Man charged in deputy ambush scrawled extremist 'Boogaloo' phrases in blood

Steven Carrillo, accused of killing a sheriff's deputy in Santa Cruz County, California, wrote the words on the hood of a car, prosecutors said

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By Brandy Zadrozny, Ben Collins and Andrew Blankstein

Steven Carrillo, a California man who was charged with murder after he ambushed two Santa Cruz County deputies, scrawled phrases tied to an online far-right extremist movement in blood on a car shortly before he was detained.

Carrillo killed Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller, critically injured another deputy and threw pipe bombs at police on June 6th, Santa Cruz District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell alleged on Thursday.

Before he was apprehended, Carrillo scrawled the word "boog" and "I became unreasonable" in blood on the hood of a car. "Boog" is short for boogaloo, a far-right anti-government movement that began on the extremist site 4chan and aims to start a second American civil war.

Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller.Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

The phrase "I became unreasonable" has become a meme in public Boogaloo communities on Facebook, which discuss weapons and fantasize about a second civil war. One recent meme on Facebook shows a man holding a Boogaloo flag at a protest, along with the phrase "Become unreasonable."

"I became unreasonable" is a reference to a quote written by Marvin Heemeyer, an anti-government extremist who bulldozed 13 buildings in Granby, Colorado, in retribution for a zoning dispute. Heemeyer killed himself after the rampage, which occurred on June 4, 2004, almost 16 years to the day of Carrillo's attack.

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Heemeyer is known by the nickname Killdozer in extremist groups online and is frequently quoted in Boogaloo Discord chats and Facebook groups.

"Heemeyer is revered in Boogaloo groups," said Megan Squire, a computer science professor at Elon University who tracks online extremism and is monitoring several private Boogaloo groups online.

Referencing a nickname for Heemeyer, Squire said, "Killdozer represents the intersection between the libertarian ideal of small government and the militant fantasy of the Boogaloo. Heemeyer, as Killdozer, meticulously planned a revenge fantasy on some local government entities that he blamed for excessive regulation of his business."

Carrillo also wrote the phrase "Stop the duopoly" in blood on the car hood. "Stop the duopoly" is an otherwise nonviolent political slogan frequently pushed by third party and libertarian candidates.

Carrillo's presence on Facebook mostly featured support for a libertarian presidential candidate, anti-police sentiment and pro-gun causes. His profile picture showed George Washington and other American presidents holding modern weapons and tactical gear.

In one of his last posts on Facebook, Carrillo posted a now infamous video of two Buffalo police officers shoving a 75-year-old man to the ground in a group called "A Gun Page for Poors Who Know They Are Poors."

Steven Carrillo.Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

Carrillo's Facebook page and posts have since been removed from the social network.
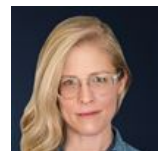
Online Boogaloo messaging has grown "increasingly extreme" amid pandemic lockdowns and nationwide protests over the killing of George Floyd, according to a recent report by the Network Contagion Research Institute, an independent nonprofit organization of scientists and engineers that tracks misinformation and hate speech across social media.

Privacy - Terms

"Elements of The Boogaloo have evolved from a gathering of militia enthusiasts and Second Amendment advocates into a full-fledged violent extremist group, which inspires lone wolf actors and cell-like actors alike," said Joel Finkelstein, director of the institute.

"Given recent events and the inability of law enforcement to grasp and intercept this new mode of distributed terror, we think an increase in these kinds of violent attacks against police are almost inevitable," Finkelstein said.

Boogaloo groups are public and readily accessible on Facebook, but a company spokesperson told NBC News last week that the social network is now "preventing these Pages and groups from being recommended on Facebook."

Facebook accounts tied to three men who were [arrested and charged with multiple state and federal violations of conspiracy](#) to cause destruction at protests in Las Vegas were pulled from the platform last week. At least one of the men, Stephen T. Parshall, repeatedly posted to Boogaloo groups on Facebook, including the phrase "Start. Fomenting. Insurrection."

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