

Is This What Is Meant by Free and Fair Elections?

Sept. 16—The world knows that the leading candidate opposing U.S. President Joe Biden in the upcoming presidential election, his predecessor Donald Trump, has been charged during 2023 with 91 felonies in four indictments by multiple Justice Department and Democratic Party state prosecutors. The former President faces prosecutors' demands that he be tied up in trials during the majority of the presidential campaign year 2024. Trump's leading political opponents, from Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff to Republican former Rep. Liz Cheney, have made it clear these prosecutions are intended to help ensure that Trump is never elected President again.

But relatively few citizens are aware, even in the United States, that President Biden's leading Democratic Party opponent, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.—without Secret Service protection—narrowly missed encountering a heavily armed man who was trying to get near him as he entered a campaign event in Los Angeles Sept. 15. The candidate has repeatedly asked for, and been denied, the Federal Secret Service protection which all major candidates for President receive.

At the Sept. 15 Los Angeles campaign event, Kennedy's private security guard service identified an armed infiltrator, detained him, and notified the Los Angeles Police Department, who came and arrested the man. The incident delayed the candidate's rally, after which it proceeded safely.

Federal authorities have continued to deny Secret Service protection to Kennedy, a declared candidate for President who is receiving 20% or more support in polling from potential Democratic Party Primary voters, and higher "favorability" ratings from the public than either Biden or Trump. RFK, Jr.'s campaign is guarded by the private security service Gavin de Becker and Associates.

Notably, the location of the RFK, Jr. campaign event Sept. 15, involving hundreds of people at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre, was within three miles of the site of the June 6, 1968 assassination of his father, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, campaigning for President as his son is now.

The killing occurred at the Ambassador Hotel, now the site for the Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools, named in the elder Kennedy's memory.

Following the incident, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. put out this message:

I'm very grateful that alert and fast-acting protectors from Gavin de Becker and Associates (GDBA) spotted and detained an armed man who attempted to approach me at my Hispanic Heritage speech at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles tonight.

The man, wearing two shoulder holsters with loaded pistols and spare ammunition magazines was carrying a U.S. Marshal badge on a lanyard and belt clip federal ID. He identified himself as a member of my security detail. Armed GDBA team members moved quickly to isolate and detain the man until LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] arrived to make the arrest. I'm also grateful to LAPD for its rapid response.

I'm still entertaining a hope that President Biden will allow me Secret Service protection. I am the first presidential candidate in history to whom the White House has denied a request for protection. (Emphasis in original.)

Were Donald Trump and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. eliminated from contention, there would be no announced serious opponent to the unpopular President Biden just over a year from Election Day 2024, no candidates who oppose NATO's war.

Given the assassinations of RFK, Jr.'s uncle in 1963 while serving as President, and his father in 1968 while campaigning for President in the same Democratic Primary, the question posed is dramatic: What is "democracy" in the United States now worth? Where is the vaunted "rules-based order" in elections in the United States, where the system cannot or will not even protect "a Kennedy"?

EDITORIAL