

## WHY DO THEY DO IT?

OMAR MATEEN



Below is a modified CNN timeline of the Orlando, Florida nightclub shooting:

- Sunday (June 12, 2016), 2:02 a.m. ET: Shooting erupts at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. There are approximately 320 that evening enjoying the club's "Latin flavor" event. An officer working extra duty in full uniform at the club responds. He and two officers nearby open fire on the shooter, and a gun battle ensues. The shooter goes inside the club, where a hostage situation develops. Over 100 officers from Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Orlando Police Department respond to the scene.
- 2:09 a.m. ET: A standoff follows. Police say they had to wait three hours to access the situation, get armored vehicles on the scene, and ensure they had enough personnel.
- 2:22 a.m. ET: Shooter calls 911 to pledge allegiance to ISIS. He also mentions the Boston Marathon bombers.
- Approximately 5:00 a.m. ET: Heavily armed SWAT team members use an armored vehicle to smash down a door at the club, clearing the way for some 30 people inside to flee to safety. SWAT officers confront the suspect in the doorway, then shoot and kill him.<sup>164</sup>

At least 49 people were killed that evening, and over 50 individuals were injured. It was the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. As the news unfolded, many were asking what could motivate someone to engage in such a horrific crime.

Omar Mir Seddique Mateen was 29 years old. His parents are from Afghanistan; he was born in New York but lived in an apartment in Fort Pierce, Florida. Interviews



John Panella / Alamy Stock Photo

People across the world, such as here in Seoul, South Korea, held vigils for the victims in the Orlando, Florida shooting.

with coworkers revealed that he was "scary." This was not just sometimes, but all the time. He had some anger management issues. Issues that would upset him revolved around women, race, or religion. In 2013, Mateen was interviewed two times by federal agents after co-workers reported he made "inflammatory" comments about radical Islamic propaganda. The next year, he raised concerns with the FBI because of his ties with an American who traveled to the Middle East to become a suicide bomber.

Sitora Yusufiy, Mateen's ex-wife, reported that he was a violent man and beat her. Not only did he physically abuse her, but he also isolated her from her family. They were married only a few months. They officially divorced in 2011. Mateen's father told reporters that Omar became enraged after a same-sex couple kissed in front of his family.<sup>165</sup>

On January 17, 2017 Mateen's wife at the time of the shooting, Noor Salman, was the person charged under antiterrorism laws.

### THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Was this a terrorist act?
2. Was this a hate crime?
3. Frida Ghitis of CNN asked this very question: terrorism or homophobia? Her answer was "both."<sup>166</sup> Do you agree?