



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on February 14, 2025

Leader of Homicidal Trans Cult on the Loose

Update: On Feb. 16, authorities [arrested LaSota](#) in Maryland.

His name is Jack Amadeus LaSota, but he goes by Ziz. He dresses like a woman and sometimes like a Sith from *Star Wars*, [according](#) to people who've met him. He [faked](#) his own death in 2022. However, he was arrested a few months later on the other side of the country.

LaSota is a 34-year-old Alaska native. He earned an undergraduate degree in computer science and interned with NASA before moving to California's Bay Area to work in tech, according to reports. He is now on the loose after posting bail on charges of disorderly conduct and obstructing an investigation. His lawyers and law enforcement have no idea where he is.

The Zizians

LaSota was considered the unofficial eccentric leader of a cult-like group comprising mostly educated transvestite vegans that many had dubbed "Zizians." The group is linked to six deaths around the country.

In addition to sharing a propensity for pretending to be members of the opposite sex, Zizians are obsessed with artificial intelligence and improving the world through "rationality."

Jessica Taylor, a former research fellow at the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, said she met LaSota and others who believed in the "Ziz theory" through the Berkeley "rationalist" scene around 2016. She [told](#) the *San Francisco Chronicle* these people adopted the most extreme versions of ideas otherwise considered perfectly normal by rationalist social circles:

Ziz theory is combining these things like rationalism, timeless decision theory, transgender related ideas, brain hemispheres and left-anarchism. A lot of these ideas on their own are normal.

Although this bizarre modern-day Manson gang has reportedly been dispersed, many members connected to it have met unfortunate fates. Emma Borhanian was shot dead in 2022. She was involved in the attack on the landlord who was trying to evict many members of the group who were living on his Vallejo, California, property. The landlord fought off his attackers, fatally shooting Borhanian. However, during the struggle he was [stabbed in the eye](#) and chest with a samurai sword.

Also, a German national who went by the name "Ophelia Bauckholt" died in a Jan. 20 shootout with Border Patrol agents in Vermont. Bauckholt, real name Felix, was a national math champion and won a



Times Union/Facebook
Jack Amadeus LaSota



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gold medal at the International Olympiad in Informatics, a prestigious high school coding contest. The other person involved in the shooting, Teresa Youngblut, a former computer science student at the University of Washington, is sitting in a New Hampshire prison. Border Patrol Agent David “Chris” Maland was [killed](#) in the Vermont incident.

Zizian Beginnings

According to multiple reports, the people comprising the Zizians began meeting each other around 2014 at a gathering organized in Berkeley, California, by the Center for Applied Rationality. The Zizians aimed to build a community of “rationalists” devoted to using mathematical and logical principles to improve the world. They saw artificial intelligence as vital to their vision.

Anna Salamon, a co-founder of the center, told NBC that “LaSota didn’t come off as a threat” when staff members first met him at an event in 2014. But their impressions changed during a monthlong retreat in 2018. That was when LaSota began espousing his beliefs with an intensity that unnerved those around him. [According](#) to NBC:

LaSota believed that humans have two minds, a left and right hemisphere, and each hemisphere can be good or evil, according to posts on her blog. Eventually, LaSota came to believe that only very few people — “she” among them — are double good.

“Suppose that you’re young and naive and someone convinces you that you’re really two people and one is good and one is sinister,” Salamon said. “Also that the world depends on you doing good stuff. That’s a pretty powerful setup for manipulation.”

A Trans Math Genius

Before coming to America, Bauckholt left Germany after earning a scholarship to study pure mathematics at the University of Waterloo in Canada. While still in college, according to reports, he interned at Jane Street Capital in New York, an elite quantitative trading firm. He graduated from Waterloo with honors and landed a job as a quantitative trader, leveraging complex mathematical models to identify investment opportunities at the New York firm Tower Research Capital.

By early 2023, he was earning more than half a million dollars and living in a Jersey City apartment. There, he hosted gatherings with his network of friends, most of whom were also highly educated transvestites.

Bauckholt, it turns out, bought into the same philosophy as FTX con man Sam Bankman-Fried — effective altruism. Bauckholt spent no more than 10% of his pretax income, and donated a significant amount to charity, reports say.

Taylor, the former research fellow at the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, met Bauckholt at a New York event in 2022. She said the trans math genius considered the Zizians more legitimate than others did. She warned him to stay away from Ziz and the group entirely. According to Taylor, they were a “death cult” that targeted victims of petty authority. (Like landlords or parents or, apparently, Border Patrol agents?) Plus, she said, she and Bauckholt discussed “the high death rate around the Zizians.”

Killing in Vermont

But it turned out that Bauckholt’s self-proclaimed penchant for rationality did not prevail. In November 2023, reports say, he got on a flight out of Newark Liberty International Airport and cut off all contact with his friends. They had no idea what happened to him until they learned he was shot dead in the gun



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battle in northern Vermont in January 2025.

Bauckholt and Youngblut were being surveilled before Vermont U.S. Border Patrol agents pulled over their Toyota Prius for an immigration check. According to charging documents as reported by NBC:

Prosecutors have said that Youngblut and Bauckholt were traveling with a large collection of weapons and tactical gear, including 48 rounds of .380-caliber jacketed hollow point ammunition, a ballistic helmet and night vision equipment.

Youngblut, the woman traveling with Bauckholt, emerged from the shootout alive. She [now sits in](#) Merrimack County House of Corrections in Boscawen, New Hampshire, charged with two federal firearms offenses. She is engaged to a 22-year-old Seattle man named Maximilian Snyder, who was arrested three days before the Vermont shootout on a charge of first-degree murder. Snyder is suspected of killing the landlord who was stabbed by a sword in 2022. The landlord was killed just before he was scheduled to testify in a case pertaining to that attack.

LaSota is [wanted](#) in California in connection with the landlord killing. He's also wanted in Pennsylvania regarding the murder of a couple whose daughter is suspected of being a Zizian. He is not charged with the crimes.

This story has many other bizarre and, ultimately, tragic twists and turns.

Cult of Trans

Cults are not new to America. Many outcasts and weirdos believe they possess elite or secret insight normal people don't. They then take dark, and sometimes homicidal, turns. And it shouldn't be surprising that the people in this story adhere to "trans" ideology.

The foot soldiers of transgenderism tend to be confused, vulnerable young people with obvious mental illnesses. However, an in-depth look at the movement reveals dark, spiritual elements.

Martine Rothblatt — real name Martin — like many of the Zizian characters, is very intelligent. When his daughter was diagnosed with pulmonary arterial hypertension, he taught himself everything necessary to help develop a treatment. He founded United Therapeutics, and ultimately developed a cure to save his daughter. Rothblatt also founded SiriusXM Satellite.

Rothblatt has undergone medical procedures many say are necessary to be considered a woman. He wrote a book called [From Transgender to Transhuman: A Manifesto on the Freedom of Form](#), and sees transgenderism as the precursor to transhumanism. Just as human beings can transcend societal restriction on "gender," we can transcend biological constraints on mortality, according to Rothblatt and others like him. He believes artificial intelligence will not only break humanity's biological restrictions, but enable humans to live forever. Others in the tech realm share this belief. One of these is computer scientist and futurist [Ray Kurzweil](#), who works at Google and wrote a book titled [The Age of Spiritual Machines](#). Kurzweil believes man and machine will merge in a process that will eventually eliminate what we consider to be human. World Economic Forum founder Klaus Schwab also believes this.

Trying to Be Gods?

To Christians and those familiar with Judeo-Christian teachings, transhumanism sounds like the latest attempt of humans to attain on their own that which only God can bestow — immortality.



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Another way to look at it is that transhumanism is another attempt at humans trying to be gods themselves. This story predates time, when Lucifer was cast out of Heaven after trying to take God's place on the throne. The Tower of Babel illustrates another instance in which humans sought to achieve godlike status through technology. And, of course, history is filled with figures who thought they were gods and made people worship them.

And it would be foolish to overlook an obvious, more synthetic element that likely plays a role in the Zizian story. The process of transitioning from one "gender" to another, or at least the perceived transformation, involves a plethora of procedures and drugs that affect hormones.

The reports I read about the Zizians did not mention of the transgender steps the members have undergone. But there's a good chance they've meddled with their hormones, which affects judgment and emotions.



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