



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Great Empty

They are the places that usually teem with humanity. And even in this void, their humanity prevails. A special section.

Trump Weighs
A Quarantine,
Then Retreats

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR and ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — President Trump said Saturday night that he would not impose a quarantine on New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but would instead issue a “strong” travel advisory for the region to be enacted by the governors of the three states.

Mr. Trump made the announcement on Twitter just hours after telling reporters that he was considering a quarantine of the area in an effort to limit the spread of the virus to Florida and other parts of the country, a move that would have been a drastic exercise of federal power to further restrict travel by millions of Americans.

Mr. Trump had offered no details about how his administration would enforce a ban on movements in and out of the three northeastern states, including the country’s most populous city, and the idea drew swift condemnation. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York called it a “declaration of war on states,” and Gov. Ned Lamont of Connecticut said it could cause confusion and panic.

The president appeared to heed those warnings, abruptly abandoning a proposal that he had floated with no notice on Saturday morning, once again subjecting the country — and, in particular, people in the northeast — to mixed messages about what his administration believed was necessary to defeat the dangerous pathogen.

Public health experts warned that even flirting with the idea of a travel ban for one of the most populated parts of the country was

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TRACKING AN OUTBREAK

SWEDEN The nation is still open while its Scandinavian neighbors have shut their borders. PAGE 4

OLYMPICS The Summer Games seem likely to begin on July 23, 2021. SPORTSSUNDAY, PAGE 2

Ambulance Calls Inundate America’s Epicenter

By ALI WATKINS

The first of many calls that night involved a 24-year-old man who had a fever, body aches and a cough that sounded like a cement mixer.

While the Brooklyn paramedics took the man’s temperature — 103 degrees — they noticed frightening vitals that hinted at coronavirus: A critically low level of oxygen was flowing into his otherwise clear lungs, while his heart thumped with the intensity of a marathon runner’s. He was taken to the nearest hospital.

Then almost immediately came the next call: a 73-year-old man with symptoms similar to the young man’s. They took him to the hospital, too.

“It’s all a war zone,” one of the paramedics said.

Days later, another paramedic,

New York’s Paramedics
Have to Decide Who
Gets Left Behind

Phil Suarez, was dispatched to two homes in Manhattan’s Washington Heights neighborhood, where entire families, living in cramped apartments, appeared to be stricken with the virus.

“I’m terrified,” said Mr. Suarez, who has been a paramedic in New York City for 26 years and had assisted in rescue efforts during the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks and later served in the Iraq war. “I honestly don’t know if I’m going to survive. I’m terrified of what I’ve already possibly brought home.”

Even as hospitals across New York become inundated with coro-

navirus cases, some patients are being left behind in their homes because the health care system cannot handle them all, according to dozens of interviews with paramedics, New York Fire Department officials and union representatives, as well as city data.

In a matter of days, the city’s 911 system has been overwhelmed by calls for medical distress apparently related to the virus. Typically, the system sees about 4,000 Emergency Medical Services calls a day.

On Thursday, dispatchers took more than 7,000 calls — a volume not seen since the Sept. 11 attacks. The record for amount of calls in a day was broken three times in the last week.

Because of the volume, emergency medical workers are making life-or-death decisions about who is sick enough to take to

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Driving the Long Haul, and Sensing a Slowdown

By JOHN BRANCH

Like so many other long-haul truckers, pumping wares of a gasping economy through the arteries of the nation’s highway system, Darrell Woolsey sees the changing landscape through his windshield.

Self-isolated in the cab of his 2016 Freightliner, a twin mattress behind him and the world out front, Mr. Woolsey moves from one load to the next, one truck stop to another, a game of dot-to-dot to keep business churning.

In the past two weeks, as the coronavirus spread across the country and forced most everyone into hiding, Mr. Woolsey picked up recycled plastic from Jack Daniel’s in Tennessee and delivered it to Trex, maker of composite decks, in Virginia. He carried massive steel buckets for Bobcat excavators from North Dakota to Georgia. He hauled rolls of brown paper from Alabama to Texas, radiator coils for furnaces and air-conditioners from Virginia to Iowa.

He wonders if the truckload of trees he picked up at a Tennessee nursery and delivered to five Home Depots in Minnesota and North Dakota were sold and planted before the storm of coronavirus hit.



TERRY RATZLAFF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Darrell Woolsey, who drives a truck with his Lhasa apso, Rusty, by his side, is staying on the road as others wait out the virus.

For now, he will keep on trucking, rumbling through these times in a diesel-powered cocoon of glass and steel, a Lhasa apso named Rusty by his side, Clorox wipes on the dash. He and other truckers are bringing the goods so the rest of us can stay put.

Mr. Woolsey does not know when he will go home to Cheyenne, Wyo., where he has a wife and three children.

“I’m quarantined, even though I’m moving around,” he said. “So I might as well keep working, as long as I can.”

Truckers are already familiar with the type of self-isolation now facing millions of Americans —

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TESTING BLUNDERS
COST VITAL MONTH
IN U.S. VIRUS FIGHT

Flawed Kits, Red Tape and Leadership
Failures Blinded Nation to Threat

This article is by Michael D. Shear, Abby Goodnough, Sheila Kaplan, Sheri Fink, Katie Thomas and Noah Weiland.

WASHINGTON — Early on, the dozen federal officials charged with defending America against the coronavirus gathered day after day in the White House Situation Room, consumed by crises. They grappled with how to evacuate the United States consulate in Wuhan, China, ban Chinese travelers and extract Americans from the Diamond Princess and other cruise ships.

The members of the coronavirus task force typically devoted only five or 10 minutes, often at the end of contentious meetings, to talk about testing, several participants recalled. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, its leaders assured the others, had developed a diagnostic model that would be rolled out quickly as a first step.

But as the deadly virus from China spread with ferocity across the United States between late January and early March, large-scale testing of people who might have been infected did not happen — because of technical flaws, regulatory hurdles, business-as-usual bureaucracies and lack of leadership at multiple levels, according to interviews with more than 50 current and former public health officials, administration officials, senior scientists and company executives.

The result was a lost month, when the world’s richest country — armed with some of the most highly trained scientists and infectious disease specialists — squandered its best chance of containing the virus’s spread. Instead, Americans were left largely blind to the scale of a looming public health catastrophe.

The absence of robust screening until it was “far too late” revealed failures across the government, said Dr. Thomas Frieden, the former C.D.C. director. Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins, said the Trump administration had “incredibly limited” views of the pathogen’s potential impact. Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, said the lapse en-



MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

F.D.A. regulations hindered wide testing, allowing the coronavirus to spread rapidly.

abled “exponential growth of cases.”

And Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, a top government scientist involved in the fight against the virus, told members of Congress that the early inability to test was “a failing” of the administration’s response to a deadly, global pandemic. “Why,” he asked later in a magazine interview, “were we not able to mobilize on a broader

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Chief Scientist
Draws Venom
From the Right

By DAVEY ALBA and SHEERA FRENKEL

At a White House briefing on the coronavirus on March 20, President Trump called the State Department the “Deep State Department.” Behind him, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, dropped his head and rubbed his forehead.

Some thought Dr. Fauci was slighting the president, leading to a vitriolic online reaction. On Twitter and Facebook, a post that falsely claimed he was part of a secret cabal that opposed Mr. Trump was soon shared thousands of times, reaching roughly 1.5 million people.

A week later, Dr. Fauci — the administration’s most outspoken advocate of emergency measures to fight the coronavirus outbreak — has become the target of an online conspiracy theory that he is mobilizing to undermine the president.

That fanciful claim has spread across social media, fanned by a right-wing chorus of Mr. Trump’s supporters, even as Dr. Fauci has won a public following for his willingness to contradict the president and correct falsehoods and overly rosy pronouncements about containing the virus.

An analysis by The New York Times found more than 70 accounts on Twitter that have promoted the hashtag #FauciFraud, with some tweeting as often as 795 times a day. The anti-Fauci senti-

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Hard Decisions
For Americans
As Bills Roll In

By CONOR DOUGHERTY and BEN CASSELMAN

On Wednesday, as on the first day of any month, many companies and households will have bills to pay. This time, a lot will simply pile up.

Angela Rogan is unlikely to make the rent on her apartment in the San Francisco Bay Area. Katherine Anderson, who owns a cafe-bakery in Seattle, isn’t going to pay her \$30,000-a-month lease. Even the Cheesecake Factory, a multimillion-dollar company, has told landlords not to expect an April remittance.

The trajectory of the U.S. economy will largely rest on how many payments go unmade, which bills are put ahead of others and the terms on which they are settled.

The \$2 trillion relief package passed by Congress amounts to a grand attempt to flush the economy with cash so that the obligations of corporations and minimum-wage-earning tenants alike can be met as usual.

But much of the money will take weeks to arrive — too late for many — and once it does, the big question hanging over the economy will be how many unpaid rent notices, water bills and mortgage payments remain after the virus subsidies and commerce resumes.

Should a significant portion be curtailed through negotiation or absorbed by the government altogether — such as loans that allow businesses to make payroll the

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NATIONAL 20-22

Pushback of Part-Time Dwellers
In some seasonal communities, full-time residents have asked their summer neighbors to sit this one out to reduce the risk of coronavirus. PAGE 20

Meth’s Devastating Return
After fighting to curb opioid use, a Kentucky town has seen another potent drug take a toll on addicts. PAGE 21

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Your Laptop Is Your Passport
Tools like Google Street View are vespels for virtual world journeys for those who are quarantined at home. PAGE 1



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Women’s equality may be lagging in the country, but in the field of lion taming, six women dominate. PAGE 16

Doctor. Violinist. Refugee.
Once successful in Venezuela, five professionals felt on top of the world. Then the world tipped over. PAGE 18

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Virus Broke Me in 40 Days
The columnist James B. Stewart has been a disciplined investor for over 40 years, surviving four stock-market crashes. But nothing prepared him for this kind of utter carnage. PAGE 1

Graduating as Jobs Disappear
The abrupt closing of college campuses was especially painful for seniors. Now, they are contemplating an even worse prospect: a job market more grim than any in recent history. PAGE 1

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A reporter’s response to the coronavirus included an internal directive to start gardening. PAGE 1

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The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery was seen as a movement’s dean. He was 98. PAGE 24

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Ben Hubbard, The Times’s Beirut bureau chief, profiles Saudi Arabia’s crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. PAGE 1

