

Mass shooting in Jersey City, New Jersey being investigated as anti-Semitic hate-crime

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Six people were killed in Jersey City, New Jersey on Tuesday in what police are investigating as a possible anti-Semitic hate crime.

The incident began when Jersey City police detective Joseph Seals approached a stolen U-haul van that had been linked to a recent homicide parked in a Jersey City cemetery. The detective was shot and killed by the two assailants inside the van, who have been identified by police as David Anderson, 47 and Francine Graham, 50.

The pair then drove to the nearby JC Kosher Supermarket store in the Greenville neighborhood of Jersey City. According to police, surveillance footage suggested that the killers specifically chose the Jewish grocery store, which is next door to a Synagogue, and that they drove "slowly and deliberately" to that location.

The two assailants, both carrying rifles, apparently opened fire inside the grocery store and began a standoff with police. For hours they exchanged gunfire with police, and the neighborhood was transformed into a warzone, with Swat teams, bomb squads, and armored vehicles filling the streets.

Willy McDonald, a 67-year-old Jersey City resident, told the *New York Times* that the incident was "one of the biggest gunfights I've seen in a while, and I've been in Vietnam"

Nearby businesses were evacuated, and schools throughout Jersey City were placed on lockdown, including the Yeshiva school located next door to the market, where around a hundred Jewish students were trapped for the duration of the gun battle.

When the siege was finally lifted three people inside the market were found dead, along with the two assailants. Two police officers who initially responded to the attack on the grocery store were also shot and

injured but are expected to recover.

The victims have been identified as 33-year-old Mindel Ferencz, who was married to the supermarket's owner, Moshe Deutch, a 24-year-old student and Miguel Douglas, who was an employee at the store. A fourth person inside the store at the time of the attack was also shot but survived.

While police initially believed the attack was random, further evidence has since emerged indicating the perpetrators may have deliberately targeted the Kosher market.

Upon searching the van used by the pair, investigators discovered both a live pipe bomb as well as a manifesto written by one of the attackers that police have described as "rambling" but not indicating any concrete motivation for the attacks.

One of the attackers, David Anderson, was said to have been linked at one time to the Black Hebrew Israelite movement, which has been labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Police have also stated that they are investigating "anti-Semitic" and "anti-police" posts on social media made by one of the suspects but have not released the content of the statements.

On Wednesday afternoon police said that Anderson and Graham were also the prime suspects in the weekend murder of Michael Rumberger, who was found bludgeoned to death in the trunk of a Lincoln Town Car in neighboring Bayonne.

Police in New Jersey have stated that surveillance footage of the street outside of the market where the fighting took place showed that the two assailants passed several other businesses as well as pedestrians before entering the market, suggesting that it was targeted beforehand.

Jersey City Director of Public safety James Shea told

the media, "There were multiple other people on the streets, so there were many other targets available to them that they bypassed to attack that place. So clearly that was their target, and they intended to harm people inside."

The Greenville neighborhood of Jersey City has in recent years become home to a number of Hasidic Jewish families who have migrated from the Williamsburg neighborhood in nearby Brooklyn to find more affordable housing.

If an anti-Semitic motive is proven in Tuesday's killings, it will be the latest in a series attacks against Jewish targets in recent years, including the October 2018 shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburg, where eleven worshipers were slain.

Overall, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has recorded a steady increase in incidents targeting Jewish people in the United States. In 2013, fewer than 800 incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism, or attacks were recorded. This number grew to 1,879 in 2018 according to the ADL, including 39 assaults.



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