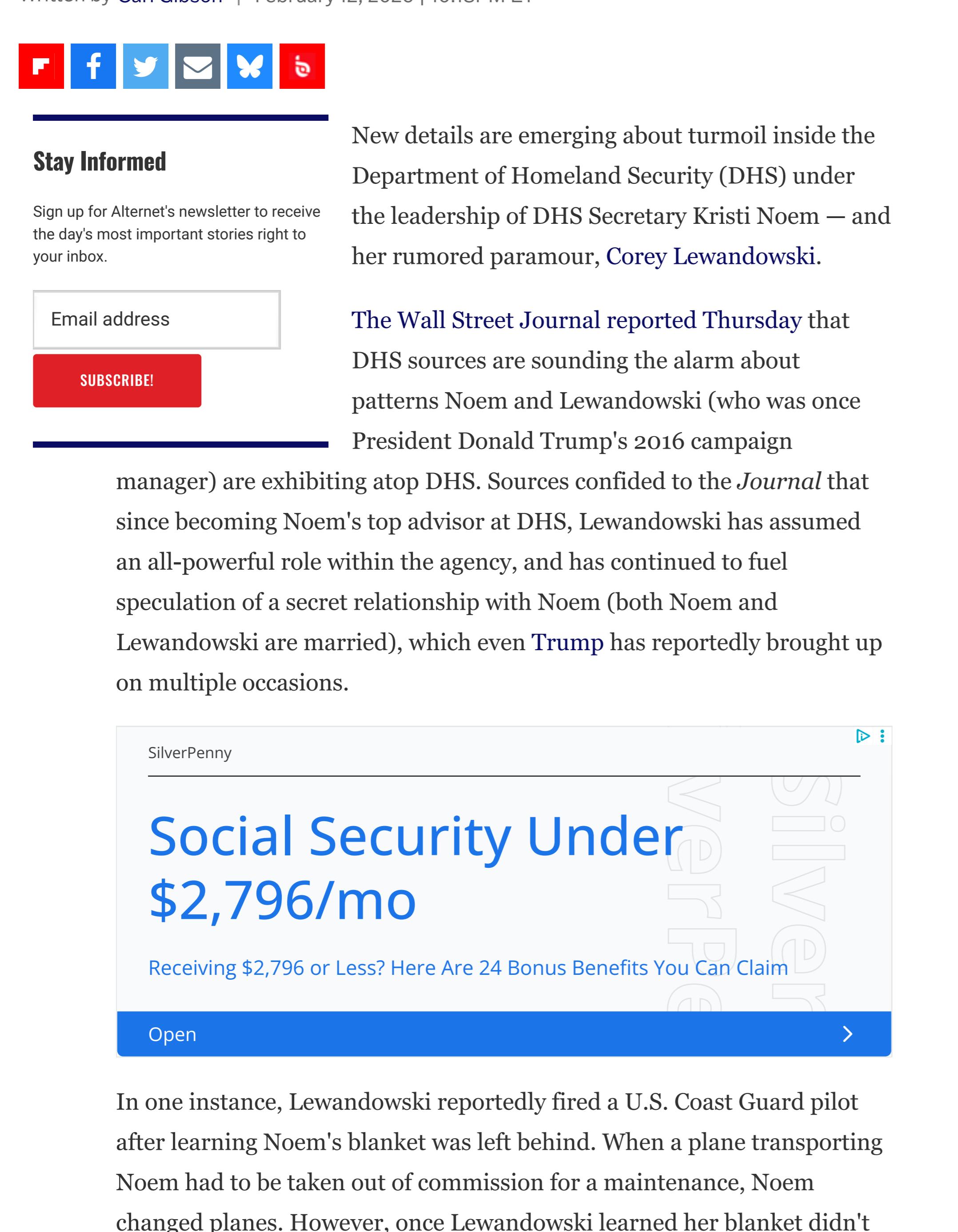


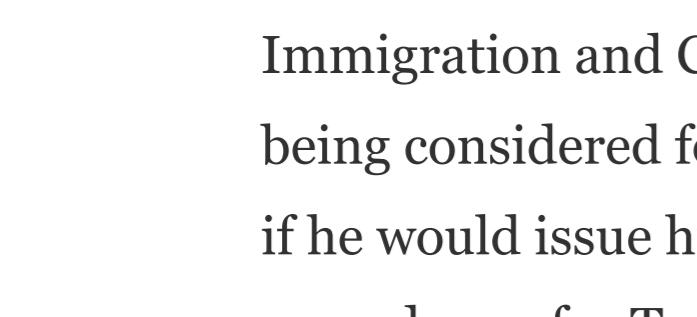
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## Kristi Noem had Coast Guard pilot fired for leaving her blanket on a plane: report



U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem holds a press conference to provide an update on border security and drug seizures along the U.S.-Mexico border, in Otay Mesa, San Diego, California, U.S., February 12, 2026. REUTERS/Mike Blake

Written by Carl Gibson | February 12, 2026 | 10:18PM ET



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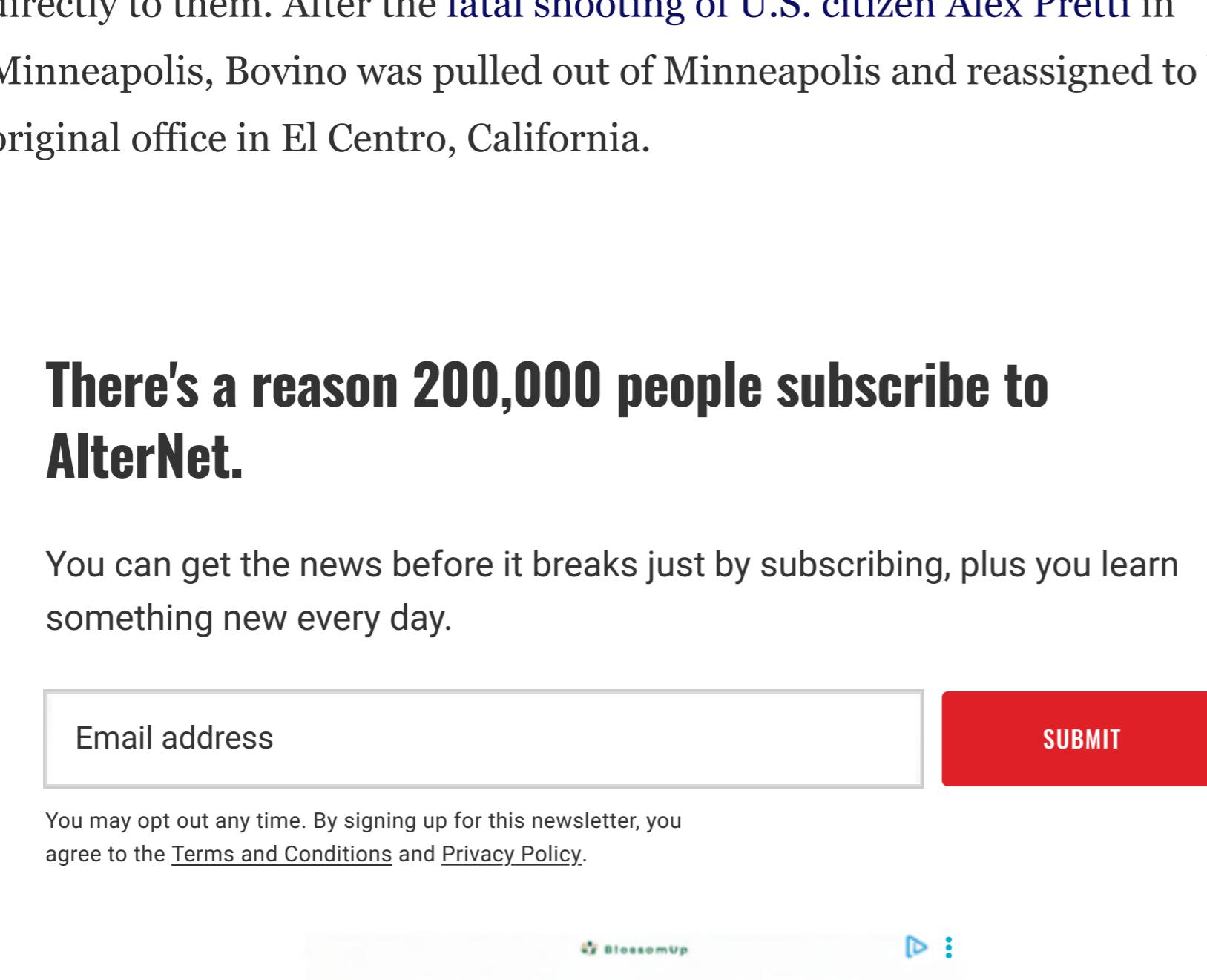
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New details are emerging about turmoil inside the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the leadership of DHS Secretary Kristi Noem — and her rumored paramour, Corey Lewandowski.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Thursday that DHS sources are sounding the alarm about patterns Noem and Lewandowski (who was once President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign

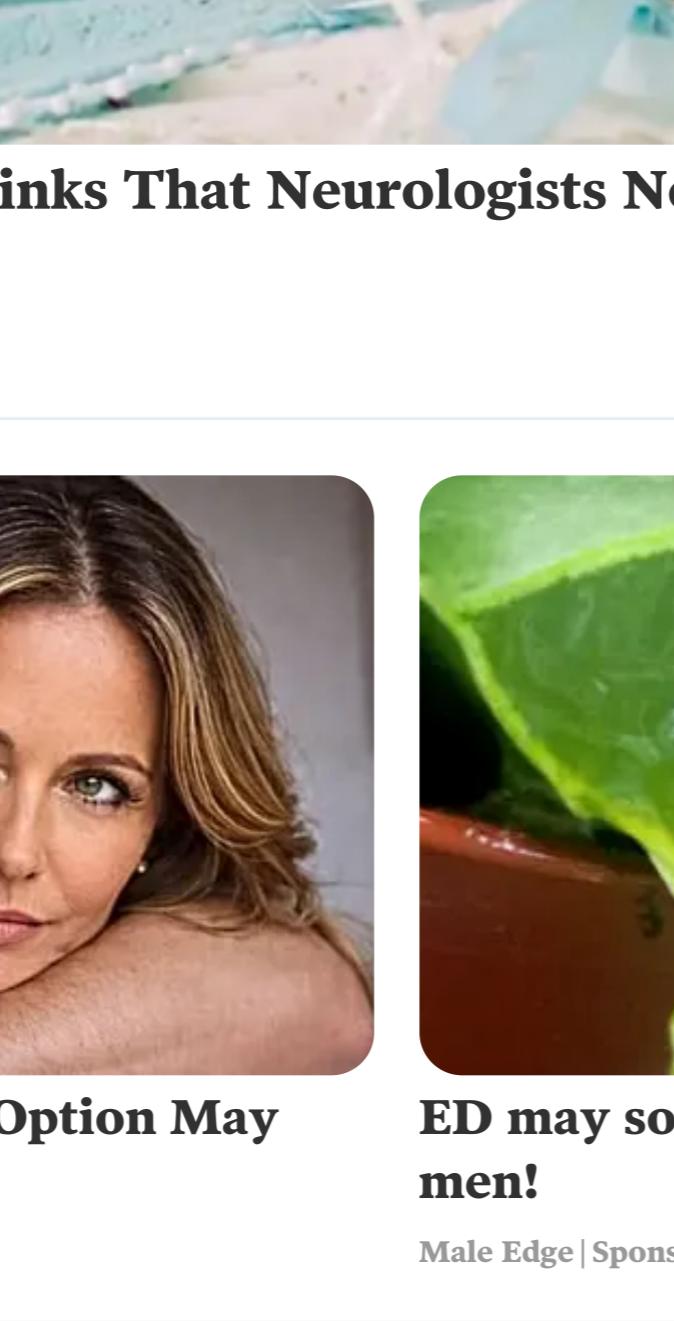
manager) are exhibiting atop DHS. Sources confided to the *Journal* that since becoming Noem's top advisor at DHS, Lewandowski has assumed an all-powerful role within the agency, and has continued to fuel speculation of a secret relationship with Noem (both Noem and Lewandowski are married), which even Trump has reportedly brought up on multiple occasions.



In one instance, Lewandowski reportedly fired a U.S. Coast Guard pilot after learning Noem's blanket was left behind. When a plane transporting Noem had to be taken out of commission for a maintenance, Noem changed planes. However, once Lewandowski learned her blanket didn't make the trip, he fired the pilot. That pilot was eventually re-hired once Noem and Lewandowski learned there was no one else available to fly them home.

Lewandowski also reportedly asked for a federally issued gun and badge, even though badges and guns are typically only issued to those who have undergone law enforcement training (Lewandowski graduated from the New Hampshire police academy in 2006, and was a member of the New Hampshire State Police between 2006 and 2010). When New York Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) official Tom Feeley was being considered for ICE director, Lewandowski reportedly asked Feeley if he would issue him a badge and gun. When Feeley declined, he was then passed over for Todd Lyons.

Both Noem and Lewandowski also reportedly clashed with Rodney Scott, who is the current commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). According to the *Journal*, Scott complained that Noem and Lewandowski mismanaged construction of Trump's wall along the Southern border of the U.S. The outlet reported that a contract for border wall construction sat on Noem's desk for roughly two months. By the time she finally signed it, the price of steel had skyrocketed, meaning far less of the wall could be built with the money allocated by Congress.



Scott even once became so frustrated with Lewandowski that he told him he would no longer take orders from him, since his 130-day window as a designated special government employee had expired. They then reportedly retaliated against Scott by reassigning his chief of staff and convinced his deputy chief of staff to resign, without giving a reason for doing so. They then replaced those two staffers with employees loyal to them.

The CBP chief also cautioned against elevating Gregory Bovino to be Border Patrol commander-at-large and making him the face of DHS' operations in cities like Los Angeles, Chicago and Minneapolis, with the *Journal* reporting Scott believed Bovino's new role would "backfire on the whole department." Even though Bovino reported to Scott in the DHS org chart, Noem and Lewandowski structured operations so Bovino reported directly to them. After the fatal shooting of U.S. citizen Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, Bovino was pulled out of Minneapolis and reassigned to his original office in El Centro, California.

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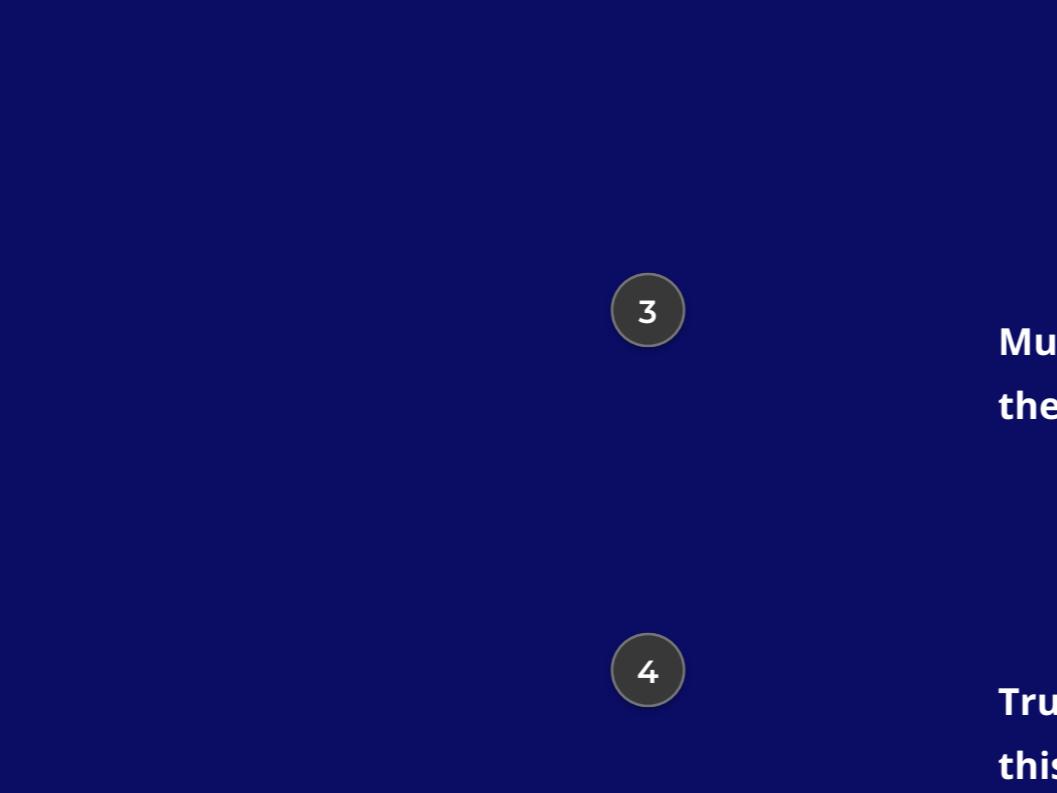
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