

Former Amazon worker dead after shooting at Georgia warehouse

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Mylen Belyue, a former Amazon employee, died during a confrontation with police after allegedly having shot at an Amazon warehouse in Columbus, Georgia, last Monday.

Shortly before 4:30 am on September 22, local police responded to 911 calls about an individual firing at the Amazon warehouse on Osceola Court. While standing outside the building, Belyue reportedly fired several rounds into the front of the building while workers were inside. Reporters later observed almost a dozen bullet holes in the warehouse's front windows.

Belyue allegedly walked away from the building and was confronted by police. He brandished his gun and engaged in a brief standoff with the officers before fatally shooting himself, according to the police. Belyue was later pronounced dead by suicide at the scene.

No other deaths or injuries were reported. The Columbus Police Department is investigating the incident. Amazon is cooperating with the investigation and claims to be "supporting those who were on site during this incident."

Deuntraz Robinson was on his way to work at the Amazon warehouse at the time of the shooting. He told local station WTVM that he was stunned by what he saw. "That's scary, like it's here. It's crazy when it's your actual job and you're like, 'Wow, that could've been me,'" he said. Workers inside the building were frightened.

Belyue had been working at Amazon since June but left about a week before the incident. He had been bullied at work and even sought mental health treatment. "Back to back to back, every day, like I said, he sat in the driveway when he got off work, sobbing," his father Miren Belyue told WTVM. "I begged him to stop working that job, and management wouldn't do

anything."

This tragedy cannot be understood apart from the social conditions in which it occurred. After Atlanta, which is 100 miles to the northeast, Columbus is the second most populous city in Georgia. Its poverty rate is 21.5 percent, which is twice the national rate of 10.6 percent, according to US Census Bureau data. The crime rate in Columbus is above the national average, and the city witnessed a record 70 homicides in 2021.

The shooting at the 90,000-square-foot Amazon warehouse was the second workplace shooting this month in Columbus. A man was fatally shot outside Aludyne-Columbus Foundry on September 3.

The needless death of Belyue also reflects Amazon's documented indifference to workers' physical and mental health. In July, an Amazon worker in Ohio described a pattern of physical abuse, sexual harassment and management retaliation in an interview with the *World Socialist Web Site*. The worker filed multiple complaints against an assistant manager who had touched her inappropriately. Not only did the complaints go uninvestigated, but also other managers began retaliating against the worker by giving her punitive, physically demanding assignments. An assistant manager even threatened her with violence, yet no one faced consequences for this harassment, which resulted in physical injuries and acute anxiety.

Amazon is also notorious for maintaining dangerous conditions that result in serious injury and even death. In April, two workers were airlifted to a hospital after sustaining severe injuries following a fire at an Amazon Web Services facility under construction in New Carlisle, Indiana. Firefighters who arrived on the scene found the building and the area full of smoke. Amazon's statement to the press referred to a "small fire" at the site but did not mention the two hospitalized

workers.

Earlier that month, Leony Salcedo-Chevalier, who worked for an Amazon subcontractor, was struck and killed by a truck at Amazon's JFK8 fulfillment center in Staten Island, New York. The worker was hit as the truck was backing up at the warehouse's loading dock. Although management tried to continue operations as though nothing had happened, workers forced the company to close two consecutive shifts out of respect for their class brother. The spontaneous uprising was the initiative of the workers themselves, and not of the Amazon Labor Union, which nominally represents them.

President Donald Trump, with the connivance of both parties in Congress, is overseeing major cuts to funding for mental health research and programs. Under Trump, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration terminated 129 grants representing \$1.74 billion in funding. The US Department of Education cut about \$1 billion in grants for school mental health programs. Moreover, Trump proposes to reorganize the National Institutes of Health (which include the National Institute of Mental Health) next year and cut its overall budget by almost 40 percent.

These cuts are part of a broader war on the working class. Representing oligarchs like Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Trump is slashing not only physical and mental health spending, but also workplace safety regulations and enforcement. For fiscal year 2026, Trump proposes to cut the US Department of Labor's budget by about 35 percent. He nominated David Keeling, a former Amazon and UPS executive, to head the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. At UPS, Keeling refused workers' demands to install air conditioning in delivery trucks.

All the social gains of the working class are to be clawed back, and the funds redirected to tax cuts for the wealthy and massive military spending. The US government is not only continuing its support for the genocide of the Palestinians, but also preparing for an invasion of Venezuela and a potentially catastrophic war with China, which is the prime economic and geopolitical rival of the US. The Trump administration also plans to use the National Guard to suppress opposition to war and austerity.

Amazon workers' fight for adequate pay, health benefits and safe workplaces is inextricable from a fight

against war and dictatorship. Workers can appeal neither to the Democrats, who support this agenda, nor to the trade unions, who function as labor police for the companies and for the state. Instead, they must form rank-and-file committees under their own democratic control to organize and wage their struggle.



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