Activision and Meta sued by families of Uvalde school shooting victims

The families of the victims killed in the Uvalde, Texas school shooting are suing Meta and *Call of Duty* developer Activision over allegations that they promoted the use of firearms to underage boys. The lawsuit claims both companies "knowingly exposed the Shooter to the weapon, conditioned him to see it as the solution to his problems, and trained him to use it." It's the kind of claim we've seen unsuccessfully thrown at video game companies numerous times in the past.

The complaint was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court on Friday on behalf of around 45 family members. As noted in the lawsuit, the families accuse Activision and Meta of "grooming" young men and putting them on a path toward violent acts. On May 24th, 2022, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos opened fire at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, killing 21.

The lawsuit says that the gunman played *Call of Duty* "obsessively, developed skill as a marksman, and obtained rewards that become available only after a substantial time investment." It also claims that the game features the AR-15 used in the shooting. At the same time, the lawsuit alleges that "the shooter was being courted through explicit, aggressive marketing" on Instagram that showed "hundreds of images depicting and venerating the thrill of combat."

"Activision should stop training and habituating kids to kill"

In addition to Activision and Meta, the families of the Uvalde victims are also suing Daniel Defense, the gun company that

made the AR-15 used in the shooting. The lawsuit alleges Daniel Defense promotes its weapons to minors on Instagram through posts “glorifying” combat. Meta’s rules theoretically ban companies from selling guns on its platforms, though, and the gunman purchased the AR-15 from Daniel Defense’s website — not through Instagram.

“Companies like Instagram and Activision do more than just allow gun companies to reach consumers — they underwrite and mainstream violence to struggling adolescents,” wrote Josh Koskoff, the attorney for the Uvalde families. “Instagram should stop enabling the marketing of AR-15s to kids by gun companies; and Activision should stop training and habituating kids to kill. It’s that simple.”

In a statement provided to *The Verge*, Activision’s head of corporate communications Delaney Simmons writes: “Millions of people around the world enjoy video games without turning to horrific acts.”

Koskoff previously won a $73 million settlement for the families of Sandy Hook school shooting victims from gun manufacturer Remington.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/5/24/24164311/activision-meta-lawsuit-call-of-duty-uvalde-shooting