



# One year later, assassination attempt remembered

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# Illegal Chinese vapes funneled into U.S.



The supply chain ferrying illegal Chinese-made vapes into the United States mostly operates in plain sight. PHOTOS BY CBP/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

## Analysis finds billions of dollars in imports unaccounted for

Emma Rumney, Kaylee Kang and Tom Polansek  
REUTERS

CHICAGO – From an office a 15-minute drive from Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, one small firm helped import millions of unauthorized Chinese-made vapes last year alone, forming a key link in the supply chain feeding U.S. demand for illegal e-cigarettes.

In a little over four years, the firm, a customs brokerage run by a man named Jay Kim, became a go-to broker for the Chinese vape industry. The firm worked on 60% of all shipments of vapes and vape parts from China to the United States in 2024 registered by the Food and Drug Administration, according to a Reuters analysis.

“A lot of them have FDA authorization,” Kim said in an interview in his office in April, referring to the vape shipments his firm handled.

However, FDA data on imports into the U.S. of FDA-regulated goods such as tobacco products or medicines showed the products Kim’s firm helped bring into the United States included unauthorized brands like Lost Mary and Geek Bar.

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Unauthorized Chinese-made vapes were seized in a raid outside of Chicago by members of the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

# TikTok prepares separate U.S. app

Questions remain over future of platform with 170M American users

Krystal Hu  
REUTERS

NEW YORK – TikTok is preparing to launch a standalone app for U.S. users that is expected to operate on a separate algorithm and data system from its global app, laying the groundwork for a potential sale orchestrated by President Donald Trump, according to people familiar with the matter.

Over the past several months, TikTok employees have been working under tight deadlines to build a new, U.S.-specific version of TikTok by transferring and duplicating the application’s codebase – including AI models, algorithms, features, and user data – from the global platform, current employees at the company, who requested anonymity while discussing private matters, told Reuters.

The move could open the door to resolving years of debate over whether the company would share what is considered the crown jewel of the ByteDance-owned short video-sharing platform: the recommendation algorithm powering the Chinese-owned platform, which has been at the center of the U.S.-China technology standoff.

The initiative, known internally as “M2,” has a September deadline, and could represent the biggest technical break between TikTok’s U.S. operations and its international business. The change is expected to impact how 170 million U.S. users access global content and how non-U.S. creators make money on the platform.

The new U.S.-only app is designed to function independently, similar to Douyin, the version of TikTok available exclusively in mainland China. Users from outside the United States will not find the American version in their app store, sources said.

Technical details of the upcoming U.S. app are reported here for the first time. Information first reported on the planned launch of the U.S. TikTok app.

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# Reports: Adviser unloaded Trump stock

Move came just one day before tariff announcement

Suhail Bhat  
USA TODAY

Dan Scavino had months to sell off up to \$5 million worth of Trump Media stock after he joined President Donald Trump’s administration as a deputy chief of staff in January.

But the top Trump adviser picked April 1, the day before Trump announced sweeping tariffs, to make the sale, ac-

cording to disclosure reports obtained by USA TODAY.

After markets closed on April 2, Trump announced tariffs on imports from countries worldwide. Markets plunged after the announcement, dropping 12% by April 9, when Trump paused the tariffs. Trump Media stock fell 11%.

The disclosure filings also show that Sergio Gor, director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, sold

Trump Media securities valued between \$15,001 and \$50,000 on March 27, just days before the tariffs were announced.

In response to USA TODAY’s questions about the timing of the divestments, White House assistant press secretary Taylor Rogers said, “White House senior staff, including Deputy Chief of Staff Scavino and PPO Director Gor, fully comply with the executive branch ethics rules, attending required

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Trump adviser Dan Scavino picked April 1, the day before President Trump announced sweeping tariffs, to sell Trump Media stock. JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

