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Ten killed in mass shooting at Oregon community college

By Gabriel Black

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At least 10 people were killed Thursday morning and many more injured after a young man, identified as 26-year-old Chris Harper Mercer, opened fire in several classrooms at Umpqua Community College (UCC), a small two-year college in Roseburg, Oregon, 175 miles south of Portland.

According to Portland's KATU News, the shooting began around 10:30 AM Pacific Time. Mercer opened fire in the Community College's Snyder Hall, a science building and reportedly fired shots into multiple classrooms.

The local *News-Review Today* interviewed Kortney Moore, 18, who was in class when her teacher was shot in the head by the gunman through a window. The paper reports that, "The shooter was inside at that point, and he told people to get on the ground. The shooter was asking people to stand up and state their religion and then started firing away."

While information is still being released, police reports indicated that, in addition to those killed, at least seven other people were injured in the attack.

Two individuals reportedly died while receiving medical treatment. Several patients' wounds were too severe to be treated at the local Mercy Medical Center and were flown via helicopter to nearby hospitals.

Mercer, who reportedly lived in the Roseburg area, was among the dead, having been killed in an exchange of gunfire with police.

In audio from the police and fire dispatch, police can be heard saying they are exchanging fire with the gunman and that he was suspected to have a long gun—meaning a gun larger than a pistol.

Police reportedly recovered three weapons from Mercer’s body, one long gun and two smaller handguns. There were also reports that the gunman was using a silencer on his weapon.

While the motivations for the shooting remain unclear, a blog post attributed to Mercer shows the young man reflecting on the attention given to Vester Flanagan after he filmed himself murdering two Virginia news reporters in August and posted the footage to social media.

“A man who was known by no one, is now known by everyone. His face splashed across every screen, his name across the lips of every person on the planet, all in the course of one day. Seems the more people you kill, the more you’re in the limelight,” the post reads.

The poster then enjoins readers to view the video of the murder stating, “It’s a short video but good nonetheless.”

While yet to be confirmed, federal investigators also suspect Mercer may have posted a warning to 4chan, an anonymous Internet forum, the night before the shooting.

A posting in the Robot9001 (“r9k”) channel on 4chan Wednesday night warned those in the channel not to go to school Thursday if they lived in the northwest and included an image of a gun. The r9k channel is a popular section of 4chan for disaffected youth and self-described social outcasts.

UCC has 3,300 full-time students as well as 16,000 part-time students. Eugene, Oregon’s KVAL noted that Oregon’s rural community colleges, such as UCC, “have really been a place for people to retrain,” citing the shrinking of jobs in the state’s fishing and lumber industries.

Approximately 20 percent of Roseburg’s 21,000 residents live below the poverty line. Douglas County, where Roseburg is located, has an official unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, among the highest in Oregon and significantly higher than the official national rate of 5.1 percent.

The United States has averaged more than one mass killing every day in 2015. According to the website shootingtracker.com Thursday’s shooting was the 294th incident so far this year in the United States in which multiple people have been killed or wounded by gun fire.