

22-Year Old Commits Suicide at Capitol to Send US Congress a Message: “Tax the One Percent”

By [Pam Martens](#)

Global Research, April 17, 2015

[Wall Street on Parade](#) 14 April 2015

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

A Policeman Directs Traffic at the Scene of 22-Year Old Leo Thornton’s Death at the Capitol Building. Cherry Blossoms Can be Seen in the Background.

At approximately 1:07 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, April 11, during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival celebrating springtime in the Nation’s Capitol, a 22-year old man took his own life with a gun on the Capitol grounds with a protest sign taped to his hand. According to the Washington Post, the sign read: “Tax the one percent.”

Yesterday, the Metropolitan Police Department released the young man’s name. He was Leo P. Thornton of Lincolnwood, Illinois. Based on what is currently known, the young man had traveled to Washington, D.C. for the express purpose of making a political statement with his sign and then ending his young life.

The Chicago Tribune reported that “Thornton’s parents filed a missing persons report on the morning of April 11 after he never came home from work on April 10, Lincolnwood Deputy Police Chief John Walsh said.”

Those are the tragic facts of the incident itself. But there is a broader tragedy: the vacuous handling of this story by corporate media. The Washington Post headlined the story with this: “Rhythms of Washington Return after Illinois Man’s Suicide Outside Capitol.” The message he delivered to his Congress – tax the one percent – has yet to be explored by any major news outlet in America in connection with this tragedy.

Was the message of Leo P. Thornton of Lincolnwood, Illinois a critical piece of information for this Congress to hear at this moment in American history. You’re damn right it was. Outside of [Wall Street’s wealth transfer system](#), provisions in the U.S. tax code are the second biggest wealth transfer system to the one percent. Together, these two systems have created the greatest income and wealth inequality since the economic collapse in the Great Depression. They threaten a repeat of the 2008 financial collapse because the majority of Americans do not have the wages or savings to support the broader economy.

President Obama clearly understands what is going on. Whether he can get Congress to act is quite another matter. In his January 20, 2015 State of the Union speech, Obama stated...

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