

4 dead, dozens wounded in Georgia high school shooting

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A 14-year-old shooter killed two students and two teachers on Wednesday morning with an AR-15 style rifle at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia, before he was taken into custody by law enforcement.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) confirmed the shooter's name as Colt Gray, a student at the school, and that nine others had injuries requiring hospitalization. Apalachee High School is part of Barrow County Schools, has about 1,900 students and is located approximately 45 miles east of Atlanta.

GBI Director Chris Hosey told news media that Gray opened fire around 10:20 a.m. and was rapidly confronted by a school resource officer and surrendered immediately. Hosey said the shooter will be charged with murder and tried as an adult. The victims have not been identified as of this writing.

A total of 30 individuals have been reported with injuries from the incident. Two gunshot victims were taken to Northeast Georgia Medical Center Barrow and one gunshot victim was taken to Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville. The injuries sustained by these three were not considered life-threatening.

CBS News reported that some patients came to hospitals with anxiety symptoms and some were experiencing panic attacks. A spokesperson for Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta said staff had received one gunshot wound patient from the high school.

Students who spoke to the media described the chaotic and terrifying scene when the shooter opened fire in a classroom. Marques Coleman, 14, spoke to CBS affiliate WANF and said he was inside the classroom when the shooting began. He said, "I see a kid with a, he had like a big gun," and just started shooting. "I got up, I started running, he started shooting like, like 10 times. He shot at least 10 times," Coleman said.

The teenager said he dove behind the desk and his teacher got in front of him, "My teacher started barricading the door with desks." Coleman told WANF he saw "one of my classmates on the ground bleeding so bad," another girl shot in the leg and a friend shot in the stomach.

A heavy police presence on the high school campus followed the shooting. By 11:00 a.m. dozens of ambulances had responded. Police officers and a medical helicopter gathered in the parking lot and on the green outside of the building. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) dispatched agents to the scene, where they were coordinating with local law enforcement.

Some news media is reporting that there had been an online warning earlier in the day that a shooting was going to take place

in the school district. Very few details about this fact have been released so far.

The FBI reported Wednesday evening that its National Threat Operations Center had received several anonymous tips in May 2023 of threats online to commit a school shooting at a "unidentified location and time," which included pictures of guns. The threat was traced to Georgia and the Jackson County Sheriffs Office was alerted by the FBI and proceeded to interview Colt, then 13 years old, and his father. Colt denied making the threat and it was decided at the time that there was no reason to make an arrest or take other legal action.

Responding in template form to another in a long list of horrific school shootings in the US, President Biden said he and his wife Jill were "mourning the deaths" that were caused by "more senseless gun violence." Biden said that what is needed is for Congress to pass "common-sense gun safety legislation," including a ban on "assault weapons and high capacity magazines," and require "safe storage of firearms, enact universal background checks, and end immunity for gun manufacturers."

Speaking at a rally in New Hampshire, Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris called the Apalachee High School shootings "a senseless tragedy," providing no coherent reason for the epidemic of school shootings in America, many of which are being carried out by teenage students. Adding to the hand-wringing of the entire US political establishment, Harris said, "We've got to stop it. It doesn't have to be this way."

Fascist Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump weighed in with his own vicious response, referring to the shooter, only 14 years old, as "a sick and deranged monster." Georgia Republican Party governor Brian Kemp and Democratic Party mayor of Atlanta Andre Dickens came together to promote the presence of local, state and federal law enforcement in and around schools.

In contrast, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US President Joseph Kishore issued a statement on the shooting at Apalachee High School that provided the only explanation of its root cause and the way forward out of the violence for the working class.

The response from the political establishment was entirely predictable. As after every mass shooting, there is no effort to explain what it is in American society that

produces such horrors on such a regular basis.

Little information is available about the shooter or the possible motives. No doubt more information will come out in the coming days. But the source of an explanation for the epidemic of school shootings lies not at the level of individual psychology, but rather social pathology.

Kishore referred to the Columbine High School massacre in 1999 in Littleton, Colorado, since which school shootings have become a constant feature of American life:

There has been a dramatic increase over the past three years, with 73 school shootings in 2021, 79 in 2022, 82 in 2023 and 45 so far this year.

And it is not only school shootings. On Monday, a man in Chicago allegedly opened fire on a commuter train, murdering four individuals. On average, 117 Americans die every day from gun violence, 67 percent by suicide and 30 percent by homicide.”

He quoted from the *World Socialist Web Site* at the time of the Columbine massacre which called attention to the social warning signs, the indications and indices of social and political dysfunction which create the climate that produces such bloody events.

“Vital indicators of impending disaster might include: growing polarization between wealth and poverty; atomization of working people and the suppression of their class identity; the glorification of militarism and war; the absence of serious social commentary and political debate; the debased state of popular culture; the worship of the stock exchange; the unrestrained celebration of individual success and personal wealth; the denigration of the ideals of social progress and equality.”

Kishore continued by elaborating on the development of these tendencies over the past three decades, and their implications:

Over the past quarter century, these social indices, these “vital indicators of impending disaster,” have only increased. The American ruling class and its state has, over the past year, armed, financed and politically justified a genocide in Gaza that has killed as many as 200,000 Palestinians. The Biden-Harris administration is escalating a global war, including the US-NATO war against Russia, that threatens nuclear annihilation.

The normalization of mass death in the pandemic has been a defining experience for young people, with more than 1.4 million deaths in the US alone due to the willful

rejection of basic public health by the American ruling class. Police in the United States kill more than 1,000 people every year.

The political system is in an advanced state of degeneration, with one of the parties of the ruling class, the Republicans, led by a fascistic demagogue who attempted to overturn the constitution, and the other, the Democrats, focused entirely on the escalation of war. The entire official political climate and culture wallows in muck and filth, centered on the glorification of wealth, amidst deepening economic and social crisis for the broad mass of the population.

Social services have been starved to pay for war and bank bailouts. The ruling class insists that there is no money for education, mental health services, basic healthcare or any semblance of a social safety net.

The growing mood of resistance in the working class, however, must and will bring with it a radical change in the political, intellectual and, indeed, moral climate of the country. The source of the social pathology of the United States lies in the capitalist system. Therefore, it must be overturned. This is the basic issue confronting workers and young people in this election and beyond.

According to EverytownResearch.org there have been 133 incidents of gunfire on school grounds in the US, resulting in 38 deaths and 81 injuries, so far in 2024. This number is on track to surpass the total of 158 shootings and, 45 deaths and 106 injuries in 2023.

The number of school shootings has risen sharply since EverytownResearch.org began collecting data in 2013, when there were 51 instances of school shootings, 28 deaths and 37 injuries. The data shows that school shootings are taking place in every state in the US, in urban centers, suburban communities and rural districts.

The organization highlights the fact that gunfire in schools “is just the tip of the iceberg” when it comes to the exposure of children to gun violence. The research shows that “every year, more than 4,000 children and teens are shot and killed and over 17,000 more are shot and wounded. An estimated 3 million children in the US are exposed to shootings per year. Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens.”



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