

# Ghost Guns Arm Far-Right Extremists

Ghost guns are predictably emerging as a weapon of choice for violent criminals, dangerous extremists, and other people legally prohibited from buying firearms. Everytown recently analyzed 10 years of federal prosecutions involving ghost guns, revealing 2,513 ghost guns connected to criminal activity and a troubling link to far-right extremism:<sup>1</sup>

- In May 2021, authorities in Pennsylvania found almost \$1 million of methamphetamine, six fully assembled ghost guns, three partially complete ghost guns, and Nazi paraphernalia during a raid on the home of two felons.<sup>2</sup>
- In May and June 2020, members of the far-right extremist “boogaloo” movement used a ghost gun to carry out premeditated attacks at the federal courthouse in Oakland and in Santa Cruz, CA, killing two law enforcement officers.<sup>3</sup>
- In January 2020, authorities arrested three members of a white-supremacist terror group who planned to travel to Virginia, where they hoped to use a gun rights rally to ignite a civil war.<sup>4</sup> One member of the group had made an AR-15 ghost gun using parts and jig widely available online.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2017, FBI agents seized more than 20 guns from a neo-Nazi sex offender, including a ghost gun assault-style rifle.<sup>6</sup>
- A white-supremacist group made AR-15 ghost guns after bombing a Minnesota mosque and attempting to bomb an Illinois women’s health clinic in 2017.<sup>7</sup>

Searches of online forums popular with white supremacists show extremists openly discussing the benefit of ghost guns and sharing advice on how to make them. On 4chan, commenters shared tips for building ghost guns amid a steady stream of racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic slurs. A rabidly racist and anti-Semitic user posted a guide for building an “untraceable, unserialized AR-15,” which has been circulating on 4chan for years. After an extremist in Germany used a homemade gun to attack worshipers at a synagogue, 4chan users shared a guide for making the shooter’s gun.

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<sup>1</sup> Everytown identified prosecutions involving ghost guns or unfinished frames or receivers from press releases from U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, media reports, and court documents. Everytown reviewed court filings to determine details about each prosecution.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Kessler, “Ghost guns, Nazi paraphernalia, nearly \$1 million of meth seized in Pennsylvania raid,” NBC News, May 2, 2021, <https://nbcnews.to/3eQxOMp>

<sup>3</sup> Dan Noyes and Amanda del Castillo, “Federal officer shooting suspects Steven Carrillo, Robert Justus ‘came to Oakland to kill cops,’ FBI says,” ABC 7 News, June 17, 2020, <https://abc7news.com/3uqDfZ5>

<sup>4</sup> Pete Williams and Erik Ortiz, “Days before Virginia Gun Rally, FBI Arrests 3 Alleged White Supremacists,” NBC News, January 16, 2020, <https://nbcnews.to/3ctOOpY>.

<sup>5</sup> Motion for Detention Pending Trial, US. v. Lemley, et al., 20-MJ-00192, 20-MJ-00193, 20-MJ-00194, at \*17-18 (D. Md. Jan. 21, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Bill of Particulars, US v. Wells, 17-CR-01114, (D. Ariz. Jul. 9, 2018); O’Connor, “Facebook Led the FBI to Seize Guns.”

<sup>7</sup> Complaint, US v. Hari, et al., 18-CR-20014, at 9, 12-13 (C.D. Ill. Mar. 13, 2018); Superseding Indictment, US v. Hari, et al., 18-CR-20014, at 5-6 (C.D. Ill. May 2, 2018).