

# Organizer of Provo protest arrested, accused of rioting, making threats

[deseret.com/utah/2020/7/10/21320220/organizer-of-provo-protest-arrested-accused-of-rioting-making-threats](https://www.deseret.com/utah/2020/7/10/21320220/organizer-of-provo-protest-arrested-accused-of-rioting-making-threats)

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John Earle Sullivan, 25, of Sandy, was booked into the Utah County Jail on Thursday, July 9, 2020, for investigation of rioting, making a threat of violence and criminal mischief.

*Utah County Jail*

PROVO — One of the organizers of a protest in Provo that resulted in a motorist being shot was arrested on Thursday.

John Earle Sullivan, 25, of Sandy, was booked into the Utah County Jail for investigation of rioting, making a threat of violence and criminal mischief.

On June 29, a group calling itself Back to Blue planned to drive around the Provo Police Department and honk their horns to show support for law enforcement.

Another group planned a counterprotest at the same time and place. On Facebook, its event page was originally titled End Police Brutality but was later changed to Marching for Racial Equality. The Facebook pages listed the event's hosts as the groups Insurgence, Solidarity for Justice, Salt Lake Equal Rights Movement and the Salt Lake Antifascist Coalition.

Sullivan is part of the Insurgence USA group, according to a police affidavit.

“Protesters traveled through downtown Provo. The protesters did not obtain a permit for the event,” the affidavit states. “John Sullivan and Insurgence USA had social media postings promoting other protesters to join them.”

Between 80 and 100 people were part of the protest.

“The protest traveled on the roadways blocking motorists who have the right of way. John Sullivan blocked vehicles from freely moving lawfully. During the course of the protest, two handguns were brandished and two shots fired toward a motorist traveling to Home Depot. Vehicles were damaged by protestors as well as by John Sullivan,” the affidavit states.

“As a protest organizer John Sullivan is heard and seen as he is promoting protesters to block roadways, keeping motorists from traveling lawfully and freely.”

Sullivan was also captured on video threatening to beat a woman in an SUV, according to the affidavit, and then kicking her door, leaving a dent.

Sullivan was seen with Jesse Taggart — the man charged with shooting the motorist — throughout the protest, the affidavit states.

“As a protest organizer, John Sullivan is heard talking about seeing the shooting, looking at the gun and seeing smoke coming from it. John did not condemn the attempted murder nor attempt to stop it nor aide in its investigation by police.”

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