

Suspect in shooting death of 4 in suburban Atlanta killed in gun battle with police

Kevin Reed
16 July 2023

The suspect being sought in a mass shooting in Georgia on Saturday morning was killed Sunday afternoon in what law enforcement reported as an exchange of gunfire.

Authorities said that Andre Longmore, 40, was shot dead following a manhunt that ended in a shootout with police in the suburban town of Jonesboro. Officials said the confrontation also resulted in the injury of a Henry County sheriff and a Clayton County policeman. Both officers are expected to fully recover.

Longmore was being sought for the murder of four adults, three men and one woman, the previous day in the city of Hampton, a town on the southern edge of metropolitan Atlanta, some 35 miles south of the city.

Henry County authorities revealed that the victims were Scott Levitt, 67; his wife, Shirley Levitt, 66; Steve Blizzard, 65; and Ron Jeffers, 66. The four were reportedly shot at approximately 10:45 a.m. in the Dogwood Lakes subdivision of Hampton, a town of some 8,200 people. All of the victims were white. Longmore was black.

According to a report by the Associated Press, a neighbor of the victims said he heard a gunshot on Saturday morning from inside his house. The neighbor, who identified himself as a Marine Corps veteran, said he knew Longmore and saw him standing in the middle of the street and noticed his hand jerking from the recoil after firing a silver handgun.

The witness also said Longmore “started walking casually” toward the entrance to the subdivision, then at a “brisk stride.” He added that after going upstairs to watch, he saw Longmore disappear behind some trees.

The neighbor also told Fox5 that Longmore was wearing tactical gear, “but it was a weird type of gear I’ve never seen before.” He said that at first he thought it was a road rage incident.

Another community member told the Associated Press that Longmore drove through his yard and his neighbor’s yard, destroying ornamental windmills and leaving tire tracks on the grass.

Although police gave few details about the mass shooting, Hampton Police Chief James Turner announced that a manhunt was underway to find Longmore and gave a description of his appearance.

Henry County Sheriff Reginald Scandrett said the sheriff’s office was offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to Longmore’s arrest. Indicating the type of force that would be used in pursuit of Longmore, Scandrett declared, “Wherever you are, we will hunt you down in whatever hole you may be hiding in and bring you into custody. Period.”

Following the killing of Longmore, Sheriff Scandrett gave a press conference in which he said that police officers tracked the suspect to Mt. Zion Parkway and Highway 138, which leads into Jonesboro, where there was an exchange of gunfire. The sheriff said Longmore fled on foot and was confronted by officers a short time later, at which point another exchange took place and the suspect was shot and killed.

The sheriff then claimed, “The citizens of Hampton, the county of Henry, the metro Atlanta area, and the entire state of Georgia can breathe a little easier tonight that the suspect is off the street.” He added, “This monster is off of our streets.”

The horrific deaths of four people in a quiet neighborhood in suburban Atlanta and the killing of the suspected gunman by police is the latest in a string of virtually daily occurrences across America in which groups of people are shot dead.

Following the spate of mass shooting events over the four-day July 4th holiday weekend, in which more than 100 people were injured and at least 18 were killed, the

ensuing 11 days have seen an additional 36 such shootings.

The latest events include:

July 5, Paterson, New Jersey: Two males were killed, one 17 and the other 26, at around 2:40 a.m. Three others were rushed to a local hospital with gunshot wounds. Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh said, “I don’t want to speculate, however it could potentially be something that stems from a Fourth of July dispute that had gone wrong.”

July 8, El Paso, Texas: A shooting at a high school party resulted in eight hospitalizations of teenagers ranging in age from 15 to 18. Authorities said the shooting occurred at a house party attended by over 100 people, after a group of uninvited guests arrived. The report added that after an argument broke out, a shooter began firing into the crowd.

July 9, Wadesboro, North Carolina: One person was killed, and six were injured when a gunman opened fire in the parking lot of a convenience store near a block party. The death was pronounced at the scene. Police have recovered shell casings from the parking lot but have not made any arrests.

July 13, El Paso, Texas: Another shooting incident in El Paso took the lives of two people, a man and a woman, and injured four others at the Ditzzy Duck Bar just after midnight. An argument in the bar spilled into the parking lot, where a shooter opened fire randomly.

According to GunViolenceArchive.org, a staggering 195 people have been injured and 32 have been killed in mass shooting incidents in the US over the 11 days between July 5 and July 16. According to the online archive, which hosts links to news reports on each shooting, a mass shooting is one in which four or more people are injured or killed, including the shooter.

The archive also reports that there have been a total of 389 mass shootings in the US so far in 2023, which is on par with the previous record, set in 2021, of 690 such events in a single year.

Such occurrences have become so commonplace in America that the media and the political establishment have stopped commenting on them unless the number of dead in a single incident reaches a figure that cannot be ignored. It is just a matter of time before the next heinous shooting occurs, with the politicians and talking heads on TV unable to offer the public an explanation for the carnage or any rational notion of

how it can be stopped.

American society is devastated by social inequality—the product of decades of plunder by the billionaire elite, combined with attacks on working class living standards, cuts to social programs and education, police brutality and murder and imperialist war abroad.

This socio-economic environment, combined with the suppression of working class resistance by the capitalist state and the corporatist trade union bureaucracy, provides fertile ground for the random violence that is taking place every day across the US in cities, suburbs and rural areas.



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