

DONALD TRUMP'S HANDS ARE COVERED IN BLOOD

By Rogelio Sáenz

Donald Trump, the provocateur of hate and racism, has been playing with fire.

Over the last several years, as presidential candidate and now president, Trump has gushed hate-filled rhetoric and has stoked the racism of his rabid supporters. He has coddled white nationalists who have been increasingly emboldened, especially with a supportive ally in the White House.

Last week the smoldering cauldron that Trump has been stirring turned to fire. Over the course of seven days, three white men terrorists picked up deadly guns and carried out mass killings in Gilroy, California, El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio. The result: 34 people savagely killed and 63 wounded.

Trump did not pull the trigger, but his irresponsible words and deeds contributed to this carnage. He cannot deny his role or walk away and hide from the latest mayhem. Trump's hands are covered in the blood of the innocent people killed and wounded over these seven days.

From that mid-June day in 2015 when Trump launched his presidential campaign, he targeted Mexicans, and by extension Latinos, as the nation's public enemy. He characterized Mexicans as invaders who are criminals, drug dealers, and rapists, set on taking over our country. Trump has viciously escalated that abhorrent depiction and has widened his spotlight to include Central Americans, Muslims, along with Democratic members of Congress that he has prodded to go back from where they come, and has targeted the city of Baltimore, as well. Only a few months ago in May, in a re-election rally in Panama City Beach, Florida, in front of his frenzied masses, Trump asked what can be done to keep migrants from crossing our southern border. One man yelled "shoot them," to which Trump, with a chuckle, responded "only in the panhandle you can get away with that statement... only in the panhandle." Recent evidence shows that since January, more than 2,000 Trump re-election ads on Facebook have featured the word "invasion" to describe immigration on our southern border.

The venom that Trump has sown seeped into our beloved city of El Paso this past Saturday morning.

That day a 21-year-old white man, Patrick Crusius, who traveled 660 miles from Allen, Texas a suburb of Dallas, to El Paso, came to the city to kill "Hispanic invaders." The manifesto, which he released eight minutes before he unleashed mass annihilation on innocent people at a Walmart that morning, echoed Trump's words, thoughts, and warnings. The gunman savagely took the lives of 22 human beings and wounded 24 others.

Trump was not in El Paso this past Saturday, but the racism and



Altered photo of a sign near the scene of the El Paso, Texas shooting.

hate that he spews and condones were undoubtedly in the head of the killer. Trump is a very dangerous individual.

Following the savagery in El Paso on Saturday, Trump's Twitter response from a golf course in Bedminster, New Jersey, to Texas Governor Greg Abbott: "pledge total support of Federal Government." It is not too outlandish to think that his twitter was followed by Trump snorting "Hmm... where was I before I was so rudely interrupted..."

With great absurdity and holding on to his "immigrants are criminals" conception, he now wants to link gun reform and immigration reform.

Trump's federal and Texas political underlings were quick with a quip after the shooting intent to protect him and deny racial animosity. Let's hear from Attorney General William Barr—yeah, that guy, the one who lied to us about what the Mueller report said: "those who commit such atrocities should be held accountable swiftly and to the fullest extent the law permits." Governor Abbott refused to envision that the savage murder constituted a "hate crime" and conveniently raised the "mental health issue" flag, oft used to defend racist and hate-filled killers. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick chimed in, blaming the shooting on video games and the lack of prayer.

The hollow words and deceptive reasoning from outsiders. Now what do political leaders from El Paso think?

Enter U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, who represents the district of El Paso: "The [killer's] manifesto is fueled by hate. And it is fueled by racism, bigotry, and division."

Former U.S. Rep. and presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke added: "He [Trump] is a racist and he stokes racism in this country... and it leads to violence."

Among the dead, an uncle, and among the wounded, an aunt, of one of my beloved former doctoral students, Maria Cristina Morales, who is a faculty member at the University of Texas at El Paso. Professor Morales mournfully lamented "I never thought I would lose a relative this way."

In Trump's world where he stirs racism, hatred, and division, the dead and wounded in El Paso, unfortunately, represent collateral damage, calculated to feed his supporters and return Trump to the White House. Trump did not pull the trigger, but he stokes the racism and abhorrence that puts innocent people at risk. He is a very dangerous person. Make sure Trump does not do this again! Let's impeach him or at least vote him out in November!

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Mourners gathered on Monday outside the Walmart in El Paso where at least 22 people were killed. Photo: Jim Wilson/The New York Times