

Say's reading materials for Group B

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Mass Shootings in El Paso, Dayton Leave 29 Dead

Investigations of weekend rampages are in their early stages

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Two mass shootings in less than 24 hours left at least 29 dead and 53 injured, and the events shook a nation that seemed to have grown accustomed to the toll of gunfire in public places.

In El Paso, Texas, a lone gunman walked into a crowded Walmart Saturday morning, shooting with an AK-style semiautomatic rifle. Authorities were investigating the shooting, which killed 20 and injured 26 more, as a possible case of domestic terrorism and a hate crime because officials believe the suspect, a white man, was targeting Hispanics. He has been charged with capital murder.

Barely 13 hours later in Dayton, Ohio, in a downtown neighborhood crowded with bars and restaurants, a man wearing body armor and a mask opened fire with a .223-caliber semiautomatic rifle with a 100-round drum magazine. The suspect arrived at the scene with his sister, whom he killed in addition to eight others, Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl said.

The gunman was killed by police about 30 seconds after he fired his first shot, police said. That rampage left 27 injured. Officials in Dayton haven't provided a motive for that shooting.

Both suspects used guns that they purchased legally, law-enforcement officials said. Officials described both investigations as in their early stages, and federal officials were looking for any connection between the

mass shootings, said Emmerson Buie Jr., the Federal Bureau of Investigation special agent in charge in El Paso.

“Because these two happened so close, we’re going to make sure they’re not linked together,” Mr. Buie said Sunday.

Late Sunday, the FBI said it was concerned that “other domestic extremists could become inspired by these and previous high-profile attacks to engage in similar acts of violence” and urged the public to report suspicious behavior.



The Hope Border Institute held a prayer vigil Sunday in El Paso, Texas.

PHOTO: MARK LAMBIE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

“We will bring the full resources of the FBI to bear in the pursuit of justice for the victims of these crimes,” Director Christopher Wray said.

Contenders for next year’s Democratic presidential nomination criticized President Trump, a Republican, for his rhetoric on immigrants, saying that played a role in inciting the suspected Texas gunman. They also faulted Senate Republicans for not passing legislation they said would help prevent mass shootings

Republicans, while expressing outrage on the shootings, presented few signs of wavering on their opposition to new gun laws. Mr. Trump did say in comments Sunday that he had spoken with lawmakers about “whatever we can do” and that “perhaps more has to be done.”

Democratic lawmakers on Sunday called for the Senate to immediately take up a House-passed bill that would require background checks on all firearm sales. Republicans in the Senate have declined to take up the legislation.

The rampage in Dayton was the 251st mass shooting of the year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research group that counts mass shootings. It defines a mass shooting as one in which four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter.

The weekend was the deadliest for mass shootings this year, said James Alan Fox, a professor at Northeastern University who studies mass killings. One mass shooting can inspire another, leading to a cluster of shootings in quick succession as like-minded individuals are spurred to action, Mr. Fox said.

“There’s all those images of suffering: memorial services, people crying, cellphone videos of the gunfire. It plays right into the mind-set of a few people who would love to replicate that in their own community,” Mr. Fox said. “There is a contagion effect.”

From 2006 to 2016, the number of public mass shootings each year was relatively flat, with about four or a five a year, according to the AP/USA Today/Northeastern University Mass Murder Database. That number has risen in recent years, with seven public mass shootings in 2017 and 10 in 2018.

The mass shootings, as did the one a week earlier in Gilroy, Calif., where a gunman killed three and injured more than a dozen at a festival, share commonalities. The suspects are all heavily armed, lone men. All struck crowded, soft targets where there may be security but are tough to secure.

In several recent shootings, law-enforcement officials are scrutinizing online writings that advocate white nationalist or hate-filled views. In the

case of the man who killed 11 and injured six at a Pittsburgh synagogue nine months ago, police found someone with few apparent connections in the physical world but an active online life, sharing a hatred for Jews among supportive groups online.

In the El Paso shooting, a suspect, described as a 21-year-old white male from Allen, Texas, was taken into custody without incident, El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen said. Although the suspect hasn't been officially named, law-enforcement officials told The Wall Street Journal he was identified as Patrick Crusius.

In Dayton, the gunman, identified by police as Connor Betts, 24 years old, had ammunition common in the military. On midafternoon Sunday, crews were still scrubbing a brick street with bleach, and the area in the Oregon District remained closed off with police tape.

In El Paso, Rosie Bridges Farmer, 61, and her family routinely shop at the Walmart where the shooting took place, only a one-minute drive from their home.

"I don't think I'll be going back," she said. "I do feel scared in a way I didn't feel before."

—*Elisa Cho, Zusha Elinson and Erin Ailworth contributed to this article.*

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