

AUGUST 2021

VOLUME 11

# We Need To Talk

*A global, student-run newspaper*







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# Current Events

Edited by Barsha Parajuli

## Andrew Cuomo's Sexual Assault Allegations and Resignation

by Afomia Ashebir Mekonnen



### **TW: Sexual assault**

On August 10, 2021, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo resigned from public office after an investigation conducted by the Attorney General of New York which had found that he had sexually harassed 11 women.

But how did it get to this point? How did the man hailed for his daily press briefings and strong leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic have such a speedy fall from grace?

### **Dec. 13, 2020**

Former staffer Lindsey Boylan steps forward to accuse Cuomo of years of sexual harassment. Via a twitter post, Boylan alleged that she would repeatedly “be grilled on [her] work (which was very good) or harassed about [her] looks” and claims that this went on “for years”. Cuomo’s administration dismissed this allegation, calling it “simply not true,” hoping that the news cycle would move on and the public would forget about

the accusation. However, this post led to the coming out of a steady stream of accusers regarding Cuomo’s workplace misconduct.

### **Feb. 24, 2021**

As the voices calling out Cuomo for his behavior grew louder, Boylan released a longer statement via Medium containing more details of Cuomo’s misconduct. Instances listed included but are not limited to Cuomo kissing her on the lips without consent (2018), stating he wanted to play strip poker with her (2017), and Cuomo going out of his way on many occasions to touch her lower back and legs.

### **Feb. 27, 2021**

Just three days later, former aide Charlotte Bennett comes forward to accuse Cuomo of sexual harassment. She alleges that Cuomo asked her uncomfortable questions about her sex life, including asking if “she had ever been with an older man” during a one on one meeting in Cuomo’s private office. Her story is heavily corroborated by family, friends,

and fellow officials in Cuomo's administration. The next day, Cuomo releases a statement saying in part: "I acknowledge some of the things I have said have been misinterpreted as an unwanted flirtation. To the extent anyone felt that way, I am truly sorry about that."

### **Mar. 1, 2021**

New York AG Letitia James is given the green light to begin an investigation into the allegations against Cuomo. The same day, an anonymous third accuser comes forward with allegations that Cuomo made unwanted advances on her in 2019.

### **Mar. 7, 2021**

Two more women come forward with accusations of sexual harassment: Karen Hinton and Anna Liss. Former aide Karen Hinton claimed that Cuomo gave her an "inappropriate" and "unethical" embrace 21 years ago and Former aide Anna Liss stated that Cuomo had asked her if she had a boyfriend, touched her lower back, and kissed her hand without consent. Later, the New York Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker issued statements calling for Cuomo's resignation.

### **Mar. 9, 2021**

A sixth anonymous accuser comes forward, alleging that Cuomo inappropriately touched her at the governor's mansion in 2020. Resignation demands grow as a bipartisan majority of New York's state legislators call for him to step down.

### **Mar. 19, 2021**

Current Cuomo aide Alyssa McGrath comes forward to accuse the governor of looking down her shirt and making suggestive remarks to her and another aide.

### **August 3, 2021**

The Attorney General's office releases the heavily anticipated report. The 165-page report announces that Governor Cuomo sexually harassed 11 current and former aides during his tenure as governor, along with creating a hostile workplace in which these behaviors were normalized.

Later, Cuomo denies any wrongdoing in a pre-recorded message and states that "his attorney has responded to each of the allegations listed in the report" and "the facts are much different from what has been portrayed."

### **Aug. 5, 2021**

The unidentified woman who Cuomo groped in the governor's mansion files a criminal complaint with the county sheriff's office. This is the first direct action taken to punish Cuomo for his actions.

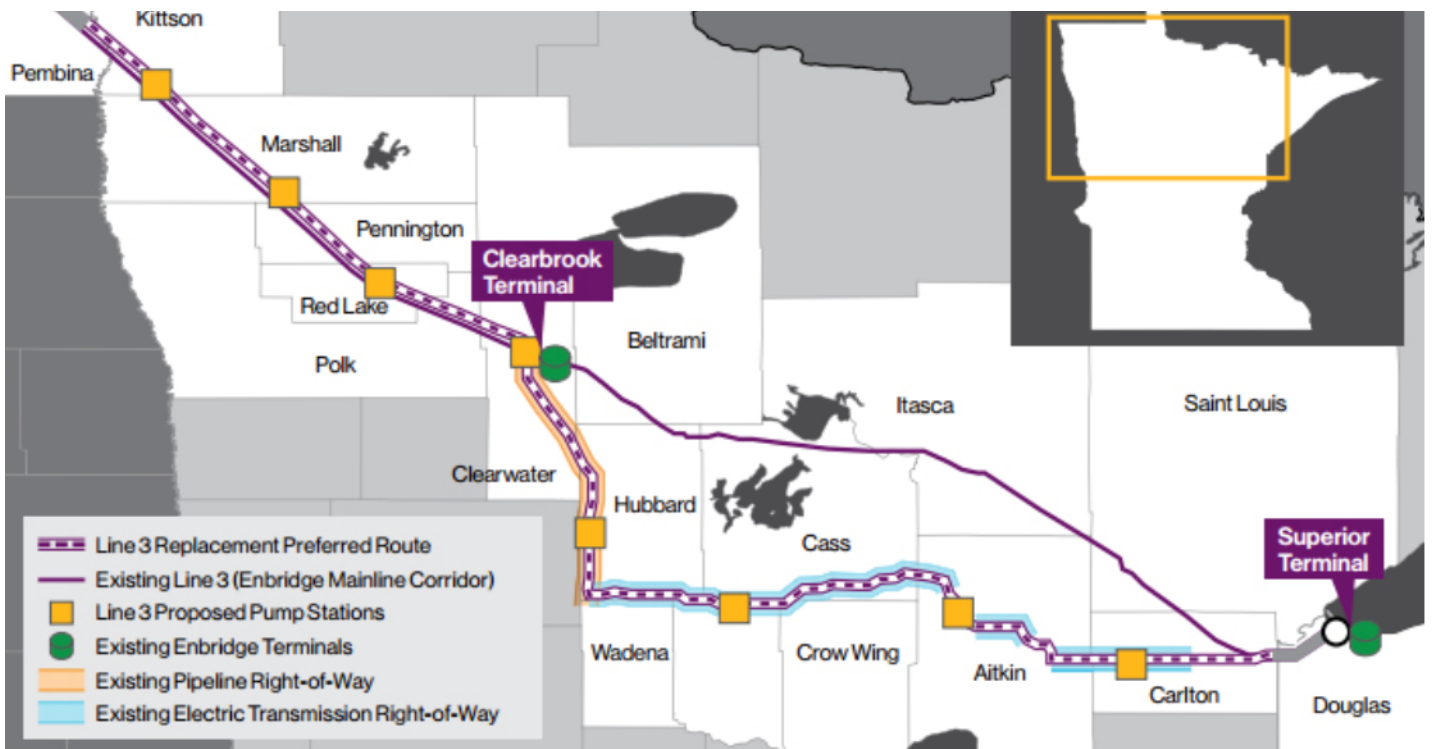
### **Aug. 9, 2021**

The previously unidentified woman who Cuomo groped in the governor's mansion comes forward as Brittany Commisso. In a televised interview, she tells CBS News that Cuomo's hugs and kisses were "not normal, not welcomed, and certainly not consensual". This interview is especially damaging because Commisso has arguably the most serious allegations, including instances of Cuomo reaching under her shirt to grab her breast and grabbing her buttocks.

### **Aug. 10, 2021**

Governor Andrew Cuomo resigns, ending his 10-year tenure as New York's governor in disgrace. In his speech, he makes moves to preserve his legacy, including denying any wrongdoing and emphasizing his achievements as governor. He will officially step down on August 24, and Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul will become New York's first female governor.





## Enbridge's Line 3 Pipeline

Ketevan Gallagher

In March of 1991, an unusual sight could be seen on the frozen Prairie river in Minnesota: pools of oil flowing down the ice and seeping into the river. This was Enbridge's Line 3 spilling 1.7 million gallons of crude oil. Now, indigenous and environmental activists worry that this may happen again. Enbridge, the company that owns Line 3, has plans to replace and expand parts of the Line 3 pipeline to restore its original operating ability.

The Line 3 pipeline runs from Hardisty, Alberta to Superior, Wisconsin, spanning 1,097 miles. Due to safety concerns, the capacity of the pipeline was reduced over time, but in 2014 Enbridge proposed plans to build new pipelines that will restore the line to its historic operating capacity- 760,000 barrels of oil per day. If fully constructed, this would be Enbridge's largest project and one of the longest oil pipelines on the continent.

All new segments of the pipeline have been built except for 337 miles of a 36-inch diameter pipeline which will replace 282 miles of a 34-inch diameter pipeline in Minnesota by using a different route. The company says that this final section in Minnesota is 80% complete, and they are on track to finish the entire project by the end of this year.

This pipeline has faced much opposition from environmental awareness groups and Native American communities. Line 3 will be transporting oil from the tar sands of Alberta. The process of extracting tar sands oil is different from the process of extracting conventional crude oil, and in many ways, it is more environmentally damaging. Converting tar sands oil to gasoline is more difficult in contrast to crude oil due to the process using roughly three times the amount of water that regular oil does. This gasoline emits 15% more carbon dioxide than gasoline made from normal oil, and if it spills, tar sands oil is more difficult to clean up than non-tar sands oil.

Oil is the most commonly spilled substance from pipelines, and environmental activists argue that if the new pipeline is made operational, it is a matter of if, not when, it will spill. Oil spills cause large amounts of damage to the waterways, forests, and wildlife surrounding it, and it would also threaten the food and water resources of indigenous tribes that live in the area. Oil spills also take billions of dollars and large amounts of time and resources to clean.

A project summary report on Line 3 from Enbridge says that “As part of our commitment to the safe and responsible operation of our pipelines, we employ comprehensive preventative measures.” These safety measures include anti-corrosion coating on pipes, pressure testing, and automatic shut-off valves. However, Enbridge has a checkered past related to oil spills. The original Line 3 pipeline has spilled numerous times before, which includes the 1991 spill- the worst inland oil spill in US history. Enbridge also owned the pipeline responsible for the second-largest inland oil spill in US history. This spill occurred in 2010 when over a million gallons of crude oil from Enbridge’s 6B line spilled in waterways in Michigan. It took Enbridge 17 hours to respond to the leak, which raises concerns over whether Enbridge has the capacity to respond to and clean oil spills, and also monitor their pipelines. Environmental and indigenous groups such as the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, the Sierra Club, and Honor the Earth have appealed to courts to repeal the permits granted to Enbridge by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, saying that there was not sufficient demand for the oil the pipeline would carry. However, Minnesota courts have denied their requests.

Many of these groups are also leading protests, and some have taken direct action by protesting on construction sites where pipes are being laid. Over 600 people have been arrested, and police have used tactics such as chemical irritants and rubber bullets to keep protesters from entering Enbridge’s private property. Enbridge has also paid law enforcement \$750,000 for policing the pipeline construction area.

Time is running out for the activists who are trying to stop the pipeline, but there are ways that you can help. The organization Stop Line 3 has petitions and information on ways to get involved. You can find the link to this site and more in the call to action section.



# Spotlight

Edited by Paleesa Kapoor

## Climate Change by Paleesa Kapoor



**“Climate change is no longer some far-off problem; it is happening here; it is happening now.” - Barack Obama**

It may seem insignificant, distant, or less critical than many of the other issues we face. It does not seem to be an immediate risk particularly today, when we face a global pandemic. Climate change, however, has effects that are inescapable, urgent, and threaten our health and safety.

We can not afford to wait to respond any longer. If you care about your health, you should care about climate change, too. Climate change has become a reality much sooner than all the expected possibilities. Climate change is not, as so many people already assume, simply an environmental crisis. It is an incomprehensible threat to the world economy, to health, to agriculture, to stability and protection, to the very land that billions of individuals live on.

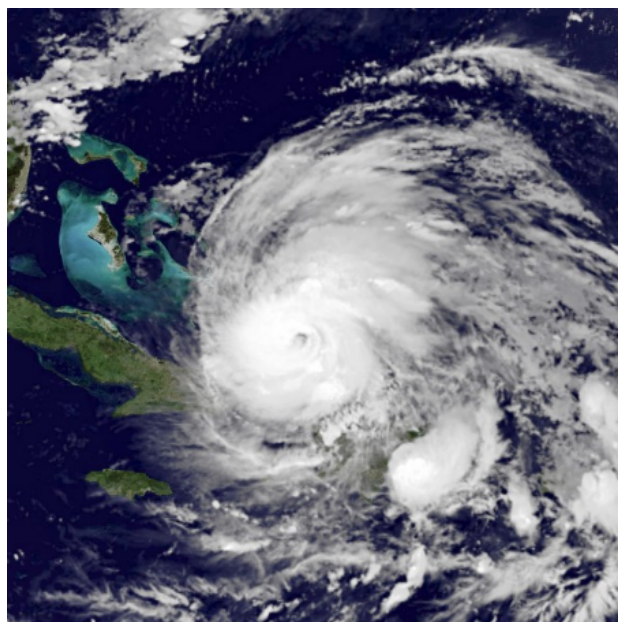
Climate change affects all of us. No nation, whether large or small, developed or underdeveloped, rich or poor, can avoid the consequences of climate change. People worldwide will encounter the effects, from more severe weather and rising food costs, to recreation and decreased opportunities to

enjoy the natural environment. People will feel the many changes to the weather that it triggers including changes in extreme weather events such as heat waves and droughts. There will be more frequent hot days and fewer cold days; longer and more intense heat waves; storms, floods, and droughts will be more severe. Global information concludes that there is an increase of water vapour in our atmosphere. The high moisture can lead to heavier rainfalls. Climate change also leads to an increase in the average global temperature.



If it's a 1.5 degree or 2 degree change, such degrees of warming aren't unnoticeable thresholds. For the planet, any increasing change is worse than the previous one. In both direct and indirect forms, climate change will lead to detrimental health effects. Extreme heat waves and hurricanes are unexpected and can be dangerous. It is more difficult to understand longer-term consequences, such as elevated heart disease, respiratory problems from impaired air quality, and diminished access to clean water and nutritious food. The true magnitude of the health effects of climate change cannot be limited to a single statistic. The world is already a fragile place. We have already been provided all the statistics. What we need to do is wake up and change. Adapting to these impacts in the future would be more complicated and expensive without drastic action now.

"Our problems are man-made, so they may be solved by man," John F. Kennedy put it rather accurately. Although it is evident that society has not been keen to react or even acknowledge the severity of climate change, it is not too late. We can't sit back and be quiet anymore, climate change is happening and our world is demolishing quicker than we think. As citizens of the earth, we are obligated to move the wheel of effort to make our world a healthier and cleaner place to live. It is not challenging to do, we are just required to remain vigilant and motivated. If the present generation struggles to address this challenge as firmly and efficiently as possible, then we will risk our coming generations to an irreversible crisis. We are blessed to live in a beautiful, vibrant, healthy, awe-inspiring world. Our children, and all generations to come, deserve the same. In order to create a world where humans and ecosystems flourish, fighting climate change is fundamental. All individuals can contribute to this cause whether it be big or small, it still counts. As long as we move now, it's not too late to slow down the rate of climate change. The future of the planet is on the line. We can and we will save it.





# Opinion

Edited by Sanjana Mittal

## Black Women in Sports

by Afomia Ashebir Mekonnen

Black women have shown their strength, resilience, and brilliance in every aspect of life they've chosen to participate in. Sports are no exception but with black women's show of greatness has come the shadow of brutal and unnecessary criticism and scrutinization that seems to follow POC everywhere they go.



Being a black woman in sports means having to maneuver through the constant battles of racism and sexism while also battling stereotypes and compartmentalization. This means having to excel and prove yourself as a capable and competent athlete while also having to make yourself just the right amount of black so people can view your success as

an accomplishment for the POC and women and rid the rest of the community of white guilt. They also have to manage to be just white enough where you're viewed as a "non-threatening black" and can be marketed as digestible and provide a new name to submit into "I'm not racist, I was rooting for \_\_\_\_\_"

Black women are celebrated for their accomplishments as long as their accomplishments do not show to be more than what was expected of them. If they surpass the limits set for them, they are put down and ransacked for possible mistakes that would fulfil the already given presumption that the success was not due to skill and ability, and when no such mistake is found they turn and claw for anything else that will subdue the triumph.

When the success is sweet the backlash is bitter. When Gabby Douglas won the Olympic gold medal in 2012, the focus was taken away from the dangling piece of gold

that hung from her neck, as she stood as not only the first African American to win the all-around title but the first American to claim gold medals in the team and all-around events, and towards her hair. She was dragged across social media and even four years later, at the 2016 Olympics people rushed towards their twitter, Instagram, and face book holes, not to comment on her skill and ability as a world class gymnast, but to throw around comments about her hair that are not only racist but dehumanizing as well. What is the most horrifying is these comments were mainly thrown around by black men and women.



Black women in sports are also stripped of their femininity and projected to the world as aggressive. Serena Williams, considered to be the greatest female tennis player of all time, has been subject to baffling instances of blatant racism where she was even compared, in many instances, to a gorilla.



These statements were not only circulated on social media but even on some national programs. There were even some cartoon drawings depicting her as a monstrous, hulking, animal-like figure. These depictions were degrading, dehumanizing, and invalidating on so many terms and Serena Williams and so many others have been victim to these kinds of instances.

Swim caps designed for natural black hair are banned. They are deemed too masculine, too opinionated, their hair too kinky, their nails too long, too fast, too strong, too good, too athletic.

Not woman enough.

Black women are constantly put on a pedestal where thousands of people can pick and prod and dissect them so they can be deemed worthy and feminine and capable and enough for everyone. The light is shone so brightly and angled so perfectly to illuminate the cracks that were painted by every spectator that decides they would rather break them down than build them up. They are criticized at every turn and stripped of their value time and time again but continue to stand resilient and strong and manage to overcome battle after battle. These women don't have to face a different brand of racism and sexism than other black



women in different branches of society, but they do so struggling in soccer fields, track fields, basketball courts, gymnasiums and wherever they're competing. They must fuse together being a black woman and being an athlete while having to deal with thousands of people on the outside telling them they are too much and too little at the same time. They carry the weight of the world's eyes and have to do so with not so much as a grimace or risk being labelled as just another "angry black woman".

They have provided us with icons for thousands of little black girls looking for someone that looks like them who has achieved all the things they wanted for themselves and they deserve more. Serena Williams, Gabby Douglas, Simone Biles, Sha-Carri Richardson, Naomi Osaka, Brianna Mcneal and so many more. Protect Black Women In sports.



## How much privacy do we receive on social media? by Deetya Adhikari

Users of the internet know that they're being tracked by the platforms they use – most notably by Google and Facebook. Although users have some understanding, they do not realize just how little privacy they are entitled to on the internet. The world has become increasingly reliant on the internet especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only exacerbated the problem of a lack of privacy.

The practice of doxing, the releasing of personal information such as address, phone number, even employers, can have a grievous effect on the victims. Their social media presence can be ruined by the hackers – which has more of an impact on famous individuals and influencers – and there will be records of their personal details all over the internet, even if deleted.

Even if users take appropriate safety precautions on social media – updating advanced privacy settings where available and not sharing personal information with

strangers on the internet, among other measures – they are still at risk for data leaks. Deep web hackers are able to break through firewalls and grab your personal information, whether to put it up for ransom or to commit identity theft. It is important to understand that the individual's personal details that were stolen are not the only risk, but also pieces of information that seem mundane, such as Facebook friend lists. That gathered info can also be used to replicate the account if not take it over, and attack the victim's friends, repeating the cycle.

Privacy is limited not only by cyberattackers and outsiders but even by the social media companies themselves. In 2014, a study was conducted on how well Facebook knew you based on what you liked. After just 10 likes, the AI knew you better than a work colleague/acquaintance; it took 70 likes for the computer to know you better than a close friend. Furthermore, at the 150 like mark, the computer knows you better than a sibling or even parent. The algorithm took it



even further, knowing you better than a spouse after 300 likes. The typical user in 2014 had approximately 277 likes, for context. In the past few years, Facebook has expanded their horizons, not only tracking Facebook users' web activity, but non-users as well.

Facebook, in a way, is able to change users' emotions and moods based on what posts it sends their way. In conjunction with Cornell University, Facebook conducted an experiment on whether they could alter the moods of users. If the users are sent more positive emotional content, they are more likely to make positive posts; if they get sent more negative posts, they will more likely make more negative or pessimistic posts.

But what do they do with all this information? Social media are essentially selling users' personal information to advertisers, in a never ending cycle of profit. The advertisers send users personalized, targeted ads using the user's data, making it more likely that the user will buy the advertised product; while the social media company makes money selling the data to the advertisers, continuing the cycle.

Privacy is nonexistent on the internet, which can be terrifying. However, this doesn't mean you should delete your social media presence completely. Keeping personal details off your social media can make a major difference in how safe you are, as well as keeping your advanced privacy settings up to date.

# Art

Edited by Jyotsna Bisariya

## NFTs : The future of digital art by Maitreyee Malla

NFTS (Non-Fungible Tokens) are digital tokens which validate the ownership and authenticity of a virtual file. This media can be anything from a single lettered text to complex and intricately coded artworks. They are the verification of the ownership of virtual intellectual property. The transactions take place with the help of blockchain, a composite technology which keeps record of each transaction between users. It is then shared on a public display ledger encrypted by complex codes and algorithms which makes fraudulent transactions difficult as each and every record/block has to be altered making it highly secure from any sort of hacking. NFTs are marketed on sites like OpenSea and Rarible and the most popular form of payment used to sell and buy these is the cryptocurrency Ether (Ethereum).

NFTs were first introduced in 2012 by Bitcoin in the form of coloured coins which were rarer and more expensive than normal bitcoins. From 2015 to 2016, the pepe frog meme NFTs started being traded, boosting the meme economy and bringing some

attention to the NFTs.



CRYPTOPUNKS FROM NEWS.BITCOIN.COM

NFTs started getting the attention of mainstream media once CryptoKitties, an online game which allowed users to collect and breed a variety of images of 2D cats, was released in 2017. In 2017, Matt Hall and John Watkinson also released CryptoPunks. All 10000 of which were given away for free to people who owned Ethereum wallets. Each CryptoPunk now holds a value of 50 ETH OR 135000 USD on average and are seen as a substantial part of the NFT market.

The NBA Topshot, collectable media files of the highlights of multiple NBA games were

minted as NFTs and released in July 2019, brought in 338 million USD over a span of just 6 months from October 2020 to March 2021.

With the growing usage of digital electronics in everyday use, many artists are going digital as the variety of canvases, palettes and brushes make it more efficient and easier to put their ideas on the screen. Crypto art and digital art are slowly entering the markets of mainstream art. The auction house Christie's collaborated with MakersPlace, an online market of NFTs, to auction the sale of Beeple's 5000-piece collage which sold for 69.3 million USD or 38000 ETH.



OCEAN FRONT BY BEEPLE FROM ARTSTATION.COM





# Call to Action

**<https://www.stopline3.org/#intro>**

Website with information and ways to take action against line 3.

**<https://www.honorearth.org/action>**

Website of an indigenous lead environmental group with information on how to take action against line 3.



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## **Newsletter images:**

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Pictures

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### **Current Events:**

Cicadas

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