



GINA FERAZZI/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

A local outreach group prays with residents on San Bernardino Avenue on Thursday.

Source: Gunman In Killings Had Been In Touch With Extremists

BY AMANDA LEE MYERS
AND JUSTIN PRITCHARD

Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — San Bernardino gunman Syed Rizwan Farook had been in contact with known Islamic extremists on social media, a U.S. intelligence official said Thursday, and police said he and his wife had enough bullets and bombs to slaughter hundreds when they launched their deadly attack on a holiday party.

The details emerged as investigators tried to determine whether the rampage that left 14 people dead was terrorism, a workplace grudge or some combination.

The husband-and-wife killers were not under FBI scrutiny before the massacre, said a second U.S. official, who likewise was not authorized to discuss the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Wearing black tactical gear and wielding assault rifles, Farook, a 28-year-old county restaurant inspector, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 27, sprayed as many as 75 rounds into a room at a social service center for the disabled, where Farook's co-workers had gathered for a holiday banquet Wednesday. Farook had attended the event but slipped out and returned in battle dress.

Four hours later and two miles away, the couple died in a furious gunbattle in which they fired 76 rounds, while 23 law officers unleashed about 380, police said.

On Thursday, Police Chief Jarrod Burguan offered a grim morning-after inventory that suggested Wednesday's bloodbath could have been far worse.

At the social service center, the couple left three rigged-together pipe bombs with a remote-control detonating device that apparently malfunctioned, and they had more than 1,600 rounds of ammunition remaining when police killed them in their

rented SUV, Burguan said. At a family home in the nearby town of Redlands, they had 12 pipe bombs, tools for making more, and over 3,000 additional rounds of ammunition, the chief said.

"We don't know if this was workplace rage or something larger or a combination of both," Attorney General Loretta Lynch said in Washington, echoing President Barack Obama. "We don't know the motivation."

Investigators are trying to determine whether Farook, who was Muslim, became radicalized — and, if so, how — as well as whether he was in contact with any foreign terrorist organization, said the U.S. intelligence official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The same official said Farook had been in touch on social media with extremists who were under FBI scrutiny.

The second U.S. official said the FBI was treating the attack as a potential act of terror but had reached no conclusion that it was. The official said Farook's contacts online did not involve any significant players on the agency's radar and dated back some time, and there was no immediate indication of any surge in communication ahead of the shooting.

The official cautioned that such contact by itself doesn't mean someone is a terrorist.

Rita Katz, director of SITE Intelligence Group, an organization that tracks and analyzes extremists, said it hasn't found any connection between Farook and jihadi groups. But she also said that some of Farook's social media posts seem to have been deleted before the attack.

Wednesday's rampage was the nation's deadliest mass shooting since 2012, when 26 children and adults were slain in Newtown, Connecticut.

In San Bernardino, a Southern California city of 214,000, 21 people were injured Wednesday, including two police officers, authorities



Farook

said. Two of the wounded remained in critical condition Thursday. Authorities said the attack was carefully planned.

"There was obviously a mission here. We know that. We do not know why. We don't know if this was the intended target or if there was something that triggered him to do this immediately," David Bowdich, assistant director of the FBI's Los Angeles office, said as the bureau took over the investigation.

Farook has no known criminal record, Burguan said. He was born in Chicago to a Pakistani family, raised in Southern California and worked at San Bernardino County's Department of Public Health for two stints totaling four years since 2010, according to authorities and acquaintances. The Saudi Embassy said he traveled to Saudi Arabia in the summer of 2014 for nine days.

As for Malik, she came to the U.S. in July 2014 on a Pakistani passport and a fiancée visa, authorities said. To get the visa, immigrants submit to an interview and biometric and background checks — screening intended to identify anyone who might pose a threat.

They were married on Aug. 16, 2014, in nearby Riverside County, according to their marriage license. Both listed their religion as Muslim.

The couple had a 6-month-old daughter who they dropped with relatives Wednesday morning before the shooting.

Adam Lankford, a criminal justice professor at the University of Alabama, said his review of mass public shootings in the U.S. indicates this is the first one in recent history involving a male-female team.

Farook was a devout Muslim who prayed every day and recently memorized the Quran, according to brothers Nizaam and Rahemaan Ali,

who attended Dar Al Uloom Al Islamiyah mosque in San Bernardino with Farook.

Rahemaan Ali said he last saw Farook three weeks ago, when he abruptly stopped going to the mosque. Ali said Farook seemed happy and his usual self, and the brothers never saw a violent side.

"He never ever talked about killing people or discussed politics, or said that he had problems at work," Rahemaan Ali said. "He always had a smile on his face."

Federal authorities said Farook legally bought two handguns used in the massacre and their two assault rifles were legally bought by someone else. Authorities did not say how the rifles got into the attackers' hands.

Farook apparently was no stranger to guns.

A profile on a matchmaking website for South Asians that matched Farook's name, California hometown, county health job and Muslim faith said his interests included target shooting in his backyard. Though the date of the posting was not clear, it listed his age as 22 so it could have been six years old.

Two weeks ago, Farook and one of the co-workers he killed, 52-year-old Nicholas Thalasinis, had a heated conversation about Islam, according to Kuuleme Stephens, a friend of the victim.

Stephens said she happened to call Thalasinis while he was talking with Farook at work. She said Thalasinis told her Farook "doesn't agree that Islam is not a peaceful religion."

As for workplace conflicts, co-worker Patrick Baccari said that until the rampage, Farook showed no signs of unusual behavior and was a reserved young man.

Baccari said he was sitting at the same banquet table as Farook before Farook suddenly disappeared, leaving his coat on his chair. Baccari was in the bathroom when the shooting started; he suffered minor wounds from shrapnel slicing through the wall.

Politics Of Grief, Gun Control, Prayer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a natural reaction in times of grief: Politicians from both parties offered supportive thoughts and prayers for those killed in the San Bernardino shootings. But within hours, social media was awash with pushback from gun control advocates calling out those who offer prayers without pushing for tighter gun laws.

"Your 'thoughts' should be about steps to take to stop this carnage," Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut tweeted. "Your 'prayers' should be for forgiveness if you do nothing — again."

Murphy, who has been outspoken in pressing for gun control legislation, added at a news conference Thursday: "Members of Congress don't get elected to send out sympathy tweets."

As GOP presidential candidates and conservative lawmakers tweeted, one by one, their prayers after the shooting, Igor Volsky, a contributing editor at the liberal website ThinkProgress, started tweeting back how much each had received in campaign contributions from the National Rifle Association, which opposes tighter gun laws.

Volsky said in an interview that his Twitter campaign stemmed from frustration with those who "routinely talk about all the thoughts and prayers they're going to send to victims, and yet they do nothing time and time again in terms of actually reducing these things from happening."

Pentagon Chief: Open Jobs To Women

WASHINGTON (AP) — After three years of study and debate, Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered the military Thursday to open all military jobs to women, removing the final barriers that kept women from serving in combat, including the most dangerous and grueling commando posts.

His landmark decision rebuffed requests by the Marine Corps to exclude women from certain infantry and combat jobs and signaled a formal recognition that thousands of women served, and many were wounded or killed, in the last 14 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are a joint force, and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force," Carter told a news conference.

But he acknowledged some concerns. "Implementation won't happen overnight. And while at the end of the day this will make us a better and stronger force, there still will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome. We shouldn't diminish that."

Carter said the military can no longer afford to exclude half the population from high-risk military posts. He said that any man or woman who meets the standards should be able to serve, and he gave the armed services 30 days to submit plans to make the historic change.

US-Led Coalition Targets IS Oil Facilities

LONDON (AP) — As British jets opened airstrikes against the Islamic State group in Syria and Germany prepared to send troops and aircraft to the region, Russia's president called on the world Thursday to brandish "one powerful fist" in the fight against terrorism.

Yet even as international efforts to defeat the extremists grew, animosity between Russia and Turkey only intensified.

Hours after Britain's Parliament authorized military action in Syria, its Tornado warplanes struck oil fields in eastern Syria that help finance IS. "This strikes a very real blow at the oil and the revenue on which the Daesh terrorists depend," Defense Secretary Michael Fallon told the BBC, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

Both the U.S.-led coalition and Russian warplanes have struck the extremists' oil facilities and Russia has drawn heated international attention to the issue by accusing Turkish authorities of profiting from oil trade with IS — allegations Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has strongly denied.

The Russian allegations came after last week's downing by Turkey of a Russian warplane near the Syria-Turkey border. Turkey insists the plane had violated its airspace, but Russia vehemently rejects that contention.

Summit Calls For Cautious Research

WASHINGTON (AP) — A tool to edit human genes is nowhere near ready to use for pregnancy — but altering early embryos as part of careful laboratory research should be allowed as scientists and society continue to grapple with the ethical questions surrounding this revolutionary technology, organizers of an international summit concluded Thursday.

"It would be irresponsible" to edit human sperm, eggs or early embryos in a way that leads to pregnancy, said Nobel laureate David Baltimore of the California Institute of Technology, who chaired the summit.

Tools to precisely edit genes inside living cells, especially a cheap and easy-to-use one called CRISP-Cas9, are transforming biology — and potential treatments created by them promise to do such things as cure sickle-cell anemia or fight HIV and cancer.

But depending on how it's used, it also could alter human heredity — maybe create "designer babies" — raising ethical questions that triggered three days of debate by scientists, policymakers and ethicists from 20 countries. This so-called germline editing — manipulating sperm, eggs or early embryos — wouldn't affect just one sick person but his or her descendants.

Activists: Mexico Releases Alleged Victims Of Police Torture

BY PETER ORSI
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Several people who were wrongly detained and allegedly tortured by Mexican police have been released after spending years in custody, human rights groups said Thursday.

The releases involved four people who were arrested in 2012 and 2013 in cities along the border with the United States and accused of crimes of which they were ultimately absolved. They all walked free Wednesday.

Amnesty International said in a statement that the cases offer "hope for justice in countless similar cases of people tortured and detained unfairly."

Three of those freed were Cristel Pina, Eduardo Estrada and Leonardo de la O, who were detained in August 2013 in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas, and accused of belonging to an extortion ring, according to two Mexican advocacy groups, the Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez and the Paso del Norte human rights centers.

While in custody they were allegedly tortured physically and psychologically

by police, and Pina in particular was subjected to sexual abuse, the groups said.

"Cristel's case reflects the systematic pattern of sexual torture faced by Mexican women who are detained by security forces. ... We consider it of utmost importance that the use of torture as a method of investigation is condemned," the centers said.

Pina, Estrada and de la O were absolved by a judge Nov. 9 and are now seeking punishment for those who tortured them.

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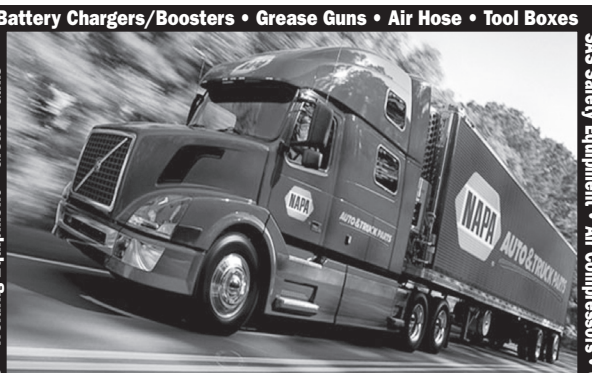
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