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# The New York Times

**THE WEATHER**  
Today, sunshine, a few clouds, high 77. **Tonight**, clear to partly cloudy, light wind, low 61. **Tomorrow**, a mixture of clouds and sunshine, high 78. Weather map appears on Page B10.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

## OFFICIALS MOUNT HUNT FOR KILLER IN KIRK SHOOTING

### IMAGES ARE RELEASED

#### Vance Flies to Utah — Trump Will Give Ally Medal of Freedom

This article is by **Jack Healy**, **Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs** and **Thomas Fuller**.

OREM, Utah — Grainy images of a slim figure climbing a staircase. An old-model bolt action rifle recovered in a wooded area. And a footprint.

Investigators on Thursday said they were piecing together these clues and others in the hunt for the killer of Charlie Kirk, the conservative social media star and close ally of President Trump who was fatally shot on Wednesday as he was addressing a crowd at a university in Utah.

Two images of what investigators described as a person of interest were released on Thursday showing a person in a black shirt, a baseball cap and dark sunglasses.

The killing of Mr. Kirk at the campus of Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, brought already ruptured political discourse in the United States to a breaking point, with politicians canceling events out of fear for their safety and multiple right-wing voices evoking a partisan “war.”

As a measure of Mr. Kirk’s influence in the Trump administration, Vice President JD Vance and his wife, Usha Vance, flew to Salt Lake City on Thursday to meet with Mr. Kirk’s family and close friends. Mr. Kirk’s casket was to be flown on Air Force Two to Phoenix, according to an official familiar with the matter.

Mr. Kirk, 31, lived in Scottsdale, Ariz., outside Phoenix.

President Trump said on Thursday that he would award Mr. Kirk a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, at a ceremony in the days ahead.

A trailblazer in the new Christian right and a divisive star of conservative politics, Mr. Kirk was shot in the neck by an assailant who university officials say was perched on a building around 150 yards away.

The suspect “appears to be of college age,” Beau Mason, the commissioner of Utah’s Department of Public Safety, told reporters on Thursday morning.

Teams of officers scoured the suburban neighborhood near the

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**SHAPING A MOVEMENT** Charlie Kirk mobilized young voters for the right. Obituary. **PAGE A16**

**SEEN AS A MARTYR** Some believe that the right-wing activist died “for something greater.” **PAGE A13**



VINCENT ALBAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

### A City Remembers

Firefighters at a reflecting pool near where family members read the names of those killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Others mourned privately. **PAGE A18.**

## Fears of Growing Tolerance for Political Violence

This article is by **Richard Fausset**, **Ken Bensinger** and **Alan Feuer**.

Even before the assassination of Charlie Kirk, an influential right-wing activist, there were signs of a looming political crisis. Rising polarization and the coarsening of public discourse left little room for shared understanding. Acts of violence, targeting figures on the left and the right, had begun piling up.

But the killing of Mr. Kirk on a Utah college campus on Wednesday — shortly after he began speaking to a young crowd on a sunny afternoon — raises the possibility that the country has entered an even more perilous phase.

On social media, it was easy to find left-wing posters reveling in Mr. Kirk’s death and suggesting he got what he deserved. On the right, initial expressions of grief and shock were overtaken by open calls for political reckoning and vengeance. There were ominous proclamations that the country was on the brink of civil war — or should be.

The outbursts worried experts, who warned that Americans’ tolerance for politically motivated attacks has been growing at a striking pace.

“We’re basically a tinderbox of

### Divided Nation Teeters on a Perilous Edge

a country,” said Robert Pape, a political science professor at the University of Chicago who has been conducting regular polls to measure attitudes toward political violence since supporters of President Trump attacked the Capitol



NIKI CHAN WYLIE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

“We’re basically a tinderbox of a country,” said Robert Pape, a political science professor at the University of Chicago.

on Jan. 6, 2021. “We are seeing more radicalized politics and more support for violence than at any point since we’ve been doing these studies in the past four years.”

The shooting of Mr. Kirk, 31, was captured from multiple angles on video; gruesome footage of blood spurting from his neck quickly went viral.

A few days earlier, many American

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## Putin’s Drones Issue Warning To Kyiv’s Allies

By **STEVEN ERLANGER**

BERLIN — The flock of Russian drones that entered Poland from Belarus on Tuesday night and Wednesday was a sharp reminder of how easily the war

in Ukraine could set Europe ablaze.

Europe is a continent already on edge. Russia is militarizing, spending nearly 7 percent of its gross domestic product on the military and training schoolchildren in basic martial skills. There is widespread uncertainty about precisely what President Trump’s commitment to Ukraine, NATO and European security really means.

Polish, Ukrainian and many Western officials believe the Russian drone barrage was intentional, although Russia sent conflicting messages about that, and the top general of its ally Belarus said the drones had veered off course. In any case, however, Russia got important intelligence for the future, testing and revealing NATO’s readiness and responses to any incursion.

Russia also sent a reminder to European leaders that their idea of sending troops to Ukraine as a security guarantee against Russian intervention would be very risky, given that any attack on them could also be put down by Moscow to errant munitions.

NATO said it was investigating whether the Russian drones were deliberately sent into Poland. But Mark Rutte, the secretary general, said Russia’s intentions were beside the point. “It is absolutely reckless,” he said. “It is absolutely dangerous.”

With Mr. Trump downgrading American financial and military support for Ukraine, President

Continued on Page A8

## JUSTICES CONVICT BRAZIL EX-LEADER

### Bolsonaro Sentenced to 27 Years in Coup Plot

By **ANA IONOVA**  
and **JACK NICAS**

BRASILIA — Brazil’s Supreme Court on Thursday convicted former President Jair Bolsonaro of overseeing a failed conspiracy to overturn the 2022 Brazilian election in a coup plot that sought to disband courts, empower the military and assassinate the president-elect.

Four of the five justices weighing the case voted to convict Mr. Bolsonaro and seven co-conspirators, including his running mate, defense minister and Navy commander, in a forceful rebuke by one of the very institutions the men sought to overthrow.

Mr. Bolsonaro, 70, was sentenced to 27 years and three months in prison, though his lawyers are likely to request house arrest because of his health problems.

The conviction is a landmark ruling for Latin America’s largest nation. In at least 15 coups and coup attempts with links to the military since Brazil overthrew its monarchy in 1889, Thursday marked the first time the leaders of one of those plots have been convicted.

It also could deal a definitive blow to one of Latin America’s most important and influential political figures. Mr. Bolsonaro galvanized a right-wing movement that transformed Brazil into a more polarized and, in some ways, conservative nation — but his conviction now leaves the right without a clear leader.

At the same time, the ruling will very likely escalate the conflict between Brazil and the United

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## College Campuses Were a Conservative Firebrand’s Workshop

By **SABRINA TAVERNISE**  
and **ALYCE McFADDEN**

Charlie Kirk did not have to attend college — or even believe it was worthwhile — to attract fervent followings on campuses throughout the country. Widely considered liberal bastions, campuses were Mr. Kirk’s primary work space, and he arrived with a message of conservatism.

He found young people navigating a maelstrom of political and

cultural forces that sometimes caused extreme turbulence on university grounds. His clear, if occasionally caustic, answers to the country’s most vexing problems cut through, particularly for young men coming of age at a time of social isolation when lives are increasingly lived online.

“It’s kind of scary to say what you believe in, especially in this cancel culture,” said Porter LaFeber, 22, a medical student at Utah Valley University who was at an event on Wednesday where

### A Welcoming Space for Right-Leaning Men

Mr. Kirk was killed. “Charlie Kirk seemed like he just went totally above that. He kind of gave a voice to the people that were maybe a little bit scared.”

“He gave me the confidence to be able to believe what I believe,” Mr. LaFeber added.

The topic of trans rights was particularly fraught, Mr. LaFeber said. As a Christian, he did not always think he could say what he actually thought about the issue.

Mr. Kirk would arrive at colleges ready for rhetorical combat, willing to engage on the thorniest topics, from abortion rights to race. He railed against trans rights. He espoused traditional family values, like prioritizing marriage for men and women and having children. He argued that

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### Fake Reviews Pose Real Threat

Small businesses are being asked to pay up or be smeared by fake negative posts online about their companies that drive down their ratings. **PAGE A17**

BUSINESS B1-5

### Ban Looms for Coveted Drones

Farmers, builders and police officers use the ones made by DJI, a Chinese company. President Trump and his allies want to stop all imports. **PAGE B1**

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### Now Batting: Native Americans

The Native Nations program, founded by the former pitcher D.J. Carrasco, fielded an all-Native American team in the Babe Ruth World Series. **PAGE B6**

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### The Personal and the Political

In “Lines of Belonging,” on the 40th anniversary of MoMA’s New Photography series, artists from three continents find ties that bind. **PAGE C1**

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### The Editorial Board

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