Pulse Nightclub Tragedy
Orange County Response
and Lessons Learned

Presented by
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and
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Oct. 20, 2017
Remember
The Timeline
June 12 to 14, 2016

- Murder of Christina Grimmie
  Orlando Plaza Live Theater
  Friday, June 10 late evening

- Largest Mass Shooting in U.S. History
  Pulse Nightclub
  Sunday, June 12 early morning

- Death of Lane Graves
  Disney’s Grand Floridian
  Tuesday, June 14 evening
Pulse Nightclub Massacre: The Event

- Active shooter event
- Mass Casualty Incident
- Followed by a Hostage Scenario
- Followed by an EOD Scenario

(Explosive Ordnance Device/Disposal: Bomb)
Pulse Nightclub Massacre: The Attack

• **2:01am** – A man armed with a Sig Sauer MCX rifle and Glock 17 pistol enters and starts shooting
• **2:08am** – Police engage with shooter
• **2:20am** – Shooter takes hostages, reports he has a bomb
• **2:30am** – Media Inquiries begin
• **7:00am** – Orange County PIO team activated
• **9:00am** – City of Orlando Webpage converted for one-stop information
Pulse Nightclub Massacre: The Tragedy

• Horrific loss of life—49 killed, 68 injured
• LGBTQ, Latinx and Hispanic communities
• Business damage and disruption
• Two jurisdictions—City of Orlando and Orange County
Pulse Nightclub Massacre: Agency Response

• Orlando Police Department, Orange County Sheriff’s Office, multiple area police agencies & Fire/Rescue
• SWAT, Arson and Bomb Squads
• Federal Bureau of Investigation
• Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
• Drug Enforcement Agency
• Department of Homeland Security
• Office of the U.S. Attorney General
• Florida Highway Patrol
• FDLE
Medical Examiner

• Transportation and Security
• Identification, Autopsy, Release

**Communication with families, leo

**Public records

• Crucial:
  • Request for declaration of emergency
  • Training
  • 72-hour
  • Transport/housing of shooter separate

Orange County Medical Examiner’s Office Pulse Media Advisory | June 15, 2016

Orange County, FL – UPDATE: Media Advisory

The Orange County Medical Examiner’s Office has the following information to report regarding the status of its operations as of 10 a.m. on June 15:

• All forty-nine (49) victims and the suspect connected to Pulse Nightclub Orlando shooting have been identified.
• The immediate next of kin for all forty-nine (49) victims have been notified through the help of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.
• Autopsies are required to be conducted in all cases of homicide. The Medical Examiner (ME) completed all autopsies on Tuesday afternoon, June 14.
• This is an active criminal investigation, therefore, the autopsy results and any reports generated will not be released at this time. This includes funeral home information.
• Of the 49 victims, 35 victims have been released to a funeral home.
• The Orange County ME facility is equipped to manage mass casualty incidents of this size without the need to establish temporary morgues.
• Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System (FEMORS) is providing direct operational support, which includes additional physicians and technical staff.
• Orange County medical staff included: Joshua Steffany, M.D.; Jessie Giles, M.D.; Marie Hanson, M.D.; Gary Utz, M.D. and Sara Zydowicz, D.O.
• From FEMORS – (Sarasota, District 12): Chief Medical Director Russell Vega, M.D., and Associate ME Wilson Broussard, M.D.
Family Reunification/Beardall

- Unforeseen need
  - Needs to start immediately
  - HIPAA/privacy VS. need for info

- Hotline
  - Set up BEFORE media presser
  - Call-takers
  - Script for right info

- Identify locations prior to events

- Resource heavy

- Transportation, Housing, Staff

- Massive number of agencies
  - Investigators, medical examiner, crisis assistance, counselors, chaplins, security
The Vigils
The Vigils
Media Volume
Press Conferences

- Social media & press briefings
- Messages of reassurance, strong presence from elected officials
- Speaking to fearful families and the unknown.

- Christine Grimmie
- Election year
  – Cohesive
  – Wrong information given
Tweet around the world

3.1 million impressions
Media Management

• One short link updated several times daily, ocfl.net/pulseinfo.
• Kept running post (in reverse chronological order) of all events and statements from June 12 - June 24.
• Created vigils and related events on Facebook.
• All ME updates/victim information posted to newsroom/OCFL News then social media.
Media Management

- SOCIAL - Directed media to follow us on Twitter @orlandopolice
- **Other leads** - @Citybeautiful, @OrangeCoFL, @OCSONews
- No individual calls or responses
- Out of office messages pointed to source sites
- Partner agencies pointed to @Orlandopolice
- City of Orlando [http://www.cityoforlando.net/pulse/](http://www.cityoforlando.net/pulse/)
- Orange County [www.ocfl.net/pulseinfo](http://www.ocfl.net/pulseinfo)
- Posted updates on Public Safety PIO out of office reply.
- **Prepare for the media cycle.**
The Public Records

The City of Orlando
• More than 200 PRRs — code, fire, building, 911
• 600 — 911 calls had to be redacted

Orange County
• 47 PRRs — autopsies, funeral home information, HIV results, death certificates, notes from around the world
The Memorials:
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts – Seneff Lawn
The Memorials: Pulse Nightclub
One Orlando Collection

http://oneorlandocollection.com/
Correcting Rumors

Official Source

Statement from the Orange County Medical Examiner's Office | June 29, 2016

The Orange County Medical Examiner's Office has been contacted by media organizations and concerned citizens from around the world with inquiries as to the authenticity of reports suggesting that the family of an unclaimed male victim from the Pulse tragedy refused to come forward or delay the process to bury their loved one.

The Orange County Medical Examiner's Office previously confirmed that the identification, notification and autopsy process was complete within 48 hours of the June 12 Pulse tragedy, a monumental task. By June 18, all 49 documented victims had been reduced to their loved ones.

While the Medical Examiner's Office is not in the business of private conversations amongst families, it was told that the family was hesitant to come forward to bury their loved one.

The outpouring of support has been unexpected and we have received multiple offers to properly bury the victim whose family did not come forward. These offers only underscore what the kindness our community has witnessed as a result of this most horrific tragedy. We’d like to share our sincere appreciation to those who reached out as well as provide reassurance that all of the 49 victims killed in this senseless shooting were returned to their loved ones, without delay.

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About Orange County Government: Orange County Government serves its citizens and guests with integrity, honesty, fairness and professionalism. Located in Central Florida, Orange County ranks 13th in median household income to over 300,000 people. Follow us on Facebook at OrlandoFamilyOrlando and Twitter @OCCF.

For more information please visit www.OCFL.net or visit the Orange County Facebook and Twitter pages.
What Worked
Public Safety Response

George Ralls, M.D.
- Orange County Director of Public Safety
- Orange County Medical Director (county wide jurisdiction)

• 100 law enforcement officers
• More than 80 EMS personnel
• 2 SWAT teams
• 2 Medical Directors (City and County)
• Incident Command
Medical Examiner’s Response

Dr. Joshua Stephany

• Officially appointed June 16

• Exhibited great care and concern for families and for first responders, staff

• Issues: Storage, equipment, staffing

• Autopsy results:
  - 209 GSWs
  - # of GSW ranged from 1-13
  - Mean 4.2 per patient
  - Only 6 victims had a single wound

“Our commitment to these families has not only been to assist law enforcement with their investigations, but to ensure families receive the necessary care and support during this difficult time as well as reunite them with their loved ones.”
Orlando United Assistance Center
Invest in Technology
Invest in Technology

![Graph showing page views and page visits over time]
What could have worked better

• Location for assistance for families changed due to scope of event.
• Need security for families during this horrible time.
• Moved to private, secure location on Thursday, June 16.
• Needed many translators
Outpouring of Donations: One Orlando Fund

• In addition to memorial tribute items, people wanted to contribute $$$
• $1 million dollar gift from The Walt Disney Co. within 24 hours
• June 14th – Orlando Mayor establishes “One Orlando Fund”
• Kenneth Feinberg, Esq., (administered Sept 11th Fund, Boston Marathon, Virginia Tech ) selected as administrator (no fee)
• Counties: Prepare NOW for financial structure, transparency
Preparedness Matters:
Invest in Training

• Preparedness
  – Law Enforcement + First Responder Drills
  – Assess long term needs
    • Medical Examiner resources?
    • Joint LEO/Hospital training?

• Evidence-based practices
  – S.A.V.E. training for EMS
  – Protocols for law enforcement transport
  – Mass fatality plans
  – Tactical medical training for law enforcement
Employee and Victim Assistance

• Employee Assistance Programs
• 956 served at the Citrus Bowl
• One Orlando Fund/Victim Assistance
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Q&A
Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs
and
Carrie Proudfit – Orange County Public Safety Lead PIO