

The American nightmare continues

At least 14 killed in mass shootings in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Texas and Missouri over Independence Day holiday period

Jacob Crosse
4 July 2023

On Independence Day eve, just before 8:30 p.m. on July 3 in the working class neighborhood of Kingsessing in southwest Philadelphia, a man wearing a black ski mask and Kevlar body armor, armed with an AR-15-style rifle, began “randomly” massacring people, according to Philadelphia police. At least five people between the ages of 15 and 59 were killed, while two children, ages two and 13, suffered serious gunshot wounds.

The horror lasted for over 10 minutes before police were able to corner the shooter, identified by police as 40-year-old Kimbrady Carriker, and take him into custody without a shot being fired by the police.

The deceased victims have been identified as Daujan Brown, 15; Lashyd Merritt, 22; Ralph Moralis, 59; Dymir Stanton, 29; and Joseph Wamah, 31. All the victims were shot multiple times, including the surviving two- and 13-year-old boys, both of whom suffered gunshot wounds to the legs. According to police, a 33-year-old woman and another two-year-old boy were injured by broken glass after Carriker shot into their moving vehicle.

At a press conference Monday, Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw confirmed that Carriker had multiple loaded magazines and a police scanner on his person. Outlaw said police had recovered over 50 shell casings spread over several blocks, with bullet holes still being discovered in cars and buildings. As of this writing, police have yet to advance a motive or release any evidence indicating that the shooter knew the victims.

At the same press conference, Staff Inspector Ernest Ransom said it appeared that Carriker was “shooting

aimlessly” at people and vehicles. Once police arrived on the scene, Ransom said, Carriker ran into an alleyway, where he was taken into custody.

In an interview with local Philadelphia television station ABC6, Marie Merritt, mother of Lashyd, said her son was just stopping at the local store on Greenway Avenue to grab a snack when he was shot several times. Reflecting on losing the youngest of her five children, Marie said that Lashyd “was my number one prize and he knows that. I miss him so much.”

In an interview with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Tina Rosette, 49, said she and her daughter, Ciannia, 24, lived with Carriker in 2021, and that while she had never seen Carriker with a gun, he did have “an aggressive approach to some things in life.” She said it appeared to her that he was in “a dark place.”

Unlike her mother, Ciannia did recall seeing Carriker with a handgun, which he showed her several times. Ciannia said she stopped talking to Carriker after she rejected his romantic advances. Both mother and daughter moved out of the residence about a year ago.

Monday’s massacre was just one of several horrific mass shootings in the United States during the days leading up to the annual Independence Day holiday on July 4. Just before midnight on Monday, 11 people were shot and three were killed in a parking lot in the Como neighborhood of Fort Worth, Texas. The shooting occurred after an annual neighborhood gathering dubbed “Comofest” had ended.

Two of the deceased have been identified as Paul Willis, 18, and Cynthia Santos, 22. Speaking to FOX4, Kadesha Weatherly, Willis’ mother, said both of her

sons were in the area of the shooting and that Paul was shot in the head.

Kadesha said her son was an aspiring electrician who had graduated from high school in Arlington and worked at a nearby McDonald's. "They didn't even let my baby make it to college," Weatherly said. "I just want people to remember his name and not just an 18-year-old victim."

Police have yet to announce any suspects or arrests in the Fort Worth shooting.

At 12:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 2, gunmen opened fire on a block party in the Brooklyn neighborhood of South Baltimore, Maryland. Two people were killed and 28 injured, with three in critical condition. The police say the two people killed were an 18-year-old woman and a 20-year-old man. Victims reportedly ranged from 21 to 34 years old. The shooting took place during an annual local celebration called "Brooklyn Day." Police say the assault was the largest shooting incident in the city's history.

While public mass shootings have, tragically, become almost commonplace in capitalist America, the phenomenon of a private mass "family annihilator," that is, a close family member who commits a multiple murder-suicide, targeting spouses, children and close relatives, is also on the rise.

In St. Ann, Missouri, Monday night, a drunk 34-year-old Coleman McIlvain murdered his girlfriend and shot her three children, killing her 14-year-old son and her five-year-old son before turning the gun on himself, according to local police. The deceased woman's nine-year-old daughter, who was shot in the hand, managed to escape and get help from neighbors.

St. Ann Police Chief Aaron Jimenez said the shooting happened at around 8 p.m. According to Jimenez, the couple began arguing after McIlvain's girlfriend refused to allow him to drive her car drunk.

"The daughter then observed the boyfriend shoot her mom in the face and then had a fight or flight response," Jimenez said, adding that "he fired approximately seven shots to try to kill her."

A neighbor told KMOV News 4 that the couple frequently fought, but that yesterday was a "normal day" and McIlvain had been out in the yard earlier helping the children set up decorations for the Fourth of July.

Gwen Connelly recalled seeing the nine-year-old girl

run up to her. "She had blood all over her," Connelly said, "and I said, 'are you hit anywhere else?' She said, 'I don't think so,' but she was drenched in blood, so she said, 'Why did this happen to me?'"

According to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), since July 3, that is, in the last 48 hours, at least 57 people have been shot to death, while over 110 have been injured in the US. Just over halfway through 2023, the GVA has recorded 348 mass shootings. The GVA defines a "mass shooting" as an incident in which four or more people, not including the shooter, are injured or killed by gunshot.

If the current pace of carnage continues, 2023 will end with approximately 687 mass shootings, nearly two a day, just below the record 690 mass shootings recorded by the GVA in 2021, the most it has recorded since it began tracking in 2014.

In a perfunctory statement on the shootings issued Tuesday, President Joe Biden, after offering prayers, once again called on his fascistic "Republican colleagues" to "come to the table on meaningful, common sense" gun reform. Even were measures such as a ban on assault weapons to pass, they would do nothing to address the root causes of gun violence, which lie in the capitalist system and the conditions it produces.

In the land of inequality, workers are forced to labor in dangerous conditions for inadequate pay, while the media, entertainment industry and capitalist politicians venerate murderous police and military assassins. Any attempts by workers to better their social standing is either stifled by the trade union bureaucracies, or if that fails, outlawed by the government.

The US government's subordination of the safety and well-being of workers and their families to corporate profit-making, most brutally expressed in the "herd immunity" pandemic policy that has led to over 1.2 million COVID-19 deaths in the US, illustrates the official indifference of the ruling elite to mass death.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact