

On the morning of April 12, 2022, a [mass shooting](#) was committed on a northbound [N train](#) on the [New York City Subway](#) in [Sunset Park, Brooklyn](#), New York, United States. At approximately 8:24 a.m. [EDT](#), a man reported to be 62-year-old [black nationalist](#)^{[3][4]} Frank Robert James^[2] put on a [gas mask](#), threw two [smoke grenades](#), and fired a handgun 33 times. The shooting occurred as the train was traveling between the [59th Street](#) and [36th Street](#) stations.

Twenty-nine people were injured, ten of them from direct gunfire; the remaining injuries were from smoke inhalation. Most passengers disembarked at 36th Street, where some passengers fled onto an [R train](#) that traveled one additional stop to [25th Street](#). On the day after the attack, Frank James was arrested as the suspect after a large manhunt. James was charged by the [U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York](#) with committing a [terrorist act](#) on a [mass transit](#)

Reports of assaults and other major felonies occurring on the subway system increased significantly during the [COVID-19 pandemic in New York City](#), when the number was adjusted for weekday ridership numbers.^{[5][6]} According to police statistics, crime in the subway has increased 68% from 2022 compared to the same time in 2021.^[6] Before the April 2022 shooting, there had been several high-profile incidents of violence in the subway, including the [killing of Michelle Go](#) in January and several stabbing cases.^[6]

Attack^[edit]



Some victims disembarked at the [36th Street station](#) after the attack.

At 6:15 a.m. [EDT](#) on April 12, 2022, [video surveillance](#) captured footage of a man matching James' description, who left a [U-Haul](#) van two blocks from a train station on the same subway line where the attack took place.^[7]

At 8:24 a.m., multiple people were shot on a northbound [N train](#) on the [New York City Subway](#) in [Sunset Park, Brooklyn](#).^[8] After the train left the [59th Street station](#) on the [Fourth Avenue Line](#),^{[9][10]} the attacker put on a gas mask, threw two [smoke grenades](#) onto the floor of a train car, and opened fire with a [Glock 17](#) 9 mm [handgun](#) as the train approached the [36th Street station](#).^{[8][11]} He fired at least 33 shots and fled the scene after the attack.^{[12][13]}

When the train stopped at 36th Street, the wounded passengers disembarked at the platform, and police were called to the station at 8:30 a.m.^{[14][15]} A passenger waiting for the subway claimed that he saw "calamity" when the subway door opened due to the smoke, blood, and screaming.^[16] Footage of the evacuation from the subway train was filmed by a passenger in an adjacent car and quickly published on social media and news sites. The footage depicted the chaos of the evacuation with many people helping injured passengers, shouting about details of the shooting, and requesting emergency services.^[17]

An announcement by the conductor on the [R train](#) across the platform urged riders on the northbound platform to board that train. When the train arrived at the [25th Street station](#), it stayed put, and police officers instructed riders to leave the station. In response, many riders began running for the exits in a panic, injuring more people. Bystanders from the train attended three injured people in one of the cars toward the front of the train.^[18]

The [New York City Fire Department](#) (FDNY) arrived at the 36th Street station, initially responding to reports of smoke in the station.^{[13][12]}

Victims^[edit]



Some victims reached the [25th Street station](#).

At a morning press conference on the day of the attack, the FDNY said there were sixteen people injured, ten of them with gunshot wounds, five of whom are in critical but stable condition. By the end of the day, a total of 29 injuries were reported: 10 with direct gunfire wounds, and 19 with other injuries.^[19]

Some of the injured jumped onto another train to flee the area and received aid at the next station, 25th Street.^[20] The people not injured by gunfire were instead injured from smoke inhalation or other conditions as they fled the scene.^[19]

Investigation^[edit]

[Keechant Sewell](#), the [New York City Police Commissioner](#), said on the day of the attack that the incident was not being investigated as a terrorist attack at that time. She did not rule out the possibility, saying the attack was under investigation.^[20] [FBI](#), [ATF](#), and [HSI](#) investigators were on the scene along with the [NYPD](#).^[20] Investigation efforts were hampered by the lack of working security cameras in three subway stations.^[9] Police obtained a picture of the suspect from a bystander's cell phone video.^[21] A \$50,000 reward was offered for information leading to the suspect's arrest.^[22]

Recovered from the train at the scene were several items, including a [Glock 9-millimeter](#) handgun, three [ammunition magazines](#), a credit card in the name of Frank R. James, and a key to a U-Haul van.^[23] Also recovered from the scene were two non-detonated [smoke grenades](#), [gasoline](#), a variety of [fireworks](#) (including canister smoke), and a [hatchet](#).^[24]

During the afternoon of April 13, the day after the attack, a surveillance video showed James entering the subway at the [Kings Highway station](#) on the [Sea Beach Line](#), served by the N train.^[25]

Accused^[edit]

Background^[edit]

Frank Robert James^[2] was born in New York in 1959 and spent years drifting from city to city.^[26] James had been arrested on 12 previous occasions,^[27] mostly for [misdemeanors](#).^[23] He was arrested nine times in New York from 1992 to 1998, with charges including possession of burglary tools, [criminal sex act](#), and criminal tampering.^[26] He was arrested three times in [New Jersey](#), the earliest in 1991 and the most recent in 2007; in the mid-1990s, he was charged with making [terroristic threats](#), but was convicted of the lesser charge of the harassment and sentenced

to probation and counseling.^[26] He had no [felony](#) convictions and was legally allowed to purchase guns; he purchased his Glock 9mm handgun in 2011^[28] from a [pawn shop](#) in [Columbus, Ohio](#).^[29]

Extremist views^[edit]

In rambling videos posted over a series of years on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts,^{[30][31]} James often posted angry and hate-filled rants, including those containing homophobia, misogyny and racist comments targeted at whites, blacks, and Hispanics.^[26] He posted [antisemitic](#) diatribes,^{[31][32]} expressed grievances at persons he believed had wronged him, made violent threats,^[30] and invoked mass shootings.^[33] In a video he published in the weeks before the subway shooting, James claimed to have a severe [post-traumatic stress disorder](#).^{[33][26][34]}

James had posted, "O black Jesus, please kill all the whiteys" on social media.^[35] In a video called "Forced Equality", James "obsessed over new Supreme Court Justice [Ketanji Brown Jackson's marriage to a white man](#)." In another, he railed about a white woman whom he appeared to know personally. "I would kill you, but it's not worth the time in jail," he said. "Killing you would be like killing a cockroach. You're not even a human being to me."^[36]

James' beliefs have been linked to [black nationalism](#),^{[31][4]} and he has been outspoken in his criticisms toward mayor [Eric Adams](#)^{[37][38]} and New York City's mental health services in several YouTube videos.^{[39][30][40][41]} He implied that a "[race war](#)" was imminent, and said that "White people and Black people should not have any contact with each other."^[30] James characterized the situation of African-Americans as an "American [Auschwitz](#)", and said that "the seed is already planted for a [Nazi Party](#) to rise in this country again and I believe it will."^[38]

Investigation and manhunt^[edit]

The suspect—who was described as a heavy-built black male, 5 feet 5 inches (1.65 m) tall and 175 to 180 pounds (79 to 82 kg), wearing a gas mask, [MTA](#) uniform, a gray hooded sweatshirt, a green vest and a backpack—fled the scene through another subway train and was not immediately apprehended.^{[7][8][20][42][43]} According to charging documents in federal court, surveillance footage showed James exiting the subway system at the [25th Street station](#), one stop away from the shooting.^[44] Upon reports that the suspect may have fled onto the subway tracks, NYPD officers searched the tunnels. Law enforcement believes that the attacker acted alone.^[20]

A [U-Haul](#) van used by the suspected gunman and rented in [Philadelphia](#) was found eight hours after the attack,^{[45][46]} about five blocks away from the [Kings Highway station](#) of the Sea Beach Line (served by the N train), where police reported the suspect entered the subway system.^{[47][18]} Investigators were able to identify the suspect after finding a key at the crime scene, linking it to the credit card that was used to rent the van.^[48] A jacket discarded by James on the 36th Street station platform had a receipt from a storage facility in [Philadelphia](#) in it, where he rented an apartment in the weeks before the attack.^[44] Searches of the storage facility and apartment found handgun ammunition, a [taser](#), a [high-capacity magazine](#) for rifles, and a smoke canister.^[44]

At around 7:20 p.m. on the day of the attack, James, then age 62,^[2] was named by the NYPD as a [person of interest](#). James was believed to be the renter of the U-Haul van.^{[12][49][50]} On the day after the attack, he was named as a suspect.^[21] Authorities sent out a [emergency alert](#) with photos of James and a tipline;^[44] the rare use of the alert system (which was also used during the manhunt for the [2016 Chelsea bomber](#)) distributed James' name and face with every New Yorker with a [smartphone](#).^[51] During the manhunt, authorities appealed to the public to provide mobile phone videos from the shooting or any other information that could locate the suspect.^{[46][52]}