

New details reveal Highland Park shooter's extensive far-right history

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Seven people were killed and 47 wounded by 21-year-old Robert Crimo III when he opened fire from a rooftop with a semi-automatic rifle on a Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago.

Among the surviving victims is eight-year old Cooper Roberts who was shot in the chest and suffered severe injuries that have left him paralyzed from the waist down, most likely for the rest of his life. His twin brother and parents were uninjured but are currently awaiting Roberts to awake in the hospital. He is currently sedated and in critical, but stable condition.

While Lake County authorities quickly declared Crimo had "no political motivation" and acted as a "lone wolf," there is ample evidence, as the WSWS has already reported, that the mass murderer was heavily involved in many far-right online circles and an avid supporter of former President Donald Trump.

Of particular note is Crimo's use of anti-Semitic iconography and pro-Christian alt-right media. A screenshot of one of the many videos Crimo posted on his YouTube channel shows him flashing the three-fingered "OK" alt-right hand signal with a lightning bolt tattooed on his right hand in the style of the "cracker bolt." The lightning bolt symbol has been identified by the Anti-Defamation League as a common white supremacist and neo-Nazi symbol derived from the SS of Nazi Germany and has been seen in many far-right extremist groups such as the Proud Boys.

Crimo also posted a time-lapse video of him painting the words "God's Not Dead" on his mother's house and then painting a camouflaged man holding an assault rifle with a yellow smiley face for a head. This face has also been noted as a common symbol used in far-right online spaces.

The words "God's Not Dead" refer to the films

God's Not Dead and God's Not Dead 2, independent films produced for a Christian audience starring Kevin Sorbo, a notorious QAnon-friendly conspiracy theorist and Trump supporter who once played Hercules on television in the 1990s. The films, while ostensibly presenting pro-Christian messages, have been utilized by the far-right in their portrayals of nefarious outside forces hellbent on killing and squashing all of Christianity. Adherents of the fascist QAnon movement have used the film as a symbol of their own perceived oppression by "woke" elements in society who deserve violent retribution.

Crimo's propagation of these fascist symbols is significant considering that the majority of his victims were Jewish, the city is home to a sizable Jewish community, and he had apparently targeted Highland Park synagogues in the past.

As *Forward* reported, five of the seven victims were Jewish or members of Jewish families. These include Jacki Sundheim, 63, who helped arrange events at North Shore Congregation Israel; Irina McCarthy, 35, a Jewish Russian émigré; and Katherine Goldstein, 64, who married into a Jewish family. The other victims, Nicholas Toledo, 73, and Eduardo Uvaldo, 69, were Mexican immigrants who had lived in the United States for decades.

At least two sources have also reported that Crimo visited a local synagogue in an attempt to "scope it out" prior to the shooting. Resident Martin Blumenthal reported seeing the 21-year-old dressed in all black with a backpack entering the synagogue and then leaving after 45 minutes. Meanwhile, Rabbi Yosef Schanowitz reported to the *Times of Israel* that Crimo had entered his Chabad synagogue of mostly Hasidic worshippers during a Passover service before being promptly asked to leave. The synagogue is located just

two blocks away from where the shooting took place and directly on the route of the Highland Park July 4th parade.

The Highland Park neighborhood was also subjected to antisemitic propaganda leaflets left outside homes of Jewish families on Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, as FOX32 reported in April.

According to Highland Park residents, Crimo was also a noteworthy figure in many of the suburb's anti-lockdown and "stop the steal" rallies, supporting Trump's claims that the 2020 election was "stolen." One selfie shows Crimo dressed as the popular character of "Where's Waldo?" while standing among throngs of other Trump supporters. Another picture shows him draped in a Trump flag while laughing.

A Highland Park resident posted on Facebook alleging that Crimo and a band of far-right associates had "doxxed" her, creating flyers calling her a Communist with her name, picture, and address along with a call to action that she must be stopped. This was all done after she had participated in a "Stop the Steal" counter-protest.

Details of Crimo's background and home life have also been revealed in light of the shooting. The *Chicago Tribune* reports that the police were called to the Crimo house no less than nine times in response to domestic disputes between his father Robert Crimo, Jr. and his mother Denise Pesina. These often related to arguments regarding "belittling" speech that often resorted in objects being thrown and physical altercations between Crimo, Jr. and Pesina. A neighbor of the family told the *Tribune* that police would come to the house on a "weekly" basis when both parents lived together.

In regard to incidents relating to Crimo himself, the first reported police occurrence was in 2002 when his mother pled guilty to child endangerment after leaving the then 2-year-old boy alone in a car with the windows rolled up for almost 30 minutes. It was reported to have been about 79 degrees Fahrenheit outside.

The police were called in 2018 when it was reported that Crimo had attempted suicide by hacking himself with a machete.

By the time of last weekend's shooting, the three no longer lived together, with Crimo living by himself in an apartment on his father's property and minimal contact between them all.

It also appears that in February Crimo wrote and published a manifesto before the shooting. According to users on 4chan, the shooter had written a paper entitled "Arcturus," a document almost 30 pages in length which consists solely of seemingly random numbers in a single paragraph. On Amazon, there is a link to "Arcturus Paperback" by Robert Crimo, but the link has since been taken down.

The mainstream media and police officials have sought to obscure and hide Crimo's involvement with the far-right and the anti-Semitic motivations for his crimes at nearly every turn. The fact that Crimo was so deeply embedded in the alt-right and Trumpism points to political issues which the ruling class would like to paper over.

The nihilism and hopelessness Crimo exhibits are a product of the rotten capitalist system and its inability to meet the basic needs of the working class. More than two decades of unending wars abroad, the far reaching assault on democratic rights at home and more than two years of a pandemic which has been allowed by the Democrats and Republicans alike to kill more than 1 million people has had a devastating effect.

Only the overthrow of capitalism by the working class under a program of international socialism can stamp out the violence of the capitalist ruling class and offer a solution to young people disoriented and broken by the failures of capitalism.



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