

Driver plows SUV through Christmas parade in Wisconsin killing five, injuring 48

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Five people were killed and 48 injured Sunday afternoon when a driver sped through a parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The Milwaukee suburb of 72,000 was celebrating its annual Christmas parade when a driver in a red SUV drove through barricades before plowing through a marching band at 4:39 p.m., driving over multiple people.

The driver proceeded down Main Street for nearly a mile at high speed, striking several participants and watchers of the parade, including a dance group of girls aged nine to 15 and members of the Dancing Grannies club, a group of grandmothers who have been a regular performing group at the parade for nearly 40 years. Those killed in the incident were aged 52-80.

“Those who died were extremely passionate Grannies,” stated the group on their Facebook page. “Their eyes gleamed....joy of being a Grannie. They were the glue....held us together. Our hearts are heavy at this most difficult time[.]”

A press release by the Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin stated that 18 children had been brought to the hospital from the incident, all between the ages of 3 and 16, including three sets of siblings. Ten of them were in intensive care and six were in critical care.

The Aurora Medical Center-Summit announced it had received 13 patients, three of whom were in critical care, and officials from Froedtert Hospital stated that they were treating seven patients.

Officials state the number of injured and killed could increase over time.

Initial reports suggested that the driver may have fired into the crowd while driving. However, recent updates from local police now indicate that an officer fired at the vehicle in an attempt to stop the car. No one was injured by the officer’s weapon.

The motivation of the driver, identified by police as

39-year-old Darrell Brooks, who has been detained and will be charged with five counts of first-degree intentional homicide, is unknown at this time but it is believed that he was fleeing a domestic dispute. He was not being pursued by the police prior to the incident.

Brooks had recently been released from jail on \$1000 bail on November 19 following his arrest on November 5. Police records show Brooks faces previous charges for reckless homicide, obstructing an officer, disorderly conduct, bail jumping, and battery.

It is unclear why Brooks decided to drive through the parade, but eyewitness testimony reported by the *New York Times* and statements from the police suggest the driver may have made a deliberate decision to do so.

Tom Hickey, 25, who was walking next to a friend’s float at the time of the incident said he noticed the vehicle attempting to make its way through the crowd. At first, he thought the driver was lost, but then watched as the driver took a right-hand turn on to the main parade route and accelerated. Video captured by an onlooker shows the red SUV slowly turn onto the parade route before accelerating rapidly through a marching band of several dozen people.

“When he made that right turn, that’s when he turned really dangerous,” said Hickey.

Another witness, 28-year-old Tyler Kotlarek, said he saw the driver intentionally aim for people in the street as he drove through the crowd. “He was going from side to side, targeting people,” said Kotarlek. “The car bombed through. He was flying through there going intentionally from left to right.”

For now, it does not appear that Brooks knew anyone in the crowd or had any planned intention to drive through the parade. Nor does it appear that the incident was connected to the verdict in the Kyle Rittenhouse trial in Kenosha, Wisconsin, which saw the fascist

gunman acquitted on all charges last week.

The events Sunday evening in Waukesha are horrific but by no means unique. Such tragedies are becoming an increasingly normalized part of life in the US. On average, three people are killed by police violence everyday. So far this year alone there have been more than 18,000 gun-related deaths, including among over 1,300 among children under the age of 18. According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 384 mass shootings in 2021 in which multiple people were injured and at least one person killed.

Over the past decade the death rate in the US has risen steadily and it is expected to continue due to steadily increasing deaths from drug overdoses and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 770,000 in less than two years as the virus has been allowed to run rampant.

Such tragedies as the Waukesha ramming must be placed in the context of the brutalization of the working class and the normalization of death promoted by the ruling class. To the capitalist ruling class, mass death is an acceptable cost in the pursuit of profits extracted from the working class all over the world.



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