

Eight workers killed in late-night shooting massacre at Indianapolis FedEx Ground facility

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16 April 2021

Nine people are dead following the 45th mass shooting to occur in the US in the last month after 19-year-old Brandon Scott Hole opened fire on workers at the FedEx Ground facility located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The sprawling 382,330 square foot warehouse, located near the Indianapolis International Airport, was transformed into a mass casualty site after Hole began firing what has been described in reports as a “rifle” or “AR” as some 100 workers at the facility were in midst of changing shifts or on a break.

Four people were shot and killed outside the facility while another four were killed inside according to Deputy Chief Craig McCartt of the Indianapolis Police department. Hole reportedly died by suicide just prior to police arriving. Multiple people were injured with five requiring hospitalization according to McCartt who said the whole incident, “did not last very long.”

McCartt said that the shooting began shortly after 11 p.m. Thursday. Hole apparently got “out of his car, and pretty quickly started some random shooting outside the facility.” After shooting multiple people outside the facility, Hole, whom FedEx confirmed on Friday was an employee as late as 2020, “went inside” and continued his rampage according to McCartt.

One eyewitness and current FedEx worker, Levi Miller, told NBC’s “Today” he saw a “hooded figure” with an “AR in his hand” who was “yelling” as he fired indiscriminately. Miller also said he also saw another man “pull a gun out of his trunk” and “try to engage the shooter, he died because of it.”

Miller said that the only conclusion he could draw as to a possible motive was that Hole was “specifically targeting our head manager” who Miller said was not there Thursday night.

Indianapolis Police Chief Randal Taylor stated during a

Friday press conference that a “significant” number of the employees at the facility are members of the Sikh community. The *Washington Post* reported that two Sikh men, Jasvinder Kaur, 50 and Amarjit Sekhon, 49, are among the eight dead, according to Rimpi Girn, a family member.

The *Post* also identified Jaswinder Singh as a victim after speaking to his nephew, 27-year-old Harry Singh.

“We are deeply saddened to learn that Sikh community members are among those injured and killed by the gunman in Indianapolis last night,” Satjeet Kaur, Executive Director of The Sikh Coalition said in a Friday statement.

Compounding the stress that workers faced during the shooting was the fact that worried family members did not know for hours if their loved ones were safe due to draconian FedEx company rules which forbid rank-and-file workers from carrying a cell phone on their person inside the facility.

“When you see notifications on your phone, but you’re not getting a text back from your kid and you’re not getting information and you still don’t know where they are...what are you supposed to do?” Monday Carson told the AP through tears Friday morning. Carson later confirmed that she heard her daughter was ok.

In a statement defending their invasive “no cell phone” policy, FedEx said that cellphone access was limited to a small number of managers at dock and package sorting areas to, “support safety protocols and minimize potential distractions.”

As police locked down the facility and began to process the massive crime scene, families of employees who may have been affected were sent to a nearby Holiday Inn Express to meet with police. The *New York Times* reported that by 2:45 a.m. Friday morning, about 110

people were anxiously waiting for news.

Thursday's shooting was the third mass shooting in Indianapolis this year. According to the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a mass shooting as four or more people shot or killed, not including the shooter, there have been 147 mass shootings so far this year in the US. The Archive has catalogued 12,395 people killed in the US via gun violence this year, which includes suicide.

In 2020, the Gun Violence Archive tabulated a record high 610 mass shootings, the most since the organization began tracking in 2014. This year, the US is on pace to record 511 mass shootings, nearly 100 more than the 417 recorded in 2019.

Multiple press outlets confirmed on Friday that local and federal authorities had been aware of Hole prior to Thursday's shooting. Paul Keenan, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Indianapolis field office, said Friday that the agency had become aware of Hole last March after his mother had called local police to report that her son might commit "suicide by cop."

As is the case with millions of working class families in the US, the evisceration of social services and the privatization of health care has left many no option but to call the police during a mental health emergency, putting themselves and their family at great risk.

In a statement, Agent Keenan confirmed that last March "a shotgun was seized at his residence," after Hole's mother had called the police. It continued: "Based on items observed in the suspect's bedroom at the time, he was interviewed by the FBI in April 2020. No Racially Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE) ideology was identified during the course of the assessment and no criminal violation was found," the statement said. "The shotgun was not returned to the suspect."

On Friday morning, multiple news agencies confirmed that agents with the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives searched the suspect's home on the eastside of Indianapolis. Federal agents were observed removing at least two computers and a large cardboard box.

While more information has yet to be released, the latest mass shooting has once again exposed the dysfunctional and anti-social character of American capitalist society. The United States has been at war for the entirety of Hole's life. During the same time, period mass shootings have become a tragic fixture in American life. Meanwhile, the police harass and kill youth and workers with impunity.

While millions of workers and young people have

struggled to survive following pandemic-related job losses and reduction in hours, pandemic profiteers and Wall Street speculators have added trillions to their wealth thanks to the passage of government "relief" packages.

Even for those that have not lost work, the prospect of being forced to work in factories and warehouses where they will be exposed to COVID-19 has obviously had a detrimental effect not only on the physical, but mental health of millions of people. An August 2020 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that rates of depression and anxiety had tripled since the previous year, with 26 percent of young adults ages 18-24 having considered suicide during the previous month.

The indifference to human life exhibited by Hole during his shooting spree is a reflection of the callous attitude of the heads of capitalist politicians and corporate executives who refuse to allow any restrictions on their right to profit off the labor of the working class, no matter the cost in life.

During FedEx's annual shareholder meeting, held in a virtual format last September, Judy Edge, corporate vice president of human resources, said that the infection rate among FedEx's global workforce was "pretty low" at 1.7 percent, with fatalities at "a fraction of percent," though Edge declined to state the number.

While FedEx package handlers, who in Indianapolis start at the poverty wage of \$13.50 an hour, are scraping to survive, last month FedEx announced that its profits had "nearly tripled" in its third quarter, with a net income of \$892 million for the three months ending February 28. During the same period last year, FedEx posted \$315 million in profit.



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