



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 30, 2019

Garlic Festival Shooting: So Many Questions, So Few Answers So Far

Almost immediately after 19-year-old Santino Legan was killed by police within a minute of beginning a [shooting rampage](#) that left three dead and a dozen wounded at the Garlic Festival in Gilroy, California, Sunday night, questions began: How did he get into the festival? Where did he get this weapon? Why the festival? What motivated him? Why didn't California's strict gun laws keep this from happening?



There are, at this writing, precious few answers, but a few clues.

Santino had been planning the attack for some time. He knew California's strict gun laws would keep him from being able to purchase a firearm, as he was only 19 (California restricts firearm ownership to those age 21 and older). He knew that security at the food festival — one of the nation's best known and most popular — would be extremely tight, with metal detectors at the main entrance.

The shooter's solution: Take advantage of Nevada's less-restrictive gun laws. As a resident of Nevada, he was able to purchase an AK-47 semi-automatic rifle knockoff from a gun shop there online and then pass a background check when he went into the store to claim it.

He also purchased a pair of bolt cutters, which he used to cut through the chain-link fence at the rear of the fairgrounds to avoid the metal detectors.

The owner of Big Mike's Gun and Ammo in Fallon, Nevada, saw nothing wrong with any of the paperwork or with Legan's behavior when he picked up the firearm on July 9. He said, "When I did see him, he was acting happy and showed no reasons for concern. I would never sell any firearm to anyone who acted wrong or looks associated with any bad group like white power. Everyone is my brother and sister," said the veteran and store owner on his Facebook page following the shooting, "and I am mourning for the families."

He added, "I have always said we will sell to good people and have done everything we can to make sure this happens. We obey the laws. We are a small home business [and] we sell to people who we think are upstanding citizens to promote safe sport shooting."

Legan even fooled a close family friend, Jerome Turcan, who was training Santino's older brother Rosino in boxing and martial arts. When Turcan learned about the shooting, the first thing he did was call members of the family: "They wanted to be sure he [Santino] was OK. That was the last contact I had with him. And then I learned this morning it was Santino who did the shooting. It was shocking."

Santino left a clue on his Instagram account that he created four days earlier, raising further questions: He posted two messages just before the shooting: "Ayyy garlic festival time. Come get wasted on overpriced sh*t." The second included a photo of Smokey the Bear and a sign saying "Fire Danger High Today," followed by, "Read 'Might is Right' by Ragnar Redbeard. Why overcrowded towns and pave more open space to make room for hordes of mestizos [a term a person of mixed descent, commonly



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white and Hispanic or white and American Indian] and Silicon Valley white trash?"

Revisionist historian James J. Martin called the book "surely one of the most incendiary works ever to be published anywhere." Parts of it were so rancid, racist, and anti-Semitic that it was banned for a period of years.

The shooter referred to himself as an "Iranian-Italian," but a cursory search of his family background reveals little confirmation of either claim.

Another clue surfaced when it was learned that one of the victims asked Legan "Why are you doing this?" and he answered, "Because I'm really angry!"

This was enough to Maureen Callahan to write in the *New York Post* that this was the strongest clue to the motive behind the shooting:

He [Legan] fits the profile of those who've come before, the rage-induced young men we first encountered through Columbine and later Sandy Hook, Aurora, Charleston, Virginia Beach, the STEM school shooting in Colorado, Charlotte, the Poway synagogue shooting in California, the Louisiana shootings in two parishes, the Sebring shootings in Florida (those last six this year alone), the Mercy Hospital shooting, the Thousand Oaks shooting, the Tallahassee yoga studio shooting, the Jacksonville Landing shooting, the Art All Night shooting in New Jersey, the Santa Fe HS (Texas) shooting, the Nashville Waffle House shooting, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS shooting — and far too many more to mention, but all with one thing in common....

These young men nurture their anger through first-person shooter games, violent pornography, through racism and a fascination with guns and violence.... [This] is our greatest, most stubborn and pressing threat — more so, I would argue, than Islamic terrorism or Russian hacking or immigration or trade wars.

There is one certainty: Anti-gun politicians wasted little time with such questions, but claimed that the issue wasn't with the shooter but with his tool of choice. Typical was the online message posted by California Governor Gavin Newsom after the shooting: He wants "national cooperation" on controlling these "weapons of godd*mned mass destruction."

Photo: AP Images

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