

El Paso, Texas

- As of writing this, 22 people were killed and dozens more injured on Saturday, August 3rd in a mass shooting at and El Paso, Texas, Walmart. It is the 7th deadliest mass shooting in the United States.
 - El Paso Police Chief Gref Allen said the first 911 call came in at 10:39 am local time, and that emergency responders were on the scene at 10:45 am.
 - The shooting began in the parking lot outside the Walmart, according to an eyewitness who said she heard gunshots as she drove through the parking lot with her mother.
 - Those wounded in the mass shooting ranged in age from 2 years old to 82, according to authorities.
 - The suspect is a 21 year-old male from Allen, Texas. He was taken into custody without incident.
 - Investigators believe the suspect is the same person who allegedly posted a four-page racist, anti-immigrant document on the website 8chan before launching the attack.
 - The document was reportedly posted online less than an hour before the attack.
 - The document decried what the author believed was an ongoing invasion of Texas by Hispanic people and what the author foresaw as the impending destruction of America. It suggested that the planned attack would give immigrants an additional incentive to return to their countries of origin.
 - The author indicated he did not consider himself a white supremacist. The document lambasted “race mixers” and said the US should be split into territories based on race. The document was critical of Republicans and also accused Democrats of using immigrants to engineer a nation-wide political coup.
 - The suspect wrote in LinkedIn while in high school, “I’m not really motivated to do anything more than what’s necessary to get by. Working in general sucks, but I guess a career in Software Development suits me well. I spend about 8 hours every day on the computer so that counts toward technology experience I guess.”
 - Two law enforcement officials told ABC News that the suspect told investigators that he wanted to shoot as many Mexicans as possible.
 - The Walmart is located at Cielo Vista Mall, one of the city’s most popular malls, particularly among Mexican tourists who cross the US border to shop there before returning to Mexico.
 - At least three Mexican nationals were killed in the attack, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said.

- “He was forthcoming with information. He basically didn’t hold anything back,” El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen said during a Sunday news conference.
 - “You have to see it for yourself,” Allen said of the crime scene. “When I first got into this job, I never knew there was an odor to blood, but there is. And until you first hand see that, as far as my description of it, horrific would be unserving as far as what that scene looks like.”
 - Officials also said an “assault-style rifle, similar to an AK-47”, was secured at the scene.
 - John Bash, the US Attorney for the Western District of Texas said that federal authorities are investigating the incident as an act of domestic terrorism and will consider federal hate crime charges and potentially seek the death penalty.
 - Investigating the incident as an act of “domestic terrorism” means the suspect was intent on “coercing and intimidating a civilian population.”
 - On Monday, law enforcement officials said that the suspect cased the Walmart, going inside on Saturday without any weapons, apparently to size up the clientele inside the store, which is about 5 miles from the US-Mexico border.
 - The suspect then exited the store and armed himself. He returned wearing protective ear muffs, safety glasses and a rifle, according to video surveillance of him inside the store.
- In response to the attack, Donald Trump said on Sunday:
 - “Hate has no place in our country, and we’re going to take care of it,”
- Trump later tweeted:
 - “We cannot let those killed in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, die in vain. Likewise for those so seriously wounded. We can never forget them, and those many who came before them. Republicans and Democrats must come together and get strong background checks, perhaps marrying this legislation with desperately needed immigration reform. We must have something good, if not GREAT, come out of these two tragic events!”

Dayton, Ohio

- Just after 1:00 am on Sunday, August 4th, a gunman opened fire in a popular part of Dayton Ohio, killing nine people and injuring 14.
 - The suspect, a 24 year-old Ohio man traveled to the Oregon District of Dayton with his sister and another companion, eventually parting ways.
 - At 1:05 am, the suspect, wearing body armor and ear protection and carrying a .223-caliber rifle with a 100-round magazine, moved through an alley and began firing shots.
 - The weapon was purchased legally online from Texas and shipped to a gun store in the Dayton area. Authorities added that the gun was modified with a pistol brace.

- The suspect shot and killed one person in the alley before moving out to the street where he shot and killed eight more people, including his sister.
- Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl said officers were already in the area and responded immediately.
 - Within about 30 seconds from the start of the shooting, police had located and killed the suspect outside a local bar, about 100 feet from where the shooting began.
- Authorities are unsure if the victim meant to kill his sister, a 22 year-old student at Wright State University.
 - The murder of a sister is called a sororicide and it isn't a well-studied phenomenon in the United States.
 - A 2013 FBI study of 160 mass shootings between 2000 and 2013 found that in nine cases, shooters killed relatives before going into a public place to continue firing.
 - A 1981 study of "honor killings" in the Middle East concluded that in about one-third of instances, brothers killed sisters.
- Former classmates say the suspect had a 'kill list' and 'rape list'
 - The Associated Press reported that classmates said he was suspended in high school for compiling a "hit list" of those he wanted to kill and a "rape list" of girls he wanted to sexually assault.
 - The discovery of the hit list in early 2012 sparked a police investigation, and roughly one-third of the schools students skipped school out of fear, according to an article in the Dayton Daily News.
- Suspect appeared to tweet extreme left views and had an abiding interest in violence
 - A twitter account that appears to belong to the suspect retweeted extreme left-wing and anti-police posts, as well as tweets supporting Antifa.
 - The twitter account liked several tweets about the shooting in El Paso and retweeted messages supporting Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. There were also several posts condemning police and supporting Antifa protesters.

Is there any research on mass shooters?

- Mass shootings can be contagious
 - Research shows that these incidents usually occur in clusters and tend to be contagious. Intensive media coverage seems to drive the contagion.
 - Back in 2014 and 2015, researchers at Arizona State University analyzed data on cases of mass violence. Lead researcher Sherry Towers wanted to know whether cases of mass violence spread contagiously like in a disease outbreak.
 - "What we found was that for the mass killings - these are high-profile mass killings where there's at least four people killed -

there was significant evidence of contagion. We also found significant evidence of contagion in school shootings.”

- Jillian Peterson, a criminologist at Hamline University found similar results in her research.
 - Towers and her colleagues also found that what set apart shootings that were contagious was the amount of media coverage they received.
 - She also found that there is a window when a shooting is most likely to lead to more incidents - about two weeks. [There results can be found here.](#)
 - It’s a form of social contagion, says Peterson, somewhat like a suicide contagion - that’s when a high-profile suicide leads to more people to take their own lives. For example, following the suicide of actor Robin Williams, researchers documented a 10% spike in suicides in the months following he death. Vulnerable individuals who are already struggling with suicidal thoughts read or watched news reports of the actor’s death and then took their own lives.
 - Peterson has interviewed living mass shooters in prison and people who knew such perpetrators and has found that these individuals often start out feeling suicidal.
 - [We can show about 80% were actively suicidal prior to the shooting.](#)
 - Peterson says that in very rare cases, a tiny minority of people considering suicide go down the path of violence toward others. She has come to think of mass shootings as a form of suicide.
 - They’re angry, horrible suicides that take a lot of people with them. The shooter never intends to live; there’s never a getaway plan. Typically they tend to think of this as their kind of last moment.”
 - “There is this element of wanting notoriety in death that you don’t have in life,” Peterson said. “So when one happens and it makes headlines and the names and pictures are everywhere and the whole world is talking about it, that becomes something that other people see as a possibility for themselves.”
 - “About half of the school shooters I’ve studied died by suicide in their attack,” said Peter Langman, a clinical psychologist in Allentown, Pa. “It’s often a mix of severe depression and anguish and desperation driving them to end their own lives.”
 - “So a mass shooting happens and then vulnerable individuals who are actively suicidal and in crisis and hear about the shooting and see this as kind of a script that they could also follow.”
- Research done by the Los Angeles Times
 - The LA Times has been studying the life histories of mass shooters in the US for a project funded by the National Institute of Justice. They built a database dating

back to 1966 of every mass shooter who shot and killed four or more people in a public place, and every shooting incident at schools, workplaces, and places of worship since 1999. The interviewed incarcerated perpetrators and their families, shooting survivors and first responders, as well as read media and social media, manifestos, suicide notes, trial transcripts and medical records.

- The data that they gathered revealed four commonalities among the perpetrators of nearly all mass shootings they studied.
 1. The vast majority of mass shooters in their study experienced early childhood trauma and exposure to violence at a young age.
 - a. The nature of their exposure included parental suicide, physical or sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and/or severe bullying.
 - b. The trauma was often a precursor to mental health concerns, including depression and anxiety.
 2. Practically every mass shooter studied had reached an identifiable crisis point in the weeks or months leading up to the shooting.
 - a. They often had become angry and despondent because of a specific grievance. For workplace shooters, a change in job status was frequently the trigger.
 - b. For shooters in other contexts, relationship rejection or loss often played a role.
 - c. Such crises were, in many cases communicated to others through a marked change in behaviour, an expression of suicidal thoughts or plans, or specific threats of violence.
 3. Most shooters had studied the actions of other shooters and sought validation for their motives.
 - a. In the age of 24-hour rolling news and social media, there are scripts to follow that promise notoriety in death.
 - b. Societal fear and fascination with mass shootings partly drives the motivation to commit them
 4. The shooters all had the means to carry out their plans.
 - a. In 80% of school shootings, perpetrators got their weapons from family members.
 - b. Workplace shooters tended to use handguns they legally owned
 - c. Other public shooters were more likely to acquire them illegally.
- Criminologists Jillian Peterson and James Densley found patterns emerge among school shooters.
 - All of the K-12 school shooters or would-be school shooters since 1966 were male, between the ages of 12 and 17. The majority were white and nearly all - 91% - were students or former students at the targeted school

- All mass school shooters since 1966 had a large number of risk factors for violence.
 - 45% had witnessed or experienced childhood trauma.
 - 77% had mental health concerns, as evidenced in a prior diagnosis, previous counseling or hospitalization, or medication use.
 - 75% had an interest in past shootings, as evidence in their writing, social media posts, or other activities.
 - 87% showed signs of a crisis, as exhibited in their behavior before the shooting.
 - 78% revealed their plans ahead of time, often on social media.
 - 80% of mass school shooters were suicidal.
 - 52% of mass school shooters killed themselves, 15% were killed by police, and 30% were apprehended (the remaining 3% are unknown).
- “About one in five mass murderers shows evidence of psychosis, according to Dr. Michael Stone, a forensic psychiatrist who maintains data on some 350 murderers going back more than a century. The other 80% have many of the problems that nearly everyone has to manage at some point in life: anger, isolation, depressive moods, resentments, jealousy.”
 - “Scientists find that only a small fraction of people with persistent mental distress are more likely than average to commit violent acts: patients with paranoid schizophrenia, which is characterized by delusional thinking and often so-called command hallucinations - frightening voices identifying threats where none exist.”
 - “People living in this kind of misery are far more likely to be the victims of violence than perpetrators; but they can act violently themselves, especially when using drugs or alcohol.”

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