

14 dead after mass shooting in U.S.

Man storms citizenship class, killing 13 before shooting himself

By William Kates

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. — A man with a gun barricaded the back door of a community centre with his car and then opened fire on a room full of immigrants taking a citizenship class yesterday, killing 13 people before apparently committing suicide, officials said.

Investigators said they had yet to establish a motive for the massacre, which was at least the fifth deadly mass shooting in the United States in the past month alone.

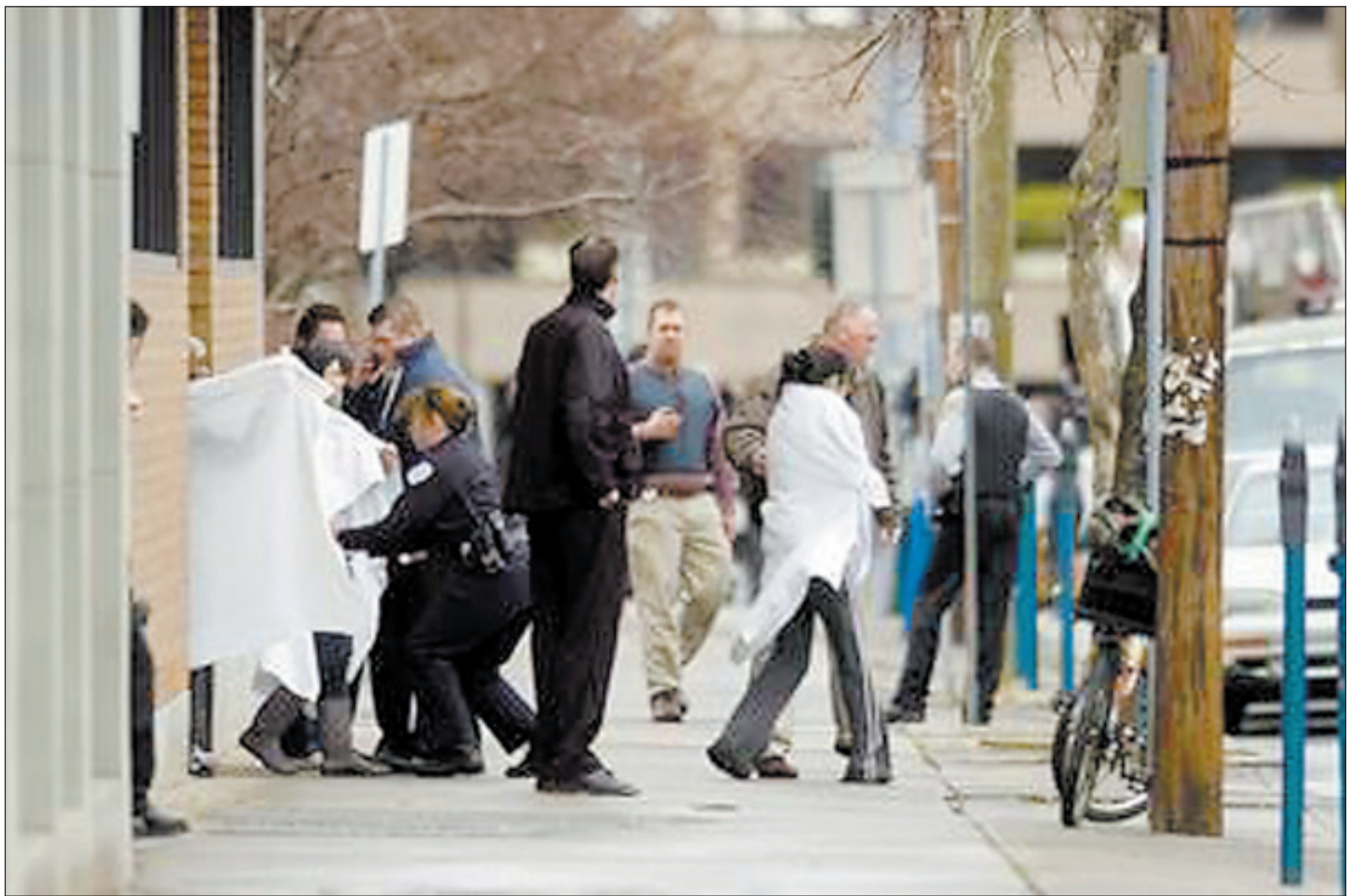
The attack came just after 10 a.m. at the American Civic Association, an organization that helps immigrants settle in the United States. Police Chief Joseph Zikuski said the shooter parked his car against the back door, "making sure nobody could escape," then stormed through the front, shooting two receptionists, apparently without a word.

The killer then entered a room just off the reception area and fired on a citizenship class.

One receptionist was killed, while the other, who was shot in the abdomen, pretended to be dead, then crawled under a desk and called 911, he said. Police said they arrived within two minutes. The rest of those killed were shot in the classroom. Four people were critically wounded.

The man believed to have carried out the attack was found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound in an office, a satchel containing ammunition slung around his neck, authorities said. Police found two handguns — a 9 mm and a .45-calibre — as well as a hunting knife, authorities said.

Thirty-seven people in all were rescued from the building, included 26 who hid in the boiler room in the basement, covering there for three hours while police methodically searched the building and tried to determine



REBECCA CATLETT, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Survivors leave a building near the American Civic Association in Binghamton, N.Y., yesterday after a man killed 13 people in a shooting spree. Most of the victims were immigrants taking classes at the community centre. The suspected killer died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

whether the shooter was still alive and whether he was holding any hostages, Zikuski said. Those in the basement stayed in contact with police by cellphone, switching from one phone to another when their batteries ran out, Zikuski said. Others hid in closets and under desks.

At one point, police led a number of men out of the building in plastic handcuffs, while they tried to sort out the victims from the killer or killers. Most of the people brought out couldn't speak English, the chief said.

Alex Galkin, an immigrant from Uzbekistan, said he was taking English classes when he heard a shot and quickly went to the basement with about 20 other people.

"It was just panic," Galkin said. Zhanar Tokhtabayeva, 30, from Kazakhstan, said she was in an English class when she heard a shot and her teacher screamed for everyone to go to the storage room.

"I heard the shots, every shot. I heard no screams, just silence, shooting," she said. "I heard shooting, very long time and I was thinking when will this stop? I was thinking that my life was finished."

New York state Gov. David Paterson said the massacre was probably "the worst tragedy and senseless crime in the history of this city."

Noting mass killings in Alabama and Oakland, Calif., last month, he said: "When are we going to be able to curb the kind of

violence that is so fraught and so rapid that we can't even keep track of the incidents?"

The suspected shooter carried ID with the name of 42-year-old Jiverly Voong of nearby Johnson City, N.Y., but that was believed to be an alias, said a law-enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A second law-enforcement official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two handguns were registered to Jiverly Wong, another name the man used.

The police chief would not confirm the name of the dead man with the ammunition satchel.

A woman who answered the phone at a listing for Henry D. Voong said she was Jiverly Voong's sister but would not give

her name. She said her brother had been in the country for 28 years and had citizenship.

"The police just called me and said he got shot," she said.

Asked if she was aware he might have been involved in the shooting, she said: "How? He didn't have a gun. I think somebody involved, not him. I think he got shot by somebody else."

"I think there's a misunderstanding over here because I want to know, too," she said.

Last night, police searched Voong's house and carried out three computer hard drives, a brown canvas rifle case, a briefcase, a small suitcase and several paper bags.

The Associated Press



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