

Two killed, three injured in Santa Clarita, California school shooting

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A gunman opened fire at Saugus High School in the city of Santa Clarita, California early Thursday morning, killing two students and wounding three others. The victims were aged 14 to 16 with the suspected shooter also admitted to the hospital with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot to the head.

Schools throughout the William S. Hart Union School District were ordered to shelter in place soon after the shooting was reported.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office reported that the shooter, Nathaniel Berhow, who turned 16 Thursday, pulled a .45-caliber handgun out from his backpack and opened fire on students before firing the weapon at himself.

Berhow was described by neighbors and acquaintances as quiet and reserved but basically friendly. He is currently listed in critical condition at an area hospital.

While details of Berhow's personal history are still to be pieced together by authorities, what is known thus far is that Berhow's father Mark died of a heart attack in December 2017. In 2016, Berhow's mother sued for custody of Nathaniel and his older sister after the arrest of Mark Berhow on suspicion of spousal battery the prior year.

An Instagram account believed to be owned by Nathaniel Berhow included a biography which read "Saugus have fun at school tomorrow." Police have reported that there is as-of-yet no evidence to suggest Berhow acted on behalf of a group or with any coconspirators; however, the Instagram posting was later removed during the day Thursday, suggesting that if not taken down by Instagram itself, at least one other person might have access to Berhow's account.

Analysis of school surveillance video revealed that the entire shooting took place over the course of 16

seconds.

In a scene that has become all too common in American schools, students on the outskirts of the school grounds quickly fled for their lives once they realized what was happening. "I just started running," sophomore Brooklyn Moreno told local media. "There were girls falling in front of me and I tried to help them up, then just kept running because I didn't want to get hurt either."

Those in the building barricaded themselves in classrooms trying not to make a sound until they were finally ordered to exit the rooms by police officers with guns drawn. Andrei Mojica, 17, was in his AP government class when the shooting started. Thirty students in the class quickly tried to barricade the doors with desks and tables. "We had no clue whether the shooter was on the opposite side of campus or right outside our door," Mojica told a local reporter. "That fear made it feel like we were waiting in silence forever."

Choir teacher Kaitlin Holt reported that one girl, shot in the hip and shoulder, was rushed into her classroom. The student wept and called out for her mother as Holt tried to administer first aid.

After a room-to-room search, students were ordered to exit the classrooms in single file with their arms raised in the air. Many students broke down in tears while leaving the building with one exclaiming, "What kind of a world is this?"

According to *USA Today*, so far in 2019 at least 30 shooting attacks have taken place on school grounds in the US that have resulted in deaths and injuries. That is an average of about 3 attacks per month with 12 fatalities including the two who died in the Saugus shooting today. The article cites statistics from the "Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund" which

tracks incidents of gun violence across the US. The organization reported 84 incidents of gunfire on school grounds overall in 2019. There were 104 such incidents in 2018.

School shootings this year have included the Highlands Ranch, Colorado school shooting that left 18-year-old Kendrick Castillo dead in May of this year and a shooting at the University of North Carolina Charlotte last April that killed 19-year-old Ellis Parlier and 21-year-old Riley Howell.

The coming days will undoubtedly see renewed calls for gun control measures from Democratic legislators and state officials. California Governor Gavin Newsom today wrote on Twitter that President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell “sicken” him for their lack of response to Democratic-proposed gun control measures. Former President Bill Clinton, in an interview with CNN’s Jake Tapper, also admonished Trump for his willful lack of action on gun control and stated that, as opposed to the pronouncements of Attorney General William Barr, the impeachment inquiry was not an excuse.

However, the eruption of antisocial violence within the United States is not primarily a result of the proliferation of firearms but of historic levels of social inequality and the violence perpetuated by both political parties at home and abroad, which significantly dwarfs all the “active shooter” events in the past 20 years in the US combined.

When it comes to military spending, immigration raids, domestic spying and tax cuts and bailouts for the rich, the capitalist class cannot help but find seemingly endless billions to spend. Meanwhile, education, healthcare, pensions and decent wages are cut to the bone. In schools throughout the country, students must endure overcrowded classrooms without sufficient or any access to nurses and counselors.



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