



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 29, 2026

Affidavit Reveals Attempted Assassination Suspect's Travel, Ease in Checking Into Hotel

Cole Tomas Allen, whom prosecutors allege attempted to murder President Donald Trump and top administration officials during the White House Correspondents' Association dinner at the Washington Hilton on Saturday, easily checked into the hotel, says the affidavit supporting charges against him.

The affidavit doesn't say whether Allen discharged the 12-gauge shotgun he carried after he barreled past a Secret Service check point, but a Secret Service agent was hit by gunfire. And when he appeared in court on Monday, acting U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche couldn't say with certainty who shot the agent.

Unclear, then, is who did so.

Key parts of the affidavit detail Allen's purchase of the shotgun and the .38-caliber semiautomatic pistol he carried. The affidavit also reprises the manifesto he sent to friends and family before his futile attempt to murder dinner attendees.

Allen's manifesto noted the lax security that enabled him to register at the hotel and take in multiple weapons.



AP Images

Scene of Correspondents' Dinner shooting



The New York Times

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Breaking News: The Justice Department charged a California man with attempting to assassinate President Trump at the correspondents' dinner. He faces life in prison if convicted.



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The Affidavit

Some 2,500 journalists, politicians, and others were at the annual dinner at which President Trump was scheduled to speak. The affidavit explains that Trump announced that the correspondents association asked him to be the honoree at the dinner and that he had accepted.

Allen reserved a room at the Hilton on or about April 6, the [affidavit alleges](#), for three nights, April 24 through 26. On April 21, he took a train from the Los Angeles area to Chicago, arriving on or about April 23. From there, he traveled by train to Washington, D.C. He arrived on April 24 at about 1 p.m., then checked into the Hilton at about 3 p.m.

At about 8:40 p.m., Allen approached a security check point and charged through a “magnetometer holding a long gun”:



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As he did so, U.S. Secret Service personnel assigned to the checkpoint heard a loud gunshot. U.S. Secret Service Officer V.G. was shot once in the chest; Officer V.G. was wearing a ballistic vest at the time. Officer V.G. drew his service weapon and fired multiple times at ALLEN, who fell to the ground and suffered minor injuries but was not shot. ALLEN was subsequently arrested.

Agents retrieved a 12-gauge pump shotgun, brand not revealed, and a [Rock Island Armory 1911 .38 caliber pistol](#). Allen bought the shotgun in August last year, and the pistol in October 2023. The affidavit does not mention that he carried knives, [as early reports averred](#).

Allen sent the manifesto to family and “a former employer” attached to an email that explained what he planned to do, writing:

I wish I could have said anything earlier, but doing so would have made none of this possible. My sincerest apologies for all the trouble I’ve caused.

He attached an “Apology and Explanation” saying he “may have given a lot of people a surprise today.” He apologized to his parents for becoming one of the “Most Wanted,” and to his students, as well as

to everyone who was abused and/or murdered before this, to all those who suffered before I was able to attempt this, to all who may still suffer after, regardless of my success or failure.

Allen explained that he had to go on the murder rampage because he was “no longer willing to permit a pedophile, rapist, and traitor to coat my hands with his crimes,” an apparent reference to President Trump.

Thereafter, he explained his “rules of engagement,” meaning his targets:

Administration officials (not including [FBI Director Kash] Patel): they are targets, prioritized from highest-ranking to lowest

Secret Service: they are targets only if necessary, and to be incapacitated nonlethally if possible (aka, I hope they’re wearing body armor because center mass with shotguns messes up people who *aren’t*

Hotel security would not be targets as long as they didn’t attempt to shoot him.

He signed his manifesto “Cole ‘coldForce’ ‘Friendly Federal Assassin’ Allen.” [The affidavit says](#) he used the moniker “cold force” on social media.

Thus was Allen charged with [attempting to assassinate](#) the president, [discharging a firearm](#) during a crime of violence, and [transporting a firearm](#) across state lines with intent to commit a felony.

He explained that he would use buckshot in the shotgun.

Another Secret Service Failure?

Yet whether Allen fired the shotgun is unclear.

Attorney General Blanche “said investigators believed the suspect fired his weapon because a spent



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shotgun shell was found inside its chamber, but he noted that more forensic examination would be done to determine exactly what happened,” [The New York Times reported](#).

The more important question might be how Allen was allowed to check into a hotel with two firearms and multiple knives the day before an event the president would attend. Allen, indeed, had the same question, and [observed in his manifesto](#) how easily he entered the hotel.

“What the hell is the Secret Service doing?” he asked:

Sorry, gonna rant a bit here and drop the formal tone.

Like, I expected security cameras at every bend, bugged hotel rooms, armed agents every 10 feet, metal detectors out the wazoo.

What I got (who knows, maybe they’re pranking me!) is nothing.

No damn security. ...

I walk in with multiple weapons and not a single person there considers the possibility that I could be a threat.

The security at the event is all outside, focused on protestors and current arrivals, because apparently no one thought about what happens if someone checks in the day before.



Fox News’ Bill Melugin and The Daily Beast’s executive editor Hugh Dougherty [also reported](#) that security was lax.

Writing on X, Melugin explained that “the first exterior security for me was on the street outside of the hotel. I flashed my ticket and was waved through in one second.”

Security did not check his name “against any list,” and he “was not patted down and did not go through a metal detector,” he continued. Melugin didn’t encounter the usual security until he entered the



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ballroom.

Dougherty reported that his room at the hotel was next to Allen's. "Quite simply, a man who wanted to kill people — many people, maybe me, maybe my colleagues — had checked into the Washington Hilton, just like I had," [Dougherty wrote](#):

He had used his access to move from floor 10 to the ballroom lobby, just like I had. And he had left a room which police had closed off, but which for all they feared could now be filled with explosives.



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