

Vegan Transgender Extremist Zizian Cult Linked to Multiple Murders

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Jack LaSota, the leader of the extremist group known as the Zizians, Photo Courtesy of the Reporter

Zizians, a transgender cult, labeled as extremists by U.S. law enforcement, was a radical vegan anarchist group linked to at least six murders.

In November 2019, a group of Zizians, dressed in black hooded robes and Guy Fawkes masks, staged a protest outside a retreat for the Center for Applied Rationality (CFAR) in northern California. Claiming CFAR was guilty of transphobia, secrecy, and ethical violations, they blocked entrances before being confronted by SWAT officers, who mistakenly feared an active shooter situation. While the incident seemed minor at the time, it marked the beginning of the Zizians' radicalization, as their beliefs in secrecy, persecution, and an alternate reality became more extreme—ultimately culminating in the violent murders and attacks linked to the group in later years.

Jack LaSota, the leader of the extremist group known as the Zizians, was denied bail in Maryland after being arrested alongside followers Michelle Zajko, 32, and Daniel Blank, 26, for trespassing and obstructing law enforcement. Authorities consider LaSota a flight risk, citing his history of faking his own death and the multi-state warrants issued for his arrest in California and Pennsylvania.

The Zizians originated as a transgender, vegan anarchist group composed of highly intelligent computer scientists who met online and gradually turned to violence. Their ultimate goals remain unclear, but their writings covered topics such as radical veganism, gender

identity, and artificial intelligence. At the center of the group is LaSota, a transgender woman and computer engineer from Alaska, who published a dark, often violent blog under the name Ziz.

The group has been linked to at least six killings across three states, including the execution-style murder of Zajko's parents on New Year's Eve 2022, the killing of a California landlord, and a January 20 shootout in Vermont that left U.S. Border Patrol Agent Chris Maland and another person dead. Zajko had also purchased weapons later linked to Maland's killing.

During his court appearance, LaSota denied any wrongdoing, instead pleading for a vegan diet, claiming she was delirious from lack of food. His public defender, Rebecca Francoeur-Breeden, described LaSota as highly intelligent, highlighting his degree in computer engineering. She also represented Zajko and Blank, both of whom were characterized as bright but troubled individuals. Blank, who has serious mental health concerns, was previously listed as a missing or endangered person.

Authorities believe the Zizians evolved from an online ideological community into a violent extremist faction, with Jack LaSota (Ziz) at its core. The group, estimated to have around 30 members, consists primarily of young transgender women with backgrounds in mathematics, computer science, and finance, including former employees of NASA, Google, and Wall Street. Their ideology blends Silicon Valley Rationalist theories, animal rights activism, anarchism, and esoteric spiritual practices, making them particularly difficult to track.

LaSota was heavily influenced by rationalist and effective altruist movements, particularly their belief that artificial intelligence could achieve godlike power and, if mismanaged, might destroy humanity. She participated in programs connected to the Center for Applied Rationality (CFAR) and the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, later developing his own radical philosophy that incorporated vegan extremism, leftist ideology, and unique jargon such as "anti-ethics," "dichotomy leakage," and "timeless gambits." She categorized people into hierarchical labels like "zombies" and "vampires" or "single good" versus "double good," while seeing society as filled with "flesh-eating monsters" who undervalue non-human life. She believed any future super-AI must prioritize animal welfare, further isolating his from mainstream rationalist circles and fueling the Zizians' increasingly extreme ideology.

The Zizians' practices include "unihemispheric sleep", a technique where members train themselves to sleep with one eye open, believing that each brain hemisphere is a distinct identity—one male, one female, one good, one evil—that may seek to destroy each other. Investigators suspect that this philosophy of self-destruction has directly contributed to suicides within the group, including Maia Pasek (2018) and Jay Winterford (2021). LaSota's blog reinforced these ideas in a fatalistic manner, suggesting that self-annihilation or murder could be a logical extension of their beliefs.

Authorities describe the Zizians as a decentralized extremist faction, using multiple aliases, shifting pronouns, and frequent movement across California, Vermont, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania to avoid detection. They are believed to be anti-sex, with many members taking hormones for gender transition, and are often estranged from their families, with some suspected to be on the autism spectrum. The group has referenced supernatural abilities and treated movies like *The Matrix* as reality, further complicating efforts to understand their motives.

As the investigation unfolds, law enforcement is working to piece together the full extent of the Zizians' crimes. Some officials believe their ideology justifies murder, particularly in cases like Curtis Lind's, where a victim seen as an obstacle was eliminated to maintain group secrecy.