

Florida shooter kills 17

PARKLAND, FLA. (AP) — An orphaned 19-year-old with a troubled past and his own AR-15 rifle was charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder Thursday morning after being questioned for hours by state and federal authorities following the deadliest school shooting in the U.S. in five years. Fourteen wounded survivors were hospitalized as bodies were recovered from inside and around Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Nikolas Cruz, still wearing a hospital gown after being treated for labored breathing, and weighing in at 5-foot-7 and 131 pounds, was ordered held without bond and booked into jail.

His former classmates thought they were having another drill Wednesday afternoon when a fire alarm sounded, requiring them to file out of their classrooms.

That's when police say Cruz, equipped with a gas mask, smoke grenades and multiple magazines of ammunition, opened fire with a semi-automatic weapon, killing 17 people and sending hundreds of students fleeing into the streets.

It was the nation's deadliest school shooting since a gunman attacked an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, more than five years ago. The overall death toll differs by how such shootings are defined, but Everytown For Gun Safety has tallied 290 school shootings in America since 2013, and this attack makes 18 so far this year.

Cruz purchased the AR-15 legally about a year ago, a law enforcement official who is familiar with the investigation told The Associated Press. The official, not authorized to discuss this publicly, spoke on condition of anonymity. Federal law allows people 18 and older to legally purchase long guns, including this kind of assault weapon.

President Donald Trump's reaction focused on Cruz's mental health.

"So many signs that the Florida shooter was mentally disturbed, even expelled from school for bad and erratic behavior. Neighbors and classmates



CRUZ

knew he was a big problem. Must always report such instances to authorities, again and again!" Trump tweeted Thursday.

Authorities offered no immediate details about a possible motive, except to say that Cruz had been kicked out of the high school, which has about 3,000 students. Students who knew him described a volatile teenager whose strange behavior had caused others to end friendships with him.

Cruz's mother Lynda Cruz died of pneumonia on Nov. 1 neighbors, friends and family members said, according to the Sun Sentinel. Cruz and her husband, who died of a heart attack several years ago, adopted Nikolas and his biological brother, Zachary, after the couple moved from Long Island in New York to Broward County.

The boys were left in the care of a family friend after their mother died, said family member Barbara

Kumbatovich, of Long Island.

Unhappy there, Nikolas Cruz asked to move in with a friend's family in northwest Broward. That family agreed and Cruz moved in around Thanksgiving. According to the family's lawyer, who did not identify them, they knew that Cruz owned the AR-15 but made him keep it locked up in a cabinet. He did have the key, however.

Attorney Jim Lewis said the family is devastated and didn't see this coming. They are cooperating with authorities, he said.

Victoria Olvera, a 17-year-old junior, said Cruz was expelled last school year because he got into a fight with his ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend. She said he had been abusive to the girl.

"I think everyone had in their minds if anybody was going to do it, it was going to be him," said Dakota Mutchler, also 17.

Cruz was taken into custody without a fight about an hour after the shooting in a residential neighborhood about a mile away. He had multiple magazines of ammunition, authorities said.



Children spending an increased amount of time on electronic devices and pulling away from others represents a form of self-imposed isolation which may indicate developing emotional or mental health issues, the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network advises.

Electronic devices found to impact mental health

The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network has fielded several inquiries from the public regarding a recent study that claims a relationship between the widespread use of social media and increases in teen suicide rates.

The study, published Nov. 14 in the academic journal *Clinical Psychological Science*, analyzed content from two surveys of U.S. high school students which referred both to their use of electronic devices and social media, as well as their frequency of feeling hopeless and considering and/or attempting suicide.

The study suggested the number of teens who used electronic devices for at least five hours a day were 70 percent more likely to have suicidal thoughts or actions than those who only used them for an hour a day.

Teens who spent more time on "screen activities" such as the internet, social media, and TV were more likely to show signs of depression, consider suicide, or make a suicide attempt than those who spent more time on "non-screen activities" like in-person social interactions, sports, homework, or exercise.

The study frames these findings in the context of a steady rise in suicide rates among teens from 2010 to 2015 following a decline over the past two decades, as measured by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention.

The study authors note the implication of cyberbullying in several high-profile teen suicides, as well as the potential for teens to see the online posts of others portraying perfect lives and become depressed.

Critics of the study say many different environmental factors — which were not assessed in the current study — may influence mood, mental health, and potential youth suicidality.

"As an example, we know that school pressures play an outside role in young people's mental health," said Scott Ridgway, executive director of the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. "Inpatient hospitalizations of teens for suicide attempts and ideation peak in the fall, with the start of the school year, and again in the spring, in sync with final exams, the college acceptance process, prom, and other stressors. This is a trend we've seen both locally and nationally."

That said, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network advises parents to engage with their children about their activities online — how much time they spend on their computers and phones and what they do on them. Increased amount of time on electronic

devices and pulling away from others represents a form of self-imposed isolation which, combined with other behavior, may indicate developing emotional or mental health issues.

"Some online and other media glamorizes suicide and presents it as a viable solution to their problems. Already this year we've responded to Netflix's '13 Reasons Why' series and its problematic handling of youth suicide," Ridgway said. "Social media is not the only factor, but its influence is something parents should watch."

Finally, mental illness is a factor in 90 percent of all suicides, and external factors usually cannot entirely explain why someone chooses to take his or her life.

Regardless of the viability of the study, the conversation about it serves as an opportunity for a dialogue about suicide, mental health, and other issues.

TSPN's website (tspn.org) offers information about suicide warning signs, risk and protective factors for suicide, and other resources on what you can do to watch out for vulnerable persons and help save a life. The phone number is 1-800-799-4889.

WARREN COUNTY ELECTION 2018

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Ray Hixson (R) Allie Marie Hyatt (I)
Terry Bell (I) Jimmy Haley (I)

SHERIFF

Herb Rowland (D) Rodney Whiles (D)
Billy Joe Crouch (I) Bobby Edwards (I)
Marc Martin (I) John Morgan (I)
Tommy Myers (I)

CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

Duane Sherrill (D) Casi Powell Cantrell (D)
Melanie Milstead (D) Chris Cope (I)

REGISTER OF DEEDS

Terry K. Smith (D) Wes Williams (D)
Danny Cummings (I) Tim Grandey (I)

TRUSTEE

Darlene Bryant (D) Anita Nunley (I)

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Levie Glenn (D)

COUNTY COURT CLERK

Lesa Scott (D)

COUNTY COMMISSION 1ST DISTRICT

Sally Brock (D) David Rhea (D)
Christy Ross (D) Ronald S. Lee (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 2ND DISTRICT

Robert Hennessee (D) Diane Starkey (D)
Carl E. Bouldin (I) Joe O'Neal (I)
Dana Hillis Mullican (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 3RD DISTRICT

Joseph Stotts (R) Richard Grissom (D)
Michael Shane Wilcher (R) George M. Smartt (D)

COUNTY COMMISSION 4TH DISTRICT

Blaine Wilcher (R) Teddy D. Boyd (D)
David Dunlap (D)

COUNTY COMMISSION 5TH DISTRICT

Michael Martin (D) Tyrone Sparkman (D)
Lori Judkins (I) Ben Myers (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 6TH DISTRICT

Phillip Stout (R) Deborah Evans (D)

COUNTY COMMISSION 7TH DISTRICT

Gary C. Martin (D) Susan Rogers (D)
Tommy Savage (D)

COUNTY COMMISSION 8TH DISTRICT

Scott Rubley (R) William Haslacker (D)
Randy England (I) Dalton Pack (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 9TH DISTRICT

Bobbie Gilbert Bailey (D) Carlene Brown (I)
Terry Gallagher (I) Steven D. Helton (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 10TH DISTRICT

Jeff Bottoms (R) Stacy Sanders (R)
Harold D. Hyatt (D) Gary Prater (D)
Cole Taylor (D) Brandon Eldridge (I)
Carolyn Miller (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 11TH DISTRICT

Morris Bond (D) Steve M. Glenn (D)
Mary Elizabeth Roller (D) Benny D. Cannon Sr (I)
Michael Bell (I)

COUNTY COMMISSION 12TH DISTRICT

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