

15-year-old shooter in camouflage kills five in Raleigh, North Carolina

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A 15-year-old gunman shot seven people, killing five of them, in the early evening on Thursday in a residential neighborhood of the state capital city of Raleigh, North Carolina.

Authorities said the crime scene stretched over two miles as the shooter gunned down victims in their yards and on a trail that winds through wetlands and pine groves in the Hedingham neighborhood on the northeast side of the city.

CNN reported that a handgun and long gun were recovered from the scene and that the suspect wore camouflage and carried a camouflage backpack, based on information from someone “with knowledge of the investigation.”

A witness named Robert Anderson appeared on NBC’s TODAY show on Friday morning and said he saw the gunman from his back deck. “He had a camouflage shirt, camouflage pants, black boots, he also had a backpack that looked like it was filled to the brim.”

Anderson added, “He was walking, and when I tell you he was walking, it was like nothing had happened. He was just walking looking straight forward. He had his gun on his side and it was pointed downwards and he was just walking.”

The shooting began at approximately 5:00 p.m. and, after four 911 calls were made, a manhunt ensued. According to Raleigh Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin, who spoke at a press conference, by 8:00 p.m. the suspect was “contained” inside a residence and at 9:40 p.m. he was apprehended.

Although officials have not released the identity of the shooter, the teenager has been identified by the *News & Observer* of Raleigh as Austin Thompson, a sophomore at Knightdale High School and the brother of one of the shooting victims. Thompson was taken to

WakeMed Hospital and is in critical condition with unspecified injuries.

Among the emergency calls, which were obtained by CNN, was one caller who said the gunman “walked by and shot” one victim “for no reason.” Another caller reported that two of their neighbors had been shot. A third caller reported a “kid running around here with a shotgun” who shot a person and “ran back into the woods.”

The five victims killed have been identified as off-duty Raleigh police officer Gabriel Torres, 29, Nicole Conners, 52, Sue Karnatz, 49, Mary Marshall, 35, and James Roger Thompson, 16. A police officer was injured and has been released from a hospital. Another victim shot was Marcille Lynn Gardner, 59, who is in critical condition, according to Raleigh Police Chief Estella D. Patterson.

Residents and local officials are stunned by the teenage murder spree in the middle-class subdivision that is bordered by golf courses and the Neuse River Greenway, a bike and walking trail that some of the shootings took place on.

Residents told the *News & Observer* that the Thompson brothers lived with their father in the Hedingham neighborhood. Some described unusual behavior from Austin. A neighbor said, “I used to see him at 4:30, 5:00 in the morning with a bookbag on. Buses don’t run till 7:00 in the morning.”

Police would not discuss any possible motive or the circumstances that led up to the shooting and said that more details would be released in the next few days.

Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman responded to questions about when the suspect will be charged and what he will be charged with, saying prosecutors intend to charge him as an adult.

“We continue to await word on the suspect’s

condition. Juvenile petitions have been filed. It would be our intent to seek to transfer these matters to Superior Court and to proceed against the individual as an adult,” Freeman said.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 533 mass shootings in the US in 2022. A map of the location of the mass shootings—defined as shootings with a minimum of four victims shot, either injured or killed, not including the shooter—shows that they have occurred in most major metropolitan areas of the US and in more than two-thirds of states.

The American political establishment has no explanation or solution for this staggering reality, because it cannot acknowledge the underlying social causes in the inequality and violence of the capitalist system.

In a society in which police kill more than 1,000 people each year and unending wars abroad have resulted in decades of death and destruction that have become normalized by the corporate media, the epidemic of mass shootings finds fertile ground.

This is combined with glorification and promotion of right-wing and fascist ideology and groups by a substantial faction of the Republican Party that is aimed at the destruction of the basic democratic rights of the working class.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party fears the rising struggles of the working class more than it does the emergence of fascism in the US and advances a “gun control” agenda which will not stop the carnage.

The *New York Times* reported that Democratic Governor of North Carolina Roy Cooper said on Friday that, “it was already clear that elected officials needed to do more to address the scourge of gun violence.” President Biden also released a perfunctory statement on Friday declaring, “Enough,” and, “We must pass an assault weapons ban.”



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