

Rejected by the revolution, Jerad and Amanda Miller decided to start their own



Jerad and Amanda Miller are shown in a photo posted on Amanda Miller's Facebook page. (Courtesy, Facebook)

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They weren't Oath Keepers, sovereign citizens or militia members.

Jerad and Amanda Miller fashioned themselves as revolutionaries, but they weren't accepted by anyone — not even their own families.

The Las Vegas cop killers died on the floor of a Wal-Mart, covered in blood and motor oil, alone with only their extremist delusions. They died together, but they were alone.

“We can’t find anything linking these two guys to anybody,” said a law enforcement official with knowledge of the ongoing investigation. “If they were a part of a group, they hid it well.”

Jerad Miller, 31, wasn’t good at hiding anything. He left behind years of Facebook rants and YouTube videos that paint a picture of a disaffected young man prone to paranoia, steeped in conspiracy theories and increasingly angry at a government on his back for various petty crimes.

Last Sunday the couple ambushed and executed Metro officers Alyn Beck, 41, and Igor Soldo, 31, as they ate lunch. Amanda, 22, also killed Joseph Robert Wilcox, 31, after he tried to use his gun to stop them in a nearby Wal-Mart.

Jerad was killed by police. Amanda, his bride of 21 months, shot herself as he lay dying.

AN UNFOCUSED MIND

A high school dropout whose last formal job appeared to be at an Indiana McDonald’s in 2011, Jerad Miller’s ramblings were filled with spelling errors and contradictions.

He voted for a big-government Democrat, Barack Obama, in 2008, but by the time he started posting on Facebook in 2010 he had embraced the world view of radical anti-government websites such as Texas radio host Alex Jones’ infowars.com. He believed the U.S. government staged the 9/11 attacks and uses aircraft “chemtrails” to spew mind-control chemicals on everyday people.

Yet he seemed nothing more than a muddled dabbler in the odd and unsubstantiated.

“life is funny if you dont find it so horrific,” he wrote on Facebook in May 2011.

“sometimes u just gotta roll with the punches anf forgive the gov for its stupidity”

But over time his rants took on a more confrontational and even apocalyptic tone. He often wrote about his “awakening” and wondered why other people couldn’t see the truth about America’s “fascist” and “tyrannical” government.

The son of conservative Christians, in 2012 he posted the profane lyrics of an anti-religious song and was rebuked by his father, Tod Miller, who on Facebook said,

“Remember who followed and campaigned for Obama! Your rebellion has no limits my son.”

“thing is father, i wasnt awake when i voted obama,” Jerad replied.

WAR ON DRUGS

Jerad hated many things about the government, but what he called his “unlawful” convictions for dealing marijuana in 2007 and in 2010 infuriated him. He particularly hated dealing with probation officers and taking drug tests.

“well, another day where these fascist nazi drug war goons get to play with my pee. really, get a real job,” he wrote in 2012.

His family offered little sympathy.

“Shame on you Jerad!!!! And WHY are they testing your pee??? did they FORCE you to do drugs???? and the actions from drugs???? take responsibility for YOUR OWN actions and quit blaming others..... please!!!” responded Carol Webberley, his grandmother.

Webberley and Tod Miller often repeated Bible verses to bolster their points. Jerad always responded in anger.

“Wow grandma, never realized exactly how ignorant you are,” Jerad wrote. “That your brainwashed and indoctrinated generation thought it would be wise to dictate like tyrants what someone can or cannot do in the privacy of their own home. Who the f— do you think you are?”

Amanda stood by her man, writing “yea except that Pot doesn’t hurt anyone. Thank you every much. he never hurt anyone.”

Jerad spent most of 2012 preaching Libertarian views and endorsing political candidates, such as former presidential contenders Ron Paul and Gary Johnson. He wrote about his opposition to welfare and universal health care, and attacked anyone favoring gun control. He compared America to Nazi Germany and wondered when the revolution would arrive.

In 2012 he wrote “I love the idea of a free america. I love the constitution. However, Americans have been neglecting their duties. Soon, USA will be slaughtering christans and constitutionalists by the millions in an effort to bring us one step closer to a new

world order. They will attempt to disarm the world in an effort to have global tyranny. I do not wish this to pass, for this will end this world as we know it.

“Satan runs our government. Satan runs our policies. The war on terror and the war on drugs is satanic agenda.”

James Garbarino, a psychology professor at Loyola University Chicago, said Jerad’s statements have to be viewed in context. For example, green hair and a piercing would have been a danger sign in the 1960s — but not today.

That’s also true of the fringe political rhetoric Jerad espoused.

“The expression of really wild, crazy political stuff is also probably more common now and certainly more widespread and certainly more visible than years ago,” he said. Delusional thinking and narcissism also are factors.

“There’s a pool of young people all across the country who are really troubled and angry. Some of them become delusional, and they look around for a cultural explanation. This couple found it in this right-wing, anti-government rhetoric.”

DEEPER VIEWS

By the end of January 2013, Jerad was prepared to fight.

“Today is day one of the resistance,” he wrote. “Today I declare that I will not acknowledge unconstitutional laws or authority figures. I am invoking the right to resist law here in Indiana. Any attempt to take me away by unlawful warrant will be met with resistance.

“Enough talk, its time for action. I was unlawfully imprisoned due to my actions that did not involve a victim. I am the victim of tyranny and the federal government and the local authorities have violated my rights for the last time.”

But two months later he reported that he was jailed without a fight because he failed to appear in court for a traffic ticket.

“Think we dont live in nazi land still?” he wrote.

Webberley tried to reason with her grandson.

“But what YOU DID DO put them on the alert about you and you know it.... I never see you take responsibility for your actions even though you say you do.... that is sad..... only tells half the story,” she wrote.

His father suggested another motive: “Do ya think maybe (police) found a reason to come get you and see if your FB threats were for real or not???”

A few days later Jerad posted a personal oath:

“I Jerad Dwain Miller do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies both foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same. So help me God,” he wrote.

“I swear to protect my fellow man from all enemies foreign and domestic. I will not deny my fellow man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, so help me God.”

Mark Pitcavage, the top researcher for the Anti-Defamation League, said the oath appears rooted in the conspiracy theories advanced by the anti-government patriot movement.

“It’s his own personal statement of what he thinks the government is going to do and his stand against it,” Pitcavage said.

Jerad was supposed to spend the summer of 2013 on house arrest in Lafayette, Ind., for failure to comply with probation terms related to his 2011 marijuana conviction, but he finished his sentence in jail after he was evicted in July. His writings became more threatening.

“hopefully we can achieve freedom without killing the older generations off. it may come to that,” he wrote in reference to legalizing marijuana use.

He was released from jail in September, and in January the couple moved to Las Vegas with plans to campaign for Independent American Party gubernatorial candidate David Lory VanDerBeek. It didn’t go well.

“After meeting me and listening to me I am sure it was obvious to them that I was not violent,” VanDerBeek recently wrote on his campaign blog. “I will never know their reasons. They were not political killers, they were simply insane people who wanted to kill.”

Amanda went back to work for Hobby Lobby. Jerad dressed up as comic book characters to pose with tourists for tips on the Strip and Fremont Street. On Facebook he wrote that he enjoyed the work, but his rhetoric darkened again in February, about the time he was stopped by police and found driving on a suspended Indiana license.

“For, if they would deprive me of my right to life, and liberty, is it not my duty, my right and obligation to abolish such an institution and slaughter all whom they send my way? Here is your warning, tread carefully, for the rattlesnake has spoken,” he wrote that month.

The imagery of the rattlesnake reappeared on the Gadsden flag he would drape on the body of a dead police officer. The Revolutionary War flag warns “don’t tread on me.”

Jerad’s angry call to Indiana’s Bureau of Motor Vehicles was considered a threat and prompted one of three interactions with Las Vegas police before last Sunday’s rampage. The officer who interviewed him apparently didn’t find a threat warranting prosecution. Nor did officers who twice interviewed the couple as witnesses to crimes involving friends and neighbors express any concern about them.

But a series of posts in March culminated in Jerad’s promise to die for his convictions.

“The day of your judgment will come, not from my hand, for you will make me a martyr. Your judgment will come from those that will bite the hand that feeds them,” he wrote. “Come for me, free me from your slavery. Give me the death a hero deserves. Help wake the masses to your corruption and treason. I f—ing dare you!”

BUNDY RANCH

If the Millers were looking for a revolution, Cliven Bundy’s ranch was the place to find it.

In early April, Bundy and his family made headlines as they confronted Bureau of Land Management officials out to round up cattle grazing without permission or payment on federal land 80 miles northeast of Las Vegas. Bundy became a symbol, attracting activists with ties to militias, the patriot movement, the Oath Keepers and sovereign citizens, who refuse to recognize any government authority.

“Ranch war almost under way,” Jerad wrote on April 9. “we need to watch this closely, could be the next Waco and start of revolution.”

On April 12 the standoff reached a fevered peak, with armed militia members forcing BLM agents to suspend the roundup in the face of a threatened firefight. Arriving days later, the Millers set themselves apart almost immediately at the camp.

“I received word that there was a gentleman who was saying some things that the protesters and some other militiamen felt were not conducive to the cause,” said Ryan Payne, a Montana militia leader who was at the ranch.

Jerad also disclosed he had a felony conviction, a concern for image-conscious militia leaders who gave the apparently destitute couple some money and sent them to Mesquite. Payne said the militia leaders “didn’t sense they were mad about being asked to leave.”

“We never had a cause to question their patriotism — just the manner in which they would prefer to move forward with things — that we should be a little more aggressive in our posture,” Payne said. “There was never anything said about going after cops or anything like that.”

It seemed Jerad was the leader, Payne said. Amanda was quiet.

“She didn’t have a whole lot to say, but she seemed like she was going to support any decision he made,” Payne said. “... If he was going to stay, she was going to stay. If he was going to go, she was going to go.”

Less active on social media sites, Amanda always was ready to support her husband’s rants.

Some people who knew them said she had an effect on Jerad.

Jake Weatherford, a Facebook friend of Jerad, told the Review-Journal that Jerad always had been anti-government:

“Well for the past 4 or 5 years,” Weatherford wrote in a email. “He got with Amanda and started talking about government, (FBI) black bags (spy operations) and ... government conspiracies.”

That fits a pattern, said James Fox, who teaches criminology at Northeastern University in Boston.

It's common for mass killers working together to justify actions they might not take if acting alone, Fox said.

"But together, with someone else — a like-minded individual — they are emboldened," Fox said.

Often one killer has more influence while the other is a follower who wants to please him, he said.

"The dominant one enjoys the fact he or she has a protégé who looks up to him, who sees him as a significant individual," he said. "... The follower enjoys the praise he or she gets by the leader. Each one gets something."

The D.C. sniper case of 2002 and last year's Boston Marathon bombing are examples, he said.

If Jerad influenced Amanda, he also loved her more than anything in his world. He raved about her in his writings and hinted she shared his extreme views more than her family knew.

"She knows my darkest secrets, my desires and my ambitions. If they cannot trust her judgment, then shame on them for thinking her stupid," he wrote a month before moving to Las Vegas.

"They will blame me for her decisions. I find this very sad, how they must hate me so. They only hurt themselves however, and perhaps they deserve it for their ignorance and assumptions... Some day they will know the truth and see me for who I really am. I'm happy to know my wife is strong and can make her own decisions, and that she chooses to stand by my side, as will I hers, always."

REVOLUTION

Should those reading Jerad's posts have known how he and Amanda would end up?

Fox says no — you can't predict mass killings.

"The good news is that they're rare," he said. "The bad news is that rare events are impossible to predict."

Rhetoric and ideology aren't enough, Fox said.

“After the fact, (there are) warning signs people talk about — how they dress, their tweets, their Facebook pages. But those only become crystal clear in the aftermath,” Fox said. “If we tried to use the way people dressed or talked or wrote, we’d be over-predicting tremendously.”

Their friends didn’t seem to sense anything was wrong. The couple was opinionated and odd, but never seemed violent.

“I must say, this man was one of my very good friends. I in no way condone his actions, but way deep down inside he was good, (psychopathic and misled) but there was good in him,” wrote Mike Beavers, who often commented on Jerad’s Facebook. “It is a tragedy that happened on Sunday. Last I talked to him everything was fine. WTF happened???”

Evicted from one revolution, Jerad declared he would start his own.

In a YouTube comment on video about the Bundy standoff about a month ago, Jerad wrote: “I was out there but they told me and my wife to leave because I am a felon. They don’t seem to understand that they are all felons now for intimidating law enforcement with deadly weapons. So don’t tell you that they need people. We sold everything we had to buy supplies and quit our jobs to be there 24/7. How dare you ask for help and shun us dedicated patriots!”

“(the) revolution is starting, here and now, and I will be a part of it,” he wrote on Facebook.

Two months later the couple launched their revolution, only to see it fail less than 30 minutes later in the automotive aisle of the Wal-Mart store where they died.

Alone.

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