

Three neo-Nazis plead guilty in terror plot targeting US power plants

Jacob Crosse
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On Wednesday, the Department of Justice revealed that at least three neo-Nazis pleaded guilty earlier this month to charges of conspiring to provide material support to terrorists as part of a plot targeting electrical substations in the United States.

Animated by their desire to see President Donald Trump remain in power indefinitely, the three far-right plotters believed that by destroying power substations they could provoke a race war, which would give rise to a fascist ethno-state.

The three men have been identified as Jackson Matthew Sawall, 22, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Christopher Brenner Cook, 20, of Columbus, Ohio; and Jonathan Allen Frost, 24, of Katy, Texas. All three face a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

The plot to provoke a racial civil war is part of a resurgence of fascistic activity in the US. From deadly attacks on left-wing protesters to the far-right “People’s Convoy,” the growth of fascistic groups has been enabled by extensive financial and legal backing from sections of the ruling class and support from sympathetic police departments.

According to plea agreements provided by the Department of Justice, the three men came to the attention of the FBI after a fourth man, an unnamed Canadian who has not been charged, crossed into the US via Detroit in 2019 to visit Christopher Cook. The Justice Department claims that the Canadian was found to be in possession of a rifle, a shotgun and a handgun, prompting a search of his vehicle by law enforcement.

During the search, federal agents seized the Canadian’s cell phone and found “multiple images of Nazi, white power and anti-LGBTQ propaganda.” Federal agents determined that the Canadian was coming to the US to visit Cook, leading them to question Cook in his home. Cook told the agents that he

had met the Canadian playing video games online.

By October 2019, according to the plea agreement, Cook, Frost and Sawall had begun conspiring with the Canadian to blow up electrical substations throughout the US.

In court papers, the agents admit that Cook, a teenager at the time, openly discussed his knowledge of the neo-Nazi Atomwaffen group, complaining that the group was “mismanaged.” In the course of the same interview, Cook’s mother told the agents that she had recently forced Cook to remove three Nazi flags he had hanging in his room.

Court documents allege that a government informant told the FBI that Cook was attempting to form an 18-member group that would shoot high-powered rifles at electrical substations throughout the US in an operation he called “Lights Out.” Details of the “Lights Out” plot were shared in an online group chat of the same name, whose participants included Cook, Frost, Sawall and others.

The group originally intended the plan to be implemented by 2024. But as Trump began to lay the groundwork for his eventual coup attempt, claiming that the only way he could lose the 2020 election was through massive voter fraud, Cook pressured the group to step up its timeline, with the aim of implementing the terror plot in the event Joe Biden was declared the winner.

The plea agreements note that Frost “sought to provide several AR-47 rifles, which he had previously acquired and built himself, to members of the conspiracy.” The group allegedly gathered in Columbus, Ohio, in February 2020. The documents state that “Frost brought an AR-47 with no serial number ... to Cook for use in carrying out their plan.”

During the Columbus meet-up, the fascists purchased

a can of spray paint and painted a swastika flag under a bridge, with the caption, “Join the Front.”

Prior to March 2020, the three gathered materials and attempted to recruit younger people to their conspiracy. They shared fascist literature such as the book *Siege*, which calls on independent Nazi cells to carry out violent terrorist activities to start a race war.

However, following the Columbus meeting, Sawall became frightened during a traffic stop and apparently tried to swallow a fentanyl necklace he was wearing. The necklace had been made by members of the group to show their allegiance to the plan and their determination not to be caught by the police. After Sawall survived his attempted suicide, he stopped communicating with Frost and Cook.

The government claims Frost and Cook continued with the plan, meeting up with juvenile recruits in Texas during the spring and summer of 2020. By August 2020, FBI agents had searched the residences of Cook, Frost and Sawall. They claimed to have found various weapons, chemicals used for explosive devices and neo-Nazi literature.

In another recent example of neo-Nazi activity in the US—and the virtual hands-off policy of police departments in relation to the far-right—members of the National Socialist Club-131 attempted to break into the Red Ink Community Library in Providence, Rhode Island, this past Monday and disrupt a reading of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Despite the fact that one person said he was assaulted by one of the fascist attackers, no charges have been filed as of this writing.

The assault left the person with a “bloody lip,” according to a report by *Liberation News*, the publication of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). The report noted that the “neo-Nazis ... retreated and dispersed after only 15 minutes.” It continued: “The event organizers did not call the police, but the police did arrive, spoke casually with the remaining neo-Nazis and did not make any arrests.”

Jordan, a PSL member who was at the meeting, noted the support the community gave to attendees of the book reading once the fascists had surrounded the library. He said: “It was great to hear our neighbors yelling, ‘You don’t live here, we don’t want you here, get out...’”

The National Socialist Club-131 is well known to the

police and the intelligence agencies. Last August, NSC-131 member Anthony Petrucelli was arrested for assault and battery for the 14th time. Earlier this year, NSC-131 member Andrew Hazelton was sentenced to five years in prison for possessing child pornography and soliciting sex from a 10-year-old.

While members of the Providence community were outraged at the presence of violent Nazis outside the book store, the minority leader of the Rhode Island State House, Republican Rep. Blake Filippi, asked Wednesday on Twitter: “Why do [Rhode Island] politicians and media give Commies a pass?”

Along similar lines as the refusal earlier this month of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis to condemn Nazis, Filippi stated: “The universal condemnation of Nazis and the apparent acceptance of Commies by politicians and media means the Commies are the clear and present danger.”



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