

Wisconsin man charged with providing assault rifle to Kenosha shooter Rittenhouse

Kevin Reed

10 November 2020

The person who purchased and provided 17-year-old militia member Kyle Rittenhouse with the AR-15-style assault rifle that he used to shoot and kill two protesters at an anti-police violence protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin on August 25, has been charged with two felonies.

Dominick Black, 19, allegedly bought a Smith & Wesson M&P rifle in his own name while he was with Rittenhouse at an Ace Home Center in Ladysmith, Wisconsin last summer. Rittenhouse gave Black money for the purpose of buying the weapon because he was not old enough to do so himself.

Rittenhouse, who is from Antioch, Illinois, faces six charges—including intentional homicide, reckless homicide and possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18—for killing Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, and Anthony Huber, 26, and wounding Gage Grosskreutz, 26, during protests against the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha.

Black was arrested and charged with two counts of intentionally giving a dangerous weapon to someone under 18, causing death. He appeared in court via Zoom conference on Monday from Kenosha County Jail and Court Commissioner Loren Keating set his bail at \$2,500 and ordered Black to have no contact with Rittenhouse or with the shooting victim Grosskreutz.

Attorney Robert Keller said Black lives in Kenosha with his mother and has no prior criminal offenses. The court set a preliminary hearing for November 19. He faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted on both charges.

The criminal complaint against Black says that the weapon was being stored in his stepfather's house and he gave it Rittenhouse there when the two met up prior to volunteering "to go out after curfew" as members of an armed militia engaged in protecting an auto

dealership. When the owner of the dealership was asked by authorities about the armed volunteers, he said he did not ask Rittenhouse to protect his property.

After Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum, Huber and Grosskreutz during a series of altercations recorded on smartphone video cameras, he fled the scene and, according to court documents, Black drove him back home to Antioch. Later that night, Rittenhouse turned himself in at the police station in Antioch, accompanied by his mother.

During their investigation, Antioch police questioned Black at the Rittenhouse family apartment that evening. Black told the police that the weapon used by Rittenhouse during the shootings in Kenosha was in the trunk of his vehicle along with a rifle he had himself brought to the protests.

Black also told the Antioch investigators that he had been armed and on the roof of the auto dealership during the protests when Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum, but he did not see the shooting. The police report says, "Kyle called Black at some point after the shooting and Black met with Kyle before they both left the area in Black's vehicle."

Black also admitted to the police that he was aware that buying the weapon for Rittenhouse was illegal. The report states that Black "told Kyle that he (Black) was going to be in more trouble than Kyle. He told Kyle that he (Kyle) was defending himself and said he told Kyle 'in all reality, you are not supposed to have that gun. That gun was in my name.'"

Additionally, the police interviewed Black's stepfather who told them that when he learned that the weapon had been purchased for Kyle, he "refused to have the rifle housed anywhere other than his locked safe at his home in Wisconsin." The stepfather also said he took the rifle out of the safe on August 24 when the

protests began in Kenosha following the police shooting of Blake.

Black's stepfather told the police, "he and Kyle had been hired to perform security in Kenosha for a private business" and, he told police, he didn't realize the AR-15 was missing from his house on August 26.

The arrest of Black is significant because it explodes one of the right-wing narratives circulated immediately after the arrest of Rittenhouse that the teenager was not a vigilante but a do-gooder who went to Kenosha by himself with a first aid kit to help protect people from "rioters" who were destroying the city.

The cooperation of Black and Rittenhouse in procurement of weapons establishes that the events leading up to the shootings were part of an organized effort in Kenosha. In fact, one of the videos published after the shootings on August 25, shows a group of armed vigilantes—including Rittenhouse—being welcomed in a friendly manner on the streets and offered bottles of water by law enforcement in Kenosha.

None of the corporate media reports about the latest developments—or anything else that has happened since the shootings in Kenosha—have drawn attention to the affinity of Rittenhouse for right-wing politics and the fact that the shooter has been promoted as a hero by Donald Trump, the Republican Party and fascist groups such as the Proud Boys.

When the Proud Boys showed up in Portland, Oregon on September 29, the leader of the group, Enrique Tarrío, spoke before a rally of 300 and said, "We're here in memory of a lot of people who have either lost their life or been attacked by these violent domestic terrorists. We're here for Kyle."

A crowdfunding website launched to raise money for the defense of Rittenhouse raised over \$1 million within a week of his arrest. The FightBack Foundation, an organization devoted to "lawsuits to stop the lies and smears of the radical left," helped to hire attorney John Pierce as defense counsel for Rittenhouse. Pierce has high level connections with the Trump administration and has previously represented two close associates of the President, Carter Page and Rudy Giuliani.

Other indications of the high-level political campaign being mounted in defense of Rittenhouse were the Waukesha County, Wisconsin Republicans giving Kyle's mother a standing ovation at a dinner meeting

on September 24 and internal White House documents urging law enforcement officials at the Department of Homeland Security to make sympathetic comments about the shooter.

Rittenhouse was extradited from Antioch to Kenosha County Jail on October 30 after Lake County Circuit Court Judge Paul Novak rejected a motion by attorney Pierce that he be released. Rittenhouse is being held on a \$2 million bail.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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