

New whistleblower allegations reveal law enforcement offered drones to secure Trump rally - but were DENIED by Secret Service before deadly shooting

By [Morgan Phillips, Congress Reporter On Capitol Hill For Dailymail.Com](#)

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Secret Service stood in the way of using drone technology to survey the scene of the Butler rally where an assassin tried to shoot former President [Donald Trump](#), according to a whistleblower.

Sen. [Josh Hawley](#), R-Mo., revealed that one whistleblower had told his office the night before the rally Secret Service 'repeatedly denied offers from a local law enforcement partner to utilize drone technology to secure the rally.'

The whistleblower alleged that after the shooting Secret Service 'changed course and asked the local partner to deploy the drone technology to surveil the site in the aftermath.'

The drones that were offered 'had the ability not only to identify active shooters but to neutralize them,' according to Hawley.

From Homeland Security Sec. [Alejandro Mayorkas](#) Hawley demanded all records and communications related to the drone offer.



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is rushed offstage during a rally on July 13, 2024



Snippers stand on a roof at Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign rally



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is covered by U.S. Secret Service agents at a campaign rally

The new claim adds another layer to the probe of the Secret Service's biggest security failure since Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981.

After a blistering six hours of testimony on Monday Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle [handed over her resignation on Tuesday.](#)

She'd spent much of the day evading and giving conflicting answers to questions such as why the roof where gunman Thomas Crooks committed his attack wasn't included within the security perimeter despite being within rifle range of the stage and why Trump was allowed to take the stage despite Crooks being identified as a suspicious person one hour before he fired any shots.

When asked to explain why there wasn't an agent on the roof, the director explained it's because the agency generally 'prefers sterile rooftops.'

FBI Director Christopher Wray told lawmakers on Wednesday the 20-year-old gunman flew a drone 200 yards from the stage just two hours before he opened fire in Butler, Pennsylvania, and had three explosives in his car.

Crooks shot Trump in the ear just 400 feet away from the stage in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13 from the roof of a nearby building just outside the security perimeter of the event.

Wray said Crooks and his family owned a combined 14 guns and Crooks had visited a shooting range one day before the rally. Crooks used an AR-style weapon that had been purchased legally by his father and sold to him in October 2023.

Wray said eight bullet cartridges had been recovered from the roof where Crooks fired off his shots toward the former president.

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July 25, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

Since I last wrote to you on July 22, my office has received new whistleblower allegations that further call into question your department's preparations. The American people deserve answers about your historic failure to protect former President Trump on July 13, 2024.

According to reports, the shooter used a drone to survey the site in preparation for his attack. This was confirmed by FBI Director Christopher Wray in his testimony just yesterday. In fact, he confirmed that the shooter was operating the drone approximately two hours before President Trump took the stage in Butler, Pennsylvania.

This raises an obvious question: why was the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) not using its own drones?

According to one whistleblower, the night before the rally, U.S. Secret Service repeatedly denied offers from a local law enforcement partner to utilize drone technology to secure the rally. This means that the technology was both available to USSS and able to be deployed to secure the site. Secret Service said no. The whistleblower further alleges that after the shooting took place, USSS changed course and asked the local partner to deploy the drone technology to surveil the site in the aftermath of the attack.

It is hard to understand why USSS would decline to use drones when they were offered, particularly given the fact USSS permitted the shooter to overfly the rally area with his own drone mere hours before event. The failure to deploy drone technology is all the more concerning since, according to the whistleblower, the drones USSS was offered had the capability not only to identify active shooters but also to help neutralize them.

So that Congress can continue its investigation, please provide no later than seven days from now all records and communications concerning the availability or use of drones at the July 13, 2024 rally in Butler, PA. You must also testify before Congress next week about these staggering security failures by your department.

Sincerely,



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



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After a blistering six hours of testimony on Monday Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle handed over her resignation on Tuesday

And he wouldn't rule out that Crooks did not have any accomplices to the crime, saying it's still being looked at by law enforcement.

As Wray faced questions about why the president was allowed on stage despite the 'threat' being identified 20 minutes before the shots were fired, Wray said, 'we don't know the answer to that.'

He said that no one in law enforcement saw Crooks with lying down in a shooting position with a gun in hand until 'moments before' he fired, but had seen him on the roof 'minutes before.'

The FBI and Secret Service revealed to lawmakers last week they spotted Crooks as a person of interest a full 62 minutes before he fired a shot.

He'd been seen with a range finder, which Cheatle said was 'not a prohibited item' at Trump rallies. This wasn't enough to identify him as a threat.

Twenty minutes before Crooks fired a shot, he was spotted on the roof.

A bullet grazed Trump's ear. One audience member, Corey Comperatore, 50, was killed and two others - David Dutch, 57 and James Copenhaver, 57 - were badly wounded but are in a stable condition.