

Dylann Roof Found Guilty in Charleston Church Massacre

By ALAN BLINDER and KEVIN SACKDEC. 15, 2016

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Dylann S. Roof, a self-radicalized young white supremacist who killed nine black parishioners last year when he opened fire during a long-planned assault on Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, was found guilty by a federal jury here on Thursday.

Mr. Roof, 22, stood, his hands at his side and his face emotionless, as a clerk read the verdict aloud in Federal District Court, where he had been charged with 33 counts, including hate crimes resulting in death.

Mr. Roof, whose lawyers conceded his guilt, will face the same jurors when they gather on Jan. 3 to begin a more suspenseful phase of his trial to decide whether he will be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole.

The jury deliberated for only about two hours on Thursday afternoon, and as a clerk began to read the guilty verdicts, one after the next, a few women in the courtroom nodded with satisfaction. After the court adjourned, the two adult survivors of the attack, Felicia Sanders and Polly Sheppard, shared a long embrace.

“I wasn’t expecting anything less,” Ms. Sanders told reporters later. “I knew it was going to be guilty, guilty, guilty, all the way through.”

Ms. Sanders’s husband, Tyrone, called Mr. Roof “pure evil” as he held his wife’s hand. “My thoughts were if I could get to him, what would I do,” said Mr. Sanders, whose son died in the attack. “But the Lord kept me from charging.”

The outcome seemed a foregone conclusion from the first minutes of the trial, which began on Dec. 7 and included a swift acknowledgment from the chief defense lawyer, David I. Bruck, that Mr. Roof was responsible for the “astonishing, horrible attack” on June 17, 2015.

Mr. Roof had chillingly confessed to investigators nearly 18 months earlier and revealed his purpose in a blatantly racist manifesto that he published online. His choice of targets seemed intensely premeditated — he scouted the church half a dozen times — although he also researched other black churches and a festival elsewhere in South Carolina before settling on Charleston because, he wrote, it is the “most historic city in my state.” Prosecutors and defense lawyers agreed on the basic contours of Mr. Roof’s march toward racial animosity. He belonged to no hate groups and acted alone in Charleston, but they said he had been an avid consumer of racist materials online.

San Bernardino shooting: What we know so far

11 December 2015

The incident

The attack took place at a Christmas party on Wednesday for employees of the San Bernardino public health department, at the Inland Regional Centre, which provides services for people with developmental disabilities.

Police believe that 28-year-old Syed Rizwan Farook, an inspector with the department, left the party and returned with his wife, 27-year-old Tashfeen Malik, to carry out the shooting.

The suspects were armed with two "long guns" - rifles or shotguns - and two semi-automatic handguns and wore dark, military-style clothing, police said. Police engaged in a shoot-out with the suspects as they attempted to flee the scene in a dark SUV, and killed both.

Several possible explosive devices were found at the scene, police said. San Bernardino police chief Jarrod Burguan said there "had to be some degree of planning" behind the attack.

The attackers

Two colleagues who survived the attack told the LA Times they were shocked to hear Farook's name linked to the shooting. He was quiet and polite with no obvious grudges, they said.

According to the AP News Agency, one victim of the shooting, Nicholas Thalasinis, got into a heated discussion with Farook about whether Islam was a peaceful religion while working a few weeks ago. His friend Kuuleme Stephens said she did not know whether those debates were a factor in the attack.

Farook recently travelled to Saudi Arabia, according to the Times, and returned with a new wife he had met online. The couple had a baby and appeared to be "living the American dream," Patrick Baccari, a fellow health inspector, told the paper...

Farook and Malik had practiced shooting at a local gun range just days before the attack, the FBI said, and that the two had been radicalised "for some time".

The motive

US officials have told the media Tashfeen Malik pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State (IS) group on Facebook...Farook and Malik talked about martyrdom and jihad as early as 2013, but they did not get on authorities' radars. Malik gained entry to the US on a fiancée visa, despite her radical views expressed online.

Chattanooga, Tennessee (CNN) – July 26, 2015

(CNN) -- Who was the gunman accused of killing four Marines in a shooting rampage Thursday at two military centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and why did he open fire? Suspected shooter Mohammad Youssuf Abdulazeez, 24, is dead, the FBI said. But -- publicly, at least -- investigators haven't said much more about him.

Witnesses saw Abdulazeez spray a hail of bullets at the glass doors of a military recruiting center in a strip mall. Then the gunman, who according to a law enforcement official was driving in a rented silver Ford Mustang convertible, moved on to his next target more than seven miles away: a Naval reserve center. There, he rammed into a gate at some point during his shooting rampage and was eventually killed by police, a U.S. official said.

Authorities "have not determined whether it was an act of terrorism or whether it was a criminal act," Ed Reinhold, FBI special agent in charge, told reporters. "We are looking at every possible avenue, whether it was terrorism -- whether it was domestic, international -- or whether it was a simple, criminal act."

Who was the suspect?

Authorities have released few details about the alleged gunman, but some details have begun to emerge about his past.

Abdulazeez was arrested in April for allegedly driving under the influence. He had been scheduled to appear in court later this month. Abdulazeez was not in any U.S. databases of suspected terrorists, a U.S. official said. He was born in Kuwait and had Jordanian citizenship, two law enforcement officials said. He was a naturalized U.S. citizen, one official said. And he may have traveled back to the Middle East in recent years.

Neighbor Dean McDaniel said he'd known the family for most of his 17 years living in the Chattanooga suburb of Hixson, Tennessee. He first crossed paths with Mohammad Abdulazeez when he was an elementary school student, and later would see him from time to time when he visited his sisters while they were baby-sitting McDaniel's children. "He was a good kid. ... They're good people," he said. "I've never had any kind of conflict with them."

Abdulazeez graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2012 with a degree in electrical engineering, university spokesman Chuck Cantrell said. Kevin Emily, his former high school wrestling coach, described him as "a great student" who sometimes missed practice to pray.

"He always contributed, always did what I asked him to do. I never had any problems out of Mohammad," Emily told CNN's "Erin Burnett OutFront." "He was very humble when he was in high school. He'd always listen to me, looked me in the eye. He was just - in high school he was a great kid."

A quote appeared beside his photos in his high school yearbook: "My name causes national security alerts. What does yours do?"

Deadly knife attacks in Marseille, France, treated as act of terror

By Elliott C. McLaughlin, CNN

October 1, 2017

(CNN) A knife-wielding man killed two women Sunday at the Saint-Charles train station in Marseille, France, before military police killed the suspect, city police told CNN.

Authorities are investigating whether the suspect had links to terror organizations. Amaq, ISIS' media wing, issued a statement on social media late Sunday calling the attacker a "soldier of the Islamic State."

The statement issued in Arabic said the attacker "implemented the operation as an answer to the call of targeting the coalition countries." France is a member of the US-led coalition battling ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

ISIS did not name the attacker or provide evidence that he was linked to the terror group.

The attacker was not carrying any identification, Marseille police said, but French Interior Minister Gérard Collomb said during a news conference that "The attacker had several identities."

Appearing on CNN affiliate BFM, Collomb said witnesses heard the attacker shout, "Allahu Akbar" -- or, "God is the greatest" -- and that the investigation was continuing. Surveillance footage showed the suspect attack his first victim, run away and come back to stab the second woman, the minister said. The suspect then ran toward soldiers arriving on the scene, Collomb said.

"Again we measure the devotion and the exceptional engagement of our troops. They have my honors," Collomb said in a tweet.

The Saint-Charles station is the same one where four Americans studying abroad fell victim to acid attacks last month. The Boston College students, three of whom were studying in Paris and one in Copenhagen, were treated for burns and released. That attacker was a 41-year-old mentally unstable woman, police said. She was arrested and hospitalized, according to BFM.

There was no reason to believe the acid attacks were terror-related, police said.