

The case of the radical ‘Zizian’ vegan trans cult and the shooting death of a Border Patrol agent

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The [murder of a US Border Patrol agent near the Canadian border](#) appears to be linked to a radical leftist trans militant cult accused of killings across the country.

Around a week before the Jan. 20 attack, federal law enforcement had been surveilling [German national Felix “Ophelia” Bauckholt](#) and University of Washington student [Teresa “Milo” Consuelo Youngblut](#).

Staff at a Lyndonville, Vermont, motel alerted authorities about seeing the duo with a firearm and black tactical clothing.



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US Border Patrol Agent David Maland was killed in Coventry, Vermont, on Jan. 20, 2025. Department of Homeland Security via A



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A Border Patrol agent sets up flares on I-91 near the scene of the shooting. REUTERS/Carlos Osorio

When law enforcement visited them, the pair claimed to be looking at property in the area and promptly checked out of the motel on Jan. 14, according to court documents.

Then, on Inauguration Day, [Border Patrol Agent David Maland](#) stopped their car in Coventry, Vermont.

Youngblut allegedly shot at Maland, who was killed, and border agents returned fire, killing Bauckholt. Youngblut is in custody.

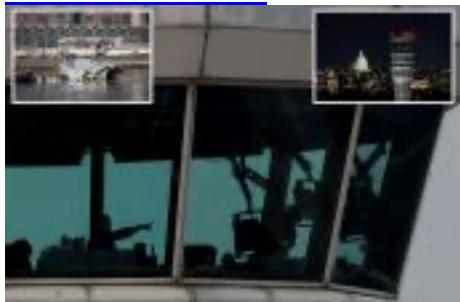
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Authorities now say the guns used by Youngblut and Bauckholt are owned by a person of interest in other murders — and connected to a mysterious cult of transgender “geniuses” who follow a trans leader named Jack LaSota, also known by the alias “Ziz.”

Bauckholt was a biological male who identified as trans and used feminine pronouns. He was an award-winning youth math genius from Freiburg, Germany, who later graduated from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada.

Around 2021, he was hired as a quantitative trader at Tower Research Capital in New York. It is believed Bauckholt was in the US on an H-1B visa. The Department of Justice says he was armed in the car and tried to aim his firearm before being shot dead.



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Felix “Ophelia” Bauckholt was killed when agents returned fire.

Youngblut, who is accused of firing the surprise shots that killed Air Force veteran Maland, was injured by return fire.

Youngblut is a biological female who identifies as trans and lists having neo-pronouns as “xe/xem/xyrs” on social media. Youngblut was a University of Washington student studying computer science.

Youngblut graduated from the prestigious and woke north Seattle private institution Lakeside School, which Bill Gates also attended.

Youngblut's family had reported her missing to Seattle police in May 2024. Her family said she was in a controlling relationship and cut off contact, according to the police report. Her social media account on BlueSky shows she followed some Antifa-aligned far-left accounts.



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Teresa "Milo" Consuelo Youngblut at Newport City Inn and Suites in Vermont before the shooting.

In November 2024, Youngblut filed a marriage application with a 22-year-old fellow Lakeside alumnus named Maximilian Bentley Snyder.

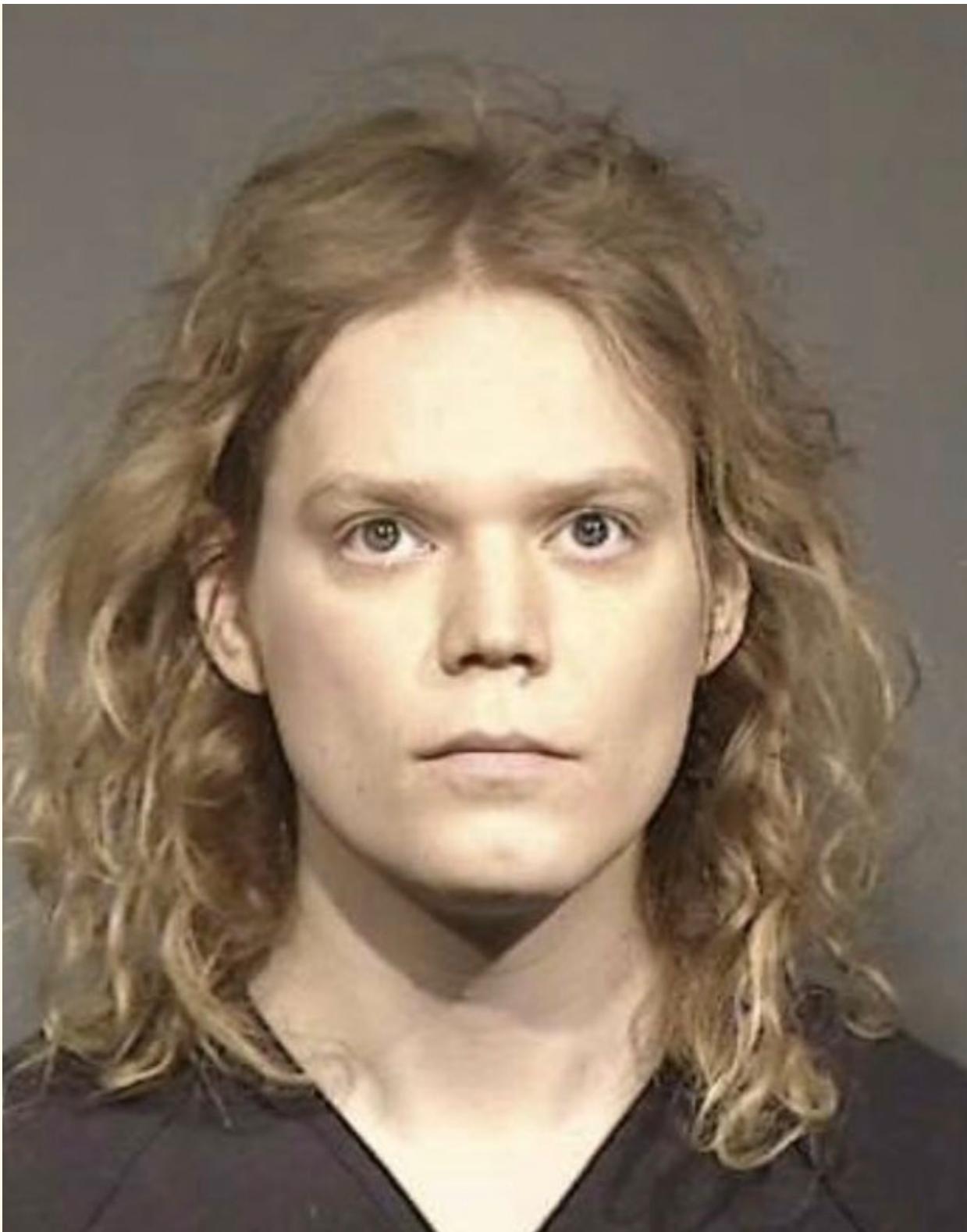
Last week, Snyder, an "any pronouns" computer science whiz from a wealthy Seattle family, was arrested in Vallejo, Calif., for the murder of an elderly key witness set to testify in an upcoming attempted murder trial against alleged members of the trans extremist group.

The arrest has revealed previously hidden close associations between Youngblut, Bauckholt and a cult linked now to four killings.

THE ZIZ CULT

Authorities are investigating the connection between murders across the country to the “Zizians” — a cult of highly-educated trans vegan “rationalists.”

Jack “Ziz” LaSota



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Jack "Ziz" LaSota has allegedly influenced his followers to kill.

The transgender leader of the group, who has posted about “transhumanism” and other topics. Some followers say LaSota is dead, but that seems to be a plot to avoid authorities. LaSota used the name “Andrea Phelps.”

Alexander “Somni” Leatham and Amir “Emma” Borhanian



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Alexander "Somni" Leatham



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Amir "Emma" Borhanian

Curtis Lind (victim)



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Curtis Lind (victim)

Two Zizians who are accused of attacking Curtis Lind in Solano County, Calif., because they were squatting on his property. Lind, who lost an eye in the attack, shot and killed Borhanian, but was going to testify against Leatham and another accused assailant and "Ziz" follower, Suri Dao.

Maximilian Bentley Snyder



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Maximilian Bentley Snyder in Solano County Criminal Court for his arraignment on Jan. 28, 2025. Special to the Chronicle

Snyder has been arrested for killing 82-year-old Lind to prevent him from testifying at the trial. Lind was stabbed and had his throat slit on the street outside his home in Vallejo, Calif. on Jan. 17.

Teresa “Milo” Consuelo Youngblut and Felix “Ophelia” Bauckholt



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Teresa “Milo” Consuelo Youngblut allegedly shot and killed Maland. Teresa Youngblut / Instagram



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Felix “Ophelia” Bauckholt

David Maland (victim)



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AP

Snyder was engaged to be married to Youngblut. Youngblut and Bauckholt were stopped by Border Patrol agent David Maland on Jan. 20 in northern Vermont. Youngblut allegedly shot at Maland, who was killed. Bauckholt was killed by return fire. Youngblut was arrested.

Michelle Jacqueline Zajko



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Michelle Jacqueline Zajko is a person of interest in the deaths of her parents Rita and Richard Zajko.
no credit

Rita Zajko and Richard Zajko (victims)



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Rita Zajko (victim)



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Richard Zajko (victim)

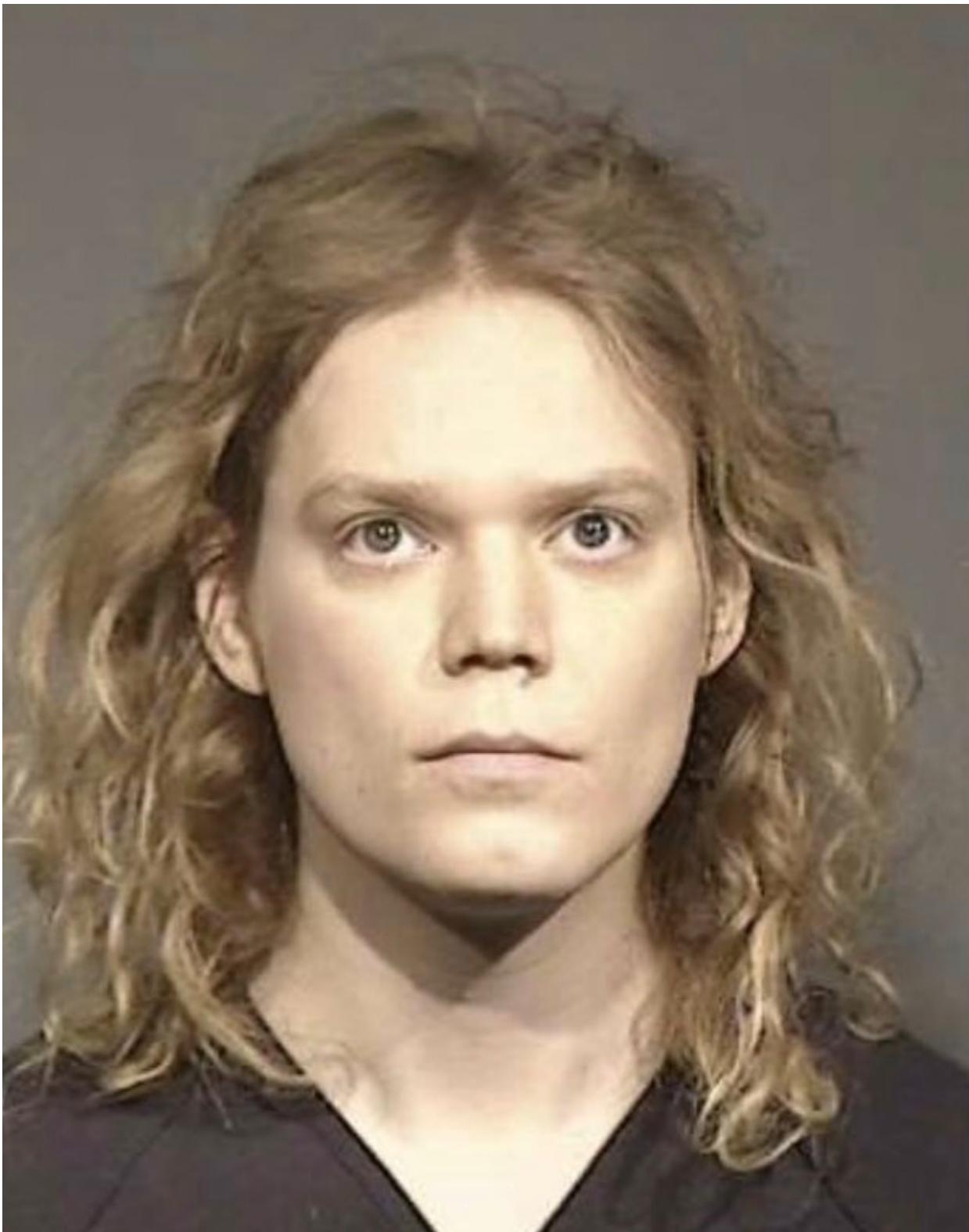
Authorities say the gun Youngblut used in the border patrol attack was bought by Michelle Jacqueline Zajko — the trans nonbinary adult child of Rita and Richard Zajko, who were found killed in mysterious and unsolved circumstances in Delaware County, Pa. in early

2023. Zajko, whose blog shows connections to the Ziz cult, has not been charged with a crime.

That group, the “Zizians,” are highly educated trans vegan “rationalists” who hold fringe, esoteric ideological beliefs about transhumanism and animal rights.

Their leader, Jack “Ziz” LaSota, is a biological male who identifies as a woman. He also used the name Andrea Phelps, and is accused of influencing followers to kill. LaSota’s archived prolific blog writings ramble about the use of violence and radical anarchist tactics to achieve various ends.

LaSota has a warrant for an arrest in Delaware County, Pa., after skipping out on court hearings on an open criminal case. His supporters say he died in 2022, but that appears to be based on a fake online obituary to try to escape the law.



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Jack "Ziz" LaSota has allegedly influenced his followers to kill.

A source with knowledge says LaSota was living with Bauckholt and other members of the group in an Airbnb rental in Chapel Hill, NC, since 2023.

A Jan. 27 motion by federal prosecutors to deny Youngblut bail strongly suggests links with the group.

"Her [Youngblut] associations with other individuals suspected of violent acts also warrants caution," prosecutor Matthew Lasher wrote in a court filing.

"The individual who purchased the firearms the defendant and Bauckholt possessed on January 20, 2025, is a person of interest in a dual-homicide investigation in Delaware County, Pennsylvania."

That person of interest is bioinformatics researcher [Michelle Jacqueline Zajko](#), according to the ATF.



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Michelle Jacqueline Zajko is a person of interest in the deaths of her parents, Rita and Richard Zajko.
no credit

Zajko is the trans nonbinary adult child of Rita and Richard Zajko, an elderly couple found killed in mysterious and unsolved circumstances in Delaware County in early 2023.

Zajko's past archived blog posts show close associations with "Ziz."

SEE ALSO



[National manhunt underway for 'armed and dangerous' woman tied to shooting death of Border Patrol agent David Maland in Vt.](#)

According to public records in reporting by Vermont news site vtdigger, Zajko had purchased a plot of land in rural Vermont close to where the deadly shootout occurred. Members of the "Ziz" group are known to live in communes in box trucks.

Zajko has not been charged with any crime.

A dispute over a former Bay-area "Ziz" commune is at the center of the murder case against Snyder, the Seattle man who applied for a marriage license with Youngblut.

In November 2022, 82-year-old Curtis Lind narrowly survived an assassination attempt by three members of the "Ziz" group who were squatting on his property in Solano County, Calif.

They impaled him with a sword and repeatedly stabbed him. Lind shot two of the assailants, killing Amir "Emma" Borhanian. He lost an eye in the attack and spent a month in the hospital.

Two other alleged members of the cult, Suri Dao and Alexander "Somni" Leatham, both transgender, have a trial in April for the attempted murder of Lind, causing the death of their comrade and other felonies. Both of them have tried to escape from custody and face other charges.



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Curtis Lind was stabbed by Ziz members who were squatting on his property in 2022.gofundme

But that trial may be in jeopardy with the sole witness, Lind, murdered — allegedly by Snyder.

The Solano District Attorney's Office accuses Snyder of lying in wait for Lind and then slitting his throat.

"The victim was a witness to a crime who the defendant intentionally killed for the purpose of preventing his testimony in a criminal proceeding," the DA alleges.



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Maximilian Bentley Snyder in Solano County Criminal Court for his arraignment on Jan. 28, 2025. Special to the Chronicle

Snyder's last transaction on Venmo last year was noted for "Milo," the trans name of his fiance.

Without naming LaSota, the court filing strongly suggests he is the linchpin among all the suspects and persons of interest.

After the shooting of the border agent, a bomb squad investigated Bauckholt and Youngblut's Toyota Prius hatchback.



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Law enforcement vehicles following a hearse carrying Maland to a funeral home in Burlington on Jan. 23, 2025. WCAX via AP

Investigators found two pistols, ammunition clips, night-vision goggles, two full-face respirators, a ballistic helmet, 48 rounds of hollow-point ammunition, shooting range targets, interstate lodging information, two-way radios and a dozen electronic devices, some of which were wrapped in foil.

At their Airbnb rentals in North Carolina, where they lived before going to Vermont, the property owner says Youngblut parked a new box truck on his property, where they spent much of their time during the day, along with other individuals in black clothing.

Some trans activists online are pressuring people not to talk to authorities or journalists, and are cheering the killings.

After it was announced that the elderly witness was murdered earlier this month, one X account that has expressed support of the Vallejo, Calif., trans defendants wrote: "Ladies and gentlemen, we got him."