

Case 76: San Bernardino

John Mueller

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Although they pledged allegiance to ISIS when committing the act, a married couple who shot up a holiday party filled with the man's co-workers in December 2015 in San Bernardino, California, had been plotting and/or contemplating such terrorism for years, even before ISIS came into being. Both were killed in a shootout with police in a chase when they tried to get away, and after an investigation, the FBI concluded that the pair, both American citizens, planned the attack themselves, did not belong to any terrorist group or network, and were not aided in any way by any terror organization. ISIS nonetheless opportunistically saluted them as "supporters" and as "soldiers of the caliphate."

They were well-educated, financially responsible and secure, quite religious, and remarkably disciplined at keeping the planning to themselves. Unlike many other ISIS enthusiasts in America as documented in this book, they did not broadcast their intentions—though the man had voiced grievances about paying taxes that helped the US wage a war on Islam and was reported to be "obsessed with Israel."

The shootings were tragically consequential, killing 14 people—one more than the 2009 shooting attack at Fort Hood (Case 32), the previous high for post-9/11 terrorism in the country. They also quietly amassed body armor and thousands of rounds of ammunition, and they constructed twelve pipe bombs and had enough additional material to create seven more—though, as the discussion in Case 48 suggests, the lethality of such explosives is not terribly impressive. The existence of this arsenal strongly suggests, as Alex Iammarino points out, that they were looking to do more attacks somewhere else.

There is no information about what those targets might have been, and, indeed, the process by which they selected the one they did attack is equally murky. There was a danger that, although masked, the man's co-workers would recognize him—and, indeed, at least one did.

However, if the goal was to terrify, the target was well chosen. Everyone has attended a holiday party at one time or another, and it is especially easy to envision yourself as one of the victims.

Case 76: San Bernardino

Alex Iammarino

November 2, 2016

1. Overview

On December 2, 2015, at 8:30am, Syed Rizwan Farook of Redlands, California, attended a work training event at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. However, he abruptly left halfway through the event, around 10:30am, leaving a backpack on a table. As the event was transitioning into a holiday party, Farook returned to the center with his wife, Tashfeen Malik, at 10:59am, and began to shoot dozens of people. The shooting lasted 4 minutes. Farook and Malik then left the premises, followed by the arrival of first-responders four minutes after the first 911 call. Between 75 and 80 people were in attendance, with 14 people killed and 22 others seriously injured in the attack.¹

Farook, born to Pakistani immigrants but a citizen of the United States, grew up in Riverside, California, and attended California State University, San Bernardino. He worked as a health inspector for the county. He met his wife, Malik, through an online dating website. Malik was born in Pakistan, and attended Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, Pakistan. The two eventually met in person in Saudi Arabia, marrying six months later and moving back to the United States. Malik was an official US citizen through marriage.

An unknown witness told police that arrived on the scene that they believed one shooter to be their coworker, Farook. Additionally, a security guard witnessed the two suspects leaving the building in a black SUV wearing tactical gear and black ski masks. As police and other first-responders tended to the victims and began transporting them to the hospital, two plainclothes investigators made their way to Farook and Malik's apartment in Redlands just before 3:00pm. As they pulled up to the apartment, they saw a black SUV rolling out of an alleyway; one of the investigators said he saw a person who matched Farook's description through the windshield. They began pursuing the vehicle as other police joined the chase. While the pursuit was underway, Farook and Malik threw an object that resembled a pipe-bomb from their window at the police behind them. This turned out to be a fake explosive. At one point early on in the chase, one policeman said he saw them briefly stop at a stoplight and put on defensive gear and bulletproof vests, as well as equip their weapons. Soon after this, at around 3:00pm, the SUV continued onto East San Bernardino Avenue, entering a suburban area, where the suspects began shooting at police.²

The suspects stopped in a neighborhood where they continued to shoot at the police. Farook left the vehicle while maintaining fire, and he was eventually shot in the side. As he was down, he shot at police with a handgun, injuring one officer. Farook was then mortally wounded. His wife remained in the vehicle

¹ Cameron Tankersley and Michael Martinez, "San Bernardino shooter Tashfeen Malik: What we know," cnn.com, December 7, 2015.

² Suzanne Hurt, "San Bernardino Shooting: Horror of Dec. 2 attack remains with rescuers," pe.com, May 27, 2016.

shooting at police through the rear window. She injured one officer, and eventually died after being hit by several bullets. Initially there were reports from eyewitnesses that there was a third gunman but this was ultimately disproved by forensic evidence and other eyewitness accounts. Until it was disproved, however, the police arrested a third person who was found near the shootout scene.

Immediately following the attack, the FBI and local Sheriff's department began searching the couple's apartment in order to find evidence to understand their intentions. They found thousands of rounds of ammunition, twelve constructed pipe-bombs, and enough material to create seven more pipe-bombs. It soon became clear that the two suspects had more than just this attack in their plans. However, to this day, it remains a mystery as to what other target(s) they had in mind. The FBI determined it was indeed a terror attack, but also that they were self-radicalized and were not in contact with any terror groups such as ISIS or al-Qaeda.³

2. Nature of the adversaries

Syed Rizwan Farook, born on June 14, 1987, in Chicago, Illinois, was a man of Pakistani descent and the son of two Pakistani immigrants. He grew up in Riverside, California, where he attended La Sierra High School.⁴ It was reported that his childhood was not easy; his mother, Rafia Farook, filed court documents against her husband, claiming him to be an alcoholic and abusive with suicidal tendencies. She also claimed that Farook and his siblings would often have to protect her from her husband. She filed for divorce, which was ultimately dismissed, but she received a legal separation "based on irreconcilable differences." She moved her children, including Farook, out of the house, and her husband moved to Pakistan.⁵

Farook attended California State University, San Bernardino, after graduating high school a year early, where he studied environmental health. He received his bachelor's degree in either 2009 or 2010, and then enrolled in the environmental engineering graduate program at California State University, Fullerton, in 2014. However, he only enrolled for one semester and thus did not complete his degree.⁶ In 2013, he met his future wife on an online dating website, and traveled to her current home in Saudi Arabia to meet in person for the first time. According to their marriage license, they married on August 16, 2014, just six months after meeting in person.⁷

Farook was very religious throughout his life. He was described as quiet but friendly by friends and family, and the director of the Islamic Center he used to attend says, "He's a little bit shy, a little bit withdrawn." He stopped attending

³ The Associated Press with CNBC, "FBI: Investigating Calif massacre as 'act of terrorism,'" cnbc.com, December 5, 2015.

⁴ "Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik," wikipedia.com, October 5, 2016.

⁵ Julia Glum, "San Bernardino Suspect Syed Farook's Troubled Childhood: Father Was Alcoholic, Mother Alleged Domestic Abuse In Court Papers," ibtimes.com, December 3, 2015.

⁶ "Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik," wikipedia.com, October 5, 2016.

⁷ Rob Crilly, "Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik: What we know about the San Bernardino shooters," telegraph.co.uk, December 5, 2015.

the Center about two years before the attack, soon after marrying his wife.⁸ Just two weeks before the attack, a coworker recalled he was arguing that Islam was a peaceful religion with another coworker who ended up being a victim of the attack.⁹

One of Farook's favorite hobbies was target practice, listed on his online profile of iMilap.com along with other things such as reading religious books, working on vintage and modern cars, and traveling. His lawyer, David S. Chesley, stated he would often go to a shooting range alone. The workers at the range described him as "normal."¹⁰

He was financially responsible, and as his landlord referred to his strong credit and lack of any red flags that would potentially make him a bad tenant.¹¹ In 2013, he made \$53,000, which is slightly below the median household income of \$61,972 in Redlands, California.¹² He and his wife had a 6 month old child at the time of the attack.

Tashfeen Malik, was born on July 13, 1986, in Karor Lal Esan, Pakistan, about 280 miles southwest of Islamabad. There remains ambiguity about where she grew up, with some sources saying she spent most of her life in Saudi Arabia, but returned to Pakistan to attend school. Both her lawyer and the Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman, Major General Mansour Al-Turki, claimed she grew up in Pakistan and only visited Saudi Arabia a few times throughout her life, including the times she met Farook.¹³

Malik studied pharmacology at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, Pakistan, graduating in 2012. It is important to note that Multan has been linked to jihadist activity and Islamic terrorism. She also attended the Al-Huda International Seminary, a center dedicated to women which taught Quranic studies in a very conservative interpretation of the religion. It is reported to be aligned with the Wahhabi form of Islam which has been defined as ultraconservative and fundamentalist and has been considered an extremist movement.¹⁴ The *Los Angeles Times* reported that this seminary teaches anti-Western views that "could encourage some adherents to lash out against non-believers [of Islam]."¹⁵ It is likely that her time spent in Multan contributed to her self-radicalization.

Malik was also described by those who knew her as quiet, timid, "very conservative," and a stay-at-home mom. Her lawyer argued that it was unlikely that she could have committed the shooting as she was of petite stature (only

⁸ Dexter Thomas, "San Bernardino shooting suspect stopped attending mosque two year ago," latimes.com, December 3, 2015.

⁹ Veronica Rocha, "San Bernardino victim was upfront about politics and religion — with Farook too," latimes.com, December 4, 2015.

¹⁰ Richard A. Serrano, Sarah Parvenu, Joseph Serna, and Richard Winton, "San Bernardino attacker was 'normal guy' while practicing at shooting range," latimes.com, December 7, 2015.

¹¹ Tankersley and Martinez, "San Bernardino shooter."

¹² <http://www.city-data.com/city/Redlands-California.html>.

¹³ "2015 San Bernardino attack," wikipedia.com, October 5, 2016.

¹⁴ "Wahhabism," wikipedia.com, accessed October 5, 2016.

¹⁵ Shashank Bengali and Aoun Sahi, "Where San Bernardino shooter Tashfeen Malif went to school to learn about Islam," latimes.com, December 7, 2015.

about 90 pounds) and thus unable to carry the weapon or wear a vest—a contention disproved by police and witness accounts.¹⁶

She was not on any list of potentially-radicalized people by the FBI or any other U.S. intelligence groups. However, it is unknown if she was the turning point in Farook's religious views, turning him from a peaceful follower to a radicalized, or violent, one. The FBI released a statement claiming that online messages between the two as far back as late 2013 show they were beginning to feed each other these toxic ideals. However, the FBI also stated that Farook was involved in a plot as early as 2011 to shoot up a cafeteria at Riverside Community College and cars stuck in rush-hour traffic on Route 91 in Corona, California. This plan was evidently not carried out.¹⁷

Though ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, there is no evidence to suggest the group initiated or directed Farook or Malik by any means. There was also a discrepancy between two different online radio broadcasts. In one, ISIS described them as “supporters” of the cause, but in another, they were described as “soldiers of the caliphate,” which could be taken to suggest they were members. Additionally, Farook under an alias on Facebook and Malik under her own name, had made Facebook posts pledging allegiance to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a few days before the attack. The FBI did not explain how they knew the post under the alias belonged to Farook.¹⁸ It was determined they were not associated with a terrorist cell.¹⁹

3. Motivation

After thorough investigation, FBI Director James B. Comey determined Farook and Malik were “homegrown violent extremists [who were] inspired by foreign terrorist organizations.” Through extensive research into their lives together, including digging through their correspondence prior to meeting in real life, it was discovered that Farook and Malik had messaged about the fame and pride associated with jihadism and martyrdom as early as 2013. In fact, Farook's online dating profile expressed his desire to meet someone who “takes her religion very seriously and is always trying to improve her religion,”²⁰ so Farook may have been attracted to Malik's depraved view of Islam. It is believed that during their trips to Saudi Arabia, they consumed even more extreme material and continued their radicalization. It is important to note that their trips to Saudi Arabia and the beginning of their plans for some type of jihadist attack began before ISIS formed. Thus ISIS may have been an inspiration to some extent, but it was neither the initial nor the sole source of inspiration.²¹

Though it is likely Farook was radicalized well before he met Malik, it is highly likely they inspired each other to commit the act together, almost in a depraved act of love. As they were both religious and discussed jihadism in depth

¹⁶ Tankersley and Martinez, “San Bernardino shooter.”

¹⁷ “2015 San Bernardino attack,” wikipedia.com, accessed October 5, 2016.

¹⁸ Tankersley and Martinez, “San Bernardino shooter.”

¹⁹ “2015 San Bernardino attack,” wikipedia.

²⁰ Adam Nagourney, Ian Lovett, Julie Turkewitz and Benjamin Mueller, “Couple Kept Tight Lid on Plans for San Bernardino Shooting,” nytimes.com, December 4, 2015.

²¹ Tewfik Cassis, “A brief history of ISIS,” theweek.com, November 21, 2015.

with each other, it is valid to include their extreme form of Islam as a factor to this attack. One of the victims killed in the attack, Nicholas Thalasinis, a Messianic Jew, was a staunch defender of Israel. He denounced Islam, including, according to a co-worker, directly to Farook as recent as two weeks before the attack.²² It was also reported that Farook's father described him as being 'obsessed with Israel'." A former co-worker of Farook says, "I let the FBI know that, he didn't want to be in the United States. He had planned on leaving the United States. There were several occasions where I thought he was going to be leaving the United States." Farook said he wanted to move to Dubai: "Syed didn't want to be in the United States because he told me that him paying taxes was helping the United States support basically the war on Islam. The war on Muslims,"²³ Although Farook argued that Islam was a peaceful religion, this office dispute could have sparked a rage in him to begin planning an attack on his Thalasinis and his other co-workers.

4. Goals

Although the attack on the Inland Regional Center left several dead and many more seriously injured, it is evident that this was not the ending to Farook and Malik's wishes. They were capable and willing to harm even more people. After they were killed in the shootout with police, raids on their house revealed a copious amount of weapon ammo and explosives: 2000 9mm handgun rounds (which, however, could have been for the shooting range), 2500 .223-caliber rounds, tools for bombs, 12 pipe bombs, and seven other pipes that were likely going to be turned into bombs.²⁴

Since the suspects died in the shootout the same day as the attack, and since they left no explicit evidence explaining why they committed this heinous act, the trail of clues they did leave can only lead to speculation about their absolute goals. It is clear they believed in jihadism and martyrdom and that Farook, at least, apparently was obsessed about Israel. But since they planned an escape with a car rented four days in advance, brought bulletproof vests and other body armor, and stored many thousands rounds of ammunition and a dozen pipe bombs, it is highly likely they were looking to attack somewhere else had the police not found them or followed them.

On the other hand, by giving their son to Farook's mother the morning of the attack and withdrawing money from their account to support her,²⁵ it is clear they made preparations for the worst case scenario knowing the strong probability that they would not make it out alive.

It is also worth noting that with the 14 dead, nearly 25% of the San Bernardino county's public health officials were killed, making this a potentially strategic target in order to lessen the ability for the county to react to any other

²² Rocha, "San Bernardino victim."

²³ CBS News, "San Bernardino suspect was obsessed with Israel, father says," cbsnews.com, December 6, 2015.

²⁴ AP, "New Information: Lawmaker: Too soon to say if shooter radicalized," weau.com, December 4, 2015.

²⁵ Michael Daly, "San Bernardino: The Most Twisted Terrorist Plot Yet," thedailybeast.com, December 4, 2015.

attack they had planned. After the attack, Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for the county, since 35% of the public health employees were either killed or wounded in the attack.²⁶

5. Plans for violence

There remain discrepancies in the sources regarding when Farook began his path to radicalization. The FBI reported that in 2011 and 2012, Farook and his neighbor, Enrique Marquez Jr., planned a terror attack on the nearby Riverside City College and on the 91 Freeway using guns and bombs. The U.S. Attorney's office filed a complaint for forfeiture that revealed Marquez's admission to these plans as well as his ties to a group of men who had made plans to travel to Afghanistan in order to train with al-Qaeda, which ultimately ended in their arrests by the FBI. Because of the arrests, Farook and Marquez scrapped their plans, but it is evident that his self-radicalization began before he met Malik, at least to some extent.²⁷ It is unclear how dedicated Farook was to the plans in 2011, so it is very possible that Malik helped continue his self-radicalization.

Given Farook and Malik's intent on escaping from the police in their rented SUV, use of tactical-style armor and weapons, and the large stockpiles of ammunition and explosives found in their homes, it is reasonable to assume they planned on carrying out a much larger attack for a very long time. It is unknown whether the attack at the Inland Regional Center was always a target. As mentioned, Farook was in an altercation with one of his coworkers two weeks before. Additionally, one eyewitness told police that he left the training exercise seemingly upset, so something else may have happened that day that triggered him to target the holiday party in addition to their initial target, whatever that may have been. The only doubt with this theory is that he brought the backpack with an explosive in it to the training session and left it there. Some believe it was there to finish off first-responders.²⁸ However, it is possible that he accidentally brought the wrong bag to the training event, realized his mistake, and, knowing that their plans would be exposed if the bag were opened, conspired with Malik to add the Inland Regional Center to their list of targets for that day. The possibility of an additional target cannot be confirmed, but it is important to keep an open mind on the issue. At 10:59am, Farook returned to the Center with Malik, and the pair began shooting those inside. The shooting only lasted about 4 minutes killing 14 and seriously injuring 22. Farook and Malik fled the scene immediately, leaving a room of nearly 90 people in complete distress and confusion. At least one worker at the Center believed Farook was the one responsible, but this worker remains unknown.

The authorities handled this case with speed and, luckily, accuracy. It took only four minutes for the first-responders to arrive from the first call. Learning

²⁶ Sharon Bernstein, "California governor declares emergency in response to San Bernardino attack," yahoo.com, December 18, 2015.

²⁷ Richard K. DeAtley, "San Bernardino Shooting: Marquez had ties to 'California jihadists,' FBI says," pe.com, June 1, 2016.

²⁸ Melissa Chan, "San Bernardino Suspects Left Behind Failed Remote-Controlled Bomb," time.com, December 3, 2015.

from the Columbine school shooting, they did not wait before entering the building where they were expecting gunfire. They did not know who the suspects were or where they were, and upon learning of a potential suspect from a worker at the facility, they did not know whether it was a terrorist attack.²⁹

A security guard at the building saw the suspects fleeing, and gave the police the vital information that the attackers “wore black masks and military gear and took off in a black vehicle.” It was this information that helped confirm that Farook and Malik were indeed the suspects. At about 3:00pm, two investigators went to Farook and Malik’s house to see what they could discover. The investigators arrived at the apartment just as the rented SUV was rolling out of an alleyway, and one of them saw a man who matched Farook’s description through the window. Thus began the police pursuit of the suspects.³⁰

It was reported that a metal pipe stuffed with cloth in order to look like a pipe bomb, was thrown at the police during the chase, but investigation afterwards proved this to be a fake explosive. At one point during the chase, the two suspects stopped briefly at a stoplight in order to put on vests and ready their rifles. They then began to shoot at the police through their back window, and ended up stopping in a nearby residential neighborhood. Farook left the vehicle, still firing at police, but got shot in the side. He continued to shoot at police while on the ground, injuring one, and was then killed. Meanwhile, police continued to fire at Malik who was still firing at them from within the vehicle. She managed to injure one officer before being hit by several bullets and dying.³¹ The police certainly stopped something of larger from occurring by being prompt in their pursuit and thorough in stopping them in their tracks.

The police in the area blocked off traffic on many streets while the pursuit began. As Farook and Malik stopped in a residential neighborhood, tweets by the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department told residents to stay indoors.³² There was also reports that a third shooter may have been involved and in the SUV with Farook and Malik. A third individual was arrested in the area, but was later released as the police determined there were only two suspects (this was proved by eyewitness accounts and forensic evidence).³³

Farook and Malik’s next-door neighbor, Marquez, was arrested as two of the weapons used in the attack were purchased (illegally) by him. He denied guilt of providing the weapons to them, but as mentioned, did admit to a previous plan of a terrorist attack with Farook years ago.

6. Role of informants

There were no informants or police operatives involved in this attack.

7. Connections

²⁹ Hurt, “San Bernardino Shooting.”

³⁰ Hurt, “San Bernardino Shooting.”

³¹ Hurt, “San Bernardino Shooting.”

³² abcnews, “San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department Advises Residents to Stay Indoors,” abcnews.go.com, December 2, 2015.

³³ Joel Athenbach and Sari Horwitz, “Some people won’t stop believing there was a third shooter at the San Bernardino attack,” washingtonpost.com, December 22, 2015.

Farook and Malik radicalized without the help of a terror group, but this does not exclude the help of others around them. There are two connections that stand out in this case, and each involves the radicalization of the two suspects.

One concerns Enrique Marquez Jr.'s ties to the group of men planning on traveling to Afghanistan to train with al-Qaeda. These men included Ralph Kenneth Deleon, Sohiel Omar Kabir, Arifeen David Gojali, and Miguel Alejandro Santana Vidriales, the latter two taking plea deals when convicted. Their plan was to kill Americans overseas with the help of al-Qaeda. Marquez' ties to this group helped lead him to plotting with Farook, potentially beginning Farook's radicalization.

Marquez was Farook's next-door neighbor, who converted to Islam in 2007. He did not attend mosque regularly, but reportedly would spend time in Farook's home reading radical propaganda, including *Inspire* magazine. It is unclear if Farook engaged in this propaganda as well, but it is also important to note that Marquez was initially a suspect in the attack because two of the weapons used were purchased by him. He was arrested, but eventually cleared for this specific crime, as he testified that he did not know they took them, and there was no evidence to prove otherwise.

The second connection regards Malik's time spent in Multan, Pakistan, where she attended the Bahauddin Zakariya University and the Al-Huda International Seminary, where women were taught ultra-conservative teachings of the Quran in Wahhabic Sunni-Islam. As previously mentioned, The *Los Angeles Times* reported that this seminary teaches anti-Western views that "could encourage some adherents to lash out against non-believers [of Islam]." It is important to add that the *New York Times* reported that the institute "teaches a strict literalist interpretation of the Quran, although it does not advocate violent jihad." Though the school and seminary did not directly advocate for extremist actions, the city of Multan has had heavy ties with jihadist activity, and there were likely many venues of "poisonous" schools of thought throughout her time here that aided her self-radicalization.

The FBI concluded, however, that Farook and Malik did not belong to any type of terrorist "cell" or "network," were not aided in any way by ISIS or any other terror organization, and hatched the plans for this attack by themselves.

8. Relation to the Muslim community

The attack stunned the Muslim community around the country. It was immediately denounced, and many Muslims were afraid of the retaliation that may occur against them in response to the attack. A few weeks after the attack, the Jalsa Salana Convention was held in Chino, California. In this, Muslims across the U.S. gathered at the Baitul Hameed Mosque to "deepen their Ahmadiyya Muslim faith." Not only was security stepped up to prevent any Islamophobic attacks, but the spokesman for Ahmadiyya's national organization, Harris Zafar, decided to send a message to the Muslim community. "As Muslims, we have to admit there is something wrong here." He wanted to make sure that no

other Muslims would feel the same desire to become radical as Farook and Malik.³⁴

Organizations that condemned the attacks include the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Ahmadiyya Baitul Hameed Mosque, and the Islamic Society of Orange County.³⁵ Muslims from across the world formed a “Muslims United for San Bernardino,” and raised around \$152,000 to help the victims’ families.³⁶

The leader of the mosque Farook used to attend was in shock. He always described Farook as one of the more religious members, but one who would never begin a conversation. It is thought that his sudden abandonment of attending mosque once he got married could have contributed to his radicalization and perversion of the faith’s ideals.³⁷

9. Depiction by the authorities

Intelligence agencies across the country, including the FBI and the House Intelligence Committee, were hesitant to describe the attack as terrorism at first, saying it’s possible it could have been an incident of workplace violence, or possibly both.³⁸ They were careful to receive all of the facts before labeling it terrorism. This announcement that it was being investigated as terrorism was not made until two days later, on December 4.³⁹

The FBI made a valiant effort to recover all of the documents and messages between Farook and Malik dating back to 2013. They ran into issues with Apple concerning the ability to access the shooters’ iPhones, which Apple insisted would lead to a dangerous “backdoor” access for the government that was unprecedented and risky to consumers. An error during the investigation led to the potential loss of some data. The FBI asked San Bernardino (the owner of Farook’s iPhone) to reset the password to the shooter’s iCloud account. Unfortunately, the phone was then unable to backup recent data unless its password was entered. Since it was reset, some of the more recent files were lost, thus the information regarding another attack may have been stored in the phone, but will never be found.⁴⁰

Throughout everything, the authorities did a responsible job. There were more questions than answers at first, and they worked thoroughly to answer as many as possible. However, questions still remain.

10. Coverage by the media

³⁴ Cindy Chang, “San Bernardino shootings cast a somber tone over Muslim conference in Chino,” *latimes.com*, December 26, 2015.

³⁵ Lucy Westcott, “American Muslim Organizations Condemn San Bernardino Shooting,” *newsweek.com*, December 3, 2015.

³⁶ Teresa Watanabe, “American Muslims raise more than \$100,000 for families of San Bernardino shooting victims,” *latimes.com*, December 8, 2015.

³⁷ Thomas, “San Bernardino shooting suspect.”

³⁸ AP, “New Information: Lawmaker: Too soon to say if shooter radicalized,” *weau.com*, December 4, 2015.

³⁹ The Associated Press with CNBC, “FBI: Investigating Calif massacre.”

⁴⁰ www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-tn-apple-fbi-call-20160219-story.html, February 19, 2016.

The media, seemingly in a race to be the first to report what was going on, did not wait on facts to begin speculating what was going on. They faced especially heavy scrutiny for their quickness to get access to Farook and Malik's apartment once the FBI completed their initial investigation. It was reported that up to 100 journalists were in the apartment looking for anything to use for their reports. Paul Callan, a legal analyst for CNN, explained that "you have a contaminated crime scene now. They've turned a crime scene in a terrorist mass murder into a garage sale."⁴¹ Many journalists were accused of being unethical, as they paid off the landlord to gain access. Kerry Sanders of NBC News, was criticized for showing pictures of children and an up-close image of Farook's mother's ID. This was not illegal, but raised ethical standards questions.⁴²

11. Policing costs

In addition to two officers being injured during the attack and subsequent chase of suspects Farook and Malik, the department and city as a whole incurred many financial costs. It was reported that "The city has incurred up to \$1 million in unforeseen expenses—from the added cost of deploying police officers on extended shifts to responding to ultimately unfounded reports of new threats."⁴³ In fact, after the attack, classes at California State University, San Bernardino, and Loma Linda University were cancelled due to a bomb threat called in to the medical center where many of the victims of the attack were located.⁴⁴ The Los Angeles Unified School District cancelled classes on December 15 after a bomb threat was called in.⁴⁵

Because 35% of the county's public health officials were either killed or wounded in the attack, Governor Jerry Brown called in a state of emergency for the county, and called for assistance from other nearby counties. The *Press Enterprise* reported that, "On Tuesday, March 22, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors in a 3-0 vote unanimously approved an agreement for up to \$1.5 million with the California Association of Environmental Health Administrators to provide up to 30 temporary employees to 'perform a variety of professional environmental health activities'."⁴⁶

12. Relevance to the internet

The internet played a significant role in two different aspects of this case. The first aspect involves the meeting of Farook and Malik through the online

⁴¹ Scott Collins, "Media criticized for live TV coverage from home of San Bernardino shooters," *latimes.com*, December 4, 2015.

⁴² Joseph Ax and Dan Levine, "Reporters allowed into California shooters' home, FBI defends its search," *reuters.com*, December 4, 2015.

⁴³ Paloma Esquivel and Richard Winton, "San Bernardino seeks help to pay \$1 million in costs from shooting," *latimes.com*, December 15, 2015.

⁴⁴ Bryan Alexander, "Governor cancels capitol Christmas tree ceremony in wake of shooting," *usatoday.com*, December 2, 2015.

⁴⁵ Diana Crandall, Emma Brown, and Mark Berman, "Facing the same threat, schools in Los Angeles, New York take different tacks," *washingtonpost.com*, December 15, 2015.

⁴⁶ Alejandra Molina, "San Bernardino Shooting: County to hire temp environmental health workers," *pe.com*, March 22, 2016.

dating website, the second involves the FBI investigation after the attack that led to their conclusion that it was a terrorist attack but not linked to any terror groups.

Because Farook and Malik met through the internet, it is reasonable to claim that their internet interactions helped lead to the ultimate planning of this attack (and any other attack they may have been planning). Since there were no informants in the case, the internet had the sole purpose of connecting Farook to Malik; no other people were connected through this venue.

With the help of the internet, the FBI was able to uncover findings related to the connection between Farook and Malik and to determine that it was a terror attack by finding Facebook posts under an alias that pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIS a few days prior to the attack.⁴⁷ Additionally, it was discovered that Malik had sent private Facebook messages at least two times to a group of her Pakistani friends, saying she was a supporter of Islamic jihad and saying “she hoped to join the fight one day.”⁴⁸ This would have been solid evidence that Malik was a threat to the United States, but unfortunately it was not caught by intelligence agencies until after the fact. Still, it helped aid the investigation.

Because of the difficulty the FBI faced with Apple while trying to decrypt the iPhones of Farook and Malik, Senators Richard Burr and Dianne Feinstein, the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, are working on encryption legislation in order to force the cooperation by companies such as Apple when national security is involved with an investigation.⁴⁹

13. Are we safer?

There is strong evidence to suggest that Farook and Malik were planning a larger attack elsewhere, either later that day or soon after. Though they were shot dead a few hours after the attack, the police and FBI did not stop their investigation. They discovered that two of the guns used belonged to their neighbor, Enrique Marquez Jr., and promptly arrested him under suspicion of aiding them in their attack. Though he denied any knowledge of their plans and their use of his weapons, he was still charged for admitting to another terrorist plot with Farook from a few years back. This alone stopped at least one other dangerous person that had the potential to carry out an attack against the United States.

The police did a heroic job tracking and killing the shooters thus preventing any other senseless deaths. They also advised the community to remain indoors in an effective way. The first-responders, arriving just 4 minutes after the initial 911 call, were also extremely heroic that day.

14. Conclusions

The terrorist attack on the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, on December 3, 2015, was incredibly tragic. Up until the Orlando

⁴⁷ Tankersley and Martinez, “San Bernardino shooter.”

⁴⁸ Richard A. Serrano, “Tashfeen Malik messaged Facebook friends about her support for jihad,” latimes.com, December 14, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ellen Nakashima, “After terrorist attacks, the debate over encryption gets new life,” washingtonpost.com, December 9, 2015.

attack of June 12, 2016, it was the worst terror attack on U.S. soil since 9/11 and the largest mass shooting since the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting on December 14, 2012.⁵⁰

There were many lessons to be learned with this attack as the investigation continued, including how to track potentially dangerous people/terrorists. After discovering that Malik sent private messages to her friends on Facebook discussing her desire to join the jihadist movement in the future, it is clear that a stronger surveillance system to people's day-to-day internet activities could have benefitted the situation and put her on a watch list. Of course, any government surveillance into people's private lives has and will cause controversy. The proposed legislation by Senators Burr and Feinstein could help improve public safety if it would indeed aid the FBI with their investigations into potential suspects of terror crimes.

Based on the personal accounts of both Farook and Malik, it was impossible for those who knew them to have known something like this was going to happen. There is no black-and-white way to determine if your neighbor or coworker will one day decide to kill dozens of people. But this serves as a reminder to always be vigilant. If Farook did leave the training abruptly and visibly angry, as one witness reported, maybe there were other visible signs of derangement that morning. To the untrained eye, vigilance is the only valid defense.

It is important to note that Farook and Malik managed to remain unnoticed during the months or even years it certainly must have taken to plan this attack as well as others they might have planned but were unable to carry out. The terrorist watch list that the United States intelligence agencies use is not fool-proof, and there will be cases that go unnoticed such as this one. It is from here that the United States government must focus on ways to improve our safety to prevent and minimize the risk of falling victim to more attacks. The government has never ceased its efforts to do so, but it must be careful not to tread in dangerous water with the public and their private lives.

Donald Trump first proposed his infamous "Muslim ban" after this attack. This is an extreme notion, and a dangerous line to walk. He cited the Japanese internment camps as precedent for this type of legislation.⁵¹ It cannot be stressed enough that this type of hostility towards a group of people due to a few bad apples should not be tolerated, and that it will only lead to further divisiveness between groups. It has been reported that comments such as his, and Islamophobic actions that often occur after extremist terror attacks, have been used as a recruiting device for ISIS and other terror groups in the Middle East.⁵²

⁵⁰ "2015 San Bernardino attack," wikipedia.

⁵¹ <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/donald-j.-trump-statement-on-preventing-muslim-immigration>, October 17, 2016. Steve Holland and Emily Stephenson, "Donald Trump urges ban on Muslims entering U.S.," reuters.com, December 8, 2015.

⁵² UK Politics, "David Cameron criticises Donald Trump 'Muslim ban' call," bbc.com, December 8, 2015. Tiffany Ap, "Al-Shabaab recruit video with Trump excerpt: U.S. is racist, anti-Muslim," cnn.com, January 3, 2016.