



AP Photo/Michael Burke

Homes destroyed by a wildfire are seen from an aerial view in the Keswick neighborhood of Redding, Calif., Friday. Fire crews have made progress against the biggest blaze in California history but officials say the fire won't be fully contained until September.

Flames close in on neighborhoods

LAKE ELSINORE, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters fought to spare homes Friday from a growing Southern California forest fire, a day after flames came perilously close to neighborhoods and destroyed one

house. Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for Orange and Riverside counties as the fire carved its way along ridges in Cleveland National Forest south of Los Angeles.

Some hillsides were allowed to burn under the watchful eyes of firefighters as a way to reduce fuel and make it harder for flames to jump roadways into communities if winds pick up again. Aircraft dropped fire

retardant on flames and homes as people ignoring evacuation orders used garden hoses to spray down their properties when the blaze flared Thursday evening, propelled by 20-mph gusts.

Kavanaugh in memo argued against indicting sitting president

By LISA MASCARO and MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh will begin the day after Labor Day, Republicans said, sparking Democratic objections that they are rushing the process without properly delving into his background.



Kavanaugh

The announcement Friday came amid the release of new documents from Kavanaugh's time on the Kenneth Starr team investigating Bill Clinton. The records reveal his resistance to issuing an indictment of a sitting president. On Christmas Eve 1998, Kavanaugh drafted an "Overall Plan" to colleagues providing his thoughts on bringing the independent counsel office's work to a close and suggesting they inform the attorney general that the findings against Clinton be left to the next president.

"We believe an indictment should not be pursued while the President is in Office," Kavanaugh wrote.

The memo, tucked toward the end of nearly 10,000 pages, provides greater insight into Kavanaugh's views on executive power that are expected to feature prominently in the Senate confirmation hearings. Democrats have warned that Kavanaugh may be unwilling to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's ongoing probe of Russian interference in the

2016 election. On Friday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he hopes to have President Donald Trump's nominee confirmed to replace retired Justice Anthony Kennedy before the new court session begins Oct. 1.

"We're moving right along," McConnell said during a radio interview in Kentucky ahead of the announcement. "He'll get confirmed. It won't be a landslide, but he'll get confirmed."

The Judiciary Committee will hold up to four days of review, with Kavanaugh to begin facing questions on Day 2, Sept. 5, said committee chairman Sen. Chuck Grassley. Kavanaugh's appearance will be followed by testimony from legal experts and people who know the judge.

The White House, which is determined to have Kavanaugh confirmed before the November elections as Republicans aim to deliver on Trump's priorities, applauded the schedule announcement. But Democrats want access to more documents from Kavanaugh's past as a judge and as an official in the George W. Bush administration.

Grassley, R-Iowa, said there's "plenty of time" to review documents but now it's time for Americans "to hear directly" from Kavanaugh.

"He's a mainstream judge," Grassley said. "He has a record of judicial independence and applying the law as it is written."

San Francisco jury backs man who claims Roundup weed killer caused cancer, Monsanto to pay \$289M

By PAUL ELIAS
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco jury on Friday ordered agribusiness giant Monsanto to pay \$289 million to a former school groundskeeper dying of cancer, saying the company's popular Roundup weed killer contributed to his disease.

Dewayne Johnson's lawsuit was the first of hun-

dreds of cases filed in state and federal courts alleging that Roundup causes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which Monsanto denies.

Jurors in state Superior Court agreed the product contributed to Johnson's cancer and the company should have provided a label warning of the potential health hazard. Johnson's attorneys sought and won \$39 million in compensatory damages and \$250

million of the \$373 million they wanted in punitive damages.

"This jury found Monsanto acted with malice and oppression because they knew what they were doing was wrong and doing it with reckless disregard for human life," said Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a member of Johnson's legal team. "This should send a strong message to the boardroom of Monsanto."

Monsanto has denied a link between the active ingredient in Roundup — glyphosate — and cancer, saying hundreds of studies have established that glyphosate is safe.

Monsanto spokesman Scott Partridge said the company will appeal. Partridge said scientific studies and two government agencies have concluded that Roundup does not cause cancer.

BRIEFLY

Stone associate held in contempt in Russia probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — An associate of former Trump campaign adviser Roger Stone was held in contempt of court Friday in a fresh attempt to challenge Robert Mueller's appointment as the special counsel investigating Trump campaign contacts with Russia during the 2016 presidential campaign.

The move also spotlighted a growing focus by Mueller on Stone. Another of Stone's associates, a New Yorker known as the "Manhattan Madam" because she once operated an upscale escort service, was expected to make her first appearance before a grand jury in the case.

Paul Kamenar, the attorney for Stone associate Andrew Miller, whose refusal to appear before the grand jury Friday led him to be held in contempt, argued

after the proceedings that Mueller's appointment is unconstitutional. He asserted that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein did not have the authority to appoint Mueller to lead the investigation into Trump campaign contacts with Russia.

Previous challenges to Mueller's legitimacy have failed. President Donald Trump has sought to undermine the investigation by calling it a "witch hunt" and a "hoax." He has repeatedly insisted, "there was no collusion."

Former staffer's book blasts Trump as bigot, 'dog'

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. (AP) — Former White House staffer Omarosa Manigault Newman claims in a new book that there are tapes of President Donald Trump using racial slurs and that she saw him behaving "like a dog off the leash" at numerous events

he attended without his wife, first lady Melania Trump.

The accusations are among a long list of scandalous claims contained in her new book, "Unhinged," set to come out Aug. 14. The Associated Press purchased an early copy of the memoir, which the White House has already slammed as "riddled with lies and false accusations."

In the book, Manigault Newman, who was a contestant on Trump's "The Apprentice" reality show and later served as a senior adviser to the president, hurls a litany of allegations, painting the president as scattered, self-absorbed, misogynistic and insecure.

Trump, she said she'd concluded after years of defending him, was a bigot.

"I didn't want to believe it," she writes. "I rejected what other people said about him because they didn't know him like I did. I had to go through the pain of witnessing his racism with my own eyes."

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