

Protected by police, fascist Patriot Front holds march aimed at menacing Labor Day festival in Indianapolis

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On Saturday, a social media video emerged showing roughly 75 members of the neo-Nazi Patriot Front group marching in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana.

Members of the paramilitary group, founded in the aftermath of the deadly 2017 “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville, Virginia, marched to the beat of drums while carrying metal shields, upside-down American flags and banners that read “Reclaim America” and “America is not for Sale.” They wore their distinctive khaki pants, white balaclavas and dark blue polo shirts.

It is not a coincidence that the fascist group, headed by 24-year-old Thomas Rousseau, chose to march in downtown Indianapolis on September 3. The group timed its march to coincide with LaborFest, an AFL-CIO-organized Labor Day festival held in Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis.

The festival regularly draws over 20,000 people, mostly union members and working class families. Attendees at the festival on Saturday included Destiny Wells, the Democratic candidate for secretary of state, and Joseph Hogsett, the Democratic mayor of Indianapolis.

According to city officials, the fascists did not have a permit to march but were allowed to occupy city roadways for over an hour while they chanted slogans such as “Faith! Liberty! Victory!”

Throughout the roughly milelong march, Indiana State Police were observed tracking the demonstrators.

On Tuesday, Mayor Hogsett was asked by Fox59, the local Fox TV affiliate, if the city had any foreknowledge that Patriot Front, which claims to have held 45

“activities” in Indiana in May and June of this year alone, would be holding a demonstration.

“Well, we didn’t. The fact that a group appeared without any forewarning or forenotice—I can assure you, no advance notice was given that this march was going to take place,” said Hogsett.

While Hogsett perhaps did not have advance knowledge of the march, it is highly unlikely that police agencies were unaware that the group was planning a demonstration.

The same day Patriot Front held its Indianapolis rally, the *Washington Post* posted a story on the close relations between the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police supervisor and head of the intelligence unit, Shane Lamond and a person named “Mason.” Mason, the *Post* verified, is an anti-racist activist who created an online account impersonating Thomas Rousseau, the leader of Patriot Front.

Mason told the *Post* that while he was assuming the identity of the leader of the fascist group, Lamond contacted him online and tried to establish a relationship with him, beginning in February 2020. This occurred, Mason said—and messages confirm—less than two weeks after Patriot Front staged a rally on the Capitol grounds.

As with the rally in Indianapolis, the Patriot Front march on the US Capitol in February 2020 occurred despite the group having no permit. The fascists, protected by the police, were allowed to carry metal shields and flag poles on public property as they menaced onlookers with their violent chants.

In a phone call Mason recorded and shared with the *Post*, Lamond told Mason, whom he believed to be a member of the Patriot Front, that he just wanted to know when the group would be coming to Washington D.C. again, so that the police could allocate enough resources to allow the fascists to march “without being attacked or hassled.”

Mason asked Lamond if he and other D.C. Metropolitan Police officers were “sympathetic to what we’re trying to do.”

“These days, we like working with patriots,” Mason said, per the *Post*, “and it’s hard for us to trust people that don’t share those patriotic views. Where do you stand on that question?”

Lamond replied that he could not answer that question, but added, “I think if you look at just kind of the ideals and demographics of your group, and other groups, you all tend to be more favorable of law enforcement than other groups, I’ll put it that way.”

In Twitter messages exchanged between the pair, Lamond wrote: “Any information you provide me would be kept strictly confidential; it would be kept very quiet to a few MPD members for planning purposes.” Seeking to ingratiate himself with the neo-Nazis, Lamond wrote that he was taking “a big risk” by reaching out to them.

Lamond also told Mason that if he preferred to talk over the phone “so nothing is in writing that’s cool.”

After Patriot Front held another rally in D.C., about which Mason did not tip off Lamond, the cop wrote to Mason: “Hi Thomas, I never heard from you. With everything that is going on in DC and across the country, there isn’t a better time to communicate/collaborate.”

The *Post* reported that Mason and Lamond remained in contact during the anti-police violence protests throughout the summer of 2020 and up to and during the January 6, 2021 coup attempt. How much “collaboration” Lamond engaged in with other members of Patriot Front during this period is not known.

What is known is that this past February, Lamond was put on administrative leave and is currently being investigated

by the FBI for his extensive “collaboration” with members of the Proud Boys, including Henry “Enrique” Tarrío. The former chairman of the group is one of over a dozen Proud Boy and Oath Keeper paramilitaries who have been charged with seditious conspiracy for their role in Trump’s failed coup.

In an interview with the *Post* after Lamond was placed on leave, Tarrío said that Lamond was “very professional” and would routinely provide him with the locations of counter-demonstrators during “Stop the Steal” rallies in Washington D.C. attended by the Proud Boys in the leadup to January 6.

Despite the fact that 31 Patriot Front fascists were arrested this past June in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, on conspiracy to riot charges, the group has continued to disseminate propaganda and hold marches throughout the United States. On July 2, roughly 50 members of the group held a march in downtown Boston, where they allegedly assaulted a local African American artist and activist, Charles Murrell.

Photos taken by a local *Boston Herald* reporter show Murrell being surrounded and beaten with metal shields by the fascists. Murrell claimed that police witnessed the assault and did nothing to stop it.

In the days, and now months, following the attack, the Boston police have not announced any charges or arrests of any members of the Patriot Front. As in Indianapolis, the police and local political leaders claimed in the days following the march that they had no foreknowledge of the neo-Nazis’ plans.



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