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LA FRONTERA DE LUTO: PASEÑOS Y JUARENSES COMPARTEN SU PÉSAME Y DOLOR

MR. PRESIDENT, WE ARE HURTING



EDITORIAL

Dear Mr. President:

Today is a tragic day to visit El Paso.

Less than a week ago, 22 of our own were killed as they shopped in a neighborhood store, as they prepared for their weekends, as they provided for their families.

Most of them were from El Paso. Eight were from our sister city of Juárez, steps away.

Today, you will find us in the agony of our mourning.

The violence that pierced El Paso, that draws you here today, is not of our own community. An outsider came here, to shatter our city, to murder our neighbors. A white man from another Texas city came to target the more than 80% of us who share Hispanic roots.

We are horrified to have witnessed this violence in our city.

This is not the El Paso we want the world to know. This is a city with a deep tradition of racial harmony. It is a city of warm, compassionate, patriotic, accepting residents who did not deserve this suffering.

But Mr. President, while we are sorry to have seen such violence and felt such pain, one other thing must be said about today.

Today is a very good day to visit El Paso.

Today, in spite of our suffering, you will see the city that makes us proud.

As our neighbors lay bleeding in hospitals, El Paso stood in line, in 104-degree heat, to donate blood, so much blood that organizers had more than they could handle.

As families waited to be reunited with missing loved

ones, El Paso quickly brought so much water and ice to their aid that donors were turned away.

When a gunman passed over one man to target others, that man didn't turn and run. He grabbed soda bottles from the shelves and started throwing, trying to distract the gunman from his evil intent. He was shot twice because of it. His name is Chris Grant. He is from El Paso.

As Grant lost blood and stumbled from the store, a woman helped stop the bleeding. She helped rush him to medical care. She had been shopping on her day off. Her name is Donna Sifford. She has been in El Paso since 1992. She is a port director for Customs and Border Protection.

They met again later at the hospital and embraced. Now, they are friends as well as neighbors.

This is El Paso.

Make no mistake. Today is not a happy day. Our city is in pain. We were targeted by a white supremacist, and we are suffering. We will remember the names of the 22 neighbors who died. Their names are printed here.

The violence of that day may have been a product of his hatred. It was not a product of our community.

Our community did not deserve this.

Our compassion for one another goes back to the city's founding.

We were pioneers when a basketball coach from a small college we now know as UTEP started five African American players in a national-championship basketball game

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People visit a memorial Monday outside the Walmart in El Paso where a mass shooting took place on Saturday. MARK LAMBIE/THE EL PASO TIMES

'ANGER HAS NO PLACE': Clint ISD, uncle honor memory of 15-year-old student. Page 2S

'IT JUST WENT CHAOTIC': El Paso native threw bottles to distract gunman. Page 4S

'GUARDIAN ANGEL': Customs and Border Protection port director helped saved lives. Page 4S

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Editorial

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for the first time — and won.

Fort Bliss, a key U.S. Army base, draws service members from around the world. They make us an international city many times over. When these patriots retire, many are purposeful in making El Paso their home. When Pope Francis visited the Americas, he chose Juárez to conclude his trip. From there, he could reach out to the world on both sides of the border.

In El Paso, we embrace our relationship with Juárez. We are not separated by a border fence. In El Paso, the border is an opportunity. Commerce helps everyone share in the American dream. We all want the same thing — we want our country to prosper. That’s not different from your goal for America. For many of us, our parents were born in Mexico. We are proud of that and we are also proud Americans. America is our country. We are home.

Not everyone who visits El Paso has understood this. During a visit to El Paso in April 2017, then-U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions called El Paso “ground zero.” He said our city was “the front lines ... where we take our stand” against cartels and human traffickers.

Mr. President, in your February State of the Union address, you claimed that El Paso was “one of our nation’s most dangerous cities” before a border wall was built. Mr. President, that is not El Paso. Our city and Juárez were always linked. Today, we are intertwined more than ever. The evil that visited us targeted people from El Paso and Juárez alike. In our sorrow, we are more alike than ever. Some in our community doubt we will be able to change your view of our border community. But it is important to us that we explain all that is good about El Paso.

In El Paso, when a baby in a onesie is covered in blood in an attack on a neighborhood store, a man scoops her up and races for the exits. In El Paso, when our neighbors are hurt, people and businesses donate more than \$1 million in just two days to help them. Our people are scared. So many of us feel our city is still viewed as a target.

But El Paso does not lash out in anger, even when we are treated unfairly. In El Paso, we won’t ever look at someone who is different with prejudice in our hearts. The hatred that came to us came from an outsider. It did not come from El Paso.

Tim Archuleta is editor of the El Paso Times.



Horizon High School holds a vigil for Javier Rodriguez on Monday at the high school football field. His death will hopefully “serve as yet another lesson to a country with a lost identity,” his coach Hugo Gines said.

‘Anger has no place in honoring his memory’

Horizon High mourns student Javier Rodriguez, 15

Molly Smith
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Javier Amir Rodriguez was many things to his classmates at Horizon High School: a best friend, a happy person, someone who was always there for others in need.

A teacher remembered him as a student who lit up the room and often entered class dribbling a soccer ball.

It was his drive and competitiveness on the field and passion for soccer that caught the attention of his soccer coaches, but it was his role as the “ultimate teammate” putting other players first that stayed with them.

On Saturday, the 15-year-old was gunned down while waiting in line at the bank with his uncle in one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history. Javier, who attended Horizon as a freshman last year, is the youngest victim of the 22 killed at an El Paso Walmart.

Horizon High School students, teachers, staff and parents joined community members Monday evening to remember him and to tell the nation they would not let the tragedy define them.

His death will hopefully “serve as yet another lesson to a country with a lost identity,” his coach Hugo Gines said. Saturday’s shooting, Gines said, “has shown the worst and the best part of people. In your memory Javier, our community has shown great resilience despite the hurt.”

‘We are people of hope, we are people of light’

Clint Independent School District Superintendent Juan Martinez did not shy away from addressing the hatred that led to Javier’s death.

“Apparently we were the targets because of the color of our skin. I am sorry: Javier did not chose the color of his skin. None of us have, none of us did,” Martinez said, switching between English and Spanish.

Investigators believe the shooter, who traveled more than 650 miles from Allen, Texas, targeted the city because it is a heavily Hispanic area. The Walmart is popular with shoppers from both sides of the border.

U.S. Attorney for the Western District



Javier Rodriguez’s family members release doves at a vigil Monday at Horizon High School. The 15-year-old was killed Saturday while shopping with his uncle at Walmart. PHOTOS BY BRIANA SANCHEZ/EL PASO TIMES

of Texas John Bash said he intends to press federal hate crimes and firearms charges against the gunman, which carry the death penalty.

A talented soccer player, Javier was on the high school soccer team last year in addition to playing for a local club team. Javier attended Clint ISD schools since

elementary school but did not enroll at Horizon High School this school year, which began July 29, because he had moved to another part of the county, a district spokeswoman said.

“Even though we are angry,” Martinez said, “we refuse to accept darkness as our closest friend ... darkness belongs to

those who use and promote violence, terror and death to spread their evil message.”

“In El Paso, in Horizon City and in Clint ISD, we refuse to be people of darkness. We are people of hope, we are people of light.”

This community respects one another

regardless of race, skin color, religion or political affiliation, the superintendent said.

How Javier would want to be remembered

Soccer was life for Javier, said his for-

mer coach Juan Ferreira, who coached him in 7th and 9th grade.

Javier’s message to his teammates would be, “do your best, stay focused, hone your craft in soccer,” Ferreira said.

“I know that if I truly want to pay tribute to Javier’s life, anger has no place in honoring his memory,” said Javier’s mid-

Man mourns nephew, youngest victim of El Paso shooting

Molly Smith
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Octavio Ramiro Lizarde wanted to cash his most recent work check first thing Saturday morning at the bank inside Walmart so he could spend the rest of the day helping his nephew get ready for school.

Javier Amir Rodriguez was about to start his sophomore year at a new high school in El Paso, having recently moved from Horizon City to live with his grandmother, Lizarde’s mother.

Lizarde, a 23-year-old construction worker, wanted to pay for Javier’s haircut and back-to-school supplies.

Both were shot Saturday morning at the Walmart near Cielo Vista Mall when a gunman opened fire on patrons. Javier didn’t survive.

At 15, Javier is the youngest victim of the 22 people who died.

“I did lose my nephew right in front of me,” Lizarde said. “It was a horrible image and I hope nobody ever goes through it. It’s very painful.”

He heard gunshots while they were in line waiting to open a bank account and saw people run in every direction. He called out for Javier and tried to grab him to pull him toward the manager’s office at the back of the bank.

“I said, ‘come here, hurry up.’ He’s like, ‘where?’ Over here, vente, so I try to pull him and I looked up and (the shooter) was there. (Javier) looked at (the shooter) as well and he turned to look at me and that’s when ...” Lizarde said, his voice trailing off.

Lizarde caught a brief glimpse of the shooter, only enough to see that the man wore glasses. He said he thinks the gunman heard them, which led to them being shot.

He stayed on the floor beside Javier for 15 to 20 minutes until police told him he had to leave and they helped evacuate him from the Walmart, which he remembers being covered in blood. Those minutes felt like eternity and all he could



Octavio Ramiro Lizarde, 23, looks at a photograph of his nephew Javier Amir Rodriguez, who was shot and killed in the Walmart attack on Saturday. Lizarde was shot in the foot and will face many procedures in an effort to save his foot. His mother, Dora Lizarde, is at right. MARK LAMBIE/EL PASO TIMES

think about was whether Javier, who had so much ahead of him, would make it out alive.

While only a few years apart, Javier was more like a son to Lizarde, he said.

Lizarde was shot in the foot and has been hospitalized at Del Sol Medical Center since Saturday. He was to undergo his first orthopedic surgery Tuesday afternoon, the first of many procedures in an effort to save his foot.

When doctors presented him with the option of amputating his foot, he said no: an optimist, he wants to walk again, to return to work and support his fiancé, 2-year-old son and 1-year-old daughter.

Lizarde would much rather discuss his memories of Javier, who the family called

Amir, than relive the harrowing minutes after gunfire broke out.

The two had long been close, bonding over their love of video games, which Lizarde taught Javier to play.

Though Lizarde didn’t love soccer as much as Javier, he would still dribble the ball with him in the park and try to keep up. Javier was always dribbling a soccer ball, constantly striving to improve his technique. He played for both his high school team and a local club team and dreamed of meeting Brazilian soccer star Neymar.

“He was really fun to be around,” Lizarde said Tuesday from a hospital room. “He was my ride or die.” “I’m trying to become stronger and be happy for the memories that he left me

than for what happened.”

These include the small things, like watching TV together, teasing each other and Javier playing with Lizarde’s kids. Javier would play his favorite rap group, Suicideboys, for Lizarde’s son and the two would dance. Javier also knew just how to calm down Lizarde’s daughter when she would start to cry.

While the physical pain of his injury will eventually end, Lizarde said, the emotional pain of losing Javier never will.

He’s still struggling to understand why his nephew’s life was cut short by a gunman filled with hatred for Latinos, people who look like himself and Javier.

Javier was a shy, quiet and kind young man who put others first, according to his friends and soccer coaches. Like his uncle, his outlook on life was positive and he had a sense of humor.

Despite the pain, anger and confusion he feels, Lizarde said his faith will give him the strength to one day forgive the shooter.

“I really hope that if he doesn’t get the death penalty, I hope he gets better mentally and realizes what he did and betters his life,” he said.

Lizarde is also leaning on his family in the days, weeks and months to come. His hospital room has been full since Saturday and his mother and fiancé have not left his side.

“We just keep moving forward,” he said.

While devastated, the family will keep living for Javier, whose death has brought them together. A cousin Lizarde had not seen in 13 years came to visit him after learning of the shooting.

After he’s released from the hospital he wants to tattoo Javier’s face on his body, to always keep him close. He also hopes Javier’s face will be captured in a mural so his memory will live on for everyone in El Paso.

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Family grieves for couple killed protecting baby

Aaron Montes
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Andre and Jordan Anchondo died protecting their 2-month-old son, Paul, from the domestic terrorist who opened fire Saturday at the Walmart near Cielo Vista Mall.

They had entered the busy store that morning, looking to buy school supplies for their oldest child, Skylin, 5, and were gathering groceries for a cookout.

They had Paul with them and had left their daughter, Skylin, at cheerleading practice. A third child, Victoria, was with her biological father.

What should have been a fun, family day turned tragic when a gunman burst into the Walmart, armed with what could be an AK-47 rifle, and opened fire.

Andre Anchondo, 23, stood in front of his family, trying to shield them from the gunman with his body. He was killed, as was Jordan Anchondo, 24, who died trying to shield their baby.

The newborn child suffered broken bones in the massacre, family members said. Paul now is being cared for by grandparents.

On Tuesday, Gilbert Anchondo, Andre’s father, was back at work at an auto body parts shop in South-Central El Paso. He was in his office, greeting customers and helping them make arrangements to fix their cars, while Andre’s brother, Tito, walked through the shop.

Gilbert Anchondo said he weeps for his son but knows that life must continue. “We have to work and carry on,” he said.

Tito Anchondo, 27, said his little brother looked up to him while they were growing up and making their way in and out of the family’s auto body shop.

At times, Andre Anchondo would look at his brother and say, “I always wanted to be like you,” Tito Anchondo said at a small desk in the shop at 120 N. Piedras St. But the older brother said he wanted to be more like his brother.

Andre was business savvy, even at a



Elsa Almanza, left, and Arlene Gomez bring donations and offer support to Gilbert Anchondo, the father of Andre Anchondo, who was killed in the shooting. The grieving father was back at work Tuesday at an auto body parts shop in South-Central El Paso. “We have to work and carry on,” he said. Gilbert Anchondo’s son Tito is behind him. AARON MONTES/EL PASO TIMES

young age, Tito said. In middle school, he’d go down to El Loco candy store on busy Alameda Avenue and buy in bulk.

The next day, he’d sell the candies at twice the price and make a profit, “Tito said.

Those memories bring a small smile to his face and they’ll be what comforts him as he undergoes the pain of losing his baby brother.

“He would always say, ‘I love you, bro,’” Tito said. “I know he respected the hell out of me. But I never got the chance to tell him that I looked up to him also and he will always be my hero.”

Tito said he would like to take care of Paul and give him the life that his brother wanted for him. He wants to show Paul how his father lived and what he did to protect him.

“I really would like to take care of Paul and give him a family and siblings and things he deserves,” he said. “A good life, education and to let him know that his dad died for him and is a hero.”

should have sympathy or anything, but I don’t want to be angry at that man as much as I am,” he said. “I want people to understand he was probably mentally sick.”

Tito remembers waiting anxiously to hear from his brother or his wife after he heard about the shooting.

Tito called Andre’s phone numerous times, but he never answered. Hours later, someone from a hospital called Tito, asking the family to identify Jordan and the baby.

The family wanted to believe that Andre had just been injured and had not had a chance to reach them, but they were prepared for the worst, Tito said.

Tito has been organizing a fundraiser for his nephew and nieces. He had a goal of raising \$5,000, but the El Paso community has provided overwhelming support, he said.

The community has donated nearly \$26,000 to his fund, and a steady stream of El Pasoans are bringing clothes, diapers, baby wipes and formula to the shop during the day.

“I never thought so many people would come,” he said.

The family could use Enfamil formula, size 2 and 5 diapers and vegetables.

Tito said he is thankful for the community’s support and hopes the community will remember his brother for what he did Saturday.

Abbie Han, a well-known El Paso boxer, visited Tito on Tuesday to offer support and reminisce when the brothers were younger and in his martial arts classes.

Han said he thinks of when young Andre was his student. Looking at a picture from the past, Han said, “He was always curious.”

Tito said that people “need to understand that, whatever my brother did in the past, I want this event to define him. I want people to know he died protecting what he loved.”

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