



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 19, 2024

Source: Crooks Hid Gun at Rally Site Before Assassination Attempt

A [source told Fox News](#) that Thomas Matthew Crooks, [who tried](#) to assassinate former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, hid his gun at the site. It was ready and waiting for Crooks to carry out his murder raid. That news surfaced just before Missouri GOP Senator Josh Hawley's shocking report: Whistleblowers revealed that most of the agents around Trump weren't Secret Service.

If Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle hasn't written her resignation letter yet, maybe now's the time.

The unprecedented failure of her agency to protect Trump has destroyed Cheatle's credibility. And the breakdown in security means she'll have a tough time on Monday before the House Oversight Committee.

The committee subpoenaed Cheatle on Wednesday.

BREAKING: Thomas Matthew Crooks hid rifle in advance of Trump rally sniper attack, Secret Service source says <https://t.co/zCeRsrnSsS>

— Fox News (@FoxNews) [July 18, 2024](#)



arinahabich/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Golf Range Finder and an AR-15

The Secret Service source told Fox that Crooks hid the AR-15 in advance, although where he stashed the rifle is unclear:

"We went from golf range finder to AR-15, and now we have to fill in the gap," the source told Fox News.

When authorities first observed Crooks carrying a golf range finder Saturday, he was perceived as a "person of interest" but not a "threat," authorities said Thursday.

Range finders were not banned from rally events at the time, but authorities are expected to review the list of items that are not allowed.

[Crooks] did not become an official threat until he was seen with a weapon.

Fox did not report when Crooks hid the rifle. Presumably, he could have done so days before the event.

Hawley's Letter to Mayorkas

The revelation that Crooks hid the gun is just the latest bruising revelation for the Secret Service. News



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reports since the day of the assassination attempt [have detailed](#) a bungled operation that sounds as if it were run by the Keystone Cops instead of the Secret Service (USSS).

And, indeed, as [Hawley wrote](#) to Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, whistleblowers said most of Trump's protection comprised agents from Homeland Security Investigations.

In two damning paragraphs, Hawley explains that Cheatle and underlings fell down on the job:

Whistleblowers who have direct knowledge of the event have approached my office. According to the allegations, the July 13 rally was considered to be a "loose" security event. For example, detection canines were not used to monitor entry and detect threats in the usual manner. Individuals without proper designations were able to gain access to backstage areas. Department personnel did not appropriately police the security buffer around the podium and were also not stationed at regular intervals around the event's security perimeter.

In addition, whistleblower allegations suggest the majority of DHS officials were not in fact USSS agents but instead drawn from the department's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). This is especially concerning given that HSI agents were unfamiliar with standard protocols typically used at these types of events, according to the allegations.

Hawley expects an answer in seven days.

Former Agents Astonished at Ineptitude

And, as [The New American reported](#) earlier today, Hawley's allegations from whistleblowers support what former agent Dan Bongino has said: that few of the agents around Trump were Secret Service.

BREAKING: [@dbongino](#) says sources tell him there were very few actual Secret Service agents posted at the Butler rally site. He says a lot of them were temp Homeland Security agents.

Bongino says this was gross incompetence by the Secret Service Counter Sniper Team and the entire... pic.twitter.com/U4r6KBgzdk

— Jesse Watters (@JesseBWatters) [July 15, 2024](#)

Bongino told Fox News' Jesse Watters early this week that most of the agents were "temp HSI folks" who are not trained to protect presidents.

Bongino was also astonished that the agency did not deploy aerial drones and other high-tech surveillance.

[Hawley asked Mayorkas](#) what percentage of agents at the event were from HSI instead of Secret Service, and whether those HSI agents constituted a majority.

Other revelations include agents [permitting Crooks](#) to enter the rally site with the range finder then losing track of him. As well, the shooter's father notified authorities that his son was missing before he tried to assassinate Trump, killed fireman Corey Comperatore, and wounded two others.

House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) subpoenaed Cheatle because DHS refused



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to cooperate with lawmakers who were asking questions about the assassination.

“DHS officials appear to have intervened and your attendance is now in question,” [he wrote](#) to Cheatle on July 17. Plus, the committee hasn’t received “meaningful updates,” he complained. He also said DHS is stonewalling with a “lack of transparency and failure to cooperate.”



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