Opinion

The government is lying

The manipulated perception of Renee Good and Alex Pretti

By LILLIAN CURTIN
Opinion Editor

On Sept. 10, I sat down at my computer to write, a couple of minutes after watching a man die on video. This past Saturday, I did the same thing.

While heartbroken and so very deeply disturbed, I can't say I'm surprised. Something I seem to say a lot nowadays.

When conservative activist Charlie Kirk was killed on Sept. 10, many people who "stay out of politics" were quick to post on social media — either how great they thought he was or condemning violence.

Where are they now?

The same people who were so angry are silent now. Both Renee Good, a mother and Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse have died on the street, shot to death, yet they don't get the same attention as a podcaster.

I had to grapple with that fact. I had to sit with myself and really try to understand how we got here, and how it's getting worse. Because, seriously, how could it get worse?

People who choose to accept and defend a public execution, have been manipulated into wearing rose colored glasses.

Many are excusing the deaths of innocent people because they are listening to unreliable sources, including the Trump administration.

Because newsflash: it's one of the most unreliable sources I've ever seen. Falling for its gaslighting will only end with more people being killed.

Good was a 37-year-old mother and a U.S. citizen. She was killed in a homicide by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Jan. 7 in Minneapolis.

Good was a poet. She was a mother. She was a person. ICE shot her in the head.

No, she wasn't committing a crime. She wasn't interfering with ICE. The worst thing she was doing was blocking the road. That would've been a job for local police to handle. ICE's job is to focus on illegal immigration. It seems like they got too power hungry and a bit too cocky.

The Trump administration claims she was trying to hit an ICE agent with her car and called her a "domestic terrorist." Multiple videos from different perspectives argue otherwise. So does local and state officials, yet state law enforcement has been barred from the investigation.

Let's put this into perspective. Of course, local officials have the closest relationship to this case. They can especially see more locally and intimately than someone sitting in an office in D.C., over a thousand miles away.

Mind you, President Donald Trump sent the National Guard to Portland, Oregon, because he saw an altered video by Fox News. He thought it was literally on fire.

So yes, his perception and assumptions about the events have been known to be so, so far off.

Trump also justified the killing by saying it was because she was "disrespectful" to the officers. One, that's not a crime. Two, ICE is merely cosplaying a militia, so let's not get too ahead of ourselves with the "respect" thing.

Trump pushed the claim that she was a paid agitator.

All of this is a ruse to justify a murder and avoid accountability.

Good wasn't an agitator. In fact, she was trying to de-escalate the situation. She was speaking calmly to the agent, saying, "That's OK, I'm not mad at you, dude."

One ICE agent gets upset with Good and her wife and orders them to get out of the car.

As a woman, if a man is acting hostile towards me and tells me to get out of the car, I am not getting out of that car.

"Well, these are officers." These are officers who have had no training or proper vetting and some have criminal records of their own. If we're not going to hold them to the same standards as other law enforcement, they should not be treated like other law enforcement.

This actually feels like a slap in the face to the men and women who are genuinely trying to protect this country and did the work. It's not fair to them just to have some guys who watched "Cops" feel inspired and go ruin public trust in law enforcement.

The shooter, ICE agent Jonathan Ross called her, "a fucking bitch." You're telling me that this was simply a man "doing his job?" No, he was mad and he had a gun, and because of the president, he had a title. If he didn't have a title, it would just be voluntary manslaughter and a court would use that explicitly as evidence.

She didn't try to hit him with her car. She was scared. The video clearly shows her trying to turn the wheel so she wouldn't hit him.

As if it wasn't bad enough, ICU nurse Pretti was killed by the U.S. Border Patrol in Minneapolis on Jan. 24. He wasn't a criminal. He cared for veterans.

I separate these two cases because they are different. Yes, they are similar, but while Good was killed by ICE, Pretti was killed by Border Patrol. Two different things. Border Patrol being involved makes it much scarier, since these are actual trained officers.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem claimed that Pretti approached officers with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun. Video evidence, witnesses and, again, local and state officials counter the claims. He was holding a cellphone, not a handgun, though he was legally armed.

Noem tried to make it seem like Pretti went there looking to kill someone. He legally had a weapon, as he was permitted to concealed carry.

Both the Department of Homeland Security and the Trump administration jumped onto social media to make statements before an investigation actually happened.

Noem claimed that the agent who killed Pretti took "defensive shots" and was "fearing for his life."

There were about five or more other officers on Pretti, beating him before he was shot. When he was shot and lying on the ground, most likely already dead, officers continued to shoot at his limp body on the pavement.

I'm not quite sure why you'd need to defend yourself from a dead man.

We can't accept this. The purpose of all of this misinformation and propaganda is to separate the victims and dehumanize them in your mind. We do it with immigrants: calling them "illegal aliens" instead of immigrants. They purposely make that separation to allow it to be easier to commit atrocities against those they're targeting.

The moment we listen to false narratives, we're going to lose our humanity. The Trump administration can spew whatever hatred they want, call anyone whatever they want, but these are still people. They aren't murderers, drug addicts or in these two cases, even immigrants. These are American citizens murdered on American streets.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Official portrait of Alex Pretti by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

AFCON: An underappreciated game

By REX NAYLOR
Staff Writer

The African Cup of Nations final between Senegal and Morocco on Sunday, Jan. 18, did not disappoint. AFCON is basically the World Cup, but only for African nations. The tournament holds great prestige for the players and countries involved and has been known to have numerous memorable moments. This year was no different.

The tournament concluded with Senegal beating Morocco 1-0 in extra time, in a dramatic match played in the rain in Marrakesh, Morocco. Even though the tournament takes place in Africa, which is bigger than both Europe and South America, the coverage pales in comparison to the Euros or Copa America.

In the eight minutes of added time, a goal was wrongfully disallowed against Senegal. Morocco was awarded a penalty and Senegal went back to its locker room in protest. Once it came back out 20 minutes later, Brahim Diaz of Morocco missed the penalty, attempting a Panenka, trying to chip the ball in the center of the goal. Senegal's Pape Gueye scored in extra time, picking out the top right corner, solidifying Senegal's second-ever AFCON win.

Throughout the match, Moroccan ball boys attempted to steal Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy's towel. This prompted backup goalkeeper Yahvan Diouf to stand guard behind the goal, even getting into a staredown with Morocco midfielder/winger Ismail Saibari. The AFCON final on its own contained more drama and iconic moments than the last World Cup in 2022.

So why doesn't it get the same publicity and attention as the Euros or Copa America? Because the tournament takes place during this time of the year.

AFCON always occurs in the winter months, as heat would be too harsh for those involved; the same reason the 2022 World Cup was held in winter in Qatar.

About one year ago, English football pundit Jamie Carragher shared his thoughts on why certain players like Mohammed Salah or Sadio Mane don't get the recognition they deserve. This comment drew criticism from fans, other pundits and former players, especially those from African nations.



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

On the BETWinner podcast, Nigeria legend John Obi Mikel responded to Carragher's comments saying, "I've played in it, I've won it, it's not his f-ing place to discredit that African nation, it's not his place." Obi Mikel continues saying, "He didn't win the Premier League, and he sits there week in week out telling people, teaching, coaching, trying to tell people how to win the Premier League."

It's worth mentioning that neither Carragher nor England has won the Euros or World Cup since 1966. The problem is that the press and media coverage of AFCON comes from English analysits and personalities.

Every single World Cup winner has come from Europe or South America, and only once has a World Cup been hosted in Africa, and only once has an African nation made the semi-finals, that being Morocco in 2022.

The AFCON happens every two years, while the Euros and Copa America happen every four and have had plenty of incidents involving poor preparation and human rights issues. They still get the best TV deals or media coverage. To watch the AFCON matches in the U.S., you need the beIN Sports Network, which very few people, if any, have.

The tournament features some of the best players in the world, Victor Osimhen, Salah, Mane and Ademola Lookman, to name a few. The passion from fans is unmatched and tickets are cheap given the tournament's prestige.

The public perception of the tournament is a lack of structure and less funding compared to the Euros and Copa America. In general, the press doesn't pay nearly as much attention to Africa as it does to Europe or the U.S., so people naturally wouldn't care as much about AFCON as they do about the Euros.

Despite world-class players, iconic moments and idolized passion, the tournament still struggles to overcome long-term issues it once faced. Experts advocate for content from big names like Netflix and Amazon to broaden their horizons, but until then, the tournament still stands in the shadow of every other football competition.