

Neo-Nazi massacre targets blacks in Jacksonville, leaving 4 dead, including shooter

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On Saturday, a 21-year-old neo-Nazi armed with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and a Glock pistol murdered three African Americans shopping at the local Dollar General in a historically black neighborhood in Jacksonville, Florida.

The shooting took place some 15 months after a white supremacist murdered 10 people at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York. As was the case in that shooting, the killer in Saturday's shooting painted swastikas on the rifle he used during the massacre and specifically drove to an area with a large African American population to carry out his crime.

According to surveillance video released by the police, Ryan Christopher Palmetter began his massacre at around 1:08 p.m. His first victim was 52-year-old Angela Michelle Carr, who was sitting in her car when Palmetter fired 11 rounds into the vehicle.

After killing Carr, Palmetter, who was wearing body armor and blue latex gloves and was dressed in a "boogaloo boi"-style floral print shirt, entered the store and began shooting at customers. At a Sunday press conference, Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters said 19-year-old Anolt Joseph (AJ) Laguerre Jr. was the second victim.

As the heavily armed Palmetter made his way through the store, several people were able to flee out the back door. Palmetter attempted to shoot people as they were leaving but fortunately missed.

Roughly two minutes after the killings began, Jerrald Gallion, 29, walked through the front entrance of the store with his girlfriend, at which point Palmetter shot and killed him. For the next three minutes, Palmetter continued to shoot at security cameras and witnesses in and around the store.

The police claim that at approximately 1:18 p.m. Palmetter called his father and told him to use a screwdriver to break into his room. Palmetter lived with his parents in Oakleaf, an upper middle class suburb of Jacksonville, in adjacent Clay County, Florida.

Palmetter's father discovered his son's last will and testament and three separate manifestos written on his computer: one for his family, one for the media and one for the police. None of these manifestos have been publicly released. However, on Saturday, Sheriff Waters said the manifestos made clear that the shooting was "racially motivated." Quoting from the manifesto, Waters said Palmetter "hated Black people." The sheriff continued, "He wanted to kill n****rs—that's the one and only time I'll use that word."

Police say that when they first entered the store at roughly 1:19 p.m., a single shot was heard and Palmetter was found dead.

Palmetter did not have a criminal record, but Waters confirmed that in 2017 he was the subject of a "Baker Act" petition. The Florida Mental Health Act, or Baker Act, can be used by emergency services to temporarily detain someone for up to 72 hours. After being held for 72 hours, Palmetter was released without further incident.

Waters confirmed that both of the guns used in the shooting were legally purchased by Palmetter in the last year.

At 12:48 p.m., roughly 20 minutes prior to the shooting at the Dollar General, he was spotted in a parking lot at Edward Waters University, a historically black college in Jacksonville. Witnesses saw Palmetter get out of his vehicle and begin putting on his body armor and latex gloves, prompting calls to campus security.

A statement released by the university after the shooting noted that an EWU "security officer engaged an unidentified male in the vicinity of Centennial Library on campus." It continued: "The individual refused to identify themselves and was asked to leave. The individual returned to their car and left campus without incident. The encounter was reported to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office by EWU security."

Saturday's heinous massacre is one of at least 474 mass shootings carried out in the United States so far this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive. The archive has cataloged over 28,000 gun violence deaths this year. Just under half, 12,537, of those gun deaths are classified as "homicide/murder/unintentional" or "defensive gun use."

Jacksonville is the largest city in Florida, home to almost 1 million people, roughly a third of whom identify as black. The city and Florida in general have been hotbeds of neo-Nazi activity over the past several years, none of which has been condemned by Florida Governor and aspiring Republican presidential candidate Ron DeSantis.

Encouraging the type of violence that terrorized Jacksonville on Saturday, DeSantis has campaigned on a "shoot on sight" anti-immigrant policy. At last week's Republican presidential candidates debate he pledged, if elected, to shoot so-called illegal immigrants "stone cold dead" if they tried to cross the US-Mexico border.

Following Saturday's massacre, the governor released a short video in which he spoke against "racially motivated violence" without condemning the fascist ideology that animated the shooter.

The current front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald Trump, has likewise sought to cultivate a fascistic and personalist base of support in the Republican Party. Since his 2015 campaign, and continuing through his term in office and his current presidential run, Trump has routinely attacked his political opponents using racially charged, violent, fascistic and antisemitic language.

Earlier this month, in response to the prosecution of Trump and 18 co-conspirators led by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, an African American and Democrat, Trump railed on his social media platform: "They never went after those that Rigged the Election. They only went after those that fought to find the RIGGERS!"

After Trump's post, the word "riggers" trended on multiple social media platforms. Former Trump White House Communications Director Alyssa Farah Griffin, speaking on CNN, said there was no question that Trump specifically chose a word to rhyme with the notorious racial slur.

"With Trump, you don't need to look for a dog whistle—it's a bullhorn when it comes to race," she said, adding, "And I do think that's deliberate."

Saturday's shooting took place five years after the Jacksonville Landing shooting, which occurred during a video game tournament held in the city and left three people

dead, including the gunman. Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan said that it appeared from the manifestos that the shooter was aware of the anniversary.

Saturday's killings also transpired on the same day that several thousand people rallied at the National Mall in Washington D.C. to mark the 60th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington for civil rights.

Unlike the present-day claimants to King's legacy, such as Democratic Party hack and former FBI informant Al Sharpton, who led Saturday's march, King sought to build an egalitarian movement aimed at securing economic and racial equality for everyone. King was assassinated in the midst of his Poor People's Campaign, after he had come out strongly against US imperialism and the Vietnam War. His reformist conceptions and continued allegiance to the capitalist and imperialist Democratic Party were in irreconcilable conflict with his progressive ideals.

Since then, the Democratic Party has swung ever further to the right, abandoning any program of social reform. This has coincided with the promotion of racist politics, which are used to divide the working class while elevating a small and privileged layer of African Americans into the political, media and corporate establishment.

In a statement issued Sunday on the killing, President Joe Biden, who in 2003 eulogized the "physical courage" and "bravery" of segregationist Senator Strom Thurmond, said that "we must say clearly and forcefully that white supremacy has no place in America."

In reality, Biden and the Democrats have covered up the transformation of the Republican Party into a fascist party in all but name and downplayed the danger of dictatorship in order to maintain bipartisan support for the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and the preparations for war against China, and to politically disarm the working class.

This, combined with the Democrats' obsessive focus on race to obscure the fundamental and colossal class divide in America, facilitates the incitement of racist and fascistic violence.



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