

# Plea deal with Trudeau's would-be assassin continues Canadian state's cover-up of far-right attack

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The trial of far-right Canadian Armed Forces reservist Corey Hurren—who was detained last July 2 following an attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Justin Trudeau—is being used to cover up the political background, purpose and import of the failed attack. Powerful forces within the state apparatus are working to bury details about what happened from reaching the public in a bid to continue the official propaganda campaign to trivialize the incident, by portraying it as the unplanned actions of a disoriented individual.

Last Friday, Hurren pleaded guilty to eight charges, including seven firearms counts and a count of wilfully causing more than \$100,000 in damage to property. The charges were substantially different and lesser than those initially levelled against the 46-year-old military reservist.

When he was first brought before a court last July, Hurren, who is an avowed supporter of the violent and fascistic QAnon conspiracy, was accused of 21 firearm counts and one charge of uttering a threat to kill or cause bodily harm to Trudeau.

The dropping of the latter charge is of great significance. It means prosecutors will not have to present any evidence in court demonstrating that Hurren planned to target Trudeau, even though such evidence is clearly in the hands of the police and prosecution.

Initial media reports on the attempted assassination indicated that Hurren had in his possession a letter in which he denounced Trudeau for allegedly establishing a “communist dictatorship” and threatened to hold him to account for his government’s imposition of coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions on gun ownership. This letter has never been made public and will likely not be submitted before the court as a result of the plea deal and the dropping of the sole charge linking Hurren’s actions to any threat to Trudeau.

In the so-called “agreed statement of facts” submitted to the court last Friday as part of Hurren’s guilty plea, the right-wing extremist is allowed to claim, without challenge, that whilst he crashed his pick-up truck through the gates of the estate on which the prime minister was temporarily living and then went in search of him with weapons drawn, he never intended to hurt anyone.

Hurren, it continues, merely wanted to “arrest” Trudeau, whom he considered “a communist who is above the law and corrupt,” and show “how angry everyone was about the gun ban and the COVID-19 restrictions.”

Asked by the judge presiding over his trial what his plan was,

Hurren responded, “I don’t think there was one.”

This is all a transparent fraud. Hurren’s actions were anything but spur of the moment. While on active military duty, he drove in his truck, laden with firearms, for two days to reach Ottawa from Manitoba. One day prior to Hurren’s attack, a rally involving right-wing extremists and fascists on Parliament Hill called for the reintroduction of the death penalty, so it could be applied to Trudeau, while protesters carried placards of Trudeau standing in a gallows. It is not known whether Hurren attended this event, but his calls for the prime minister to be “arrested” and his absurd attacks on Trudeau as a “communist” are entirely in keeping with the far-right protesters’ propaganda.

When police detained Hurren on the grounds of Rideau Hall, Trudeau’s temporary residence, he was in possession of five firearms. These included a restricted Hi-Standard revolver, a prohibited International Arms break-open pistol, a prohibited Norinco S12 rifle, a Lakefield Mossberg shotgun, a Grizzly Arms shotgun and a prohibited high-capacity magazine. An additional 11 firearms were found at Hurren’s home.

New information provided in a CBC report on Hurren’s trial underscores that his intentions were anything but peaceful when he arrived on the grounds of Rideau Hall. Citing from the agreed statement of facts, the CBC wrote, “(A)fter crashing his truck Hurren was observed on surveillance video on the morning of July 2, arming himself with a number of firearms before setting out on foot.

“An officer approached him near the grounds’ greenhouse and asked Hurren to place his weapon on the ground. Hurren refused and said he would not disarm, according to the statement.

“The officer persisted but Hurren said, ‘I can’t do that.’

“Eventually another officer joined and noted that Hurren had a shotgun in his right hand, pointed at the ground and a second shotgun slung on his back. A long rifle lay on the ground, said the statement.”

This underscores that the Crown’s case against Hurren is a travesty. Despite his having issued a direct threat to Trudeau and being discovered armed to the teeth on the grounds of Rideau Hall, the prosecution has chosen to entirely exclude from the trial any consideration of Hurren’s plans to kill, harm or even “arrest” the Prime Minister.

Even if one accepts Hurren’s assertion that he aimed to “arrest”

Trudeau not kill him, the fact that he was searching for him with arms drawn in the grounds of the prime minister's temporary residence demonstrates that he was at the very least anticipating a potentially violent clash with Trudeau's security detail. Outrageously, all of this is being swept under the rug at Hurren's trial, which will be brought to a rapid conclusion when he is sentenced less than two weeks from now.

The latest developments in the Hurren case underscore the urgency of the Socialist Equality Party's demand, first raised in a statement last month, for all internal investigations into the attempted assassination to be made public. This step is critical in order to lay bare Hurren's political motivations for his premeditated attack and expose any possible accomplices or at least supporters he may have had both within and outside the military. Two internal inquiries have long ago been completed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but officials have insisted that they are "not for public consumption."

The official narrative of Hurren as a disoriented individual who was overwhelmed by the pandemic and had no intention of harming anyone neatly dovetails with the ruling elite's desire to prevent any serious examination of the role of far-right networks and right-wing extremists within the military and state apparatus. Such an investigation would undoubtedly uncover significant support for far-right views, including those expressed by Hurren and the demonstrators on Parliament Hill on July 1.

In recent years, there have been repeated exposures of far-right elements within the Canadian military. These include:

- \* On July 1, 2017, four serving Canadian military members, all of whom were members of the Proud Boys, broke up an indigenous ceremony in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Although the military investigated the incident, no charges or demotions were ever imposed on those involved.

- \* In January 2020, Patrick Matthews, a former Canadian combat engineer who had deserted his post just months earlier, was detained by the FBI as a member of the neo-Nazi terrorist outfit The Base. Matthews was briefly detained by the RCMP in August 2019, after he had been exposed by a journalist as a recruiter for The Base, but was allowed to flee to the United States. He was arrested in January 2020 for his involvement in The Base's plot to launch a violent attack on the Virginia State Legislature.

- \* In July 2020, it was revealed that a neo-Nazi sailor was allowed to rejoin the Royal Canadian Navy despite his involvement with violent white supremacist groups, and his efforts to sell military-grade weaponry to far-right organizations.

- \* In August 2020, a CBC report revealed that two military reservists, who were members of the same unit as Hurren, were identified by counter-intelligence police four years earlier as supporters of far-right groups, including the Soldiers of Oden and 3 Percenters. One of them described Trudeau as a "treasonous bastard" and continues to serve as a reservist to this day.

- \* In early December 2020, a uniformed junior officer addressed an anti-mask rally in downtown Toronto in what was a flagrant violation of the military's obligation to refrain from engaging in political activity.

No one within the political establishment wishes to expose the true extent of the far-right's infiltration of and support within the

armed forces and other state institutions. While all parliamentary parties united behind a New Democratic Party-inspired motion calling for the Proud Boys to be designated a "terrorist group" late last month, the cynical character of this manoeuvre is illustrated by the fact that not a single politician has raised serious concerns about, never mind demanded an exposure of all the facts surrounding the first attempted assassination of a Canadian head of government by a right-wing extremist in modern times.

The reasons for this are clear. Canada's ruling elite, like the wing of the US ruling class that supports the Democratic Party, is responding to Trump's attempted fascist coup of January 6 by downplaying the threat posed by the far right and extending an outstretched hand of "reconciliation" to the very political forces responsible for its promotion. In the US, this takes the form of Biden and the Democrats' incessant appeals for "unity" with their Republican "colleagues," while in Canada it was shown by the NDP and Liberals joining the Conservatives, a party with extensive ties to the extreme right, to issue a hypocritical condemnation of the Proud Boys.

The authorities' attempt to downplay and trivialize Hurren's actions reflects the fear that a full account of what happened, and its broader context and significance, would disastrously discredit the Canadian military, which would be exposed as a hotbed of far-right activity. This would cut across the unanimous push on the part of the ruling class to vastly expand military spending and carry out the largest rearmament program since the Second World War. It would also puncture the ideological propaganda used by the Canadian ruling elite to justify military interventions around the globe: namely the claims that its military is fighting for "democracy" and "human rights."

Even more fundamentally, Canada's ruling elite wants to keep the full extent of far right and fascist activities under wraps because it wishes to leave open the option of using these reactionary political forces to suppress working class opposition. Under conditions of an unprecedented escalation of social inequality, the spread of joblessness, hunger, and poverty amid the pandemic, and the government's catastrophic response to COVID-19, ruling classes in Canada and internationally are increasingly turning towards authoritarian forms of rule to maintain their grip on power.



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