

★ CIVIL WAR IN NORTH TEXAS

The 21 year old El Paso shooter killer of 22 had an itinerary as a student that took him from Frisco Texas High where he began Senior High School, to Plano Senior High from which he graduated in 2017. A fellow student at Plano, Jake Wilson, learned the identity of the shooter when fellow schoolmates started texting each other the shooter's Senior High yearbook photo.

"Everybody is sick to their stomach," Wilson said, adding that "I knew it was a kid named Patrick and they sent me a picture and sent me his senior yearbook photo. I went, 'Oh my God. That's when it all hit. I had English with him.'"

Wilson describes Patrick Crusius as a loner, but one by choice, who seemed uninterested in making friends at the school. "Very quiet kid not very involved, often questioned why kids were involved, he was picked on in class for reasons I don't even really know. He seemed like a quiet kid, just went to class, left class, contributing to class but a little overbearing at times," Wilson said.

It led to some bullying according to Wilson who says Crusius acted indifferently toward it. Wilson, said Crusius was "very strong-minded" in class and would try to "take charge," but other kids refused to work with him because he was "irritable and had a short temper." He was often "picked on" because of how he spoke, and because he wore what looked like hand-me-down clothes, Wilson said.

Wilson, who is now 20 and works in his family's scrap-metal recycling business, said while he was in English class with Crusius during their senior year, the taunts from other kids during class seemed relentless. "Every time I looked up in class," Wilson said, "it was someone new speaking negatively to the kid, 'Patrick that is dumb, stupid.' It seemed constant. No one really wanted to work with him in group settings because he would do his own thing, he would sit there and act like he was listening to you and then he would go do his own thing and people would complain about that," he said.

Wilson and other recent 2017 Plano Senior High graduates are just getting started making a name for themselves in the world, complained Wilson. "I really hope it doesn't define it because that's not who we are as a city or even at the school," he said. However one of the Plano High School currently enrolled students is Matin Azizi-Yarand, now 18. The teenager was in court for a terror plot hatched in 2017 to commit an *Islamic State-inspired* mass shooting at a North Texas mall. He was however communicating with two informants and an undercover FBI agent about possible targets. Investigators said he eventually settled on Frisco's Stonebriar Centre, sending \$1,400 to buy weapons and supplies.

Azizi had a carefully mapped out a strategy. He planned the attack to coincide with Ramadan, a Muslim holiday, to limit Muslim casualties. When law enforcement



learned his target date was just weeks away, they quickly swooped in. After his arrest, Azizi-Yarand had been held on a \$3 million bond. Before the plea deal, he could have faced up to life in prison. After pleading guilty, he was given 20 years on the first count and 10 on the second, but the sentences will run concurrently. He'll have to serve at least 10 years before he's eligible for parole. Prosecutors said they were pleased to come to an agreement, avoiding a trial that could have forced investigators to spill their anti-terrorism tactics they'd rather keep secret.

It was a busy April in North Texas. At nearby Frisco Texas where the El Paso shooter began his high school career, two 14-year-old students were arrested after a student reported overhearing the teens "discussing bringing guns to school and conducting a school shooting," police said. School resource officers identified the two students and arrested them on suspicion of exhibition of a firearm, a third-degree felony punishable by two to

10 years in prison. Police noted that while no guns were brought to school, "the mere threat alone meets the elements" for the offense.

These arrests come on the heels of the arrest of a Cobb Middle School student being taken into custody last week on suspicion of making threats at that Frisco school. In a separate incident, a Griffin Middle School student was taken into custody in December after police say he made a threat on social media involving his Frisco school. Because they are juveniles, none of the students are being identified by police.

Police did identify Ronathan Livingston of Dallas, who was arrested on April 12 on suspicion of making a threat on social media against Frisco High School. Livingston is 17. According to a probable cause affidavit, Livingston posted comments to another student's online feed about a shooting at Frisco High School. The student said Livingston later said he had a "beef" with another student and that he "was serious about the threat," according to the affidavit Livingston was released on \$10,000 bond after two weeks in jail.

As the death toll doubles from 3 to 6 of Mexican citizens killed by Crusius in El Paso, Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard says Mexico will take legal action to protect Mexicans and Americans of Mexican descent. In a video statement, Ebrard called the shooting an "act of barbarism" and said the country's first priority is attending to the impacted families, he said. Mexico plans to seek legal measures to protect Mexican nationals and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. Mexican officials say that besides the 6 Mexican nationals killed another six were wounded in the Saturday shooting at the Texas Wal-Mart. El Paso is a popular weekend shopping destination for Mexicans who live across the border, in Ciudad Juarez.

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Nazis Explain Why

In 1934, American writer Theodore Abel created a fake competition to trick hundreds of people into describing why they loved the Nazi Party so much. Their words seem worryingly relevant today.

Helen Radtke explained why she had joined the German Nazi Party. She wrote that she was a politically active person who had sat in the public gallery of her local state parliament to listen to the debates held there, and attended as many political rallies as possible in search of a party that was "nationalist, but also cared for the poor." Eventually, she wrote, she found just what she was looking for in Hitler and his movement.

Radtke's letter was just one of 683 personal accounts sent to Abel in the years after Hitler was elected in 1933. Last January, the Hoover Institution – a public policy think-tank based at Stanford University in California – published 584 of those letters online. These personal testimonies are not only useful in understanding why so many people were attracted to the Nazis in the 1930s, but also provide insight into the minds of the millions of Germans today who are still turning to far-right political parties, like the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD).

Around a year after Hitler became Chancellor, Theodore Abel wanted to know what had motivated so many people to support him. After Abel failed to get any of the estimated 850,000 Nazi party members to agree to an interview, he came up with the idea for a fake competition, where he offered 125 Reichsmarks to whomever could write the most beautiful, detailed description of why they had joined the Nazi Party.

At the time, the prize money was worth more than half the monthly average salary in Germany, and even Joseph Goebbels – the Nazi Minister of Propaganda – publicly supported the contest. The submissions ranged from handwritten love letters to Nazism, to 12-page testimonies, while participants represented a cross-section of German society, from soldiers and SS officers to office workers, housewives, children and miners.

Many of the letter writers were happy to see the end of the Weimar Republic, which was founded in 1919 after the German defeat in the First World War, and which they blamed for the economic state the country was left in after the war and for the Great Depression. The writers were excited by Hitler's promise to introduce strict political order; Bernard Horstmann, a miner from Bottrop in western Germany, wrote that he thought the previous government had promoted "the betrayal of the people and our fatherland."

Horstmann went on to call a professor who thought the First World War was unjustified a "poisoner of people's minds." Before joining the Nazis, Horstmann was a member of the antisemitic nationalist group the German Völkisch Freedom Party, but soon, he wrote, the group's ideologies became too tame for him.

A letter from Ernst Seyffardt from Duisburg, another city in western Germany, was titled: "The Curriculum Vitae of a Hitler-German." Seyffardt wrote that he joined the Nazi Party because he wanted to contribute to "bringing back peace and order in our homeland."

At the time, left-wing groups tried to counter the surge in nationalist support. Fights would often break out between Communist Party members and thugs from the Nazi paramilitary wing, the Sturmabteilung (SA), while some more liberal groups called for the boycott of shops owned by Nazi Party members. But that only seemed to make Hitler and the Nazis more appealing to many. "It was because Adolf Hitler and his party faced so much criticism and resistance among the press that I became particularly interested in joining their movement," wrote a party member named Friedrich Jörns.

The letters Abel received reveal that the right-wing information bubble prior to 1933 largely stemmed from the weekly newspaper **Der Stürmer**, Hitler's **Mein Kampf** and Nazi Party rallies.

One member, named Schwarz, explained how reading **Mein Kampf** had caused him to not only distrust most mainstream newspapers, but also Jewish and Polish people for the way their "catastrophic, mole-like activities have ruined the world." Even though Schwarz went on to admit that he had never had personal



WWII Mexican anti fascist poster- the sky is in colors of the national flag

contact with anyone Jewish, and that he couldn't prove that Polish people were "unreliable", he wrote that he "trusts his instincts on the matter." Nurse Lisi Paupié clearly agreed: "The Jews are our misfortune, that much is clear," she wrote in her letter to Abel.

Recently, the German television show *Panorama* had three actors read out some of the letters, partly to show how the rhetoric used – "old parties", "dreadful press," "poisoner of minds," "betrayal of the people and fatherland" – is similar to that used by the AfD. And the segment proved its point: those terms are still worryingly relevant almost 85 years after Theodore Abel decided to trick some Nazis into writing their letters.

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the letters are available here:

digitalcollections.hoover.org/advancedsearch/Object/archiveType%3AItem%3BcollectionId%3A58225