

US MOVIE THEATER MASSACRE

MOURNING THE DEAD

PHOTO BY SHANNON STAPLETON / REUTERS

People participate in a vigil for victims behind the theater where a gunman opened fire on moviegoers in Aurora, Colorado, on Sunday. Residents of the Denver suburb mourned their dead from a shooting rampage by a "demonic" gunman who killed 12 people and wounded 58 after opening fire at a cinema showing the new Batman movie on Friday.



Shooting suspect quiet as he faces court

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and NICHOLAS RICCARDI in Aurora, Colorado
The Associated Press

The suspected gunman in the Colorado theater massacre headed to his first court appearance on Monday, but authorities said he refuses to talk, and it could take months to learn what prompted one of the worst mass shootings in US history.

James Holmes, 24, has been held in solitary confinement awaiting his hearing, where the charges of suspicion of first-degree murder will be read against him. Friday's shootings left 12 dead and 58 wounded, some critically.

"He's not talking to us," Aurora Police Chief Dan Oates said.

Police have said Holmes began buying guns at Denver-area stores nearly two months before the shooting and that he received at least 50 packages in four months at his home and at school. He recently purchased 6,000 rounds of ammunition over the Internet, the chief said.

During the attack, Holmes allegedly set off gas canisters and used a semiautomatic rifle, a shotgun and a pistol to open fire, Oates said.

The semi automatic assault rifle jammed during the attack, forcing the gunman to switch to another gun with less firepower, a federal law enforcement official told The Associated Press. That malfunction and weapons switch might have saved some lives.

The owner of a gun range said Holmes applied to join the club last month but never became a member because of his behavior and a "bizarre" message on his voice mail.

When Lead Valley Range owner Glenn Rotkovich called to invite Holmes to a mandatory orientation the following week, he said he heard a message on Holmes' voice mail that was "guttural, freakish at best".

He eventually told his staff to watch out for Holmes at the July 1 orientation and not to accept him into the club, Rotkovich said.

Officials at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus were looking into whether Holmes, a former doctoral student in neuroscience, used his position in a graduate program to collect hazardous materials.

Holmes' reasons for quitting the doctoral program in June, just a year into the five- to seven-year program, remained a mystery. He recently took an intense, three-part oral exam that marks the end of the first year. Those who do well continue with their studies and shift to full-time research, while those who don't do well meet with advisers and discuss their options. University officials would not say if he passed, citing privacy concerns.

Ritchie Duong, a friend who has known Holmes for more than a decade, told the Los Angeles Times that he last saw Holmes in December and his friend seemed fine.

Academics came easily to Holmes, Duong said. "I had one college class with him, and he didn't even have to take notes or anything."

Obama, Aurora pay tribute to victims

By MARY SLOSSON and CHRIS FRANCESCANI in Aurora, Colorado
Reuters

President Barack Obama met with friends and family of the Colorado movie theater shooting victims on Sunday as the town of Aurora mourned the 12 who died.

Obama joined local officials and residents in refusing to utter the name of the alleged shooter, James Holmes.

Obama met with families at the University of Colorado Hospital. In a televised address afterward, he focused on the bravery of a young woman, Stephanie Davies, who saved her friend Allie Young by putting pressure on a gushing neck wound with one hand while calling for help on her cell phone with the other.

"They assure us that out of this darkness a brighter day is going to come," Obama said. "Although the perpetrator of this evil act has received a lot of attention over the last



LARRY DOWNING / REUTERS

US President Barack Obama pauses while speaking at the University of Colorado Hospital after he met with families bereaved after a gunman went on a shooting rampage at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, on Sunday. Friday's mass shooting has stunned the nation and rekindled debate about guns and violence in America.

couple of days, that attention will fade away. And in the end, after he has felt the full force of our justice system, what will

be remembered are the good people who were affected by this tragedy."

Among the thousands of

people spread across the lawn at the memorial were two dozen friends of victim Micayla Medek, 23, all clad in bright



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BARACK OBAMA
US PRESIDENT

shades of pink, her favorite color.

Henry Miranda, 23, was sitting with "Cayla" when she was shot, and declined to talk about the night.

"Today is not about 'Why?'" Miranda said. "It's about celebrating the love she brought

into all of our lives."

Across the city, residents mourned. A dozen crosses with names of the dead now stand on a small hill across the street from the movie theater. Flowers have been placed in front of all the crosses and a giant teddy bear was placed next to one with the name of the youngest killed, 6-year-old Veronica Moser-Sullivan.

A sign reading "7/20 gone not forgotten" was surrounded by balloons, flowers, American flags, Air Force hats and flags, and dozens of handwritten notes.

The spray of bullets in the theater took the lives of victims ranging from the 6-year-old girl to a 51-year-old man. Many of the wounded are still in the hospital.

Iraq war veteran Christina Blache said she thought the shots were part of the show. But she was hit, and a friend who was celebrating his 27th birthday died. "Who expects to be shot in a movie theater? None of us did," she told CNN.

Warner Bros mulls changes to *Gangster*

By RONALD GROVER and LISA RICHWINE in Los Angeles
Reuters

Warner Bros is rethinking its plans for the film *Gangster Squad* in light of a scene featuring a movie-theater shooting, but beyond that Hollywood executives expect little fallout from the mass killing at a Batman screening on Friday in Aurora, Colorado.

Officials at Warner Bros were expected to meet on Monday to discuss whether to remove or edit the *Gangster Squad* shooting scene, or to change the Sept 7 release date for the film starring Sean Penn and Ryan Gosling, a person familiar with the discussions said.

On Friday, Warner Bros yanked *Gangster Squad* trailers after a gunman killed 12 and wounded 58 at a midnight premiere of another Warner film, *The Dark Knight Rises*. Trailers had included the scene in which men open fire with machineguns on an audience in a movie theater.

Warner Bros has scaled back promotions for *The Dark Knight Rises*, canceling a Paris premiere and calling

off appearances by the cast in Mexico and Japan. Weekend box office results for the Batman movie came in slightly below projections, but the movie still grossed an estimated \$162 million in the United States and Canada for the third-best opening weekend ever, according to Hollywood sources.

Industry experts said moviegoers were likely to move on quickly from the shooting and studios would proceed mostly as planned. Theaters tightened security over the weekend to reassure customers and one chain imposed new rules on costumes.

Upcoming releases that feature some violence are set to debut on schedule. *The Bourne Legacy*, a new movie in the action series that stars Jeremy Renner in the role made famous by Matt Damon, is set for Aug 10. A remake of the 1990 science fiction movie *Total Recall* will reach theaters on Aug 3.

"The immediate reaction is to go to some dark place when something like this happens. By Monday that's forgotten and the business of releasing a movie takes over," said one person familiar with the stu-

dios' thinking.

Especially for big-budget films, studios like to stick with planned openings as they spend tens of millions of dollars to raise awareness in advance. Filmgoers don't dwell on isolated incidents for long, said Peter Sealey, a former Columbia marketing chief who now heads the Sausalito Group consulting firm.

"The public's attention span is not that long for such tragedies, and they won't make the connection the further it fades into their memories," Sealey said.

Ronn Torossian, chief executive of New York-based 5W Public Relations, agreed that the public "has a very short-term memory" of news events and said the Aurora shooting would not leave a long-term impact on film promotion. "Reality shows have had tragic suicides and other incidents, yet reality shows continue," he said.

Eerie resemblance

Gangster Squad presents some unique issues due to the theater shooting scene, which bears an eerie resemblance to what transpired in Colorado. Sticking with the Sept 7 release date would require the film's

stars to do press interviews in the next week or two and face questions about the scene and the shooting.

The studio could decide to go ahead with the debut but cancel the usual round of celebrity interviews and advance screenings typically used to generate early buzz about a movie.

A Warner Bros spokeswoman had no comment on Sunday.

Another studio, News Corp's 20th Century Fox, had to regroup earlier this year following the national uproar over the fatal shooting of unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman.

Fox had already started promoting a Ben Stiller comedy called *Neighborhood Watch*. After Martin's killing, the studio removed theaters posters and a trailer for the film and changed its name to *The Watch*. That movie opens on Friday.

Crowds still turned out for *The Dark Knight Rises*, the finale in a popular Batman trilogy starring Christian Bale.

The major movie studios withheld their usual boasting about movie ticket sales on

RAMPAGE HURTS SALES

The Dark Knight Rises recorded strong ticket sales in its opening weekend, but still below forecasts given by many in Hollywood, as some moviegoers appeared to have stayed away after a shooting rampage at a showing of the film on Friday.

The film grossed an estimated \$162 million in showings through Sunday in US and Canadian movie theaters, according to studio estimates from people with knowledge of the data. That was lower than the \$173 million that had been projected on Saturday based on Friday receipts.

The Dark Knight Rises was one of the most-anticipated films of the year before a gunman opened fire on moviegoers in Auro-

ra, killing 12 and wounding 58 more.

Before the shooting, box office forecasters had predicted sales in a range of \$170 million to \$198 million from Friday through Sunday, just shy of the record \$207 million set by superhero movie *The Avengers* in May.

The Dark Knight Rises is the third and final film in a popular Batman series starring Christian Bale as the crime-fighting hero and directed by Christopher Nolan. *The Dark Knight* took in \$158 million in the US over its debut weekend in July 2008, a record at the time. It went on to ring up sales of more than \$1 billion around the world.

REUTERS

international markets. Ticket sales since its late-June opening reached \$442.7 million, the studio said in an e-mail. The film is now the highest-grossing film in Argentina and Uruguay after four weeks in theaters, and scored the highest opening in history in Venezuela.