

Chattanooga Shootings

How Did Gunman Turn Into A Killer?

BY MICHAEL KUNZELMAN AND KATHLEEN FOODY
Associated Press

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Hailey Bureau still recalls the quote her high school classmate Muhammad Yousef Abdulazeez selected for his yearbook photo: "My name causes national security alerts. What does yours do?"



Abdulazeez

Abdulazeez was apparently borrowing a wisecrack from a well-known American Muslim blogger, and Bureau said it was considered a joke at the time.

"Now it's very morbid," she said, a day after the 24-year-old Kuwait-born Abdulazeez opened fire on two U.S. military sites in Chattanooga in an attack that left four Marines dead and raised the specter of terrorism on American soil.

A picture emerged Friday of Abdulazeez as a likable, outgoing young man who enjoyed a laugh, made the wrestling team and seemed "as Americanized as anyone else," yet was clearly aware of what set him apart at his Chattanooga high school.

What's not clear — to counterterrorism investigators and to neighbors and former classmates — is what set him on the path to violence that ended with him being gunned down by police.

Abdulazeez did not appear to have been on federal authorities' radar before the bloodshed Thursday, officials said. But now counterterrorism investigators are taking a deep look at his online activities and foreign travel, searching for clues to his political contacts or influences.

"It would be premature to speculate on exactly why the shooter did what he did," FBI agent Ed Reinhold said. "However, we are conducting a thorough investigation to determine whether this person acted alone or was inspired or directed."

In the quiet neighborhood in Hixson, Tennessee, where Abdulazeez lived with his parents in a two-story home, residents and former classmates sketched a picture of an utterly ordinary suburban existence. They said they would see him walking along the wide streets or doing yard work. One neighbor recalled Abdulazeez giving him a ride home when he became stranded in a snowstorm.

"It's kind of a general consensus from people that interacted with him that he was just your average citizen there in the neighborhood. There was no reason to suspect anything otherwise," said Ken Smith, a city councilman.

As ordinary as the Abdulazeez family appeared on the outside, court documents allege it was an abusive and turbulent household.

Abdulazeez's mother, Rasmia Ibrahim Abdulazeez, filed a divorce complaint in 2009 accusing her husband, Yousef Saed Abdulazeez, of beating her repeatedly in front of their children and sexu-

ally assaulting her. She also accused him of "striking and berating" the children without provocation.

Weeks later, the couple agreed to reconcile, with the father consenting to go to counseling.

Abdulazeez graduated from Red Bank High School in Chattanooga, where he was on the wrestling team. A fellow Red Bank High graduate, Hussain Javid, said Abdulazeez was "very outgoing," adding: "Everyone knew of him."

"Obviously something has happened since then," said Sam Plank, who graduated two years ahead of Abdulazeez but hadn't crossed paths with him since 2006. "He was as Americanized as anyone else. At least that's what it seemed like to me."

Bureau, 25, said she and Abdulazeez often sat next to each other because their last names were close alphabetically. She said she broke down Thursday when she learned Abdulazeez was the gunman, saying, "It's so shocking. I imagine him the way I knew him then, laughing and smiling."

Abdulazeez got an engineering degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2012 and worked as an intern a few years ago at the Tennessee Valley Authority, the federally owned utility that operates power plants and dams across the South.

He was conditionally hired as an engineer at the Perry nuclear power plant near Cleveland and spent 10 days there before he was let go in May 2013 because he failed a background check, said Todd Schneider, a FirstEnergy Corp. spokesman. Schneider would not say why he failed.

Later Friday, a federal official who had been briefed on the matter told The Associated Press that Abdulazeez was dismissed because he failed a drug test. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing law enforcement investigation.

"He worked in an administrative building," Schneider said. "He was never allowed in the protected area of the plant near the reactor."

For the past three months, Abdulazeez had been working at Superior Essex Inc., which designs and makes wire and cable products.

In April, he was arrested on a drunken driving charge, and a mugshot showed him with a bushy beard.

Karen Jones, who lived next to the family for 14 years, said she was somewhat surprised last weekend by his appearance when she saw him walking with another man in woods behind the house, where he liked to shoot pellet guns at a red target suspended in a tree.

"He had this big beard, which was not how he used to be," Jones said. She said he was typically clean-shaven.

The women of the family always wore head coverings in accordance with their Muslim faith, Jones said. Javid said he occasionally saw Abdulazeez at the Islamic Society of Greater Chattanooga, but the last time was roughly a year ago.

The official Kuwait News Agency on Friday quoted the Interior Ministry as saying that while Abdulazeez was born in Kuwait, he was of Jordanian origin.

A U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the case and spoke on condition of anonymity said that Abdulazeez was in Jordan last year for months, and that those travels and anyone he met with are being looked at as part of the terrorism investigation.

In recent months, U.S. counterterrorism authorities have been warning of the danger of attacks by individuals inspired but not necessarily directed by the Islamic State group. Officials have said they have disrupted several such lone-wolf plots.

But the FBI's Reinhold said Friday that so far, there is "no indication he was inspired by or directed by" ISIS or other groups.

The gunman on Thursday sprayed gunfire at a military recruiting center at a strip mall, then shot up a Navy-Marine training center a few miles away.

More details of the attack emerged Friday, with Reinhold saying Abdulazeez was armed with at least one handgun and two long guns — which means a rifle or a shotgun. Some of the weapons were bought legally, some may not have been, Reinhold said.

The gunman was also wearing a vest designed to hold extra ammunition, Reinhold said.

The dead Marines were identified as Gunnery Sgt. Thomas J. Sullivan of Hampden, Massachusetts; Staff Sgt. David A. Wyatt of Burke, North Carolina; Sgt. Carson A. Holmquist of Polk, Wisconsin; and Lance Cpl. Squire K. "Skip" Wells of Cobb County, Georgia. Sullivan, Wyatt and Holmquist had served in Iraq, Afghanistan or both.

An unidentified sailor seriously wounded in the attack remained hospitalized.

Troops inside military recruiting stations are unarmed, largely because of legal restrictions. Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army's chief of staff, said security at such installations will be reviewed in light of the attack.

But he added: "I think we have to be careful about over-arming ourselves." He said there is a danger of "accidental discharges and everything else that goes along with having weapons that are loaded that causes injuries."

On Friday, Gwen Goff added purple ribbons and a flag to a makeshift memorial taking shape outside the recruiting station.

"I love the service. Without them, where would we be as a country?" Goff said.

Woman Found Dead In Texas Jail

HEMPSTEAD, Texas (AP) — Friends' recollections and Sandra Bland's own words present a picture of a young woman on the cusp of finding her niche in life. She seemed to have landed a perfect job. She had a voice and following on social media for speaking out about racial injustice and police brutality and was active in her community.

Even after one video surfaced showing the 28-year-old talking in March about depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, those who knew her said she would not have killed herself inside a Texas jail cell — not even over the confrontational traffic stop that led to her arrest, which mirrored the ones she railed against online.

"She was in good spirits. She was looking forward to what was next," said friend and mentor LaVaughn Mosley, 57, adding that he was unaware of any struggles with depression. "She was making plans for the future, so there's no way she was in a suicidal state."

On Friday, about 100 protesters marched from the jail — where authorities say she hanged herself with a plastic bag earlier this week — to the courthouse in Hempstead, where several other friends of hers also expressed disbelief.

Bland's death came amid increased national scrutiny of police after a series of high-profile cases in which blacks have been killed by officers. Friends and family have questioned authorities' account of how she died.

2 Killed, 3 Wounded In Maine Shooting

LEE, Maine (AP) — A former convict beat a man and stole guns and a pickup truck before shooting five people, two of them fatally, during a rampage across several northern Maine towns, state police said Friday.

Anthony Lord, who faces murder and kidnapping charges, was arrested at his uncle's home in Houlton, and a woman who was being held with him was safe, State Police Lt. Sean Hashey said.

Investigators were searching for a motive for the shootings that left 58-year-old Kevin Tozier and 22-year-old Kyle Hewitt dead. Two other men and one woman are being treated for gunshot wounds and are expected to survive, police said.

"We know a lot, but there's a lot of questions to be answered still," Hashey told reporters. Officers, detectives and evidence technicians will work through the weekend to piece the case together, he said.

Dozens of law enforcement officers had been searching for Lord after an outburst of violence that started with a fire Thursday night at a barn in the town of Benedicta and then escalated when a man was robbed of his guns and pickup truck early Friday in the township of Silver Ridge.

300 People Injured Train Collision

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A commuter train crashed into another passenger train during rush hour Friday in South Africa's largest city injuring more than 300 people, an emergency services spokeswoman said.

Nana Radebe, spokeswoman for Johannesburg Emergency Services, said 326 people were rushed to nearby hospitals with minor to serious injuries. No fatalities were reported.

"For now we have removed people with minor to serious injuries, but none critical," she said, adding that firefighters searched for commuters who may have been trapped inside the train cars.

The trains were on the same track, Radebe told The Associated Press, and it appeared that a traveling train collided with a stationary train.

"What we do know is that one vehicle rear ended the other," said Russel Meiring, a spokesman for ER24, a private emergency service.

Greece Makes Changes To Government

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece's proposed bailout cleared further key hurdles Friday after German lawmakers overwhelmingly gave their backing to another financial rescue and the European Union said it would release a short-term loan to ensure Athens avoids a debt default.

The developments, along with the Greek parliament's approval early Thursday of creditor-demanded austerity measures, contributed to a positive initial assessment from Europe's bailout fund. In a statement, the European Stability Mechanism said it approved a "decision to grant, in principle, stability support to Greece in the form of a loan program."

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, meanwhile, reshuffled his cabinet after a rebellion earlier this week in his party's ranks over the austerity measures, replacing two ministers who voted against him and changing another eight ministers and deputy ministers.

Though the broad outlines of the Greek bailout were agreed Monday by the eurozone's 19 leaders, the ESM's decision formally kick-starts the process by which Greece begins negotiating the details.

The discussions, which are expected to last four weeks, will include economic targets and reforms deemed necessary in return for an anticipated \$5 billion euros (\$93 billion) over three years.

Clinton Focuses On GOP In Primary Faceoff

BY LISA LERER
Associated Press

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Hillary Rodham Clinton avoided any mention of her primary opponents in the first Democratic face-off of the 2016 presidential campaign, opting instead to focus her fire on an expanding field of would-be Republican contenders.

All five Democratic primary candidates were on the program for the Friday fundraiser for the Iowa state party, creating an opportunity for Clinton to confront her challengers before more than 1,300 influential party activists in the crucial caucus state.

Instead, she explained her White House bid as a "deeply personal" quest, vowing she would never let Republicans "rip away the progress" made during the Obama administration. In a fiery address, she slammed the economic policy of former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, joked that Donald Trump is "finally a candidate whose hair gets more attention than mine," and attacked Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker for targeting union power.

"Trickle-down economics has to be one of the worst ideas of the 1980s," Clinton said, evoking Republican policy from the Reagan era. "It is right up there with New Coke, shoulder pads and big hair. ... We are not going back to that."

The dinnertime event came as the Democratic primary fight — long assumed to be little more than a coronation of Clinton — appeared to be heating up into a slightly more serious contest.

In recent weeks, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has risen in the polls and packed arenas with voters eager to hear the message of the self-described socialist who's become Clinton's chief

rival. So far, he's refused to criticize Clinton directly, though he edged closer to an attack Friday, questioning whether she would back the kind of tough regulation on Wall Street that's becoming a rallying call for liberals.

"You'll have to ask Hillary Clinton her views on whether we should break up these large financial institutions," he said, during an afternoon appearance in Cedar Rapids. "I do."

The Clinton campaign has signaled that it considers Sanders to be a legitimate challenger who will be running for the long haul, noting the \$15.2 million he's raised, largely from small donors, in the first three months of the race. They believe he will find a measure of support in Iowa, where the caucus system typically turns out

the most passionate voters, and New Hampshire, given Sanders' many years representing neighboring Vermont in Congress.

On Friday, Clinton's campaign said it bought \$7.7 million worth of television advertising time in early voting states, its first ad buy for the 2016 contest. In Iowa, the campaign paid \$3.6 million for time in all eight media markets that serve the state. An additional \$4.1 million of airtime was purchased in New Hampshire, which holds the first primary.

But so far the Clinton team has resisted any direct engagement with Sanders, fearing such an exchange might alienate the activists and small-dollar donors who will form the base of support in the general elec-

tion if Clinton should win the nomination.

"You can see that Democrats are united, we are energized, and we are ready to win this election," Clinton said, opening her remarks before a cheering audience.

Besides Sanders and Clinton, the forum featured former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb and former Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) is now accepting applications for Executive Director. The SDBIC administers the \$1 per head beef checkoff. The office of the Executive Director is located in Pierre and is responsible for implementing the beef promotion, research and education programs within South Dakota under the guidance of a board of directors. Duties include personnel management, public relations, monitor the beef checkoff system and assist in annual budget. Competitive salary and benefits provided.
Details about the position can be found on www.sdbic.org or contact Karla Pazour at (605) 730-1720 / president@sdbic.org. Please submit a cover letter, resume and references electronically to newhire@sdbic.org by August 15.

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