

Oregon Republican appeals to far-right militias

Accused Portland killer Jeremy Christian makes first court appearance

Toby Reese
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Jeremy Joseph Christian made his first court appearance in Portland, Oregon on Tuesday after being arrested for stabbing three individuals with a knife last Friday, killing two. The violent assault took place after the victims intervened to defend two girls who had been the target of an Islamophobic and racist tirade from Christian while traveling on a Portland MAX train.

The dead are Ricky John Best, 53, and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, 23. Micah David-Cole Fletcher, 21, was also stabbed in the neck but survived the attack.

In the wake of the killing, the mayor of Portland, Ted Wheeler, has threatened to withhold permits for two right-wing rallies scheduled this month. Supporters of the events have angrily protested the mayor's actions.

Multnomah County Republican Party chairman James Buchal, a Trump supporter, told the British newspaper *Guardian* said that he favored the deployment of "security forces" to protect protests organized by right-wing groups, citing the "Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters" as organizations that could provide "security." Both are extreme right-wing, fascistic anti-immigrant groups.

Joey Gibson, another Trump supporter, stated on "The Common Sense Conservative" YouTube channel that he plans to hold his June 4th "free speech" rally in Portland regardless. He is also the organizer of a June 10th "March Against Sharia" event at Westlake Park in Seattle, Washington.

In his brief court appearance on Tuesday, Christian let loose a violent stream of right-wing invective. "Free speech or die Portland, you got no safe place, this is America," he declared upon entering the courtroom. "Get out if you don't like free speech." He went on, "Death to the enemies of America, leave this country if you hate our freedom. Death to ANTIFA [anti-fascism]. You call it

terrorism, I call it patriotism. You hear me? Die."

Further details surrounding the killing have emerged over the past few days. The court documents reveal that after his arrest, the patrol car video camera captured Christian stating, "I just stabbed a bunch of [expletive] in their neck... I can die in prison a happy man. That's what liberalism gets you."

Christian told police that he was homeless and did not know the last time he had a permanent address. According to the booking documents, he did not have a job. Although he had no documented history of mental illness, Christian's mother reportedly said that he was addicted to marijuana and possibly had mental health problems after he robbed a market in 2002. Court staff had said at the time that he possibly needed help for depression.

Whatever the particular impact of mental illness, Christian was clearly influenced by the anti-immigrant sentiment that has been cultivated by the Trump administration and the "alt-right" forces that surround it.

One of the two teenage female victims, Destinee Mangum, told CNN, "He told us to go back to Saudi Arabia, to get out of his country... that we basically weren't anything and we should just kill ourselves."

A woman who did not want to be identified released cell phone video footage to the press from the night before the killing, when Christian had been involved in similar behavior on the MAX train.

At a right-wing "free speech" rally on April 29, Christian was filmed giving a Nazi salute, calling for the death of Muslims, and shouting other racist or religious epithets. At that event, police separated Christian from protestors and confiscated a baseball bat he had brought.

Christian's Facebook page shows a highly confused but political stream of thoughts. In December of 2016 he posted, "Bernie Sanders was the President I wanted. He

voiced my heart and mind. The one who spoke about the way America should gone. Away from the Military and Prison Industrial Complexes. The Trump is who America needs now that Bernie got ripped off. In a pick your poison election, I would have voted for his fast poison vs. your slow poison. Where are your grand ideas Hillary???"

Christian posted in January of this year, "If Donald Trump is the Next Hitler then I am joining his SS to put an end to Monotheist Question."

In the ten days after the election of Trump, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) tracked nearly 900 hate or bias incidents. The highest number of these incidents happened in the three days immediately following the election with 202, 166, and 138 incidents, compared to 22 and 26 incidents on the 9th and 10th day, respectively. Of the 867 crimes reported, 32 percent were motivated by anti-immigrant sentiment. The second highest category was anti-black, at 21.6 percent.

While the violent and reactionary ideas espoused by Christian are an expression of the types of sentiments encouraged by the Trump administration, they are more broadly an outgrowth of the reactionary and noxious atmosphere promoted by the entire political establishment, which offers no progressive solution to the social crisis in the United States.

The Democrats and the media have systematically downplayed and covered up the significance of the Trump administration's association with far-right elements, personified in the appointment of Stephen Bannon, former head of Breitbart News, to be Trump's chief of staff. The Democrats have instead centered their criticism of Trump on their own reactionary agenda of aggression against Russia.



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