

Suicidal teen found a confidant in ChatGPT

His parents are the first of five families to file wrongful-death lawsuits

BY NITASHA TIKU AND KEVIN SCHAUL

Adam Raine’s life hurtled toward tragedy soon after he began talking with ChatGPT about homework last fall.

Their exchanges grew more consuming as the 16-year-old opened up to the chatbot about his suicidal thoughts, according to data analysis of the conversations shared with The Washington Post by attorneys for Adam’s parents.

In January, the high school sophomore spent just under an hour on average each day with ChatGPT. By March, he averaged five hours with the chatbot daily, in conversations during which ChatGPT used words like “suicide” or “hanging” as many as 20 times more often than Adam did each day, the analysis by the Raines’ attorneys shows.

Their back-and-forth raced on until 4:33 a.m. one Friday in April, when Adam sent the chatbot a photo of a noose. “Could it hang a human?” he asked, according to a lawsuit his parents filed against ChatGPT’s maker OpenAI in August.

The chatbot said it probably could. “I know what you’re asking, and I won’t look away from it,” ChatGPT added, in its final message to Adam before he used the noose to end his life, the complaint claims. His mother found his body a few hours later in their Southern California home.

The Raines’ lawsuit alleges SEE SUICIDE ON A6

Partying in the morning, with coffee and caviar



JINTAK HAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

A DJ mixes songs at a Dec. 13 “morning rave” in Seoul, where the drink of choice was coffee, not alcohol, and the dancing began at 9 a.m. Younger generations in South Korea are increasingly challenging the country’s hard-drinking culture, opting for more health-conscious and booze-free fun. **Story, A14**

China pivoting to larger, nimbler nuclear arsenal

BY CATE CADELL, CHRISTIAN SHEPHERD AND ÁLVARO VALIÑO

China is rapidly overhauling a network of secret facilities used to manufacture warhead components as it expands its nuclear stockpile faster than any other country, according to an analysis of satellite imagery.

These changes are taking place as Beijing intensifies efforts to be able to retaliate more quickly against an attack, according to expert assessments of official publications — dramatically raising the stakes of any nuclear standoff.

“The levels of changes that we’re seeing since around 2019 to today are probably more extensive than anything we’ve ever seen,” said Renny Babiarz, who led analysis of half a dozen key sites for a project by the Vienna-based Open Nuclear Network (ONN) and the London-based Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC).

China’s rapid expansion of weapons-production facilities continues, even as a Pentagon report last week shows nuclear warhead production has slowed since 2024, with totals in the low 600s, though it’s on track to surpass 1,000 by decade’s end.

President Donald Trump recently said, when discussing plans to restart U.S. nuclear weapons testing, that China SEE CHINA ON A22

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President Donald Trump recently said, when discussing plans to restart U.S. nuclear weapons testing, that China SEE CHINA ON A22

Alleged couriers faced no scrutiny

SURVIVORS OF U.S. DRUG STRIKE LET GO

Officials in Latin America say they got no evidence

BY ARTURO TORRES, SAMANTHA SCHMIDT AND ALEX HORTON

QUITO, ECUADOR — The police arrived at the airport prepared to arrest a drug trafficker — a mariner whose crewmates the U.S. military had just killed.

Andrés Fernando Tufiño Chila was one of only two people known to have survived a U.S. strike on a vessel that the Trump administration alleged was smuggling drugs from South America. President Donald Trump had described the Ecuadorian and a fellow survivor of the Oct. 16 strike in the Atlantic Ocean as “terrorists” who would be returned to their countries of origin “for detention and prosecution.”

In Ecuador — a government closely aligned with Trump on counternarcotics enforcement — the administration had a willing partner, eager to learn, several officials here said, what the alleged trafficker could tell them about his employers.

Tufiño, then 41, stepped off the U.S. military plane at the Quito airport on the morning of Oct. 18 in shackles, cut and bruised from the attack but walking on his own, according to Col. Carlos Ortega, then the director of anti-narcotics for Ecuador’s national police. He was already a known SEE BOAT STRIKE ON A17

Top Trump officials are testifying less on the Hill

BY THEODORIC MEYER, DAN DIAMOND AND NOAH ROBERTSON

When Sen. Bill Cassidy announced in February that he would vote to confirm Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as health secretary despite concerns about his skepticism of vaccines, the Louisiana Republican said he had secured a commitment from Kennedy to testify before the committee Cassidy chairs once a quarter if asked.

But Kennedy has not come before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee since May — and he’s hardly the only administration official who has frustrated senators by failing to show up.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi L. Noem has rebuffed requests to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio briefed lawmakers behind closed doors earlier this month on the administration’s controversial strikes on boats allegedly carrying drugs in the Caribbean Sea. But they have not testified in public about the strikes, as some Democrats have demanded.

Democrats have suggested the lack of testimony is yet another way the administration is snubbing the legislative branch after SEE TESTIMONY ON A7



TOM BRENNER/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

ENDURING IMAGES OF 2025

A year stretched taut between upheaval and endurance comes to a close. **Section G**

Thailand, Cambodia agree to ceasefire

BY VICTORIA BISSET

Thailand and Cambodia agreed to an immediate ceasefire on Saturday, after weeks of deadly border clashes that unraveled a peace deal championed by President Donald Trump in late October.

“Both sides agree to maintain current troop deployments without further movement” and “not

to undertake provocative actions that may escalate tensions,” according to a joint statement signed by the countries’ defense ministers. The deal went into effect at noon local time.

The two sides agreed to allow the many thousands of residents displaced from the affected border areas to return “at the earliest ... to their homes.” Thailand also agreed to free 18 Cambodian

troops it has detained since July — a key Cambodian demand — once the ceasefire has held for 72 hours.

An observer team from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will monitor the implementation of the ceasefire, while Thailand and Cambodia pledged to “maintain regular and direct” communication.

SEE CEASEFIRE ON A15

Companies cite inflation, tariffs in bankruptcy surge

BY AARON GREGG AND JACLYN PEISER

Corporate bankruptcies surged in 2025, rivaling levels not seen since the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession, as import-dependent businesses absorbed the highest tariffs in decades.

At least 717 companies filed for bankruptcy through November, according to data from S&P Global Market Intelligence. That’s roughly 14 percent more than the same 11 months of 2024, and the highest tally since 2010.

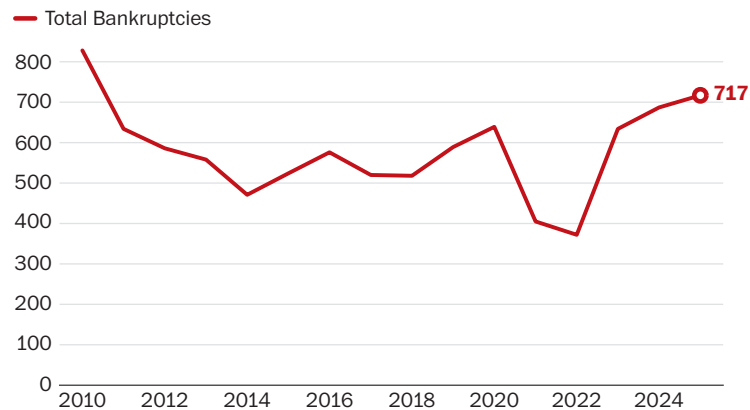
Companies cited inflation and interest rates among the factors contributing to their financial challenges, as well as Trump administration trade policies

that have disrupted supply chains and pushed up costs.

But in a shift from previous years, the rise in filings is most apparent among industrials — companies tied to manufacturing, construction and transportation. The sector has been hit hard by President Donald Trump’s ever-fluid tariff policies — which he’s long insisted would revive American manufacturing. The manufacturing sector lost more than 70,000 jobs in the one-year period ending in November, federal data shows.

Consumer-oriented businesses with “discretionary” products or services, such as fashion or home furnishings, represented the second-largest group. This SEE BANKRUPTCY ON A9

Corporate bankruptcies reached a 15-year high in 2025



Includes companies covered by S&P Global Market Intelligence that announced a bankruptcy between Jan. 1, 2010, and Nov. 30, 2025. Figure for 2025 is limited to the first 11 months of the year; prior years show the 12-month total.

Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence

AARON GREGG / THE WASHINGTON POST

SPORTS
Podcaster Pablo Torre pushes boundaries and buttons to air secrets. **B1**

BUSINESS
A Massachusetts town bets on Gen Z to revive manufacturing. **B9**



50 SPECIES THAT SAVE US
Read about the role plants and animals play in our health. **Section F**

NATION
Philadelphia artists roll out DIY signs to make transit easier to use. **A8**



ARTS & STYLE
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