

Memphis, Tennessee murder-suicide leaves three postal workers dead

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Two US Postal Service (USPS) workers were killed Tuesday in Memphis, Tennessee after a third postal worker opened fire on them. According to authorities, the shooter then took their own life.

The shooting occurred at the East Lamar Carrier Annex in the predominantly-working class Orange Mound neighborhood in southeast Memphis. The FBI and the US Postal Inspection Service are investigating, along with city authorities and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. At the time of this writing, the identity of the shooter has not been made public.

The victims have been identified as 37-year-old Demetria Dortch and James Wilson, a longtime USPS manager. In comments made to the local Fox News affiliate, Dortch's father described her as "a hardworking young lady, always has been," adding, "She was a good mother to all of her kids."

A family member of Wilson, Roxanne Rogers, spoke to Memphis' *Commercial Appeal*, saying, "He was a good man. An outstanding man. He was a humble soul, one of the nicest supervising managers you could ever wish there was.

"He treated nobody different. He treated everybody the same. He had compassion for people. If you had a problem, he'd work it out for you. He was a post office family person."

The shooting is only the latest in a string of recent shootings in Tennessee. On August 3, a warehouse worker in Nashville wounded three employees before turning the weapon on himself. Then, on September 23, a gunman opened fire in a Collierville Kroger grocery store, located roughly 30 minutes from Memphis, killing two and wounding 14. Days later, a 13-year-old student at a Memphis school was shot and wounded by another student.

While the possible motivations for Tuesday's

slayings remain unknown, it is an undeniable fact that postal workers represent one of the most overworked and underpaid professions in the US, thanks to decades of Democratic- and Republican-led attacks, with the goal of privatizing the world's largest mail carrier service. Exacerbating the already brutal conditions of these workers is the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 10,000 postal workers infected and at least 83 having lost their lives as of late last year.

A report published on August 31 by the non-profit Center for Public Integrity (CPI) found that hundreds of post offices around the country have withheld pay from hourly workers for years. In a press release detailing the report, the CPI writes, "From 2010 to 2019, at least 250 managers in 60 post offices were caught changing mail carriers' time cards to show them working fewer hours, resulting in unpaid wages, according to a batch of arbitration award summaries obtained by Public Integrity for cases filed by one of the three major postal unions."

ProPublica reported last year that the USPS, over the past decade, had fired or pressured to leave 44,000 workers with work-related injuries. In addition, analyzing US Labor Department data, ProPublica found that postal workers, while representing only a fifth of the federal workforce, suffered about half of all federal workplace injuries and illnesses in 2019.

On a national level, there have been a total 35,040 instances of gun violence from all causes this year, according to Gun Violence Archive. Of those, 462 are classified as "murder/suicides incidents." It is impossible to comprehend such figures outside of an examination of the decay of the capitalist system itself, in particular the enormous rise in social inequality in the United States. The only viable solution to ending the epidemic of gun violence is the socialist

transformation of world society, replacing the drive for profit with a system that is organized to meet the needs of humanity.



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