

# Club Q Colorado shooting: Attack was ended by dad and show performer

22 November



Richard Fierro says his combat training kicked in as he pounced on the gunman

**A father and a club performer managed to subdue a gunman who opened fire at an LGBT nightclub in the US state of Colorado, it has emerged.**

The attacker killed five people and left 17 others with injuries at Club Q in Colorado Springs on Saturday night.

Officials named the "heroes" who halted the attack as Richard Fierro and Thomas James, without detailing their actions.

Mr Fierro provided his account of events, saying he tackled the suspect, took the weapon and hit him with it.

It is not clear if Mr James is the performer Mr Fierro says then stepped in to help.

At a Monday afternoon press conference, police identified the victims as Daniel Aston, Derrick Rump, Kelly Loving, Ashley Paugh and Raymond Vance. Family members say Aston and Rump were both bartenders at Club Q.

The suspect, named by police as 22-year-old Anderson Lee Aldrich, is in police custody in hospital.

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The gunman was stopped by a 15-year US Army veteran who was attending a performance at the club with his wife and daughter.

Speaking to reporters on Monday evening, Richard Fierro said his combat training kicked in as he pounced on the gunman, pulling him to the floor by his body armour.

"I just ran over there. Got him. I'm thinking, 'I gotta kill this guy. He's gonna kill my kid. He's gonna kill my wife'," said the Iraq and Afghanistan veteran.

"It's the reflex," Mr Fierro said from the front yard of his suburban Colorado Springs home. "Go. Go to the fire. Stop the action. Stop the activity. Don't let no-one get hurt."

The local brewery owner said he and his family had dropped to the floor as the bullets began to fly.

He described seeing the gunman move in the direction of a patio where other club-goers had fled, before charging at him.



From left: Daniel Aston, Ashley Paugh and Derrick Rump

He said the man dropped his rifle as he fell. They began wrestling on the ground. Mr Fierro said he snatched the attacker's pistol from him and used it to beat him.

"I kept whaling on [hitting] him. I'm a big dude and this guy was bigger," Mr Fierro said.

He told reporters that he urged a performer from the club to kick the attacker in the head.

"One of the performers was walking by and I told her kick him," he said. "And she took her high heel and stuffed it in his face."

Mr Fierro said one of the dead included his daughter's boyfriend, 22-year-old Raymond Vance.

Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers hailed the bystanders' "incredible act of heroism".

He said that he had spoken to Mr Fierro on Monday, telling reporters: "I have never encountered a person who engaged in such heroic actions that was so humble about it."



Mr Fierro denies that he's a hero

Praise also came from the governor of Colorado, as well as the owner of the club - who said the "heroes" had probably saved lives.

Police are looking into who owned the rifle allegedly used in the shooting, as well as a handgun the suspect was carrying at the time of his arrest.

The investigation will determine whether the shooting - which came on the eve of Sunday's Transgender Day of Remembrance - was a hate crime, and if the suspect acted alone.

The suspect is facing five murder charges and five charges of committing a bias-motivated crime causing bodily injury, according to US media. Investigators said on Tuesday that no charges had yet been formally filed.

Club Q has been described as the heart of the LGBT community in Colorado Springs, a city 70 miles (110km) south of Denver.

The suspect had reportedly previously come to police attention over an alleged bomb threat in 2021.

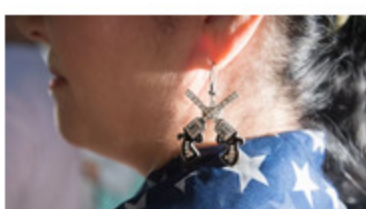
According to a police report at the time, his mother had called emergency services saying "he was threatening to cause harm to her with a homemade bomb, multiple weapons, and ammunition".

President Joe Biden said Americans "cannot and must not tolerate hate".

In 2016, 49 people were killed in a shooting at the Pulse gay club in Orlando, Florida. At the time it was the deadliest mass shooting in US history.

*The language in this story has been updated to reflect that one of the individuals who intervened was not a drag performer.*

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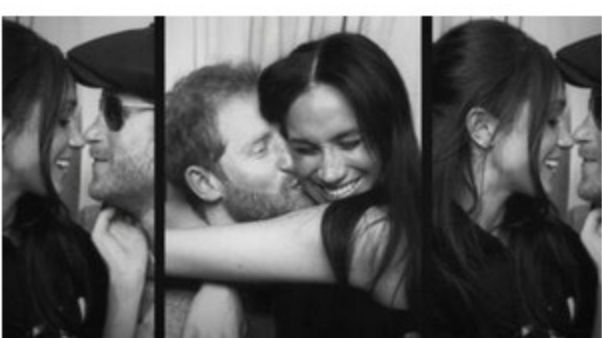
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