

The Man Who Bought The Rifles: Who Is Enrique Marquez?

BY MATT HAMILTON, KATE MATHER AND JAMES QUEALLY
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LOS ANGELES — A 24-year-old Wal-Mart security guard, known to friends as a shy cycling enthusiast who wanted to join the military, has emerged as a key figure in last week's terror attack at a San Bernardino social services center.

Enrique Marquez Jr. purchased two military-style rifles several years ago that Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik used in the attack that killed 14 people at the Inland Regional Center, according to federal authorities.

Marquez, who had attended prayers at an Islamic center in recent years, lived next door to Farook on Tomlinson Avenue in Riverside for many years. Neighbors said they were good friends who often worked on old cars together. Marquez also cemented his connection to his next-door neighbor by marrying the sister of Farook's sister-in-law last year, according to county records.

The circumstances of the marriage are now under investigation, according to a federal official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the probe is ongoing.

Marquez's relationship with Farook — and his purchase of the weapons — have become focal points of the investigation into the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil since Sept. 11, 2001.

Hours after the deadly attacks in San Bernardino, a cryptic message was posted on Marquez's Facebook page.

"I'm. Very sorry sguy's," it read. "It was a pleasure."

Marquez was interviewed by federal investigators after he checked himself into a mental health facility following the attacks. Federal agents also searched his home and seized several items. Attempts by the *Los Angeles Times* to contact Marquez were unsuccessful.

Viviana Ramirez, 23, a friend of Marquez's and fellow student at Riverside Community College, described him as shy but said they bonded over their mutual desire to enlist in the military. Marquez, she said, rarely spoke about his family or his marriage but could become playful, even silly, once he dropped his guard.

"He has a really nice smile, he's really welcoming," she said. "He'll play around if he feels very welcome with you." Marquez purchased the



GINA FERAZZI/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

FBI agents executed a search warrant at this home on Tomlinson Avenue on Saturday, Dec. 5, where resident Enrique Marquez is suspected of purchasing the guns used by the couple in the San Bernardino shooting rampage.

weapons at least three years ago, federal officials have said. It is not clear when he gave them to Farook. A law enforcement source said there was no indication Marquez knew of Farook's plan to carry out an attack.

Marquez never spoke of Farook, according to Ramirez. He talked most often about his desire to enlist in the U.S. Navy. He was intensely focused on that goal and physical fitness, choosing to ride his bicycle to and from work and classes at Riverside Community College, she said.

But Marquez's ambition was accompanied by occasional admissions of sadness or loneliness, according to Ramirez. On one of the few occasions that he opened up about his personal life, Ramirez remembers Marquez confessing that he and his new wife were "not clicking."

Marquez married Mariya Chernykh in November 2014, according to county records. The marriage added another connection to the Farook family; Chernykh's sister was married to Syed Raheel Farook, the shooter's older brother. The sisters are from Russia, according to marriage records.

Raheel and his wife were both witnesses at Marquez's wedding, records show. Raheel and Chernykh's sister, Tatiana Gigliotti, were married in 2011.

The women came to the United States separately on J-1

visas, which allow foreign individuals to enter for work-study cultural exchange programs, according to the federal official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Marquez's marriage could strike some people as odd, although Ramirez did not find it unusual. Marquez did not live with his wife, she said, and he never explained his living arrangements.

"He never really talked about the friends he had. He wouldn't bring anybody up," Ramirez said. "He was more of an in-the-moment person."

Brittani Adams, a neighbor of Syed Raheel Farook, said she had seen Marquez and Chernykh around the family home but the two looked like anything but a married couple.

"He would never leave with her, come with her, not hug her," Adams, 24, said. "None of them seemed like they were married. It was very weird."

A Wal-Mart spokesman said Wednesday that Marquez had worked for the retail giant since May but that the company has made the decision to fire him. He did not elaborate.

Marquez attended prayers at the Islamic Society of Corona-Norco four or five years ago, though not regularly, according to Yousuf Bhaghani, president of the facility's board of directors.

"We have members who actually are recognized in writing and everything, and then you

have people who come and go," Bhaghani said. "Enrique was one of those guys who used to come, but he was not a permanent member."

Authorities have not contacted the Islamic Society about Marquez, said Bhaghani, who did not know when Marquez converted to Islam.

"We're trying to figure out how he got converted. Who converted him?" he asked. "Because obviously he's Hispanic and a converted Muslim. So far, we really don't have much to go with because the people who remember him, remember that he used to come and pray but that's pretty much it."

It was not clear if Farook had also attended the center at any point.

Ramirez said she sent Marquez a message on Facebook to check on him in the days after the massacre, but he did not respond.

Despite Marquez's links to the terror suspects, Ramirez said she doubts he would have done anything to help Farook and Malik if he knew what they had intended to do with the weapons.

Ramirez is hosting a Christmas party this weekend and said she would still gladly welcome Marquez into her home.

"He's never done anything mean. A lot of newspapers call me and want me to talk bad about him," she said. "He is a really good person."

Syrians Leave Rebel-Held Area In Homs

HOMS, Syria (AP) — Hundreds of rebels and their families on Wednesday left the last opposition-held neighborhood of Homs as part of a local truce that will bolster government control of the city, while opposition groups met in Saudi Arabia to forge a united front ahead of proposed peace talks.

The international community is making its most serious push yet for a cease-fire and negotiations to end Syria's nearly 5-year-old conflict. U.N. and U.S. officials hope the deal that led to the rebels' evacuation of the Waer neighborhood in Homs can be replicated elsewhere to create pockets of peace and a climate conducive to negotiations.

The monumental size of the task was evident in Homs and at the opposition conference in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

In Homs, once Syria's third-largest city and a center of the uprising against President Bashar Assad, there was bitterness and tears as a first group of civilians and insurgents evacuated Waer. A three-year blockade by government forces in the civil war has inflicted untold hardship on those inside.

"This is not a surrender, this deal is a result of three years of siege that has led to a human catastrophe in Waer," said opposition activist Mohammad Sbai, speaking via Skype from the shattered neighborhood.

Text Announcing Death Reveals Attacker

PARIS (AP) — It took a text message from Syria to a mother in northeast France to reveal the identity of the third killer at the Bataclan concert venue in Paris: Your son died as a martyr Nov. 13.

For nearly four weeks, police had failed to identify the third gunman who stormed the concert venue along with two French Islamic extremists, killing nearly three-quarters of the total 130 people who died in the Paris attacks.

Then, about 10 days ago, Foued Mohamed-Aggad's mother in Strasbourg received a text message in English announcing her son's death "as a martyr" — a typical way that the Islamic State group notifies families of casualties. She gave French police a DNA sample which showed that one of her sons was killed inside the Bataclan, his brother's lawyer said, confirming an account by French officials, who requested anonymity to release details of the investigation.

"Without the mother, there would have been nothing," said the lawyer, Francoise Cotta.

The news announced Wednesday further confirms that the deadly Paris attacks were carried out largely, if not entirely, by Europeans trained by Islamic State extremists.

Yahoo's Plan: Spin Off Itself, Not Alibaba

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Internet pioneer Yahoo, under pressure from unhappy shareholders and desperate to avoid a huge investment-related tax bill, will break itself apart — just not in the way it had previously planned.

The company will now aim to spin off its struggling Internet business — essentially, everything associated with the Yahoo brand name — into a new company. Yahoo itself would then become little more than a holding company for its \$32 billion stake in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

For most of the past year, Yahoo had planned instead to spin off the Alibaba stake into a separate holding company called Aabaco. That corporate maneuver was designed to sidestep more than \$10 billion in taxes Yahoo might otherwise owe. But the IRS jeopardized that plan by refusing to guarantee a tax exemption.

The about-face could mean big changes for hundreds of millions of users who rely on Yahoo websites, services like email and other mobile applications. CEO Marissa Mayer plans to outline a cost-cutting reorganization late next month; many analysts speculate that Yahoo may simply sell off that business if the latest overhaul doesn't bear fruit quickly.

The uncertainty and reshuffling threaten more distractions at a time when Yahoo is already struggling in digital advertising against rivals such as Google and Facebook. It also may raise more doubts about whether Mayer will be able to turn around Yahoo, even though company Chairman Maynard Webb said Wednesday that the board of directors remains in her corner after three-and-half years on the job.

Default Likely On Recent Bond Payments

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Puerto Rico's governor said Wednesday that it's probable the U.S. territory will be unable to make more upcoming debt payments because it has no more money amid a worsening economic crisis.

Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla spoke during a trip to Washington to meet with Republican legislators and others before a vote by Congress that might include a provision giving Puerto Rico public agencies access to Chapter 9 bankruptcy provisions.

Puerto Rico faces more than \$900 million in bond payments in January, including a \$357 million general obligation bond payment due Jan. 1. It would be the island's first major default if the payment is not made. Puerto Rico's Public Finance Corporation already missed a \$58 million bond payment in August.

Garcia did not directly answer a question about whether the government could make the Jan. 1 payment if Congress approved the bankruptcy measure. He said only that it would give Puerto Rico flexibility in talking with creditors out how to make upcoming payments.

Puerto Rico recently made a \$354 million bond payment even though officials said they were running out of money and warned of a possible government shutdown. Some investors have accused Garcia's administration of exaggerating the financial crisis to evade payment.

Antonio Weiss, counselor to the U.S. Treasury secretary, urged Congress on Wednesday to approve a package that includes a debt-restructuring mechanism for Puerto Rico. He said basic services on the island have not been cut yet in part because the government has deferred payment of \$300 million in tax refunds and borrowed \$400 million in emergency loans.

On Wednesday, the Republican chairmen of the Senate Judiciary, Finance and Energy committees introduced a bill that calls in part for the creation of an authority that would oversee Puerto Rico's finances and could offer up to \$3 billion in repurposed funds.

The U.S. Supreme Court announced last week that it would hear an appeal on a ruling that barred Puerto Rico from giving municipalities the power to declare bankruptcy.

Argentine President Blasts Incoming Leaders In Final Speech

BY PETER PRENGAMAN
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Tens of thousands of supporters jammed Argentina's most famous square Wednesday night to say goodbye to President Cristina Fernandez, who lauded her government's achievements while blasting the incoming administration in the same withering tones she aimed at opponents throughout her eight years in office.

As blue and white Argentine flags waved and people cheered on a balmy night, Fernandez gave a speech that was both a recap of her years in power and a clear sign that she does not plan to make things easy for President-elect Mauricio Macri, who will be inaugurated Thursday.

Fernandez addressed the crowd on Plaza de Mayo in downtown Buenos Aires amid widespread criticism for her decision not to attend Macri's inauguration.

The two spent much of the last 10 days bickering over where the presidential baton and sash would be handed over. Macri wanted to receive them at the Casa Rosada presidential offices from Fernandez, while she insisted the handover happen in Congress. Many Argentines viewed the argument as a national embarrassment.

Without mentioning him by name, Fernandez framed the tiff as Macri's fault. She also criticized a Wednesday federal court ruling in a case brought by Macri that determined her presidency ended at midnight, saying it would leave Argentina without a president until Macri's swearing-in at midday Thursday.

"I can't talk much because after midnight I'll turn into a pumpkin," she joked.

Fernandez talked about "an agenda from the outside being imposed on the region," apparently referring to the United States and others she sees

as enemies of Argentina. During her two terms in power, Fernandez frequently accused other countries of meddling in this South American nation's affairs, though rarely provided details.

For 12 years, Fernandez, and before her, late husband and predecessor, Nestor Kirchner, dominated the political landscape. The couple rewrote the country's social contract, spending heavily on social programs for the poor while passing liberalizing laws, such as legalizing gay marriage in 2010.

They also aligned Argentina with socialist leaders like the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales, who attended Fernandez's farewell speech.

"She made me proud to be Argentine for the first time in my life," said onlooker Pablo Vega. "She defended the interests of the country more than anybody."

South America Hacker Team Targets Dissidents, Journalists

BY FRANK BAJAK
AP Technology Writer

LIMA, Peru (AP) — A shadowy cyber-espionage group that sent malware to the prosecutor whose mysterious death transfixed Argentina early this year has been hitting targets in left-leaning nations across South America, the Internet watchdog group Citizen Lab reported Wednesday.

The breadth and brazenness of the hackers' activity bear the hallmarks of state sponsorship. So do its targets.

The group has been attacking opposition figures and independent journalists in Ecuador with spyware. It also ran dummy websites. The most elaborate, geared toward Venezuela, is a constantly updated news site featuring dubiously sourced "scoops" on purported corruption among the ruling socialists. In Ecuador, a similarly faux site seemed tailored to attract disgruntled police officers.

The researchers launched the three-month probe after determining that spyware found on the smartphone of Argentine prosecutor Alberto Nisman was written to send pilfered data to the

same command-and-control structure as malware sent to targets infected in Ecuador. They said the hackers had a "keen and systematic interest in the political opposition and the independent press" in the three nations, all run by allied left-wing governments. That suggests it may have operated on behalf of one or more of those governments, the 60-page report said.

In September, the hackers threatened a Citizen Lab re-

searcher as he poked around in a U.S.-based machine the group had infected.

"We're going to analyze your brain with a bullet — and your family's, too," read a message that popped up on his computer screen. "You like playing the spy and going where you shouldn't, well you should know that it has a cost — your life!"

That's rare behavior among professional hackers, perhaps indicating little fear

of criminal prosecution, said Morgan Marquis-Boire, one of the researchers.

In November, the group attempted to infect the computer of an *Associated Press* reporter, who was also investigating it, with a phishing attack aimed at stealing his Google password.

The researchers identified the group through intertwined Internet domains and tell-tale digital signatures on emails sent to infect computers.

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