

Highland Park shooter posted anti-Semitic and racist messages days before shooting

William Quartermaine

12 July 2022

On July 4, Robert Crimo III opened fire from a rooftop on an Independence Day parade in Highland Park, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago, killing seven and wounding dozens more. The human price paid for Crimo's actions continues to increase with heart-wrenching consequences.

For instance, the WSWS had previously reported on one wounded victim in particular, 8-year-old Cooper Roberts whose spinal cord was severed as a result of being shot by Crimo. While he was sedated and in stable condition only days ago, Roberts is now having to undergo an extremely complex surgery to repair a torn esophagus and fight a new infection.

CBS News reports Roberts regained consciousness briefly and asked for his twin brother, Luke and his dog before eventually being rushed for emergency surgery. Luke suffered shrapnel-related injuries during the shooting and, while in stable condition at home, will have to live with pieces of shrapnel inside him for the rest of his life.

A motive for the shooting has yet to be offered by Lake County authorities with Lake County Major Crimes Task Force spokesman Sgt. Christopher Covelli maintaining there was no racial or political motive for the attack. However, there is mounting evidence to suggest that Crimo was an active participant in far-right movements, steeped in antisemitism and fascist rhetoric, and a loyal follower of former President Donald Trump.

In addition to recent reports on Crimo's political activity, newly revealed messages from his account "Awake47" on 4chan underline his fascist tendencies. The comments, which contain extreme racist and violent content typical of far-right movements and paramilitary groups, were written within days of his Fourth of July attack.

On June 25, for example, Crimo parroted an antisemitic talking point used by Holocaust deniers saying, "the math is all screwed (sic) up. the logistics of 6m jews doesn't make sense but i'm just retarded." On July 2, he posted simply "retarded jews." Both of these comments, the second of which was posted only two days before the shooting, bring light to the antisemitic sentiments exhibited by Crimo and potential motivation for targeting the Chicago suburb which has a large Jewish population.

Crimo's fascist vitriol extended beyond anti-Semitism. On June 28, Crimo also posted "i say we just get rid of the blacks all together." On July 2, he wrote, "orientals should be gassed and washed."

Photos of Crimo wearing a "Sad Boys" Pepe the Frog t-shirt, a well-known symbol of the far right and Trump supporters have been documented, as well as photos showing him present at at least two pro-Trump rallies. Newly revealed posts also show Crimo had a Trump bobblehead taped in the back of his Acura, while more photos showcase the 21-year-old draped in a Trump flag.

Highland Park community activist Rachael Wachstein told *Forward* that she had seen Crimo with a band of other pro-Trump supporters at a Blue Lives Matter rally in September 2020 in Highland Park. Crimo allegedly pushed and intimidated counter-protesters aggressively and was a known quantity in the neighborhood as a particularly recognizable pro-Trump element. Despite Crimo's involvement with the far right and his recognizable stature, he was able to purchase multiple firearms legally and passed four background checks without any further questioning before committing the shooting.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that Crimo was heavily involved in Trumpism and fascist politics, no

national Democratic officials have discussed these facts in relation to the shooting. The antisemitic and racist rhetoric from Crimo has all but been totally unreported by major media outlets as well.

Acting as cover for the increasingly fascistic Republican party, the Democrats use crocodile tears and blame the populace as a whole to avoid any meaningful action in curtailing tragedies such as the Highland Park shooting.

Senate Democratic Majority Whip and Illinois senator Dick Durbin repeatedly side-stepped questions regarding Crimo and his motivations in an interview on Fox News Sunday. Instead, he offered conventional platitudes such as how a mass shooting like Crimo's is not "consistent with America's values or its constitution," before echoing toothless claims for "stricter" gun safety laws.

President Joe Biden's attempts to quell popular anger over the deluge of mass shootings in recent weeks that have left so many dead or wounded was exemplified in his signing of a bipartisan gun safety package in late June; the first gun safety law ratified in 30 years. However, the bill does little beyond offer tepid restrictions on assault weapons usage and allocating funds for "mental health and school safety" which have yet to be revealed in detail. Since the signing of the bill there have been 30 more reported mass shootings throughout the country.

According to White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, Biden still has no plans to visit Chicago or the Highland Park suburb, instead choosing to focus on traveling to Ohio to promote his American Rescue Plan.

On CNN, Illinois governor and potential 2024 Democratic presidential nominee J.B. Pritzker remained elusive regarding Crimo's motives, saying "there were signs of this white supremacy symbol ... [but] we don't exactly know whether it is focused on one particular group or another."

When pressed about the failure of Illinois's "red flag" laws to stop the shooter—wherein a citizen's purchasing of firearms would be halted once a family member has identified them as a potential violent threat—Pritzker blamed Crimo's family for not stepping up and reporting him to the authorities.

These half-measures and tepid excuses offered by the most prominent faces of the Democratic Party underlie

the party's complicity in the growth of inequality which is undermining democratic rights and accelerating the trend of mass shootings in the United States.

The Democratic Party is incapable of speaking to the roiling social and political crisis that pervades the United States and is accordingly unwilling to offer more than the most meager opposition to the far right. Only a movement of the working class armed with a socialist program can overthrow the rotten capitalist order which spawns figures like Crimo.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact