

Five people killed, including 8-year-old boy, in Texas mass shooting

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In at least the 184th mass shooting in the United States this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, five people were shot and killed “almost execution style” inside a residential home this past Friday night in rural Cleveland, Texas, according to San Jacinto County Sheriff Greg Capers.

All five of the deceased were from Honduras. Among the dead are eight-year-old Daniel Enrique Laso-Guzman; Sonia Argentina Gúzman, 25; Diana Velázquez Alvarado, 21; Julisa Molina Rivera, 31; and José Jonathan Cásarez, 18. According to Sheriff Capers, some of the people inside the home had just moved there a few days ago after fleeing gang violence in Honduras.

Cleveland, Texas, located some 40 miles north of Houston, is a small city with less than 7,500 residents according to the US 2020 census. The median income for a family in Cleveland is just over \$28,500, some \$7,000 below the poverty line. Nearly a quarter of Cleveland residents live below the poverty line, including 32 percent of children under 18.

Nearly 48 hours after massacring his neighbors, the suspected killer, Francisco Oropesa, 38, is still at large and considered “armed and dangerous” according to police. In a search of Oropesa’s home, police claim to have recovered additional firearms.

The latest mass shooting began around 11:30 p.m. Friday night when Oropesa’s next-door neighbor, Wilson Garcia, asked Oropesa to stop firing his military-grade rifle outside their home as Garcia’s baby was trying to sleep.

A reportedly drunken Oropesa allegedly responded, “I’ll do what I want in my front yard.” According to Capers, Garcia pleaded with Oropesa, saying he would call the police if he continued to fire his semi-automatic rifle. Shortly thereafter, the doorbell camera recorded

the shooter approaching Garcia’s home armed with his rifle.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Garcia said Oropesa first shot and killed his wife who had just called the police and was standing at the entrance of their home. “He wanted to kill us all to leave no evidence,” Garcia told the *Times*.

Garcia said Oropesa was stalking him and that he only escaped by jumping out the window of his house. Instead of giving chase to Garcia, Oropesa allegedly went room to room, shooting his victims, “above the neck” according to police.

Five other people inside the home were not injured during the shooting. Of those five, three were children who were found covered in the blood of the three women who died protecting them from the killer.

Despite the fact Garcia’s wife had called the police before the shooting occurred, and multiple people called the police as the shooting transpired, Oropesa was able to escape apprehension.

Responding to the shooting, Texas Governor Greg Abbott refused to name the victims or offer his usual, empty, “thoughts and prayers” rhetoric. Instead, Abbott criminalized and smeared the deceased as “illegal immigrants.”

Abbott wrote on his official Twitter account that there was a reward for information “on the criminal who killed 5 illegal immigrants Friday.” Outraged social media users immediately denounced Abbott’s statement: “Dehumanizing murder victims who did nothing wrong as ‘illegal immigrants’ to provide cover for their precious ‘gun rights’ is absolutely deplorable,” one wrote.

At least 13,849 people have been killed with a gun so far this year in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive. Friday’s shooting is one of several

that occurred in the United States in April involving innocuous events, such as children ringing the doorbell or a car pulling into a driveway, that turned into deadly encounters.

On April 13 in Missouri, an 84-year-old white man shot a black teenager in the face after he accidentally went to the wrong address to pick up his younger brothers. Ralph Yarl, 16, was shot multiple times by Andrew Lester. In an interview on CNN, one of Lester's grandsons, Klint Ludwig, said that following the pandemic his grandfather became radicalized and started embracing "right-wing conspiracy theories."

While the media and Democratic Party tried to pigeonhole the shooting of Yarl as the latest expression of "white supremacy," two days after Yarl was shot, a 20-year-old white woman was shot and killed by a white man after she and three of her friends accidentally turned into the wrong driveway while looking for a friend's house in rural upstate New York. Kayline Gillis was a passenger in the vehicle that was struck with gunfire, unleashed by 65-year-old Kevin Monahan.

Less than 24 hours after the massacre in Cleveland, Texas, four hours north in Texarkana, Texas, on April 29, an 18-year-old baseball player was rushed to the hospital after he was shot in the chest during a baseball game.

The US ruling class and its bought-and-paid-for politicians have no answer to the daily plague of mass shootings in the US. In the more than 20 years since the Columbine Massacre, the pace of mass shootings in the United States has continued to accelerate.

The ruling elite promotes violence and brutality throughout the world, currently expressed in the escalating US-NATO war against Russia. The criminal indifference of the ruling class to the pandemic, which has killed over 1.1 million in the United States, has also had a profound impact. In the first year after the pandemic emerged, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that more Americans had died of gun-related injuries than any year prior, including over 21,000 non-suicides by gun.

Last year, the CDC reported that there were over 47,000 firearm deaths in 2022, eclipsing the 2021 total and the most in at least the last 40 years. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 2022 was the deadliest year on record for child deaths, with 1,676 children gunned

down, making "death by gunshot" the leading cause of death of children.

Whatever the individual circumstances behind each horrific incident, their frequency requires a social explanation. They express a society that is in deep crisis, pervaded by violence promoted by the state and in which life is cheap.



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