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# Multiple opportunities to prevent shooting: Security criticized, motive a mystery One week after Trump shooting

US Presidential Election 2024

Washington = Kayoko Shimojji July 20, 2024 20:00



It has been one week since the shooting of former President Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on the 20th. The whereabouts of suspect Thomas Matthew Crooks (20) are gradually becoming clearer thanks to information from authorities reported by the US media and statements from federal lawmakers who have been briefed by the authorities.

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According to the New York Times and other sources, about an hour before the incident, a local police officer spotted a thin man with suspicious behavior near the venue and radioed the Secret Service (Presidential Security Service). The man was Crooks, who would later commit the crime, but he did not appear to be carrying a weapon, and the officer lost sight of him.



Former President Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, 2024. (Reuters)

A sniper stationed near the venue spotted and photographed the suspect 20 minutes before the attack, and at least two police officers were pulled from traffic control to help search for the man. But security forces allowed the rally to go ahead, and Trump took to the podium, where he was shot about eight minutes into his speech.

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Trump's campaign announced the rally on its website on the 3rd and solicited participants. On the 8th, an advance guard of security visited the venue to assess security threats and discussed the division of roles between the presidential guard and the local police. The guards excluded a group of warehouses located only 150 meters north of the podium from the most heavily guarded area, leaving the security there to the local police.



Aerial photo of the rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, where former President Trump was shot on July 13, 2024. (AP)

The Guard has come under fire in the United States since the incident. A congressional hearing is scheduled for the 22nd, with Republican lawmakers calling for the resignation of Guard chief Cheatle. The Department of Homeland Security has also launched an investigation, though it found no problems with the Guard's response.

Along with the security measures, the next focus of investigation will be on the suspect's motive. While the suspect's steps before the incident are becoming clear, his motive remains unclear.

**"The suspect had contempt for politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties," a classmate said.**

Crooks lived in a house in Bethel Park, California, about 80 kilometers south of the scene of the crime. According to U.S. media, he graduated from a local high school in 2022 and a local junior college in May of this year, and worked as a nutritional assistant at a nursing home.

On July 20th, the basement was completely renovated.

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### 事件の経過とクルックス容疑者の足取り

米紙ニューヨーク・タイムズなどによる

7月3日	トランプ陣営がペンシルベニア州バトラーで13日に選挙集会を開くと発表
8日	警備の先遣隊が会場を事前調査
12日	<b>容疑者</b> 射撃クラブで射撃を練習
事件当日 13日	<b>容疑者</b> 自宅近くの銃砲店で銃弾50発を購入 事件の約1時間前、地元警察が不審な様子の容疑者を会場で発見するも見失う
	事件の約20分前に狙撃手が容疑者を見つけて写真を撮影し、画像を共有
	トランプ前大統領の演説開始
	<b>容疑者</b> 演説開始8分ほどで発砲 トランプ氏は右耳から出血。集会参加者1人が死亡、2人が負傷 警護隊の狙撃手が容疑者を射殺

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The course of events in the Trump shooting and the suspect's movements

His high school classmates have offered mixed reviews of him. According to CBS, some say he was a good student, well-liked by his teachers and would often speak up in class, while others say he was relentlessly bullied and isolated, and that he would sometimes wear camouflage or hunting gear. Some even say he failed the entrance exam for the school's rifle team.

His political beliefs are also unclear. State voter information showed him to be registered as a Republican, but there is also a record of him making small donations to Democratic organizations in 2021. While many classmates said they had never heard of a specific political ideology from the suspect, one man who was a junior high and high school classmate told the NYT that he generally despised politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

When a classmate expressed support for Trump during a political debate class in junior high school, the suspect allegedly replied, "You're Hispanic, aren't you? And you like Trump? That's kind of stupid."

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The Pennsylvania home of Thomas Matthew Crooks (20), who is under investigation for the attempted assassination of former President Trump - Reuters

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating the incident as an attempted assassination and possibly a domestic terrorist attack. There is no indication of any connection to terrorist organizations, and the attack is believed to have been carried out by a single individual.

According to US media, the FBI has seized and examined at least two mobile phones and one laptop, and has told federal lawmakers that they have found no evidence of strong partisan views or political ideology.

The phone had search history for information on public figures such as President Biden, Trump, and members of the British royal family, as well as the schedule of the Democratic National Convention, the boy who committed the mass shooting and his parents who were charged, and "major depressive disorder." A local FBI official told reporters on the 14th that there was "no indication that he had mental health issues."

They also found one explosive device in his home and two in a car parked nearby, and discovered he had been receiving packages containing dangerous materials over the past few months. He had a detonator in his pocket at the time of the shooting.

**"There's so much we don't know"**

Professor Eric Madfis (Criminal Justice) of the University of Washington Tacoma, who is an expert on mass shootings in the United States, said, "Mass shootings are on the rise in American society, but there are not enough attempted assassinations of politicians to allow for quantitative analysis," and pointed out, "The suspect is a young white man, and he obtained his gun from a relative, not illegally, which is in common with the statistical trends of mass shooting perpetrators, but there is still too much we don't know." The suspect has not been seen to be active on social media, and it is difficult to imagine that he had any intention of gaining fame.

Professor Madfis also pointed out that, because the suspect's actions showed a glimpse of his obsession with guns, it is possible that he thought that by killing a former U.S. president, he would gain international recognition and show that he was a strong, tough man, and that he was a man of integrity. (Washington = Kayoko Geji)

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