



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 16, 2020

Rhode Island Teacher Arrested for Defacing Columbus Statue

One of the three suspects arrested on the morning of June 6 for defacing a statue of Christopher Columbus in Providence, Rhode Island, [was a social-studies teacher](#). WPRI, the CBS affiliate in Providence, reported that Derrick Garforth, one of the alleged vandals, is listed on the website for Jenks Middle School in Pawtucket as a social-studies teacher.



WPRI quoted Pawtucket School Superintendent Dr. Cheryl McWilliams, who told the station that Garforth has been placed on leave pending an investigation.

"I have just learned about this and the Pawtucket School Department is investigating it," McWilliams said in an e-mail.

The *Washington Examiner* noted that around 1:30 a.m. on June 6, police officers observed a car with Massachusetts license plates driving slowly by the statue. About 10 minutes later, they saw a man and woman run toward the statue, throw objects at it, and then run off.

Police identified the two people throwing objects at the statue and getting into the car as Garforth and Charlotte Whittingham, with another woman, Mackenzie Innis, as the driver of the car.

Officers found white and purple paint, gloves, and masks in the car. The paint matched the colors found on the statue.

All three suspects have been charged with desecration of a grave or monument and conspiracy and were arraigned and released.

Statues across the country have been desecrated and torn down in the wake of the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. Police found a statue of Columbus beheaded last week in Boston, another Columbus statue was destroyed in St. Paul, Minnesota, and another in Richmond, Virginia, was also pulled down.

The destruction and vandalism of statues has gone beyond those depicting Columbus, with Confederate War statues, the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Lincoln Memorial, World War II Memorial, and others also being defaced during protests that turned violent.

Along with Confederate leaders such as Robert E. Lee, Columbus has been a favorite target of the revisionists who would rewrite history. As we observed in a 2017 article (["Iconoclasts Vandalize Statues of Columbus in New York and Baltimore"](#)):

As anarchy and destruction of property and attacks against historic monuments revered by Americans escalates, it is important to remember that these acts go far beyond grievances against Robert E. Lee or Christopher Columbus, and (soon) even George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.



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We noted in the September 18, 2017 print edition of *The New American* that leftist groups such as Antifa (members of which have taken an active role in destroying Confederate monuments) and Black Lives Matter are copying the violent practices of Mao's Red Guards.

Mostly likely, people such as Garforth have merely been duped into following the "politically correct" version of history instead of doing their own homework and learning enough American history to appreciate our heritage. They are probably more unwitting pawns than revolutionaries. It is ironic, however, that someone with such a lack of appreciation for one of our most beloved historic figures was entrusted to teach social studies to impressionable middle-schoolers.

Image: D-Keine/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Warren Mass is a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus who has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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