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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 8/17/2017 10:50:41 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): THE BANNON intvw intrigue: what was he doing? -- WHAT TRIGGERS TRUMP's temper -- KELLY 'dismayed' -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Sessions remarks in N.C. -- B'DAY: Ron Bonjean

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. BANNON SPEAKS ... TWO Steve Bannon interviews in the last 48 or so hours.

-- NYT: "Trump's Embrace of Racially Charged Past Puts Republicans in Crisis," by Jeremy Peters, Jonathan Martin and Jack Healy: "Stephen K. Bannon, the president's chief strategist, said in an interview that if Democrats want to fight over Confederate monuments and attack Mr. Trump as a bigot, that was a fight the president would win. 'President Trump, by asking, 'Where does this all end' - Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln - connects with the American people about their history, culture and traditions,' he said. 'The race-identity politics of the left wants to say it's all racist,' Mr. Bannon added. 'Just give me more. Tear down more statues. Say the revolution is coming. I can't get enough of it.'" <http://nyti.ms/2fN5ShN>

-- THE BIG WHAMMY -- READ THIS: "Steve Bannon, Unrepentant: Trump's embattled strategist phones me, unbidden, to opine on China, Korea, and his enemies in the administration," by Robert Kuttner in the American Prospect: "Needless to say, I was a little stunned to get an email from Bannon's assistant midday Tuesday, just as all hell was breaking loose once again about Charlottesville, saying that Bannon wished to meet with me. I'd just published a column on how China was profiting from the U.S.- North Korea nuclear brinkmanship, and it included some choice words about Bannon's boss. ...

"Far from dressing me down for comparing Trump to Kim, he began, 'It's a great honor to finally track you down. I've followed your writing for years and I think you and I are in the same boat when it comes to China. You absolutely nailed it.' 'We're at

economic war with China,' he added. 'It's in all their literature. They're not shy about saying what they're doing. One of us is going to be a hegemon in 25 or 30 years and it's gonna be them if we go down this path. On Korea, they're just tapping us along. It's just a sideshow.' ...

"Contrary to Trump's threat of fire and fury, Bannon said: 'There's no military solution [to North Korea's nuclear threats], forget it. Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that ten million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about, there's no military solution here, they got us.' ...

"I'm changing out people at East Asian Defense ; I'm getting hawks in. I'm getting Susan Thornton [acting head of East Asian and Pacific Affairs] out at State.' But can Bannon really win that fight internally? 'That's a fight I fight every day here,' he said. 'We're still fighting. There's Treasury and [National Economic Council chair] Gary Cohn and Goldman Sachs lobbying.' ...

"I asked Bannon about the connection between his program of economic nationalism and the ugly white nationalism epitomized by the racist violence in Charlottesville and Trump's reluctance to condemn it. ... He dismissed the far right as irrelevant and sidestepped his own role in cultivating it: 'Ethno-nationalism-it's losers. It's a fringe element. I think the media plays it up too much, and we gotta help crush it, you know, uh, help crush it more.' 'These guys are a collection of clowns,' he added."

<http://bit.ly/2w4q0IW>

OK, LET'S REVIEW. This is super juicy. **BANNON** dumped on colleagues and contradicted the president on North Korea. There are two positions here: Axios's Jonathan Swan writes Bannon did not know he was giving an interview.

@jonathanvswan: "You might read some takes tomorrow saying Bannon is playing 5D chess & this was part of a devious strategy. Those takes will be wrong." (**Read Swan's piece for more** <http://bit.ly/2i9eMqL>). Bannon has told people he did not believe this was an on-the-record call. Kuttner, who wrote the piece, said he and Bannon never discussed it being off the record. Generally speaking, that's a conversation you have if you want your remarks kept private. To believe Bannon is to believe that he was caught off guard after calling the reporter, forgot the rules of conventional journalism or believed a left-wing reporter would keep his incendiary remarks private.

-- THE ALTERNATE VIEW: Bannon is an incredibly savvy political operator who talks to reporters all the time, and did these interviews for some reason. Yes, Bannon, who is a top adviser to the president who harps on leaking, is constantly gabbing with journalists. He gave two interviews over the course of roughly 48 hours. His job was on the line, then he found himself aligned with the president over protests in the south. He used the Prospect to dump on Gary Cohn, the president's economic adviser, with whom he has clashed, and to get his views heard on China. Whatever his motivation was, he felt like he should dial up some reporters and get his take out there.

THE BIG PICTURE -- MIKE SHEAR, MAGGIE HABERMAN and GLENN THRUSH:

"The president's top advisers described themselves as stunned, despondent and numb. Several said they were unable to see how Mr. Trump's presidency would recover, and others expressed doubts about his capacity to do the job. In contrast, the president told close aides that he felt liberated by his news conference. Aides said he seemed to bask afterward in his remarks, and viewed them as the latest retort to the political establishment that he sees as trying to tame his impulses. Mr. Trump's venting on Tuesday came despite pleas from his staff, including his daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner. ...

"Mr. Bannon, whose future in the White House remains uncertain, has been encouraging Mr. Trump to remain defiant. Two White House officials who have been trying to moderate the president's position suggested that Mr. Bannon was using the crisis as a way to get back in the good graces of the president, who has soured on Mr. Bannon's internal machinations and reputation for leaking stories about West Wing rivals to conservative news media outlets. Many in the White House said they still held on to the hope, however slim, that the new White House chief of staff, John F. Kelly, could impose order on the disarray even as Mr. Trump hopscotches from one self-destructive episode to the next. Mr. Kelly, who watched the president's performance on Tuesday with his head hung low, grimacing at some of Mr. Trump's remarks, is frustrated, according to people inside the White House." <http://nyti.ms/2i7LnwM>

THE PRESIDENT at 6:19 a.m.: "Publicity seeking Lindsey Graham falsely stated that I said there is moral equivalency between the KKK, neo-Nazis & white supremacists.....and people like Ms. Heyer. Such a disgusting lie. He just can't forget his election trouncing. The people of South Carolina will remember!"

-- **WE NEVER REALLY** hear Graham talk about the presidential primary, which he dropped out of nearly two years ago (Dec. 2015). **ALSO:** Graham won his last election by 15 points, and won his last primary by 41 points.

-- **NANCY COOK** and **JOSH DAWSEY:** "'In some ways, Trump would rather have people calling him racist than say he backed down the minute he was wrong,' one adviser to the White House said on Wednesday about Charlottesville. 'This may turn into the biggest mess of his presidency because he is stubborn and doesn't realize how bad this is getting.' For Trump, anger serves as a way to manage staff, express his displeasure or simply as an outlet that soothes him. Often, aides and advisers say, he'll get mad at a specific staffer or broader situation, unload from the Oval Office and then three hours later act as if nothing ever occurred even if others still feel rattled by it. Negative television coverage and lawyers earn particular ire from him. White House officials and informal advisers say the triggers for his temper are if he thinks someone is lying to him, if he's caught by surprise, if someone criticizes him, or if someone stops him from trying to do something or seeks to control him." <http://politi.co/2wbZSWB>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :** If you know only one fact about rising drug costs, know this one: drug makers set prices

for prescription drugs. To help manage nearly double-digit price increases, employers, unions and government programs use PBMs to negotiate lower net prices to help curb costs for employers and patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

MORE FALLOUT -- "Mitch McConnell's secret fury over Charlottesville response highlights GOP's Trump dilemma," by USA Today's Heidi Przybyla: "There was a reason why it took Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell an entire night to respond to President Trump's chaotic news conference equating counter protesters with the Nazis they came to resist. He was livid. Two sources close to the senator, speaking under condition of anonymity to describe private conversations, said the pro-civil rights Republican who lived through the 1960s in Kentucky closely deliberated on the best way forward." <https://usat.ly/2x5LTyj>

-- **WHAT MNUCHIN THINKS**, per Bloomberg's Saleha Mohsin, Justin Sink, and Margaret Talev: "As Treasury Department aides filtered in for a routine meeting on Wednesday, there was one main issue to be discussed: Secretary Steven Mnuchin does not stand with Donald Trump on the topic of neo-Nazis. Mnuchin, like other officials, had no idea the president would inflame the Charlottesville controversy by equating white supremacists to counter-protesters, the staff was told, according to two people familiar with the meeting.

"He stood beside Trump at the president's news conference in New York, the one that devolved into a shouting match with reporters over race, but not with the intent of endorsing his remarks on the issue. And now the message was that it's time to move on. The team was encouraged to look beyond the chaos of the past several days and instead focus on advancing Trump's economic agenda, the two people said." <https://bloom.bg/2w4vj4Q>

-- **"Former CIA director slams Trump's 'despicable' comments in letter to CNN anchor,"** by CNN's Zachary Cohen: "Former CIA director John Brennan slammed President Donald Trump's 'dangerous' and 'ugly' comments on the deadly violence at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia -- writing a personal letter to CNN's Wolf Blitzer after 'The Situation Room' anchor spoke publicly about the fact that he lost all four grandparents to the evils of Nazism. ... 'If allowed to continue along this senseless path, Mr. Trump will do lasting harm to American society and to our standing in the world. By his words and his actions, Mr. Trump is putting our national security and our collective futures at grave risk.'" ***With the whole letter*** <http://cnn.it/2uRYRid>

--**"Apple's Tim Cook 'disagrees' with Donald Trump's take on neo-Nazi violence in Charlottesville,"** by Recode's Tony Romm and Kara Swisher: "Apple CEO Tim Cook on Wednesday called for an 'unequivocal' denouncement of the recent neo-Nazi demonstration in Charlottesville, Virginia, stressing he disagreed with comments by President Donald Trump that attributed the violence there to 'many sides' - and not white supremacists. In a note to Apple's employees, obtained Wednesday night by Recode, Cook also announced the company would donate \$1 million each to the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League. Apple plans to match its

employees donations to human rights groups -- on a 2-for-1 basis -- until Sept 30, while setting up a new system in iTunes, its music software, to 'offer users an easy way to join us in directly supporting the work of the SPLC,' Cook said." <http://bit.ly/2w4TUXi>

-- YASHAR ALI: "Rabbi That Oversaw Ivanka Trump's Conversion to Judaism Slams Trump on Charlottesville Response" <http://nym.ag/2fNDCeS>

NEW STRIKING TIME COVER - The magazine devotes its issue to a special report on Charlottesville, with essays by Nancy Gibbs, Eddie S. Glaude Jr., John Grisham, Jon Meacham, Ilhan Omar, and Tavis Smiley. The cover shows a figure wearing an American flag giving a Nazi salute. **See the cover:** <http://bit.ly/2uJpFp1>

-- **MICHAEL SCHERER** will be on "Morning Joe" this morning at 7:40 a.m. to discuss the cover story.

THE COMING BATTLE -- @CoryBooker: "I will be introducing a bill to remove Confederate statues from the US Capitol building. This is just one step. We have much work to do."

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "House Homeland Security Committee to hold hearing on domestic terror threats after Charlottesville," by Washington Examiner's Josh Siegel: "Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, announced Wednesday his panel will host a hearing next month focused on domestic terrorism threats, including that of white supremacist groups, following the weekend clash in Charlottesville at a rally organized by white nationalist groups. The Sept. 12 hearing was previously scheduled as part of an annual review of worldwide terrorist threats. But McCaul, R-Texas, said the hearing will be broadened to also address domestic threats." <http://washex.am/2i906l4>

WAPO'S ASHLEY PARKER and BOB COSTA on JOHN KELLY -- "Trump's lack of discipline leaves new chief of staff frustrated and dismayed": "The uproar -- which has consumed not only the White House but the Republican Party -- left Kelly deeply frustrated and dismayed just over two weeks into his job, said people familiar with his thinking. The episode also underscored the difficult challenges that even a four-star general faces in instilling a sense of order around Trump, whose first instinct when cornered is to lash out, even self-destructively. ...

"This portrait of the White House under Kelly comes from interviews with 17 West Wing aides, informal advisers, Republican lawmakers and Trump confidants, many speaking on the condition of anonymity to offer a more candid assessment.... Kelly has largely improved staff morale, and implemented a rigor and order that has made West Wing aides feel both more optimistic and less mistrustful of one another, several White House aides said. ...

"Kelly has transformed the West Wing from a political Grand Central Station - with aides and hangers-on cycling through the Oval Office - into an actual place of business.

One outside adviser recalls stopping by the White House to say hello to his friends on days he had free time. Under Kelly, he said, approvingly, 'If you're coming, now it's, 'Why are you coming? Who are you coming to see? And why does the White House care about what you have to say?' ...

"Late last week in Bedminster, he gathered at Trump's clubhouse restaurant for a relaxed, social dinner with the senior staff members. ... As they reminisced about the campaign and told jokes, Kelly offered a quip. 'The best job I ever had was as a sergeant in the Marine Corps,' he said with a laugh, 'and after one week on this job, I believe the best job I ever had is as a sergeant in the Marine Corps.'"

<http://wapo.st/2wcJWU6>

NYT'S MIKE SCHMIDT and MATT APUZZO: "Trump Lawyer Forwards Email Echoing Secessionist Rhetoric": "President Trump's personal lawyer on Wednesday forwarded an email to conservative journalists, government officials and friends that echoed secessionist Civil War propaganda and declared that the group Black Lives Matter "has been totally infiltrated by terrorist groups."

"The email forwarded by John Dowd, who is leading the president's legal team, painted the Confederate general Robert E. Lee in glowing terms and equated the South's rebellion to that of the American Revolution against England. Its subject line - 'The Information that Validates President Trump on Charlottesville' - was a reference to comments Mr. Trump made earlier this week in the aftermath of protests in the Virginia college town. 'You cannot be against General Lee and be for General Washington,' the email reads, 'there literally is no difference between the two men.' ...

"You're sticking your nose in my personal email?" Mr. Dowd told The Times in a brief telephone interview. 'People send me things. I forward them.' He then hung up." ... The email's author, Jerome Almon, runs several websites alleging government conspiracies and arguing that the F.B.I. has been infiltrated by Islamic terrorists. He once unsuccessfully sued the State Department for \$900 million over claims of discrimination." <http://nyti.ms/2vLd8OX>

WHAT TRUMP IS READING -- "Republican Congressman Meets With WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange," by Daily Caller's Alex Pfeiffer: "After TheDC broke the news of the meeting, Rohrabacher put out a statement in which he said Assange 'emphatically stated that the Russians were not involved in the hacking or disclosure of [Hillary Clinton's] emails.' The three met for three hours and Rohrabacher is the first congressman to have visited the WikiLeaks founder. A press release from the California congressman's office stated that Rohrabacher 'plans to divulge more of what he found directly to President Trump.'" <http://bit.ly/2fMsDSS>

--WE HAD HEARD earlier this week that Rohrabacher was planning on trying to meet up with Assange. When we emailed his spokesman Ken Grubbs to ask what Rohrabacher was going to do in London, he told us on Monday night: "[H]e's on his way to meet up with his wife to celebrate their 20th anniversary."

NIMBY -- "Mayors taking swift action to avoid becoming the next Charlottesville," by WaPo's Janell Ross, Mark Berman and Joel Achenbach: "City officials across the country are nervously trying to figure out how to avoid becoming the next Charlottesville as alt-right leaders and white nationalist groups vow to stage more rallies in coming days. A group claiming it is advocating free speech has planned a rally for Saturday on the historic Boston Common, with a group advocating racial justice planning its own gathering in opposition. Boston officials said they have laid down strict conditions, including no sticks, weapons or backpacks. ... A rally scheduled for Aug. 26 in San Francisco has prompted House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D) and several California lawmakers to urge the National Park Service to rescind the permit to gather on federal park land there." <http://wapo.st/2i8kEjL>

-- PHOENIX MAYOR WANTS TRUMP TO DELAY -- by Arizona Republic's Yvonne Wingett Sanchez: "Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton wrote in a statement Wednesday he was disappointed to learn of Trump's visit so close to the violent events in Charlottesville. The mayor called on Trump to delay the visit. 'If President Trump is coming to Phoenix to announce a pardon for former Sheriff Joe Arpaio, then it will be clear that his true intent is to inflame emotions and further divide our nation,' the statement said." <http://bit.ly/2w1Cl4N>

SCOOP -- "Trump Set to Roll Back Obama-Era Contraception Rule," by WSJ's Michelle Hackman and Louise Radnofsky: "The Trump administration is poised to issue a rule unwinding an Obama-era requirement that employee health benefits include contraception, which will spark a fresh round of litigation over an issue that has been before courts for six years. Federal health officials are expected to finalize a regulation that would allow employers with religious or moral objections to birth control to omit coverage for contraception from their workers' plans ... The Trump administration rule would allow a much broader set of employers to opt out of offering coverage for birth control, making moot a 'workaround' designed by the Obama administration that allowed women in some cases to obtain coverage even if their employers had declined to offer it directly." <http://on.wsj.com/2i8MgFH>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: University of Virginia students, faculty and Charlottesville residents attend a candle light march across campus grounds on Aug. 16. Hundreds gathered on the campus for a candlelight vigil against hate and violence days after Charlottesville erupted in chaos during a white nationalist rally. | Andrew Shurtleff/The Daily Progress via AP

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK - WHAT A.G. JEFF SESSIONS WILL SAY TODAY -- Sessions is speaking about gang violence today at 11:30 a.m. to local and federal law

enforcement from North Carolina at the Gangs Across the Carolinas Training Symposium in Winston-Salem, North Carolina: "According to the FBI's most recent National Gang Report, approximately half of the gang investigators they surveyed said that gang membership and gang activity were increasing. Approximately one third of jurisdictions reported an increase in threats to law enforcement. ... Whether it is MS-13, the Bloods, or Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs, gangs are targeting our youth and law-abiding citizens. But I have news for these vicious criminals: WE ARE TARGETING YOU. ...

"President Trump is serious about supporting our state and local law enforcement. That is why he sent my Department three executive orders when I took office. One directs us to be supportive of law enforcement. A second declared that our mission is to reduce crime. And the third requires us to dismantle transnational criminal organizations. These are our goals and we are getting after them. ... Since the beginning of this year, the Department of Justice has secured more than 1,200 convictions against gang members. ... We will not let up. We will combat this threat, take the fight to them, and devastate these criminal enterprises. I refuse to cede one more block, one more street corner, one more inch to these gangs."

FOR YOUR RADAR -- REUTERS: "China military criticizes 'wrong' U.S. moves on Taiwan, South China Sea: "The 'wrong' actions of the United States on Taiwan, its South China Sea patrols and deployment of an advanced anti-missile system in South Korea have had a large, negative influence on military trust, a senior Chinese officer said on Thursday. Fan Changlong, a vice chairman of China's powerful Central Military Commission, told Joseph Dunford, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, that mutual trust mechanisms between the two militaries had continued to improve, China's defense ministry said. 'But wrong actions on the Taiwan issue, the United States deploying the THAAD system around China, U.S. ships and aircraft's activities in the South China Sea, the United States close-in surveillance in the sea and air near China have had a large, negative influence on bilateral military ties and mutual trust,' Fan added." <http://reut.rs/2uScduN>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :** Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers and other health care purchasers; however, the list price - the important starting point for those negotiations -- continues to rise, at a rate of nearly ten percent in 2016 alone. Increased competition, faster reviews of generics and biosimilars and ending anti-competitive practices can also bring down the cost of medications for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

CASH DASH -- "Lawmakers raise cash off Trump-Russia probe," by Austin Wright and Darren Samuelsohn: "Rep. Eric Swalwell's campaign website features ominous photos of President Donald Trump, Donald Trump Jr. and Jared Kushner. It warns about Russia's attacks on last year's presidential election and asks visitors to sign a petition demanding that a bipartisan commission investigate. Those who sign are then asked to contribute \$5, \$10, \$25 or more to the California Democrat. Swalwell is one of the junior members of the House Intelligence Committee, which has long had an

unspoken rule against engaging in partisan fundraising related to the panel's secretive work.

"But the panel's high-profile Russia investigation is now putting that rule to the test, and experts are warning that some committee members' recent appeals for campaign cash could undermine everyone's credibility. ... Fundraising appeals from Intelligence Committee members have so far avoided detailed references to the panel's investigation, but there is undoubtedly a connection. And these fundraising appeals come as outside groups, including some with ties to the Trump administration, are capitalizing on the highly charged issue to bolster their own war chests."

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

BEHIND THE SCENES -- "The 48 Frantic Hours Before CEOs Broke With Trump,"

by Bloomberg's Melissa Mittelman, Jennifer Kaplan, Jing Cao and Zachary Tracer:

<https://bloom.bg/2vL2Z4Q>

LIKE A PHOENIX -- "Rahm Emanuel rehabs his national profile," by Natasha Korecki and Kristen East: "Rahm Emanuel's bungling of the Laquan McDonald shooting case in 2015 so sunk his stature with the African-American community, Hillary Clinton wouldn't be seen with him during her campaign stops in his city. With one crisis of violence in minority neighborhoods and another with police department morale, he had all but been silenced on national politics. But 18 months after fighting off resignation calls and protests in the streets, the Chicago mayor has rediscovered his national voice - and with Donald Trump in the White House, he's as emboldened as ever to use it. He's on CNN. He's on The New York Times' op-ed pages. He's dispensing advice to top House Democrats on national campaign strategy. He's jetting off to Milan and London to forge mayoral alliances while brashly picking fights with New York. The biggest headlines have come from Emanuel's decision to become the first big-city mayor to legally challenge Trump's immigration policies." <http://politi.co/2x6J8ws>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Jennifer Steinhauer Named Editor of Live Journalism/D.C." at

the New York Times <http://bit.ly/2w4sa4S>

NYT BRINGS EVENTS TO D.C. -- "The New York Times announced today that its celebrated TimesTalks event series will expand into the arena of politics, policy and current events with a provocative three-part series this fall in Washington D.C.

TimesTalks/D.C. will feature Times journalists as they explore the most pressing issues of the day in conversations with leaders who are shaping our world. The inaugural event will feature a conversation between House Speaker Paul Ryan and The Times's deputy Washington editor Jonathan Weisman on tax policy reform discussions in Congress and the legislative agenda. Speaker Ryan will provide insight on his party strategy and goals. This TimesTalks/D.C. conversation will take place the morning of Thursday, September 7 at the Newseum." <http://politi.co/2uLgLar>

PLAYBOOK INBOX -- Richard Viguerie, "A call to action re Steve Bannon": "Dear Conservative Leader: The campaign against our friend and fellow conservative Steve

Bannon has reached a fever pitch, and it is urgent that you join me in letting President Trump know just how deeply it would divide his winning coalition if he were to cave-in to those who wish to derail his agenda by removing Steve Bannon from the White House staff. ... I believe that the campaign to remove Steve Bannon from the White House staff is part of a well-thought-out effort to isolate the President from his conservative - populist base, stymie our conservative - populist agenda and to make Donald Trump a one-term President." **The full letter** <http://politi.co/2vLDPDo>

-- **ANN SELZER** emails: "I'm writing to let you know that after eight years of working exclusively with Bloomberg on their national political polling, my firm is now available to work with other clients as Bloomberg takes a hiatus for this off-election year. This is not necessarily a permanent arrangement. We both like each other and foresee we will work on projects together again one day. This means I can take on new polling-related projects, collaborations, and consultative relationships with clients that were not possible while I held an exclusive arrangement with Bloomberg News. If you or someone you know might be interested in working with me, please be in touch."

VALLEY TALK -- "Apple Readies \$1 Billion War Chest for Hollywood

Programming," by WSJ's Tripp Mickle: "Apple has set a budget of roughly \$1 billion to procure and produce original content over the next year, according to people familiar with the matter-a sign of how serious the maker of iPhones is about making a splash in Hollywood. Combined with the company's marketing clout and global reach, the step immediately makes Apple a considerable competitor in a crowded market, where both new and traditional media players are vying for original shows. ... Apple could acquire and produce as many as 10 television shows." <http://on.wsj.com/2w4rOeHe>

Playbookers

SPOTTED enjoying Wednesday afternoon's Nationals game together: Kelly Simpson, Dave Natonski, Brent Robertson, Charlie Keller, Alex Schriver, and Matt Haller.

OUT AND ABOUT - Pool report: "The British Embassy opened its doors yesterday to over 200 soccer football fanatics for a live recording of this season's inaugural 'Men in Blazers' podcast, a show which 'aims to enlighten the masses to the wildly entertaining world of soccer.' At the event, which sold out to the public in 10 minutes, the Men In Blazers hosts Roger Bennett and Michael Davies sat down with CBS's Major Garrett, CNN's Chris Cillizza and British Ambassador Kim Darroch to talk soccer, the start of the Premier League season last weekend (which is celebrating its 25th anniversary) and the British brand's popularity in Washington, where it has been one of the top local markets for Premier League coverage on NBC Sports over the past few years."

TRANSITIONS -- America First Action, a pro-Trump super PAC, has named **Corey Lewandowski** as a senior adviser and a spokesman. ... Bustle has named political strategist **Karine Jean-Pierre** as a contributing editor. Jean-Pierre is the senior adviser

and national spokesperson for MoveOn.org.

-- **PELOSI WORLD: Henry Connelly** has been named as deputy communications director for House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. Connelly is currently director of speechwriting. He is a graduate of Yale and an alum of former Rep. Janice Hahn's office.

ENGAGED - Jeff Grappone, who works in corporate communications at Siemens USA, on Tuesday proposed to **Amy Graham**, who works in public affairs at the EPA. "Amy and Jeff met in 2012 at the Vice Presidential debate in Danville, Kentucky. She was part of the Romney campaign's surrogate operation and Jeff was there with Sen. Kelly Ayotte. Amy and Jeff became instant friends at the debate and started dating in 2015. Jeff proposed on Siasconset Beach in Nantucket and they celebrated at dinner in town with friends before finishing the night at the Club Car's piano bar." **Pic**
<http://bit.ly/2w4n5tm>

-- **Aaron Wells**, a partner at The Smoot Tewes Group, got engaged this past weekend to **Beth Florence**, a nurse at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda. Aaron proposed at their alma mater, Augsburg University, followed by a celebration with family and friends in Minnesota. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2x6V3dR> ... <http://politi.co/2uLibBH>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Ron Bonjean, partner at Rokk Solutions, celebrating with his "folks (my dad and I share the same birthday) at The Good Pants Ranch." **A fun fact about Ron:** "In college, I was the announcer for the Milwaukee County Zoo's Dolphin and Sea Lion Show. I still have most of the script memorized since we did it 5 shows a day, 7 days a week all summer long." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:
<http://politi.co/2wSCdlb>

BIRTHDAYS: Glen Caplin, senior adviser for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand ... former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) is 68 ... Politico's Alexis Williams ... Rep. David Price (D-N.C.) is 77. He's celebrating by discussing U.S. energy policy with a bipartisan group of colleagues at an Aspen Institute conference (h/t Sawyer Hackett) ... Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.) is 54 ... Jamie Smith, global chief communications officer for the BitFury Group, is 4-0. She's celebrating with "a true throw back Thursday with the kids: Six Flags America (weather permitting). Lincoln Rose (4) and Elijah James (2) are thrilled to experience sun (or rain) with their mommy on her very special birthday" (hubby tip: Eric Pierce) ... Ali Deckard ... IJR CTO Carl Sceusa is 27 (h/t Anton Vuljaj) ... Elyse Cohen of the U.S. Chamber Foundation and a Michelle Obama alum ... Leah Nelson of Sunshine Sachs (h/t Clare Tonneson) ... Derek McGinty ... Sabrina Leigh Schaeffer, VP at the Herald Group ... Mike Buczkiewicz, senior producer at "Morning Joe" ... Josh Dubois is 35 ... Chris Golden ... Sonali Dohale ... David Kusnet, former White House speechwriter and principal at the Podesta Group (h/t Jon Haber) ... HuffPost's Elise Foley ... Mark Molaro ... Aaron Kinnari ...

... **Matt Mittenthal**, director of comms for BuzzFeed News ... Carlee Griffeth, O'Malley/SCDP alum who now does comms for Rep. Kurt Schrader, "celebrating the

end of being on her parents' health care plan #ThanksObama. She'll be feted by friends after work at Cantina Marina." (h/t Matt Corridoni) ... Tyler Nickerson ... Alyson Chadwick ... Eric Stark ... Indonesia turns 72 on its Independence Day ... Monica Fernandez ... Carlee Griffeth ... Ashley Harris ... Nick Hawatmeh ... Laura DeSimone ... Andrea McCarthy ... Kevin Lillard ... Kate Gladney ... Boston Globe's Eric Moskowitz ... Margie Glick ... Yousef Saba ... Mandy Matti ... Rex Babin ... John Hayes, the pride of Cedar Falls, Iowa ... Suzy Loftus ... Nancy Kirshner ... Robyn Garnett ... Diane Shust ... Ken Bailey ... Michael Alter (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Ken Bailey ... Alan Bowser ... Maegan Carberry ... Kate Stacy ... Kevin Mack ... Mary Lou Foy ... Lisa Stickan ... Greg Murphy ... Michael Kraft ... former Chinese president Jiang Zemin is 91 ... author V.S. Naipaul is 85 ... Robert DeNiro is 74 ... author Jonathan Franzen is 58 ... Sean Penn is 57 (h/ts AP)

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :**

The high prices that drug makers set for prescription drugs can put financial strain on patients, employers, unions and others who provide health care coverage to more than 50 percent of Americans. Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers, unions and government programs. But, as list prices - the starting point for those negotiations -- continue their nearly double-digit increases, the effects ripple throughout the system. The key to ensuring greater access and affordability lies in fostering greater competition. Facilitating faster reviews of generics and biosimilars, identifying off-patent drugs with little or no generic competition, and ending anti-competitive practices that keep safe, effective alternatives out of the market are also key to abating rising drug costs for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

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