

Further details emerge on far-right views of Canadian army reservist who tried to kill Trudeau

Roger Jordan
15 July 2020

In the almost two weeks since army reservist Corey Hurren attempted to assassinate Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, it has become manifestly evident that the 46-year-old was motivated by long-standing far-right political convictions. Yet even as more evidence comes to light exposing Hurren's affinity for right-wing extremist views and websites, the political establishment, military, and corporate media continue to downplay the significance of his actions. Indeed, they are even trying to deny that they were politically motivated.

Hurren was detained on the grounds of Rideau Hall, the official residence of Governor General Julie Payette and temporary residence of Trudeau, after crashing his pickup through the main gate early on the morning of July 2. Officially on full-time military duty at the time of his arrest, he was heavily armed, including with at least four firearms. He is due to appear in court on Friday on 22 charges of firearms offences and uttering death threats.

Last week, anonymous sources spoke to the media about the contents of a note that Hurren allegedly wanted to deliver to Trudeau. The would-be assassin wrote that it was time for a "wake-up call" for Canada, which was in danger of becoming a "communist dictatorship" under Trudeau's Liberal government. He also wrote of his concern that his truck would be repossessed due to the collapse of his sausage-making business amid the coronavirus pandemic. Such a development, Hurren complained, would make it impossible for him to remain part of the Canadian Rangers, a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) reserve unit responsible for patrolling rural and coastal areas.

However, Hurren's far-right views were not merely a reaction to the economic and social distress triggered by the pandemic. A *Toronto Star* article published last weekend revealed that he had created a webpage in the early 2000s that promoted Infowars and other ultra-right conspiracy websites. Infowars is run by the right-wing extremist provocateur Alex Jones, who claims that the Democrats want to establish "communism" in the United States and conduct a "white genocide."

Just one hour prior to crashing his truck through Rideau Hall's gates, Hurren shared an online post associated with QAnon, an internet-based fascist trend that urges US President Donald Trump to order the arrest of the Democratic Party leadership and impose dictatorial rule.

The day prior to Hurren's attack on Rideau Hall, a right-wing

extremist "Dominion Day" rally was held on Parliament Hill. Among the signs at the protest were one showing a picture of Trudeau standing in a gallows, another calling for the reintroduction of the death penalty for the Prime Minister, and several indicating support for "QAnon." It is not known whether Hurren attended the event.

The *Star* also revealed that Hurren penned an article in 2015 praising his family's military service and promoting the use of the term "old stock Canadian," a phrase coined by the political right to refer to white, Christian, English or French speakers whose descendants have resided in Canada for several generations. During the 2015 federal election campaign, the phrase was used by Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper to whip up anti-immigrant chauvinism and mobilize the hard-right base of the Tory Party, including far-right elements.

"We are the people who built this country, defended this country, and made it one of the most desirable places on the planet to live," wrote Hurren in his 2015 article. "That is also why people still want to come here and start a better life. If some of you still think it is an insult to be called an 'Old Stock Canadian' then I think you are wrong. It is a title and a heritage that you should be proud of."

Hurren's longstanding far-right sympathies and association with the military—he served as an artillery soldier between 1997 and 2000, before joining the reserves last year—raises many troubling questions. These include: Was the military, which claims to be concerned about the prevalence of racist and far-right views in its ranks, aware of Hurren's views? Did he share them with fellow Rangers and other CAF personnel whom he came in contact with, including during the weeks immediately prior to his assault on Rideau Hall, when he was on full-time active service duty as part of the Canadian military's COVID-19 deployment? How did Hurren obtain his arsenal of weapons, at least two of which were illegal?

The corporate-controlled media has proven staggeringly uninterested in exploring any of these issues, just as it has accepted the few details shared by the military and government about the events of July 2 as the full story. Thanks to the indifference of the corporate media, even basic information about the attack—such as whether Hurren carried it out in CAF battle fatigues—is not publicly known.

Publicly, at least, Canada's political establishment is presenting the attempted assassination of the prime minister as a virtual non-event, worthy of little comment, let alone investigation. Since Trudeau gave a perfunctory thank you to the RCMP one day after Hurren's arrest for their response to this "concerning" incident, no government official has bothered to speak publicly on the attempted killing of Canada's current head of government. (See: [HYPERLINK "https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/07/08/trud-j08.html"](https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/07/08/trud-j08.html) Canadian establishment downplays failed attempt to assassinate Trudeau)

The media coverage has been deliberately pitched to downplay and trivialize the event, with Hurren referred to as the "Rideau Hall intruder," and someone who may have been seeking "suicide by cop." Intelligence agency "experts" have also been cited to deny the obvious: that Hurren's actions were politically motivated. "I still don't necessarily see this as an ideologically-motivated attack. Just because [he believed] in conspiracy theories doesn't mean that's why he ended up doing what he did," Jessica Davis, a security consultant and former CSIS analyst, told the *Star*. "His motivation really does seem quite mixed."

The political establishment and corporate media are anxious to conceal how the dramatic shift of bourgeois politics to the right over the past two decades is incubating extreme right-wing forces, including in the institutions of the state. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Canada's ruling elite united, in the name of the "war on terror," around a policy of increased collaboration with Washington in aggression and war around the world, and attacks on democratic rights at home. In intrigues and military interventions from Haiti in 2004 to the ongoing CAF deployment in Ukraine, Canadian imperialism has pursued its predatory interests by allying with far-right and outright fascist forces. Last year, a Canadian military intelligence report admitted that at least three dozen armed forces personnel were members of ultra-right groups or had voiced racist or extremist views.

Prime Minister Harper, while whipping up anti-immigrant and Islamophobic prejudice, including with the references to "old stock Canadians" that Hurren apparently found so appealing, also declared Canada to be a "warrior nation" whose citizens owed their freedoms to the military's battlefield prowess. While Trudeau and his trade union and New Democratic Party (NDP) allies have distanced themselves from such explicitly bellicose assertions of Canadian imperialist interests, they are in fundamental agreement with Harper's goal of massively expanding the resources of the military to wage war around the world. Trudeau has pledged to hike military spending by over 70 percent by 2026, and his government has integrated Canada's armed forces even more fully into US-led military-strategic offensives in the oil-rich Middle East, and against Russia and China. In the latest coronavirus spending bill adopted by the Liberal government with NDP support on June 17, the government smuggled in over half a billion dollars to ensure ongoing funding for the building of two warships in Vancouver.

A serious examination of Hurren's background, would reveal the fact that the military and security agencies of the Canadian capitalist state are breeding grounds for far-right forces. In so doing, it would cut across the efforts of Trudeau and his allies,

including the NDP, to pursue rearmament and promote Canada as a benign, "humanitarian" and "pacific" force on the global stage.

It is within this context that the response of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh to Hurren's attempted assassination of Trudeau should be understood. Singh told a press conference last Wednesday that the main issue and concern raised by the July 2 events was that had Hurren been a "person of colour" it would have ended differently. Singh compared Hurren's peaceful surrender after a 90-minute police "de-escalation" effort to the fate of Ejaz Choudry, a South Asian man who was shot to death by police in his own home in Mississauga last month just minutes after they had arrived for a wellness check. "That contrast—someone showed up to potentially kill the prime minister of Canada, or with weapons at his residence, and that person was arrested without any violence and you had a person who in his own home was killed," commented Singh. "That to me is what systemic racism in policing is all about."

Singh then proceeded to praise the fascist-minded Trump for the cosmetic reforms he presented in an executive order last month following the mass protests against the brutal police murder of George Floyd—protests that Trump had sought to suppress with military violence. "The fact that President Trump, who has been horrible on this issue, who has said hateful things and I've called him out on that, has done more in terms of a concrete policy change than the prime minister of Canada who says that he is an ally, that to me is really troubling," said Singh. "He's literally done nothing."

Singh's intervention is a deliberate effort to dissipate popular concern over and opposition to the rise of the extreme right and divert it in a reactionary direction. At the very point when workers should be questioning the complicity of the capitalist state, its parties and its institutions, including the military and police, in the growth and emboldening of far-right forces, the NDP intervenes to declare that everything can be put right. All that is necessary is to change the racist mindsets of a few cops and ensure racial "equity" within the existing state structures and social order—i.e., secure the equal "right" of wealthy blacks and whites to sit in corporate boardrooms, occupy senior positions within the repressive state apparatus, and exploit the working class.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)