

Democrats and media silent on execution of Michael Reinoehl by US Marshals

By Kevin Reed
10 September 2020

Six days after a multi-agency fugitive task force led by US Marshals tracked down, cornered and killed Michael Reinoehl, the corporate media and the Democrats remain silent on his execution in a hail of bullets in Lacey, Washington.

On Wednesday, OregonLive.com reported, on the basis of search warrants and police affidavits, that a Portland detective assigned to the US Marshals Pacific Northwest Violent Offenders Task Force obtained “pen register” and “trap and trace” warrants from a Portland-area judge one hour and 14 minutes before Reinoehl was shot dead.

The court-approved warrants permitted the task force to track the GPS location and cell phone call data from Reinoehl’s cell phone and pinpoint his precise location.

Although the OregonLive.com report says it “appears” that the US Marshals “already had acted on other information that Reinoehl was in the Lacey area,” it is more likely that the warrants were an after-the-fact formality for police electronic surveillance tracking that was initiated as soon as the manhunt for Reinoehl commenced.

Reinoehl’s killing came several hours after he was charged with the murder of Aaron “Jay” Danielson, a Trump supporter and right-wing vigilante, at a protest in Portland, Oregon on August 29. Just minutes before Reinoehl’s death was announced, President Donald Trump tweeted a demand that the police take action to apprehend Danielson’s killer. “Do your job, and do it fast. Everybody knows who this thug is,” Trump declared.

A second report on Wednesday by OregonLive.com included a statement by an eyewitness to the shooting of Reinoehl at an apartment complex in the 7600 block of Third Way Southeast in Lacey. Nathaniel Dingess, 39, speaking through his attorney, said he saw Reinoehl walking toward his car holding a cell phone in his hand when two unmarked law enforcement vehicles converged

on him and began firing.

Dingess said no warnings or commands were issued as Reinoehl ducked for cover near his car. He was unable to enter his vehicle because it was blocked by the police cars. “Officers shot multiple rapid-fire rounds at Reinoehl before issuing a brief ‘stop’ command, quickly followed by more rapid-fire shooting by additional officers,” Dingess said. He added that he never saw a handgun in Reinoehl’s possession.

As reported Monday by the *World Socialist Web Site*, Reinoehl’s death was a state murder carried out with the endorsement of Attorney General William Barr and President Trump. On Monday, Trump hailed the killing of Reinoehl, saying, “If somebody is breaking the law, there has got to be a form of retribution.”

Taking care not to disrupt their own campaign for “law and order” in response to the mass protests against police violence across the country, Democratic Party presidential and vice presidential candidates Joseph Biden and Kamala Harris have remained silent on the extra-judicial murder of Reinoehl. They have similarly said little or nothing about the murder of two protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin last month by Kyle Rittenhouse, a Trump supporter and armed vigilante who traveled to Kenosha to join other far-right vigilantes in attacking anti-police violence protesters.

In an interview with VICE News, published on September 3, Michael Foster Reinoehl, 48, said that he had been identified as the shooter of Danielson within an hour of the incident on August 29. Of the shooting, he said: “I had no choice. I mean, I had a choice. I could have sat there and watched them kill a friend of mine of color. But I wasn’t going to do that. That was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

He went on: “You know, lots of lawyers suggest that I shouldn’t even be saying anything, but I feel it’s important that the world at least gets a little bit of what’s

really going on because there's been a lot of propaganda put out there.”

Reinoehl described the arrival of the caravan of right-wing counter-protesters in Portland. He said, “There were 600 vehicles... I saw more of their vehicles than real citizen vehicles. It felt like the beginning of a war. It was a free for all and the police were letting it happen.”

Debunking the presentation of the protesters by the right wing and the media, Reinoehl said, “What they've done is they're trying make it look like we are all terrorists. And they're trying to make me look like a murderer. I've noticed that they keep saying that it's not clear that it's related to the protests. That's a lie. They know that it's related to the protests.”

On the question of Antifa, Reinoehl said, “They want to paint a picture of Antifa having major involvement. A lot of people don't understand what Antifa represents. And if you just look at the basic definition of it, it's just anti-fascist, and I am 100 percent anti-fascist. I am not a member of Antifa. I am not a member of anything. Honestly, I hate to say it, but I see a civil war right around the corner.”

Little of this interview has been carried by the corporate news media, which falsely repeated Attorney General Barr's claim that Reinoehl was a member of Antifa. The media reported without criticism the official reports from the US Marshals Service that Reinoehl was gunned down because “initial reports indicate the suspect produced a firearm, threatening the lives of law enforcement officers,” and that “as they attempted to apprehend him, there was gunfire.” Officials later acknowledged that they “are not able to confirm at this time if he fired shots.”

Protests against police violence in Portland and other cities have continued since George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police in late May. With the encouragement of the White House, groups of right-wing militias and vigilantes have carried out acts of violence against the demonstrators with increasing frequency.

In August, a counter-protester was arrested in Portland for firing a weapon into a crowd of Black Lives Matter demonstrators, and Alan Swinney, a member of the neo-fascist Proud Boys, brandished a gun and pointed it at protesters.

Public outrage over the police killing of Reinoehl has been expressed on social media. Portland-area artist and musician David Rovics wrote a song about the murder titled “A Song for Michael Reinoehl” and posted it on Facebook and YouTube. The lyrics to the song include the following:

*For years it was predicted someday Someone
would retaliate
With all those weapons on display With that much
fear and hate
Michael Reinoehl he was sought For murder, the
alleged crime
But he was never caught Or given a chance for
prison time
The cops came to the property From local deputies
to feds
They came to kill their enemy They wanted this
anarchist's head*

Speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site*, Rovics said of the killing of Reinoehl: “All we know is what the police say, which we also know is completely unreliable. But even according to what the police have said, he did not fire at them, and none of their body cams were on. So, based on that lack of information, my educated guess is Michael was executed.

“As for why, I'd say that's because many of the cops, at every level—city, state, federal—are sympathetic with fascists and not at all sympathetic with antifascists, and this has been true since fascism has existed as a political philosophy.”

When asked about the response of the corporate media, Rovics said, “What they're doing with him, as with so many other cases, is treating the police report as if it's remotely believable. They know it's not—or they should know. Pretending they don't know this is collusion, it's a sort of gas-lighting. So, basically, they're giving us the impression that he did something other than raise his hands up and surrender, and thus, the police had some kind of justification to fire 40 bullets at him.”

To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>