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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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Host says Google stole his voice

Suit claims company's AI tool mimics Greene without permission

BY WILL OREMUS

David Greene had never heard of NotebookLM, Google's buzzy artificial intelligence tool that spins up podcasts on demand, until a former colleague emailed him to ask if he'd lent it his voice.

"So ... I'm probably the 148th person to ask this, but did you license your voice to Google?" the former co-worker asked in a fall 2024 email. "It sounds very much like you!"

Greene, a public radio veteran who has hosted NPR's "Morning Edition" and KCRW's political podcast "Left, Right & Center," looked up the tool, listening to the two virtual co-hosts — one male and one female — engage in light banter.

"I was, like, completely freaked out," Greene said. "It's this eerie moment where you feel like you're listening to yourself."

Greene felt the male voice sounded just like him — from the cadence and intonation to the occasional "uhhs" and "likes" that Greene had worked over the years to minimize but never eliminated. He said he played it for his wife and her eyes popped.

As emails and texts rolled in from friends, family members and co-workers, asking if the AI podcast voice was his, Greene became convinced he'd been ripped off. Now he's suing Google, alleging that it violated his rights by building a product that replicated his voice without payment or permission, giving users the power to make it say things Greene would never say.

Google told The Washington Post in a statement on Thursday that NotebookLM's male podcast voice has nothing to do with Greene. Now a Santa Clara County, California, court may be asked to determine whether the resemblance is uncanny enough that ordinary people hearing the voice would assume it's his — and if so, what to do about it.

The case is the latest to pit the rights of individual human creators against those of a booming AI industry that promises to transform the economy by allowing people to generate uncannily lifelike speech, prose, images and videos on demand. Behind the

SEE GOOGLE ON A13

Is the Florida Current, one of the world's fastest ocean currents, slowing? Scientists are studying it and the worldwide havoc that would cause.



SARAH L. VOISIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Oceanographers study the Florida Current to determine the strength of the water flow between Florida and the Bahamas.

Working an underwater puzzle

BY KASHA PATEL IN STRAITS OF FLORIDA

At 2 a.m., oceanographer Ryan Smith was headed into his 12th hour of work with little sleep when trouble started.

From the rear deck of the University of Miami's research boat, he guided the vessel's winch to lower a cage containing 14 long, gray tubes, collectively weighing about 1,000 pounds, hundreds of meters deep into the Atlantic Ocean, to record the temperature, salinity and density of the water. But after running smoothly for the first

two-thirds of the trip, the sensors now suddenly stopped transmitting data.

There was no time for a hiccup. With urgency mounting, Smith signaled to bring the cage to the surface.

At sea, there is no helpline to call for a broken instrument at this hour (or any hour). If the team couldn't fix it, they would need to make a 12-hour slog back to Miami through the fast-moving Florida Current — the precise subject they were trying to measure.

For 43 years, scientists have been

studying the strength of the water flow between Florida and the Bahamas to learn what drives its changes over time. The information could help scientists answer a pressing question: Is the Florida Current, one of the world's fastest ocean currents, slowing down? If so, it could indicate weakening of the larger circulation system in the Atlantic Ocean — what scientists call the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) — which could be

SEE OCEANS ON A8

School district becomes refuge for students amid ICE surge

Outside of Minneapolis, five schools are getting aggressive in protecting their immigrant families

BY KARIN BRULLIARD

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINN. — First period was about to begin Tuesday when the phone rang at Columbia Academy. The parent of one of the middle school's students had been detained by immigration authorities, and the family needed help finding a lawyer.

It was one more in a steady stream of daily crises that had confronted Leslee Sherk, Columbia Academy's principal, in this immigrant-heavy Minneapolis suburb every day for more than two months. They arrived in dings on her phone, in scratchy dispatches on her walkie-talkie, in frantic calls to the office, in whispers from children in hall-

ways, in emails on her sticker-covered laptop, tallying the latest number of students with at least one parent detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: 16, up from 10 the week before.

Every day felt like "triage," Sherk said.

The impact of the surge had saturated every aspect of the school day in Columbia Heights' district of fewer than 3,400 students — half of them English-language learners — and seeped deeply into the hours beyond it. Seven students had been detained, including Liam Conejo Ramos, the 5-year-old whose photo became a global symbol of the

SEE MINNEAPOLIS ON A6



CAROLINE YANG/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Columbia Academy Principal Leslee Sherk and instructor Cristan Pillajo greet students taking an after-school Latin dance class online. On Wednesday, only one student attended the class in person.

Ky. race is break from the past

GOP HAS SOURED ON SEN. MCCONNELL

Ex-aides seeking his seat distance themselves

BY HANNAH KNOWLES

One Republican candidate to succeed Sen. Mitch McConnell introduced himself with an ad that shows a cardboard cutout of the longtime Senate majority leader in the trash.

Allies for a rival hit back with ads that noted the first candidate gave McConnell money.

And Daniel Cameron, the former Kentucky attorney general once considered a McConnell protégé, is now keeping his distance.

"I'm my own man," Cameron said in an interview, later suggesting McConnell donors prefer one of his opponents.

The Senate primary to replace 83-year-old McConnell shows how profoundly the GOP base in his home state has soured on one of the most powerful and significant political figures in Kentucky history. McConnell drew low approval ratings for years but fended off challengers by flexing his raw clout and ability to deliver for his state.

While he at times expressed frustration or anger with President Donald Trump, McConnell used his political muscle to cement much of the president's first-term legacy, including a 6-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court that has helped pave the way for an even more disruptive second term.

SEE KENTUCKY ON A7

Border czar: 'Small' force will stay in Minneapolis

BY MARIANA ALFARO

President Donald Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, said Sunday that a "small" security force will remain in Minnesota to support immigration operations, even as the surge of federal agents there is set to end soon.

Speaking to CBS's "Face the Nation," days after declaring an end to Operation Metro Surge, the Trump administration's largest immigration operation since the president took office, Homan said more than 1,000 immigration agents had left the Twin Cities area and that hundreds more will depart in the coming days.

The operation ended after widespread protests against the raids and fatal shootings by officers of two American citizens.

Homan said "we'll get back to the original footprint" of federal agents carrying out immigration operations in the state, but that a small number of officers will stay behind for a period of time to respond to protests and what he described as "agitators."

"There will be a small force, a security force ... that will respond to when our agents are out and they get surrounded by agitators and things got out of control, and

SEE DHS ON A4

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