

HSAS COMMON SENSE: CURRENT EVENTS RELEASE

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American Events: Assassination of UnitedHealthcare CEO Sparks National Outcry

Daniel Brindle-Khym and Jesse Fraser-Greytak, Grade 9, Staff Writers

- Early on December 4, 2024, Brian Thompson, CEO of UnitedHealthcare, was fatally shot outside a Manhattan hotel during an investor conference.
- On the day of the incident, UnitedHealth Group issued a statement mourning the loss of Thompson and vowing to cooperate fully with law enforcement investigations.
- Authorities have identified Luigi Mangione, a 26-year-old Ivy League graduate, as the primary suspect. Mangione was arrested after a multi-state manhunt.
- Evidence found at the scene included shell casings engraved with three words: “deny,” “defend,” and “depose.” This reflects Mangione's and many other Americans’ criticisms of the health insurance industry’s practices. Such practices include profit-driven decision-making and claim denials.
- The attack has polarized public opinion. While many have condemned the act as a heinous crime, some have celebrated it as a symbolic stand against systemic injustices in healthcare. Such ideas are popularized on social media such as X and Reddit.

Global Events: Notre Dame Reopens After Years of Repair

Tahsan Latif, Grade 11, and David Caswell, Grade 9, Staff Writers

- In 2019, fires engulfed the treasured cathedral Notre Dame in France, with President Emmanuel Macron vowing to restore the church in 5 years.
- On December 8, 2024, the cathedral officially reopened in an extravagant ceremony, with notable attendees being President Macron himself and US President-elect Donald Trump.
- A cultural icon, the Notre Dame reconstruction employed 2,000 people, planted 2,000 trees, and restored 2,000 features and artifacts
- After the festivities, the cathedral returned to holding public masses twice daily and is expected to receive 15 million visitors annually.

Miscellaneous Events:

Ava Karaganis, Grade 11, and Ophelia Clark-Wade, Grade 11, Staff Writers

- A plane crash in South Korea on Saturday shocked the nation as it was the first South Korean plane accident in almost 30 years. 179 people died; the only survivors were two crew members who were in the back of the plane. Investigations are underway but possible causes include gear malfunctions or bird strikes.
- Former President Jimmy Carter died on December 29th at the age of 100. He leaves behind the legacy of being one of the world’s greatest peacemakers. His successful and altruistic post-presidency career won him the Nobel Peace Prize.
- President Donald Trump’s appeal for defaming the victim of his sexual abuse, E. Jean Carroll, failed. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit reaffirmed the previous judgment including Carroll’s five million dollar award.

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