

Gunman kills two at Oregon supermarket after publishing intent to commit a mass shooting online

Alex Findijs
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Two people were killed and another two injured Sunday night at a Bend, Oregon Safeway supermarket when a gunman opened fire in the store.

The shooter, identified as 20-year old Ethan Miller, killed 84-year old Glenn Bennett and 66-year old Donald Surrett, an employee at the store. Surrett was fatally shot after confronting Miller. It is believed that his intervention saved lives as he prevented the gunman from continuing his shooting spree. Miller was found dead by police shortly after, most likely taking his own life.

Witnesses report that Miller began firing from outside the store, killing Bennett at the entrance, before continuing into the Safeway where he continued to spray bullets before being confronted by Surrett toward the back of the store.

Miller lived in an apartment complex behind the Forum Shopping Center where the Safeway is located. People who knew Miller also reported that he had worked at the Safeway for a period of time before the shooting.

Police reports indicated that Miller began shooting as he exited his apartment complex and continued into the shopping center parking lot and the store. In total, the incident lasted four minutes. Police responded to the shooting within three minutes of receiving 911 calls.

When police arrived they found Miller dead with an AR-15 rifle and shotgun near him. A search of the shooter's car also found a sawed-off shotgun and three Molotov cocktails. A search of Miller's apartment discovered additional stores of ammunition.

Police spokesperson Sheila Miller stated that police had "no evidence of previous threats or prior knowledge of the shooter."

Miller had made his plans long ahead of time however, revealed in a series of posts on the website Wattpad, which were made public Sunday night by an anonymous account for 12 hours. The posts have since been removed but several passages were documented by reporters before they were deleted.

In his posts, Miller declared his anger at society and his desire to die. He regularly referred to death as "peace" and states "I'm so FULL OF RAGE!! I'm just fucking Angry at the World and everything in it and It's gonna be so fucking nice to just watch it all Burn."

He referred to himself as a "quiet kid with anger issues" and as a "Time Bomb. Ready to Blow!" He also blamed the stress of anti-COVID measures and family issues for his inability to find a girlfriend.

"I am responsible for this," he said, "but I was turned into a monster. I created this Tragedy. But Society created Me."

Miller's motivations are not entirely clear, but he appears to have been driven by a suicidal fantasy in which he would enact as much violence as possible on the world. He repeatedly referenced the 1999 Columbine school massacre as an inspiration but attempted to separate himself from the "typical" mass shooter.

"I feel like this shooting is gonna be a bit DIFFERENT though," he said. "Because I'm not like the typical Mass Shooter. I'm different I'm not doing this for 'Fame' or to 'Get Revenge.' I simply just want to DIE and leave a Lasting Impression and VIOLENT mark on this World on my way out."

His original intention was to carry out his shooting at his former high school, Mountain View High School, on September 8, the first day of classes. In his

manifesto, he planned “AT LEAST 20 Dead but I might just Kill up to 40+ if I have the time. I Will Not Stop Until Police Arrive. Although I do Plan on Leaving SOME Survivors...To Tell Their Stories of course.”

He continued: “The Gravity of it all is just indescribable. It’s going to be a Spectacle. Once Again I’ll say that it will be my Magnum Opus.”

Miller suddenly changed his target to the store as he could not “wait any longer.”

Central to Miller’s deranged manifesto is a complete disregard for human life and a perverse libertarian ideal of dying in a way that he chooses, specifically by causing as much death and destruction as possible, the prospect of which he relished.

“Suicide is not nearly as tragic as people make it out to be,” he wrote. “We should be able to have control over our own Deaths and should be allowed to go out on our own terms I know for a FACT that where I go after this life will be a hell of a lot better for me then it is here. I’m not a conformer in any way shape or form.”

Despite Miller’s distressed state of mind, he never mentioned any attempt to seek help for his mental state while expressing a clear understanding that his planned actions were reprehensible.

“I’m Evil. Plain and Simple. That is literally the only answer here. My Head doesn’t work right it never really has. I just don’t fit in with this world.”

Miller’s disturbing disregard for human life and his anger at society at large is a common thread in mass shooting events. Troubled people, in need of help, turning to mass violence as a solution to their perceived problems.

The routine eruption of mass violence—the deadliest recent examples being a mass shooting by a white supremacist at a grocery store in Buffalo on May 14 who killed 10 people; the slaughter of 21, including 19 children, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on May 24; and the July 4 parade massacre of seven people by a Trump supporter in Highland Park, Illinois—is a particularly horrific symptom of the failure of the capitalist system.

Especially in the United States, a pernicious form of individualism is promoted as justification for the hyper exploitation of the working class. Only by promoting the lie that society is an “every man for himself”

competition, where the lives and well being of others are irrelevant in the quest to amass ever greater fortunes, can the capitalist class hope to justify the mass concentration of wealth at one pole and social misery at the other.

It is no coincidence that the number of mass shootings in the US has continued to rise over the past 25 years, as the American ruling class has turned to ever greater forms of exploitation and violence abroad and at home. Imperialist war has destroyed the lives of millions in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and now Ukraine, while domestically, social services have been slashed and militarized police forces assault and kill with impunity. The ruling class repeatedly presents the use of violence as an appropriate means of resolving problems.

Capitalist society is rotting from the inside and men like Miller are the product of this decay. As of this writing, there have been 450 mass shootings in 2022 so far, totaling 456 deaths and 1,922 injuries according to the Gun Violence Archive.

On August 28 there were eight shootings in a single day, including Miller’s assault on the Safeway store. Among the others was a shooting in Phoenix, Arizona, where a man dressed in body armor opened fire into motel rooms and cars, killing two and injuring five, before taking his own life.

Another incident in Houston, Texas, saw a man set fire to a building and shoot at people attempting to flee. The shooter set fire to the residential complex he had recently been evicted from and opened fire on residents from behind a car, killing four and injuring two before being killed by police.

The capitalist media continuously presents mass killings as isolated incidents of madness or as the result of a general mental health crisis. But this worsening social illness must be recognized for what it is: the result of decades of war, austerity and poverty as the global crisis of capitalism deepens. The only cure for this disease is the socialist transformation of society.



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