

NBC's *Early Today*

11/23/22

3:30:34 a.m. [TEASE]

14 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New This Morning]

FRANCES RIVERA: This morning, our Steve Patterson speaks to the hero who's being called a lifesaver. The former Army vet jumped into action to stop the Colorado Springs shooter. Among the five killed was his daughter's longtime boyfriend. Today, the suspect faces a judge.

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3:32:41 a.m.

3 minutes and 4 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Club Q Mass Shooting; GLADD: New Data Shows Unprecedented Threats and Attacks Against LGBTQ Americans]

PHILIP MENA: GLADD has released a new report showing an unprecedented number of protests, threats, and attacks against drag events in 2022. According to their findings, there were 124 incidents in 47 states leading up to Saturday's mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Club Q Mass Shooting; Suspect Set to Appear Virtually in Court Today]

And the shooting suspect, 22-year-old Anderson Aldrich is already — expected to appear virtually in court today. According to a court filing from the public defender, Anderson is nonbinary and uses they-them pronouns. Here's NBC's Steve Patterson.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Club Q Mass Shooting; Nightclub Shooting Hero Speaks Out]

STEVE PATTERSON: Maybe the only one unwilling to call Richard Fierro a hero is Richard Fierro.

RAY FIERRO: I didn't do anything special, dude. I took care of my kids. I took care of my wife. I took care of my family. I took care of my friends.

PATTERSON: Richard went to Club Q that fateful Saturday night with his wife Jessica, their daughter Kassie, and Cassie's boyfriend Raymond Vance.

RAY FIERRO: We were having a great time.

PATTERSON: Then, shortly before midnight, the chaos began. As the crowd scattered from the shooter, Richard ran right for it. [TO FIERRO] Your first instinct as you see him is to rush him,

is to take him down

RAY FIERRO: My daughter and my — my — my whole family was in there. Who's not going to do what they can to stop somebody from hurting them?

PATTERSON: Having served 15 years in the army, Richard says instinct took over. He slammed him to the ground.

RAY FIERRO: I hit him everywhere I could find. He had armor on. He may have had a helmet. He might not have had a helmet. I don't know. I know I found a little, wet, bloody spot and I still kept going,

PATTERSON: If Richard hadn't acted, authorities say the loss of life would have been even more catastrophic.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Club Q Mass Shooting; Remembering Nightclub Massacre Victims]

JESSICA FIERRO: He was a hero way before their in my eyes. There could have been so many more bodies. There could have been so many more injuries. And there wasn't.

PATTERSON: Five people died that night, including Richard's daughter's boyfriend Raymond

RAY FIERRO: She did that scream, that guttural scream, when she found out about Raymond. It was that guttural scream and it was the worst thing I've ever heard. This is my kid.

PATTERSON: Raymond's mother Adrianna is heartbroken.

VANCE's MOTHER ADRIANNA: He was very kind. I used to call him my gentle giant.

PATTERSON: Has it settled in?

VANCE's MOTHER ADRIANNA: No. I still — I still think he's going to walk in through the door

ESTHELA BELL: Why did the bullet go into him? That's one of my biggest questions.

PATTERSON: Raymond's family describing the 22-year-old as the life of every room he walked into and the pain of reckoning with his death.

BELL: I work in a restaurant, and one of the hostess came and said your husband called and he said it's an emergency. I said oh, my god, what happened so I call him and he told me that Raymond was dead.

PATTERSON: Immense grief and heartbreak that will last a lifetime

RAY FIERRO: Walking past other bodies that were laying there. It's — there's — those are things you won't be able to unsee. There's the smells you won't be able to unsmell and it was just horrifying

MENA: Our thanks to Steve for that report