

Widening Manhunt for Texas Gunman Slowed by 'Zero Leads'

CLEVELAND, Texas (AP) — A widening manhunt for a Texas gunman who fatally shot five neighbors continued coming up empty Sunday as officers knocked on doors, the governor put up \$50,000 in reward money and the FBI appeared no closer to catching the killer after nearly two days of searching with a team that has grown to hundreds of people.

"I can tell you right now, we have zero leads," James Smith, the FBI special agent in charge, told reporters while again asking the public for tips in the rural town of Cleveland, where the shooting took place just before midnight Friday.

The search for the gunman near Houston has grown in scale: Authorities said that by Sunday evening more than 200 police from multiple jurisdictions were searching for Francisco Oropeza, many of them going door to door in hopes of any clues that would lead to the 38-year-old suspect. Local officials and the FBI also chipped in reward money, bringing the total to \$80,000 for any information about Oropeza's whereabouts.

Oropeza is considered armed and dangerous after fleeing the area Friday night, likely on foot. San Jacinto County Sheriff Greg Capers said authorities had widened the search area beyond the scene of the shooting, which occurred after the suspect's neighbors asked him to stop firing off rounds in his yard late at night because a baby was trying to sleep.

At a Sunday vigil in Cleveland, Wilson Garcia, the father of the 1-month-old, described the terrifying efforts inside his home by friends and family that night to escape, hide and shield themselves and children after Oropeza walked up to the home and began firing, killing his wife first at the front door.

Another of Garcia's children, 9-year-old Daniel Enrique Laso, was also killed. Garcia said he and two other people had gone to "respectfully" ask Oropeza to shoot his gun farther away from the house, which is on a street where residents say it is not uncommon for neighbors to unwind by firing off guns.

Garcia said he walked away and called the police when Oropeza refused. It was 10 to 20 minutes later when he said he saw Oropeza loading his AR-style rifle while running toward the house.

"I told my wife, 'Get inside. This man has loaded his weapon,'" Garcia said. "My wife told me to go inside because, 'He won't fire at me. I'm a woman.'"

Authorities have said at least five other people who were in the house at the time were uninjured.

During the early hours of the search, investigators found clothes and a phone while combing an area that includes dense layers of forest, but tracking dogs lost the scent, Capers said.

Authorities were able to identify Oropeza by an identity card issued by Mexican authorities to citizens who reside outside the country, as well as the doorbell camera footage. He said police have also interviewed the suspect's wife multiple times.

Police recovered the AR-15-style rifle that they said Oropeza used in the shootings. Authorities were not sure if Oropeza was carrying another weapon after others were found in his home.

Capers said he hoped the reward money would motivate people to provide information and that there were plans to put up billboards in Spanish to spread the word.

"We're looking for closure for this family," Capers said.

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