

Gunman kills 3 at California festival

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE
Associated Press



AP Photo/Noah Berger
Police escort people from Christmas Hill Park following a deadly shooting during the Gilroy Garlic Festival.

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Scot Smithee | Gilroy police chief

GILROY, Calif. — Authorities were searching for answers Monday to why a 19-year-old opened fire on a popular food festival less than a mile from his parents' home in California, killing two children and another young man.

They believe many more people would have died if officers patrolling the event had not stopped the gunman so quickly.

Santino William Legan, 19, cut through a fence and appeared to randomly target people Sunday afternoon, the end of the three-day Gilroy Garlic Festival that attracts about 100,000 people to the city known as the "Garlic Capital of the World," Gilroy Police Chief Scot Smithee said.

Police responded in less than a minute, and Legan turned what appeared to be an AK-47 style rifle on them, Smithee said. Three officers fired back and killed Legan, who legally purchased the weapon this month in Nevada, where his last address is listed.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the officers who were able to engage this guy as quickly as they did," the police chief said. "We had thousands of people there. It could have gone so much worse so fast. ... There absolutely would have been more bloodshed."

Legan's motive wasn't known, Smithee said. Legan posted two photos on Instagram not long before the attack that injured 12 other people.

One photo depicted Smokey Bear in front of a "fire danger" sign, with a caption that said to read the 19th century book "Might is Right," a work that claims race determines behavior and is popular among white nationalists and far-right extremist groups.

Legan's since-deleted Instagram account says he is Italian and Iranian. Minutes before the shooting, he had posted a photo from the festival saying, "Ayyy garlic festival time" and "come get wasted on overpriced (stuff)."

The festival in the agricultural city of 50,000 about 80 miles southeast of San Francisco had security that required people to pass through metal detectors and have their bags searched.

The shooter sneaked in through a fence that borders a parking lot next to a creek, Smithee said, and the gunfire

sent panicked people running away and diving for cover under tables and a concert stage.

Some witnesses reported a second suspect, Smithee said, but it was unclear whether that person was armed or just helped in some way. A manhunt stretched into Monday.

The shooting killed 6-year-old Stephen Romero, a 13-year-old girl and recent college graduate Trevor Irby, who was in his 20s, authorities and family said.

"My son had his whole life to live, and he was only 6," Alberto Romero told San Francisco Bay Area news sta-

tion KNTV. "That's all I can say."

The boy's grandmother, Maribel Romero, told Los Angeles station KABC-TV that she searched several hospitals before learning he had died. She said Stephen was "always kind, happy and, you know, playful."

Keuka College said Irby was a biology major who graduated in 2017 from the school in upstate New York.

Officials didn't release the name of the girl who died. The wounded were taken to multiple hospitals, and their conditions ranged from fair to critical, with some undergoing surgery. At least five have been released.

Police searched the two-story home of Legan's family less than a mile from the garlic festival and a dusty car parked outside before leaving the house Monday with paper bags and what appeared to be other evidence.

Jan Dickson, a neighbor across the street, said Santino Legan had not lived there for at least a year and that SWAT officers came to the home Sunday night. She called the Legans "a nice, normal family."

Stepping up feud, Trump assails Cummings as 'racist'

By ZEKE MILLER and HOPE YEN
Associated Press



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite
Elijah Cummings

WASHINGTON — Facing growing accusations of racism for his incendiary tweets, President Donald Trump lashed out at his critics Monday and sought to deflect the criticism by labeling a leading black congressman as himself racist.

In the latest rhetorical shot at lawmakers of color, Trump said his weekend comments referring to Rep. Elijah Cummings' majority-black Baltimore district as a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess" where "no human being would want to live" were not racist.

Instead, Trump argued, "if racist Elijah Cummings would focus more of his energy on helping the good people of his district, and Baltimore itself, perhaps progress could be made in fixing the mess."

"His radical 'oversight' is a joke!" Trump tweeted Sunday.

After a weekend of attacks on Cummings, the son of former sharecroppers who rose to become the powerful chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Trump expanded his attacks Monday to include a prominent Cummings defender, the Rev. Al Sharpton, who held a press conference in Baltimore to condemn the president.

"Al is a con man, a troublemaker, always looking for a score," Trump tweeted ahead of the press conference, adding that the civil rights activist and MSNBC host "Hates Whites & Cops!"

Sharpton fired back at the president in a tweet of his own, saying, "I do make trouble for bigots."

Cummings is leading

multiple investigations of the president's governmental dealings. In his direct response to Trump on Twitter, Cummings said: "Mr. President, I go home to my district daily. Each morning, I wake up, and I go and fight for my neighbors. It is my constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch. But, it is my moral duty to fight for my constituents."

Cummings has also drawn the president's ire for investigations touching on his family members serving in the White House. His committee voted along party lines Thursday to authorize subpoenas for personal emails and texts used for official business by top White House aides, including Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner.

Meanwhile, Trump convened a group of "wonderful Inner City Pastors" for an unannounced closed-door meeting to discuss the issues facing the black community Monday.

"This country needs healing. There's so much division in America along racial lines," said Bill Owens, president of the Coalition of African American Pastors, who said he was among about 20 pastors who had met with the president.

"He wanted to know from us: What should he do in America? What best can he do?" Owens said of Trump, insisting the gathering "was not damage control."

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