

Jury Finds Portland Antifa Leader Guilty, Police Arrest Member For Assault

By: Logan Washburn

August 15, 2024

A jury in Clackamas County, Oregon, convicted Antifa leader Alissa Azar. Then an Antifa member attacked a man outside the courthouse.

When an Oregon county near Portland held self-proclaimed “journalist” Alissa Azar accountable for planning a riot in 2021, violent members of Antifa descended on a small main street. Police arrested one member for allegedly assaulting a man.

“She just wasn’t even just your average Antifa member. She was somebody who definitely was an orchestrator, or I would call a ringleader,” Clackamas County Commissioner Ben West said to The Federalist. “They operate with creating fear, and at a certain point, you just have to stand up and be like, ‘No.’”

A Clackamas County jury found Azar guilty of a felony riot charge and a misdemeanor disorderly conduct charge, but was hung on her misdemeanor charge for use of “ESG [electrical stun gun]/Tear Gas/Mace,” according to The Post Millennial. Prosecutors alleged Azar helped organize a 2021 Antifa riot in Oregon City, a small, usually safe community.

Azar, who calls herself a “journalist,” retained lawyer Lauren Regan, director of the radical Civil Liberties Defense Center, which has defended Antifa in court.

John Hacker, a well-known Antifa member who allegedly helped attack journalist Andy Ngo in 2021, assaulted a man outside the courthouse after the verdict, according to West. West said a constituent stopped to shake his hand, and Hacker became violent.

“Hacker comes out of nowhere, yelling and screaming,” West said. “These two gentlemen started yelling at each other and engaging, and it escalated and escalated, and I turned around from right across the street and watched John Hacker just throw an absolute haymaker on this dude and knock him to the ground.”

West said he is unsure if the two had any history. Chelly Bouferrache, on assignment for The Post Millennial, told The Federalist the two knew each other.

“I crossed the street and John Hacker’s there, and I was like, ‘I think I just saw you assault him,’” West said. “John tries to evade, police end up arresting him.”

The victim was lying on the ground with a “hole in his face,” according to West. Bouferrache confirmed this. West said he is also a nurse, so he helped the man until an ambulance arrived.

“He was bleeding pretty profusely. He was dazed. I got him off the ground, sat him up, tried to provide some direct pressure,” West said. “Then Antifa came out and were yelling threatening things to me, and making threats to me and my person while I was giving my report to law enforcement.”

Local police deescalated the situation, he said. According to online records, Hacker is currently in the Clackamas County Jail, charged with assault and not allowed out on bail.

Hacker harassed Bouferrache outside the courthouse earlier in the day. According to The Post Millennial, police had warned him to leave her alone.

“He always says, ‘You’re lying about me,’ or ‘I’m not stalking you,’” Bouferrache said. “I’m like, ‘You can say whatever you want online, but I don’t want you in my personal space. You scare me.’ I told him that so many times, because he’s huge.”

Hacker had just been interrupting West during a press conference, and he did the same yesterday, according to videos Katie Davis court with The Post Millennial posted on X.

An Antifa member allegedly assaulted Davis court earlier in the courthouse.

“The ‘pink hair’ came out, and she just swung those doors as hard as she could — Katie had her back turned — and just smacked right into the back of Katie,” Bouferrache said. “She did it again a second time. Only this time Katie was sitting at the edge of the bench and the trash can, and it probably hit the edge of her knee and the trash can. But she did it.”

The suspect was speaking with Azar earlier outside the courthouse, according to The Post Millennial. Witnesses told deputies about the incident, which is under investigation.

During Azar’s trial in downtown Oregon City, West said 20 to 25 Antifa members have consistently been in the courtroom, harassing himself and journalists covering the event.

“The courthouse is full of people that are obviously Antifa members. They have a specific look about them, and they will take any opportunity to be very confrontational,” West said. “They come out of the courthouse flipping everybody off; they’re just acting chaotic and unhinged.”

West said Antifa members posted themselves across the street from the courthouse.

“We were walking to lunch just across the street from the courthouse. On the other side of the street was a little band of the Antifa group, and they were catcalling and acting out,” West said. “They definitely stand out a little bit, because they don’t dress like a lot of normal people that you would see in Clackamas County. They have multi-colored hair; they tend to be very angry.”

West said a “very, very credible source” told him a member of the jury felt “incredibly threatened” by Antifa, and is “still very afraid for their safety for providing that public service.”

Antifa has a history of intimidating public officials. Anarchists firebombed a car that belonged to a family member of Portland City Commissioner Rene Gonzalez, a Democrat

who pushed to ban open-air drug use, in January. An Antifa member also punched Democrat Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in the face in 2021.

A Portland Antifa account posted on X, asking for “specific times you have documentation of elected official Ben West being at the courthouse.” The account called on Antifa members for “support” at the courthouse Wednesday.

West said he is concerned for his safety.

“I’m not immune to their potential assaults or personal attacks,” West said. “At the same time, I firmly believe that if I have the ability to set the standard and the culture as a leader within my community, I have a role to do that.”

Ngo has been covering the trial as well. He posted on X that Azar testified at her own trial, allowing the prosecution to examine her history with Antifa — which includes far more than the case at issue.

Police arrested Azar for participating in the anti-Israel protest and library siege at Portland State University in May, but she was released on bail, Ngo reported. According to online court records, Azar currently faces a misdemeanor charge for criminal trespass. The case is still open.

The Riot

Republican Dan Tooze was running for state representative in 2021 and rented a pavilion in an Oregon City park for voter registration, according to West. Members of the right-wing group Proud Boys attended, and Antifa showed up to shut it down.

“Antifa hates him, and decided to come in from Portland to create that chaos and mayhem and come into Oregon City,” West said.

Azar called on Antifa members to show up to the event on X, according to The Post Millennial. “Don’t forget about the counter demonstration this afternoon, if you’re able to show up please do,” Azar wrote on X. “Rise against hate, stand up to fascism.” When Antifa showed up to the event in Clackamette Park near the Willamette River on June 18, the groups erupted in a brawl, charging each other with pepper spray.

Video appears to show Azar pepper-spraying someone during the conflict, according to The Post Millennial. A video posted at the time depicts a loud “bang” noise in the fray.

“I heard testimony of women and children being evacuated by boat from the river,” West said.

Police quickly responded en masse to the riot and shut it down. Officers found “explosive devices, a homemade bomb, chemical wipes, and riot shields” at the site, according to The Post Millennial, and a witness in the trial tied them to Antifa.

West said he condemns all violent extremism, whether the perpetrators are Proud Boys or Antifa.

“In Clackamas County, we respect the rule of law. We are a safe county,” West said.

“We’re not going to have violent political extremism turn into riots and chaos and create danger in my community.”

Antifa Intimidation

As violent protestors clashed with police and vandalized businesses for more than 200 days in Portland, starting in summer 2020, tensions rose in nearby Clackamas County.

When the protests stretched into summer 2021, right-wing and left-wing groups demonstrated for weeks in Oregon City, caught between rural Oregon and the Portland Metro area.

Conservatives held flag waves along a local highway for weeks, which Antifa tried to stop with intimidation tactics. State and local police mostly kept the groups apart, preventing any large clashes.

At one point, according to West, Antifa vandalized the location of the flag wave with a “congealed urine, bloody, oily, liquidy substance coating the public area, along with fleshy chunks of pig parts.” Radicals placed a sign with a poem at the site.

“Antifa came in to try to do a biohazard type of vandalism,” West said. “Not to be overly dramatic, but it looked like a kind of satanic messaging with a black background, and almost like blood-red lettering that had a creepy poem with it. Antifa was there, glorifying it and propagandizing it on their social media channels.”

Azar posted on X at the time, saying “local antifascists” stopped the flag-waving event by “pouring blood, oil, feces and cat litter everywhere.” While Azar’s account is now private, West provided The Federalist with screenshots of the posts.

“There was liver all over the place, and antifascist graffiti all around the meetup spot,” Azar posted at the time. “A communique was included: ‘Fascists are not welcome under any flag they fly. We must take every opportunity to disrupt organizing, recruiting, and propaganda. Some presents were left behind for your sh-tty rally.’”

West said the court discussed Azar’s post promoting the biohazard.

“It was the prosecution showing a pattern of really kind of aggressive and bad behavior, illegal behavior,” West said. “I don’t think most people understand how awful and gross and dangerous the behavior was, happening in our community. It was associated with Portland, but they brought it over into Clackamas.”

A Different Vision

While Clackamas County is just a half-hour drive from downtown Portland, it is far different. The county stretches from the Portland suburbs in the northwest to the Cascade Mountains in the east to the farmland of the Willamette Valley in the west.

Clackamas County voted for Republican Christine Drazan instead of now-Gov. Tina Kotek, a Democrat, in 2022. While neighboring Multnomah County — which contains Portland — had a 29 percent increase in homelessness from 2022 to 2023, Clackamas County had a 65 percent decrease in homelessness.

“It’s a tale of two counties, and the contrast is clear,” West said. “We have a culture that respects the rule of law. We respect police. Law enforcement is well funded here and taken care of; we don’t defund our police.”

Elected officials’ job is to solve problems and provide basic services like public safety, according to West. “When you call 911, we want somebody to show up,” West said. “When they come to Clackamas County to do this crazy behavior, we won’t allow it.”