



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 24, 2024

Grassley Confirms Would-be Trump Assassin Was Photographed Before He Fired; Demands Answers

Police body-camera video taken during the minutes following the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, confirms that local police photographed [would-be assassin Thomas Matthew Crooks](#) and sent the photos to the Secret Service (USSS).

The footage, [provided by](#) GOP Iowa Senator Charles Grassley in a news release [and on X](#), also confirms that Crooks disappeared only to reemerge firing an AR-15 at Trump from a rooftop less than 150 yards from the stage where Trump spoke.



AP Images
Charles Grassley

Grassley has demanded answers from Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and the acting director of the Secret Service, Ronald Rowe.

Rowe has at least temporarily replaced disgraced former Director Kimberly Cheatle, [who resigned](#) yesterday after more than a week of blistering criticism.

The Video

Cheatle was forced out of the agency's top job because Crooks nearly assassinated Trump, murdered firefighter Corey Comperatore, and wounded two others on July 13 at the Butler Farm Show Grounds.

Myriad reports soon revealed that the Secret Service [saw Crooks](#) when he entered the grounds with a golf rangefinder, and that local cops saw and photographed him. A local cop saw Crooks from a ladder to the roof where Crooks lay in ambush, [but retreated](#) when Crooks threatened him with his rifle.

As well, the [Secret Service permitted](#) local cops to handle perimeter security, and neither police nor the federal agency stationed a cop or agent on the roof from which Crooks fired. Cheatle claimed the roof [was too steep](#) to safely cover, a false and widely ridiculed claim.

But now police body-camera video confirms at least one of those reports. The footage shows three local cops and a Secret Service agent. The agent asks multiple questions, including which of the locals saw Crooks and photographed him. The cop whose body-camera footage produced the video told the agent to speak with a cop inside the building.

Crooks apparently had a bicycle.

"I believe the sniper that seen these and sent the pictures is right inside this building," the cop said. [He told](#) the agent to yell for "Greg," the sniper who "sent the original pictures and seen him come from the bike ... and then lost sight of him. He's the one that sent the pictures off."

The cops and agent compared photos on their smartphones.

"The footage records Beaver County and USSS officers gathering facts and recapping a timeline of



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events leading up to the shooter's attempt against former President Donald Trump," a [news release from Grassley says](#):

The video confirms:

1. Local law enforcement saw the shooter prior to his presence on the roof.
2. Local law enforcement shared pictures of the suspected shooter with USSS, raising questions with respect to exactly when the pictures were shared.
3. Law enforcement lost track of the suspected shooter.
4. Law enforcement sought access to a drone to secure the water tower after the shooting.

Letter to DHS, USSS Chiefs

Grassley's letter includes a list of Secret Service personnel deployed to the rally, including a drone operator.

Noting that Cheatle told the House Oversight Committee that the agency does indeed use surveillance drones on occasion, Grassley pointed to reports that Crooks flew a video drone over the event hours before Trump spoke. "Is that reporting accurate?" [Grassley asked](#).

Grassley wants Mayorkas and Rowe to answer these question by July 30:

- Did the Secret Service deploy drones, and if not why?
- Did local or state cops ask for drone coverage? If so, did the Secret Service deploy them? If not, why?
- Did an unauthorized drone fly over the rally's restricted airspace?
- If so, was the Secret Service drone operator aware of it, and did the operator deploy countermeasures? If not, why?
- Who at the Secret Service decided whether or not to deploy a drone?

The letter demands all records regarding drone surveillance and counterdrone measures.

As well, Grassley asked whether the water tower was cleared and whether it played a role in the assassination attempt.

Bungled Operation Costs Cheatle Her Job

Crooks' easy access to the roof and his near-assassination of Trump ended Cheatle's career.

After a brutal beating before the House Oversight Committee on Monday, GOP Chairman James Comer of Kentucky and Ranking Minority Member Jamie Raskin of Maryland [demanded Cheatle's resignation](#).

Also preceding her [resignation yesterday](#) was a report in *The Washington Post* that her agency repeatedly denied requests [from team Trump](#) for more protection for two years.

For many agents, Cheatle's departure was good news. President Joe Biden appointed her to the job not because she was the most qualified, but because she was a boon companion of First Lady "Dr." Jill Biden.



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“She was well liked by the future first lady and her most senior aides, including top adviser Anthony Bernal,” [the New York Post reported](#) two days after Crooks tried to assassinate Trump.

“I heard at the time she was being considered for director that Anthony had pushed her forward as an option,” a different source told the *Post*.

Cheatle was the subject of at least [six written complaints](#) to *The Washington Post*, the newspaper reported. The complaints said that Cheatle never served in a top position on a presidential detail, and that she was “excessively focused on hiring and promoting more women.”

The six complaining agents were incensed that Cheatle said that the roof from which Crooks fired at Trump was too steep to safely place agents.



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