



John Locher/The Associated Press

A restaurant employee looks at the scene of a mass shooting at a shopping complex in El Paso, Texas.

Twenty dead in El Paso

The Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — The shooting that killed 20 people at a crowded El Paso department store will be handled as a domestic terrorism case, federal authorities said Sunday as they weighed hate-crime charges against the suspected gunman that could carry the death penalty.

A local prosecutor announced that he would file capital murder charges, declaring that the alleged assailant had “lost the right to be among us.”

The attack on Saturday was followed less than a day later by another shooting that claimed nine lives in a nightlife district of Dayton, Ohio. That shooter was killed by police. Together the two assaults wounded more than 50 people, some of them critically, and shocked even a nation that has grown accustomed to regular spasms of gun violence.

Investigators focused on whether the El Paso attack was a hate crime after the emergence of a racist, anti-immigrant screed that was posted online shortly beforehand. Detectives sought to determine if it was written by the man who was arrested. The border city has figured prominently in the immigration debate and is home to 680,000 people, most of them Latino.

Using a rifle, the El Paso gunman opened fire on shoppers during the busy back-to-school season.

The attack targeted a Walmart and did not spread to other nearby shopping areas, El Paso Police Sgt. Robert Gomez said.

Most victims were inside the store. By Sunday evening, all bodies had been removed from the store and the parking lot, police said, but no names or ages were released.

Despite initial reports of possible multiple gunmen, the man in custody was believed to be the only shooter, police said.

Law enforcement officials identified him as 21-year-old Patrick Crusius from Allen, a Dallas suburb, which is a nearly 10-hour drive from El Paso. He was arrested without police firing any shots and was jailed without bond, authorities said.

There was no immediate indication that he had an attorney.

Crusius surrendered after being confronted by officers on a sidewalk close to the scene. Police did not know how many bullets were fired or why the attack stopped, Gomez said.

“We don’t have information on what prompted him to stop firing,” Gomez said.

El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen said the suspect was cooperative and “forthcoming with information.”

Police said they did not know where the weapon was purchased. Allen acknowledged that it is legal under Texas law to carry a long gun openly in a public place.

“Of course, normal individuals seeing that type of weapon might be alarmed,” but before he began firing, the suspect was technically “within the realm of the law,” Allen said.

Relatives said a 25-year-old woman who was shot while apparently trying to shield her 2-month-old son was among those killed. Mexican officials said six Mexican nationals were also among the dead.

Mexico planned to take legal action against whoever sold the gun to the suspect, the country’s foreign minister said. Gun ownership is highly restricted in Mexico, requiring special permits, and gun shops are rare.

President Donald Trump denounced both shootings, saying “hate has no place in our country.” Addressing reporters in Morris-

town, New Jersey, the president said Sunday that “we’re going to take care” of the problem. He said he’s been speaking to the attorney general, the FBI director and members of Congress and will make an additional statement Monday.

Trump also pointed to a mental illness problem in the U.S., calling the shooters “very seriously mentally ill.”

Authorities searched for any links between the suspect and the material in the document that was posted online, including the writer’s expression of concern that an influx of Hispanics into the United States will replace aging white voters, potentially turning Texas blue in elections and swinging the White House to Democrats.

The writer was also critical of Republicans for what he described as close ties to corporations and degradation of the environment. Though a Twitter account that appears to belong to Crusius included pro-Trump posts praising the plan to build more border wall, the writer of the online document says his views on race predated Trump’s campaign and that any attempt to blame the president for his actions was “fake news.”

The writer denied he was a white supremacist, but the document says “race mixing” is destroying the nation and recommends dividing the United States into territorial enclaves determined by race. The first sentence of the four-page document expresses support for the man accused of killing 51 people at two New Zealand mosques in March after posting his own screed with a conspiracy theory about nonwhite migrants replacing whites.

El Paso Mayor Dee Margo said he knew the shooter was not from the city.

“It’s not what we’re about,” the mayor said at the news conference.

El Paso County is more than 80% Latino, according to the latest census data. Tens of thousands of Mexicans legally cross the border each day to work and shop in the city.

Trump visited in February to argue that walling off the southern border would make the U.S. safer. City residents and Democratic presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke, who is from El Paso, led thousands on a protest march past the barrier of barbed wire-topped fencing and towering metal slats.

O’Rourke, a former Texas congressman, stressed that border walls have not made his hometown safer. The city’s murder rate was less than half the national average in 2005, the year before the start of its border fence. Before the wall project started, El Paso had been rated one of the three safest major U.S. cities going back to 1997.

Trump ordered flags flown at half-staff in memory of the victims of the two shootings.

The shooting was the 21st mass killing in the United States in 2019, and the fifth public mass shooting. Before Saturday, 96 people had died in mass killings in 2019 — 26 of them in public mass shootings.

An Associated Press/USA Today/Northeastern University mass murder database tracks all U.S. homicides since 2006 involving four or more people killed, not including the offender, over a short period of time regardless of weapon, location, victim-offender relationship or motive. The database shows that the median age of a public mass shooter is 28, significantly lower than the median age of a person who commits a mass shooting of his family.

Since 2006, 11 mass shootings — not including Saturday’s — have been committed by men who are 21 or younger.

Gunman kills nine in Ohio

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — A masked gunman in body armor opened fire early Sunday in a popular entertainment district in Dayton, Ohio, killing nine people, including his sister, and wounding dozens before he was quickly slain by police, officials said.

Connor Betts, 24, was armed with a .223-caliber rifle with magazines capable of holding at least 100 rounds of ammunition and squeezed off dozens of shots before he was gunned down no more than 30 seconds after his rampage began, Police Chief Richard Biehl said.

Surveillance video shared by police showed officers shot Betts at the doorstep of further destruction, just stopping him from entering a bar where some people took cover when the chaos broke out around 1 a.m. in the historic Oregon District.

Had he gotten inside the bar, the result would have been “catastrophic,” Biehl said.

It was the second U.S. mass shooting in less than 24 hours, and no motive has been explained.

Betts’ 22-year-old sister Megan was the youngest of the dead — all killed in a night-life spot of bars, restaurants and theaters that is considered a safe area downtown, police said.

Betts was a familiar face at another bar southeast of Dayton in Bellbrook, a short drive from his home, where he was known as an ever-friendly, happy guy who sometimes came in for a beer or two and never made trouble.

Bartender Andy Baker said Betts was at Romer’s Bar & Grill last Monday and seemed fine. Baker said when he saw Betts identified as the shooter, he thought: There is no way that’s the guy.

Fellow customer Mike Kern said he sometimes played trivia at Romer’s with Betts, who was good for answers about current events and pop culture and was “the kind of kid you’d want as a son.”

“I never heard him talk about violence, say a racist word, or anything like that,” Kern said.

The gunman was white and six of the nine killed were black, police said. Although they’ll investigate the possibility of a hate crime, they said the quickness of the rampage made any discrimination in the shooting seem unlikely.

They identified the other dead as Monica Brickhouse, 39; Nicholas Cumer, 25; Derrick Fudge, 57; Thomas McNichols, 25; Lois Oglesby, 27; Saeed Saleh, 38; Logan Turner, 30; and Beatrice N. Warren-Curtis, 36.

Mayor Nan Whaley said at least 27 more people were treated for injuries, and at least 15 of those have been released. Several more were in serious or critical condition, hospital officials said at a news conference Sunday morning. Some suffered multiple gunshot wounds and others were injured as they fled, the officials said.

Betts was from Bellbrook, southeast of Dayton. Bellbrook Police Chief Doug Doherty said he and his officers weren’t aware of any history of violence by Betts, including during high school, and had no previous contact with him.

Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local Schools also confirmed Betts graduated in 2013 but didn’t immediately release information about his records.

Brad Howard said he went to school with Betts and had known him for two decades.

“The Connor Betts that I knew was a nice kid,” Howard said. “The Connor Betts that I

talked to I always got along with well.”

More recently, Betts was taking college classes and working at an eatery. Sinclair Community College confirmed he attended there and studied psychology but wasn’t enrolled this summer. Chipotle confirmed he worked at one of its restaurants but released no other details.

Police blocked access in Betts’ neighborhood, where neighbor Stephen Cournoyer said he often saw Betts mowing the lawn or walking the dog.

“He seemed like a good kid,” Cournoyer said. “He wasn’t a speed demon, didn’t do anything crazy. But that’s not to say, I mean, obviously he had an issue.”

Nikita Papillon, 23, was across the street at Newcom’s Tavern when the shooting started. She said she saw a girl she had talked to earlier lying outside Ned Peppers bar, where Betts was slain at the entrance.

“She had told me she liked my outfit and thought I was cute, and I told her I liked her outfit and I thought she was cute,” Papillon said. She herself had been to Ned Peppers the night before, describing it as the kind of place “where you don’t have to worry about someone shooting up the place.”

“People my age, we don’t think something like this is going to happen,” she said. “And when it happens, words can’t describe it.”

Tianycia Leonard, 28, was in the back, smoking, at Newcom’s. She heard “loud thumps” that she initially thought was someone pounding on a dumpster.

“It was so noisy, but then you could tell it was gunshots and there was a lot of rounds,” Leonard said.

Staff of Ned Peppers said in a Facebook post that they were left shaken and confused by the shooting. The bar said a bouncer was treated for shrapnel wounds.

A message seeking further comment was left with staff.

President Donald Trump was briefed on the shooting and praised law enforcement’s speedy response in a tweet Sunday. The FBI is assisting with the investigation.

Gov. Mike DeWine visited the scene after earlier ordering that flags in Ohio remain at half-staff.

DeWine, a Republican, said policymakers must now consider: “Is there anything we can do in the future to make sure something like this does not happen?”

Both of Ohio’s two U.S. senators visited the scene of the mass shooting. Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown said responding with thoughts and prayers wasn’t enough and stronger gun safety laws are needed. Republican Sen. Rob Portman said the discussion must include not just policy changes, but issues such as mental health supports.

Whaley said more than 50 other mayors also have reached out to her.

A family assistance center was set up at the Dayton Convention Center, where people seeking information on victims arrived in a steady trickle throughout the morning, many in their Sunday best, others looking bedraggled from a sleepless night. Some local pastors were on hand to offer support, as were comfort dogs.

The Ohio shooting came hours after a young man opened fire in a crowded El Paso, Texas, shopping area, leaving 20 dead and more than two dozen injured. Just days before, on July 28, a 19-year-old shot and killed three people, including two children, at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in Northern California.

PROPOSAL

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follow-up phone message about Pendleton’s potential liability as of press time.

One of the main resources for the homeless in Pendleton is Neighbor 2 Neighbor Pendleton, which offers a warming station in the winter and a weekly day center in the summer.

On a bright and warm Wednesday afternoon, homeless residents gathered at Neighbor 2 Neighbor’s Southeast Court Avenue facility to access its showers and get out of the heat.

As volunteers processed people in the lobby and offered them fresh clothes, some members of Pendle-

ton’s homeless community expressed their concerns with the proposed ordinance.

Across four interviews, multiple homeless people admitted to being charged with criminal trespassing, but added that banning many forms of outdoor camping and sleeping was not the answer.

Mark Woodger was blunt in his assessment of the proposed ordinance.

“I think it’s sick,” he said.

Woodger said eating, breathing and sleeping are essential for life and the ordinance would make the latter difficult to do.

D.J. Haney, who identified himself as a “local homeless rapper,” was also upset at

the proposal, predicting that more homeless would get high on meth to stay awake and avoid encounters with police.

At least one day center user didn’t think the law would affect him that much.

Greg Carter, who said he prefers to live life on the streets, said he thinks his preferred camping spot is secluded enough that he’ll avoid detection.

Despite the homeless people’s concerns, Councilor Paul Chalmers said he supported the ordinance.

Chalmers said he didn’t want to be perceived as heartless, but constituents were reporting feeling unsafe in public places because of the homeless presence.

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