

Suspect arrested in apparent second Trump assassination attempt

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On Sunday the FBI. announced it had opened an investigation into an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump after at least one Secret Service agent opened fire at Trump's International Golf Club while the former president was golfing. Neither Trump, nor apparently anyone else, was injured in the incident, which took place two months after the July 13 attempted assassination of Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania.

On Monday federal prosecutors charged Ryan Wesley Routh, 58, with two gun-related charges: possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

Leading Democrats, including Vice President Kamala Harris, her running mate Tim Walz, and President Joe Biden released short statements in which they expressed gratitude for Trump's safety while deploring violence in America.

For his part, shortly after the incident, the Trump campaign blasted out emails to supporters assuring them he was "safe and well" but that "there are people in this world who will do whatever it takes to stop us. I will not stop fighting for you. I will Never Surrender!"

According to statements from the local police, the FBI and the Secret Service, a Secret Service agent fired between 4 and 6 shots sometime after 1:30 p.m. local time after spotting an AK-47-style rifle with a scope pointed into the golf club.

Rafael Barros, special agent in charge of Miami's Secret Service field office, said that Trump was "one or two holes behind" the agent when they began shooting. Reflecting on the violent political environment 50 days before the election, Barros candidly admitted, "Yes, the threat level is high. We have increased the amount of assets that we have ... so we live in danger times, yes."

Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw estimated that the alleged shooter was 300-500 yards away from Trump when the agent began firing. Bradshaw observed that this was "not a long distance" for a potentially lethal shot given the rifle and scope the alleged shooter possessed.

According to photographs produced by Bradshaw, in addition to the AK-47 rifle with a scope, police recovered two backpacks and a Go Pro camera on a chain-link fence near the property line. Bradshaw said after the shooting began a witness spotted the alleged gunman, Routh, fleeing in a black Nissan.

The eyewitness took photographs of the vehicle and license plate and passed it along to the police, who were able to arrest Routh while he was driving on I-95 in nearby Martin County. Bradshaw said that the alleged shooter had not given any statements at the time of his arrest and that he was unarmed when taken into custody.

Routh was a former construction worker in North Carolina before moving to Hawaii in 2018. In 2016 he voted for Trump for president. In 2020, Routh expressed support for Representative Tulsi Gabbard, then a Hawaii Democrat and presidential candidate, and donated small amounts to the Democratic Party.

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, Routh's X feed became almost entirely devoted to supporting US imperialist ambitions in Ukraine. Recanting his previous support for Gabbard, in an X post to the former Hawaii Representative on March 14, 2022 Routh called her an "idiot" and implored her to "go and Join Putin and trump and be their third leg... I AM GOING TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR UKRAINE."

Notably, in the last couple of years, Routh has been interviewed by the *New York Times*, *Semafor* and

Newsweek Romania, in some cases from Kiev. In each interview, Routh touted his support for Ukraine and spoke about trying to recruit civilians, including from among former Afghan soldiers who fled the Taliban, to come and fight in Ukraine.

In the video interview with *Newsweek Romania*, posted three months after Routh's outburst at Gabbard, he explained from Kiev that his "initial goal was to come and fight. I think everybody around the globe should be motivated to come here and support the Ukrainians and support the army, no matter what gender, age, anything, everybody should be here supporting the army."

Routh said because he was 56 and had "no military experience" the Ukrainians told him "you are not an ideal candidate."

Routh explained that "Plan B" was to "come here to Kiev and promote getting more people here. We need thousands and thousands and thousands of people here fighting with the Ukrainians" Routh said.

Later on in the video, Routh claimed to be working with the "international legion."

In a *Semafor* article published March 10, 2023, the news organization identified Routh as the "head of the International Volunteer Center in Ukraine, a private organization which helps foreigners seeking to assist the war effort connect with military units and aid groups."

Routh claimed to have been trying to get Afghans to fight in Ukraine, but, "Most of the Ukrainian authorities do not want these soldiers." He later claimed to have "had partners meeting with [Ukraine's Ministry of Defense] every week and still have not been able to get them to agree to issue on single visa."

In his most recent posts on X before his account was suspended, Routh claimed to have "thousands of Afghan soldiers that are very cheap" ready to be sent to Ukraine and Taiwan in furtherance of US imperialist ambitions.



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