

10 Dead, Suspect Arrested in Mass Shooting at NY Supermarket

A gunman wearing military gear and livestreaming with a helmet camera opened fire with a rifle at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket in what authorities described as “racially motivated violent extremism,” killing 10 people and wounding three others Saturday before he surrendered, authorities said.

Police officials said the gunman, who also wore body armor in addition to military-style clothing, pulled up in the afternoon and opened fire amid shoppers at a Tops Friendly Market, the shooting streamed via a camera affixed to the man’s helmet.

“He exited his vehicle. He was very heavily armed. He had tactical gear. He had a tactical helmet on. He had a camera that he was livestreaming what he was doing,” city Police Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia said at a news conference afterward.

Gramaglia said the gunman initially shot four people outside the store, three fatally. Inside the store, a security guard who was a retired Buffalo police officer fired multiple shots at the gunman and struck him, but the bullet hit the gunman’s bulletproof vest and had no effect, Gramaglia added. The commissioner said the gunman then killed the security guard.

Video also captured the suspect as he walked into the supermarket where he shot several other victims inside, according to authorities.

Police said 11 of the victims were Black and two are white. The supermarket is in a predominantly Black neighborhood a few miles (kilometers) north of downtown Buffalo.

"This is the worst nightmare that any community can face, and we are hurting and we are seething right now," Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said at the news conference. "The depth of pain that families are feeling and that all of us are feeling right now cannot even be explained."

Gramaglia said Buffalo police entered the store and confronted the gunman in the vestibule.

"At that point the suspect put the gun to his own neck. Buffalo police personnel—two patrol officers—talked the suspect into dropping the gun. He dropped the gun, took off some of his tactical gear, surrendered at that point. And he was led outside, put in a police car," he said.

The suspected gunman was later identified as Payton Gendron, 18, of Conklin, a New York state community about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of Buffalo, two law enforcement officials told The Associated Press. The officials were not permitted to speak publicly on the matter and did so on the condition of anonymity.

The suspect was being questioned Saturday evening by the FBI, one of the officials said, and Conklin was expected to appear in court later Saturday.

At the news briefing, Erie County Sheriff John Garcia pointedly called the shooting a hate crime.

"This was pure evil. It was straight up racially motivated hate crime from somebody outside of our community, outside of the City of Good neighbors ... coming into our community and trying to inflict that evil upon us," Garcia said.

Elsewhere, NAACP President Derrick Johnson issued a statement in which he called the shooting "absolutely devastating."

"Our hearts are with the community and all who have been impacted by this terrible tragedy. Hate and racism have no place in America. We are shattered, extremely angered and

praying for the victims' families and loved ones," he added. Separately, the Rev. Al Sharpton called on the White House to convene a meeting with Black, Jewish and Asian "to underscore the Federal government (is) escalating its efforts against hate crimes." In a tweet, Sharpton said that "leaders of all these communities should stand together on this!"

The shooting came little more than a year after a March 2021 attack at a King Soopers grocery in Boulder, Colorado, that killed 10 people. Investigators have not released any information about why they believe the man charged in that attack targeted the supermarket.

At the scene in Buffalo on Saturday afternoon, police closed off an entire block, lined by spectators, and yellow police tape surrounded the full parking lot.

Braedyn Kephart and Shane Hill, both 20, pulled into the parking lot just as the shooter was exiting. They described him as a white male in his late teens or early 20s sporting full camo, a black helmet and what appeared to be a rifle.

"He was standing there with the gun to his chin. We were like what the heck is going on? Why does this kid have a gun to his face?" Kephart said. He dropped to his knees. "He ripped off his helmet, dropped his gun and was tackled by the police."

Tops Friendly Markets released a statement saying, "We are shocked and deeply saddened by this senseless act of violence and our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families."

At the White House, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said President Joe Biden was receiving regular updates on the shooting and the investigation and had offered prayers with the first lady for the victims and their loved ones.

"The president has been briefed by his Homeland Security advisor on the horrific shooting in Buffalo, New York, this

afternoon. He will continue to receive updates throughout the evening and tomorrow as further information develops," she said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland was briefed on the shooting, Justice Department spokesperson Anthony Coley said.

More than two hours after the shooting, Erica Pugh-Mathews was waiting outside the store, behind police tape.

"We would like to know the status of my aunt, my mother's sister. She was in there with her fiancé; they separated and went to different aisles," she said. "A bullet barely missed him. He was able to hide in a freezer but he was not able to get to my aunt and does not know where she is. We just would like word either way if she's OK." {eo}

Associated Press reporters John Wawrow in Buffalo and Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this report. Balsamo reported from Washington and Collins reported from Hartford, Connecticut.

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