



## [Assassination Attempt of Trump and Its Possible Implications on the Upcoming Election](#)

The safety of American presidents and former presidents has been one of the main focuses of the United States Secret Service since its inception. This responsibility was tested when Former President Donald Trump took the stage at the Butler Farms Fairgrounds in Pennsylvania for his 43rd campaign appearance this past Saturday, July 13th. While making remarks only 8 minutes after taking the stage and beginning his address, shots rang out within the crowd and Former President Trump clutched his ear. Within seconds, Secret Service members swarmed the stage, covering Trump. Over the next minute, several shots were heard, one set injured some spectators and killed another while the others were the shots of Secret Service snipers that ultimately killed the gunman. Trump was then escorted off of the stage and as he was led away from the scene, raised his fist to signify to the crowd that he was okay.

Pennsylvania, a crucial battleground state, was the backdrop for an incident that drew concern due to some major questions regarding how this was allowed to transpire. While some have defended the Secret Service stating that it is nearly impossible to secure outdoor events of that nature, others have not been so forgiving. These feelings were only intensified when it was later revealed that the very building used in the assassination attempt had been identified as a potential risk days before by those responsible for assessing the venue. Adding to the scrutiny, reports have recently surfaced that rally attendees had warned not only local law enforcement, but the Secret Service as well, of a man with a gun on the roof. An officer went to check out the roof, but returned for reasons unsure. All of this has led to an investigation being opened by both the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Congress, aimed at figuring out how and why the former president's security detail failed.

In the aftermath of the attempted assassination, many people have turned their attention to how Thomas Matthew Crooks – the shooter – was even allowed to gain entry to the roof, let alone do it while armed with a gun. When sitting presidents or former presidents go to speak at large events like this, the Secret Service secures a perimeter ranging anywhere from 100-300 feet. Typically, the Secret Service works jointly with local law enforcement, divvying up the duties to ensure the security and safety of the event. The building where Crooks fired his shots was roughly 400 feet away from the former president's podium. The Secret Service claims that this distance took it from its top priority list, and made it the local law enforcement's job to clear and secure. However, local authorities have continued to state that the Secret Service ultimately had the final call on security matters, shifting the blame back to the service and off of themselves.

As details emerged about the incident, some information regarding Crooks began to come to light, but there are still other aspects that remain unknown. Crooks was a 2022 graduate of Bethel Park High School and while he was a registered Republican, his overall political leanings were somewhat hazy given that federal campaign finance reports also showed that he donated money to a progressive political action committee (PAC). Thus, there were no hints of particularly strong and fervent political beliefs that would suggest a motive for an attempted assassination. It was reported that even after the FBI looked into several of Crooks' personal belongings and interviewed more than 100 people, there was no clear understanding as to why he opened fire during the Trump rally, as he provided no footprint of reasons for targeting the former president.

While the dust continues to settle, another aspect that has drawn considerable attention for many observers is how the attempted assassination could potentially impact the upcoming November election. When Former President Ronald Reagan was shot shortly after being elected to office, the incident helped garner sympathy from the American population and led to increased approval ratings – albeit only for a short period of time but he did still ultimately win re-election. Some have wondered if the same could happen for Trump, especially considering how the photo taken of him just seconds after being shot with his fist in the air has quickly gone viral and made its way to a plethora of merchandise. However, Christopher Zorn, a professor of political science and sociology at Penn State University expressed in an email to USA Today that “While the event may lead to some additional support for Former President Trump, it also took attention away from the intense scrutiny on President Biden and the Democratic Party in the last week or two...The result may thus be to help both candidates in different ways, with the possible overall effect being relatively slight.”

Helping to support this sentiment is the idea that in our current news cycle climate, a new development comes almost every day, so the cultural conscious focus is not likely to stay fixated on this long enough for it to concretely alter the election. As one commentator aptly put it, many additional things will happen in the coming months that will capture voters’ attention, including another planned debate between Trump and Biden. He added that “We are building the scaffolding of whatever the political climate will be in late October, and whatever event happens then will be the one that is sort of the tipping point...It's unlikely that the election will ever look like it's going to be anything but close.” A multitude of analysts agree with this perspective, noting that the lack of outright political motivation driving the crime combined with the time remaining until the November election for other campaign developments to transpire make it less likely to sway large numbers of the American population. Instead, most agree that Trump could see a small initial boost from the incident, but that even if he does, it is probable that this would only be temporary.

As investigations continue and more information is uncovered, the repercussions, however, could remain a topic of national discussion and intrigue. For now, while the incident may have momentarily shifted public sympathy and media focus, experts remind Americans that its long-term impact on the political landscape is still unclear.