

Right-wing US Army soldier massacres 18 people in Lewiston, Maine

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At least 18 people are dead in Lewiston, Maine, with another 13 injured, following the deadliest mass shooting in the history of the state Wednesday night. As of this writing, at least three of the injured are in critical condition, and the suspected shooter, 40-year-old Robert C. Card, remains at-large more than 24 hours after the mass killing.

According to emergency services, after 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday night, police began receiving calls of an active shooter at Just-In-Time Recreation, a bowling alley in Lewiston, which is about 30 miles north of Portland, the largest city in the state.

Lewiston, with a population of roughly 36,000, is the second largest city in Maine. Police claim the shooter killed at least seven people at the bowling alley.

Shortly after 7:00 p.m., emergency services began receiving phone calls of a second mass shooting taking place at Schemengees Bar & Grille, a restaurant located roughly four miles south of Just-In-Time and also in Lewiston. Police report at least eight people were killed there.

Following the two shootings, the suspected mass murderer, Card, a Sergeant First Class in the US Army Reserve, evaded police capture and went on the run. For over 24 hours a “shelter-in-place” order has been in effect for Lewiston and Androscoggin County, home to over 111,000 people.

On Thursday, all of the schools in the Lewiston were closed, while Bates College, with an enrollment of some 1,800 students, remained on lockdown.

Since the shooting transpired, hundreds of police, federal agents and para-military assets have flooded into the town. Videos shared on social media show drones, helicopters, armored police vehicles and camouflaged agents with helmets and rifles patrolling major streets and businesses. Despite hundreds of people and millions of dollars worth of equipment, state and federal agents have been, as of publication, unable to locate the shooter.

On Thursday, US government officials warned Canadian border patrol to be on the lookout for the “extremely armed and dangerous” Card.

Wednesday’s carnage took place at two public establishments,

where Card, a resident of Bowdoin, located 15 miles east of Lewiston, had recently complained to family members and friends that he was hearing menacing voices.

“In the past year, he had an acute episode of mental health, and it’s been a struggle,” Katie Card, who is married to Card’s brother, told the Daily Beast in a Thursday interview. Katie said her brother-in-law has had hearing loss and recently purchased hearing aids. For months, she says he has been hearing “voices” attack him while in public.

“He truly believed he was hearing people say things,” Katie Card told the news outlet. “This all just happened within the last few months.”

In a separate interview with NBC News, Katie Card said the family had previously reached out to the Army Reserve base where Card worked and local police because they had grown “increasingly concerned” with Card’s mental state. Katie said Robert complained that the voices made “horrible” comments about him.

Katie Card also confirmed a previous CNN report that Robert had recently lost his job at a recycling center. She said that Robert was currently unemployed and that he had previously been a truck driver at a warehouse distribution center.

Officials with the Veterans Administration (VA) confirmed on Thursday night that Card was not enrolled in or using VA health care.

Cards’ mental state was well-known to police and military officials prior Wednesday’s massacre. On Thursday, the Associated Press confirmed that in mid-July while training at the US Military Academy at West Point in New York with the rest of his unit, the Army Reserve’s 3rd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment, Card’s commanders became “concerned” because he was acting “erratically.”

The official confirmed to the Associated Press that military commanders called police and had Card transferred to a medical facility, where he was committed for several weeks.

Card has been in the US Army Reserves for over two decades, having first enlisted in December 2002. The US Army has confirmed that he was a petroleum supply specialist, who had not previously served any combat deployments. As a petroleum supply specialist, Card would have overseen the transfer and storage of fuel and other liquids for his unit. JP-8 is the most widely used jet fuel used by US military vehicles. Previous studies have shown that the exposure to the fuel can cause hearing problems, as well as “headaches, dizziness, difficulty breathing, general weakness, trouble concentrating, forgetfulness, and trouble gripping things.”

While there is no current motive at this time, a review of Card’s social media accounts, specifically his Twitter/X account, reveals his far-right leanings. Before the account was suspended, it showed that Card had followed several far-right figures, including Donald Trump Jr. and Elon Musk, and regularly “liked” posts from Ohio Republican Jim Jordan, former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, right-wing commentator Ben Shapiro, and convicted felon/conservative pundit Dinesh D’Souza.

In one of the Trump Jr. posts “liked” by Card, the ex-president’s son asserts falsely that due to the “incredible rise of trans/non-binary mass shooters in the last few years ... maybe, rather than talking about guns we should be talking about lunatics pushing their gender affirming bulls*** on our kids.”

Card also “liked” posts that encouraged motorists to run over anti-police violence protesters and denied the existence of COVID-19.

His fascist politics were well-known to some members of the community. In an interview with NBC, local resident Liam Kent said that the Card family lived on “basically a compound” in Bowdoin.

“The family and Robert, they’re all gun fanatics,” Kent told NBC. “For all intents and purposes, they are very much associated with right-wing militias. It’s known in the town to stay away from them and not approach them.”

Kent recalled when he was younger going to the store as a child and seeing Card at a nearby weigh station with a dead deer. Kent said Card was “grinning, covered in blood with a gun still strapped to his body.”

“[T]hey would shoot guns all the time” he added. “You could hear them every day after school. It was like clockwork.”

According to the Gun Violence Archive, which categorizes any incident in which four or more people, not including the shooter, are injured or killed as a “mass shooting,” 2023 is on pace to set the record for most mass shootings ever recorded by the tracker. At the current pace, 2023 will end with some 700 mass shootings, or just under two a day. As of this writing, there have been at least 566 mass shootings this year, a figure higher than the total tracked in 2016, 2017, 2018 or 2019.

While officials have yet to name the victims, several have been identified by friends and family on social media, including Michael Deslauriers II, Tricia Asselin and Bob Violette.

In a Thursday night statement, Bath Iron Works confirmed that 40-year-old union pipefitter Peyton Brewer-Ross was among the victims. Brewer-Ross, like several other patrons, was playing in a cornhole tournament at Schemengees Bar & Grille when the shooting started. He was the father of a two-year-old girl.

Joseph Walker, 57, was a manager at Schemengees Bar & Grille at the time of the shooting. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Leroy Walker, Joseph’s father, said police told him that his son “died a hero” because he armed himself with a butcher knife and attempted to subdue the gunman.

Following the latest mass shooting, as usual, none of the capitalist politicians, including President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have sought to provide an explanation for the increasing frequency of mass killings in the US. Instead of an explanation, they once again offered their “condolences” and “sorrow.”

Given that Biden, who along with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is currently overseeing the genocide of the Palestinian people, these “empathetic” statements ring completely hollow.

In his statement Biden called on Congress to pass an assault weapons and high-capacity magazine ban. Besides the fact that this will never pass the Republican-controlled House, it further does nothing to address the root cause of gun violence, which is not ultimately found in the individual psychology of the shooter no matter how deranged but in American capitalist society. A wealthy ruling class that is currently funding and overseeing a genocide abroad in pursuit of its imperialist interests cannot, and will not, stop the massacre of children and workers at home.



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