



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
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## **FBI Provides Final Briefing on the Virginia Beach Municipal Center Shooting to the Virginia Beach Police Department**

Virginia Beach, Va. —The Federal Bureau of Investigation has concluded its investigative assistance to the Virginia Beach Police Department (VBPD) regarding the mass shooting at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center on May 31, 2019, and has provided a final verbal briefing to the police department.

At the request of VBPD, the FBI provided significant law enforcement assistance to the police department's response and investigation of the incident. In the immediate aftermath, the bureau deployed crisis management and operational personnel to assist with the local response. This included field Evidence Response Teams and experts from the FBI Laboratory who conducted a complex 10-day evidence recovery operation and forensic investigation of the crime scene in Municipal Center Building 2, and specialists from the Victim Services Division who were deployed to support victims, family members, and others impacted by the incident. In support of the police department's investigation, FBI agents conducted numerous victim and witness interviews, and computer experts examined digital evidence.

### **FBI Assessment of Attacker's Motivation**

As part of the investigative team's effort to determine the shooter's motivation for the workplace attack, VBPD requested assistance from the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU), based in Quantico, Virginia. BAU has completed its analysis of the information and evidence gathered throughout the investigation and shared its key findings with VBPD during the final briefing.

Following is the summary of BAU's key findings:

1. BAU assesses the shooter was motivated by perceived workplace grievances, which he fixated on for years. BAU found the shooter struggled with how he perceived his own work performance and how others at work viewed him. The shooter's inflated sense of self-importance contributed to this conflict and led him to believe he was unjustly and repeatedly criticized and slighted. Violence was viewed by the shooter as a way to reconcile this conflict and restore his perverted view of justice.
2. BAU assesses the shooter's perceived grievances began taking shape as early as 2014, and he purposely isolated himself by disengaging from relationships to conceal his intentions. For this reason, BAU assesses that no individual or group was in a position to see the confluence of behaviors that may have forewarned the attack.

3. BAU assesses that the shooter suffered from significant mental health stressors which appear to have contributed in part to his decompensation in advance of the attack; however mental health stressors alone cannot explain the Virginia Beach attack.

BAU further assesses that the Virginia Beach Municipal Center shooter is similar in many ways to other active shooters studied by the FBI. Mass shootings are a predatory act, generally with planned and purposeful violence intended for an identified target, person, place, or institution.

It is important to note that only the shooter knew the real reason why he committed this horrific act of violence; however, at this time, the FBI is confident, based on evidence collected, that the above assessment is accurate.

### **About BAU Analysis**

BAU provides investigative support and post-attack behavioral analysis of mass violence at the request of law enforcement agencies to assist with their investigation of an attack and determine motive. BAU conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Virginia Beach Municipal Center shooting at the request of VBPD. An extensive review of all available evidence, combined with the team's experience, training, and resources, allowed BAU to gain a more thorough understanding of motivations for the attack. The purpose of this type of analysis is to help law enforcement better understand mass violence, and to use the lessons learned from each incident to prevent future incidents from occurring.

The members of BAU are aware of the horrific impact of this incident and extend our deepest sympathies to the victims, survivors, families, and community. Our hope is that by helping develop a better understanding of why people commit these horrible acts of violence, we can ultimately help prevent future tragedies.

### **FBI Resources**

The FBI's response to the Virginia Beach Municipal Center shooting was led by the Norfolk Field Office and included assets from multiple field offices and headquarters divisions. Hundreds of FBI personnel responded, including special agents, task force officers, analysts, professional staff, and chaplains. The response also included numerous specialty teams such as the Evidence Response Team, Laboratory Shooting Reconstruction Team, Computer Analysis Response Team, Bomb Technicians, Behavioral Analysis Unit, and Victim Assistance.

The FBI personnel and resources came from the following field offices and headquarters components:

#### **FBI Field Offices**

- Atlanta
- Baltimore
- Charlotte
- Norfolk
- Richmond
- Tampa
- Washington

## FBI Headquarters

- Critical Incident Response Group
- Laboratory Division
- Operational Technology Division
- Victim Services Division

## Resources

- [May 31, 2019 Final Investigation Summary Report](#) (PDF on vbgov.com)
- [Virginia Beach Police Department Interim Investigative Executive Summary – May 31, 2019](#) (PDF on vbgov.com)
- [Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the FBI’s Role in the Criminal Investigation of the Shooting at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center on May 31, 2019](#)
- [Statement Clarifying the FBI’s Role in the Criminal Investigation of the Virginia Beach Municipal Center Shooting – February 5, 2020](#)
- [Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Violence](#)
- [Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2019](#)
- [Active Shooter Incidents 20-Year Review, 2000-2019](#)

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