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## [Test] Secrets, scandals and nachos

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# DETOUR

An adventure in local news

Friday, March 16, 2018

The weekend is here... and so is the latest dispatch from Detour Beta! A few fans reached out to say they couldn't find our emails. We spent the last week researching why. Turns out a lot of email spam filters act like aggro bar bouncers and toss out anything that looks suspicious. It's a fairly common headache for brand new senders like us until we establish some street cred. To make sure you always see your issue of Detour, add [ashley@detourdetroit.com](mailto:ashley@detourdetroit.com) to your contacts. If you're using Gmail, drag or move any email from us into your Primary folder. Or, open the email and mark it as "not spam." No offense to SPAM, which is legitimately delicious when fried. -Ash & Kate

## SPOTLIGHT

### Secrets, secrets are no fun...

Nothing's more aggravating than being left out in the cold when there's a juicy secret. And Detroit's biggest, fattest secret this season is what exactly was promised to Amazon if the tech giant had committed built its second headquarters in Motown. One might think taxpayers would have the right to know if our local leaders offered billions of dollars in tax credits or agreed to enslave every third-born child to build drones or whatnot. Ha! Not in Metro Detroit!

### Fill in the blanks

The argument for confidentiality is that future businesses pondering a move downtown could see the details and hold Detroit hostage for even more than was offered to Amazon (that, and there's literally zero public relations upside to revealing the details of what many are calling a "corporate welfare plan"). That's

ostensibly why Detroit's Amazon bid team, led by Rock Ventures, asked for the incentives package to be included in a non-disclosure agreement as "trade secrets." After reporter Chad Livengood exposed the NDA, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation said it will no longer grant confidentiality to tax incentive proposals ([Crain's](#)). But that's not a retroactive promise, so it's on Dan Gilbert and Rock Ventures to fill in the blanks about what went down ([Crain's again](#)). Livengood even posted the document with top line numbers of the incentives offered to Amazon that he received through a FOIA request, handily redacted. Guess nobody told the MEDC it was Sunshine Week? ([Facebook](#)).

### **Does it really matter?**

After the spectacle that was Amazon's HQ2 bid process, it seems obvious that if another unicorn company promising tens of thousands of jobs and economic stimulus ever knocks on our door, Detroit is going to come with the red carpet, billions in tax savings and an awe-inspiring poem written by Jessica Moore. But are tax credits for big businesses the best road to Detroit's economic recovery? Judging by the reaction, that's still open for debate. If the region could have a real conversation about the kinds of incentives we want to be on the hook for providing, maybe it would all be easier to swallow. But the real dagger is the sneakiness. In a moment where transparency is everything, it's the part about secrets that drones --er-- drives us crazy. - *Ashley Catherine Woods*.

Here's the document with all the top-line numbers for incentives given to Amazon. Minus, you know, the actual numbers. (Courtesy Chad Livengood).

## **PRO TIP**

When life hands you lemons, be as cool about Twitter jokes as former Detroit Lion Eric Ebron ([Twitter](#)).

## **AU COURANT ITEMS OF SPECULATION**

### **Another MSU fumble?**

Legislation to protect sexual assault victims passed in the state Senate Wednesday -- seems like a pretty obvious victory, with some rare bipartisanship

thrown in. But Michigan State University interim President John Engler is calling foul, using his appearance in the capital Thursday to criticize lawmakers for supporting legislation that he claims damaged settlement talks with Larry Nassar's victims and were driven by attorneys rather than survivors. ([Detroit News](#))

## Engler vs. everybody

Social media blowback was swift:

“Engler lied. I came to [state Sen. Margaret O’Brien (R-Portage)] about these bills, with the research to back it because I knew from years of researching abuse dynamics that these laws were archaic and damaging,” Rachael Denhollander, Nassar’s first public accuser, tweeted. “This is about stopping sexual abuse for us. MSU doesn't share these values.” ([Twitter](#))

Victims attorney John Manly also pushed back, saying that his team has “been begging MSU for mediation for months.” ([Twitter](#))

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley [disputed Engler’s characterization](#), saying that the legislation “does not prevent negotiations -- it makes them possible. Without it, most survivors will likely be steamrolled and never get their day in court. It’s time for MSU to stop making excuses and enter mediation.” ([Twitter](#))

Engler’s critics -- who have been speaking out since he was appointed -- had even more to be angry about Thursday afternoon, when MLive reported that he had secretly met with lawmakers to attempt to stall the bills designed to protect victims. ([MLive](#))

## Scandal doesn’t come cheap

Engler’s main disagreements with the legislation appears to be that it would limit public institutions from receiving immunity from lawsuits and extend the statute of limitations, putting “literally every business in the public sector and the private sector at risk of untold billions of dollars by liability,” he said.

He also claimed students and taxpayers would be on the hook for settlements for Nassar victims, which could add up to tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars ([Freep](#)). John Gallagher dug into potential costs and funding sources back in January, looking at Penn State’s payouts in the Jerry Sandusky scandal for comparison. His sources suggested that putting the expense on students’ ledgers would be a public relations nightmare for MSU, and poor handling of the crisis could drive away donors. ([Freep](#)) There’s a long road ahead for Nassar’s victims: their legal battle is in early stages, and the bills they championed still need to pass in the House. -- *Kate Abbey-Lambertz*

## Go big or go home

The latest proposal for regional transit adds more buses, a few airport routes, park-and-ride lots, commuter rail to Ann Arbor and more... and it won't come cheap. Wayne County Executive Warren Evans' \$5.4 billion, 20-year plan calls for a higher millage than the proposal voters rejected in 2016. And even with more benefits for the suburban communities that have been disinclined to fund transit, Oakland and Macomb officials aren't yet sold. It's looking like a stretch to get buy-in from the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan board in time to get a transit proposal on the November ballot. ([Crain's](#), [Freep](#))

## If you build it...

“When Detroit Sip was conceived, I had no idea that so many positive things were being planned for the area. It was definitely a blessing from God. In the beginning stages before construction really began, I'd sit out front and literally pray for our neighborhood and this business strip in particular—and now we can see just how those prayers were answered.” Jevona Watson, attorney and owner of Detroit Sip coffeehouse at [7240 W. McNichols](#), near the University of Detroit Mercy and the 7 Mile and Livernois commercial district. Future neighbors include the Live 6 Alliance home base, a new restaurant, an \$8M mixed use development called 7.Liv and the Fitzgerald redevelopment ([Crain's](#), [Daily Detroit](#)). Read more of Jevona's story at Reimagining the Civic Commons. ([Medium](#))

## ONE MORE THING

### Detroit's blowing it again, by Alok Sharma

We're going to master the defining technology of the 21st Century—and use it to sell cars? Detroit entrepreneur, data analyst and civic rabble rouser [Alok Sharma](#) of [Sharma Analytics](#) will deliver a wake-up call to the Motor City next Wednesday at Urban Consulate. Here's a preview of what you'll hear.

“I can go to a Cadillac dealership and purchase a vehicle with “Super Cruise” artificial intelligence (AI) today. With this system, the car can drive itself on highways without human interaction. It's a luxury vehicle, sure, but it's not a Lambo supercar, this is a \$75k vehicle. This is quite a feat for the auto industry to pull off, and the AI will get only get smarter (and cheaper) each model year.

My question is: What other applications are there for these AI learnings? What industries could be transformed by this R&D we've conducted? Home appliances? Infrastructure monitoring? Medical diagnostics? The possibilities

are endless, but southeast Michigan (automakers, OEMs, suppliers, bankers, even universities) are too focused on using AI for “moving metal”.

We’re harnessing the “electricity” of the 21st Century to sell hatchbacks.

Thomas Edison knew the lightbulb was the start of things to come, not the end. It’s past time for us to figure this out.” March 21, Urban Consulate ([Facebook](#)).

**Got a hot take? Drop your expert wisdom on the Detour community. Email [ashley@detourdetroit.com](mailto:ashley@detourdetroit.com).**

## WE CAN'T STOP TALKING ABOUT...

**Paging MTV Cribs:** Meet the priest who built himself an insane mansion in Okemos, complete with wine cellar, swimming pool and an elevator. The church is also missing five million dollars. ([Detroit News](#)).

**Why Google searches are not created equal:** “This is where we get into dangerous territory because of the ways in which any marginalized community cannot trust that the kind of information that comes back about them will be true, or that it hasn’t been highly optimized towards some other purpose, like pornography. So what happens if you’re in a minority group that doesn’t have the resources or the numbers to shape those searches?” ([Color Lines](#))

**Milestone:** Detroit is about to clear its rape kit backlog, a major achievement in Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy’s quest to get justice for victims. But relying on rape kits to solve sex crimes can have some troubling consequences: “While treating the body as a crime scene is helpful if you want to reconstruct the assault after the fact, it can also be incredibly dehumanizing and traumatic for sexual assault survivors. ... It puts an unfair burden on survivors to perform in the midst of one of their most vulnerable moments.” ([Splinter News](#))

**A scholar’s a-ha moment in a Metro Detroit classroom leads to some groundbreaking research on code-switching and literacy:** “A new insight of [Julie] Washington’s might offer a new path forward, however. In presenting code-switching lessons as a way to ward off catastrophic reading failure, she says, advocates have failed to convey the upsides of speaking African-American English. In a recent paper, Washington points to research showing that fluent speakers of two dialects might benefit from some of the cognitive advantages that accrue to speakers of two languages. She hopes that this line of thinking might at last persuade teachers and parents alike to buy in.” ([The Atlantic](#))

**Keeping up with the Kardashians:** Vogue “essentially confirms” Kendall Jenner is still dating Detroit Piston Blake Griffin after she dialed in for the interview from Michigan on Valentine’s Day. “I’m happy,” she finally admits. “He’s very nice. I have someone being very nice to me.” ([Vogue](#))

**Here’s your comeback...** When somebody trashes “kids today” for walking out of school to protest guns. The Michigan’s Past Twitter account has the details of the 1946 Port Huron student walkout. Call it a time-honored Michigan tradition ([Twitter](#)).

**Out of the doghouse:** “News” that Big Sean had cheated on girlfriend Jhene Aiko with former Pussycat Dolls member Nicole Scherzinger took over Twitter on Tuesday. But Jhene called the rumors “fan fiction” and said the two are still going strong. Which is a relief, considering she has a tattoo of Big Sean’s face on her arm. ([US Weekly](#))

**Remember that time Chamillionaire** felt the wrath of Twitter for offering to help Jorge Garcia, the Michigan man who was deported to Mexico after 30 years living in the U.S.? Whether you do or not, the rapper-slash-angel investor’s candid response and thoughts on relationships between minority communities are well worth a listen. ([Latino USA](#); Freep reporter Niraj Warikoo’s [tweet](#) that started it all)

## OUI OUI SAY YES TO THESE FINE THINGS

### Candy Girl

Mark Kurlyandchik broke the news that Chef Kate Williams (Lady of the House) will be creating the bar snack menu for the the Siren Hotel's delectable upcoming lounge, The Candy Bar ([Freep](#)). Williams will also helm the hotel’s all-day second-floor restaurant, Karl’s. Expect the hotel and Candy Bar to open soon in the Wurlitzer Building downtown.

In the name of Friday and bar snacks, Chef Kate answers a few of Detour’s burning questions, edited slightly for clarity.

Q: How will the menu at Candy Bar compare to Lady of the House?

A: “Menu will be more casual but same attention to detail and a lot of crossover.”

Q: Will [Ryan Gosling's face](#) be a future partner of The Candy Bar?

A: “No plans for Ryan Gosling yet but you never know! There's a lot of time, lol.”

Q: If you seriously tell me your fave late night bar snack, I want to publish it.

A: “The chicken nachos from [Detroit Beer Company](#). Hands down.”

### **Detour’s official stance on nachos is botanas > tachos > nachos > we’re so hungry**

We’re practicing our Charleston for the Freep Film Festival’s Roaring ‘20s gala at the DIA on Saturday, April 14, to benefit the DIA and Detroit Film Theatre. Detroit’s annual documentary film festival is shaping up to be the bees’ knees. [Gala tickets here](#).

Our dream collab come to life: David Byrne x Detroit School of Arts choir = magic. ([YouTube](#))

This Saturday, feel the power of Black Women Rock, a celebration of feminism, #blackgirlpower and creative autonomy, all wrapped into a powerhouse stage show at the Wright Museum. (Joyous writeup over at [Metro Times](#)). [Tickets here](#).

Who’s hibernating? We were delighted to see the flirtation on display last weekend between the Detroit Zoo’s hottest polar bear couple: newcomer Suka, 5 and Nuka, 13.

Celebrating women and fabulous hair: The “Empowered Women, Empower Women” afternoon features bites, drinks and mini blowouts. Saturday, March 25 at Detroit Blows. [RSVP via Facebook](#).

TFW you read all the way to the bottom of the email and feel like you've already achieved something this morning. #goals, amirite? Help your friends increase their sense of self-worth by subscribing to Detour at [DetourDetroiter.com](#).

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