

# Two dead and nine injured in mass shooting at Brown University

Kevin Reed

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At least two Brown University students are dead and nine others are wounded after a gunman opened fire inside a classroom in the Barus & Holley engineering building late Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday, police detained a “person of interest,” a man in his 20s from Wisconsin, whose identity has been widely reported but not officially confirmed, as the police investigation continues.

According to Providence police, the shooting began during an exam period inside a classroom in the large engineering and physics facility on Brown’s College Hill campus. Witnesses reported a burst of rapid gunfire as the shooter opened the classroom door and fired more than 40 rounds from a 9 mm handgun into students who had no possibility of defending themselves.

Law enforcement officials later stated that two handguns and loaded 30-round magazines were recovered when the person of interest was taken into custody at a hotel roughly 15 to 20 miles from Providence, indicating preparation for sustained, indiscriminate killing.

The victims, all Brown students according to reports, were attending a regularly scheduled class as final exams approached. Two were pronounced dead, while nine others were transported to area hospitals. City officials have said that seven remain in stable condition, one is in critical but stable condition, and one has already been discharged. The victims’ names have not yet been released, as authorities notify their families.

Police began receiving 911 calls shortly after 4 p.m. Saturday with reports of an active shooter and multiple victims inside a classroom. Brown’s emergency alert system ordered students and staff to “run, hide, and fight,” locking down the campus and parts of surrounding neighborhoods as terrified students barricaded themselves in labs, libraries and dormitories.

Providence Police Chief Col. Oscar Perez told reporters that more than 400 law enforcement officers ultimately

responded to the scene and that the incident produced a multi-agency investigation that extended through the night and into Sunday.

At an early press briefing, Perez confirmed that two were dead and nine wounded. He said authorities were combing the building and surrounding area for evidence. He stressed that the probe is “complex,” refused to speculate on the motive, and would not confirm whether the gunman had any connection to Brown, saying that those issues were part of an ongoing investigation aimed at securing a successful prosecution.

The person of interest, identified by multiple media outlets as a 24-year-old man from Wisconsin, was detained early Sunday at a Hampton Inn in a Rhode Island community outside Providence, after what officials described as intensive overnight investigative work. Federal and local law enforcement used digital and geolocation tools to track the suspect, with FBI units and U.S. marshals assisting in the arrest in a hotel room that had become a temporary refuge for the alleged gunman.

While police have not publicly announced any charges, they have made clear that the individual is being held in connection with the Brown shooting and that further information will be released only as it does not jeopardize the case.

Providence Mayor Brett Smiley praised the “extraordinary” coordination among local, state and federal agencies, and repeatedly referred to the “complexity” of the investigation, while offering no insight into for the cause for the type of massacre that happens on a regular basis in the US.

Brown’s president, Christina Paxson, issued a campus-wide letter mourning the dead and invoking the “resilience” of the student body, even as students gathered in vigils that manifested the grief and anger within the campus community over the violence.

President Trump, speaking to reporters on the White House grounds, responded in characteristically perfunctory fashion, declaring, “it’s a terrible thing” and that “all we can do is pray for the victims and those who were badly hurt.” On social media, Trump initially claimed that the suspect was already in custody, a statement that contradicted police at the time and had to be hastily revised.

Other leading figures in the political establishment responded with the ritualistic combination of platitudes, appeals to “unity,” and calls for “prayers.” Rhode Island politicians and national Democrats echoed the familiar script, offering condolences to the families and vague commitments to “do better,” while scrupulously avoiding any indictment of the social order that produces an unending stream of such tragedies.

The official reaction to the Brown shooting follows the line of previous campus mass shootings that have become so frequent that they now form a grim catalogue stretching back decades. This list includes:

- Virginia Tech in 2007, 32 killed across multiple buildings
- Northern Illinois University in 2008, five killed in a lecture hall
- The University of Alabama in Huntsville in 2010, three killed during a faculty meeting
- Oikos University in Oakland, California in 2012, seven dead
- Santa Monica College in 2013, six killed after the shooter turned a domestic dispute public on campus
- The University of California, Santa Barbara in 2014, six killed in the college town area
- Umpqua Community College near Roseburg, Oregon in 2015, nine killed in a writing class
- The University of Virginia in 2022, three killed on a returning charter bus
- Michigan State University in 2023, three students killed across two buildings
- Florida State University in April 2025, two killed and multiple wounded.

Each new atrocity is briefly described as “unthinkable” and “shocking,” as families experience the agony of loss and the event is normalized, training to treat lockdown drills and active-shooter protocols as a permanent feature of academic life.

Brown’s position in the elite Ivy League shows that no sector of higher education is immune from the carnage. Campus shootings have struck institutions ranging from small religious colleges to large public universities and

private research institutions, indicating that the phenomenon is not rooted in any type of campus culture but in broader characteristics of American society.

The same government that oversees a vast apparatus of military violence abroad also presides over a domestic landscape in which young people cannot go to class or gather at social events without the ever-present possibility of being shot and killed.

The massacre at Brown University is also one more episode in the larger epidemic of mass shootings in the United States, which has no parallel in any other advanced capitalist country. Year after year, databases compiled by independent monitors and the media record hundreds of incidents in which four or more people are shot, with totals routinely exceeding one mass shooting per day.

The Brown attack joins a list that encompasses not only colleges and universities, but K-12 schools, workplaces, supermarkets, nightclubs, movie theaters, churches, synagogues, mosques and festivals, indicating that all of public and semi-public life has been transformed into potential “soft targets.”

Within the mass shooter epidemic, school and campus incidents are especially revealing because they expose the inability of the existing order to guarantee even minimal safety for children and young adults. From Columbine High School in 1999 to Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Parkland, Uvalde, Michigan State and now Brown University, a full generation has come of age with the knowledge that death by gunfire is a possibility in the classroom, cafeteria or playground.

The bankruptcy of the capitalist political system is revealed both by what it refuses to address and by what it actively promotes. Successive administrations, Democratic and Republican, have poured trillions into war, surveillance and repression, while presiding over extreme social inequality, precarious employment, student debt and a mental health system gutted by budget cuts and privatization.



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