

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 7/26/2017 10:44:01 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by BP: HOW THE GOP brought back Obamacare repeal 'from the dead' – MCCAIN's maverick moment – SENATE GOP to TRUMP: confirming another AG is too hard -- JEFF FLAKE's secret new book – RICK PERRY duped -- WHO TOOK NYT buyouts

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by BP
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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. WARNING FROM SENATE REPUBLICANS TO PRESIDENT TRUMP: It will be tough, if not impossible, to confirm another attorney general if you fire Jeff Sessions. Six GOP senators have already taken Sessions' side. Trump has neither the time nor political capital to oust Sessions and pick someone else.

FOR YOUR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: The House approved a sanctions bill 419-3 yesterday afternoon that would, among other things, limit Trump's ability to roll back penalties against Russia, Iran and North Korea. The Senate is expected to quickly pass the bill. The White House has sent mixed signals about whether Trump will sign this bill. If he doesn't, Congress would be able to override his veto.

-- FT: "The new sanctions have become the subject of intense scrutiny both in Washington and overseas, where European allies have raised the threat of retaliation because the measures could effect a pipeline project to transport Russian gas into Germany. ...

"Brussels has stepped up its diplomatic offensive against the sanctions, warning several oil and gas projects involving Shell, Eni and BP are at risk. On Tuesday, officials said the EU was 'activating all diplomatic channels' in an effort to persuade US lawmakers to dilute the bill's impact on European companies and the continent's energy security. EU officials are concerned the sanctions could damage multibillion-euro pipeline and infrastructure projects straddling Russian territory and beyond in areas between the Baltic and Black seas." <http://on.ft.com/2uYk798>

OVERNIGHT -- NYT: TOM KAPLAN and ROBERT PEAR: "Senate Votes Down

Broad Obamacare Repeal: "[R]epublican leaders suffered a setback when their most comprehensive plan to replace President Barack Obama's health law fell far short of the votes it needed.

"The Tuesday night tally needed to reach 60 votes to overcome a parliamentary objection. Instead, it fell 43-57. The fact that the comprehensive replacement plan came up well short of even 50 votes was an ominous sign for Republican leaders still seeking a formula to pass final health care legislation this week. ...

"The Senate is now moving ahead with debate, amendments and ultimately a final vote in the coming days on legislation that would have a profound effect on the American health care system - roughly one-sixth of the United States' economy. But it is entirely possible that by week's end, the senators will have passed nothing."

<http://nyti.ms/2uwBzRk>

-- **THE BET** , although far from certain, is that Senate Republicans will pass a so-called "skinny repeal" bill -- legislation that would end the employer and individual mandate, and medical-device tax. This would be a vehicle to allow the House and Senate to negotiate on a final repeal and replace bill. The "skinny repeal," though, is not a comprehensive plan and includes no replacement, so it's a tough vote. **AND ANOTHER QUESTION** a lot of people are asking: what can get through the very divided -- and increasingly conservative -- House Republican Conference? This is not a gang known to favor incrementalism -- and that's what would emerge from a negotiation with the Senate. ***Paul Demko on what's next in the health care debate***

<http://politi.co/2uXmyIV>

THE POLITICO TICK TOCK -- BURGESS EVERETT, SEUNG MIN KIM and JEN HABERKORN: "How the GOP brought Obamacare repeal back from the dead": "As Mitch McConnell strode to the Senate floor on Tuesday, with no votes to spare to keep the GOP's Obamacare repeal campaign alive, he knew where everyone in his conference stood. Everyone, that is, except for Ron Johnson....

"When he finally emerged, Johnson headed to McConnell's desk on the Senate floor. The two engaged in a tense, 10-minute face-to-face talk. McConnell's face turned increasingly red, and the GOP leader threw up his hands multiple times. ... Ten minutes after McConnell and Johnson began chatting, McCain entered the chamber and provided the 49th vote. Only Johnson remained. Left with the option of being the Republican who killed Obamacare repeal or the one who saved it, the Wisconsin senator quickly flipped a thumbs-up into the air to vote yes....

"On a Delta flight from Salt Lake City to Washington on Monday afternoon, Lee sat in the middle seat, furiously texting about his latest thinking in the health care debate, according to an eyewitness who sat next to Lee and described the messages to POLITICO.

"In one text, Lee told a recipient that he might still vote to proceed to the repeal

debate, but that it was 'still too early to do so in good conscience because we're not being told anything.' 'This leadership line of pass something, anything, is dangerous and potent,' Lee typed out in another message, written in a large enough font that fellow passengers could easily read his words, according to the eyewitness. In another text, Lee wrote: 'This bill is nothing more than bailing out insurance companies with a few minor reforms thrown in for good measure.'" <http://politi.co/2tJ5il8>

MCCONNELL'S REDEMPTION via **JOHN BRESNAHAN: "McConnell gets a win in Obamacare repeal opening round"**: <http://politi.co/2uXedVA>

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MCCAIN'S MAVERICK MOMENT -- WAPO's PAUL KANE: "We're getting nothing done": McCain, in emotional return, laments what the Senate has become": "Sen. John McCain was greeted by applause from both sides of the aisle Tuesday as he walked onto the Senate floor, delivering Republicans a crucial vote to begin debate on an unknown plan to overhaul the health-care industry. Then the Arizona Republican, done with the niceties, delivered a 15-minute excoriation of the modern Senate. A Senate riven by partisan infighting and almost no effort to work across the aisle. A Senate that has abandoned the principle that legislative committees had ownership of the process. ...

"All we've managed to do is make more popular a policy that wasn't very popular when we started trying to get rid of it,' McCain said, noting rising support for the 2010 Affordable Care Act. 'I voted for the motion to proceed to allow debate to continue and amendments to be offered. I will not vote for this bill as it is today. It's a shell of a bill right now.' ...

"We're not getting much done apart,' McCain told his colleagues. 'I don't think any of us feels very proud of our incapacity. Merely preventing your political opponents from doing what they want isn't the most inspiring work. There's greater satisfaction in respecting our differences but not letting them prevent agreements.'"

<http://wapo.st/2uYa3wP>

-- **DANA BASH: "Reporter's Notebook: Inside the Senate chamber - an hour-long emotional swirl"** <http://cnn.it/2h1IL32>

-- **BOSTON GLOBE: "While the Senate debates health care, Mitt Romney is . . . waterskiing?"** <http://bit.ly/2tlzBi9>

MEANWHILE ... BACK ON THE TRAIL -- "At Ohio rally, Trump keeps making campaign promises," by Annie Karni in Youngstown, Ohio: "President Donald Trump returned to this longtime Democratic stronghold on Tuesday night, sounding almost unchanged from the candidate who campaigned here last year, as he confidently

doubled down on promises he has yet to keep.

"In the Covelli Centre arena filled with still-believing fans, Trump promised a trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which so far is stalled in a long pipeline of legislation that must come before it. He vowed he was still going to build that wall, which currently has no source of funding. He said manufacturing jobs would come roaring back to Mahoning County, advising the Ohio crowd, 'don't sell your house. We're going to get those values up.' Ohio's unemployment rate increased to 5 percent in June, from 4.9 percent the previous month. And even as he is actively splitting his own party and his own movement by publicly denigrating his Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, Trump made a rousing call that 'America must be united.'

"But what was ostensibly the biggest good news of Trump's day -- the Senate vote to move ahead on repealing Obamacare -- appeared in his speech only as an afterthought. It didn't get more than a passing mention until the very end of Trump's hour-long laundry list of a speech, during which he appeared more animated when he spoke about cracking down on undocumented immigration, sanctuary cities, and 'radical Islamic terrorism' than when he touched on the legislative victory that puts him one step closer to fulfilling a campaign promise." <http://politi.co/2uVQXrB>

-- **WHAT TRUMP SAYS** - Per Annie Karni: "With the exception of the late, great Abraham Lincoln, I can be more presidential than any president that's ever held this office," he said. "It's much easier, by the way, to act presidential than what we're doing here tonight, believe me."

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POOL REPORT DU JOUR, per yesterday's pooler David Jackson: "Spotted disembarking from Air Force One: Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie. Asked what he was doing on the trip, Bossie said: 'I heard there was a rally here.'"

-- **"Trump Says Apple CEO Has Promised to Build Three Manufacturing Plants in U.S.,"** by WSJ's Tripp Mickle and Peter Nicholas: "Mr. Trump, in a 45-minute interview with The Wall Street Journal, said [Tim] Cook promised him Apple would build 'three big plants, beautiful plants.' Mr. Trump didn't elaborate on where those plants would be located or when they would be built. 'I spoke to [Mr. Cook], he's promised me three big plants -- big, big, big,' Mr. Trump said as part of a discussion about business-tax reform and business investment. 'I said you know, Tim, unless you start building your plants in this country, I won't consider my administration an economic success. He called me, and he said they are going forward.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2tJ7U8C>

-- **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM TRUMP'S WSJ INTERVIEW** : "The truth is the people I care most about are the middle-income people in this country who have gotten screwed. And if there's upward revision it's going to be on high-income people. You know, I was

with Bob Kraft the other night. He came to have dinner with me. He's a friend of mine. And as he left, he said, Donald, don't worry about the rich people. Tax the rich people. You got to take care of the people in the country. It was a very interesting statement. I feel the same way."

-- WHAT JON ALLEN AND AMIE PARNES ARE READING: TRUMP: "Well, I didn't - I wouldn't have wanted to. But I see the way they go after us on a witch hunt, you know? The Russian - the Russian story's all an excuse for the Democrats losing. In fact, if you read the book, 'Shattered,' they have a whole chapter where they sat the day after the election and they said: Yeah, Russia. It was Russia. And, you know, Trump was involved. OK, the one thing interesting, you never heard me even associated with anybody. But, no, that's a total witch hunt, the whole Russia story. It's a hoax. It's a hoax. We had no collusion with Russia. We never dealt with Russia." ***Edited transcript*** <http://on.wsj.com/2v7bGcg>

SCARAMUCCI TALKS SHOP -- Anthony Scaramucci told reporters late Tuesday night that he is trying to fight White House leaks and that "they don't care about [the] Washington establishment and as New Yorkers they are going to do things their own way," according to pooler David Jackson of USA Today. "'There are rumors that I'm firing more people,' but 'I'm not firing any more people' at least for now.' Scaramucci said, according to the pool. 'If the leaks continue then I've got to let everybody go.'" He also said that he will likely restructure the communications department. "Asked if he really thought leaks were from the [communications] office he said 'some of them are', but they are the people he can deal with. Said he can't get into the problem of other leakers yet."

BATTLE ROYALE -- "Trump and Sessions locked in silent battle," by Josh Dawsey: "Donald Trump is playing an elaborate game of chicken with Jeff Sessions. And they are not on speaking terms. Sessions has sent to word to the White House that he has no plans to resign and wants to stay as attorney general even amid daily humiliation from the boss, according to two people familiar with his thinking. But he hasn't told Trump that himself. Trump, meanwhile, has complained to anyone who will listen about Sessions recusing himself from the Russia and has weighed firing him. And he has told his advisers he has no desire to speak to Sessions, an early campaign supporter.

"I'm very disappointed in Jeff Sessions," Trump said in the Rose Garden Tuesday, sending a message to his top law enforcement official from a public microphone. Trump's public criticisms of his attorney general have led to an unusual spectacle where the two men aren't talking - but sending messages through their aides and waiting for a resolution to the fate of the country's top law enforcement official, according to interviews with six White House aides and advisers, as well as Sessions allies. The zone of confusion has led to conservatives, liberals, West Wing aides and others wishing for a resolution and end of a tired storyline without having any idea when that resolution will come." <http://politi.co/2uY0cqB>

-- SESSIONS TAKES A STAND: "The standoff between Trump and Sessions escalates," by WaPo's Devlin Barrett, Philip Rucker and Sari Horwitz: "In a recent conversation, Sessions's chief of staff, Jody Hunt, told White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus that the attorney general had no intention of stepping down. Hunt, according to people familiar with the conversation, made it clear to Priebus that Sessions 'plans to move forward with his agenda in the department and he has no plans for resigning,' according to one person familiar with the exchange. Priebus, for his part, did not say Trump planned to fire Sessions if he did not leave ... Trump's reluctance to act on his anger and fire Sessions may be based in part on the lack of an immediate plan for a successor at the Justice Department. While Trump has discussed potential candidates to replace Sessions, senior White House officials have not settled on anyone, and may not anytime soon." <http://wapo.st/2vZCBda>

NYT'S ALEX BURNS in PHOENIX -- "Senator Jeff Flake, Facing Twin Threats, Is Said to Take On G.O.P. Rift in New Book": "Senator Jeff Flake, Republican of Arizona, faces political challenges from both sides in seeking re-election next year ... Yet Mr. Flake, seemingly undaunted, has secretly planned an unconventional campaign kickoff that risks intensifying both threats: Working privately, and largely without the knowledge of political advisers, he has written a book that amounts to an ideological manifesto for his own version of conservatism, according to three people briefed on the manuscript who discussed it on the condition of anonymity. ... In his writing, Mr. Flake draws a bright-line distinction between his outlook on government and a competing vision, associated with Mr. Trump, that Mr. Flake describes as nationalist and populist in nature, the people said. Mr. Flake links himself closely with Barry Goldwater." <http://nyti.ms/2uWEWIE>

WHAT TRUMP IS READING -- "Poll: Half of Trump voters say Trump won popular vote," by Steve Shepard: "Roughly half of voters who said they voted for Donald Trump last November, 49 percent, believe Trump won the popular vote, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. That's compared to 40 percent who say Democrat Hillary Clinton won. Overall, a majority of voters, 59 percent, believe Clinton won more votes than Trump, but 28 percent believe Trump won more votes." <http://politi.co/2h2oLgJ>

-- "Poll: Voters say Mueller ouster would be inappropriate," by Steve Shepard: "By a more than two-to-one margin, voters say it would be inappropriate for President Donald Trump to fire special counsel Robert Mueller over his probe into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. Nearly half of voters, 48 percent, say it would be wrong to remove Mueller, compared to only 22 percent who say it would be appropriate for the Trump administration to dismiss Mueller. There is a huge gap in partisan perceptions: Democrats say overwhelmingly that firing Mueller would be inappropriate, 67 percent to 11 percent. Independents also tilt heavily against firing Mueller, 47 percent to 19 percent. But Republicans say, 37 percent to 29 percent, that it would be appropriate." <http://politi.co/2h2ILQh>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK:** GOP political consultant and strategist **JEFF LARSON** is joining America Rising Corporation as its new chairman. Larson was a senior adviser to the 2017 Presidential Inaugural Committee and CEO of the 2016 Republican National Convention. Larson will focus on business development and the marketing of the organization's platforms and products. Byron Koay, the president of America Rising Corporation, and CEO Joe Pounder will still oversee day-to-day operations. Matt Rhoades, the former chairman of AR, has been named to AR's board of directors.

-- **WHAT THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU TO READ:** Tuesday was local media day at the White House. Local TV stations and the Salem Radio Network broadcast from the North Lawn of the White House. Reince Priebus, Mick Mulvaney, Tom Price, Linda McMahon, Ben Carson, Elaine Chao, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Kellyanne Conway all participated.

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- He's speaking to the American Legion Boys Nation and the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation at 3 p.m., and has a "jobs announcement" at 5 p.m. His schedule is completely empty between 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Sen. John McCain gets into his car at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., on July 25. | Mark Wilson/Getty Images

SIREN -- "Woman pleads guilty in scheme to pay off Brady challenger," by Josh Gerstein: "A Pennsylvania pastor pleaded guilty to a federal felony Tuesday for participating in a scheme that led a challenger to Rep. Robert Brady (D-Pa.) to bow out of a 2012 primary contest. Appearing in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, Rev. Carolyn Cavaness pleaded guilty to a single charge of making a false statement in a federal proceeding, court records show. Cavaness was a campaign staffer for Jimmie Moore, a Philadelphia judge who entered the Democratic primary against Brady. Moore dropped out in February 2012, according to press accounts. No charges have been announced against Moore or Brady. However, one court filing made public Tuesday indicates prosecutors believe Brady attempted to influence the testimony of at least one witness in the investigation." <http://politi.co/2tBZxYh>

THE WAR -- "Trump Finds Reason for the U.S. to Remain in Afghanistan: Minerals," by NYT's Mark Landler and James Risen: "President Trump, searching for a reason to keep the United States in Afghanistan after 16 years of war, has latched on to a prospect that tantalized previous administrations: Afghanistan's vast mineral wealth, which his advisers and Afghan officials have told him could be profitably extracted by

Western companies. Mr. Trump has discussed the country's mineral deposits with President Ashraf Ghani, who promoted mining as an economic opportunity in one of their first conversations. Mr. Trump, who is deeply skeptical about sending more American troops to Afghanistan, has suggested that this could be one justification for the United States to stay engaged in the country. To explore the possibilities, the White House is considering sending an envoy to Afghanistan to meet with mining officials." <http://nyti.ms/2tYdBe8>

BIG NEWS -- "Wasserman Schultz aide arrested trying to leave the country," by Heather Caygle and John Bresnahan: "Imran Awan, a House staffer at the center of a criminal investigation potentially impacting dozens of Democratic lawmakers, has been arrested on bank fraud and is prevented from leaving the country while the charges are pending.

"A senior House Democratic aide confirmed Awan was still employed by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) as of Tuesday morning. But David Damron, a spokesman for Wasserman Schultz, later said that Awan was fired on Tuesday. Awan pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to one count of bank fraud during his arraignment in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Awan is accused of attempting to defraud the Congressional Federal Credit Union by obtaining a \$165,000 home equity loan for a rental property, which is against the credit union's policies since it is not the owner's primary residence." <http://politi.co/2uwiXB7>

TRUMP'S CABINET -- "State Department says Secretary Tillerson is 'taking a little time off' amid tensions in the White House," by Business Insider's Alex Lockie: "When asked about the discrepancies between Tillerson's public schedule and his reported movements, and why the department hadn't updated the press on his whereabouts, [Heather] Nauert said Tillerson 'does have the ability to go away for a few days on his own.' 'Just taking a little time off,' Nauert said of Tillerson's unannounced absence. 'He's got a lot of work. He just came back from that mega-trip overseas, as you all well know - many of you were over there with the G-20.' Asked why she didn't just say Tillerson was on vacation, Nauert said she didn't know the standard protocol for listing private days. ... Nahal Toosi, a foreign-affairs correspondent at Politico, later tweeted that Tillerson had 'GTT -- Gone to Texas,' adding that he was 'fine and he's working 20 hour days, but just not in DC.'" <http://read.bi/2uAmuwo>

OOPS! -- "U.S. energy secretary duped into fake interview with Russian comedians," by Reuters' Timothy Gardner: "U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry optimistically discussed expanding American coal exports to Ukraine and other energy matters during a lengthy phone call this month with a Russian prankster who Perry thought was Ukraine's prime minister. Perry actually was talking with comedians known in Russia for targeting celebrities and politicians with audacious stunts, Energy Department spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes said in a written statement. Pranksters Vladimir Krasnov and Alexei Stolyarov are sometimes called the 'Jerky Boys of Russia,' after an American duo who put out recordings of their prank phone calls in the 1990s. ... During the 22-minute call on July 19, Perry, whose department oversees the U.S.

nuclear weapons program, discussed a range of topics in a business-like tone, including sanctions against Russia and helping Ukraine develop oil and gas."

<http://reut.rs/2tBLjXp>

THE RESISTANCE -- "McAuliffe, Pelosi weekend travel project promotes governor races as 'future of the party'," by USA Today's Heidi Przybyla: "Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe and Rep. Nancy Pelosi have been quietly courting major party donors during a series of weekend trips that illustrate how the Democratic Party's road to rebuilding begins with changing the habits of labor unions and traditional donors. The duo has traveled to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston and New York to try to convince traditional donor groups and grassroots organizations to channel more funding to local and state elections - with a particular focus on the next generation of governors who will oversee redistricting around the 2020 Census - as well as legal battles and ballot initiatives to challenge gerrymandered congressional districts.

"It's the start of a routine they plan to keep in the lead up to the 2018 election. 'I don't care who the president of the United States is, it doesn't matter in the sense that, if we don't have governors to stop these horrible maps, they're going to pass a lot of this stuff at the state level,' said McAuliffe, a Democrat who finishes his term in January. 'Politically, this is what I'm going to do. I'm obsessed,' McAuliffe said during an interview with USA TODAY at a Washington hotel." <https://usat.ly/2h2iyl7>

POLITICO MAGAZINE -- "Trump the Disloyalist: Why is anyone surprised by the president's treatment of Jeff Sessions?" by John J. Pitney Jr.: "Trump's life has been a long trail of betrayals. His mentor was attorney Roy Cohn, who had been Senator Joseph McCarthy's right-hand man. ... Trump benefited greatly from the relationship, but when Cohn contracted AIDS in the 1980s, Trump turned his back on him, transferring his business to other attorneys. When the funeral came, Trump didn't speak. 'Donald pisses ice water,' Cohn reportedly said before his death. Trump's ex-wives would probably say the same thing if they were not bound by non-disclosure agreements. He was especially disloyal to his first wife, Ivana, the mother of Donald, Jr., Ivanka and Eric. During their breakup, he told a writer for Vanity Fair: 'When a man leaves a woman, especially when it was perceived that he has left for a piece of ass -- a good one! -- there are 50 percent of the population who will love the woman who was left.'"

<http://politi.co/2h2pPRE>

DEEP DIVE -- MICHAEL LEWIS in September's Vanity Fair, "Why the Scariest Nuclear Threat May Be Coming From Inside the White House": "On the morning after the election, November 9, 2016, the people who ran the U.S. Department of Energy turned up in their offices and waited. They had cleared 30 desks and freed up 30 parking spaces. They didn't know exactly how many people they'd host that day, but whoever won the election would surely be sending a small army into the Department of Energy, and every other federal agency. ...By afternoon the silence was deafening. 'Day 1, we're ready to go,' says a former senior White House official. 'Day 2 it was "Maybe they'll call us?" ... On his visits to the White House soon after the election, Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, expressed surprise that so much of its staff seemed to be

leaving. 'It was like he thought it was a corporate acquisition or something,' says an Obama White House staffer. 'He thought everyone just stayed.' ...

"Meanwhile, inside the D.O.E. building, people ... from the Trump administration appear willy-nilly, unannounced, and unintroduced to the career people. ... 'Yes, you can notice the difference,' says one young career civil servant, in response to the obvious question. 'There's a lack of professionalism. They're not very polite. Maybe they've never worked in an office or government setting. It's not hostility so much as a real sense of concern with sharing information with career employees. Because of that lack of communication, nothing is being done. All policy questions remain unanswered.'" <http://bit.ly/2vZFEvm>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Fox News host 'targeted' in ambush at Brooklyn bar," by N.Y. Post's Lia Eustachewich and Daniel Prendergast: "A Fox News host was ambushed while attending her pal's campaign event in Brooklyn Monday night - doused head to toe with a bottle of water. The assault against Kat Timpf, a libertarian co-host on 'Fox News Specialists,' occurred at Union Pool in Williamsburg, where her friend and Brooklyn Borough president hopeful Ben Kissel was hosting the event, which coincided with his birthday. A still shaken Timpf told The Post Tuesday that she was definitely targeted for the attack." <http://nyp.st/2v77Z6w>

--N.Y. TIMES DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- per Hadas Gold's Morning Media: "A slew of Times stalwarts have taken buyouts. Among them: Bruce Headlam, an editor in the opinion section (Headlam was also featured in the documentary film 'Page One' when he was media editor), Charles Duhigg, who's been in charge of live events, former Jerusalem bureau chief Ian Fisher and defense reporter Chris Drew. -- Headlam told me after he leaves he'll be working on a new project with Malcolm Gladwell, a company that will be 'doing digital journalism in a lot of different forms,' 'an empty vessel for interesting things' including some writing, visual and audio journalism. There's no name just yet."

-- LUIZA SAVAGE promoted at Politico - Carrie Budoff Brown emails the staff: "We're thrilled to announce a new expanded role for Luiza Savage, who will become the Editorial Director of Cross-Platform Content, working across the newsroom and with our business partners to drive and develop written, video and live-event projects that are high impact and newsworthy. Luiza is an ideas machine, and she's already played a unique role in conceptualizing projects that produce strong journalism while generating significant revenue."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) at the Kastles last night at GW.

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED last night at a Newseum screening of Fox Searchlight's documentary "STEP" last night: Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Rep.

Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Amanda Lipitz, Chip Smith and Mauren Umeh. **Trailer**
<http://bit.ly/2uYfoEn>

TRANSITIONS -- Bradley Hayes has joined the U.S. Customs & Border Protection Office of Trade Relations as executive director. ... **Matt Dickerson** has been named as policy director at the Republican Study Committee. He previously worked on the staff of the late Rep. Bill Young. ... **Alexei Woltornist** has joined the RSC as communications director. He previously was comms director for Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio). ... **Noelani Bonifacio** has been promoted to professional policy staffer at the RSC.

-- **OBAMA ALUMNI: Hannah Hankins** has been named VP at Civic Advisors, a social impact firm founded by Obama-Biden alumni. She previously spent more than five years in the Obama White House communications department, most recently as comms director and senior policy advisor for the Domestic Policy Council.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Mark McLaughlin, the research director at Senate Leadership Fund who was research director at the NRSC for the '14 and '16 cycles, turned 31 (hat tip: fiancée Natalie Gillam, who met him at the NRSC) ... Kelly Laco, one of the press assistants at DOJ public affairs, who celebrated with a Nats game last night (h/t Devin O'Malley) ... Christian Hulen, a Jeb Bush alum now VP of public affairs at FP1 Strategies (h/t Zach Cikanek)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Amb. Patrick Gaspard, VP of the Open Society Foundations. How he's celebrating: "My birthday always begins with a blast of Mick Jagger, who is my bday soulmate. Jumping Jack Flash. I'm celebrating in Washington with family, but planning blowout birthday weekend in New York, which will include some theatre." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2v11CUf>

BIRTHDAYS: Molly Conway, Department of Labor deputy chief of staff (h/t Jillian Rogers) ... Scott Sforza, senior counselor at the Harbour Group ... Margaret Tutwiler ... The Daily Beast's Erin Gloria Ryan ... ABC News' Dan Harris is 46 ... Bill Raines ... Sarah Portlock Fellman, day editor at WSJ ... Nick Muzin, senior adviser and deputy COS for Sen. Ted Cruz ... Obama alum Namrata Kolachalam ... Linda Feldmann, Washington bureau chief of Christian Science Monitor ... former NSA director Mike McConnell is 74 ... Elsa Hoffacker ... Sonny Bunch, Free Beacon executive editor ... Tomeika Bowden, chief comms officer at the D.C. Public Charter School Board (h/t Jon Haber) ... Olivia Baackes ... Catharine Ryun ... Kerri Briggs ...

... **Kara Bloomgarden-Smoke**, media reporter at WWD ... Sam Schabacker ... Chad Jones, executive director of the National Electrical Contractors Association of Western Pennsylvania, is 37 (h/t Kara Hauck) ... Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Ok.) is 4-0 ... Rep. Martha Roby (R-Ark.) is 41 ... Elettra Wiedemann, LSE grad and Brooklyn resident, on the road in support of her new book "Impatient Foodie" (<http://bit.ly/2tJf251>) (h/t Ben Chang) ... Politico's Benjamin Hong ... Michael Zachariades ... Hadley Holmes, JD candidate at Boston College law school ... Stacey Silva ... Ami Susan Edds Petrucelli ... Shakila Khalje ... Sheka Tarawalie ... Elettra Wiedemann ... Don Neal ... Libby

Burmester ... Connie Terry ... Karen Besserman ... PJ McCann ... Michael Leffel (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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