

While desperate children called police from inside the school begging for help

Uvalde Texas police, Border Patrol, refused to engage Robb Elementary shooter for over an hour

Jacob Crosse
27 May 2022

In a stunning press conference Friday afternoon, Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steven McCraw confirmed that at least 19 police officers waited in the hallway of Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas for more an hour while 18-year-old Salvador Ramos massacred 19 children and two schoolteachers.

For the third time in as many days, Texas police officials have presented an entirely different and contradictory timeline. It has become clear that the well-funded Uvalde police department, with its annual \$4 million budget, some 40 percent of the entire Uvalde city budget, has been trying to cover up officers' inaction.

While McCraw presented a new series of alleged "facts" during Friday's press conference, he was unable to answer several questions posed by increasingly agitated reporters. For the second day in a row, the police, showing contempt for the local working class community, more than 80 percent identifying as Hispanic, refused to conduct the press conference in Spanish as well as English.

McCraw could not answer why a school resource officer was not on the scene when Ramos crashed his vehicle and began shooting at bystanders. He also did not know why the Uvalde SWAT team did not participate in the incident, only offering the excuse that the paramilitary squad were "part-time." Furthermore, McCraw was unable to answer reporters questions as to how many kids died between 12:03 p.m. and 12:51 p.m., when at least 19 heavily armed police officers and federal Customs and Border Patrol agents were alternatively inside the school and assaulting despondent parents.

McCraw could not answer how many children he thought bled out while police waited in the hallway to engage the shooter.

Nor could he answer why the armed school resource officer, one of six employed by the district, was not at the school when Ramos first crashed his grandmother's truck and began shooting at around 11:28 a.m. McCraw did confirm that the school cop did arrive at the school at 11:31 a.m., two minutes before Ramos entered through a side door that was apparently propped open.

During this time, the officer apparently did not see Ramos shooting at the school and drove right past him in the parking lot to engage a teacher he

apparently thought had something to do with the shooting. The school police officer, unlike what was claimed by police during the first 48 hours following the massacre, never shot at Ramos.

While it was previously known that police were more concerned with arresting, tasing, and pepper-spraying unarmed parents than attempting to stop what would become the third deadliest mass shooting in Texas history and at least the eighth in the last 13 years, on Friday McGraw admitted for the first time that there were "more than enough" police to attempt to breach the school before they finally did, shortly before 1 p.m.

McCraw, who has officially been the executive director and colonel of the Texas Department of Public Safety since August 2009, said Ramos first entered the school building at 11:33 a.m., seven minutes earlier than Victor Escalon Jr., a regional director at the Texas Department of Public Safety, claimed on Thursday.

According to the timeline presented by McCraw, it would take another 90 minutes for militarized specially trained BORTAC agents with Customs and Border Patrol to enter the classroom and shoot Ramos. BORTAC thugs were deployed to Portland during the 2020 summer protests against police violence. While deployed in Portland, BORTAC agents in unmarked vans seized protesters and whisked them away to be interrogated without probable cause.

The 90-minute delay from Ramos entering the school until police killed him, runs counter to everything that the police had been allegedly trained to do in the more than 23 years since the Columbine massacre. One of the supposed "lessons learned" by police was to not wait to form a perimeter outside the school while the shooter is "active" but to immediately follow the sound of gunfire and engage the shooter to prevent further loss of innocent life.

Of course, this presupposes that the police exist to serve the interests of all of society, which under capitalism is not the case. The police are an instrument of class rule, charged with the power to shoot and kill workers and youth whenever they "feel threatened."

President Joe Biden, and Donald Trump before him, praise police as "heroes" and flood departments around the country with billions of dollars in additional funding, while money for social services evaporates. Police are provided military-grade weaponry, advanced computers, social

media tracking software, body armor, advanced optics, “less-lethal” ammunition, and “urban assault vehicles,” not to risk their lives to save the children of working class families, but to protect the rich, intimidate workers, and ensure profits keep flowing to Wall Street.

In attempting to explain the indefensible and reduce the question of why the police failed to respond during Tuesdays’ massacre to simply a “bad decision,” McCraw said the 19 police officers, who included Border Patrol agents, were following the directives of the “incident commander,” Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Chief of Police Pete Arredondo, who has refused to give any public interviews as of this writing.

Attempting to explain the thinking of Arredondo, McCraw argued that the police were convinced that Ramos, who fired over 100 rounds once he entered the building, had already massacred all the children in the classrooms and that there was “no rush” to attempt to give aid to any of the injured that might still be alive.

McCraw said, without actually naming him, that Arredondo was “convinced at the time that there was *no more threat to the children* and that the subject was barricaded and that they had time to organize.” [emphasis added]

That there was “no more threat” to the children was immediately contradicted by McCraw when he revealed that multiple children locked inside the classroom with Ramos for over an hour continued to call 911 pleading for police assistance, to no avail.

McCraw could not confirm if Arredondo was aware that children locked inside the classroom with the active shooter Ramos were calling for help for nearly an hour. McCraw said at least two different students called 911 throughout the incident; he could not confirm if all of the children who reached out to police while trapped in the room with Ramos survived, only confirming that two of them did.

In the first call, received by police at 12:03 p.m., thirty minutes after Ramos entered the school, a young student told the operator she was in room 112.

At 12:10 p.m. that same student called back and told the police that multiple people around her were dead.

At 12:13 p.m. and 12:16 p.m. she called back again, telling police that there were still 8 or 9 people alive in the room with her.

At 12:19 p.m. McCraw claimed emergency services received another call from inside the school, this time from a different student, trapped in the adjacent room, 111. Both of the rooms were connected by a unisex bathroom, allowing Ramos to walk back and forth. Despite continuing to receive phone calls from desperate children, telling police they are trapped in the classroom with Ramos, who was continuing, in the words of McCraw to “sporadically” fire his semi-automatic rifle at children and police, the cops refused to engage the shooter.

In the words of McCraw, this was because the “on scene commander” ordered police to proceed as if it was a “barricaded subject” and not an “active shooter” scene. “With the benefit of hindsight, of course, it was not the right decision,” McCraw said. “It was the wrong decision, period,” he added.

Why this “decision” was allowed to stand after repeated phone calls from

children begging for help as parents pleaded with police to save their children, was not explained.

By 12:15 p.m., the *New York Times* reported, the BORTAC team, which would go on to enter the room and kill Ramos, had arrived in Uvalde and were in the hallway of Robb Elementary. They were joined by over a dozen other police. McCraw said at this time the BORTAC team had three ballistic shields, capable of stopping bullets fired from the weapons possessed by Ramos.

At 12:21 p.m. emergency services received another call from a student inside the school. On that call McCraw said one could hear “three” gun shots. At 12:36 p.m. the initial caller, who had been trapped inside the school with Ramos for over an hour, called back again. At 12:43 p.m. she called again, pleading, “please send the police now!” McCraw said it would be another 14 minutes, or 12:57 p.m. until BORTAC agents entered the classroom and shot Ramos.

Since Tuesday, police have repeatedly described Ramos as being “barricaded” in the two classrooms. This is meant to convey an image of well-entrenched shooter who has used his surroundings to fortify his position. This description has been a lie from the beginning.

As one survivor, Miah explained to CNN, when Ramos first entered her classroom, he broke the window on the door leading into the classroom, providing an access point for police. Miah, who was hit by bullet fragments, told CNN she survived the terrifying encounter by rubbing herself in the blood of her now-deceased friend and playing dead.

Miah told CNN reporter Nora Neus that after Ramos killed her teacher and many of her classmates he went into the adjacent classroom, put on “sad” music and continued to kill. While Ramos did lock the door from the inside once he was inside the classroom, there were windows facing out that were accessible by police. McCraw could not explain why police did not attempt to engage Ramos from these windows

As of this writing, it appears Ramos, who police claim brought two AR-15 style rifles, 60 magazines and over 1,600 rounds of ammunition to the school, spent nearly 90 minutes in rooms 111 and 112 where he conducted most of his killing. When a BORTAC team finally did enter the room, they did not have to contend with any elaborate traps or obstacles; all they did was use a janitor’s master key to unlock the door, according to a report from the *New York Times*.

In response to growing outrage from parents and families, enraged by police inaction during the shooting, and compounded by the non-stop barrage of lies in the following day, CBS reported on Friday that “several different law enforcement entities” from all over Texas were “called in by Uvalde police to not only assist in supplementing their police force, but to also provide extra protection to police and the mayor following heavy criticism and threats...”



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact