

Trump-supporting fascist charged with attempted murder after shooting unarmed man protesting Spanish conquistador statue in New Mexico

Jacob Crosse
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A peaceful protest held in opposition to the re-installation of a statue depicting a Spanish conquistador Thursday in Española, about 25 miles north of Santa Fe in north central New Mexico, ended in violence after a 23-year-old supporter of ex-President Donald Trump shot an unarmed protester in the chest with a pistol. The shooting occurred in front of a government building and right next to the local sheriff's office.

The shooter, who has since been charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and attempted first degree murder, has been identified by police and local media as Ryan Martinez. In photos and video taken before the shooting, and on his own social media accounts, Martinez is shown frequently wearing a red "Make America Great Again" hat. On social media, and at Thursday's rally, Martinez expressed support for Trump, and his "big lie" that the 2020 election was fraudulent, and that Joe Biden is an illegitimate president.

The victim has been identified as 25-year-old Jacob Johns, an "activist, artist, musician and father" who is Hopi and Akimel O'odham, according to a GoFundMe made in support of his recovery. As of this writing, Johns is still being treated for his injuries at a hospital in Albuquerque about 90 miles (144 kilometers) south of Española.

Video of the shooting posted on social media shows that Martinez was in no danger when he pulled out his pistol and shot Johns, who, along with dozens of other Native Americans and local community members, had

been peacefully protesting the re-installation of a statue depicting the Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate.

Martinez was one of several right-wing Trump supporters who decided to harass and intimidate Native American residents who had gathered at the rally to celebrate the postponement of the statues' installation. According to police and protesters, Martinez cursed at the protesters and was previously told by police to leave the rally.

In a video showing the "No Juan de Oñate" rally, posted by Raymond Naranjo, Martinez is shown wearing a teal hoodie and red "Make America Great Again" cap. The video shows a scuffle break out as Martinez jumps over a small wall and attempts to bull rush protesters who had gathered in front of the Rio Arriba County government building where the statue of Oñate was supposed to be installed. On Wednesday, local officials postponed the re-installation of the statue citing "safety concerns."

The video shows several people prevent Martinez from running towards the main group of protesters, which included women and children. After Martinez was blocked by protesters, he hopped back over the small wall, pulled out his pistol, took aim, and shot at the crowd. Screams immediately fill the air, and a person is heard yelling, "Help me! Help me!" and "I can't breathe." After shooting Johns, the video shows Martinez speeding away in a white Tesla.

This is the second time in the last three years that a

right-wing fascist has shot someone protesting a statue of Oñate. In the summer of 2020, as nationwide protests against police violence erupted following the police murder of George Floyd, Steven Ray Baca, the son of a former Bernalillo County sheriff's deputy showed up in Albuquerque's Old Town neighborhood with several other heavily armed members of the "New Mexico Civil Guard" to menace anti-police violence protesters who were demanding the removal of the statue venerating Oñate, who colonized New Mexico in 1598 for the King of Spain.

In the 2020 protest, Baca shot an unarmed protester named Scott Williams four times in the torso with a pistol after he had previously assaulted two woman, Julie Harris and Vivian Norman. Earlier this year, Baca pleaded guilty to battery charges against Harris and Norman.

Baca had originally been facing several serious charges in relation to the shooting of Williams, but several of them were dropped after a new special prosecutor was appointed and offered Baca a plea deal. Baca, who has been free since June of 2020, is still awaiting sentencing after pleading no contest to aggravated battery, and guilty to battery and unlawful carrying of a deadly weapon in the shooting of Williams. Baca was originally set to be sentenced on September 9, but a judge granted his request to have it delayed until November.

In response to the latest right-wing terrorist attack animated, incited and cultivated by Trump and the Republican Party, Democratic New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham released an anodyne statement on Twitter (X) on September 29, absolving Trump and the Republicans of any political responsibility for Thursday's shooting, instead blaming "gun violence."

"What happened yesterday," Grisham wrote, "demonstrates, yet again, the immediate need for meaningful solutions to the epidemic of gun violence. We cannot allow this to be the norm."

Since Trump's failed January 6, 2021 coup, right-wing political violence has increasingly become "the norm" in New Mexico and throughout the United States. In

January of this year, failed Republican New Mexico House candidate Solomon Peña, an ardent Trump supporter, organized a multi-month shooting spree against the homes of his political opponents following his November 2022 defeat. Peña's attempted assassinations, one of which was conducted with a machine gun, targeted the homes of two Bernalillo County commissioners and two New Mexico state legislators.

Thursday's shooting once again demonstrates that the Democratic Party and the agencies of the capitalist state, cannot be relied upon to carry out a serious fight against right-wing political violence.

The Democratic Party is far more concerned with politically rehabilitating the Republicans and key institutions of the capitalist state, such as the police, military, intelligence agencies and Supreme Court, which supported Trump's coup, than they are of stopping the fascist threat.

For the Democrats and their billionaire backers on Wall Street and in the CIA, the number one priority remains forging "national unity" with the Republicans in order to prosecute imperialist war abroad against Russia and China, and enacting austerity measures at home in a bi-partisan fashion.



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