

Anti-Latino Mass Shooting One-Year Anniversary: Domestic Terrorism Not A New Concept

Op Ed 2020-08-03 15:28:43

Whittier, CA - One year ago today, an anti-immigrant White nationalist drove nearly 600 miles across the state of Texas, to open fire on human beings shopping in an El Paso Walmart in the name of stopping the 'Mexican Invasion.' That day the mass shooter murdered 23 people and injured 22 others. This was without a doubt domestic terrorism, a hate crime against Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.

When I first heard the horrific news one year ago, I first thought of my family and friends who lived in El Paso and I worried for their safety. I next thought of the victims and their families, especially the innocent children lost and traumatized forever. I thought of the time I lived in El Paso. I thought of the beautiful people and culture that make up this often misunderstood border town. I thought about the 23 people that died that day, and how I could've known them at some time while I lived there. Most of all, I worried about informing my 82-year-old mother who was born across the border from El Paso in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. How would she take the news? Would it affect her health? Despite my grief, I knew I would have to tell her urgently so that she could immediately speak with her *primos hermanos* in El Paso.

Today, on this one-year anniversary of the El Paso massacre, I'm reminded that domestic terrorism is not a new concept at all. The anniversary of this horrific event takes me back to La Matanza or "The Slaughter" that occurred in Texas from 1910 to 1920. For decades, attacks and killings, which included the lynching of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, were committed by White Texans. Many historians agree that this was a series of domestic terrorist attacks that stemmed from Anti-Mexican sentiment.

In 1918, during this decade of dehumanizing terrorism, Texas Rangers executed fifteen unarmed Mexican men and boys in the *Porvenir Massacre*. *Despite best efforts to forget this act of domestic terrorism, descendants of those brutally murdered Tejanos are still fighting for recognition and justice today. Does this sound familiar to you?*

Perhaps the main difference between 1918 White supremacy and the White supremacy that inspired the 2019 shootings in El Paso, Texas and Gilroy, California, is how easily organized hate groups can recruit new followers, radicalize their base, and spread hateful doctrine online.

Social Media and other online platforms like Facebook, Tik Tok, Twitter, and YouTube are often complacent in the process, creating rules and community policies that protect free speech instead of Latinx lives. Thankfully, Twitter is moving in the right direction by permanently banning David Duke, and expanding their hate speech policies to disallow more violent content.

But it's not just the David Dukes of the world; it's also people typically considered to be high authorities, like members of Congress, political candidates, and the President of the United States – particularly in recent years.

On August 3, 2019, the El Paso murderer posted a manifesto online, calling for an end to a 'Latino invasion', ahead of his trek across Texas to murder Mexicans. Where did this hate and rhetoric come from? Perhaps from one of the 2,200 ads the Trump Administration ran on Facebook referring to Latinx immigrants as "an invasion."

Preventing the mass murder of Latinx is part of what makes our work at the National Hispanic Media Coalition so incredibly important. I'm proud to lead an organization that is on the front lines of the civil rights movement, demanding that hate online be eliminated, and that our community be afforded digital civil rights.

As Americans, we must acknowledge the breadth of our U.S. History: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We must all do what we can as a nation to stop domestic terrorism. As individuals, we must be inclusive and

empathetic to immigrants of all backgrounds, because that is what makes the United States strong – and El Paso Strong!

WHAT : Anti-Latino Mass Shooting One-Year Anniversary: Domestic Terrorism Not A New Concept
WHEN : 2020-08-03 15:28:43
WHERE :

CONTACT:

communications@nhmc.org

The National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) is a civil rights organization that was founded to eliminate hate, discrimination, and racism towards the Latino community. For nearly 35 years, we have held decision-makers in corporations, government, and other organizations accountable for the exclusion and dehumanization of Latinos in the United States of America. We educate and increase visibility of Latinos from Washington D.C. to Hollywood and around the world. NHMC works in collaboration with other civil rights organizations to safeguard democracy in the United States of America. NHMC stands for equality and justice for all by fighting homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, sexism, and colorism against marginalized communities. At NHMC, we believe that you don't have to be Latino to know that representation matters.