

SHOOTING: 10 of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition

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his brother-in-law about a week ago. He said he was in shock and had “absolutely no idea why he would do this.”

The attackers invaded the Inland Regional Center about 60 miles east of Los Angeles and began shooting around 11 a.m. Wednesday. They opened fire in a conference area that the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health had rented out for an employee banquet, said Marybeth Feild, president and CEO of the nonprofit center.

Police spokeswoman Sgt. Vicki Cervantes said witnesses reported seeing one to three gunmen.

“They came prepared to do what they did, as if they were on a mission,” Burguan, the police chief, said.

Burguan said that someone had left the morning event after “there was some type of dispute,” but investigators were not sure whether that had anything to do with the subsequent massacre in the Southern California city of 214,000 people.

As gunfire echoed through the large three-building complex, several people locked themselves in their offices, desperately waiting to be rescued by police. Some texted or telephoned their loved ones and whispered to them what was going on.

“People shot. In the office waiting for cops. Pray for us. I am locked in an office,” Terry Petit’s daughter texted him.

Petit, choking back tears as he read the text for reporters at the scene, said his daughter works at the center, where social workers find jobs, housing and transportation and provide other services to people with disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

According to its web page, the center has a client base of more than 30,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families. It is a privately run nonprofit, the largest of its kind in California with about 670 employees.

Ten of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition, and three were in serious condition, Fire Chief Tom Hannemann said.

That the violence happened at a place dedicated to helping people with developmental disabilities — even if they were not targeted



People who were near a shooting rampage at a social services center that killed multiple people and wounded others arrive at a community center to reunite with their family members in San Bernardino, Calif., Wednesday.

AP Photo/Jae C. Hong



Law enforcement search for a suspect in a mass shooting at a Southern California social services center on Wednesday in San Bernardino, Calif.

AP Photo/Chris Carlson

— made it even harder for some to comprehend.

“These are all disabled kids, very disabled,” said Sherry Esquerra, who was searching for her daughter and son-in-law, both of whom work at the center. “She gets all the services she possibly could for these kids. So I just don’t understand why

somebody would come in and start shooting.”

FBI agents and other law enforcement authorities converged on the center and searched room to room for the attackers. Triage units were set up outside, and people were wheeled away on stretchers. Others were marched from the building

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— President Barack Obama

with their hands up so that police could search them and make sure the attackers weren’t trying to slip out.

They had indeed escaped. One witness, Glenn Willwerth, who runs a business across the street, said he heard 10 to 15 shots and then saw an SUV with blacked-out windows pull out “very calmly, very slowly” and drive off.

As the manhunt dragged on, stores, office buildings and schools were locked down in the city, and roads were blocked off.

About four hours later, with police looking for a dark SUV, officers staking out a home in the nearby city

of Redlands saw a vehicle matching that description. Public records show the home is a possible residence of a family member of Farook.

Authorities pursued the SUV, and a gunbattle broke out around 3 p.m., authorities said. One officer suffered a minor injury.

The aftermath of the shootout was captured live by television news helicopters.

Each of the dead had a rifle and handgun and was wearing tactical clothing, including vests stuffed with ammunition magazines, said Agent Meredith Davis of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. An explosive device was found at the social service center, and during the car chase, the couple hurled a fake bomb — a metal pipe stuffed with cloth — out of the SUV, she said.

President Barack Obama was briefed on the attack by his homeland security adviser. He said it was too early to know the shooters’ motives but urged the country to take steps to reduce mass shootings, including stricter gun laws and stronger background checks.

“The one thing we do know is that we have a pattern now of mass shootings in this country that has no parallel anywhere else in the world, and there’s some steps we could take, not to eliminate every one of these mass shootings, but to improve the odds that they don’t happen as frequently,” Obama told CBS.

The shooting sounded like “an organized plot,” and preliminary information seems to indicate that “this is personal, and there seems to suggest some element of revenge and retaliation,” said Erroll G. Southers, director of Homegrown Violent Extremism Studies at the University of Southern California and a former FBI agent.

“What it says to me, it’s someone who’s familiar with the facility, it’s someone who knew exactly what room they were going to go to. They knew exactly which way they needed to escape,” Southers said. “They’ve done their homework.”

The social services center has two large buildings that require a badge to get in, said Sheela Stark, a member of its board of trustees. However, the conference room where many public events take place — including the banquet Wednesday — is usually left open when visitors are expected.

Ex-wife says Colorado Planned Parenthood shooting suspect vandalized another clinic

By BRUCE SMITH and SADIE GURMAN
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The man accused of killing three people at a Colorado Planned Parenthood clinic left a decades-long trail of broken marriages, scant social connections and a reputation for religious zealotry that didn’t match his yen for gambling and extramarital affairs.

New court documents and interviews reveal Robert Lewis Dear as an occasionally violent, fundamentalist loner who was known to nurse a grudge. He had one for at least 20 years against abortion providers, going so far as to put glue in the locks of a clinic in Charleston years earlier, a common protest technique among activists trying to shut down abortion clinics.

But still unknown is what caused Dear, 57, to escalate from petty vandalism to the fusillade he is accused of unleashing at the Colorado Springs office, where a law enforcement official said he rambled about “no more baby parts” after his arrest. Colorado Springs police have refused to disclose a motive for Dear’s violence, but there’s mounting evidence that Dear was deeply concerned about abortion.

Dear’s ex-wife, Barbara Mescher Micheau, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that her former husband came home one day bragging about gluing the doors of a clinic. Micheau, who lives in Moncks Corner, South Carolina, said Dear never talked much about Planned Parenthood, although “obviously he was against abortion.”

“He was always plotting revenge against people he felt did him wrong and you know it didn’t take much for him to feel like somebody did him wrong,” Micheau said. “So he would spend a lot of time trying to get back at people, trying to figure out ways to get back at people.”

Micheau was Dear’s second of three wives, and in the affidavit she filed to divorce him in 1993, she described him as angry and isolated.

Micheau said Dear had no friends, according to the document. He would listen to music on headphones for hours, ignoring her. He’d vanish for gambling trips



Daniel Owen/The Gazette via AP, Pool

Colorado Springs shooting suspect, Robert Dear, right, appears via video before Judge Gilbert Martinez, with public defender Dan King, at the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center for his first court appearance, where he was told he faces first degree murder charges.

to Las Vegas or Atlantic City and suddenly explode in anger at home, kicking her and pulling her hair.

“Rob’s anger erupts into fury in a matter of seconds and is alarming,” she wrote. “You have to constantly monitor his emotional state.”

She added that he appeared devoutly religious.

“He claims to be a Christian and is extremely evangelistic, but he does not follow the Bible in his actions,” Micheau wrote. “He says as long as he believes he will be saved, he can do whatever he pleases. He is obsessed with the world coming to an end.”

Dear’s problems were evident even before their marriage ended. He jumped between jobs in fast-food management before joining the South Carolina electric company Santee Cooper. There “he got in trouble a lot and played hooky a lot” before he eventually quit and became an artist’s representative, selling prints wholesale to art galleries, Micheau said. “He liked the freedom of being his own boss and not having anyone to answer to,” she wrote in the divorce complaint. Money was tight and she said her former husband used his money for “personal pleasures,” such as a motorcycle and an expensive gun, rather than their bills that piled up.

In 1992, after Dear and Micheau were separated, he was arrested in North Charleston, South Carolina, on a charge of criminal sexual

conduct after a woman said he put a knife to her neck, forced her into her apartment and sexually assaulted her after hitting her in the mouth. No records show how the case was ultimately handled.

Dear also married Pamela Ross, who told The New York Times that he didn’t seem overly zealous, standing against abortion but not dwelling on it. Court records show they divorced in 2001. Neighbors who lived beside Dear’s former Walterboro, South Carolina, home say he hid food in the woods as if he was a survivalist, warning neighbors about government spying. One neighbor put up a wooden fence separating their land because Dear liked to skinny dip.

Dear also lived part of the time in a cabin with no electricity or running water in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

About a year later he moved again, having convinced another woman he met in South Carolina to live with him in his white trailer marked with a cross on a desolate stretch of land in Hartsel, Colorado, ringed by Rocky Mountains. Living more than 60 miles west of the clinic in Colorado Springs, Dear rarely waved to neighbors, who saw him heading into the mountains on an ATV to gather firewood or stopping to get his mail at the post office.

Relatives of Dear’s girlfriend, Stephanie Bragg, said they hadn’t heard from her much since they moved.

BRIEFLY

Budget talks hit snag over environment, refugees

WASHINGTON (AP) — Talks on a massive, government-wide spending bill hit a snag Wednesday as Republicans pressed demands to block new power plant rules, weaken financial services regulations and make it more difficult for Syrian and Iraqi refugees to enter the U.S.

Democrats, whose votes will be needed to carry the \$1.1 trillion measure through the House, flatly rejected the initial offer from top Republicans. With little more than a week to pass a measure to avert a government shutdown, it’s likely that a short-term funding bill will be needed to keep the government open past the Dec. 11 deadline.

Republican aides characterized Tuesday night’s offer from House Speaker Paul Ryan and top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell as an opening move, but the White House weighed in sharply, saying it threatened a government shutdown.

Many lower-tier items in the massive measure have been worked out, leaving numerous policy provisions, known as “riders” as the main unresolved items.

“The effort they’re engaged in now is to lard the bill up with ideological riders,” White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest told reporters.



House scales back ‘No Child Left Behind’

WASHINGTON (AP) — After years of failed efforts, the House voted overwhelmingly Wednesday to sharply scale back the federal role in American education. But the bill would retain the testing requirement in the 2002 No Child Left Behind law that many parents, teachers and school districts abhor.

The legislation, approved 359-64, would return to the states the decision-making power over how to use students’ test performance in assessing teachers and schools. The measure also would end federal efforts to encourage academic standards such as Common Core.

The 1,000-plus page measure was a compromise reached by House and Senate negotiators. The Senate is to vote on it early next week and President Barack Obama is expected to sign it.

Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., who led the House-Senate conference committee on the legislation, said Washington has been micromanaging the nation’s classrooms for too long.

“Today, we turn the page on the failed status quo and turn over to our nation’s parents and our state and local leaders the authority, flexibility and certainty they need to deliver children an excellent education,” he said.

Lack of sound in Chicago police videos raises more questions

CHICAGO (AP) — A police dash-cam video that captures a white Chicago officer fatally shooting a black teenager 16 times has no sound, nor do videos from four other squad cars at the scene. But department protocol indicates all the cruisers should have been recording audio that night.

The silence is almost sure to figure into the ongoing federal investigation of the case, and it raises questions about whether officers were careless with the recording equipment or, worse, attempting a cover-up.

“When you’ve got a standup cop with nothing to hide, the dash-cam is his friend,” said Gregg Stutchman, who has specialized in video forensics in California for 23 years. “But for cops who aren’t quite as standup, it would make sense that they wouldn’t want things recorded.”

Several experts on the type of equipment commonly installed in police vehicles told The Associated Press that it’s plausible for a single squad car to have a glitch preventing sound recording. But they could not imagine how an entire fleet of cars would ever lose audio at the same time and place by mere happenstance.

“I’ve never heard of it before,” Stutchman said. “It raises a red flag.” The more likely explanation is that audio was intentionally switched off, he said.