

Framing the Orlando Shooting: An Act of Hate or Terror?

The representation of American Muslims and Islamic Extremists in Traditional
and New Media

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ABSTRACT

In the hours after the Orlando shooting, the media widely reported on the event. People were indecisive if the shooter's motives had terroristic or homophobic roots. This thesis will examine how traditional media platforms *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* and new media platforms *Huffington Post*, *Vice News* and *Buzzfeed News* framed their news reports by their choice of stylistic features, and how this contributed to the representation of Islamic Extremists and American Muslims in the media. Nowadays, most newspapers have their own websites, causing traditional and new media to become intertwined. Still, the traditional media platforms preferred the frame of an act of terror performed by an Islamic extremist, contributing to a negative image of Muslims in the media, whereas new media preferred an act of hate towards the LGBTQ-community or tried to include both sides of the story.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early night of the 12th of June 2016, a mass shooting took place at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida. It was the deadliest shooting on American soil at that time. In the days after, the media widely reported the event. Newspapers and online posts described what went down that night in detail and provided explicit background information on the shooter Omar Mateen. The different reports by the media sources took different angles. People were indecisive whether Mateen's motives had terroristic or homophobic roots, resulting in a clear distinction between the framing of the event as an act of terror performed by an Islamic extremist and as an act of hate towards the LGBTQ-community. Multiple online news sources shared live updates of the tragedy through 'new media', which originated with the rise of the internet and opened the doors to new ways of publishing, new features to reach an audience and it has the means to easily visualise a story. Traditional and new media platforms show a difference in audience. Even now, the general American news consumer still prefers watching the news on tv, rather than reading or listening to it (Mitchell, Shearer, Gottfried, & Barthel, 2016). However, those who do read the news prefer to read it online. Mostly adults seek their news online. This study sets out to analyse how new and traditional media platforms used stylistic features of news reporting to frame their articles on the Orlando Shooting and how this contributed to the representation of Islamic extremists and American Muslims in the media. Firstly, an analysis of new and traditional media platforms will give insight into the characteristics of the two platforms and it will present similarities and differences in writing style, audience and the reach of the platforms. Subsequently, an overview of the concepts of framing, extremism, identity, and terrorism will explain how these relate to the writing of news reports and contribute to the representation of Islamic extremists and American Muslims in the media. This is of significance, for the way in which a story is presented can shape the reader's way of thinking, can alter their emotions and has

the ability to mobilise people to act upon the opinions of others (Whitaker, Ramsey & Smith, 2012; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Walter, Billard, & Murphy, 2017). After the 9/11 attacks, research into the concept of framing in the media increased. Abrahamian (2003) looked at headlines of articles published in popular newspapers and concluded that the US mass media framed the event in the context of Islam and the West being threatened by the Other. Due to the global reach of digital media and the speed in which news travels via the internet this can be very problematic. In addition, digital media can easily visualise a tragedy or event, which could enhance the experience of certain emotions even more. People are so used to their phones, tablets, laptops and with the rise of visual social media platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram, that initiated a culture of visual documentation (Hjorth & Cumiskey, 2018). Writers of online articles have access to numerous images taken at the place of horror and have the possibility to attach many of them to their news story, while print editions have limited space for visual images.

2. MEDIA PLATFORMS, FRAMING AND EXTREMISM

2.1 THE THIN LINE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA

News media is a form of mass media, a communication tool that delivers news to the public or a certain audience. In the twentieth century news was presented in the form of print (newspapers) and broadcasting (television and radio). Newspapers report on a wide range of topics such as important events, political and social issues, as well as business, sports and art through different genres of articles, namely editorials, features, columns and more. The rise of the internet allowed for a new form of communication tool: new media. These are platforms that distribute information or provide entertainment on a computer or via the internet (Manovich, 2001). Harrison (2008) recognises three different forms of newspapers: “discursive”, “descriptive” and “tendentious” (p. 38). He describes the discursive form as the

“official version of events” (p. 39). It is critical, “well-researched or sourced, offer analysis and commentary, use experts and are written by specialists” (p. 39). The second type is the descriptive news form. Harrison recognises two different brands of descriptive news: “the neutral descriptive news form” and the, often longer, descriptive news form that is biased and “judgmental” (p. 40). The second uses data to present an opinion. Within the descriptive news form, an event is stripped down to its core, free from comments and opinions to present a summary of an event. Tendentious news reports often try to persuade people. In contrast to descriptive news, tendentious news is highly opinionated, tries to explain the events through human interest stories and is written in a campaigning style. According to Harrison (2008), today’s newspapers do not belong exclusively to one type anymore. They want to reach an audience as wide as possible and through new platforms, such as new media, they become “multi-platform[s]” (p. 42). Nowadays, most newspapers have their own websites. This causes traditional media and new media to become intertwined. Writers of both platforms have to adopt a writing style that includes both online and print writing (Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2012; Harrison, 2008). Traditional media platforms consistently have to write a print and online edition. The skill is to distinguish the different favoured stylistic features for the different platforms and apply them correctly. The online reader is a scanning reader, even more than the reader of print articles, who looks for tools that provide information quickly, such as “headlines, subheads, highlighted words, bulleted items, pictures, graphics [and] links” and prefers short texts (Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2012, p. 283). Online news stories contain short paragraphs that fit on a screen, are written in simple and brief sentences and include links to background information, other stories, images and so on (Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2012). Moreover, online media platforms are often connected to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Today’s news reporters must attempt to use these social media platforms to their advantage, for it is the perfect tool to find sources, by so-called

citizen journalism, and to reach an audience. Most of the traditional and new media platforms have their own Facebook and Twitter account, where they share their online articles and give the reader the possibility to easily share, “like” and comment on the articles. In addition, at the bottom of a webpage article there is a “share” button, which provides the reader for another option to share the article, by giving them an option to post the link to the article on their personal social media platforms. This relates to the concept of “uptake” (Agha, 2011, p. 267; Cole & Pellicer, 2012, p. 451). Uptake entails the constant reinterpretation and recontextualization of the semiotic meaning of a fragment through mediation. Online media platforms have a larger uptake than traditional platforms, for they can easily reach a wider global audience within a short amount of time by means of relatively new technological devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, and networks like the internet and social media.

2.2 THE CONSEQUENCES OF FRAMING

An example of mediators of news articles are the reporters and editors themselves. They are so-called “gatekeepers” (Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith 2012, p. 8). Social scientist Kurt Lewin was the first person to apply the term “gate keeper” in “his post-World War II research on social change” (White, 1950, p. 383; Shoemaker, 2001, p. 233). Lewin identified that news reports travel through “communication channels” and that “certain areas within the channels functioned as ‘gates,’” which are either “governed by impartial rules or ‘gate keepers’” (White, 1950, p. 383). The ‘gate keepers’ are the people responsible for which news items pass through the channels and which items do not. In today’s field of mass communication, the term ‘gatekeeper’ could refer to both people, individuals or a group, or a (social) media platform who has the ability to decide which stories will be reported on, which stories will appear in print or posted online and most importantly, *how* these stories will be reported on. This *how* refers to the framing of a story, which happens in both traditional and new media. Framing focuses on the presentation of the story and “provides for a rhetorical

context for the text” (Whitaker, Ramsey, & Smith, 2012, p. 8). In addition, framing includes the placing of information within a particular context to emphasise elements of the issue (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 61). Framing can trigger both “individual” and “collective-level emotions”, mainly collective guilt and collective victimization, which can subsequently influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviour toward outgroup members (Walter, Billard, & Murphy, 2017, p. 852). As a result, the media can influence the readers’ opinion, beliefs and attitudes about a certain topic and their behaviour towards others by the way they frame their story.

2.3 DEFINING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

People categorise themselves and others constantly. We do this by using labels, identifying certain types of behaviour and through describing each other (Demmers, 2017). There is a distinction between “individual identity,” how we see ourselves, and “social identity,” who we are in relation to a social group we belong to, which is determined by rules, beliefs, appearance and behaviour (p. 22,24). When the framing of a news report evokes the emotion of collective victimisation, which leads to the alteration of emotions, beliefs and attitudes toward outgroup members, people will start making a distinction between insiders and outsiders based on differences between the two social groups (Walter, Billard, and Murphy, 2017). Within this study of the Orlando Shooting, at least four social groups are of importance: people who identify with the LGBTQ-community, people who consider themselves part of the Muslim community, the general American population and Islamic Extremists. Neuman (as cited in Borum, 2011) explains extremism as “... any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and universal human rights” (p. 10). Most Islamic Extremists operate under the command of a greater institution, such as ISIS or Al Qaida. However, some extremists operate individually, so-called “lone wolves”. These people are often self-radicalised. Wilner and Dobouloz (2010)

describe radicalisation as “a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations ... that prepares and motivates an individual to pursue violent behaviour” (p. 38). This political violence by “subnational groups or clandestine agents” is labelled terrorism when it is directed at civilians or non-combatants and aims to influence and/or persuade an audience (Davis et al., 2013, p. 29). The media frequently connect Islam directly to terrorism and therefore blame many innocent people as well (Shadid, 2005). As a result, “Islam becomes a political category” (Shadid, 2005, p. 332). Shadid (2005) argues that there are four main shortcomings of how the current media reports on Muslims by use of language: “simplification,” “stigmatisation and problematisation,” The ‘Us’ (positive) and ‘Them’ (negative) mentality,” and “the lack of participation of Muslims and their vision in the media” (Shadid, 2005, p. 331). All four shortcomings contribute to a negative image of Muslims in the media.

3. DISCOURSE AND FRAMING ANALYSIS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN THE MEDIA

Discourse analysis studies the use of spoken and written language and semiotic events. Pan & Kosicki (1993) say that news discourse and framing devices consist of four structures: “syntactical”, “script”, “thematic”, and “rhetorical” (p. 59-61). The syntactical structure, in this sense, includes the inverted pyramid structure – important facts are mentioned first, and less important later – the way in which an article is organized, and the balance. The script structure refers to the idea of a news script as a complete and independent entity with a beginning, middle and end. It is often personalized and dramatized, due to its play with human emotions and its focus on action. The thematic structure refers to a news story that reports on different events related to a central issue or topic, a theme, consisting of a summary and a main body. The rhetorical structure includes the stylistic choices, such as “metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images”, the intention to invoke

images, to increase the importance and clarity of the story, and to proclaim their factuality (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 61-62).

This study focuses on the mass shooting that took place at the Pulse Nightclub on June 12, 2016 in Orlando, Florida. It will analyse articles by traditional media platforms *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Washington Post*, which are all elite newspapers, that gave a detailed description of the event or background information about the gunman. It will do the same for new media platforms *Huffington Post*, *Vice News* and *Buzzfeed News*, which are platforms that use the web only. The articles were written between the 12th of June and the 13th of June and all platforms are American. The genre of the articles can be defined as news reports. These types of articles are generally without an opinion, however some do implicitly tend to be judgmental, they include the five w's: who, what, when, where and why and cover events that happened in the last 24 hours (Harrower 2012; Harrison 2008, p. 40). The chosen media platforms are situated on the left of the political spectrum, so the differences and similarities found will not be the consequences of their political bias. The articles are reported on and written by multiple people. However, *Vice News* is unclear. Through a discourse and framing analysis, the way in which the articles framed their story and their contribution to the representation of Islamic extremists and American Muslims is analysed by means of the shortcomings proposed by Shadid (2005).

4. FRAMING OF THE ORLANDO SHOOTING, ISLAMIC EXTREMISM AND THE REPRESENTATION OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS

4.1 THE INVERTED PYRAMID AS A FRAMING DEVICE

The syntactical structure, as Pan and Kosicki (1993) define it, analyses the arrangement of the article the same way syntax focuses on the order of words and phrases, hence the name syntactical structure (syntax, n.d). It includes the inverted pyramid and the balance or

objectivity of the writing. Balance can be best defined through the understanding of its antonym imbalance or bias, which occurs when a story “has a preferred side, is one-sided or partisan” (Hopmann et al., 2012; Wien, 2005, p. 9). According to Pan and Kosicki (1993), “the signifying power of [the] elements [of an inverted pyramid] varies in the same descending order” (p. 59). Considering word order, the subject is placed at the start of a phrase, for the English language is an SVO (subject, verb, object) language. Likewise, the headline is the first sentence the reader will read and is ultimately “the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers’ minds” and therefore it is a powerful framing tool (p. 59).

The headlines by the six news media platforms either showed a preference for the frame of an act of terror by an Islamic extremist or a more neutral frame that stated how severe the shooting was. Hayley Tsukayama, Mark Berman and Jerry Markon (*The Washington Post*) and *Vice News* both mentioned the Islamic State, which could instantly trigger other concepts and imageries that people have stored within their memories that relate to IS and terrorism through the means of pre-existing beliefs and schemas. Walter, Billard and Murphy (2017) found that frames trigger emotions, which can either “enhance or attenuate the power of frames” (p. 850-854). Joe Mozingo, Matt Pearce and Tracy Wilkinson (*The Los Angeles Times*) referred to both an act of terror and an act of hate, balancing both sides of the story. Lizette Alvarez and Richard Pérez-Peña (*The New York Times*) and Sebastian Murdock, Andy Campbell, Roque Planas and Willa Frej (*Huffington Post*) chose a neutral headline focusing on the severity of the shooting, while Ema O’Connor, Ellie Hall, Michelle Border Van Dyke and Mike Hayes (*Buzzfeed News*) contrastingly focused on the shooter Omar Mateen rather than the shooting itself.¹ It is striking that only *The New York*

¹The headline of the print article by *The New York Times* read “Praising Isis, Gunman attacks gay nightclub, leaving 50 dead in worst shooting on U.S. soil”, linking the gunman directly with the Islamic State while, at that time, there was no direct evidence as to what Mateen’s

Times recognized that Pulse was a gay nightclub, which is an important fact, for Mateen was an apparent homophobe and was known for being angered by women, black, Jewish, gay, and queer people (Walter, Billard, & Murphy; *The Los Angeles Times*; *Buzzfeed News*; *The New York Times*; *Huffington Post*).

Following the headline is the lede or lead. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Huffington Post* and *Vice News* wrote a one sentence lede that summarized the event and included the most important details (what, where, how, when), such as the death toll, the shooter's possible terrorist ties, and where it happened. Only *Vice News* still did not recognise that it happened at a gay bar. *The Los Angeles Times* had a more elaborate lede that could be defined as what Pan and Kosicki (1993) describe as a "script" (p. 60). This is a narrative, describing the event as a chronological story and it "contains the intrinsic push of our attention to drama, action, characters, and human emotions" (Bennet as cited in Pan & Kosicki 1993, p. 60). News therefore "often appears to be excessively fragmented, personalized, and dramatized" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 60). *The Los Angeles Times* decided to open the article by creating a vivid image of the event, using descriptive adjectives and verbs such as "people danced and drank to thumping reggaetón, salsa and merengue," "others were splattered with blood of people they didn't know." They emphasized that it was the blood of strangers to dramatize it further, and gradually leading up to the climax in the

relation was with the terrorist group and if there was a connection at all. The stylistic choice to use the word "praising" contributed the frame of terror, for it implies the admiration or approval of ISIS and could provoke a type of emotion such as anger, which subsequently enhances the power of a frame (Lecheler, Schuck & de Vreese 2013, p. 202). The online version's headline left out "Praising Isis, as well as "worst shooting on U.S. soil." This could possibly be explained by the differences in editors, visual and stylistic reasons and they may have had more information on what happened by the time they wrote the print article, for the headline is more detailed. The initial online versions are written with the limited information that was available right after the shooting happened and were constantly updated with new information as time progressed. It has no direct influence on the main claim of this study, however it does show that within the same news outlet, difference in framing exists between print and online article.

sentence “before the sun rose in the humid Florida air Sunday, 50 people lay dead, and 53 more were injured - the deadliest shooting in American history.” Pan and Kosicki (1993) identify this as a strategy “to appeal to human interest and to increase psychological proximity to the audiences” (p. 61). Lee, Hon, and Won’s (2018) study states that psychological proximity is made up of two major components: “cognitive proximity” and “emotional proximity” (p. 246). “Cognitive proximity [...] is a mental representation of the proximity toward certain objects molded by individuals’ perceived salience, knowledge, and personal relevance. Emotional proximity represents the level of emotional connectedness and empathy toward people or events” (Deza & Deza as cited in Lee, Hon, & Won 2018, p. 246). So, by placing emphasis on drama and human emotions and by creating a vivid image *The Los Angeles Times* increased the psychological proximity to their audience using two framing devices, identified by Pan and Kosicki (1993) as part of the script and thematic structure of a news report. Simultaneously, enhancing the emotional connectedness and empathy of their audience towards the event and the victims of the attack. However, the article gave the impression that the Americans in general were the victims of the terror attack and have to defend their people. This is the emotion of collective victimisation and has a strong influence on the behaviour, beliefs and attitudes toward outgroup members.

An interesting comparison is the final paragraph of the *Huffington Post*’s article, the 14th and 27th paragraph of the article by *The New York Times*, and the 40th paragraph of the article written by *The Los Angeles Times*. All three were written similarly, containing a summary of other tragedies, yet differed in what they implied. *The Los Angeles Times* wrote about the shooter and listed the Orlando shooting at the top of a list with other shootings that ended in a slaughter, whereas *Huffington Post* identified the weapon Mateen had used and subsequently mentioned other tragedies caused by this weapon. They both showed how tragic the shooting was and placed it in a frame of terror, but not necessarily as a deed done by an

Islamic extremist. The news platforms respectively focused on the causalities of the shooting and the weapon used during these shootings, not the person behind the gun. *The New York Times* initially mentioned the causalities from different shootings over the past couple of years and ultimately compared Mateen to other “self-radicalized” terrorists who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. So, *The New York Times* presented a clear frame of an act of terror by an Islamic extremist.

4.2 THE UNDERLYING MEANING OF QUOTATIONS AND SOURCES

All articles quoted Barack Obama, who was at that time President of the United States of America. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* included him saying that the shooting was another reminder of how easy it is for someone to obtain a gun. The new media platforms did not mention gun control. *The New York Times* quoted Hillary Clinton saying America needs to harden their defences against international terror groups. They also quoted Donald J. Trump accusing “Mr. Obama of weakness on radical Islam and [him calling] for barring Muslim Immigrants.” Shadid (2005) identifies the representation of immigration as a serious problem as “problematisation and stigmatisation,” which contributes to the negative image of Islam and Muslims (p. 333). The reader is given the idea that stopping Muslim immigrants will solve the problem of terrorism. These are clear examples that support the frame of terror. However, *The New York Times* did quote three influential people with different political opinions and beliefs to appear balanced. In addition, *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times* both quoted leaders, such as Rasha Mubarak, representing the Muslim community in America towards the end of their article, who condemned the attack and explicitly stated that “[the extremists] do not speak for us” and that “[t]he Muslim community joins our fellow Americans in repudiating anyone or any group that would claim to justify or excuse such an appalling act of violence.” The authors juxtaposed two distinct groups of Muslims that Shadid (2005) identifies as the “moderate”

Muslim and the “extreme” Muslim, or the “good” versus the “bad”, not recognising the fact that within every society there are “bad” and “good” people (p. 332). He describes this phenomenon as “simplification of Islam” (p. 332). Moreover, a distinction between Americans and American Muslims was made. American Muslims had to separately state that they joined their fellow Americans and did not support any group that would justify such an act of violence, as if they are not “real Americans” and have to justify themselves towards them. Furthermore, according to *The New York Times* the attack was claimed by ISIS. They used the source SITE intelligence group, which tracks jihadist propaganda. They could have chosen this source to appear more reliable and increase their facticity, whereas *The Los Angeles Times* and *Vice News* used the Islamic State’s Amaq news agency as a source, which is directly related to IS. However, *Vice News* recognised this and said that “the fact that [such] a website applauded it doesn’t mean anything.” They even provided the reader with a reason why Islamic State would claim the attack, while there was no direct evidence that it was directed by them, therefore implying that they were doubtful if IS was in fact responsible for it.

4.3 HOW INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CONTRIBUTED TO THE FRAMING OF THE ARTICLES

The Washington Post explicitly mentioned that Mateen was Muslim, though he was not very religious “and gave no indication that he was devoted to radical Islam.” This sentence could be interpreted as implying that religious Muslims must also be affiliated to radical Islam or at least have to state that they are not. Shadid (2005) identifies an “us vs them” society, in which “culturalization of the behaviour of a certain ethnic or religious group leads to a stereotyped representation of the group” (p. 334). He states that the explicit mention of their Islamic background implies that it is the only explanation for their deviant behaviour (Shadid, 2005, p. 335). A major problem is that people tend to remember positive behaviour from members of their own group and negative behaviour from members of other

groups (Shadid, 2005, p. 337). Moreover, people start to form stereotypes that will influence the way they process information and will ultimately influence their expectations of the behaviour of other people incorrectly (Shadid, 2005, p. 338). In addition, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* added that Mateen was a son of Afghan immigrants. Most citizens of Afghanistan are Muslim. However, *The Washington Post* added that he was a security guard born in New York. *Buzzfeed News* introduced Mateen as a 29-year-old U.S citizen. Similarly, *The New York Times* said he was born in New York. Both dismissed the frame of terror in this instance and recognised him as an American born in New York. Still, *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times* mentioned the holy month of Ramadan within the context of terrorism.

All articles wrote a different account of Mateen's phone call with the FBI. *The New York Times* only mentioned that he pledged allegiance to IS and *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* added that he had referred to the Boston Marathon bombing. Only *Huffington Post* and *Buzzfeed News* provided the reader with the information that Mateen also claimed solidarity with Moner Mohammad Abusalha. Abusalha was born in Florida and was the first American to carry out a suicide bombing in Syria. It was an attack against non-Americans performed by an American. This could be a possible reason as to why the other news media platforms decided to leave this part of information out. Mateen's motives to attack Pulse nightclub were under investigation at the time of publication of the articles. In addition, the news articles also reported differently on this information. *Buzzfeed News* and *Huffington Post* stated multiple times that there was no evidence that he was part of a larger terror plot. They used words such as "concerns", "appears", "inspired by" and "casually". These words all indicate a sense of doubt and refrain from presenting an opinion. *The Washington Post* firmly said it was being investigated as a terrorist attack and even talked about overseas terrorism. *The Los Angeles Times* wrote that officials had not determined if

the act was directed by IS or if “other motivations, such as homophobia, factored into the attack,” implying that homophobia could not have been the main reason behind the shooting. Similarly, *The New York Times* did acknowledge that there was no evidence. However, this was followed up by emphasizing that Mateen was “still” believed to be on “at least one watchlist”. The information is not very convincing, because it is based on an assumption or belief. It gives the impression that they tried to cover up adverse findings by ending the paragraph like this.

Both *Huffington Post* and *Buzzfeed News* provided much background information about Mateen. They elaborately wrote about his relationship with his ex-wife and how she had told that Mateen was problematic. She thought he was mentally-ill and bipolar and she spoke up about how he physically abused her. These news platforms wrote about his behaviour at work and how he had mentioned to his colleagues that his family had ties to Al Qaeda and that he wanted to kill black people. They included Mateen saying to the FBI that “he made the comments because he believed he was being teased for being Muslim” (*Huffington Post*). His co-workers said that he was always angry and that women, black, Jewish, gay and queer people all angered him equally. They tried to be balanced and included both sides of the story. They did acknowledge that he had possible terrorist ties, but still decided to focus on his problematic personality and that sexual orientation could also have been a strong motivation for his attack. *The Washington Post* tried to support this frame by writing that the Islamic State had executed gay people in the past. However, it was immediately refuted by the statement that it is not yet clear if sexual orientation was a motive. *The Huffington Post* completed their frame by quoting Pulse’s co-owner showing her love towards the LGBTQ-community, mentioning the Pride month and Equality Florida, an LGBTQ civil rights organisation in their final paragraphs, the last thing the reader will take with him/her. *Vice News* did the same, while *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*

ended with leaders of the Muslim community condemning the shooting and *The Washington Post* mentioned the shooting in Orlando that took place that Friday night and killed 22-year-old singer Christina Grimmie. *Buzzfeed* ended their article with a brief analysis of Omar Mateen's father Seddique Mateen and his relation to the Afghan Taliban. They mentioned that a cache including lawsuits involving Seddique Mateen, a debt-buying company and an insurance company was released. *Buzzfeed News* made no assumptions on the information presented and therefore ended the article on a balanced note; they hint towards terror and simultaneously imply that trouble runs in the family.

5. CONCLUSION

In the modern world there is a fine line between traditional media and new media platforms. The major difference is the reader. The online reader scans more and looks for hyperlinks, highlighted words, bulletins and graphics, which causes the writing style of online articles to deviate from that of print articles. What remained the same is that both platforms tend to frame their news articles. This refers to the presentation of a story and includes the placing of information within a particular context to emphasise elements of the issue. Framing can trigger both individual- and collective-level emotions and can ultimately influence the readers' opinions, beliefs and attitudes about a certain topic and their behaviour towards others through the presented frame. It does this via different framing tools. The US media framed the 9/11 attacks in the context of Islam, which contributed to the representation of Muslims in America. This study focused on the Orlando shooting and how traditional media platforms *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* and new media platforms *Buzzfeed News*, *Vice* and *Huffington Post* framed their news articles of the event. It identified framing tools that are part of different news discourse structures, namely syntactical, script and thematic. It found that the three traditional media platforms tried to

include both sides of the story – hate towards the LGBTQ-community and an act of terror by an Islamic extremist – yet, preferred the latter. The headline is the initial cue to activate semantically related concepts in the reader’s mind. Two of three traditional media platforms mentioned IS in relation to the shooter Omar Mateen in their headlines, whereas none of the new media platforms did. Furthermore, they compared the shooting to other terrorist attacks, indirectly called Mateen self-radicalised and quoted Muslim leaders condemning the attack by an extremist. These examples of stylistic choices contributed to the frame of terror by an Islamic extremist and simultaneously to the representation of American Muslims in the media. The traditional media platforms mentioned that Mateen was Muslim, from Afghan descent and they made remarks to the holy month of Ramadan. They explicitly mentioned Mateen’s Islamic background in the context of terror, implying that this was probably the only explanation for his deviant behaviour and therefore also misrepresenting a great majority of innocent Muslims. *Huffington Post* framed its report in the context of hate towards the LGBTQ-community, while *Buzzfeed News* chose a more neutral or indecisive frame that included both sides of the story. Both gave a broad overview of Mateen’s background that focused on his anger towards women, black, gay and queer people, how he treated his wife and how he was believed to be bipolar and mentally ill, compared to a single-sentence or short paragraph in the articles by *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, which, on the other hand, emphasised his possible ties and earlier remarks to terrorist groups. *Huffington Post* ended its article by honouring the LGBTQ-community. *Buzzfeed News* chose to focus on Mateen’s father. The new media platforms took on a more neutral or balanced frame of the attack and therefore refrained from explaining the event through the prism of Islam and juxtaposing “good” versus “bad” Muslims.

This Bachelor thesis did not have the ability to research why there is a difference between the framing of the online articles by traditional and new media platforms. It assumes

that it could be explained through the history of the platforms. For example, *The New York Times* has been around since the 1850s and has for a long time been considered neither left or right wing. However, *The New York Times* does have a certain stance or meaning on things, whether online or on print. It cannot simply deviate from this and from what the readers expect of it, for it could become a different newspaper if it does. New media platforms were founded many years later in a different environment and could establish their political stance and their opinions right then. *Huffington Post*, *Vice News* and *Buzzfeed News* were founded between 2005 and 2013, a time wherein people started to learn more about the LGBTQ-community, which could make it easier for them to also take into account this side of the Orlando Shooting as compared to a newspaper that also reported in the past when homosexuality was still a taboo subject. In addition, the new media platforms were not around when the 9/11 attacks happened. This could make it easier for them to look at possible terrorist attacks more critically.

The study intended to analyse the differences and similarities between traditional and new media. To exclude political bias, it decided to choose liberal, left-wing platforms, therefore the results are not inclusive of all traditional and new media platforms. Similarly, it looked at elite platforms and excluded other types of platforms. Moreover, the Orlando Shooting is a unique case study, for it was an attack on a marginalised group and the motives of the shooter were debatable. Another critical point is that there were only two articles on the Orlando Shooting available on liberal new media platforms and one of them took a different approach than the others. All these factors could have influenced the results of the study. It could therefore be of importance for further research to focus on different types of new and traditional media platforms, considering the location on the political spectrum and the targeted audience.

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Appendix 1 – The New York Times

Orlando Gunman Attacks Gay Nightclub, Leaving 50 Dead

A gunman killed 49 people and wounded 53 more in an attack at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla., early Sunday.

By [Lizette Alvarez](#) and [Richard Pérez-Peña](#)

- June 12, 2016

ORLANDO, Fla. — A man who called 911 to proclaim allegiance to the Islamic State terrorist group, and who had been investigated in the past for possible terrorist ties, [stormed a gay nightclub](#) here Sunday morning, wielding an assault rifle and a pistol, and carried out the worst mass shooting in United States history, leaving 50 people dead and 53 wounded.

The attacker, identified by law enforcement officials as [Omar Mateen](#), a 29-year-old who was born in New York, turned what had been a celebratory night of dancing to salsa and merengue music at the crowded Pulse nightclub into a panicked scene of unimaginable slaughter, the floors slicked with blood, the dead and the injured piled atop one another. Terrified people poured onto the darkened streets of the surrounding neighborhood, some carried wounded victims to safety, and police vehicles were pressed into service as makeshift ambulances to rush people to hospitals.

Joel Figueroa and his friends “were dancing by the hip-hop area when I heard shots, bam, bam, bam,” he said, adding, “Everybody was screaming and running toward the front door.”

Pulse, which calls itself “Orlando’s Latin Hotspot,” was holding its weekly “Upscale Latin Saturdays” party. The shooting began around 2 a.m., and some patrons thought at first that the booming reports they heard were firecrackers or part of the loud, thumping dance music.

[Some people who were trapped inside](#) hid where they could, calling 911 or posting messages to social media, pleading for help. The club posted a stark message [on its Facebook page](#): “Everyone get out of pulse and keep running.”

Hundreds of people gathered in the glare of flashing red lights on the fringes of the law enforcement cordon around the nightclub, and later at area hospitals, hoping desperately for some word on the fates of their relatives and friends.

More than 12 hours after the attack, [anguished relatives](#) paced between Orlando Regional Medical Center and a nearby hotel as they waited for word. They were told that so many were gunned down that victims would be tagged as anonymous until the hospital was able to identify them.

“We are here suffering, knowing nothing,” said Baron Serrano, whose brother, Juan Rivera, 36, had been celebrating a friend’s birthday with his husband and was now unaccounted for. “I cannot understand why they can’t tell me anything because my brother is a very well-known person here in Orlando. He is a hairstylist, and everybody knows him.”

A tally of victims whose relatives had been notified began slowly building on a city website; by 6 p.m., it had six names. Among them was Juan Ramon Guerrero, a 22-year-old man of Dominican descent who had gone to the club with his boyfriend, Christopher Leinonen, who goes by the name Drew, because they wanted to listen to salsa. A friend, Brandon Wolf, watched people carry Mr. Guerrero outside, his body riddled with gunshot wounds.

But no one knew what had become of Mr. Leinonen. His mother, Christine, anxious because of health problems, had woken at 3 a.m. to news of the shooting, and learned from Mr. Wolf that her son had been inside.

A three-hour standoff followed the initial assault, with people inside effectively held hostage until around 5 a.m., when law enforcement officials led by a SWAT team raided the club, using an armored vehicle and explosives designed to disorient and distract. Over a dozen police officers and sheriff's deputies engaged in a shootout with Mr. Mateen, leaving him dead and an officer wounded, his life saved by a Kevlar helmet that deflected a bullet.

At least 30 people inside were rescued, and even the hardened police veterans who took the building and combed through it, aiding the living and identifying the dead, were shaken by what they saw, said John Mina, the Orlando police chief. "Just to look into the eyes of our officers told the whole story," he said.

It was the worst act of terrorism on American soil since Sept. 11, 2001, and the deadliest attack on a gay target in the nation's history, though officials said it was not clear whether some victims had been accidentally shot by law enforcement officers.

The toll of 50 dead is larger than the number of murders in Orlando over the previous three years. Of an estimated 320 people in the club, nearly one-third were shot. The casualties far exceeded those in the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, where 32 people were killed, and the 2012 shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn., where 26 people died.

"In the face of hate and violence, we will love one another," President Obama said in a special address from the White House. "We will not give in to fear or turn against each other. Instead, we will stand united as Americans to protect our people and defend our nation, and to take action against those who threaten us."

As he had done after several previous mass shootings, the president said the shooting demonstrated the need for what he called "common-sense" gun measures.

"This massacre is therefore a further reminder of how easy it is for someone to get their hands on a weapon that lets them shoot people in a school or a house of worship or a movie theater or a nightclub," Mr. Obama said. "We have to decide if that's the kind of country we want to be. To actively do nothing is a decision as well."

The shooting quickly made its way into the presidential campaign. Donald J. Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, who has accused Mr. Obama of weakness on radical Islam and has called for barring Muslim immigrants, suggested on Twitter that the president should resign.

“Appreciate the congrats for being right on radical Islamic terrorism,” he wrote. “I don’t want congrats, I want toughness & vigilance. We must be smart!”

Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee, released a statement saying: “We need to redouble our efforts to defend our country from threats at home and abroad. That means defeating international terror groups, working with allies and partners to go after them wherever they are, countering their attempts to recruit people here and everywhere, and hardening our defenses at home.”

Fears of violence led to heightened security at lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender events and gathering places around the country. Law enforcement officials in Santa Monica, Calif., confirmed the arrest on Sunday of a heavily armed man who said he was in the area for West Hollywood’s gay pride parade. The authorities, however, said they did not know of any connection between the California arrest and the Orlando shooting.

The F.B.I. investigated Mr. Mateen in 2013 when he made comments to co-workers suggesting he had terrorist ties, and again the next year, for possible connections to [Moner Mohammad Abusalha](#), an American who became a suicide bomber in Syria, said Ronald Hopper, an assistant agent in charge of the bureau’s Tampa Division. But each time, the F.B.I. found no solid evidence that Mr. Mateen had any real connection to terrorism or had broken any laws. Still, he is believed to be on at least one watch list.

Mr. Mateen, who lived in Fort Pierce, Fla., was able to continue working as a security guard with the security firm G4S, where he had worked since 2007, and he was able to buy guns. The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said Mr. Mateen had legally bought a long gun and a pistol in the past week or two, though it was not clear whether those were the weapons used in the assault, which officials described as a handgun and an AR-15 type of assault rifle.

A former co-worker, Daniel Gilroy, said Mr. Mateen had talked often about killing people and had voiced hatred of gays, blacks, women and Jews.

Around the time of the massacre, Mr. Mateen called 911 and declared his allegiance to the Islamic State, the brutal group that has taken over parts of Syria, Iraq and Libya, Agent Hopper said. Other law enforcement officials said he called after beginning his assault.

Hours later, the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, claimed responsibility in a statement released over an encrypted phone app used by the group. It stated that the attack “was carried out by an Islamic State fighter,” according to a transcript provided by the SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks jihadist propaganda.

But officials cautioned that even if Mr. Mateen, who court records show was briefly married and then divorced, was inspired by the group, there was no indication that it had trained or instructed him, or had any direct connection with him. Some other terrorist attackers have been “self-radicalized,” including the pair who [killed 14 people in San Bernardino, Calif.](#), who also proclaimed allegiance to the Islamic State, but apparently had no contact with the group.

[The Islamic State has encouraged “lone wolf” attacks](#) in the West, a point reinforced recently by a group spokesman, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, in his annual speech just before the holy

month of Ramadan. In past years, the Islamic State and Al Qaeda ramped up attacks during Ramadan.

American Muslim groups condemned the shooting. “The Muslim community joins our fellow Americans in repudiating anyone or any group that would claim to justify or excuse such an appalling act of violence,” said Rasha Mubarak, the Orlando regional coordinator of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Lizette Alvarez reported from Orlando, and Richard Pérez-Peña from New York. Reporting was contributed by Wendy Thompson and Les Neuhaus from Orlando; Alan Blinder in Fort Pierce, Fla.; Rukmini Callimachi from Paris; Eric Lichtblau and Eric Schmitt from Washington; and Steve Kenny, Richard A. Oppel Jr., Rick Rojas and Daniel Victor from New York.

A version of this article appears in print on June 13, 2016, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Praising Isis, Gunman Attacks Gay Nightclub, Leaving 50 Dead in Worst Shooting on U.S. Soil. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Appendix 2 – Washington Post

Gunman who killed 49 in Orlando nightclub had pledged allegiance to ISIS

By [Hayley Tsukayama](#) ,

[Mark Berman](#) and

[Jerry Markon](#)

June 13, 2016

ORLANDO — A gunman who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State opened fire inside a crowded gay bar and dance club here early Sunday, leaving 49 people dead and 53 injured in the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, authorities said.

President Obama labeled the rampage “an act of terror and an act of hate.” The gunman fired bullets seemingly at random inside the popular [Pulse nightclub](#), forcing panicked patrons to dive onto the dance floor, crawl across the ground and scramble out a back entrance. He then held others hostage in a three-hour siege that ended when police stormed the building and killed him.

Witnesses described scenes of horrific carnage. Victims flooded local hospitals with gunshot wounds to their chests, legs and arms. Some had their calves and forearms blown off, doctors said. Police said the toll could have been even greater had a SWAT team not rescued 30 people and shepherded them to safety. Many of the victims were Latino; the club was celebrating “Latin Night.”

“We’re dealing with something we never imagined and is unimaginable,” said Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer (D), who declared a state of emergency in the city.

The gunman was identified as Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard who was born in New York to Afghan parents. After his initial assault on the dance club, Mateen called 911 and pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, according to federal law enforcement officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the FBI investigation is unfolding. During the call, Mateen made reference to the 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon, officials said.

[\[GRAPHIC: What we know about the Orlando nightclub mass shooting\]](#)

The shooting raised fresh alarm about the ability of overseas terrorists to wreak havoc on U.S. soil. But it also ignited fears of a broader [campaign against the American gay, lesbian and transgender community](#) as the first anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage approaches.

Hours after the Orlando attack, police in Southern California reported arresting a heavily armed man who said he was headed to a gay pride parade in the Los Angeles area — though authorities later said they were mistaken about the man’s target. Meanwhile, in Washington, police stepped up patrols ahead of the Capital Pride Festival, one of dozens of gay pride events scheduled this month across the nation and around the world.

“As Americans, we are united in grief, in outrage, and in resolve to defend our people,” Obama said during a brief speech at the White House, where he said the FBI is investigating

the Orlando massacre as an act of terrorism. Until Sunday, the 2007 rampage at Virginia Tech — in which 32 people died — was the country's worst mass shooting.

Throughout the day, relatives and friends of missing clubgoers gathered at a downtown Hampton Inn & Suites to await news of their loved ones. On Sunday evening, as the names of the dead began to trickle out, the scene in the hotel's sweltering lobby turned tragic. One woman sat in a chair next to a stack of pizza boxes, sobbing and screaming. Another woman crumpled in her chair, crying, and was taken out in a wheelchair. A third woman vomited into a trash can. Others hugged, shook and softly cried as grief counselors and law enforcement officials milled about.

Condemnations of the carnage in downtown Orlando flooded the airwaves from officials and pundits across the political spectrum. But late Sunday, many questions remained unanswered. It was unclear, for example, how a lone gunman managed to hold so many people inside the nightclub for so long, whether any of the clubgoers tried to stop him and why police waited three hours to intervene. A clear timeline of events, including when the victims were killed and injured and who shot them, remained elusive.

Authorities declined to offer details. But a senior U.S. law enforcement official said officers delayed their assault on the gunman because the active-shooter scene turned into a hostage negotiation once the gunman called 911. For three hours, the gunman was on the phone with police and no shots were fired.

"That is when you do wait," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not an authorized spokesman. "It was appropriate."

Police ultimately chose to end the standoff because of concerns about the health and safety of dozens of people who were injured and trapped inside. Officials at nearby Orlando Regional Medical Center said at least nine people died at the hospital or were dead when they arrived. It was unclear whether anyone was injured during the gunman's final shootout with officers, although authorities said that one Orlando police officer was shot but his Kevlar helmet saved him.

The Islamic State has repeatedly executed gay people and released videos showing their gruesome executions. FBI Special Agent Ron Hopper said the bureau was still working to determine whether sexual orientation was a motive in the Orlando attack. He said investigators had found no indication that Mateen had outside help in planning the attack, nor any sign of other suspects or further threats to the public.

Much was also still to be learned about Mateen's background, although details about his previous contacts with law enforcement officials began to emerge. Much like Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older of the two brothers who carried out the Boston Marathon bombing, Mateen had been on the FBI's radar.

Hopper, who runs the FBI's Orlando office, told reporters that Mateen had twice been investigated by the bureau and was cleared both times.

In 2013, Hopper said agents twice interviewed Mateen after he made "inflammatory comments to co-workers alleging possible ties to terrorists." The FBI closed the investigation after it was unable to verify the details of his comments, Hopper said.

The following year, FBI agents examined possible ties connecting Mateen to Moner Mohammad Abusalha, the first American to carry out a suicide attack in Syria. Like Mateen, Abusalha lived in Fort Pierce, Fla.

“We determined that contact was minimal and did not constitute a substantive relationship or a threat at that time,” Hopper said.

Meanwhile, Sitora Yusify, [Mateen’s ex-wife, said in an interview](#) Sunday that he beat her repeatedly during their brief marriage and that Mateen, who was a Muslim, was not very religious and gave no indication that he was devoted to radical Islam.

“He was not a stable person,” she said. “He would just come home and start beating me up because the laundry wasn’t finished or something like that.”

On Sunday, the gunman was armed with a handgun and an assault rifle and was carrying additional rounds.

“It appears he was organized and well-prepared,” Orlando Police Chief John Mina said. Mateen had legally purchased the two guns — which the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said were a .223-caliber AR-15-type assault rifle and a 9mm semiautomatic pistol — within “the last few days,” according to Trevor Velinor of the ATF. The AR-15 is the civilian variant of the M16 military rifle and is one of nation’s most popular weapons. A standard magazine carries about 30 bullets.

The violence in the crowded nightclub began as Saturday gave way to Sunday. About 2 a.m., Pulse Orlando posted an urgent message on Facebook: “Everyone get out of pulse and keep running.”

Within minutes, police vehicles and a SWAT team descended on the club.

“I was there,” Ricardo J. Negron posted on Pulse’s Facebook page several hours later.

“Shooter opened fire @ around 2:00am. People on the dance floor and bar got down on the floor and some of us who were near the bar and back exit managed to go out through the outdoor area and just ran. I am safely home and hoping everyone gets home safely as well.” Many of the injured were taken to the regional medical center, which was locked down until Sunday afternoon. The hospital permitted only two family members at a time to go inside, leaving 45 people waiting in the 84-degree heat.

Some people emerged from the hospital with tears streaming down their faces. One woman lay on the ground, moaning “no” over and over until her family led her away.

Joannette Martinez said her family became worried when they couldn’t find her 24-year-old sister, Yilmay. It was Yilmay’s first time at the club, Joannette said; she was celebrating a visit from her brother-in-law.

“No one’s told us anything,” Martinez said as she sat on the sidewalk, her back to the hospital, after waiting for several hours.

At the Hampton Inn & Suites, Jose Honorato waited with his seven siblings for word about his younger brother Miguel.

“He was at the club with three friends. They made it out safely when the shooting started, but they don’t know if he made it out,” Honorato said.

Honorato said he had called Miguel’s phone, but it just kept ringing and went to voicemail. Police described a hellish scene inside the nightclub, which was strewn with bodies. “It’s absolutely terrible,” Mina said. “Fifty victims in one location, one shooting.”

The massive law enforcement response included a number of federal agencies. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, who was scheduled to attend a meeting in Beijing on cybersecurity, said Sunday that she was returning to Washington so she could monitor the investigation.

At the White House, Obama met with FBI Director James B. Comey and then briefly addressed the nation, saying the entire country stands “with the people of Orlando, who have endured a terrible attack on their city.”

The president said it was too early to know “the precise motivations of the killer,” but that the FBI would investigate possible links between the gunman and terrorist groups. Echoing comments he has made after other mass shootings, Obama said the bloodshed served to highlight how easily people can obtain guns in the United States. He also signed a proclamation honoring the victims and ordering that American flags be flown at half-staff until sunset Thursday.

In Orlando, Joshua and Mary Zika, who live less than a block from the nightclub, said they were particularly appalled that the shooter had appeared to target a particular group. “We’re proud of our gay community in Orlando,” Mary Zika said.

By early Sunday evening, a Florida LGBT advocacy group had raised nearly half a million dollars for the victims. More than 11,000 people had donated to Equality Florida’s GoFundMe page in six hours, raising more than \$480,000. The funds will go directly to victims and their families, according to the page.

Sunday’s rampage followed another shooting in Orlando: The fatal slaying Friday night of a pop singer who was killed while signing autographs after a performance at an Orlando concert venue.

Christina Grimmie, a 22-year-old singer who was a finalist on NBC’s “The Voice,” died hours after she was shot by a gunman who then shot himself, police said.

Berman and Markon reported from Washington. Adam Goldman in Washington and Katie Zezima and Amanda Elder in Orlando contributed to this report. Also contributing were Peter Holley, Souad Mekhennet, Ariana Eunjung Cha, Greg Miller, Joby Warrick, Tim Craig, Sarah Larimer, Julie Tate, Missy Ryan, Ellen Nakashima and Thomas Gibbons-Neff.

Appendix 3 – The LA Times

06.13.16

'An act of terror and an act of hate': The aftermath of America's worst mass shooting (Los Angeles Times)

Latin Night was wrapping up at Pulse around 2 a.m. as about 320 people danced and drank to thumping reggaeton, salsa and merengue.

Minutes later partyers were fleeing into the street. Some clutched gunshot wounds. Others were splattered with the blood of people they didn't know. Some were carried and dragged to safety. Police frantically loaded one injured man into the bed of a pickup truck.

Those still trapped in the gay nightclub could only hide.

Before the sun rose in the humid Florida air Sunday, [50 people lay dead](#), and 53 more were injured – the deadliest shooting in American history.

The gunman, 29-year-old Omar Mateen, died in a shootout with SWAT officers three hours after his rampage began. Mateen, the son of Afghan immigrants, called 911 during the siege, pledging his allegiance to [Islamic State](#) and mentioning the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

The FBI had twice investigated Mateen on suspicion of having terrorist ties in 2013 and 2014, yet they could not find conclusive evidence. Mateen was able to legally purchase a handgun and a .223 AR-15-style assault rifle days before the massacre.

After the shooting, a statement attributed to Islamic State's Amaq news agency said the attack "was carried out by an Islamic State fighter."

National security officials said they had not determined whether he was directed by Islamic State or simply inspired by the group. Nor had they learned how other motivations, such as homophobia, factored into the attack.

"We know enough to say that this was an act of terror and an act of hate," said President Obama at a White House media briefing after meeting with the FBI director. "And as Americans we are united in grief, in outrage and in resolve to defend our people."

“This massacre is therefore a further reminder of how easy it is for someone to get their hands on a weapon that lets them shoot people in a school or in a house of worship or a movie theater or in a nightclub. And we have to decide if that’s the kind of country we want to be. And to actively do nothing is a decision as well,” he said.

The top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Adam B. Schiff (D-Burbank), noted similarities to the November attack on the Bataclan nightclub in Paris and said in a statement that intelligence officers were combing through terrorism databases to see whether there were any known links between the shooter and a terrorist group.

FBI agents were interviewing Mateen’s family and friends Sunday and planned to search his home, authorities said.

Since 2014, Islamic State has urged supporters in the U.S. to plan and carry out deadly attacks without traveling overseas first or communicating directly with the group's leaders. Such so-called lone -wolf attacks are difficult to prevent because there are few communications to uncover or visits to terrorist training camps to track.

In May, Islamic State renewed a call for supporters in Europe and the U.S. to launch attacks on civilians during the holy month of Ramadan, which lasts from early June to the beginning of July.

"Ramadan has come near, and it is the month of raids and jihad, the month of conquest," Abu Muhammad Adnani, an Islamic State spokesman said in an audio message posted online.

Make it "a month of suffering" for non-Muslims, Adnani added, saying the message was specifically directed to "soldiers and supporters" in Europe and America.

Whether Mateen heeded the call or followed his own agenda is unclear.

From his home in Fort Pierce, a sleepy town on the Atlantic coast, Mateen drove 120 miles to Orlando. He was a man brimming with rage. He beat his ex-wife for not doing the laundry,

for any perceived slight; she thought he was mentally ill and left him after four months of marriage. At the security firm where he worked, he vented his hatred for gays, blacks, women, Jews. He grew furious on a recent trip to Miami, where he saw two men kissing in a park.

Mateen pulled into the parking lot at Pulse in the early hours of Sunday. The club sits on a humble commercial strip of South Orange Avenue, next to Dunkin' Donuts, across from a RadioShack.

At the entrance, an armed security guard confronted Mateen at 2:02 a.m. Shots were fired, but whatever happened did not stop Mateen. He stormed into the club just as last call was announced over the microphone.

When the first of dozens of shots rang out, many thought the sound was part of the music.

When one of the clubgoers, Chris Hansen, heard the loud banging noises, he thought the pops seemed to move with the beat.

"I thought it was a Ying Yang Twins song or something," Hansen recalled.

But the DJ turned down the sound and the sharp pop of gunfire became chillingly clear. In cellphone videos, the sound of single, high-velocity shots echoed through the streets. At other times, bullets crackled like firecrackers, the sound of a fully automatic weapon.

Partiers ran for the doors and fled into the surrounding neighborhood. Some had gunshot wounds.

At 2:09, the club posted a chilling note on its Facebook page: "Everyone get out of pulse and keep running."

But many couldn't escape. They barricaded themselves in the bathrooms. One woman covered herself with dead bodies to hide from the shooter. Two others briefly hid under the DJ stand.

Many who couldn't get out texted their loved ones.

"Mommy I love you," wrote one man, identified by the Associated Press as Eddie Justice, to his mother, Mina Justice.

"In club they shooting"

"He's coming"

"I'm gonna die"

"He's in the bathroom with us"

The fate of Justice, 30, was unknown.

Mateen stopped shooting and made his call to 911 about 20 minutes into the attack. He held the remaining 30 clubgoers as hostages. Authorities said they did communicate with him at this point, but did not specify what was said.

Outside, dozens of emergency vehicles poured into the area. There were not enough ambulances, so police cars transported many of the wounded to the hospital. The Orlando Fire Department called its bomb squad and hazardous material team to the scene after 3 a.m.

At 5:05 a.m., a SWAT team made up of 14 Orlando police officers and Orange County sheriff's deputies moved in to rescue the 30 hostages. They busted through a wall in an armored vehicle.

A fierce shootout broke out when they located Mateen. One officer took a shot to the head but was saved by his Kevlar helmet.

At 5:53 a.m., Mateen was dead.

No one left more carnage behind in an American shooting. Not the Columbine High School shooters in Colorado, where 13 people died in 1999; not [Adam Lanza](#) in Newtown, Conn., where 26 people were killed in 2012; not [Seung-Hui Cho](#) at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., where 32 people were killed in 2007.

Muslim leaders in America, bracing for a backlash, condemned both the slaughter and Islamic State.

“You do not speak for us,” said Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. “You do not represent us. You are an aberration. You are an outlaw. You don’t speak for our faith. “

He continued, railing against the extremists: “They never belong in this beautiful faith. They claim to. But 1.7 billion people are united in rejecting their extremism, interpretation and their acts and senseless violence.”

Brandon Wolf escaped the Orlando massacre by hiding in the bathroom. But he couldn’t find his friend Drew.

“Please Drew. Please,” he tweeted at 6:39 a.m.

He braced himself for the worst.

“Lord give me strength,” he wrote.

Then Wolf heard news he didn't expect: His other friend [Juan](#) was among those killed in the attack.

Devastated, he grieved and waited for word of Drew.

More than 15 hours after the attack, he tweeted again: "I want to thank you for all your prayers. And thoughts. But we lost them both. 2day is a sad day for earth and an incredible day for heaven."

At an Orlando hospital, Shawn Roysten, who survived the shooting, waited at the side of friends who fared less well, including one who was shot five times.

Roysten, a New York resident in town to visit family, had gone to the club as part of its Latin night. He arrived about 12:30 a.m. When the gunfire started, Roysten ran out and hid behind a fence, said his mother, Helene.

The bullets just kept coming, penetrating the fence. "There were so many bodies, so much blood," Roysten told his mother.

Mozingo and Pearce reported from Los Angeles and Wilkinson from Orlando. Contributing to this report was the staff of the Orlando Sentinel; Times staff writers Brian Bennett and Del Quentin Wilber in Washington, Sarah Parvini in Los Angeles and Molly Hennessy-Fiske in Orlando; and the Associated Press.

Appendix 4 – Huffington Post

CRIME

06/12/2016 09:28 am ET **Updated** Jun 16, 2016

New Details Emerge About Deadliest Mass Shooting In U.S. History

“The one thing that we can say is that this is being treated as a terrorist investigation,” said President Barack Obama.

By Sebastian Murdock, Andy Campbell, Roque Planas, and Willa Frej

Gunman Omar Mateen killed 49 people and injured 53 others when he opened fire at a popular gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Mateen was fatally shot by police.

Police have notified the next of kin for nearly all of the victims.

The FBI had questioned Mateen twice in the past, but he still legally obtained guns.

President Barack Obama said there were no links to a larger terror plot but that Mateen was inspired by “extremist information.”

ORLANDO, Fla. — Harrowing new details emerged Monday about the man who killed 49 people and injured another 53 at an iconic gay club in Orlando, Florida, in an hourslong attack that has been described as the worst mass shooting on U.S. soil.

Authorities have been reaching out to families of the victims as many wait for news about loved ones feared dead after the shooting. By Monday afternoon, police had notified the next of kin for about [46 victims](#).

[This is what we know about the victims.](#)

The Pulse club, known as a lifeline for Orlando’s LGBTQ community, was packed early Sunday morning when gunman [Omar Mateen stormed in](#), taking dozens of people hostage before dialing 911 from the venue’s bathroom. Mateen was fatally shot by authorities, who [burst into the club](#) after he threatened more lives and suggested he [was wearing explosives](#).

Investigation

President Barack Obama on Monday denied claims that Mateen was participating in a larger terror plot.

“The one thing that we can say is that this is being treated as a terrorist investigation,” Obama said. “It appears that the shooter was inspired by various extremist information that was disseminated over the internet.”

FBI Director James Comey echoed Obama’s statement in a news conference, saying there is so far “no indication that this was a plot directed outside the United States.”

Mateen called 911 twice early Sunday from the scene, Comey said. He first called and hung up; then he called back and spoke briefly with a dispatcher before hanging up again. Finally, the dispatcher called him back and they spoke.

During these calls, Comey said, Mateen pledged solidarity with the Tsarnaev brothers, who were responsible for the Boston marathon bombing, and with a Florida man who died in a suicide bombing while fighting for the al Nusra front, a terror organization linked to al Qaeda that is battling the Syrian government.

Timeline

Mateen entered the club around 2 a.m. Sunday with a semi-automatic Sig Sauer MCX rifle and handgun. He began shooting, and at one point entered a gunfight with an armed, off-duty officer. Mateen left the building, then went back in, where the violence turned into a hostage situation, said Orlando Police Chief John Mina.

Mateen retreated to the bathroom, where he appeared to have held 15 to 20 people hostage.

José Colom, 48, lives down the street from Pulse and was near the club when the shooter arrived. He said Mateen drove up, appeared to change clothing in his car, then emerged with weapons in his hands. He shot three people outside before entering the building, Colom said.

During a press conference Monday, Mina described Mateen as “cool and calm” in a conversation with negotiators, in which they discussed bombs, explosives and the so-called Islamic State.

“We believed that further loss of life was imminent,” Mina added. He said that prompted a SWAT team to detonate an explosive on a bathroom wall, and expand the hole using an armored vehicle to allow people to escape.

“We were able to rescue dozens and dozens of people who came out of that hole,” Mina added. “The suspect came out of that hole himself carrying a handgun and a long gun.”

A short time later, officers killed Mateen in a gunfire battle.

A total of 11 officers exchanged fire with Mateen, and all have been removed from duty, as is protocol for officer-involved shootings.

Mateen purchased a handgun and the Sig Sauer MCX approximately one week before the shooting, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Despite being questioned by the FBI in 2013 for suspected terrorist ties, then again in 2014, Mateen was still able to obtain the guns legally.

The semi-automatic assault weapon Mateen used was similar to the [AR-15](#), yet another legally obtainable weapon used in a number of other tragedies. It was used to kill schoolchildren at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut; moviegoers in Aurora, Colorado; and office workers at a social services center in San Bernardino, California.

Warning Signs

Several accounts of Mateen's disposition before the attack have cast the man as a dangerous figure who set off warning bells at home and in the workplace.

In an interview with The Washington Post, Mateen's ex-wife said [he was an abusive husband](#) who routinely beat her during their marriage.

"He was not a stable person," said the woman, who requested to remain anonymous out of fears for her safety. "He would just come home and start beating me up because the laundry wasn't finished or something like that."

In May 2013, while Mateen was working as a security guard at a Florida courthouse, the FBI investigated him for inflammatory comments he made to co-workers.

Comey said Mateen told co-workers that he had hoped that "law enforcement would raid his apartment and assault his wife and child so he could murder himself." The gunman also mentioned that his family had ties to al Qaeda and Hezbollah. During an interview with FBI agents, Mateen said he made the comments because he believed he was being teased for being Muslim.

Daniel Gilroy, who previously worked with Mateen as a security guard, told the Los Angeles Times [he complained](#) to their employer "multiple times that he was dangerous," including one incident where Mateen said he wanted to kill black people. Gilroy said that women, Jewish people and queer people all equally angered Mateen.

"You meet bigots," Gilroy said. "But he was above and beyond. He was always angry, sweating, just angry at the world."

The FBI investigated Mateen again in 2014 amid concerns he had ties to [American suicide bomber](#) Moner Mohammad Abusalha. The investigation was eventually closed.

Pulse Is A Place Of "Love And Acceptance"

Pulse's co-owner Barbara Poma expressed her "[profound sadness](#)" over the tragedy in a statement on the club's website.

"From the beginning, Pulse has served as a place of love and acceptance for the LGBTQ community," she said. "I want to express my profound sadness and condolences to all who have lost loved ones. Please know that my grief and heart are with you."

The shooting comes [during Pride month](#), a celebration of the LGBTQ community.

Local [blood banks](#) in Orlando have been flooded with volunteers and donors.

Equality Florida, an LGBTQ civil rights organization, set up a [GoFundMe account](#) for the victims of the shooting. The donation page had raised more than \$1 million as of midday Monday.

Nina Golgowski, Nick Visser and Reuters contributed to this report.

This piece has been updated with information from the police about the type of assault weapon the suspect used.

CORRECTION: *An earlier version of this article incorrectly referred to Gov. Scott Walker asking for a moment of silence. Walker is the governor of Wisconsin, not the governor of Florida.*

Appendix 6 – BuzzFeed News

Here's Everything We Know About The Orlando Shooter

Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old U.S. citizen, [open fired in a gay nightclub](#) in Orlando, Florida, early on Sunday, killing 49 and injuring 53.

[Ema O'Connor](#)

BuzzFeed News Reporter

[Ellie Hall](#)

BuzzFeed News Reporter

[Michelle Broder Van Dyke](#)

BuzzFeed News Reporter

[Mike Hayes](#)

BuzzFeed News Reporter

Last updated on June 13, 2016, at 4:06 p.m. ET

Posted on June 12, 2016, at 4:27 p.m. ET

Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old U.S. citizen, [opened fired in a gay nightclub](#) in Orlando, Florida, early on Sunday, killing 49 and injuring 53.

Mateen, who had been armed with a handgun and AR-15-type rifle, was killed at the scene after a SWAT team stormed the club, Hopper said. But what led him to open fire inside nightclub is something that investigators are continuing to piece together.

Mateen was born and raised in New York until his family moved to Port St. Lucie in eastern Florida. He was of Afghan descent.

He had worked as a contracted security guard in Florida since 2007 for G4 Security — a company that provides security for federal buildings.

G4 Security said in a [statement](#) Monday that when Matteen was hired he was given a "detailed company screening when he was recruited in 2007 and re-screened in 2013 with no adverse findings."

Before becoming a security guard, he worked for the Florida Department of Corrections. Mateen worked at Martin Correctional Institution from October 2006 to April 2007, a department spokesman told BuzzFeed News.

In 2009, he married Sitora Yusufiy in New Jersey, but she left him after a few months of marriage when he began physically abusing her, she [told](#) reporters Sunday.

The divorce wasn't finalized until 2011, government records obtained by BuzzFeed News show. Yusufiy said it took a year and a half for the divorce to go through because she was in New Jersey, while Mateen was in Florida.

Yusufiy met Mateen online and, in the beginning, acted normal, but after a few months, "I saw he was bipolar," she said, adding that he "would get mad out of nowhere." She also called him "mentally ill."

Yusufiy also told reporters Mateen was pursuing a career as a police officer at the time and that she believed he had worked at a Fort Pierce-based juvenile detention center.

Mateen's father, Seddique Mateen, told NBC that a few months ago Mateen was angered by two men kissing in Miami, especially because it took place in front of his three-year-old son.

His father has since held his own news conference, telling reporters that the family was totally unaware of any issues.

"We are saying we are apologizing for the whole incident," Seddique Mateen said. "We weren't aware of any action he is taking. We are in shock like the whole country."

Public records show that Mateen was living with a woman named Noor Zahi Salman, who appears to be the mother of his son.

Salman is named as Mateen's wife in a mortgage filed in St. Lucie County in September 2013.

A neighbor of the couple [told](#) the *Washington Post* that Salman did not wear the hijab or any other type of religious garb.

The FBI investigated Mateen twice before Sunday's attack — once in 2013 and again in 2014 — for possible terrorist motivations and connections.

Speaking from the White House after getting briefed by FBI Director James Comey, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, and other officials, President Obama said Monday there is no evidence that Mateen was directed or part of a larger plot.

The investigation into the shooter's motivations, he added, are still in the preliminary phase and that it appears he was "inspired by various extremist information that was disseminated over the internet."

Comey also gave an update Monday on new information discovered about Matteen.

Prior to the attack, Comey said, Mateen made three 911 calls. During his exchange with the dispatcher, Mateen pledged his allegiance to the leader of ISIS, but also claimed solidarity with Boston Marathon bombers and a Florida man who blew himself up in a suicide bombing, Moner Mohammad Abusalha, who was a member of Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda.

Mateen first came on the FBI's radar after agents were made aware of comments that he made while working as a security guard at a Florida courthouse, Comey said.

It was there that Mateen had made comments to coworkers about family connections to al-Qaeda, and that he hoped law enforcement would raid his apartment and kill his wife so that he could then martyr himself, Comey added.

Mateen's comments prompted the FBI to open an investigation, which included using a confidential informant, recording his conversations, and conducting two interviews in 2013 and 2014.

Asked during the first interview about his comments while working as a security guard, Mateen said he said those things out of anger and because his coworkers were teasing him for being Muslim.

The FBI again interviewed Mateen after Abusalha killed himself in Syria while driving a truck packed with explosives into a government outpost and detonating the bombs.

But Comey said investigators determined that Mateen only knew Abusalha "casually."

"I don't see anything in reviewing our work that our agents should have done differently," Comey said, adding that he would continue to scrutinize the agency's work regarding the Pulse nightclub attack.

Omar's father, Seddique Mateen, at one point also had a [Youtube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#) which he used as a platform to call for his strong political beliefs, including support for the Afghan Taliban.

Seddique Mateen announced on his show that he wanted to run for president of Afghanistan. In one recent [video](#), he expresses gratitude toward the Afghan Taliban, while denouncing the Pakistani government, especially the ISI, or Inter-Services Intelligence.

Mateen also [posted](#) on his Facebook page that he had met with members of Congress from the Foreign Affairs Committee during a hearing on Afghanistan. BuzzFeed News has reached out to the committee, though there is no record of a hearing in which Mateen took part.

On Monday, the St. Lucie County court released a [cache](#) of documents, including past lawsuits involving Seddique Mateen — including one involving a debt-buying company and another with an insurance company following a car accident.