



Written by [James Murphy](#) on November 8, 2018

Another Ghastly Mass Shooting Kills 12 in Southern California

An ex-Marine, heavily tattooed and dressed all in black, opened fire in a crowded Thousand Oaks, California bar late Wednesday night. When the carnage was over, 12 people, including one police officer, were dead and the gunman killed himself. Around a dozen more were injured.

"It's a horrific scene in there," Ventura County Sheriff Geoff Dean told reporters. "There's blood everywhere."



The gunman, identified as Ian David Long, began the murders by shooting a security guard at the Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks, a community about 40 miles west of Los Angeles. Long then reportedly entered the building shooting security guards and patrons, seemingly at random.

Long also shot Sergeant Ron Helus, a 54-year-old 29-year veteran of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. Amid chaotic conditions, Helus ran into the scene and exchanged gunfire with Long prior to being shot. He would die later at the hospital.

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Dean said of Helus, "He was hard working, he was totally committed, he gave his all and tonight, as I told his wife, he died a hero."

Dean praised all the officers who went in, heedless of their own safety. "There's no doubt that they saved lives by going in there and engaging with the suspect," Dean said.

Police have not yet publicly speculated on a motive behind the killings. Long had no criminal record, but one interaction with police occurred earlier this year. In April, police were called to the home that Long shared with his mother when neighbors reported loud crashing sounds from within the home. Long was reportedly acting "irrationally" and "irate." Police called in a mental health specialist at the time to assess Long's condition.

Reports said that Long may have suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Dean related. But the mental health specialist cleared Long and didn't feel his condition called for an involuntary psychiatric evaluation.

Long was a decorated Marine veteran, having served from 2008 until 2013. He received 10 medals during tours of Afghanistan.

President Trump [responded](#) to the shooting with two tweets, the first informative and the second lauding the actions of police. "Great bravery shown by the police. California Highway Patrol was on scene within 3 minutes, with first officer to enter shot numerous times. That Sheriff's sergeant (Helus) died in the hospital. God bless all the victims and families of the victims. Thank you to Law Enforcement."

House minority leader Nancy Pelosi also weighed in, saying, "We are heartbroken by the loss of



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Sheriff's Sgt. Ron Helus," Pelosi said in a statement. "His courage represents the best of America, and his heroism is a blessing to our country."

While Pelosi refrained from pushing gun control with her initial response, another colleague, Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) couldn't resist using the tragedy to signal a House priority when Democrats take control in January. "We must find a way to stop these senseless, and many times preventable killings that are robbing our country of innocent lives," Nadler tweeted.

The Thousand Oaks shooting occurred only a scant 12 days after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting where a gunman killed 11 temple-goers in an anti-Semitic attack.

Long used a legally purchased Glock 21, a .45-caliber weapon with an extended magazine in the assault. There are also reports that he used some sort of smoke bomb to create confusion during the attack. Extended magazines are illegal in California.

"This weapon did have extended magazines on it," Dean said. "We don't know at this time how many rounds were actually in the weapon or how many rounds the magazine could actually hold because it's still being processed as part of the evidence."

By California law, the Borderline Bar and Grill was a [gun-free zone](#). Permitted and concealed firearms are banned in any California business that serves alcohol.

A 2018 survey by the website [Niche](#) listed Thousand Oaks and Ventura County as one of the safest places to live in America.

When asked if he was surprised that such a tragedy could occur in Thousand Oaks, Dean said, "I've learned it doesn't matter what community you're in. It doesn't matter how safe your community is. It can happen anywhere."

If all these mass shootings leave you with a bad feeling in the pit of your stomach, then congratulations, you haven't yet lost your ability to feel. As these shootings continue to occur and become ever more common, we risk becoming unaffected by them. While we rightfully look to defend the Second Amendment against those who attempt to use these tragedies to steal our freedoms, it's also proper to remember that real people are dead because of people so imbued with evil that they chose to act out this way.

And the answer to evil ultimately is not legislation — but God and His love.

Image: Screenshot from [ABC News video](#)



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