

# Reports confirm Maine police ignored months of warnings prior to Lewiston massacre

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In the aftermath of the deadliest mass shooting in the United States since the Uvalde, Texas, elementary school shooting last year, dozens of reports have emerged confirming that local police were warned multiple times that Robert Card, 40, was suffering from severe mental issues, heavily armed, and expressed a desire to conduct a mass shooting to friends and colleagues.

Despite being warned multiple times, beginning as early as May of this year, that Card presented a threat to himself and others, Sagadahoc County police canceled a state-wide teletype alert, known as File 6, on October 18, one week before the shooting. The File 6 alert warned that Card was suffering psychotic episodes and was heavily armed.

Last Friday evening, Card, a US Army reservist, was found dead of an apparent self-inflicted gun shot wound inside a metal trailer at the recycling plant where he was recently fired. The plant is less than a mile away from where Card abandoned his car at a boat launch after he massacred 18 people, ages 14-76 at a bowling alley and a bar and grille in downtown Lewiston, Maine.

On Friday, police identified all the deceased victims: Tricia Asselin, William Frank Brackett, Peyton Brewer-Ross, Thomas “Tommy” Conrad, Michael Deslauriers II, Jason Walker, Keith Macneir, Bryan MacFarlane, Ronald “Ron” Morin Arthur “Artie” Strout, Joseph “Joey” Walker, Joshua Seal, Maxx Hathaway, Robert “Bob” Violette, Lucille Violette, Stephen “Steve” Vozzella, William “Bill” Young and his son Aaron Young. As of this writing three victims remain in critical condition.

Until his body was found, Lewiston, the second largest city in Maine, and several other nearby towns were under virtual martial law as police and federal agents scoured the area for Card. Dozens of schools, government buildings and businesses were closed while government officials urged residents to stay inside their homes with the doors locked.

Robert Card’s family first reached out to the Sagadahoc County Sheriff’s Office on May 3, according to police reports released on Monday and reviewed by major media outlets, including CNN, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*. In the initial May 3 report, Card’s ex-wife, Cara Card, and their son, told police Card’s mental health had been deteriorating since January and that “Robert had recently picked up 10-15 handguns/rifles” from his brother Ryan’s house.

Card’s son told police that his dad was, “likely hearing voices or

starting to experience paranoia” and that he often claimed, “that people around them were talking about him,” even if there was no one in the area.

Sagadahoc deputies reached out to Card’s Army Reserve unit in Saco, Maine, and spoke to Card’s commander, himself a cop, who confirmed that they had “considerable concern for Robert.” Despite this, police never made contact with Card or arranged for a social worker or mental health professional to accompany him on a wellness check.

Less than two months later, in July, Card got into a fight with fellow soldiers while training at West Point, New York. According to police reports, Card told other members of his unit that he was hearing voices accusing him of being a “pedophile” and other insults. Card, who was described in police reports as “belligerent and possibly intoxicated,” shoved a soldier and locked himself in his room, prompting a medical intervention. Card was initially taken to a hospital on base and then transferred to a psychiatric hospital in Katonah, New York, for two weeks.

During this time, Card’s commanders took steps to ensure that he would not have access to firearms while on duty. However, 10 days before Card was committed, state records reviewed by CNN confirm Card legally purchased a Ruger SFAR rifle chambered for .308 ammunition, which is a heavier bullet than the .233 typically used in civilian rifles modeled after the US Army’s M-16/M-4. This rifle, which police believe he used to carry out the shooting, was found by police in Card’s abandoned vehicle.

At the same time Card purchased the rifle, he was also able to purchase a Beretta 92-F 9mm pistol, the standard pistol used by the US military.

Shortly after Card was released from the hospital, on August 5, he attempted to pick up a suppressor he had previously purchased at another gun store. Card was denied the silencer because he indicated on ATF Form 4473, a form the government uses to track over-the-counter firearm purchases, that he had been committed to a mental institution.

There was a second incident in early September in which Card attacked another soldier, prompting Army officials to call police again. This was at least the third time since May 3 police assistance had been requested by either family members or military personnel to

deal with Card's increasingly violent and unstable behavior.

According to a statement from the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's office, after a night at the casino, Card punched a friend who warned him to stop talking about "shooting up places and people." The friend later told the police that Card, "has guns and is going to shoot up the drill center at Saco and other places ... [the friend] is concerned that [Card] is going to snap and commit a mass shooting."

It is unclear what steps, if any, police took at this time to get Card the medical help he needed.

Two weeks after Card's friends warned police he was going to commit a mass shooting, Sagadahoc and Kennebec County deputies finally attempted to make contact with Card at his residence in Bowdoin, 15 miles east of Lewiston. Police claim no one was home on September 15, and in response they issued the File 6 teletype alert warning police across the state that Card was armed and dangerous.

On September 16, it appears one Sagadahoc deputy attempted to make contact with Card again at his home. The deputy wrote in his report that he believed Card was home on September 16 because his car was in the driveway and he could hear someone inside the residence.

The deputy wrote in his report that he called for back-up which apparently never arrived. The deputy on the scene decided to leave because he knew that when "[Card] answers the door at his trailer, in the past he usually does so with a handgun in hand out of view from the person outside."

Despite police knowing that Card's friends and families had warned them he had threatened to commit a mass shooting, police never attempted to make contact with Card again. On October 18, police canceled the state-wide alert that was issued on September 15. A week later, Card carried out his massacre at two establishments he had previously frequented with an ex-girlfriend who had recently broken up with him.

Nancy Lowell-Cunningham, the sister of Peyton Brewer-Ross, one of the 18 victims of last week's shooting, told local CBS news outlet 13 WGME, that anger is building among the victims' families in the wake of the reports showing police knew how dangerous Card was.

"I am getting upset, thinking that there were signs. And why was something not done?" she asked. "Eighteen lives were lost. Feels like things were missed."

In American capitalist society, police do not exist to solve or prevent crime. Police are an instrument of class rule, given extraordinary powers by the ruling class to kill workers and anyone who threatens either the police themselves, or capitalist property relations. The police and US military exist to "serve and protect" the wealthy, their businesses and their property, nothing more.

A 2022 report by Catalyst California and the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California found that in 2019, Los Angeles County sheriff's officers spent 88 percent of their time on duty conducting stops. This is opposed to only 11.2 percent of the time spent in response to calls for service.

In other words, the report, which analyzed police records from sheriff's departments in Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and Riverside, found that nearly nine out of every 10 hours of police time is spent harassing motorists.

Translated to dollars, the report observes that the L.A. Sheriff's Department spent over \$981 million conducting traffic stops as opposed to \$124 million responding to service requests. And these "service requests" often turn into deadly encounters at the barrels of a police gun.

In a society run for the betterment of all instead of protecting the wealth and privilege of a parasitic few, the resources of society would be spent on social services, including universal healthcare and mental health clinics, in order to give people like Card the help they need before they deteriorate.

In a belated attempt to tamp down growing anger over the failure of police to prevent or to even make contact with Card in the months leading up to the shooting, on Wednesday, Maine Democratic governor Janet Mills announced the state would be launching a whitewash investigation into the police response.

The investigation was announced after Mills was confronted by reporters at a Tuesday press conference over the multiple warning signs police ignored prior to the shooting. After a reporter asked Mills about her response to the reports, Mills feigned ignorance, prompting CNN reporter Shimon Prokupez to respond, "Governor, you really don't know what we're talking about? Is that what you're going to stand here and tell us? Governor, everyone here wants to know that answer."

Mills refused to comment, blandly stating it was "under investigation." Pressed further by Prokupez, Mills retorted that the journalist was "making assumptions" and that the "facts had yet to be determined."

Mills also confirmed that President Joe Biden would be visiting the state on Friday. In her statement, Mills said she was "deeply" appreciative and "profound grateful" for Biden's impending visit.



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