



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 16, 2024

Would-be Assassin Routh Advocated Killing Trump, Has Long Arrest Record

The suspect in the second assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump is a [Democratic donor](#) and would-be soldier of fortune who vowed to fight and die for Ukraine.

Ryan Wesley Routh, 58, has also been arrested some 100 times, and was involved in a stand-off with cops in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 2002.

And, significantly, in a book that he co-authored, he advocated assassinating Trump.



AP Images
Ryan Routh in Ukraine in 2022

The Book

The New York Times interviewed Routh in 2023, after he wrote in 2022:

I AM WILLING TO FLY TO KRAKOW AND GO TO THE BORDER OF UKRAINE TO VOLUNTEER AND FIGHT AND DIE.

The *Times* [reported Sunday](#):

In a telephone interview with *The New York Times* in 2023, when Mr. Routh was in Washington, he spoke with [the] self-assuredness of a seasoned diplomat who thought his plans to support Ukraine's war effort were sure to succeed.

But he appeared to have little patience for anyone who got in his way. When an American foreign fighter seemed to talk down to him in a Facebook message he shared with *The New York Times*, Mr. Routh said, "he needs to be shot."

In the interview, Mr. Routh said he was in Washington to meet with the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, known as the Helsinki Commission "for two hours" to help push for more support for Ukraine. The commission is led by members of Congress and staffed by congressional aides. It is influential on matters of democracy and security and has been vocal in supporting Ukraine.

Mr. Routh also said he was seeking recruits for Ukraine from among Afghan soldiers who had fled the Taliban. He said he planned to move them, in some cases illegally, from Pakistan and Iran to Ukraine. He said dozens had expressed interest.

"We can probably purchase some passports through Pakistan, since it's such a corrupt country," he said.



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Routh even invited North Korean communist dictator Kim Jong Un to Hawaii and offered to help keep the peace between the United States and Korea, the *Times* reported.

That bizarre fact aside, his efforts to help Ukraine failed miserably. His book, [Ukraine's Unwinnable War](#), which he wrote with his fiancée, Kathleen Shaffer, is about that effort, [The Washington Post reported](#).

On GoFundMe in 2022, the newspaper reported, Shaffer said she was raising funds to support Routh, who “put his life at home on hold and traveled to Kyiv in April to support the people of Ukraine. He plans on staying for at least 90 days and stays at a hostel with a military unit.”

The blog claimed that Routh “helped ‘send 120 drones to the front lines.’” The fundraising effort pulled in \$1,865 of a \$2,500 fundraising goal.

In his book, Routh called Trump a “fool” and “buffoon,” and complained that Trump ended a [nuclear arms agreement](#) with Iran. He wrote:

I must take part of the blame for the retarded child that we elected for our next president that ended up being brainless, but I am man enough to say that I misjudged and made a terrible mistake and Iran I apologize.

But Routh didn't stop there. He followed that apology with this advice:

You are free to assassinate Trump as well as me for that error in judgement and the dismantling of the deal.

Arrests

Last night at about 9 p.m., the [Greensboro News & Record reported](#), Secret Service and Homeland Security agents searched the home where Routh once lived in the city.

Routh, a roofing contractor, is still registered to vote at that address. “Records show he was an unaffiliated voter who most recently voted in the Democratic primary in March.” The [newspaper continued](#):

Routh has had multiple encounters with law enforcement dating back to 1998 with about 100 arrests, according to a LexisNexis search of his name....

In 2002, he was involved in a three-hour armed stand-off with police. He was accused of wielding an automatic machine gun and barricaded himself inside United Roofing Company on the former Lee Street where he had worked.

He was ultimately charged with carrying a concealed weapon and possession of a weapon of mass destruction in that case, as well as obstructing a police officer and resisting arrest.

Tax problems have also followed Routh, who racked up 14 judgements and liens, according to LexisNexis.

[The Post noted](#) that something must have changed in Routh. In 1991, he helped defend a woman from a rapist and received an award for heroism.



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After the Assassination Attempt

Routh is suspected of attempting [to assassinate](#) Trump on Sunday. The former president was playing a round of golf at his Trump International course in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Secret Service agents spotted Routh at about 1:30 p.m. He was waiting a few holes ahead of Trump, who was between the fifth and sixth holes. An agent fired at Routh, who fled the scene. He left behind a backpack, GoPro camera, and “assault rifle,” as media reports described it.

A witness saw Routh run from agents and then drive away in a black Nissan, and later identified him for police.

The West Palm Beach sheriff said the Secret Service didn’t surround the golf course because Trump isn’t the president.

Routh didn’t ask why he was arrested, the [Post reported](#).

Though Routh donated to Democrats, his political beliefs were unsettled.

“His over 500 posts on X showed his views ranging from the left to the right, including support for politicians such as Bernie Sanders, Tulsi Gabbard and [Nikki] Haley, as well as Trump,” [ABC News reported](#).

Federal records show 19 donations to ActBlue totaling some \$140 that went to losing Democratic primary contenders in 2020, the [New York Post reported](#): Tom Steyer, Andrew Yang, Beto O’Rourke, and Sen. Elizabeth Warren.



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