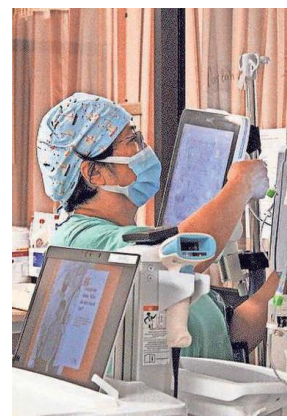


Vaccine could boost Big Pharma's reputation

Drug companies' efforts to end pandemic could take them from zero to hero. **In Money**

US carries out first federal execution in 17 years

After series of challenges, Supreme Court cleared the way for killer's death. **In News**



TUCSON MEDICAL CENTER

Inside a COVID-19 intensive care unit

In the global hot spot of Arizona, a Tucson hospital struggles to save its largest-ever number of critically ill patients. **Nation's Health**

USA TODAY

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$2 | WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020

ELECTION 2020

Money dries up for November

Officials say they lack resources to conduct vote

Pat Beall, Catharina Felke and Elizabeth Mulvey
USA TODAY NETWORK

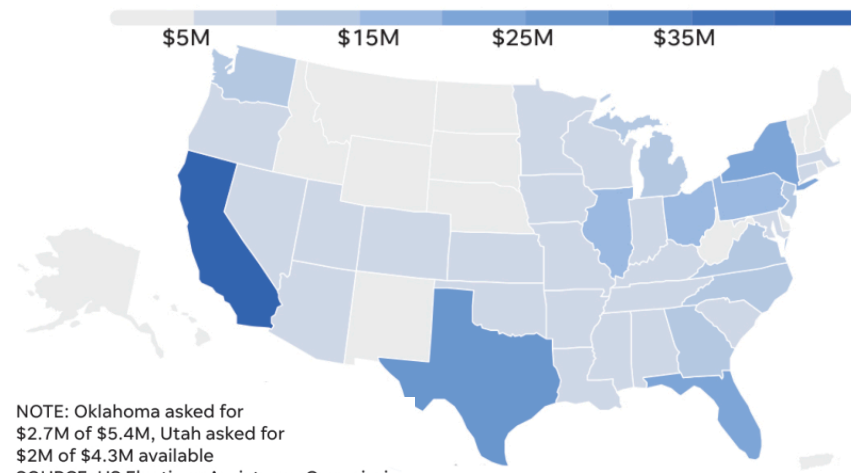
Heading into Georgia's primary June 9, McDuffie County Elections Director Phyllis Brooks had to assemble a last-minute crew to count votes.

Two of her three staffers were out with COVID-19. She had more than 2,500 absentee ballots to tally by hand.

Brooks brought in a handful of county employees and hired teenagers to do the counting. There's no money left in her election office budget. Not for poll workers. Not for extra hands to count what is likely to be a record number

See **ELECTION**, Page 6A

Distribution of the \$400 million in emergency funds to respond to the coronavirus for the 2020 election



Results and more from key primaries

Voters weighed in on key races Tuesday: In Alabama, Jeff Sessions fought for his former Senate seat against Tommy Tuberville, who is endorsed by Trump. In Texas and Maine, voters chose which Democrats will face Republican incumbent Sens. John Cornyn and Susan Collins, respectively, in November.

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Ex-employee pleads guilty in 7 VA deaths

Nursing assistant gave vets lethal insulin doses

Kristine Phillips
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – A former nursing assistant pleaded guilty Tuesday to federal murder charges in connection with a string of insulin deaths at a veterans hospital in West Virginia.

Federal prosecutors say Reta Mays injected lethal doses of insulin into eight veterans at the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center in rural Clarksburg, causing their blood sugar levels to drop to dangerously low levels. Seven died shortly after.

The 46-year-old was charged with seven counts of second-degree murder and one count of assault with intent to commit murder, according to charging documents unsealed Tuesday. She faces life imprisonment. Her attorneys did not respond to requests for comment.

"Nothing we have done will bring your loved ones back," Bill Powell, U.S. attorney in West Virginia, said at a press conference. "But we do hope that the work of these agents and prosecutors honored the memory of your loved ones in a way that they so justly deserved and, in some small fashion, assuage the anguish you

See **GUILTY PLEA**, Page 6A

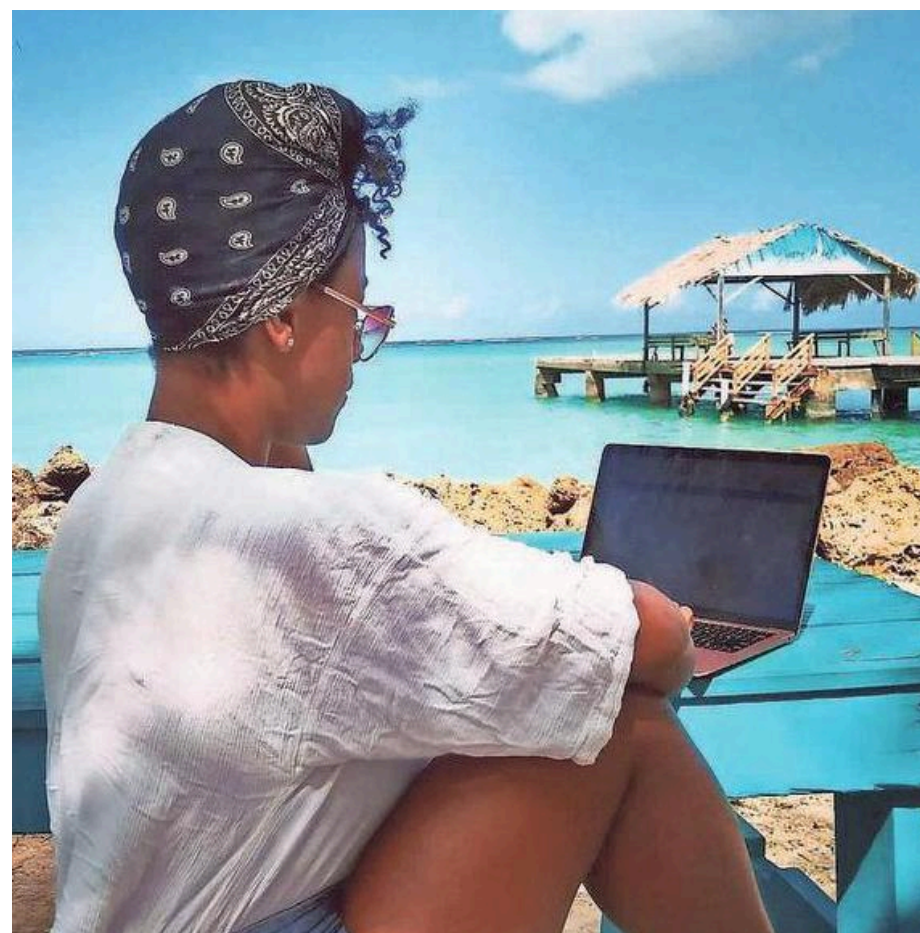
RACE IN AMERICA

"It wasn't until I had left the USA to experience Spain that I really got a sense of what freedom looks like. I was able to be 100% myself without having to worry about safety and without needing to have too much of a complex identity."

Sienna Brown, 28, a Brooklyn, New York, native who now lives near Valencia, Spain on the Mediterranean Sea

Black people move beyond USA

Transplants say they're better off in other countries



Tiffanie Drayton says she felt displaced in New Jersey, so she came to Trinidad and Tobago. TIFFANIE DRAYTON

Kim Hjelmggaard
USA TODAY

Anthony Baggette knew the precise moment he had to get out: He was driving by a convenience store in Cincinnati when a police officer pulled him over. There had been a robbery. He fit the description given by the store's clerk: a Black man.

Okunini Obadele Kambon knew: He was arrested in Chicago and accused by police of concealing a loaded gun under a seat in his car. He did have a gun, but it was not loaded. He used it in his role teaching at an outdoor skills camp for inner-city kids. Kambon had a license. The gun was kept safely in the car's trunk.

Tiffanie Drayton knew: Her family kept getting priced out of gentrifying



Baggette



Kambon

neighborhoods in New Jersey. She said they were destined to be forever displaced in the USA. Then Trayvon Martin was shot and killed after buying a bag of Skittles and a can of iced tea.

Baggette lives in Germany, Drayton in Trinidad and Tobago, Kambon in Ghana.

All three are part of a small cultural cohort: Black emigres who said they felt cornered and powerless in the face of persistent racism, police brutality and economic struggles in the

See **LEAVING**, Page 3A

Trump: US to sanction China over Hong Kong

President criticizes Biden, Obama policies

John Fritze and David Jackson
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump said Tuesday he signed legislation that would slap sanctions on Chinese officials who undermine the autonomy of Hong Kong, the latest step in the administration's increasingly confrontational posture toward Beijing.

But Trump's official remarks in the Rose Garden quickly turned political as he offered an extended critique of Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, and the Obama administration's trade policies.

"If we listened to Joe Biden, hundreds of thousands of additional lives would have been lost" to the coronavirus, Trump claimed without evidence.

Trump's remarks, which focused far more on Biden than on Hong Kong, came as the president has slid in national polling and has seen slipping support in battleground states he won in 2016, such as Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The president, who made trade with China a centerpiece of his 2016 campaign, argued that the Obama administration "freely allowed China to pillage our factories." Biden aides did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump's remarks were the latest instance in which the president has veered into presidential politics during an official event.

"I can't believe this," political analyst Stuart Rothenberg posted on Twitter. "This is a campaign event from the White House."

U.S. relations with China have deteriorated as Trump has hammered at Beijing's response to the coronavirus, repeatedly asserting China failed to warn the world about the severity of the disease that experts say originated in Wuhan. The virus has added a new layer of tensions on top of the trade war that erupted in 2018.

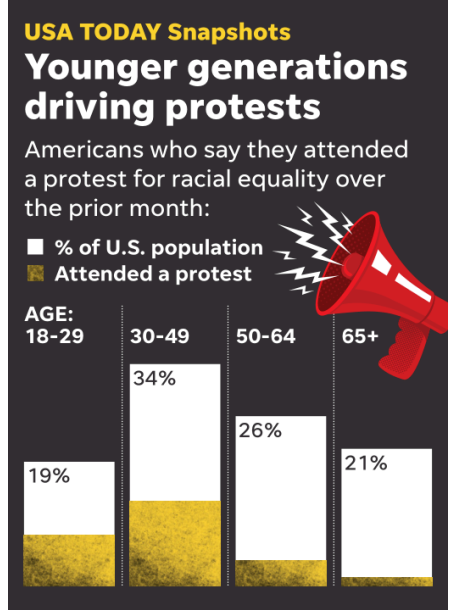
Trump has claimed his "phase one" trade agreement with China announced in January remains in place, though the country is falling short of its goals to purchase U.S. goods and Washington has left in place sanctions on billions of dollars in Chinese goods.

The president said he also signed an executive order ending preferential trade treatment for Hong Kong.

Contributing: Nicholas Wu, Deirdre Shesgreen



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RACE IN AMERICA

Leaving

Continued from Page 1A

USA and chose to settle and pursue their American-born dreams abroad.

No official statistics cover these international transplants.

In Ghana, where Kambon is involved in a program that encourages descendants of the African diaspora to return to a nation where centuries earlier their ancestors were forced onto slave ships, he said he is one of “several thousand.” Kambon rejects descriptors such as “Black American” or “African American” that identify him with the USA.

In Trinidad and Tobago, where Drayton works in her home office, which has a view of the ocean and hummingbirds frolicking above the pool, there are at least four: Drayton, her mother, sister and her sister’s boyfriend. There are probably more.

About 120,000 Americans live in Germany, home to about 1 million people of African descent. For historical reasons, Germany’s census does not use race as a category, so it is not possible to calculate how many hail from the USA.

“There’s a lot of institutional racism in Germany,” said Baggette, 68, who has lived in Berlin for more than 30 years and said he still feels conflicted about his move.

He described the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, as a time when neo-Nazis and skinheads would “throw Black people off of the S-Bahn,” the city’s subway system. “But I still felt, and feel, better off here – safer,” he said.

In interviews with more than a dozen expatriate Black Americans spread out across the globe from the Caribbean to West Africa, it became clear that for some, the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis provided fresh evidence that living outside the USA can be an exercise in self-preservation.

A study in 2019 by the National Academy of Sciences found Black men were about 2.5 times more likely than white men to be killed by police. An analysis this year by Nature Human Behavior of 100 million traffic stops conducted across the country determined that Black people were far more likely to be pulled over by police than whites, but that difference narrowed significantly at night, when it is harder to see dark skin. Black Americans face a far higher risk of being arrested for petty crimes. They account for a third of the prison population but just 13% of the overall population, according to Pew Research, a nonpartisan “fact tank.”

Drayton, 28, is writing a book about fleeing from racism in America. She said one of the starkest illustrations of how her life has changed since moving to Trinidad and Tobago in 2013 is how she feels comfortable driving her kids around the block to get them to sleep each night without being worried about what happens if she is pulled over by police.

“In America, your hands are shaking. You’re worried about what to say. You’re worried about whether you have the right ID. You’re just so worried all the time,” she said of the interactions her friends experience regularly with American police officers.

For other Black Americans who chose what amounts to foreign exile, Floyd’s death and the ensuing protests confirmed that leaving may not mean a life free from racism and police brutality, but it at least feels somewhat more within reach.

“It wasn’t until I had left the USA to experience Spain that I really got a sense of what freedom looks like. I was able to be 100% myself without having to worry about safety and without needing to have too much of a complex identity,” said Brooklyn, New York, native Sienna Brown, 28, who lives near Valencia on the Mediterranean Sea. Brown founded a company that helps Black American women emigrate to Spain.

She said Spain isn’t racism-free and isn’t that diverse, but she has experienced it as a welcoming place where people are willing to be educated about their prejudices.

Lakeshia Ford moved to Ghana full-time after visiting in 2008 as part of a study-abroad year in college.

“Here I don’t have to think of myself as a Black woman and everything that comes with that,” said Ford, 32, who grew up in New Jersey and runs her own communications firm in Accra, Ghana’s capital. “Here I am just a woman.”

She said that although racism in the USA contributed to the decision, her move to Ghana was not a direct reaction to prejudice. She was equally intrigued by Ghanaian culture and what she saw as a growing economic success story rarely portrayed in the West, where Af-



Yasiin Bey, formerly known as Mos Def, right, moved to South Africa to escape racism, though he was thrown out in 2016. SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM/AP

rica for many is synonymous with disease, poverty and conflict.

“When I got here, I remember thinking: There’s wealthy Black people here. No one tells you that. I was really pissed off about it. I was also really intrigued,” she said.

Ford said that since Floyd’s death in May, she has received several emails a day from Black Americans asking how they, too, can make a new life outside the USA.

“Come home, build a life in Ghana. You do not have to stay where you are not wanted forever. You have a choice, and Africa is waiting for you,” Barbara Oteng Gyasi, Ghana’s tourism minister, said during a ceremony last month marking Floyd’s death.

Black Americans, like expatriates of all races and ethnicities, leave the USA temporarily or permanently for different reasons: in search of a better quality of life, for work opportunities, to marry or retire abroad, for tax reasons, for adventure.

Kimberly Springer, a New York-based writer and researcher who spent almost a decade in the United Kingdom, where she taught American studies at King’s College London, said that although “Black people have always traveled,” and “we’ve gone places willingly or unwillingly,” often this travel is connected in some way to a search for an experience that is not tainted by the myriad ways Black Americans encounter discrimination in the USA.

“In America, I feel hyper-visible in ways I didn’t when I lived in the U.K.,” said Springer, 50, noting that although racial inequalities in the U.K., like in the USA, are deep and pervasive, they are connected to a history and tradition – in the U.K.’s case, its former empire – that she doesn’t share. As a foreigner, Springer said, she was afforded a certain amount of insulation from British racism.

“Our racism isn’t as lethal as yours,” said Gary Younge, a professor of sociology at Manchester University in England. Younge, 51, who is Black, spent more than a decade as The Guardian newspaper’s U.S. correspondent.

“In Britain, I don’t generally walk around thinking I might get killed, whereas in America, in some places, that’s not always the case,” he said.

Younge attributed this disparity to the availability in the USA of guns.

Asked whether Black people should confront racism at home, rather than leave, he said, “Why shouldn’t they just live? If a white person leaves America and goes somewhere for work or better opportunities, no one would say to them they need to stay and fight for racial equality. Black people have a double burden of being discriminated against and having to stick around.”

Black Americans have been trying to escape American racism – from segregation to heinous organized violence, such as lynchings – for generations.

There are examples among America’s Black intellectuals, artists and prominent civil rights activists.

Writers James Baldwin and Richard Wright and entertainer Josephine Baker relocated to Paris. Wright and Baker died in France’s capital. Poet Langston Hughes was part of an expatriate community in London. Jazz and blues singer Nina Simone decided to see out her days in France, and after she stopped performing, she never returned to what she called the “United Snakes of America.” Simone also lived in Liberia, Barbados, Belgium, the U.K., the Netherlands and Switzerland. When she died in 2003, her ashes, at her request, were scattered across several African countries.

“I left this country for one reason only. One reason. I didn’t care where I’d go. I might’ve gone to Hong Kong, I



Lakeshia Ford NII OKAI DJARBENG

“Here I don’t have to think of myself as a Black woman and everything that comes with that. Here I am just a woman.”

Lakeshia Ford, 32, who grew up in New Jersey and runs her own communications firm in Accra, Ghana’s capital

might’ve gone to Timbuktu, I ended up in Paris with \$40 in my pocket with the theory that nothing worse would happen to me there than had already happened to me here,” Baldwin said in 1968 on “The Dick Cavett Show.”

A decade prior, actor and singer Paul Robeson, famed for his deep baritone voice, said before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, “In Russia, I felt for the first time like a full human being. No color prejudice like in Mississippi, no color prejudice like in Washington. It was the first time I felt like a human being.”

Yasiin Bey, an American rapper-actor better known by his stage name Mos Def, moved to South Africa because he was fed up with inequality and racism.

“For a guy like me, with five or six generations from the same town in America, to leave America, things gotta be not so good with America,” Bey said in 2013 as he prepared to leave the USA for Cape Town. He was thrown out of South Africa in 2016 for violating its immigration laws. He was detained after trying to leave the country on a “World Passport,” which has no legal status. According to his lawyer, Bey did not want to use his American passport for political reasons.

That same year, as the U.K. voted to leave the European Union and President Donald Trump was elected, there was an uptick in people searching the internet for the term “Blaxit,” according to Springer. If the U.K. could withdraw from the EU – “Brexit” – could Black people, disheartened by racial violence, leave the USA?

“I try not to use the phrase ‘I can’t breathe’ too lightly,” Springer said, referring to the words that became a rallying cry for police brutality protesters and were the last words of Floyd and Eric Garner, a Black man killed in police custody in 2014.

“But I think there is a way in which this country is, in its history and its failure to recognize it and reckon with it honestly, is suffocating,” she said. “I really don’t blame anyone thinks I can’t take this country anymore, I’m leaving, and I’m just not coming back.”

Kambon, 41, an academic in Ghana, said he is never going back to the USA.

He is in the process of renouncing his American citizenship.

He said that after the police in Chicago falsely accused him of concealing a loaded gun in his car, the charges were thrown out by a judge because there was no probable cause for his arrest, and the evidence – obtained illegally – would be not be admissible in court.

“I told myself on the witness stand: I will never allow myself to again be in the jurisdiction of these white people who, on a whim, can decide you’re not going to see your family for the next 10 years, who can decide to throw a felony charge on you on a whim,” he said.

Drayton said she tells her friends to leave if they can. Many want to, she said, but either don’t have the financial means or face other obstacles.

“I’ve been wanting to leave for a long time,” said Drayton’s friend Karla Garcia, 29, in Orlando, Florida. “But it’s difficult as a young divorced mother of a child with special needs to just get up and leave.”

Brown said she is determined to make a life in southern Europe, not least because she wants to own a house and build and pass on wealth. She has a 16-year-old sister in the USA, and she said accumulating “generational wealth” is something that has proved elusive for Black Americans, unlike for many whites.

Her experience is that it will be easier to do this in Spain than in New York, where there are more barriers to financial success, from discrimination in mortgage lending – “red lining” – to access to social welfare services, such as affordable day care.

“It’s like having a few more stepping stones to achieve that,” she said.

Pew Research estimated that the overall average wealth of white American families is at least 10 times larger than that of Black American families.

A Washington Post-Ipsos poll of Black Americans conducted in mid-June found that although they are outraged and frustrated by Floyd’s death, they are optimistic about rising concern from whites and the prospect of improved police treatment.

In Berlin, Baggette has learned to live with his mixed feelings about his adopted homeland. He values the free education and health care his kids receive in Germany. He does not routinely fear for their lives.

Baggette is retired but coaches youth basketball. When a team from Chicago’s South Side visited a few years ago as part of an exchange program, he was shocked to hear from some of the youngsters that one of the things that most impressed them about Germany’s capital was the easy access to fresh fruit, especially strawberries. It was available on most streets in small kiosks. These kids weren’t used to that on the South Side, he thought.

“Being Black in Berlin is a challenge,” he said. “One thing I can say is that when those young kids from Chicago visited us here, well, they felt a certain amount of freedom that I can tell you they don’t feel over there.”

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