



Shoppers purchase and browse items at the Lego store at Fashion Show Mall in Las Vegas Friday.

# Super Bowl of shopping is more like a scrimmage

U.S. trends away from Black Friday

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO  
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — The annual ritual of Black Friday, as we know it, is over.

Gone are the throngs of frenzied shoppers camping out for days ahead of the big sales bonanza on the day after Thanksgiving. And forget the fisticuffs over flat-screen TVs.

Instead, stores around the country had sparse parking lots, calm, orderly lines, and modest traffic. Black Friday, which traditionally is the biggest shopping day of the year, almost looked like a normal shopping day. And not every shopper was happy about that.

In Denver, for instance, Susan Montoya had nearly an entire Kmart to herself Friday morning. Montoya half-heartedly flipped through a rack of girls' holiday party dresses and looked down the store's empty aisles.

"There's no one out here!" she said. "This is sad."

Black Friday for decades was a rite of passage for U.S. shoppers. Many would spend Thanksgiving evening combing through circulars to plot their shopping route for the next day based on the deals they hoped to snag.

But in recent years, retailers have started offering mega-discounts in stores and online earlier instead of waiting until Black Friday. And in the last few years, they've opened locations on Thanksgiving Day, a once-sacred holiday from retail.

That has led to the "graying" of Black Friday. In fact, according to the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, nearly 60 percent of shoppers had already started holiday buying by Nov. 10.

Early numbers aren't out yet, but the retail group expected about 30 million people shopped on Thanksgiving and 99.7 million on Black Friday. It also expects about 135.8 million people will be shopping during the four-day weekend, compared with 133.7 million last year.

The group estimates overall sales for November and December will rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion compared with last year.

Judging from the crowds so far, though, the shopper numbers could be hard to come by. "The frenzy and traffic levels were subdued," said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a retail consultancy.

Here are the three biggest reasons for the graying of Black Friday:

## You don't have to wait for discounts

Many stores pushed discounts on holiday merchandise early. Because of that, some shoppers weren't excited about discounts on Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

Jeff Simpson, a principal at Deloitte, also said doorbusters — fat discounts on hot items that once drew shoppers in for store openings — are losing their "umph." Ten years ago, major retailers would focus on the 10 best items and discount them below costs, he said. Now, many stores offer several hundred doorbusters, and many of the items don't carry a name brand.

"They got watered down," he said. "When you run that many doorbusters, can they

"There's no one out here! This is sad."

— Susan Montoya, Black Friday shopper

really be that special?"

Some shoppers already are jaded about Black Friday deals. Take Bintou Cham, who got discounts of 40 to 50 percent at J.C. Penney and other stores in New York City, but was hoping for more.

"I was looking for 70 percent off," she said.

## More people shop online

Many stores made their deals available online and in stores for the official start of the season.

It's not clear whether that move made more people shop online instead of heading to stores. But Deloitte's Simpson said retailers need shoppers in the stores. "You tend to buy fewer items online," he said.

But executives from top retailers including Wal-Mart, Target and J. C. Penney dismiss the chatter about the irrelevance of Black Friday, saying they have worked hard to blend their online operations with the physical stores. Target, Wal-Mart, Toys R Us and J.C. Penney all said they were pleased with traffic both at the stores and online for the official start of the holiday season.

J.C. Penney's CEO Marvin Ellison said: "We saw customers going back and forth, researching online and then go to the stores." And Wal-Mart's Steve Bratspies, chief merchandising officer, said the chain saw more shoppers going back forth between its website and its stores compared with a year.

But sometimes retailers lose when customers go online. Ashley Walton got out early to go to stores on Black Friday, but she left disappointed. She said Wal-Mart didn't have the tablet she wanted for her son.

She solved that quickly by ordering it on Amazon.com.

## No one is in a rush

Trend experts say there's no single item that's making shoppers rush to stores.

William Taubman, chief operating officer at Taubman Centers, which operates more than 20 U.S. malls, said that without a clear trend in fashion, there's less of an urgency to buy.

"The trend is no trend," he said.

For Pam Williams, the Black Friday shopping has lost a bit of its luster because there's no rush of getting a sought-after item. "They kind of took the fun out of Black Friday when they started opening up on Thursday," said Williams, who was shopping in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on Friday.

Not that there aren't any hot items. Jim Silver, editor-in-chief of TTPM, an online review site, said about 10 toys are already hard to find, including certain "Star Wars" toys. Still, there doesn't seem to be panic right now.

That's something Keith Nelson noticed as he stood in line on Thanksgiving, waiting for Toys R Us' 5 p.m. open: "Lines used to be longer, people would be sleeping and bringing lounge chairs out here," he said.

Toys R Us CEO Dave Brandon said the lines weren't as long as last year, but the traffic built throughout the night. He declined to give specific numbers.

# 3 killed in gun battle at Planned Parenthood

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP)—A gunman who opened fire inside a Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood clinic was arrested Friday after engaging in gun battles with authorities during an hourslong standoff that killed three people and wounded nine others, officials said.

Two people and a police officer with the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs were killed in the rampage, law enforcement officials said.

The university police department identified the officer killed as 44-year-old Garrett Swasey, a six-year veteran of the force.

Nine other people, including five police officers, were shot and are in good condition, police said.

The gunman is in custody. His name was not immediately released.

Authorities said they haven't determined a motive or whether the shooter had any connection to Planned Parenthood.

"We don't have any information on this individual's mentality, or his ideas or ideology," police Lt. Catherine Buckley said.

Planned Parenthood released a statement that said it did not know the full circumstances or motives behind the attack, or whether the organization was the target.

A number of people were evacuated during the standoff — some wrapped in blankets in the blowing snow — to a nearby Veterans Administration clinic.

For several hours, the firing of a long gun was the only indication police had that the shooter was in the building, Buckley said. Officers finally made



A person is transported to an ambulance Friday in Colorado Springs, Colo.

voice contact by shouting to him and convinced him to surrender, she said.

Video from *The Denver Post* showed a tall man in a white T-shirt being led away by police as snow fell on the frigid evening.

With the immediate threat over, authorities turned their attention to inspecting unspecified items the gunman left outside the building and carried inside in bags.

Three officers were shot while responding just before noon to the initial report of shots fired. More than two hours later, the gunman shot another officer in an exchange with police inside the clinic, Buckley said.

The suspect surrendered about five hours after entering the building.

The shots sent people inside the clinic racing for cover. Jennifer Motolinia hid behind a table inside the clinic and called her brother, Joan, who said he heard

multiple gunshots in the background.

"She was telling me to take care of her babies because she could get killed," Joan Motolinia said of his sister, the mother of three.

He rushed to the clinic but was frustrated because a police barricade kept him from getting close.

"People were shooting for sure. I heard someone shooting. There was a lot of gunfire. She was calm, she was trying to hide from those people," he said.

Police inside the building ushered staff and patients to the second floor without saying why, employee Cynthia Garcia told her mother-in-law, Tina Garcia.

Then Cynthia Garcia heard gunshots, but she couldn't tell where they were coming from, Tina Garcia told The Associated Press.

Police cordoned off the clinic, nearby medical offices and a shopping center. Authorities ordered everyone

in the area to take shelter where they were.

Denise Speller, manager of a nearby hair salon, said she heard as many as 20 gunshots in less than five minutes.

She told *The Gazette* newspaper that she saw two officers near a bank branch, not far from the Planned Parenthood facility.

One of the officers appeared to fall to the ground and the other officer knelt down to help and then tried to get the officer to safety behind a patrol car, she said. Another officer told Speller to seek shelter inside the building.

"We're still pretty freaked out," Speller said by phone while still trapped inside the salon. "We can't stop shaking."

Shelley Satulla said she saw five or six people put on stretchers and placed in ambulances lined up next to King Soopers shopping center near the clinic.

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241 SE Second St. Pendleton  
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[www.pendletonepiscopal.org](http://www.pendletonepiscopal.org)  
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Wednesday Worship Noon  
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Worship - 10:45 AM  
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SECOND SERVICE 10:30 AM  
712 SW 27<sup>th</sup> ST.  
541-276-1894  
[www.fcogpendleton.com](http://www.fcogpendleton.com)

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

-Presbyterian Church (USA)-  
201 SW Dorion Ave.  
Pendleton  
Service of Worship - 10:00 am  
Children's Sunday School - 10:20 am  
Fellowship - 11:00 am  
[www.pendletonpresbyterian.com](http://www.pendletonpresbyterian.com)  
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in Mission for Christ LCMC  
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Sunday Worship.....10:30 AM  
Red Lion Hotel  
( Oregon Trail Room )  
[www.faithpendleton.org](http://www.faithpendleton.org)

### Living Word Christian Center

Sunday Worship Service  
10:00 AM  
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM  
Sharon Miller, Pastor  
401 Northgate • Pendleton  
278-8082  
[www.livingwordcc.com](http://www.livingwordcc.com)

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9:00 & 10:45 am  
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For more information call  
541-567-8441

### Community Presbyterian Church

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108 S. Main • 276-9569  
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[pendletonfaithcenter.org](http://pendletonfaithcenter.org)

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Bible Class: 9:30a  
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M-F 8:30-12:30  
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352 SE 2nd Street  
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541-276-2616  
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Open Hearts, Open Hands, Open Doors  
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Evening Service 7 pm  
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Monday @ 6 pm