## The Zizians Explained*An NCITE Rapid Report*March 28, 2025

Who Are They?

* A U.S.-based cult-like anarchist group with a presence in at least three states. The group has been linked to **six murders** and **10 crimes in total**, including the recent murder of a U.S. Border Patrol agent.
* The group advocates for extreme environmental rights, veganism, and opposes the advancement of artificial intelligence.
* The group is named for **“Ziz” LaSota**, 34.

What Do They Believe?

* Violent rationalism: An extreme version of an ideology that emphasizes reason as the source of knowledge, truth-seeking and personal fulfillment.
* Opposition to artificial intelligence
* Extreme environmental rights
* Vegan anarchotranshumanism: An extension of the anarchist commitment to maximize freedom by altering one’s body or physical state to “be free” from what they consider to be arbitrary social constructs such as agender and biological conventions about how the human body and mind function.

How Did They Form?

* LaSota founded the group alongside Gwen Danielson, 30. The pair began as rationalists, who believe in reason as the source of knowledge, but became disillusioned, feeling isolated from the community for being transgender. This feeling evolved into a belief that the broader rationalist community is composed of authoritarians with evil intent.
* The pair sought to bring together a group of “Gervais sociopaths,” following a theory that all organizations are led by sociopaths who acquire power and use it to manipulate loyal and uninformed followers.

What Have They Done?

10 Zizian adherents, including LaSota, have been charged with crimes connected to the cult in California, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. LaSota remains in custody on suspicion of crimes listed below, though not for murder, and is the focus of FBI investigations across several states.

**Brief Timeline of Activity**

* 2019: Four Zizian members were arrested in California and charged with five misdemeanors and a felony related to the false imprisonment of minor children at a wilderness camp.
* 2022: Founder Ziz LaSota was alleged to have died after falling from a boat in the San Francisco Bay. LaSota was later determined to be alive.
* 2022: An elderly man renting land to Zizians in California was violently attacked. The man shot and killed one of the assailants in an act law enforcement determined was in self-defense. Two Zizian alleged assailants have been charged with attempted murder and await trial.
* 2022: Parents of a Zizian member were found shot to death in their Pennsylvania home. The Zizian member was briefly put into custody but ultimately released without a charge. Ziz LaSota was charged with obstructing the double homicide investigation and with disorderly conduct.
* 2025: On Jan. 17, the California landlord from 2022 was again attacked. He died. A Zizian adherent has been charged with his murder.
* 2025: On Jan. 20, a Zizian adherent and a U.S. Border Patrol agent were killed in a firefight after a traffic stop in northern Vermont near the U.S. border with Canada.
* 2025: On Feb. 16, three Zizians including founder Ziz LaSota were arrested in Maryland and charged with trespassing, obstruction and possession of a handgun in a vehicle. They were detained pending trial.
* 2025: On March 19, additional charges were filed, and the cases were transferred to the higher-level circuit county court. In total, the three individuals face almost three dozen charges.

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