



Written by [Clinton Alexander](#) on September 27, 2016

Washington Mall Shooting: Answer Not Gun Control, but Armed Populace

Friday evening in the town of Burlington,  Washington, a gunman walked into Macy's at the Cascade Mall and opened fire. The shooting lasted a mere 60 seconds and left five people dead. The mall is 65 miles north of Seattle and sits directly against the state's major north-south corridor, I-5. Word of the shooting spread quickly throughout Burlington, a town of approximately 8,500 people, and had residents ill at ease as news spread through the neighboring town of Mount Vernon.

Sam Price of Burlington — owner of Larry's Auto & Truck Parts of Burlington, a business less than one mile from the Macy's door — told *The New American*,

My initial reaction was obviously a concern for the entire community as the gunman was on the loose, and prayers for the families of the victims. It wasn't long after news of the shooting came through that police and officials were canvassing my entire neighborhood at home. News reports had him possibly coming directly into our area, so everyone was on complete lockdown.

The New American also interviewed Rob Martindale, owner of Farrell's Auto Wrecking in Mount Vernon, a mere three miles away, who stated,

At first it was very sporadic information and we really didn't know much. My kids were at a football game at the high school just down the street from the mall. We originally thought it might just be some sort of drive-by shooting, but we called our kids and told them maybe they should come home just in case. We originally had dinner plans in town, but after the news, decided to just go to a quick drive-through. Before our kids could even leave the game to head home, the school officials announced over the loud speaker that there were reports saying the gunman was heading in the direction of the school. They took everyone into the high school gymnasium and had a lockdown. No kids were allowed to leave until their parents arrived and personally picked them up. For something like that to happen in our small community was definitely unsettling.

After examining surveillance video from the Burlington Mall and connecting a specific car and license plate to the shooter, 20-year-old Arcan Cetin, Skagit County authorities alerted the Island County Sheriff's Office, and the suspect was apprehended without incident around 6:30 p.m. Saturday evening, one day after the shooting. He was taken into custody approximately 28 miles from the mall in Burlington near his apartment in Oak Harbor, Washington — home to Whidbey Island Naval Air Station.

Details of Cetin and his background are still sparse, but some information is known. While initial eyewitness reports suggested the shooter might be Hispanic, Cetin's family is actually of Turkish descent. His father met his mother in Turkey and the family emigrated from there to the United States when he was a young child. Cetin's status is not that of a citizen, but rather a "legal resident" of the United States.



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According to reports by KIRO-7 News in Seattle, Arcan Cetin has had previous encounters with the law, including:

- A 2015 misdemeanor fourth degree assault case in Island County, in which he was ordered to undergo a mental health evaluation. There were reports of Cetin using cannabis during the course of his mental health evaluation.
- A court order to abstain from alcohol and drug use.
- Multiple accusations of having “groped” girls at the high school he attended in Oak Harbor.
- An accusation of having sent an unsolicited photo of his crotch to a 21-year-old neighbor.

Speaking to the Associated Press, Amber Cathey, the neighbor to whom he allegedly sent a photograph of his crotch, said she would deliberately change the route to her apartment to avoid his proximity when his car was in the parking lot. Similar sentiments were echoed by multiple others who had contact with Cetin throughout his teen and high school years.

The five victims who were murdered by Cetin at the Cascade Mall are:

- Sarai Lara, the youngest victim at just 16 years. A sophomore at Mount Vernon High School, Lara was a cancer survivor and has been described by her mother as a happy, responsible, and driven student.
- Belinda Galde, age 64, and her mother said to be in her 90s.
- Chuck Eagan, maintenance worker for Boeing. Eagan and his wife were in Macy’s after having dinner at the mall. When the shooting began, they started to run. When his wife stumbled, he stooped to help her up and was shot.
- Shayla Martin, 52-year-old make-up artist from Mount Vernon. Martin’s sister described her as an avid reader who was both classy and practical.

Bail has been set at \$2 million for Cetin, who has been charged with five counts of premeditated murder. Cetin’s stepfather has described his stepson as suffering from anxiety and depression — mental health issues for which he had undergone court mandated counseling.

While families of the victims in the Burlington and Mount Vernon communities struggle to make sense of such senseless violence, one B-List Hollywood celebrity has already issued a snarky comment on social media. Via his Twitter account, actor Wil Wheaton stated, “Welcome to America. It has been 0 days since our last mass shooting. #F**ktheNRA”

Ignoring the obvious mental illness from which Cetin was suffering, people such as Wheaton are quick to lay blame for the shooting at the door of Second Amendment supporters and groups such as the NRA. What they completely discount is that in addition to the court orders to abstain from drugs and alcohol, Cetin had also been barred by the judge from owning or possessing a firearm. *It was already illegal for Arcan Cetin to have the weapon.* Additional gun control laws would have been moot in the scenario where Cetin committed such a heinous act without regard for human life.

In the wake of the shooting at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg, Oregon, on October 1, 2015, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution Thomas Sowell wrote the column [The “Gun Control” Farce](#), published at *The New American* and elsewhere. Said Sowell:

President Obama’s intrusion into the mourning community of Roseburg, Oregon, in order to promote his political crusade for stronger gun control laws, is part of a pattern of his using various



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other sites of shooting rampages in the past to promote this long-standing crusade of the political left.

The zealotry of gun control advocates might make some sense if they had any serious evidence that more restrictive gun control laws actually reduce gun crimes. But they seldom even discuss the issue in terms of empirical evidence.

Saving lives is serious business. But claiming to be saving lives and refusing to deal with evidence is a farce. Nor is the Second Amendment or the National Rifle Association the real issue, despite how much the media and the intelligentsia focus on them.

As the communities of Burlington and Mount Vernon, Washington mourn the lives of those lost last Friday, they need the thoughts and prayers of their friends, loved ones, community, and nation. What is not needed is politicians and Hollywood personalities pointing fingers at the NRA in an obvious attempt to further curb the Second Amendment — actions which would leave good citizens further defenseless and do nothing to curb violent acts by those such as Arcan Cetin.

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