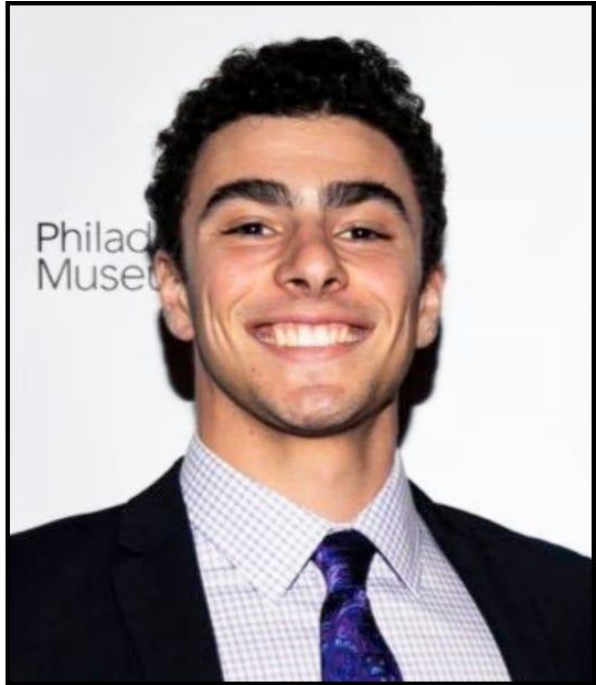


# Two 26-Year-Olds: One Killed a Homeless Man, Another is Suspected of Killing a Healthcare CEO

Daniel Penny is free after killing a man victim to the system.  
What of Luigi Mangione, who is suspected of killing a man symbolic of it?

Prem Thakker

Dec 10, 2024



*Left: Daniel Penny returns to a Manhattan courtroom after a break in his trial on Dec. 3, 2024.*

Photo by Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images; Luigi Mangione. Photo via Luigi Mangione on X

On Monday, 26-year-old Daniel Penny was acquitted after killing Jordan Neely, a desperate Black homeless man on the subway, on the grounds that he was trying to protect others. On the same day, police detained 26-year-old Luigi Mangione, who is suspected of killing the CEO of a company that has denied thousands of life-saving healthcare claims.

Penny walks free after killing a man victim to the system. What will be the verdict for Mangione, who is suspected of killing a man symbolic of it?

As many have remarked, Brian Thompson's tenure as CEO of insurance giant UnitedHealthcare was grisly. Thompson (alongside other higher-ups) allegedly conducted insider trading, selling millions of dollars of stock upon learning that the Department of Justice re-opened an antitrust investigation into UnitedHealth. While the company was on an upward profit swing, it has been awash in allegations and revelations of limiting mental health care coverage via algorithm, denying healthcare services needed after hospitalization at drastic rates via artificial intelligence, and denying insurance claims at a starkly high rate.

A gun killed Thompson. Paperwork has killed thousands.

## A Cruel Juxtaposition

As others have also noted, Thompson is also not aberrant – from either the blood-sucking industry or the broader social structure that has long allowed people of high status to skate by with no regard for the rules governing us, while enjoying esteem and priority nary any of us enjoy.

While thousands have joked about the premeditated killing, celebrated it, even propped up the assailant as some folk hero, some – mostly members of Congress and the establishment media – have dug their heels, categorizing all reaction that isn't somber as vicious, dehumanizing, or even just as another example of the radical left. *How dare you? He had a wife and kids! How can so many Americans be indifferent, or even celebratory in response to death?*

Sen. John Fetterman is one of those who has loudly insisted that the “public execution of an innocent man and father of two is indefensible.” We are expected to ignore the fact that for 14 months straight before Thompson's killing, Israeli forces have publicly executed thousands of innocent men, women, and children in Gaza with the enthusiastic support of US politicians like Fetterman.

We are also expected to ignore that two days after Thompson was killed, two migrant teenagers were stabbed in Lower Manhattan. The culprits asked if they spoke English. The teenagers indicated they did not. They were then stabbed. One was killed. No ensuing nationwide manhunts.

Indeed, that same day, a judge dismissed one charge against Penny – the man who put Jordan Neely, a homeless man who suffered from mental illness, in a chokehold on the subway for several minutes, killing him. Neely was allegedly behaving aggressively and yelling about his lack of food, water, and shelter and that he was ready to die. Penny, who claimed he was trying to protect others on the train, was acquitted of the remaining charge – criminally negligent homicide – he faced.

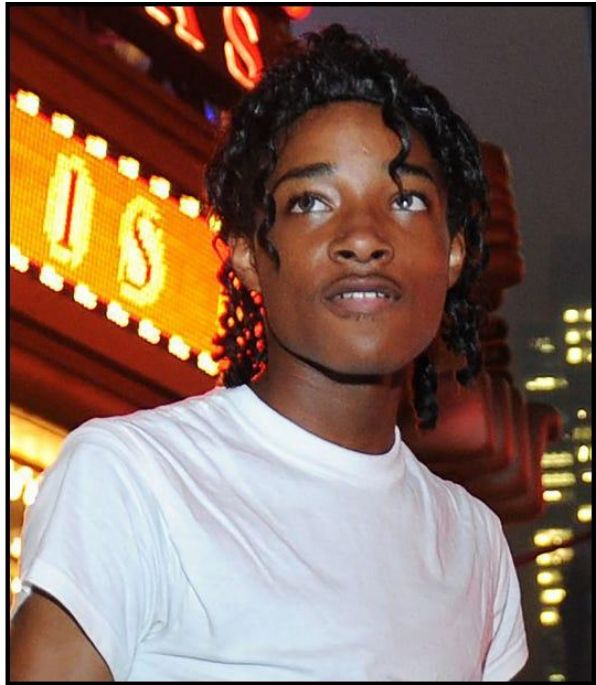
Each case, obviously, is its own. But in each, contradictions of who is human, questions of who merits sympathy, and inquiries of what sort of society we tolerate, ring loud and clear.

How many migrants has this country *really* killed, either in wreaking havoc across the world and creating migrants to begin with, or in how it treats them if they manage to cross our militarized southern border?

How many tax dollars have been funneled towards endless war abroad, towards uncounted massacres of foreigners?

How many people here in the US have been left without a place to call home, a pillow to return to on good days or bad ones, to the point of desperation? How many times have they been met with violence, often tolerated or encouraged, rather than care and uplift – like in Daniel Penny's killing of Jordan Neely? And has that violence helped in *any* discernible way?

It's a cruel juxtaposition. The system that produced a behemoth health insurance company that haphazardly denies thousands of healthcare claims is the same that



*Left: UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. Photo by Business Wire/TNS/Abacapress.com via Reuters; Right: Jordan Neely is pictured before going to see the Michael Jackson movie, 'This is It,' in New York City in 2009.*

*Photo by Andrew Savulich/New York Daily News/TNS/Abacapress.com via Reuters*

brought a homeless man with schizophrenia and depression to bounce between subway cars.

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