

LARGEST MASS SHOOTING IN U.S. HISTORY

For many, the popping didn't register as anything other than the loud bass filling the nightclub. Then, in an instant, screams ripped through the music, ushering in chaos. Bullets from 29-year-old Omar Mateen's AR-15 collided with those seeking safety; when the noise was silenced, 50 were left dead with another 50 plus were injured.

We recently discussed nightclub violence after Denver Broncos' Aqib Talib was shot in Dallas on June 5, and reviewed who could be held liable for such incidences. However, what occurred at the Orlando nightclub, Pulse, goes far beyond a fight between a few individuals. This was a deliberate, hate-fueled attack led by a self-proclaimed ISIS sympathizer; the worst such attack on U.S. soil since 9/11, and the greatest mass shooting in U.S. history.



The Real Questions

The question we feel compelled to ask is, "How can a man such as Omar legally purchase a weapon?"

Regardless of where you come down with the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms, most of us should be able to agree that the restrictions are in place to keep such men with evil intent from purchasing a gun. Omar acquired the .233 caliber AR-15 and a Glock handgun within the last week, despite the fact that he had been interviewed by the FBI three times since 2013 due to his connection in two separate cases.

According to law enforcement, shortly before beginning his killing spree, Omar made a 911 call declaring his allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State. While it is unsure if there is a direct connection, ISIS recently called on all Muslims across the globe to attack western targets. Omar's ex-wife stated that he was mentally-ill and often abusive. Co-workers described him as "extreme" in his religious beliefs.

Whether a true member of ISIS or a mentally-ill individual, the question remains the same: *how did the current system fail to keep him from buying weapons?*

Completely Legal Purchase

Homeland Security undersecretary John Cohen stated, "Being on the watch list is not in itself disqualifying, under law. The disqualifying elements of the investigation may be classified." In Florida, one must wait three days to purchase a handgun, however a weapon like a AR-15 doesn't require a permit, registration, or even a license. Florida joins Kansas, Vermont, South Dakota, Alaska, Missouri, Wyoming, Kentucky, Arizona, Mississippi, and Louisiana as states with the least restrictive gun control.

Therefore, despite the obvious (albeit possibly in hindsight) warning signs for Omar, he purchased the weapons that would later shoot over 100 people legally and through the proper channels. In fact, out of the shooters involved in mass shootings in the U.S. between 1982 and 2012, 49 purchased their weapons legally while only 12 did not (one unknown).

The Solution?

Should the United States develop new gun control measures that all states must adhere to or is there another answer? According to a study conducted by Pew Research Center in 2013, policies like a more complete background check for private and gun show sales is favored by the public.

Other widely accepted policies (where more than 50% sided) included: preventing those with mental illness from purchasing a gun, creating a federal database to track gun sales, armed security guards at schools, ban on semi-automatic weapons, ban on assault style weapons (the AR-15 used by Omar is the apparent weapon of choice of mass killers in the U.S.), a ban on high-capacity ammunition clips, and a ban on the online purchase of ammunition. Had these policies been enacted, the chances of Omar obtaining a gun and storming the nightclub drop dramatically (along with other mass shootings).



What is your opinion? What steps, if any, does the U.S. need to make to address this growing issues within the Unites States?

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