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Georgia Shooting Near CDC Leaves Officer Dead; Suspect Linked to COVID-19 Vaccine Grievances

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A gunman who opened fire near the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) campus and Emory University in Atlanta on Friday, killing a police officer, was reportedly fixated on the COVID-19 vaccine, according to law enforcement reports and witness statements. The suspect, identified as 30-year-old Patrick Joseph White, was later found dead inside a CVS Pharmacy from which he allegedly fired multiple rounds.

Authorities say White began shooting from inside the CVS, striking several CDC buildings across the street and leaving bullet holes in windows. Before arriving at the store, White had attempted to enter the CDC campus but was turned away by security guards, according to the Associated Press (AP). Officials have not confirmed the exact motive, but internal communications reviewed by *The New York Times* suggested CDC leadership believed the attack was connected to COVID-19 vaccine concerns.

White's father told police his son believed the vaccine had made him depressed and suicidal. He also disclosed that White had recently been grieving the death of his dog and frequently spoke about vaccine-related conspiracy theories. Neighbor Nancy Hoalst described White as "unsettled" and said he often voiced strong anti-vaccine beliefs. "He very deeply believed that vaccines had hurt him, and that they were hurting other people," Hoalst told *The New York Times*.

During the incident, DeKalb County Police Officer David Rose, 33, was fatally shot after White shifted his fire away from the CDC campus toward the officer. Rose, who had served with the department for nearly a year, was a married father of two with a third child on the way. He later died at Emory University Hospital. The DeKalb County Police Department praised Rose's service, stating he served "with courage, integrity, and unwavering dedication."

CDC Director Susan Monarez confirmed that at least four CDC buildings were struck by gunfire. While no civilians were injured, the agency reported that bullets entered office windows and passed through workspaces. "It's a miracle no one was killed here," one CDC employee told CNN. At the time of the shooting, 92 children were present in a daycare on the CDC campus. A parent expressed concern to CBS News, saying, "It's anxiety-inducing, it's very scary."

White was armed with five firearms, including a long gun, according to law enforcement officials. The gunfire prompted lockdowns at Emory University, Emory University Hospital, nearby schools, and the CDC. Campus alerts instructed individuals to "Run, Hide, Fight" until the threat was neutralized.

Witnesses in the surrounding area described the chaos. Brandy Giraldo, chief operating officer of General Muir's deli, recalled hearing the gunshots. "It sounded like fireworks going off, one right after the other," she told the AP. Despite the extensive damage, officials have not yet determined whether White's death was self-inflicted or the result of police gunfire.

Authorities continue to investigate the shooting, the suspect's background, and his apparent fixation on COVID-19 vaccines as part of a broader examination of the motives behind the deadly attack.