

Fed Agency Let Worker's Nazism Go Unchecked, Suit Says

By [Grace Elletson](#) · 2023-10-18 18:24:03 -0400 · [Listen to article](#)

A U.S. government printing agency violated federal law by failing to step in when an employee trumpeted support for Adolf Hitler, Nazism and antisemitic conspiracy theories in the workplace, three workers told a Washington, D.C., federal court.

Sarah Hurtt, Joshua Crotty and Jonathan Romain **alleged** in a complaint filed Tuesday against the U.S. Government Publishing Office that it violated Title VII when it allowed defendant Samuel Mewshaw to discuss openly his allegiance to Nazism in the office and to sexually harass **his** colleagues with pornographic imagery.

"GPO failed to take action to stop the discrimination, allowing it to pollute the workplace, and allowed it to remain unremedied for years," the workers said.

The employees said Mewshaw was openly antisemitic in the agency, which produces official government documents for federal offices and the public, such as passports and White House publications.

They said he supported Hitler, Nazism and antisemitic conspiracy theories. According to the suit, he would leave Nazi literature on his desk, such as "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," an antisemitic book used by Nazis to spread propaganda.

Mewshaw greeted other GPO employees with the Nazi salutes, the workers said, and sent out links to colleagues about antisemitic conspiracy theories claiming that the amount of Jewish people killed in the Holocaust was inflated. At one point in the office, Mewshaw held up a book about Hitler and said that he was the "greatest white man who has ever lived," the workers said.

Romain, who is Jewish, said he was harassed by Mewshaw with stereotypes. Mewshaw called him a "secret millionaire" and said he worked for the government "as a cover-up," referring to antisemitic conspiracy theories, Romain said.

Mewshaw compared Crotty, who is of Irish descent, and his wife, who is of Sicilian descent, to Black people while using a racial slur, according to the suit. Another employee espoused similar views in the office, the workers claimed.

The employee stated openly that Jewish people control the entertainment industry and told Hurtt, who grew up in Thailand, that she is not American because she was born outside the country. The employee also sexually harassed her, stating that she should be a sex worker in Thailand and commenting on her appearance, according to the suit.

Mewshaw also displayed figurines in the office with erect penises, the workers claimed, and at one point sculpted a penis out of binding glue and chased others around the office with it. He also shared pornography in the office, the workers said, including posters of naked women.

Not only did GPO supervisors witness and ignore the behavior about which the three workers lodged complaints, one supervisor contributed to the harassment himself, they said. The supervisor openly used the N-word in front of Romain several times, the employee said, and referred to women as prostitutes.

The supervisor also made antisemitic comments about billionaire George Soros and made reference to Romain's Jewish identity in a derogatory fashion, stating he knew Jonathon "was a Jew," in front of other colleagues, according to the suit.

In the fall of 2022, Mewshaw's behavior began to escalate, the workers said. He appeared to arrive at work intoxicated and more frequently discussed Nazi ideology, according to the suit. In October 2022, the workers said, he arrived late to the office and began shouting at Crotty about a Nazi sympathizer.

When Crotty told him to stop, he threatened him with violence, stating: "Do you want to settle this in the bathroom? There are no cameras."

A supervisor broke up the altercation and asked Crotty to leave the office while making excuses for Mewshaw, the workers said. Crotty said he filed a complaint with the GPO stating that he was afraid Mewshaw might retaliate against him violently and took leave after the episode. Crotty said he was forced to take another job after the GPO declined to extend his leave while it investigated the altercation.

While the supervisor was eventually removed from his post, GPO leadership told employees

to put "blinders" on to the discrimination and did not take further action beyond an agencywide statement that GPO Director Hugh Halpern issued stating that some employees were "not being kind," according to the suit.

"Nothing in Director Halpern's statement gave GPO employees, including plaintiffs, notice that Director Halpern was addressing matters as severe as open Nazism and white supremacy in a federal workplace or severe sexual harassment," the workers said.

Brian J. Markovitz, who represents the three workers, told Law360 that employees shouldn't have to face such conduct in the workplace.

"This is a terrible situation that our clients had to endure," Markovitz said. "Nobody should have to deal with this stuff at work, especially if they work for the federal government."

A GPO spokesperson said Mewshaw is no longer an employee with the agency but otherwise declined to comment.

Mewshaw could not immediately be reached for comment.

The workers are represented by Brian J. Markovitz, Michal Shinnar and Mathew B. Hough of [Joseph Greenwald & Laake PA](#).

Counsel information for the GPO and Mewshaw was not available

The case is Hurtt et al. v. Halpern et al., case number [1:23-cv-03097](#), in the [U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia](#).

--Editing by Nick Petruncio.

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