

# **Charlie Kirk refused Netanyahu funding offer, was 'frightened' by pro-Israel forces before death, friend reveals - The Grayzone**

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**A Trump insider and longtime friend of Charlie Kirk tells The Grayzone how the assassinated conservative leader's turning point on Israeli influence provoked a private backlash from Netanyahu's allies that left him angry and afraid.**

**The source said anxiety spread within the Trump administration after an apparent Israeli spying operation was uncovered.**

Charlie Kirk rejected an offer earlier this year from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to arrange a massive new infusion of Zionist money into his Turning Point USA (TPUSA) organization, America's largest conservative youth association, according to a longtime friend of the slain commentator speaking on the condition of anonymity. The source told The Grayzone that the late pro-Trump influencer believed Netanyahu was trying to cow him into silence as he began to publicly question Israel's overwhelming influence in Washington and demanded more space to criticize it.

In the weeks leading up to his September 10 assassination, Kirk had come to loathe the Israeli leader, regarding him as a "bully," the source said. Kirk was disgusted by what he witnessed inside the Trump administration, where Netanyahu sought to personally dictate the president's personnel decisions, and weaponized Israeli assets like billionaire donor Miriam Adelson to keep the White House firmly under its thumb.

According to Kirk's friend, who also enjoyed access to President Donald Trump and his inner circle, Kirk strongly warned Trump last June against bombing Iran on Israel's behalf. "Charlie was the only person who did that," they said, recalling how Trump "barked at him" in response and angrily shut down the conversation. The source believes the incident confirmed in Kirk's mind that the president of the United States had fallen under the control of a malign foreign power, and was leading his own country into a series of disastrous conflicts.

By the following month, Kirk had become the target of a sustained private campaign of intimidation and free-floating fury by wealthy and powerful allies of Netanyahu – figures he described in an interview as Jewish "leaders" and "stakeholders."

"He was afraid of them," the source emphasized.

## **At TPUSA, the rift with Israel widens**

Kirk was 18 years old when he launched TPUSA in 2012. From its inception, his career was

propelled by Zionist donors, who showered his young organization with money [through neoconservative outfits like the David Horowitz Freedom Center](#). He repaid his wealthy backers over the years by unleashing a relentless firehose of anti-Palestinian and [Islamophobic](#) diatribes, accepting [propaganda trips](#) to Israel, and [sternly shutting down](#) nationalist forces challenging his support for Israel during TPUSA events. In the Trump era, few American gentiles had proved more valuable to the self-proclaimed Jewish state than Charlie Kirk.

But as Israel's genocidal assault on the besieged Gaza Strip drove an unprecedented backlash within grassroots right-wing circles, where only [24% of younger Republicans](#) now sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians, Kirk began to shift. At times, he toed the Israeli line, [spreading disinformation](#) about babies beheaded by Hamas on October 7, and [denying the famine](#) imposed on the population of Gaza. Yet he simultaneously ceded to his base, [wondering aloud](#) if Jeffrey Epstein was an Israeli intelligence asset, [questioning](#) whether the Israeli government allowed the October 7 attacks to proceed in order to advance long-term political goals, and parroting narratives familiar to his most vociferous critic on the right, streamer Nick Fuentes.

This July, at his TPUSA Student Action Summit, Kirk provided a forum for the right-wing grassroots to vent its fury about Israel's political hammerlock on the Trump administration. There, speakers from former Fox News stalwarts Tucker Carlson and [Megyn Kelly](#), to the anti-Zionist Jewish comedian [Dave Smith](#), denounced Israel's blood-soaked assault on the besieged Gaza Strip, branded Jeffrey Epstein as an Israeli intelligence asset, and openly taunted Zionist billionaires like Bill Ackman for "getting away with scams" despite having "no actual skills."

Following the confab, Kirk was bombarded with infuriated text messages and phone calls from Netanyahu's wealthy allies in the US, including many who had funded TPUSA. According to his longtime friend, the Zionist donors treated Kirk with outright contempt, essentially ordering him to fall back into line.

"He was being told what you're not allowed to do, and it was driving him crazy," Kirk's friend recalled. The conservative youth leader was not only alienated by the hostile nature of the interactions, but "frightened" by the backlash.

The friend's account dovetails with those of multiple right-wing commentators with access to Kirk.

"I think, in the end, Charlie was going through a spiritual transformation," Candace Owens, a conservative influencer who shifted decisively against Israel after October 7, [reflected](#) after her friend's killing. "I know it, he was going through a lot. There was a lot of pressure, and it's hard for me to watch the people who were pressuring him just say the things that they're saying."

She continued: "They wanted him to lose everything for changing or even slightly modifying an opinion. It's very hurtful to me."

Kirk appeared visibly outraged during an [August 6 interview](#) with conservative host Megyn Kelly, as he discussed the menacing messages he was receiving from pro-Israel bigwigs.

"It's all of the sudden: 'oh, Charlie: he's no longer with us.' Wait a second—what does 'with us' mean, exactly? I'm an American, okay? I represent this country," he explained, before addressing the powerful Zionist interests harassing him.

"The more that you guys privately and publicly call our character into question—which is not isolated, it would be one thing if it were just one text, or two texts; it is dozens of texts—then we start to say, 'whoa, hold the boat here,'" Kirk continued. "To be fair, some really good Jewish friends say, 'that's not all of us'... But these are leaders here. These are stakeholders."

He went on to complain to Kelly, "I have less ability... to criticize the Israeli government than actual Israelis do. And that's really, really weird."

In one of his [final interviews](#), conducted with Israel's premier influencer in the United States, Ben Shapiro, Kirk once again tried to raise the issue of censorship of Israel critics.

"A friend said to me, interestingly: 'Charlie, okay, we've pushed back against the media on COVID, on lockdowns, on Ukraine, on the border,'" Kirk told Shapiro on September 9. "Maybe we should also ask the question: is the media totally presenting the truth when it comes to Israel? Just a question!"

According to Kirk's longtime friend, Kirk's resentment of Netanyahu and the Israel lobby was spreading within Trump's inner circle. In fact, they said, the president himself was terrified of Netanyahu's wrath, and feared the consequences of defying him.

During the past year, the Trump insider was told by contacts in the White House that the Secret Service had caught Israeli government personnel placing electronic devices on its emergency response vehicles on two separate occasions.

While The Grayzone was unable to confirm the story with the Secret Service or White House, such an incident would not have been unprecedented. Indeed, [according to a report in Politico](#) citing three former senior US officials, a cellphone spying device was placed by Israeli agents "near the White House and other sensitive locations around Washington" toward the end of Trump's first term in 2019.

Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson recounted a similar incident in his memoir, writing that his security team found a [listening device in his bathroom](#) soon after Netanyahu used his personal toilet.

## The Israel-did-it theory

Kirk was killed this September 10 with a single shot fired by a sniper apparently positioned on a rooftop 200 meters away. He was shot while seated before a crowd of thousands at Utah State University in Orem, Utah on the first leg of his [American Comeback Tour](#). The scene of Kirk collapsing from the impact of a gunshot to his neck just as he began answering a question about transgender mass shooters was perhaps the most shockingly vivid spectacle of assassination – and certainly the most viral – in human history.

There is currently no evidence of an Israeli government role in Kirk's assassination. However, that has not stopped thousands of social media users from speculating that the pro-Trump operative's shifting views on the issue contributed in some way to his death. By the time of publication, over 100,000 Twitter/X users have liked a September 11 post by libertarian influencer Ian Carroll [declaring](#) about Kirk, "He was their friend. He basically dedicated his life to them. And they murdered him in front of his family. Israel just shot themselves."

Many advancing the unsubstantiated theory have pointed to a [Twitter/X post](#) by Harrison Smith, a personality at the pro-Trump Infowars network, stating on August 13 – almost a month before Kirk's assassination – that he was told by "someone close to Charlie Kirk that Kirk thinks Israel will kill him if he turns against Israel."

The frenzied speculation has set off shockwaves in Tel Aviv, where Netanyahu was compelled to explicitly deny that his government killed Kirk during a [September 11 interview](#) with NewsMax.

## Netanyahu and his allies bury the Kirk crisis as “big tent” collapses

That appearance was just one of several interviews and statements the Prime Minister dedicated to Kirk in the wake of his killing in an effort to frame the late conservative leader's legacy in a uniformly pro-Israel light. The major public relations push has occurred while Netanyahu wages a military campaign on seven fronts, punctuated by a regional assassination spree that most recently reached into the heart of Qatar, a US ally.

Netanyahu first [tweeted](#) prayers for Kirk at 3:02 PM in the afternoon on September 10, minutes after news of the shooting broke. He has since authored three additional posts about Kirk, even breaking away from the Israeli war cabinet to spend the afternoon of September 11 [memorializing the conservative leader on Fox News](#).

During that interview, Netanyahu did his best to insinuate that Israel's enemies were responsible for murdering Kirk, despite the fact no suspect was named or in custody at the time:

“The radical Islamists and their union with the ultra-progressives—they often speak about ‘human rights,’ they speak about ‘free speech’—but they use violence to try to take down their enemies,” the Prime Minister told Harris Faulkner.

In a [September 10 Twitter/X post](#) eulogizing the conservative leader, the Israeli Prime Minister described a recent phone conversation with Kirk.

“I spoke to him only two weeks ago and invited him to Israel,” Netanyahu declared. “Sadly, that visit will not take place.”

Left unmentioned was whether Kirk declined the invitation—just as he did with the Prime Minister's offer to reload TPUSA's coffers with donations from his coterie of wealthy American Jewish cutouts.

At the time of publication, a 22-year-old resident of Utah has been taken into custody after supposedly confessing to killing Kirk. The public may soon learn the true motives of the alleged assassin. Perhaps they will fuel the narrative which Trump and his allies advanced in the immediate wake of the shooting – that a leftist radical was responsible, and that a wave of draconian repression must follow.

But after the shooter's initial escape and a series of federal law enforcement mishaps, a large sector of Americans will likely never believe the official story. Nor will they ever know where Kirk's turning point on Israel would have taken the conservative movement.

Four days before the assassination, frustration among pro-Israel commentators bubbled over in public during an [Fox News interview](#) in which Ben Shapiro launched a chilling attack on Kirk without naming him.

“The problem with a ‘big tent’ is that you may end up with many clowns inside,” Shapiro told Fox host and fellow Zionist gatekeeper Mark Levin in an apparent critique of TPUSA.

“Just because you're saying somebody votes Republican—that doesn't mean that they ought to be the preacher at the front of the church, they're not the person that ought to be leading the movement, if they are spending all day criticizing the President of the United States as ‘covering up a Mossad rape ring’ or ‘being a tool of the Israelis for hitting an Iranian nuclear facility.’”

When Kirk took his usual place at the “front of the church” four days later, he was cut down by a sniper's bullet.

Within 24 hours of Kirk's death, Shapiro [announced](#) that he would be launching his own campus speaking tour, vowing: "We're gonna pick up that blood stained microphone where Charlie left it."