

Police lock down Maryland school after suspension of teacher

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Mace's Lane Middle School in the US state of Maryland was placed in a state of lockdown last week after it was discovered that an eighth grade Language Arts teacher had pseudonymously penned several science fiction novels depicting "the largest school massacre in the nation's history." The teacher, Patrick McLaw, was placed on administrative leave and submitted to an "emergency medical examination" by state officials.

Maryland state authorities subjected the school, located in Cambridge, a town of 12,000, and McLaw's home to police dog sweeps in search of bombs, weapons, and other incriminating items. "The information we received caused us to return to Dorchester County and immediately take the following steps.... A K-9 sweep was conducted at the Mace's Lane School looking for explosive devices and other weapons. A secondary search was performed by police and school officials looking for suspicious packages or other items," Dorchester county sheriff James Phillips told news outlets in regard to the response to McLaw's writings.

"The residence of the teacher in Wicomico County was searched by personnel.... A further check of Maryland State Police databases also proved to be negative as to any weapons registered to him," Stephens added. According to the Dorchester sheriff, McLaw was "currently at a location known to law enforcement and does not currently have the ability to travel anywhere."

A statement from Dorchester County Superintendent of Public Schools Dr. Henry Wagner, citing "significant matters of concern brought forth by law enforcement," said that an officer from the Cambridge Police Department would be stationed at Mace's Lane "for as long as we deem it necessary." Among the

stipulations attached to McLaw's suspension are that "he is not allowed to come onto school property or participate in school events."

McLaw, who was nominated for a teacher of the year award by the Dorchester school district last year, has apparently never engaged in any criminal behavior, his only "crime" being writing a novel with controversial subject matter. The books in question, entitled *The Insurrectionist* and the sequel *Lilith's Heir*, were written by McLaw under the moniker of "Dr. K.S. Voltaer."

The description for *The Insurrectionist* begins: "On 18 March 2902, a massacre transpired on the campus of Ocean Park High School, claiming the lives of nine hundred forty-seven individuals—the largest school massacre in the nation's history. And the entire country now begins to ask two daunting questions: How? and Why? After the federal government becomes involved, and after examining the bouquet of black roses that lies in front of the school's sign, it becomes evident that the hysteria is far from over."

In a perpetual state of crisis, the US ruling class has no means of addressing the "hows and whys" of the population to the unending assaults on their living standards, the eruption of war and the growth of poverty, preferring to resort to the use of armed police and other forms of repression. The hysterical response of authorities, which amounts to a blatant attack on free speech, is the latest in a slew of attacks against the population's basic democratic rights. In response to a number of school shootings and other public tragedies taking place in the recent period, state and federal officials have sought to beef up security forces in public areas—including schools—in the name of "gun control."

The efforts to justify the ramping up of police state

mechanisms have coalesced with a concerted attack on First Amendment rights. Earlier this month, Palestinian-American professor Steven Salaita was denied a position at University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana due to a series of comments on the teacher's Twitter feed that had been critical of the Israeli state's treatment of Palestinians.

Protests that erupted in the aftermath of the August 9 police killing of unarmed Missouri youth Michael Brown were met with police squads in armored vehicles toting fully automatic weapons, stun grenades, and other crowd-control devices. Increasingly, the US ruling class is turning to outright police state methods in its attempts to suppress the expression of basic democratic rights of the population.



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