

‘Horrifying’ conspiracy theories swirl around Texas shooting | AP News

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May 26, 2022

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — By now it’s as predictable as the calls for thoughts and prayers: A mass shooting leaves many dead, and wild conspiracy theories and misinformation about the carnage soon follow.

It happened after [Sandy Hook](#) , after [Parkland](#) , after the Orlando nightclub shooting and after the deadly rampage earlier this month at a [Buffalo grocery store](#) . Within hours of Tuesday’s school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, another rash began as internet users spread baseless claims about the [man named as the gunman](#) and his possible motives.

Unfounded claims that the gunman was an immigrant living in the U.S. illegally, or transgender, quickly emerged on Twitter, Reddit and other social media platforms. They were accompanied by familiar conspiracy theories suggesting the entire shooting was somehow staged.

The claims reflect broader problems with racism and intolerance toward transgender people, and are an effort to blame the shooting on minority groups who already endure higher rates of [online harassment](#) and [hate crimes](#) , according to disinformation expert Jaime Longoria.

[...]

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