

Government cover-up continues two years after Uvalde, Texas school massacre

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Friday marked two years since the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, which claimed the lives of 19 students and two teachers and left 17 others injured on May 24, 2022.

While representatives of the Democratic and Republican parties and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies continue to cover up the causes of the massacre—both its origins and the response to it in real time—family members are still mourning the loss of their loved ones. They are angry and frustrated by the lack of accountability for the deadliest-ever school shooting in the state of Texas.

Official investigations have been conducted by the city of Uvalde, the state of Texas and the US Justice Department—including lengthy reports that concluded there were disastrous failures on the part of law enforcement officials during the shootings. But family members have been stonewalled, and no one has been held responsible for the shooting deaths.

On the day of the shootings, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, a former student at Robb Elementary, shot his grandmother before driving her truck into a ravine on the school property. He emerged from the vehicle wielding a Daniel Defense AR-15-style assault rifle, hopped a fence and entered the school through an unlocked door at 11:33 a.m.

After walking down a hallway, Ramos fired shots from outside two classrooms. He then entered and exited both classrooms, firing more than 100 rounds at students and teachers. For 77 minutes, law enforcement officials expended more resources attempting to contain angry parents seeking to save their children from mass murder than they did to stop the shooter.

On Friday, families of the victims filed lawsuits in California and Texas against the social media company Meta, parent of Facebook and Instagram; Activision,

the maker of the video game “Call of Duty;” and Daniel Defense, the manufacturer of the DDM4-V7 rifle used by Ramos in the shootings.

Two days prior to the lawsuit filings, a group of 19 families reached a \$2 million settlement with the city of Uvalde, or approximately \$100,000 per family, a completely inadequate amount of money for those who have suffered the loss of their nine- and 10-year-old children.

As Veronica Mata, mother of 10-year-old victim Tess Marie Mata, told ABC News, the death of her daughter feels even “more real” two years later. Ms. Mata continued, “The reality is hitting that Tess is no longer here with us. She’s gone and is never coming back.”

Expressing the demands of the parents, Veronica Mata also said:

How much more can we take? Our girl [was] taken in the most horrific way possible, and we just want people to understand that we are fighting for what is right. And we feel so defeated.

The local criminal investigation of police conduct during the massacre was begun by Uvalde District Attorney Christina Mitchell in May 2023. She claimed the investigation would take one year, including the empaneling of a grand jury in January of this year, but the process is dragging on with no commitment as to when it will be completed.

The wrongful death lawsuit in California was filed against Meta and Activision on behalf of the 19 families by the same attorney who represented them in the settlement with the city. The lawsuit against Daniel

Defense was filed in Uvalde District Court.

The lawsuit against Meta and Activision alleges that the companies “enabled and emboldened firearm manufacturers’ efforts to expand the market for their weapons by granting unprecedented, direct and 24/7 access to children.”

The families’ lawyer, Josh Koskoff, stated that the gunman, Ramos, on his eighteenth birthday purchased the assault rifle he used in the mass shooting because “he was targeted and cultivated online by Instagram, Activision and Daniel Defense.” Koskoff continued, “This three-headed monster knowingly exposed him to the weapon, conditioned him to see it as a tool to solve his problems and trained him to use it.”

The lawsuits also state that Ramos downloaded “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare” in November 2021 and had been playing previous versions of “Call of Duty” since he was 15 years old. The lawsuits note that the “Call of Duty” video game prominently features the Daniel Defense DDM4V7 that Ramos used in the shooting.

The lawyer argued that “Simultaneously, on Instagram, the shooter was being courted through explicit, aggressive marketing. In addition to hundreds of images depicting and venerating the thrill of combat, Daniel Defense used Instagram to extol the illegal, murderous use of its weapons.”

According to the lawsuit, on April 27, 2022, the gunman created an account with Daniel Defense and added a DDM4V7 to his online cart. Then, 23 minutes after midnight on his 18th birthday (May 16, 2022), he purchased the weapon. Eight days later, he carried out the Robb Elementary School shooting.

Speaking to CBS News on Friday, attorney Koskoff said that the two lawsuits are “working in concert with each other.” He continued:

Instagram creates a connection between ... an adolescent ... and the gun and a gun company. And nobody exploited Instagram for this purpose more than Daniel Defense. If Instagram can prevent people from posting pictures of their private parts, they can prevent people from posting pictures of an AR-15. And, of course, Instagram doesn’t care. They don’t care. All they care about is driving traffic and generating attention, drawing attention and getting their ad

revenue.

Responding to the lawsuits and statements by Koskoff, Activision told CBS News that the Uvalde shooting was “horrendous and heartbreaking in every way, and we express our deepest sympathies to the families and communities who remain impacted by this senseless act of violence.” The statement continued: “Millions of people around the world enjoy video games without turning to horrific acts.”

Meta and Daniel Defense did not respond to questions about the lawsuit.

In 2022, attorney Koskoff reached a \$73 million settlement with Remington, the maker of another AR-15-style rifle that was used in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting that left 26 people dead in Connecticut in 2012.

As pointed out by legal experts, the lawsuits against Activision and Meta face challenges due to the Section 230 protections against prosecution of online service providers for the actions of the users of their platforms.

Meanwhile, a federal lawsuit in 2005 established that federal law provides broad protection for gun manufacturers from liability for shootings that involve their weapons.

News media reported on Friday that the group of 19 families was filing a \$500 million federal lawsuit against, among others, nearly 100 state police officers who took part in the law enforcement response to the shooting on May 24, 2022. Those on this list include former Robb Elementary School Principal Mandy Gutierrez and Pete Arredondo, the school district’s police chief, who was eventually fired months later for his role in the deaths during the mass shooting.



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