

LIFE FAITH&RELIGION

Segall: Blowing up my Temple



Erik Segall

Over the weekend, a white-supremacist tried to erase Temple Emanuel, Colorado's second oldest synagogue. He wanted to kill us.

Doesn't matter if I tell people that I'm Jewish or if I hide my identity, we are a target. Anti-Semites focus on our places of worship, our last names, maybe even our facial features. They hate for hate's sake. But we are resilient. We have a long history of defending ourselves and we cannot be erased.

I've been thinking about the eleven people murdered at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill, Pennsylvania. In their honor, we've displayed

in the entrance at Temple Emanuel a beautiful ornamental tablet made by local artist Joe Kronwitter.

I've also been thinking about the fifty people slain at the Al-Noor Mosque in Riccarton, New Zealand.

And it almost happened at Temple Emanuel here in Pueblo.

We say, "Never again," but it happens repeatedly. Again and again. The first school bombing occurred in 1927 in Bath, Michigan. The bomber, a

55-year-old white male, blew up a school using dynamite and pyrotol, an inexpensive explosive from WWI. Thirty-eight children died horrifically.

And why? Because he was upset about the tax increase to build the elementary school.

The domestic terrorist here in Pueblo cited reasons but it's simple. Hate desires an outlet and Jews have often been the recipient. Thankfully, our temple's leaders, Michael Atlas-Acuna and his wife Helena, are diligent

about our safety. Like she said yesterday, "We will not cower in fear. We're going to fight back!"

Today, the Jewish congregation, the kahal kodesh of Temple Emanuel, would like to thank Chief Troy Davenport and the Pueblo Police Department, along with the FBI, for averting this tragedy. Jews have always been welcomed in Pueblo. We've always felt safe. This anti-Semitic coward and his thwarted attempt changes nothing.

Shalom.