



DAVID GUTTENFELDER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The spot where federal agents killed Alex Pretti last week in Minneapolis. “I hope that Alex’s story can catalyze change,” a friend said.

# Pretti’s Loved Ones Call Government’s Narrative ‘Reprehensible’

This article is by Talya Minsberg, Corina Knoll and Julie Bosman.

MINNEAPOLIS — He was a calm presence amid hospital chaos. A mentor who taught kindness and patience to younger friends and colleagues. A singer with a knack for dancing. A bicyclist who treasured the beauty of Minnesota.

Over the weekend, the family, co-workers and friends of Alex Pretti, who was killed by immigration agents in a confrontation after he was apparently filming them, remembered his life, even

as the circumstances of his death were debated on the national stage.

They shared photos of the Alex they knew: a smiling, bearded Mr. Pretti in the powder-blue scrubs he wore at his job as an intensive-care nurse at the Veterans Affairs hospital, an outdoors lover posing with his mountain bike on a wooded trail, and a student wearing a green cap and gown as he sang a solo at his high school graduation in Green Bay, Wis.

And they denounced what they saw as smear campaigns in the aftermath of Mr. Pretti’s death.

## Seeing Efforts to Sully Man Who Sought to Make a Difference

Within hours of the killing by federal agents on a Minneapolis street, Trump administration officials labeled Mr. Pretti a “would-be assassin” and asserted, with no evidence, that he had committed an act of “domestic terrorism.”

Through their own shock and grief, people who knew him struggled to rise above the lies and insults, they said, to describe who he was.

Rory Shefchek, a friend from high school who now lives in Madison, Wis., said he hoped that Mr. Pretti would be remembered as the person he knew.

“He was a helpful, kind guy,” Mr. Shefchek said. “He was a confident, diligent and respectful person throughout his life. I hope that Alex’s story can catalyze change, as someone who believed in doing the right thing.”

Of the cellphone footage of Mr. Pretti, he said, “There’s only so much they can handle before bad things start to happen.”

Mr. Hagelsieb’s comments reflect a growing sense of fear, frustration and disillusionment among some current and former immigration officials at the department, which is leading Mr. Trump’s push to arrest and deport millions of people. In interviews with The New York Times, more than 20 of them expressed anxieties that the administration was sending federal agents into situations in Minneapolis and other major cities that were increasingly dangerous for them and the civilians they encountered. They said that long hours, arrest quotas and public violence were taking a significant toll on morale.

Many also worried that the fallout would irreparably damage how the public perceived the two main homeland security agencies involved in Mr. Trump’s crackdown, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Border Patrol, hurting long-term recruitment and retention. Several said that they worried that Democrats would draw on voter outrage to shut down ICE, which has been the most publicly visible arm of the immigration operation, if they returned to power.

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## Economic Fear Running Deep, Times Poll Says

This article is by Lisa Lerer, Ruth Igielnik and Camille Baker.

Americans are deeply pessimistic about their economic future, driven by financial anxiety among all but the oldest Americans and by a widespread belief that a middle-class lifestyle is out of reach for most people, a New York Times/Siena poll found.

While a majority of people said that they could afford basics like rent, gas and groceries, most said they worry about the costs, and there was a pronounced sense that it has become more difficult, if not nearly impossible, to get ahead in America today.

Majorities of voters said they do not feel confident in their ability to pay for housing, retirement and health care, all traditional staples of a middle-class lifestyle. Separately, more than half said housing and education are now so expensive that both have become unaffordable.

Those rising costs have shifted perceptions of America as a place of upward economic mobility dominated by a comfortable middle class. Two-thirds of voters said they now think a middle-class lifestyle is out of reach for most people, and 77 percent say it has gotten harder to achieve than a generation ago.

The economic worries persist across geographic, gender and racial lines. The only voters who seem less stressed economically are those over age 65, who express far fewer concerns about costs.

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JACKIE MOLLOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Pedro, 2, and his mother, Ana Valoy, look down at striking nurses from his hospital in New York.

# For 2-Year-Old, Nurse Strike Is Scary and Lonely

By JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN

Pedro, age 2, has lived in a hospital almost half his life. He needs a new heart. Some days, he used to play peekaboo with the nurses. He covered his face, and the nurses who cared for him for months rushed over and acted surprised, to his delight.

No one rushes over anymore when Pedro pretends to hide. The nurses he knows are on strike, walking a picket line outside the hospital in New York City. And the new nurses — brought in by the hospital during the walkout — are temporary hires who

## Waiting for Heart, and for His Care Team

don’t know Pedro.

He is one of several children who live in a pediatric cardiology unit on the sixth floor of the children’s hospital at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia. When nearly 15,000 nurses went on strike Jan. 12 at several of the city’s largest hospitals, Pedro’s nurses were among them.

The walkout has sent a jolt through New York’s health care

system. Elective surgeries were canceled. Some patients were transferred to hospitals unaffected by the strike. And a few thousand travel nurses were hired on weeklong contracts to do the jobs of the striking health care workers. The hospitals have insisted that they are running smoothly and that patient care has not suffered.

But the strike has profoundly affected the long-term patients who live in hospitals and the nurses who care for them, sometimes for months and years on end. It has proved especially be-

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# Trump, Under Pressure, Retreats From Smears In Minneapolis Killing

## Morale Sinks at ICE and Border Patrol

This article is by Nicholas Ne-hamas, Hamed Aleaziz, Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Alexandra Berzon.

Oscar Hagelsieb spent nearly 25 years as an immigration officer and special agent, proud of his work enforcing federal laws.

But watching the chaos unfolding in Minneapolis, and the fatal shooting of a U.S. citizen there on Saturday, Mr. Hagelsieb said he felt anger and despair at how the Trump administration was deploying his former agency.

“You’re not addressing the problem by throwing a 500-pound gorilla into these inner cities,” said Mr. Hagelsieb, 52, who said he voted three times for President Trump and retired from the Department of Homeland Security in 2023. “It’s completely unfair to the agents who have been put in this position.”

“They’re causing chaos, and unfortunately it’s costing lives,” he added. “There’s only so much they can handle before bad things start to happen.”

## Change in Command for a Crackdown

By LUKE BROADWATER and DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON — Faced with a broad outcry over the killing of a protester on Saturday in Minneapolis, the White House on Monday pulled a top border official from the city and tried to distance President Trump from the response of his most senior officials, who had immediately characterized the man fatally shot by federal agents as a “domestic terrorist” who was “brandishing” a gun, before video evidence undercut their charges.

Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, notably did not defend the language of White House officials, including Stephen Miller, the deputy chief of staff, and Kristi Noem, the home-



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Memorial tributes to Alex Pretti in Minneapolis on Sunday.

land security secretary, who were the most vocal in spreading false accusations against the victim, Alex Pretti. Mr. Pretti was shot roughly 10 times by immigration agents after he was apparently filming them with his camera.

He was licensed to carry a gun in Minnesota, but video from several angles shows he never pulled one, and his hands were visible as he was shot in the back.

The administration on Monday was planning to move Gregory Bovino, a Border Patrol official whose harsh tactics have drawn sharp criticism, out of the city, according to two officials with knowledge of the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity [Page A11]. Several other Border Patrol agents were ex-

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**REACTION** The Trump administration raced to shape its narrative around the killing even as conflicting video footage emerged. PAGE A10

**ANXIETY** Parts of Minneapolis are carrying on, but the crackdown’s clashes and killings are at the top of everyone’s mind. PAGE A13

# Israel to Reopen Gaza Crossing As Last Hostage Body Is Found

By DAVID M. HALBFINGER and AARON BOXERMAN

JERUSALEM — Israel said on Monday that it would reopen the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt within days for travelers on foot, a move that would allow Palestinians who fled the enclave during the two-year war to return home for the first time.

Aid officials said they hoped that the reopening of the border crossing would also allow them to evacuate those in Gaza who need medical care abroad — thought to number more than 18,000 people, according to the World Health Organization.

In a social media post early Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said that the border crossing, near the city of Rafah, would reopen after the completion of a search in Gaza for the remains of the last captive yet

to be returned to Israel.

Later on Monday, the Israeli military announced that it had at last found the remains of the captive — Master Sgt. Ran Gvili, a police officer shot during the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023 — after months of searches in Gaza [Page A5].

Israel agreed to allow the Rafah crossing to reopen as part of the cease-fire deal struck in October. But Israeli leaders demanded that Hamas first return the remains of all dead Israelis and foreign citizens in Gaza.

Now, with Mr. Gvili’s body back in Israel, that mission was complete.

Israel’s decision to reopen the border — where both Israel and Egypt are expected to impose

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Stores are seeing more foot traffic as consumers look for ways to stretch their dollars as far as possible. PAGE B1

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A young woman’s mission of being rejected 1,000 times has received a big thumbs-up on social media. PAGE C1

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The Seattle Seahawks took right away to quarterback Sam Darnold, who put his team in the Feb. 8 title game against New England. PAGE B6

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**An Antarctic Welcome**

A very sociable penguin decided to make friends with scientists participating in an expedition to study Antarctica’s fastest melting glacier. PAGE D3

