to our agency continuing to trailblaze in authentically connecting with Black audiences,” said Burrell co-CEO Fay Fergusson.



Tuwisha Rogers-Simpson

Heap, a digital analytics provider, names **Micha Hershman** as chief marketing officer. Hershman was most recently vp of marketing and brand design at digital workplace platform Envoy. Before that, he was head of marketing, North America for Eventbrite. At Heap, Hershman will be responsible for leveraging brand, product marketing, and demand generation to drive growth. “Micha has a breadth of knowledge in growing success-driven teams that elevate brand awareness and go-to-market success,” said Heap CEO Ken Fine.

Dunn Pellier Media promotes **Melissa Edwards** to VP of publicity. Edwards previously served as senior publicist at the firm. In her new role, she will focus on leading the culture, training, and development of the agency’s teams and manage and oversee its health and fitness PR accounts and activities.

COMMENTARY



Jerome Powell

Touting the Fed. In what might be one of the toughest jobs in PR, the board of governors of the Federal Reserve is looking for a communications partner.

On Nov. 2, the Fed's division of financial management sent an email to firms on its bidder's list asking if they were interested in handling PR and outreach support.

The lucky firm will be responsible for making sense of Fed chair Jerome Powell's "war on inflation."

While Wall Street buzzed last week after the Fed issued a statement that offered various economic scenarios that would slow its policy of jumbo-sized rate increases, hopes of lower rate hikes were soon dashed.

At a follow-up press conference, Powell called it "very premature" to think about letting up on .75 percent rate hikes.

"We have a ways to go," said Powell. He wants to forge ahead to two percent inflation, just like the good old days.

The Fed set Dec. 1 as the deadline for responses to its PR inquiry.

Don't hold your breath. More than 400 scientists signed a letter that was released on Nov. 4 demanding that Hill+Knowlton Strategies drop its fossil fuels clients "that are worsening the climate crisis and commit fully to the climate action the world desperately needs."

There's a better chance of Santa Claus firing its reindeer than H+K voluntarily paring its roster of multi-million dollar accounts.

According to the [letter from Clean Creatives](#), H+K played an enabling role in campaigns launched by Saudi Aramco, ExxonMobil and the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative to mislead the public.

The scientists believe H+K's work for its energy clients is incompatible with its role leading public communications at the annual United Nations climate talks that kicked off Nov. 6 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

H+K is not exactly a PR wallflower. The UN knew what it was getting into when it hired the WPP unit.

C'mon, Pope Francis. A study by the University of Cambridge says the Catholic Church can play a big role in reducing carbon emissions by bringing back meatless Fridays.

Meat agriculture is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Even if a small portion of the world's 1.1B Catholics abstained from meat on Friday, the payoff would be huge.

The researchers found that Catholic bishops in Wales and England in 2011 called for meatless Fridays.

A quarter of the flock compiled and saved 55 tons of carbon, which is the equivalent of 82K annual round trips from London to New York.

Pope Francis has called for "radical responses" to counter climate change. Meatless Friday is one of them.

He could make a PR splash by making his Meatless Friday policy at the UN climate conference.

Saudis Get Their Mitts on Twitter. Saudi Arabia kicked in about \$2B to help Elon Musk finance his Twitter acquisition, which means that one of the most repressive regimes in the world with no tolerance of free expression may have oversight of America's so-called town hall.

That's why Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy wants the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US to review Twitter's change of ownership.

In an Oct. 31 letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Murphy notes Twitter's foreign ownership could result in increased censorship, misinformation or political violence.

Murphy fears that Saudi influence over Twitter's operations or access to user data could be used to silence government critics and human rights activists, or to further state-sponsored disinformation campaigns.

He also notes that the Saudis have demonstrated a willingness to crush dissent beyond the borders of the Kingdom.

The murder and dismemberment of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul is a prime example of the reach of Saudi intelligence forces.

Musk claimed his acquisition of Twitter "freed the bird." The Saudi connection may cage that same bird.

The verdict is in. Nearly half (49 percent) of sports fans believe Saudi Arabia launched its LIV Golf tour as an exercise in sportswashing. Twenty-one percent disagree, and the rest have no opinion, according to the [Seton Hall Sports Poll released Nov. 3](#).

More than four-in-ten (41 percent) of sports fans say the image of professional golf has been diminished by the existence of two leagues. Thirty percent say golf's image hasn't suffered because of the LIV.

The Saudis launched the LIV to modernize, supercharge and reinvigorate the world of professional golf.

Sports fans are still waiting for that to happen.

"Have you no sense of decency?," responded Boston lawyer Joseph Welch to Sen. Joseph McCarthy during his communist witch hunt investigation in 1954.

That question could be posed to Republican talking heads who claim the attack on Paul Pelosi was fake or a false flag operation. They prefer to peddle the baseless claim that the 82-year-old husband of the Speaker of the House was involved in a homosexual tryst with his attacker David DePape.

In his new role as Chief Twit, Elon Musk retweeted the homophobic post but then deleted it.

Charlie Kirk, podcaster and right-wing radio show host, has called for "some amazing patriot out there in San Francisco or the Bay Area" to become a midterm hero by bailing out DePape and then asking him some questions.

Pelosi was assaulted with a hammer and suffered blunt force trauma. He underwent surgery to repair a skull fracture and serious injuries to his right arm and hands.

Welch unleashed another zinger at the 1954 hearing that could be adapted for today's conspiracy-mongering GOP.

"Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness," he said. —Kevin McCauley