Mass shooter, targeting anti-police-violence protesters in Portland, Oregon, kills one, injures four

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At least one person is dead and five others have been injured after a gunman, unidentified as of this writing, opened fire on anti-police violence protesters gathering for a Saturday march in Portland, Oregon.

Police have chosen not to identify either the shooter or any of his victims up to now. At least three of those injured are in critical condition, including the shooter, who himself was apparently shot by a protester who returned fire, according to Oregon Live. The same report claims that police investigators recovered at least eight shell casings from the scene that matched a .45 caliber gun.

Portland police have also claimed to have recovered one rifle round, which was apparently fired by the protester who hit the shooter, stopping the rampage. That same protester turned himself and his rifle into the police after the shooting.

The day before the shooting occurred, a tiny group of Patriot Front fascists briefly hung an anti-immigrant banner over a bridge in downtown Portland. The banner was taken down by local members of the community.

Prior to the shooting, roughly 50 anti-police violence protesters had gathered at Normandale Park in Northeast Portland. The purpose of the demonstration was to march in solidarity with 22-year-old Amir Locke, who was murdered by Minneapolis SWAT officer Mark Hanneman on February 2. The *New York Times* reported that the march was "partly led by Letha Winston," whose son, Patrick Kimmons, was killed by Portland police in 2018.

According to local media reports and eyewitness accounts, as the marchers were set to begin walking, at around 8 p.m., an armed and agitated man exited a nearby home and approached in the crowd. In an interview with the *Portland Mercury*, a woman who wished to remain anonymous out of fear for her safety, said she and three other women, all unarmed, were serving as traffic safety volunteers when they spotted the man angrily walking towards them.

"We were unarmed and actively working to de-escalate him and get him to leave," the woman recounted to the *Mercury*. "He wasn't threatened by us. He walked up to us yelling about protesters in his neighborhood and opened fire within 90 seconds."

The woman claimed the man was about 10 feet away from her when he began shooting. She said bullets grazed her knee and arm while one woman was shot in the stomach, leg and chest, another was hit in the neck, while a fourth woman was fatally shot.

"We show up voluntary to put ourselves between people exercising their first amendment rights and outsiders who would kill them for doing so," the woman told the *Mercury*. "We did our jobs."

In an interview with *New York Times*, one of the victims, 39-year-old Dajah Beck, told the paper she was shot twice. Prior to the shooting, Beck and other members of the volunteer motorcade were confronted by the enraged man, who, in language that could have been ripped from the lips of Donald Trump, accused the group of being "violent terrorists."

Beck told the paper the man said that "they" were responsible for violence in the city before threatening the unarmed group of women: "If I see you come past my house, I'll shoot you."

In social media posts Sunday and Monday, Beck further detailed her horrific experience: "My best friend and I walked out of the ER with 11 total bullet holes and multiple grazes." She added: "It was all traffic corkers he opened fire on. Four women. Unarmed. Non threatening. One with a cane. Two more heard the shots, came to help, he shot them too."

"Four women trying to de-escalate & he unloaded a 45 [pistol] into us because he didn't like being asked to leave and stop calling us terrorist c*nts. We were in high vis[ibility] and dresses. He murdered a disabled woman."

Adding that her GoPro camera, which was taken by the police, would substantiate her claims, Beck warned, "Do not

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believe PPB press releases or the statements of mass murders." The police, Beck added, "took two of us to the same hospital as him [the shooter]. We [were] wheeled past each other twice."

"He came there to kill us, I am positive. He thought we were protesters." Beck posted a graphic picture of a gunshot wound she suffered.

Despite multiple witnesses describing the same activity, an angry armed man confronting the women and refusing to leave before attempting to murder them, police have refused to say if they have leveled any charges, or even arrested the mass shooter.

Democratic Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who last April encouraged fascistic violence against anti-police protesters, saying, "[t]hose who are engaged in it, let's make it hurt them a little bit," waited until late Sunday night before releasing a statement on social media where he thanked Portland police officers for "the careful work they are doing and recognize the exhaustion they must be experiencing."

The tight-lipped Portland police held their first public press conference following the shooting Sunday afternoon. Eschewing their indoor conference room, the police held the news briefing outside, which was almost immediately interrupted by anti-police protesters, which the police used as an excuse to withhold information. Multiple protesters and eyewitnesses have claimed that the police attempted to arrest community medics who were providing medical aid to the injured following the shooting.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Portland Police Lt. Nathan Sheppard claimed the shooting appeared to be "a confrontation between armed protesters and an armed homeowner." Blaming victims for being unwilling to talk, Portland police claimed the crime scene was "extremely chaotic" and that a number of "witnesses were uncooperative with responding officers. Most people on scene left without talking to police." The mass distrust of the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) is more than understandable given the department's intimate connections with fascist paramilitary groups, such as the Proud Boys and Patriots' Prayer.

In what is surely an undercount, the PPB, earning a toothless "reprimand" from the Department of Justice, acknowledged using "force" against demonstrators more than 6,000 times during protests throughout 2020. As part of the DoJ investigation into the PPB, it was revealed last month that riot-police training materials used by the PPB included fascist memes about assaulting "dirty hippies," frequently shared in Proud Boys circles.

One slide, which displayed a riot cop smashing a protester with a baton, included a far-right prayer that read in part: "For thou talk of Marx, yet know him not ... so I shall send among you, my humble servants with hat, and with bat: That they may christen your heads with hickory, and anoint your faces with pepper spray."

While police have so far declined to identity the mass shooter, who is currently hospitalized, the fact that elements in society feel empowered and justified in carrying out homicidal violence against left-wing and anti-police-violence protesters is entirely due to the support they have received from the ruling class, the police and the courts.

Throughout Donald Trump's presidency, he frequently blamed amorphous "antifa terrorists" for any and all crimes, including his failed January 6 coup. Following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, which sparked multiracial protests against police violence throughout the country and internationally, Trump, in something of a dress rehearsal for his coup, launched a federal occupation of Portland, flooding the city with hundreds of agents.

Emulating tactics developed by right-wing military regimes in South and Central America, federal thugs clad in black armor and unmarked vans snatched protesters off the streets, disappearing them for hours to undisclosed locations for interrogation.

Saturday's mass shooting comes roughly three months after aspiring police cadet, honorary Proud Boy and Trump supporter Kyle Rittenhouse, was acquitted on all counts in the Kenosha, Wisconsin killings. In both circumstances, protesters against police violence, a majority of whom were unarmed, were confronted by a gun-wielding assailant who shot and killed people, yet was not immediately arrested.

As the WSWS warned prior to the verdict of Rittenhouse: "If Rittenhouse is acquitted, it would embolden the violent paramilitary militias that have been cultivated in the orbit of Trump and the Republican Party. It would effectively provide legal sanction for neo-Nazi and fascistic militias to march into future left-wing protests armed to the teeth, to terrorize workers, students, and youth with assault rifles, and to shoot protesters whenever they 'feel threatened.'"

The normalization of far-right vigilante violence, which has been deliberately promoted and cultivated by a historically bankrupt ruling class, can only be stopped by a mass movement of the working class against the capitalist system, the source of inequality and fascism.

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