

# Four killed in mass shooting of sleeping train riders in Chicago suburb

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On Labor Day morning in Forest Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, four people were shot and killed as they slept on a commuter train. Police said the shooting happened on two different train cars. Three victims were found dead in one car and the fourth victim in a second. They were discovered by a Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) employee.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office identified three of the four victims as 60-year-old Adrian Collins, 28-year-old Simeon Bihesi, and 64-year-old Margaret Miller, while the last victim, a 52-year-old man, has not yet been identified. Bihesi was confirmed by family to have been homeless at the time of his death. Two others reportedly were also homeless.

Rhanni Davis, 30, was arrested 90 minutes after the shooting was reported and is being held in Cook County Jail until the first hearing at the end of the month. Charged on Tuesday, Davis is accused of four counts of first-degree murder. No motive for the shootings has been made public. Local reports indicate Davis has a history of working for several different private security firms, as well as a record of petty crime.

Mass killings and shootings occur with a disturbing regularity in the United States. The shootings in Chicago were followed just a few days later by a high school shooting in Winder, Georgia, with two students and two teachers left dead. While specific circumstances may differ from one event to another, the most pressing questions are the social roots of these repeated outburst of violence and how to stop them from happening.

No serious answer will come from the political establishment, either Democratic or Republican. Officials have already made statements to distance the

murders from their social and economic context. They are focusing on the individual suspect and calling for increased public safety spending.

Forest Park Deputy Chief Chris Chin, in a press conference following the shooting, emphasized the rarity of such incidents. "This is an isolated incident, so it can happen anywhere. Obviously, there's a little bit more concern because it is on a mass transit system," he said. But this offered little reassurance to the public.

Other public officials shared similar thoughts about the shooting. At a news conference, CTA President Dorval Carter said, "This is a very isolated incident. I can tell you in my career at CTA, I've never seen anything like a mass shooting."

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx expressed that the motives of the accused may never be known, adding, "I fear, however, the question of why may never be answered because sometimes truly horrific, heinous acts have no answer."

That a mass killing is an irregular event in the United States could not be further from the truth. So far this year, 385 mass shootings have occurred in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive. In Illinois alone, there have been 29 mass shootings.

The indicators of the social pathology of capitalism which underlie these grim figures are many, but include growing inequality, the suppression of working class struggle, the worship of militarism and war, the absence of any solutions to social problems from the political establishment, the lack of access to culture and art, the domination of wealth over public need, the unrestrained growth of fascism, lack of healthcare, the policy of "forever COVID" and support for genocide as official state policy.

But what is driving these indicators? Who is responsible? In 1999, in an article titled "The

Columbine High School massacre: American Pastoral ... American Berserk,”David North, the chairperson of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, wrote:



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Look honestly at this society—its political leaders, its religious spokesmen, its corporate CEOs, its military machine, its celebrities, its “popular” culture, and, above all, the entire economic system upon which the whole vast superstructure of violence, suffering and hypocrisy is based. It is there that the answer is to be found..

Twenty-five years later, the social crisis has metastasized, giving rise to mass shootings and daily violence in American society with an increasing frequency.

The influence of viciously right-wing policies of the Democratic Party also plays a role, creating the environment for the targeting of the homeless. Last month, Democratic Governor of California Gavin Newsom was filmed as part of a media blitz highlighting sweeps of homeless encampments in Los Angeles. The governor himself took part in dismantling tents and throwing away homeless residents’ possessions.

Rampant homelessness in the US is only one of the most visible indicators of the scale of officially sanctioned inequality and brutality in the United States. The homeless are being targeted by Democratic city leaders, backed by the super-rich and the upper middle class, as a major inconvenience to their lifestyle rather than a symptom of a profoundly broken social order.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 47 people experiencing homelessness were killed in violent incidents between 2020 and 2022. Going back further, at least 1,923 hate crimes against homeless people were reported in the past quarter century, with at least 558 of those attacks being lethal.

There can be no solution to homelessness, poverty, inequality or any of the problems confronting working people except through the ending of the capitalist system.