

Animal Cruelty LINKs to Mass Shootings

From [National Link Coalition: The National Resource Center on The LINK between Animal Abuse and Human Violence](#)

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Payton Gendron

The accused mass shooters in the horrific Buffalo, N.Y. supermarket and Uvalde, Texas elementary school massacres have become the latest in a string of alleged mass murderers whose ignored early warning signs included a history of torturing animals. The [Washington Post](#) described online Discord chat app postings from the alleged Buffalo shooter, Payton S. Gendron. “In addition to laying out mounting plans for a mass shooting, the messages amount to a wide-ranging journal of a troubled 18-year-old, who described killing and mutilating a cat and being taken to a medical facility for psychiatric evaluation after he stated in a high school class that he planned to commit 'murder/suicide.'”

A [subsequent New York Post article](#) described the incident where Gendron wrote he had repeatedly stabbed a feral cat, smashed its head on a concrete slab, then decapitated it with a hatchet; he posted a photo of the cat and he and his mother dug a shallow grave in the backyard. “Honestly right now I don’t feel anything about killing that cat,” he wrote. “I thought I would be in pain but I literally just feel blank.” He took meticulous notes, recording the time when blood spilled from the cat’s mouth, which knife he used, how many times he swung the hatchet, and posted a photo of his own face sprayed with the cat’s blood. This level of aggressiveness would have put him into a category of high risk for public safety. But a month earlier he also wrote that his own cat, “Paige,” had spent more time with him than any person in his life over the past few years and hoped his family would take care of her when he was gone.

The postings featured thousands of lines of racist, antisemitic and often rambling remarks, and repeated references to a white supremacist ideology of “replacement theory” which imagines a nefarious plot to replace White Americans with people of color. He detailed months of planning and practicing for the attack and obtaining his weapons, which he kept secret from his parents, despite having been held for a mental health evaluation last year after making a threatening remark at his high school in Conklin, halfway across New York State. He also apparently conducted a reconnaissance mission of the market the day before the attack and bought a helmet with a GoPro camera and livestreamed the massacre. Gendron, 18, surrendered to police after the attack and pled not guilty to charges of murder.

Less than two weeks later, the 18-year-old suspect in the deadly Uvalde massacre that killed 19 students and two faculty members and wounded 17 others was also reported to have had a history of abusing cats and dogs. [ABC News](#) reported that Salvador Ramos, 18, who was killed by law enforcement officers during the rampage, allegedly committed animal abuse and displayed videos of the cruelty to users on the Yubo social live streaming media platform.



Salvador Ramos

Two users familiar with online posts attributed to Ramos told ABC News the suspect would go on live video and play videos of him abusing animals, including cats. One Yubo user said Ramos would allegedly publicize the abuse and would “put cats in plastic bags, suspend them inside, throw them at the ground and throw them at people’s houses.” Ramos allegedly “would display these videos while laughing and boasting about how him and his friends did it ‘all the time.’” Neither law enforcement investigators nor ABC News could definitively confirm that the alleged account belonged to the accused shooter.

The Daily Beast reported that Ramos “had a long history of anger and aggression that was somehow overlooked for far too long,” including “beating a little dog senseless,” according to a former classmate. “He would go to the park and try to pick on people and he loved hurting animals,” said Jamie Arellano, who attended Uvalde High School with Ramos.

Other recent young alleged mass murderers believed to have histories of torturing animals include:

- Arcan Cetin, 20, Cascade Mall shootings, Burlington, Wash.
- Nikolas Cruz, 19, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Fla.
- Ethan Crumbley, 15, Oxford, Mich. High School.
- Andrew Golden, 11, and Mitchell Johnson, 13, Westside Middle School, Jonesboro, Ark.
- Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, Columbine High School, Littleton, Colo.
- Sienna Johnson, 16, Mountain Vista High School in Highlands Ranch, Colo.
- Kip Kinkel, 15, Thurston High School, Eugene, Ore.
- Adam Lanza, 20, Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Conn.
- John Michael Legg, 19, and Frederic Allen Rogers, 23, home invasion in Morgan County, Ala.
- Luke Woodham, 16, Pearl High School, Pearl, Miss.

Older mass murderers and school shooters believed to have animal cruelty histories include:

- Seth Ator, 36, Midland/Odessa, Texas rampage.
- Mark Barton, 44, Atlanta, Ga. day-trading offices.
- Alexander Hernandez, 34, string of shootings in San Fernando Valley, Calif.
- James Huberty, 41, McDonald’s massacre, San Ysidro, Cal.
- Devin Kelley, 26, Sutherland Springs, Texas church.
- Stephen Paddock, 64, Las Vegas, Nev. music festival.
- Jarrod Ramos, 41, Annapolis, Md. *Capital Gazette* newspaper.
- Dylann Roof, 21, Emanuel A.M.E. Church, Charleston, S.C.
- Patrick Sherrill, 44, Edmond, Okla. post office.

Also read [**A Statement from the National Coalition on Animal Abuse’s Link with School and Other Mass Shootings, June, 2022**](#)