

Neo-Nazi facing multiple charges after ramming security barrier outside White House with U-Haul truck

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23 May 2023

Just before 10:00 p.m. Monday night, a 19-year-old neo-Nazi driving a 26-foot U-Haul truck rammed a security barrier on the north side of Lafayette Square, a few hundred feet from the White House, in an apparent attack targeting President Joe Biden. Video from the scene shows that police recovered a black and red flag with a swastika on it and a roll of duct tape from the truck.

Multiple cell phone videos from witnesses confirm that the driver deliberately tried to drive past the barriers.

The driver of the vehicle was identified Tuesday morning by US Park Police as Sai Varshith Kandula of Chesterfield, Missouri. Chesterfield is an upper-middle class suburb of roughly 50,000 people outside St. Louis. Local NBC reporter Paula Vasan confirmed in interviews with Kandula's neighbors that the young man was often seen walking around the neighborhood wearing a McDonald's cap and that he "kept to himself."

A spokesperson for Marquette High School told Vasan that Kandula graduated from the school in January 2022. "We can confirm that he participated in Student Council during his sophomore year and the boys' tennis team in his sophomore and junior years," the spokesperson said.

In his LinkedIn profile, Kandula wrote that his "... career pursuit is dedicated in the field of data analytics" and that he was "currently skilled in python and java as my primary sources of coding languages." He said he did not have any "job experience" and that he was "actively searching for jobs..."

No one, including Kandula, was hurt in the incident,

although it does appear that Biden was in the White House at the time of crash.

The incident, coupled with reports of a "suspicious package" nearby, prompted the Secret Service to order the evacuation of the Hay-Adams Hotel, which is located on the corner of 16th and H Street, across from Lafayette Square and the White House.

In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Chris Zaboji, a 25-year-old pilot who was on a late-night jog, said he heard a "huge crash" despite the fact that he was wearing headphones. He told the paper he saw that the truck had "slammed" into the barricade and that it "seemed intentional from where I was standing." Zaboji said he began to record the incident, which showed the driver backing up and ramming the gate again, at which point several police officers descended onto the scene.

Kandula is currently facing at least five charges, including assault with a dangerous weapon, threatening to kill and/or harm a president or vice president and destruction of federal property.

The serious charges stem in part from an interview Kandula conducted with Secret Service agents following the attack. In portions of the interview leaked to major media outlets, Kandula admits that he flew to Washington D.C. from St. Louis on a "one-way ticket" and that upon arriving at Dulles International Airport he rented a U-Haul, which he drove directly to the White House.

In the interview, Kandula is reported to have said that his goal was to "get to the White House, seize power, and be put in charge of the nation." As to how the skinny 19-year-old planned to seize power, he replied, "Kill the

president if that's what I have to do and hurt anyone that would stand in my way." He told the agents he had been plotting for six months and that even though he was not able to penetrate the White House, "my message was received."

In addition to driving with a Nazi flag and a roll of duct tape, Kandula had a "green book" on his person, which served as an "outlet for his thoughts," per the Secret Service.

In the same interview, he allegedly admitted to purchasing the Nazi flag online because "Nazis have a great history." Asked to elaborate, Kandula said he admired the Nazis' "authoritarian nature, Eugenics, and their one world order."

In statements that could have been ripped from the interview with fascist Alex Jones given last year by rapper-millionaire Ye (formerly Kanye West), Kandula said he looked up to Hitler "because he was a strong leader."

His failed terrorist attack is just the latest in a torrent of right-wing political violence unleashed following the election of Donald Trump, himself an admirer of Hitler.

Less than three weeks ago, a neo-Nazi gunman who wore the same RWDS (Right Wing Death Squad) patch favored by the Proud Boys, gunned down eight men, women and children at a mall outside a Dallas suburb.

A week before that, on April 30, US attorneys in Minneapolis announced multiple arson charges against Jackie Rahm Little, a 36-year-old Minnesota man. Little was charged with setting fires to two mosques in Minneapolis on April 25 and 26.

Little is also accused of vandalizing the office of Democratic Representative Ilhan Omar and a police vehicle assigned to a Somali officer. In both instances, Little spray painted the number "500," first on Omar's office door and then on the police vehicle.

In February, Omar went public with several death threats she had recently received, tweeting out voicemails she had received. In one message, an angry man threatens her, saying, "I'll put a bullet in your f*cking head, and get the f**ck out of my country you c*nt-sucking b*tch. I'll f*cking kill you."

Omar, an immigrant from Somalia and the frequent target of the Republican Party, said that these threats were directly related to right-wing attacks leveled against her by Republicans. "These threats increase whenever Republicans put a target on my back," she said.

Omar was removed from the House Foreign Affairs Committee earlier this year by Republicans who cynically accused her of antisemitism for her tame comments critiquing the outsized influence of Israeli lobbyists in Washington.

The rise of antisemitism and violent fascist attacks in the US is due entirely to the immense support these elements, including QAnon and white supremacists, receive from the Republican Party.

In fact, less than 24 hours after the vehicle attack in Washington, Florida Republican Senator Rick Scott released what he called a "formal travel advisory for socialists visiting Florida," warning that the state was "openly hostile" to "Socialists, Communists, and those that enable them."

Notably, neither Scott nor Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has ever issued a travel advisory warning Nazis not to come to Florida. Quite the opposite. Given the opportunity to denounce Nazis last year following an assault on a Jewish college student, DeSantis refused.

Scott was one of dozens of Republican and Democratic politicians who welcomed members of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion to the Capitol last year.



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