San Bruno Police Department

After Action Report

YouTube Shooting Incident
April 3, 2018
“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”

-Vince Lombardi
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1. Introduction

Before delving into the particulars of this incident, it is important to note that this was not a mass casualty event; but it was intended to be, and very easily could have been. From a pragmatic policing perspective, the outcome of this incident differed little from any other shooting. A lone attacker fired a handgun, striking three people, all of whom survived, then took her own life. As a police department, we are acutely aware of this fact. However, the motivation for the shooting, the setting in which it occurred, the fact that the victims were completely unknown to the suspect, and the suspect’s intentions, make this anything but a typical everyday shooting. Thus, the need for a more in-depth analysis.

At approximately 12:43 p.m. on Tuesday April 3, 2018, Nasim Aghdam, a 38-year-old female, parked her vehicle in a dirt lot adjacent to the YouTube Campus at 901 Cherry Avenue in San Bruno, CA. Armed with a semi-automatic handgun, which was concealed in her purse, Aghdam walked into the YouTube courtyard. Once in the courtyard, Aghdam was almost immediately confronted by a YouTube employee requesting to see her security badge. Aghdam ignored the request of the employee and abruptly removed the loaded semi-automatic pistol from her purse, opening fire on a group of people that were eating lunch at tables approximately fifty yards away. Aghdam continued walking toward the crowd as she fired all of the rounds in her weapon, reloaded and resumed firing immediately, striking three people with her gunfire. Aghdam then stopped in front of the secured glass doors leading to the lobby area of the building, pointed the firearm at her chest, and took her own life with a single shot. There were a total of nineteen spent shell casings recovered at the scene, and one live round remaining in Aghdam’s firearm. One of the victims that was struck by gunfire sustained a through and through bullet wound to the upper chest. The other two victims sustained less serious bullet wounds to their extremities. All three victims survived the attack. The attack itself lasted less than one minute.

This incident was immediately reported as an active shooter via numerous 911 calls to the San Bruno Police Department (SBPD). SBPD units arrived on-scene within two minutes of the first report and did not have any information that the shooter had taken her own life, or that she was acting alone. The building at 901 Cherry Avenue sits on a 5.5 acre property and is nearly 600,000 square feet of office space. Believing that this was in fact an active shooter incident, SBPD units responded accordingly. In reality, the lone shooter was likely deceased prior to the arrival of the first officers on scene.

The City of San Bruno has an estimated population of 43,000 residents, with a substantially larger daytime population due to a variety of factors. San Bruno has its own municipal police department, and its own 911 Dispatch/Communications Center. SBPD consists of approximately seventy officers and support staff under the direct control of the Chief of Police. The Patrol Division had seven sworn Peace Officers on duty at the time of this incident. There were other
sworn Peace Officers on duty within the City in various other assignments at the time, which provided approximately twelve additional responding officers. There was a request for mutual aid from surrounding agencies, which resulted in well over a hundred additional police officers showing up to assist within the first thirty minutes.

Responding to and managing this incident from start to finish posed numerous challenges for SBPD and allied responding agencies. This AAR describes not only the suspect’s actions leading up to and during this event, but also the response activities of first responders. The AAR addresses the initial response, rescue operations, tactical operations, incident management, public information, investigative activities and post-incident debriefing processes.

This report provides a holistic and constructively critical review. It has been compiled from various sources, including personal observations, debriefing sessions, personal and group interviews, and investigative reports. As such, this report represents the views of many individuals from various aspects of the response to this incident, producing legitimate, but often varying perspectives.

The purpose of this After Action Report (AAR) is to provide candid and constructive insights to better prepare the organization, and the broader law enforcement community, to appropriately respond to incidents in the future.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing, so there may be additional information that comes to light after the completion of this report.

This AAR describes various tactical and otherwise sensitive activities of responding agencies and should be considered “Law Enforcement Sensitive”. The material contained herein is not to be shared outside of the law enforcement community.
1. Annexes

This AAR is organized into seven (7) annexes, as follows:

**Annex A: Suspect Profile/Actions Timeline** - Includes information about the suspect and her actions leading up to and during this event

**Annex B: Notification/Dispatch** – Includes information about emergency calls and handling of the incident by emergency communications personnel

**Annex C: Initial Response** – Includes information about the initial response by San Bruno Police, Fire/EMS and early assistance from outside agencies

**Annex D: Fire and EMS Operations** – Includes information on the activities of Fire and EMS personnel at the scene

**Annex E: Incident Management** – Includes information on the command post and other management operations that were part of this incident

**Annex F: Investigation** – Includes information on the investigative steps taken following this incident and what they have revealed about the suspect and her actions

**Annex G: Debriefing Processes** – Includes information on the various debriefing and public outreach processes that have followed this incident
2a. Annex A: Suspect Profile/Actions Timeline

This portion of the AAR will provide some background information on the suspect and a general timeline of her actions leading up to and during the shooting incident, as they are now known. Obviously, the San Bruno Police Department was not privy to any of this information prior to the shooting. The investigation into this incident is ongoing, so there may be additional information that comes to light after the completion of this report.

Suspect Profile

The suspect in this case was Nasim Najafi Aghdam, a 38-year-old female resident of San Diego, CA.

While Aghdam was unemployed, she spent a great deal of time creating videos and posting them on YouTube. The majority of the videos that Aghdam created were fitness related or pertaining to animal rights activism. Aghdam’s videos garnered some moderate popularity on YouTube, which based on comments, was largely due to her somewhat quirky and unusual appearance and demeanor. Aghdam’s videos received enough views that she was able to earn some income through YouTube’s advertising revenue share program. This income varied but at its height she earned approximately $6,000 in a one year period.

Aghdam was an ardent supporter of animal rights and frequently attended protests and demonstrations to that end. Many of these protests and demonstrations were associated with PETA, but there is no information tying Aghdam to that group, or any of its prior alleged acts of violence. In fact, every family member and associate interviewed described Aghdam as a very peaceful person prior to this event. Aghdam’s passion for animal rights was described to have stemmed from a deep sense of empathy and a desire to protect animals from harm.

About 6 months prior to the shooting, YouTube began a process that its content creators came to refer to as “demonetization”. This essentially involved YouTube requiring significantly larger view rates before it compensated content creators. Aghdam fell into the category of YouTube content creators that were immediately impacted by this. The income from her efforts on YouTube essentially disappeared overnight.

Over the next 6 months, Aghdam became increasingly frustrated with this “demonetization”, and along with many other YouTube content creators, she took to public forums to express this frustration. Aghdam posted
numerous videos claiming that YouTube was censoring her and discriminating against her. Aghdam also sent numerous emails to YouTube directly, expressing her feelings. The investigation has revealed that YouTube was very responsive to Aghdam, but it was also clear that Aghdam was not happy with their responses.

According to family members, Aghdam was quite open regarding her frustration with YouTube. Aghdam believed that she was building a very successful YouTube presence and that this would ultimately be her source of wealth in the near future. Aghdam felt that the “demonetization” actions by YouTube had taken away her voice, her livelihood and her future. Family members explained that Aghdam’s reaction to all of this was that of dejection and depression, but not violence. Aghdam frequently cried and expressed that she had no idea what to do with her life now that YouTube had been taken away from her. It appears that during this 6-month period, Aghdam increasingly saw herself as a victim, and YouTube as the perpetrator. While family members said that they noted this frustration worsening, there was never a moment in which they suspected she would resort to any form of violence whatsoever. Family members explained that Aghdam was quite outspoken against any form of violence, and never expressed any violent ill-wishes toward YouTube, or anyone else.

With the knowledge of what Aghdam would ultimately do, and where she would do it, it is now quite obvious that her anger toward YouTube had reached a cataclysmic level.

### Suspect Actions Timeline

**January 2018:** Aghdam legally purchased a 9mm Smith and Wesson handgun from a legitimate gun dealer in San Diego. Aghdam also obtained her handgun safety certificate. Family members claimed no knowledge of this purchase and said that Aghdam never spoke of guns or expressed any interest in purchasing one. The investigation into this incident has not revealed any motivation for purchasing this firearm, other than the possibility that she was already planning some sort of violence against YouTube.

**March 29, 2018:** By all accounts, Aghdam was very close with her family, specifically her mother and brother, who stated that they typically spoke to her on a daily basis. When her family reported her missing on April 2, 2018, they reported that this was the last day that they had seen her; about 4 days prior.

**March 31, 2018:** Aghdam spoke to her mother on the telephone and the conversation was described as normal, with no indication of Aghdam’s upcoming actions. The family claimed that this was the last time that any of them had heard from her, when they reported her missing.
April 1, 2018: Aghdam’s family was unable to reach her on the telephone throughout the day, something that they described as highly unusual. At about 8:00 p.m. they drove to the residence where she lived with her grandmother, to check on her. When they arrived, they discovered that the front door was unlocked, which was also very unusual. The family went inside the apartment and discovered that the door keys were lying on the floor, and both of Aghdam’s cell phones were left on the counter along with her laptop. While this now seems like very telling information, Aghdam had previously mentioned getting a new phone and laptop to stop YouTube from “hacking” her devices, so the family was not overly concerned at that point. Aghdam’s neighbor would later describe seeing her at the residence earlier that day, discarding two bags of clothing into a dumpster before leaving the apartment in her vehicle. It is believed that Aghdam left the apartment and headed for the YouTube campus in San Bruno, approximately 500 miles away.

April 2, 2018: Aghdam’s family reported her missing to the San Diego County Sheriff’s Office. The family did not inform SDCSO of the keys, phone and laptop left at her residence. They also made no mention whatsoever of YouTube or her issues with the company. Aghdam’s family did not report her to be a danger to herself or to others. The family simply told deputies that Aghdam had never been out of touch with the family for this period of time and that they feared something might have happened to her. Standard procedure for any California policing organization would be to enter Aghdam into the Missing and Unidentified Persons Database (MUPS). SDCSO did this, and also placed her under the designation of “At-Risk”, simply based on the family’s assertion that her disappearance was highly unusual.

April 2, 2018, 1240 hours: Aghdam visited the YouTube campus in San Bruno, and specifically the building at 901 Cherry Avenue, where the shooting later occurred. Aghdam parked her vehicle in the dirt lot adjacent to the parking garage for this building, behind the Molly Stone’s Grocery Store. Aghdam entered the outdoor courtyard area of the YouTube Campus. Accessing the courtyard did not enable her to access the interior of the building, but it was an area where employees frequently congregated for meals and other events. As soon as Aghdam entered the courtyard, she was approached by a YouTube employee who asked if she needed some help. This
employee was not a member of the security team, but had been trained to confront anyone seen on campus without a YouTube badge/ID. Aghdam told the employee that she wanted to get information about career opportunities with YouTube, so the employee escorted her to the main lobby. Accessing the main lobby from the courtyard required use of an employee access card. Once in the lobby, the employee walked Aghdam to the security desk and told staff that she was there to inquire about a job. She had a brief conversation with the staff, who essentially told her that she needed to apply online, before leaving out the main entrance doors on the opposite end of the lobby from where she had entered. Aghdam was on campus for approximately 10 minutes. Security staff did not identify her and did not describe feeling that her behavior was at all suspicious. In later watching CCTV of this occurrence, Aghdam appears very casual, but she wears dark sunglasses throughout the exchange despite being indoors, and is wearing a single blue latex glove on her left hand. While the latex glove initially seemed to be suspicious, later interviews with her family revealed that Aghdam was concerned about germs and frequently wore one latex glove to protect her when touching items in public. Aghdam was not carrying a purse or any other bag and her clothing was relatively tight fitting. No firearm was readily apparent on her person, but it is unknown whether or not she was armed during this visit to the campus. It is believed that Aghdam was conducting reconnaissance in preparation for the attack, but was not planning to attack on this visit.

April 3, 2018, 0200 hours: Mountain View Police Department (MVPD) Officers contacted Aghdam sleeping in her vehicle in a parking lot in their city. The vehicle Aghdam was driving had been entered into the SVS database as being associated to an “At-Risk Missing Person”. A patrol officer driving through the lot ran the license plate, noted the association with the missing person case, and made contact with the driver, Aghdam. MVPD spoke to Aghdam for over 20 minutes, with the entire contact captured on body worn cameras. The officers were thorough and diligent in investigating not only Aghdam’s welfare, but determining what she was doing so far from home. Aghdam was lucid throughout the contact and simply explained to the officers that she had a disagreement with her family and decided to leave the area. Aghdam said that she did
not want to have any contact with her family and explained that she had purchased a new cell phone so that they would not be able to reach her. All of this led the officers to the appropriate conclusion that Aghdam was a voluntarily missing adult. Aghdam gave no indication that she was a danger to herself or to others, and she was ultimately released from the scene. MVPD contacted Aghdam’s family in follow up and told them that she had been located in good health and that she did not want to be contacted by them. Family members were pleased to hear that she was okay, but were unfamiliar with the area and did not know how far away from San Diego it was. When the call ended, Aghdam’s brother searched for Mountain View on the internet and was surprised to see that she was so far from home. He continued to search for information about the area in an effort to determine why she was in this area, and discovered that YouTube was less than an hour from Mountain View. Aghdam’s brother immediately suspected the Aghdam was likely on her way to YouTube, so he called back to MVPD to share this information with them. Aghdam’s brother explained her discontent with YouTube to the MVPD Officer and told him that she was probably heading to YouTube to “complain”. The Officer was diligent in clarifying what Aghdam’s intentions might be, even asking if there was any possibility that she would be violent. Aghdam’s family told MVPD that the worst she would do was stand out front and protest. It is unknown why Aghdam traveled to Mountain View from San Bruno after visiting the YouTube campus earlier in the day. She was sleeping in her car in a Walmart parking lot when she was contacted by MVPD. It is relatively common knowledge that Walmart will allow people to use their parking lots to sleep in vehicles, so it could simply be that she needed a place to sleep in her car. It is also worth noting however, that this Walmart was directly across the freeway from a Google campus, and Google owns YouTube. It is possible that Aghdam was considering the Google campus as an alternative or additional target, but a review of CCTV from the Google campus did not reveal her ever accessing any portion of it.

April 3, 2018, 1115 hours: Aghdam visited Jackson Arms shooting range in South San Francisco, about 5 miles from the YouTube building where the shooting occurred. Aghdam entered the facility with the Smith and Wesson 9mm that she purchased in January, secure in a
lockbox. Aghdam also was in possession of .380 auto ammunition. Aghdam rented time to use a firing lane and then attempted to practice using her firearm. The CCTV footage from this activity makes it clear that Aghdam was far from proficient with the firearm. In fact, she was in possession of the wrong ammunition. She worked for several minutes attempting to load the magazine with the .380 ammunition before she realized that it would not fit. Aghdam then returned to the counter and requested assistance. The staff was very helpful with her, even exchanging her ammunition for the proper 9mm rounds for her firearm. A staff member then accompanied her to the firing lane and provided her with a brief lesson in handling and using the handgun. Almost 20 minutes after first attempting to use the gun, Aghdam managed to fire the first round at the target. Aghdam spent about 20 more minutes at the range before she returned to her vehicle and left the parking lot in the direction of San Bruno.

April 3, 2018, 1235 hours: Aghdam arrived in the area of the YouTube Headquarters at 901 Cherry Avenue in San Bruno. She drove to the west end of Bayhill Drive, adjacent to the campus and behind the Molly Stone’s Grocery Store. Aghdam remained in her vehicle until approximately 1243 hours.

April 3, 2018, 1243 hours: Aghdam exited her vehicle and walked eastbound on the north sidewalk of Bayhill Drive, adjacent to the parking garage for YouTube Headquarters. Aghdam had a purse draped over her shoulder as she entered the courtyard. As soon as Aghdam entered the courtyard, she was confronted by a YouTube security employee who noticed that she did not have an identification badge. The employee courteously asked Aghdam if she could help her to find something, or if she had an identification badge. Aghdam did not respond to the employee and continued walking quickly toward the lobby entrance. The employee persisted and followed Aghdam telling her that she could not be on campus without an ID badge. The straight-line distance from where Aghdam entered the courtyard to the lobby doors was approximately 75 yards. At the time of this incident, there were approximately 25 people in the courtyard area. The majority of these people were seated at tables very close to the main
building, about as far from where Aghdam entered as possible. It is unknown whether Aghdam intended to fire upon people in the courtyard, or access the building, or both. Regardless, it was evident that the persistence of the employee prompted Aghdam to begin firing before it was ideal. While Aghdam was approximately 50-60 yards away from the crowd of people seated at lunch tables, she removed the 9mm firearm from her purse and immediately began firing indiscriminately toward the crowd. Based upon Aghdam’s apparent ineffectiveness with the firearm earlier that day at the firing range, her ability to be accurate while moving, from a distance of 50-60 yards, was poor at best. Aghdam fired ten rounds toward the crowd of people, then reloaded the gun with a second magazine from her purse and immediately resumed firing. Aghdam continued walking toward the crowd and the lobby entrance while firing eight more rounds. Aghdam arrived at the lobby doors and attempted to open them without success. These doors were kept closed and locked at all times, requiring an access card for entry. When Aghdam was unable to open the doors, she stepped back about 15 feet, pointed her gun at her own chest, and fired a single round. Based upon the Coroner’s report, Aghdam was deceased within seconds. Aghdam fired a total of 19 rounds, including the one she used to kill herself. Of the 18 rounds fired into the crowd, 3 bullets struck 3 different victims, all of whom were YouTube employees. The most critical victim was a 36-year-old male who was struck in the upper torso. The bullet exited near his upper spine and punctured one of his lungs. He did not know this, but the gunshot had created a sucking chest wound, giving him a matter of minutes to survive. This male victim ran around the building to the east, or front side, where he collapsed near the main entrance doors off Cherry Avenue. The other two victims were both females, one was 27-years-old and the other was 32-years-old. Both of the female victims were shot in the leg but managed to run out of the courtyard and to an adjacent restaurant. The more serious of the two had a moderate arterial bleed that was treated with an ad-hoc tourniquet by restaurant staff. The less serious had a mostly superficial wound.

April 3, 2018, 1246 hours: First 911 call received in the San Bruno Police Dispatch Center.
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Aghdam entered parking garage

Aghdam parked vehicle

Aghdam entered courtyard

Aghdam started

Victims hit by gunfire

Female victims fled to restaurant

Male victim fled to front of building and collapsed

Aghdam shot herself

YouTube HQ
2b. Annex B: Notification/Dispatch

This portion of the AAR will provide some basic information regarding the emergency calls received and the handling of the incident from a dispatch and communications perspective.

The first 911 call associated with this incident was received by SBPD on April 3, 2018 at 1246 hours. There was one dispatcher working in the San Bruno Police Dispatch Center when this call came through, which was fairly common for this time of day. Incidentally, this same dispatcher was alone in the Dispatch Center in 2010 when a PG&E gas pipeline exploded in a San Bruno neighborhood. While there was only one dispatcher working the dispatch center, there was a dispatch supervisor and multiple police clerks in the adjacent offices. The on-duty dispatcher immediately called out for assistance from these personnel, anticipating the volume of calls that was sure to follow. Below is a basic timeline of the 911 and dispatch activities from the early stages of this event:

- **1246 hours:**
  - First 911 call received. There were at least 70 more 911 calls, 40 calls into the local emergency line and 30 more into the non-emergency line, in the ten minutes that followed the first call. The first caller advised that there were “shots fired” at 901 Cherry Avenue and names YouTube as the location. This caller was inside the building and did not see the shooting or the shooter, but only heard the shots. He described hearing approximately 25 shots and believed they were coming from the lobby. The suspect was initially described as a white male in his 30’s wearing a white jogging suit and a hat.
  - The dispatcher managed to dispatch officers to the scene while staying on the line with the caller.

- **1247 hours:**
  - A San Bruno Police Commander arrived in the San Bruno Dispatch Center to help coordinate the response and needed resources.

- **1248 hours:**
  - Dispatch informed officers that the shooting was occurring in the rear courtyard. This was critical to target the response to a 600,000 square foot building with more than 5 acres of outdoor space.
  - Without waiting for a request, Burlingame Police Dispatch implemented our “Virtual dispatch” relationship. This essentially brought two more dispatchers into the San Bruno Dispatch Center operating remotely from BPD. These dispatchers immediately began taking calls, entering call info into RMS, relaying critical information to officers on scene, and taking detailed victim/witness statements.
The first patrol units arrived on scene and confirmed “active shooter”. This was based on input from people fleeing the scene, and not on the actual hearing of gunshots.

Additional callers reported seeing at least one male shooter carrying a long gun and wearing black fatigues, running up the stairs within the main lobby.

Dispatch contacted County Communications and requested to have Fire and Medics staged for an active shooter at YouTube.

County Communications received a fire alarm notification from YouTube Headquarters and dispatched Fire assets without advising them of the active shooter call. Apparently, the call taker for the alarm was not yet aware of the active shooter incident.

**1249 hours:**
- At the direction of the Commander, San Bruno Dispatch requested mutual aid through County Communications.
- Arriving officers located the male gunshot victim just outside the second level main entrance on the Cherry Avenue side of the building.

**1250 hours:**
- Phase 2 Code 3 Tac Alert issued.
- Officers on-scene located a female down in the courtyard with a gun next to her. It was unknown whether she was a shooter, and it was believed that there was more than one shooter, based on 911 callers.

**1251 hours:**
- First press inquiries came in on San Bruno Police emergency lines. At least one press outlet called in via 911.

**1254 hours:**
- Dispatch received a report of a possible active shooter at the Carl’s Jr. Restaurant just south of YouTube HQ. This was due to two female shooting victims fleeing to this location and yelling at staff to call police for an active shooter. Staff did not know the shooting was occurring at YouTube.

**1258 hours:**
- On-scene radio operations moved to the County Wide Mutual Aid (Green) frequency and primary dispatching responsibilities were taken over by County Communications.
- Teams begin dynamic building searches

**1300 hours:**
- Nearby Marine Corps Base and nearby school advised to go into lockdown.

**1302 hours:**
- San Bruno received a report of a possible suspect hiding behind a retaining wall in front of another YouTube building about a block away. The subject was described as wearing a ski-mask covering his face and head, with a possible
handgun in his hand. This turned out to be an employee that had fled the shooting scene and decided to lay down behind a retaining wall and wait to be discovered by police. He wrapped a t-shirt around his head and face to protect himself from the sun. The possible gun in his hand was a cell phone.

- Calls continued to stream in from people hiding in various locations within the building seeking instructions or requesting rescue.

1305 hours:
- A caller reported that there were numerous YouTube employees hiding in the wooded area between the courtyard and highway 280.
- Press calls ramped up rapidly with about 40 inquiries in the next 15 minutes. Many calls came in on the 911 and emergency lines.
- San Bruno received the first Public Records Act (PRA) request from a media outlet. There were four such requests in the next 15 minutes. All requested items that had not even been obtained yet, such as body camera footage and CCTV footage from the scene.

1310 hours:
- A caller in a residential neighborhood about a half mile from YouTube HQ reported that there was a possible suspect hiding behind a tree in their front yard. This turned out to be a YouTube employee that had fled the scene of the shooting.

1311 hours:
- A caller in another residential neighborhood about a half mile away from YouTube HQ reported that there was an unknown female hiding in her backyard. Again this turned out to be an employee that fled the scene of the shooting.

1332 hours:
- County Dispatchers arrived at the Command Post and dispatched from there.

"Virtual Dispatch"

SBPD had an established “virtual dispatch” relationship with a nearby agency (The Burlingame Police Department). This relationship allowed the dispatch centers for both departments to be joined instantaneously when needed.

It was common practice for Dispatchers from both agencies to monitor radio traffic from one another’s cities, and to step in and assist one another whenever appropriate. Dispatchers from both agencies were able use one another’s radio frequencies and computer-aided dispatch systems seamlessly. Not only did this immediately multiply the dispatch strength in a major incident, but it allowed one agency to take over for another if there were ever technical difficulties or other issues that crippled one communications center. As an example, a couple
of years prior to this incident, the Burlingame Police Department was the victim of a malware attack that disabled their computer systems for a period of time. San Bruno Dispatch was able to immediately take over their dispatch duties to avoid any disruption of police services in their city. Furthermore, when the event became protracted, Burlingame Dispatchers were able to simply work out of the San Bruno Dispatch Center. Prior to this incident, both departments used this connection quite frequently, so there was a familiarity that made it easy to implement for this event.

As a result of this “virtual dispatch” set-up, one dispatcher became five in a matter of seconds. This proved critical because San Bruno would not have been able to effectively manage the volume of emergency calls while keeping up with the critical communications from officers on-scene.
2c. Annex C: Initial Response

This portion of the AAR will provide a basic explanation of the initial police response to the shooting incident. There are separate sections dealing with the longer-term response, including: Fire and EMS, investigations, incident management, etc. As explained in the previous Notification/Dispatch Annex, San Bruno Police received the first 911 call associated with this incident on April 3, 2018 at 1246 hours. Below is a summary timeline of the police response that followed that first 911 call:

**Within 30 seconds:** San Bruno Police units were dispatched to the report of an active shooter at the YouTube Headquarters, located at 901 Cherry Avenue in San Bruno.

**Within 2 minutes:** Two SBPD patrol officers arrived at the southeast corner of the headquarters building. This location was chosen because it provided the closest access to the stairs leading to the main entrance to the lobby. At this point, responding officers had no specific information regarding where the shooter was, nor did they have any description of the suspect. Shortly after the first two officers arrived, an additional patrol officer and a motor officer arrived at the northeast corner of the building.
threat, in accordance with their training. As the officers arrived at the main lobby entrance, they were unable to open the lobby doors because key cards were required, which the police department did not have. Knowing this, two YouTube security employees remained just inside of the entrance and opened the doors for officers as they arrived. The first officer to arrive at the courtyard entrance encountered the same issue because the gate there also required a key card for access. Again, there was a YouTube security employee waiting just outside of this gate to provide access for the officer. The officer instructed the YouTube security staff member to wedge the gate open for other arriving officers and then clear the area immediately.

Within 4 minutes: The officer that first entered the courtyard received information that there was a female subject down near the lobby entrance doors from the courtyard. The officer immediately worked his way to this location and found an unresponsive female lying down, and a handgun on the ground several feet away from her. The officer ordered the female to show him her hands at gunpoint, but received no response. The officer then noticed what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the female’s chest. The officer also broadcasted over the radio that he had a female down with a firearm next to her.
Within 6 minutes: One of the first outside agency officers to arrive on-scene was a Pacifica Police Officer that happened to be near San Bruno when the call for mutual aid was broadcast. This officer arrived at the main lobby doors at the front of the building and encountered the male victim, still accompanied by the YouTube employee. This officer noticed that the victim appeared to be suffering from a sucking chest wound, was having a great deal of trouble breathing, and was going into shock. The officer considered leaving the victim, to progress toward the threat in accordance with active shooter training, but also noted that he did not hear any active gunfire. Believing that the victim would almost surely succumb to his injuries if not treated, the officer stopped and applied a sucking chest wound seal and dressing to the victim. This almost immediately enabled the victim to breath more normally, but the officer knew that he still required prompt transport to a trauma hospital. According to the surgeons that treated this victim, the officer’s treatment, combined with the timely transport by Fire and Medics, was absolutely responsible for saving the victim’s life.
Within 8 minutes: As explained in the Notification/Dispatch section of this report, while officers believed that the deceased female in the courtyard was in fact a suspect, they were unable to confirm this initially. Additionally, officers were receiving numerous reports that there were other shooters, not matching the description of the down female, within the 650,000 square foot building. Officers on-scene had not heard any gunshots in the eight minutes that they had been on-scene. However, they also knew that this facility was large enough, and built in such a way, that the might not hear the shots, even if they were continuing. This created a great deal of difficulty in determining how to handle the situation as supervisors weighed the need for an immediate dynamic search against the inherent danger of conducting such an operation with minimal personnel. As the first two San Bruno Police supervisors on-scene discussed this, they located a blood trail leading up one of the lobby staircases, into the main office areas. This led the supervisors to decide that a dynamic search was warranted, and they developed a hasty plan to facilitate this.

Image from supervisor’s body camera as he arrived in the main lobby. The suspect is down outside the glass doors that are seen in the distance.
Within 10 minutes: The first two, four-officer search teams were deployed and began by following the blood trail up the stairs. Their search was immediately very difficult due to the strange layout of this tech facility, which had massive open areas, countless secured doors that they were unable to open, and thousands of employees hiding in various locations throughout the building. The search teams were able to secure access cards from security personnel fairly quickly, but they encountered many doors that required keycode entry or actual keys to open, as opposed to the key card. Almost every employee the search teams encountered and evacuated was holding multiple items in their hands, usually mobile devices, laptops, bags, etc. As they advanced through the building, the information garnered from employees was increasingly leading them to believe that the deceased female was likely the only shooter. However, reports to the contrary continued to come in, so the search continued. Also within this timeframe, Fire and Medics had the male victim evacuated and on the way to San Francisco General Hospital. There is more information on the Fire/EMS response in the Fire and EMS Operations Annex later in this report.

Image from officer’s body camera captured an employee exiting a hidden door in a stairwell with a metal tripod in his hand. This occurred during the initial dynamic search for additional shooters.

Within 15 minutes: YouTube Security began a coordinated evacuation of employees that exited the building. The security team had a pre-existing plan for accomplishing this, including the use of one of their other buildings as the evacuation location. Security not only coordinated the evacuation to this safe location, but they requested that all employees remain at the evacuation location until police spoke to them, and released them. Police personnel were
initially unaware that this was being done as their attention was focused on getting to the
threat as quickly as possible. This effort by YouTube Security not only removed an exceedingly
difficult task from the plates of first responders, but also made the job of investigators
immensely easier when it was time to identify and interview witnesses. During this same
timeframe a complete inner and outer perimeter was set up, and the Incident Command Post
(ICP) was established

**Within 40 minutes:** The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office SWAT Team began to arrive on
scene. The initial search teams were told to cease their search operation and turn over that
responsibility to the SWAT/Tactical Unit. A Tactical Command Post (TCP) was established,
separate from the ICP. A press staging area was also established (see Incident Management
Annex for further information regarding press management).

**Within 90 minutes:** The dynamic search of the building was complete, and a more thorough
systematic search was initiated.

**Within 150 minutes:** The systematic search of the building and the surrounding property was
completed, and the SWAT Team turned the building over to San Bruno investigators.
2d. Annex D: Fire and EMS Operations

This portion of the AAR will provide a brief summary of the early actions and response of Fire and EMS resources involved in this incident. This AAR is primarily focused on the law response to the shooting, but this section has been added in an effort to provide some insight into the Fire and EMS response. What follows is an abbreviated timeline of the Fire and EMS operations for this incident. This data is from the Fire communications system, so some of the times might vary from those reported elsewhere in this report.

- **1248 hours**: Fire alarm @ 901 Cherry Avenue, basement stairs #3 exit pull, Engines 51, 52, 63 and Truck 51 responding.
- **1251 hours**: PSC Update – Police request Fire/EMS for shots fired at same location.
- **1252 hours**: B16 / E51 on scene. Incident Command established. Units advised to stage and don personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **1253 hours**: E52 / T51 on scene.
- **1256 hours**: Police requesting rescue of victim at front of building and advising secure for Fire. Medic 31 on scene and staging.
- **1257 hours**: Engine 63 on scene. PSC Update - One patient at entrance and one in courtyard (suspected shooter).
- **1301 hours**: Level 2 MCI requested.
- **1303 hours**: Suspect pronounced deceased.
- **1304 hours**: Most critical victim on ambulance and en-route to SF General Hospital. 2nd alarm requested. Engines 37, 38, Quint 62, B5, B17, B20.
- **1306 hours**: Training 4 added to incident. Rescue 61 en-route to SF General with second gunshot victim. 2nd alarm units directed to stage at Cherry/Bayhill.
- **1307 hours**: Dispatch advised IC of another patient at clubhouse at 1125 Cherry, injured while escaping. Unified Command established with Law.
- **1310 hours**: 2nd alarm units begin to arrive.
- **1315 hours**: Unified Command Post established at 851 Traeger.
- **1318 hours**: Hospital polling (SF 6 immediate / Stanford 4).
- **1324 hours**: IDT arrives and establishes communications.
- **1326 hours**: Medic 42 transports 2nd female patient to Kaiser SSF.
2e. Annex E: Incident Management

This portion of the AAR will provide information regarding incident command, media management and the cooperation between public and private entities during this event.

Incident Command

An SBPD Lieutenant was among the first units to arrive on-scene. Initially, this Lieutenant assumed a position with the entry team, believing that this was in fact an active shooter incident, and that stopping the active threat was an absolute priority. As additional personnel arrived, this Lieutenant left the immediate scene and established a location for the Incident Command Post (ICP). From there, the Lieutenant began to coordinate the large-scale response from outside agencies that would be arriving promptly. The ICP was established at 1258 hours, approximately 10 minutes after the first officers arrived on-scene.

Unfortunately, the Lieutenant was unable to bring the department’s command vehicle to the ICP, because it was assigned to the on-duty Watch Commander and was in use within the hot zone. This left the Lieutenant to start ICP operations on the trunk of his unmarked vehicle with nothing more than a pen and a pad of paper. Mutual aid units were advised of the ICP location and instructed to respond there, but the vast majority of units responding from outside agencies went directly to the scene as opposed to the ICP. A staging area separate from the ICP was not initially established, which would later become a logistical issue for Incident Command.

At approximately 1307 hours, a Battalion Chief from San Bruno Fire arrived at the ICP and Unified Command was established. The SBPD Lieutenant assumed the role of Incident Commander (IC).

At approximately 1315 hours the decision was made to request assistance from County OES. Specifically, the request was made for multiple incident command vehicles, a Logistics Liaison and Tactical Dispatchers. An ad-hoc version of the Incident Command System (ICS) began to take form as the IC established an Operations Section, a Logistics Section and a Public Information Officer.

At approximately 1325 hours, an Investigations Liaison was appointed, and a Press Staging Area was established approximately one block from the ICP. A separate Tactical Command Post (TCP) was established as well. On the next page is a map depicting the overall layout of the scene at this point.
At approximately 1330 hours, representatives from YouTube and Walmart.com arrived at the ICP and were welcomed in by Command Staff. This included Security Heads, a Legal Liaison and a Public Relations Liaison. While it was somewhat unorthodox to have these non-sworn personnel at the ICP, the decision to allow them in proved invaluable. This is explained in greater detail in the Takeaways/Recommendations section of this Annex.

At approximately 1345 hours, about one hour into the incident, OES assets began to arrive on scene. This included an operational incident command vehicle from the Belmont Police Department, a tactical dispatch vehicle, and multiple ICS-trained personnel to assist the IC.

At approximately 1450 hours, about two hours into the incident, Command shifted from a tactical operation to an investigative operation. The original IC transitioned into the role of Investigations Commander and another Lieutenant took over as IC. The new IC immediately established a staging area that was separated from the ICP and designated a Staging Officer to organize human assets and deploy them upon command from the IC. The first effective inventory of personnel was conducted and revealed approximately 120 police personnel on-scene. There were only 55 police personnel on the roster at the ICP at that time. Obtaining an accurate count of officers on-scene this late into the incident proved to be very difficult and time consuming as it required a lengthy roll call, among other efforts. Many officers on-scene had not switched their radios to the joint channel being used for the operation, and others were from agencies that did not have access to the joint channel (CHP).

At approximately 1640 hours, about four hours into the incident, the inner and outer perimeters were significantly reduced, and the majority of outside agency officers were released from the scene.

At approximately 1800 hours, the outer perimeter was eliminated, and the ICP was relocated to the foot of Bayhill Drive. The Security Head and Legal Liaison from YouTube were allowed to remain at the ICP and continued to provide valued assistance to the IC.

The much-needed and much-appreciated mutual aid response included the arrival of multiple Command Staff members and Police Chiefs from outside agencies. Many of these experienced law enforcement professionals made significant contributions to the handling of this incident. At the same time, the presence of high-ranking police executives that are not part of the ICS structure of the incident also created some significant challenges. These challenges are discussed in greater detail in the Takeaways/Recommendations section of this AAR.
Media Management

There was an immediate and widespread media interest in this event, on an international level. As was mentioned earlier in this AAR, SBPD received media inquiries within the first ten minutes of this incident and received formal Public Records Act requests within the first hour. Many of the early press inquiries came in on 911 and other emergency lines, making it difficult for dispatchers that obviously had more important tasks at hand than assisting the media. While some of this difficulty was due to inconsiderate reporters, it was also exacerbated by the fact that SBPD failed to designate a press hotline in the early stages of the incident.

Despite the early challenges described above, the San Bruno Police Command Staff made the early decision that it would strive to create a tone of cooperation and transparency with the media. This decision was made easier by the belief that the police response to this incident appeared to have been exceptional in nearly all facets. Desiring to maintain the productive relationship between YouTube and the police department that existed prior to this incident, managing the press required some coordination and cooperation between YouTube and SBPD.

As is fairly common in this digital age, it was not the police department or YouTube that released the first information about this incident. Of course, YouTube employees and other witnesses were posting information on social media almost immediately. In fact, one citizen captured a video of the earliest police response and posted it to various social media channels within 5 minutes of police arrival. This video went viral over the next few hours and had well over 1 million views in that period of time. Fortunately, this video captured a courageous San Bruno Police Corporal driving directly up to the courtyard entrance, arming himself with a rifle, and running into the courtyard without any delay whatsoever. While the public information efforts by SBPD that followed were important, it was this video that set the media tone right from the start. Because the viral video from the YouTube shooting captured a police officer doing exactly what he was trained to do, despite the dangers, all the police department had to do was to build on that narrative; and that is exactly what it did.

As the San Bruno Police Chief has said many times since this incident, the officers and dispatchers that were involved in this incident displayed tremendous courage, bravery and professionalism; all he had to do was talk about it.

In the very early stages of this incident, SBPD used its established social media presence to put out critical public safety information and to provide the community with some insight as to what the large police presence was pertaining to. While SBPD ordinarily uses its social media presence as a place for two-way communication and public engagement, this was simply not possible in this case. While Command Staff put out a great deal of information early and often, it was not able to respond to questions or comments from followers due to preoccupation with managing the incident itself.

There was also an excellent press staging area designated before a significant volume of media were on-scene. The chosen location put the media close enough to the scene that they were
able to secure the key shots they desired while keeping them far enough away to ensure that they were not an intrusion. The location even had a slight hill that enabled all members of the media to get into position for quality video coverage of press conferences, without having to battle with one another.

SBPD also decided to take a slightly different approach to the Public Information Officer (PIO) concept. Rather than designating one staff member to handle all facets of the media, the decision was made to split these responsibilities. A Sergeant was designated as the Press Liaison. His job was essentially to coordinate the location of the media and manage their needs at the scene, which included keeping them abreast of press conference times. A Commander was designated to construct message content by working with investigators to ensure that information to be released was accurate. Due to the scope of the event, the Chief of Police would deliver all press conferences and be the face and voice of the department.

At approximately 1325 hours, about a half hour after the first 911 call, SBPD publicly confirmed that there had been an active shooter incident at YouTube Headquarters, and that there would be a press conference as soon as the scene was declared to be safe.

At approximately 1346 hours, SBPD learned that at least two YouTube employees were live streaming from within the building while sheltering in place. The media began to report what they were hearing from these live streams, which included the claim that dozens of people were killed and that there were multiple shooters still inside the building. Neither of which were accurate.

The Chief of Police held his first press conference about an hour into the incident. This was after the dynamic search of the building was complete, and the systematic search was underway. The Chief essentially disclosed the following in that first press conference:

- SBPD responded to the report of an active shooter at YouTube Headquarters.
- Officers arrived quickly and immediately entered the building to search for the shooter.
- Upon arrival officers located a male shooting victim in critical condition near the front of the business.
- A short time later officers located a deceased female with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound and currently believe her to be the shooter.
- Two additional gunshot wound victims were located at an adjacent restaurant.
- All three gunshot victims were transported to area hospitals and their conditions were unknown.
- Numerous officers from numerous area agencies were quick to respond, and SBPD could not have handled this incident so effectively without that critical assistance.

The Chief was asked a number of additional questions following the statement that he was prepared to deliver. Rather than dodging these questions, he made a genuine effort to answer any questions that he could, without speculating or compromising the ongoing investigation.
This helped to immediately establish the tone of cooperation and transparency that the department was seeking.

SBPD held several press conferences over the next few hours, stopping to update the media and the public whenever some new information of value came to light. As international media and national networks arrived, the Police Chief granted individual interviews to each of them upon request. While this was time consuming for the Chief, he embraced this as his primary role in the incident, and he trusted his staff to handle most other facets of the investigation. This enabled SBPD to create a positive and accurate narrative, and doing so without delay prevented a lot of the speculation that often results in a narrative that is not favorable to the agencies involved.

As previously mentioned, SBPD was working together with representatives from YouTube from the very early stages of this event. The department’s decision to hold this first press conference as early as it did, was perhaps the first contentious point in this interaction. Obviously, YouTube was concerned about the optics of the event itself, and more practically about the potential liability associated with it. YouTube executives made it pretty clear that their preference was for the department not to release any information to the media at this point. SBPD made it clear that this was not an option. What resulted, was a collaborative effort to balance the need for transparency, with the importance of information veracity, and YouTube’s public relations/legal concerns. From a more practical perspective, this meant that the SBPD Public Information Officer drafted content for press releases, then met with YouTube Public Relations to discuss that content prior to release. This ensured that the message the police department wanted to publish was clear, while allowing its private sector partner in this event to express any concerns about that message, and to be aware of what was going public, before it went public. This process abruptly fostered a strong working relationship between YouTube and SBPD. There were certainly points at which SBPD planned to release information that YouTube preferred it would not, but this was usually overcome with simple explanation and the occasional compromise.

YouTube representatives were not a part of the first press conference, but they stood side-by-side with the Chief in the conferences that followed. This also helped to convey the message that the two entities were working together.

As international media began to converge on the scene, it was clear that continuing a positive relationship with them would require that the department provide them with the access that they desired. Hundreds of media groups all wanted to obtain quality footage and meaningful interviews, which they would not be able to get if they were restricted to the original press staging area. Once the police department reduced the scene perimeter and relocated the ICP, the decision was made to shut down an entire block of Cherry Avenue, directly in front of the YouTube building, and provide that space to the media. This was a significant undertaking not only in terms of the personnel required to accomplish it, but it required the shutdown of a major arterial street running through the middle of a large business park. It was incredibly well-
received by the media. There was ample room for everyone and their mass of equipment. National media groups all wanted an interview with the Chief in the early morning hours of the day after the incident so that they could make the morning broadcasts on the east coast. The Chief was able to use this street closure in a sort of assembly line approach, moving from one interview to the next, straight down the line, until he had accommodated them all. The police department maintained this closure for about 24 hours, then most of the media left of their own accord. Countless media outlets commented that this unprecedented access was deeply appreciated and made their jobs much easier. Below is a basic scene map of what this looked like.

Approximately 48 hours after this event, there was a large joint press conference held at SBPD, and this tactic proved highly effective. This conference included: SBPD, San Bruno Mayor, San Bruno City Manager, FBI, ATF and YouTube Executives. Every effort was made to provide all of the information that the department felt it could possibly release without compromising the ongoing investigation. At the conclusion, the Chief informed the media that there would not be another press conference for at least a week, unless some unexpected critical information emerged before then. This was done in an effort to sort of close the news cycle on this story and enable the department to focus on the investigation. It was effective.
2f. Annex F: Investigation

This portion of the AAR provides information on both the on-scene and follow-up investigations into this incident. The fact that the sole suspect in this shooting took her own life allows for the sharing of investigative information much more freely, and much sooner, than would be the case if there was pending prosecution. That being said, some aspects of this investigation are ongoing, which means that this Annex is not a complete representation of all the known facts of this case. In fact, this investigation will likely be ongoing for quite some time. Rather than delay release of this AAR, we have decided to include a summary of relevant investigative information as it was known at the time of its authoring.

The investigation of this incident, the events that led up to it, and the suspect’s motive, has been a collaborative effort from the very start. It would be impossible to give credit everywhere that credit is due in this report, but suffice it to say that SBPD could not have handled this on its own, and didn’t have to. Nearly every agency in San Mateo County sent seasoned investigators directly to the scene to assist with the early investigation. District Attorney Investigators were by our side every step of the way with guidance and support. The Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms played an instrumental role in the execution of search warrants in the San Diego area and determining the history of the firearm used. The San Mateo County Vehicle Theft Task Force used their automated license plate readers to produce a list of all vehicles that were within a half mile radius of this event when it happened. The San Mateo County Coroner’s Office delivered a thorough and timely death investigation and report. The San Mateo County Crime Lab completed a comprehensive processing of a very large crime scene, including construction of a 3-dimensional scene diagram using a Total Station 3D Scanner. The San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office assigned a dedicated ADA to this case, despite knowing that there was no prosecution likely, to ensure that search warrants were promptly issued, and legal questions were professionally addressed. The FBI assisted with ruling out terrorism as a motive for this attack. No doubt, there were countless others that assisted with this investigation, for which the City of San Bruno is eternally grateful.

Even the earliest stages of this incident were driven largely by intelligence gathered through investigative steps. For example, one of the most immediate priorities was determining whether or not there were additional shooters beyond the deceased female. Tactical teams were attempting to address this issue by conducting physical searches of the premises. Not only was this time consuming and difficult in a 600,000 square foot facility with thousands of employees inside, but it could only be effective to a certain degree. If additional shooters had already exited the building, managed to blend in with evacuating employees, or were concealed in an area where they were not likely to be found, they could be missed. The vast majority of this facility was covered by video surveillance, which meant that reviewing video footage would likely be the fastest way to rule out the possibility of other shooters or co-suspects. Within 20
minutes of the first 911 call, a San Bruno Police Investigator was reviewing video footage with the help of YouTube Security. This enabled the police department to be much more certain that Aghdam acted alone, much sooner than would have otherwise been possible. Prompt review of the video also enabled investigators to fairly quickly determine that Aghdam did not appear to plant any sort of devices on the premises, which was critical to allowing operations to continue. Unfortunately, the courtyard where the shooting occurred was not covered by video cameras.

The next most pressing investigative undertaking was accompanying the three victims to two different area hospitals. If this shooting was not random, interviews with these victims were likely the shortest path to understanding the motive. Of course, we now know that the victims were chosen at random, but nonetheless Detectives needed to be deployed to the hospitals to conduct interviews. Strangely enough, the male victim initially refused to speak with detectives at the hospital and would not allow them to view the contents of his cellular phone. The victim’s wife was present at the hospital, and he was reluctant to speak with her around. This led the detectives to suspect that the victim might have known the shooter, and that this incident could have a domestic violence connection. This was later ruled out as a possibility, and why the victim was so uncooperative is still a mystery. He did ultimately provide a statement, but never allowed the search of his cell phone.

To even begin to investigate this matter, police needed to identify the suspect. The suspect’s body became the jurisdiction of the San Mateo County Coroner’s Office as soon as she was pronounced deceased, but the Coroner was not able to examine the body until the scene was declared completely safe. This meant that police personnel were not able to search the suspect’s person for identification until almost three hours after this incident began. Even when the Coroner was able to access and search the body, the suspect had no form of identification on her person. The suspect did however have a set of car keys in her purse. There was some immediate concern that came with the discovery that Aghdam likely had left a vehicle nearby. This would be a good way to identify her, but there were concerns about explosive devices and/or booby traps. Aghdam’s vehicle was located using the key fob from her purse and a records check of the license plate provided Aghdam’s name as the registered owner. The San Mateo County Bomb Squad was called out to sweep the vehicle before it was accessed. Following the “all clear” from the Bomb Squad, investigators conducted a cursory search of Aghdam’s vehicle and found her identification. Shortly thereafter detectives contacted Aghdam’s family and learned of her history with YouTube, which quickly emerged as the motive for this shooting.

Once Aghdam was identified, investigators quickly determined that there were two residences associated with her, where search warrants would need to be executed. One San Bruno Detective returned to the police station and began authoring affidavits for search warrants for both residences and Aghdam’s vehicle. There were two ATF Agents on-scene that had responded to the original call for mutual aid. They quickly offered the assistance of ATF in
conducting surveillance of these two residences until investigators arrived to execute search warrants. SBPD Detectives were already on their way to San Diego, but ATF’s surveillance helped to ensure that nobody fled these locations or destroyed evidence prior to their arrival.

While investigators were zeroing in on Aghdam’s motive, the FBI learned of her identity and began to explore the possibility of a terrorism tie-in. At one point the FBI contacted the ICP and stated that they were sending agents out to Aghdam’s residences in San Diego, to speak with her family. This led SBPD to suspect that the FBI had found some sort of terrorism connection to this event, which would likely result in the FBI taking over as the lead investigating agency, but it was not immediately clear that this was the case. SBPD was appropriately prepared to hand over this investigation to the FBI, in the event that there was a connection to terrorism. Ultimately, the FBI sent two Agents to the ICP and this issue was discussed at length. As time passed, the FBI did not identify any terrorism nexus that would justify their taking over the investigation, so they assumed a supportive role in assisting SBPD when appropriate. FBI agreed not to contact anyone at Aghdam’s residence, or take any other investigative steps without collaborating with SBPD.

One of the most daunting tasks for investigators at the scene was conducting interviews with the thousands of employees that had been evacuated from YouTube Headquarters. As previously mentioned, YouTube Security did an excellent job of evacuating and essentially sequestering these witnesses for police, but systematically interviewing so many people was another matter entirely. A DA Investigator and an SBPD Detective ended up leading this effort. Each of them took a team of five investigators from various surrounding agencies and responded to the buildings where these employees were being held. Announcements were made to the entire group of employees instructing them to either have their identification ready for police, or write their identifying information on a card if they did not have their ID. Further announcements broke the group up into three segments: those who saw anything associated with the shooting; those who saw nothing but heard the shooting; and those that did not see or hear anything. YouTube Security personnel collected the identifying information for the group that did not see or hear anything, while police investigators worked their way through brief interviews with the other two groups. This process took approximately two hours. But in that span of time more than 1,500 people were identified and hundreds of them were interviewed. From all this, there were no more than a couple of dozen people that were able to add any information of value to the investigation.

Search warrants were executed at the two residences associated to Aghdam in San Diego. One of these residences was where her family lived. It was quickly evident that Aghdam had not lived at this residence for quite some time and no significant evidence was obtained there. The second residence was where Aghdam had lived with her grandmother leading up to this incident. There was very little located there as well. Investigators did seize a laptop and two cellular phones, as well as some clothing and other personal items. There were no weapons or ammunition located, nor were there any suicide notes, manifestos or other writings discussing...
Aghdam’s plans, or her frustration with YouTube. A later analysis of the cellphones revealed that they had both been factory reset. The laptop had also been wiped and factory reset. Nothing of any evidentiary value was obtained from the phones or the laptop.

Detectives were able to go through hundreds of social media posts and YouTube videos created by Aghdam. These posts and videos consistently raved about YouTube censoring and sanctioning Aghdam. She repeatedly claimed that YouTube deliberately stopped her from getting views because they did not agree with her positions and her message. Nowhere in these messages did Aghdam make any threats of violence or otherwise indicate that she intended to commit this shooting.

The search of Aghdam’s vehicle revealed a small gun safe that did not contain a firearm but did contain paperwork for the firearm found next to Aghdam’s body. It also contained receipts from the Jackson Arms firing range and Aghdam’s handgun safety certificate. Several papers containing writings in Arabic were seized from the vehicle. Later analysis of these writings revealed no mention of YouTube, the shooting, or Aghdam’s pending suicide. There were also multiple memory cards, an external hard drive, a cellular phone and a digital camcorder seized from the vehicle. These items were all forensically analyzed and revealed very little evidence.

Investigators conducted dozens of interviews with every known family member and associate of Aghdam that they could locate. None of these people described having any notion that Aghdam was going to hurt anyone, including herself. To a person, those interviewed described Aghdam as very peaceful and empathetic. None of these people had any knowledge that Aghdam had purchased a firearm. Other than reiterating Aghdam’s frustration with YouTube, none of the people interviewed were able to provide any further clarity as to why this happened.

Aghdam had no criminal history, no known law enforcement contacts, and no history of mental illness. The toxicology test revealed that Aghdam was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of this incident.

A review of Aghdam’s various communications with YouTube revealed that she was increasingly frustrated with their policies and felt that YouTube was deliberately positioning her videos so that she could not be found or viewed. Aghdam believed that YouTube was targeting her because she was of Middle Eastern descent and because they did not agree with her position on various issues. YouTube was generally very responsive to Aghdam’s communications. The responses were professional and courteous, but they did not present any real solution to Aghdam’s plight.

While this investigation is ongoing, to this point it has only revealed that Aghdam felt that YouTube had taken away a critical part of who she was, and this shooting was in retaliation...nothing more.
2g. Annex G: Debriefing Processes

While SBPD is a relatively small police department, it is no stranger to critical incidents. While there are others, perhaps the best example is the PG&E gas pipeline explosion that devastated a residential neighborhood in 2010. As such, SBPD was very familiar with the critical incident debriefing processes, and their importance. What follows is a brief explanation of the debriefing processes and public outreach that has been conducted in association with this incident.

- **Critical Incident Stress Debriefings:** San Mateo County is truly blessed to have a designated Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team that is available to all agencies when needed. SBPD had used the services of this team many times in the years that preceded this event and was quick to call on them again here. YouTube volunteered to host these debriefings, providing wonderful facilities, as well as food and drinks for all attendees.
  - The first CISM debriefing was conducted about 10 days after the incident, and included SBPD personnel only. All personnel were encouraged to attend, and more than 40 people participated. This number might seem small, but the department has less than 100 employees, and only about 60 of them were involved in this incident. Command staff was present for only the introduction portion of this debriefing, to encourage staff to speak freely. According to the CISM team, and those who attended, this debriefing was highly effective and very useful.
  - The second CISM debriefing was conducted a couple of days later and invitations were extended countywide to all personnel involved in the incident. This included Police, Fire, EMS, Dispatch, Coroners, Crime Lab, etc. There were approximately 75 people in attendance, most of whom were from agencies other than SBPD. This was largely due to the fact that SBPD personnel had already been through a CISM debriefing only days earlier. Once again, feedback from attendees was very positive.
  - The final CISM debriefing was conducted in cooperation with YouTube executives and designed to provide YouTube employees with access to the CISM process. This event was also well attended, and feedback was very positive.

- **Tactical Debriefings:** The law enforcement and fire agencies in San Mateo County work very closely with one another. Immediately following this incident, there was a high level of interest in debriefing the response and sharing lessons learned throughout the county. An SBPD Lieutenant was promptly assigned to head up the response analysis and tactical debriefing process, which would then result in the conducting of multiple tactical debriefings.
On April 20, 2018, seventeen days after the incident, a large scale tactical debriefing was conducted. The decision was made to conduct a joint tactical debriefing with Police, Fire, EMS and Dispatch. YouTube once again volunteered to host this debriefing, providing ample space and food and beverages for approximately 200 attendees. An SBPD Lieutenant headed up the presentation, which consisted of an extensive multimedia presentation, including body camera footage, surveillance footage, radio traffic and 911 calls. Despite the large audience, the event was designed to encourage questions and input from attendees, which resulted in a powerful exchange of information that contributed significantly to the lessons learned from the incident. The debriefing lasted almost four hours and was very well received.

Shortly thereafter, the same Lieutenant delivered a tactical debriefing to YouTube executives and security heads.

A groundswell of interest in the tactical debriefing content then began, largely from the private security industry. SBPD has since delivered debriefing presentations to more than twenty groups of people, with dozens more scheduled. These groups have included: police departments, private security teams, state and federal agencies, business executive teams, global security associations, etc.

- **Formation of Stakeholder Groups:** There was already a stakeholder group in place among SBPD, YouTube and the other tenants of the YouTube business park. Prior to this incident however, this group mostly discussed minor annoyances such as parking complaints and pedestrian safety. In the aftermath of this incident, the group was reformed and restructured to focus on emergency management and public safety. The group meets quarterly and many productive enhancements have come from their meetings.

- **Development of the After Action Report:** Perhaps the most comprehensive and challenging component of the debriefing and outreach process has been the development of the After Action Report (AAR), which you are reading right now. The aim from the get-go has been to create a detailed AAR that would effectively share the details of this incident, as well as the lessons learned from it, with public safety entities everywhere. Additionally, SBPD plans to release a non-law-enforcement-sensitive version of this AAR to the public when complete.
3. Takeaways/Recommendations

Up to this point, the aim of this AAR has been to provide readers with a detailed description of the particulars of this case, without significant opinion regarding what was done well, and what was not. This has been done deliberately to allow each reader to better understand the facts and come to their own conclusions as to what can be garnered from this experience. Every public safety department is different, and what one department takes away from this event might be completely different from what another takes away.

This portion of the AAR is designed to share some of the takeaways and recommendations that the involved agencies have identified to this point. While the items discussed here are specific to the agencies involved, many of them are no doubt applicable to countless other agencies as well. This is by no means a comprehensive list of the many lessons learned from this event, and we continue to identify new learning points to this day. The intention is to share what has been identified as having gone well, as well as some of the things that did not go so well. There is also an effort made to identify some of the potential shortcomings in current law enforcement practices, and some of the changes that are being sought to address them.

**Dispatch/Communications Takeaways**

- **Virtual Dispatch:** The pre-established relationship between the dispatch centers for SBPD and the Burlingame Police Department proved critical in this incident. This was not a relationship that was only leveraged in rare critical incidents. The two departments used one another for break fills, busy times, and to cover maintenance needs on an almost daily basis. As such, there was a strong familiarity between the two entities, and not a beat was missed as BPD stepped in to serve as SBPD dispatchers within a minute of the first 911 call. For smaller agencies like SBPD, that manage their own dispatch communications, an overlap relationship like this is essential. There are some technological challenges involved in setting up a virtual dispatch relationship, but they are all quite simple to overcome. If your agency is interested in learning more about how this was done by SBPD and BPD, please use the contact information at the end of this AAR to contact us.

- **Co-locating call takers and dispatchers:** As a fairly small department, at SBPD the staff member taking a 911 call is often also going to dispatch that call. When this is not the case, the call taker and the dispatcher are at least in the same immediate location. Much has been made about the response time for this incident, with police on-scene within 2 minutes of the first 911 call. This was largely due to the fact that there was no need for a transfer communication between a call taker and a dispatcher. The first 911 call taker was able to mute her 911 line and immediately dispatch officers as soon as the call came in. In many departments, especially larger ones, the call taker and the
dispatcher are two different people. This is often necessary because the radio is too busy for a dispatcher to also take calls. There is little doubt however, that this arrangement slows response times. This delay is exacerbated in situations where the call taker and the dispatcher are not even in the same room. From all of the study and analysis into active shooter scenarios, we know that time is the most critical element. Every second means lives lost, and the vast majority of these incidents end as soon as police are on-scene. As such, law enforcement agencies must take a close look at what can be done to shorten the response time and it is strongly believed that removing the delay between 911 call and dispatch is the first step.

- **Caller statements in RMS**: As the callers relating to this incident streamed in, call takers took the time to obtain succinct but thorough statements from each caller. The questions asked by call takers rivaled those that would be expected from a seasoned police officer. Call takers established contact information for every caller, determined where they were when the shooting occurred, and ascertained exactly what they had seen and/or heard. Furthermore, the call takers entered all of this information directly into the CAD system. This created a permanent record, all in one place, that investigators could later use to identify witnesses and triage their priorities in setting up interviews. With thousands of witnesses in and around the building when this shooting occurred, identifying and interviewing witnesses would have taken months without this outstanding effort by call takers. This was something that these call takers were not specifically trained to do, but was more a reflection of their experience and diligence. Moving forward we have added basic police interview training to the training regimen for all dispatchers and call takers. Additionally, this incident is used as an illustration of the importance of adding all information garnered from a caller directly into the CAD system notes for the call.

- **Need for terminology training**: Most departments have engaged in a significant amount of active shooter training over the last several years, and in most cases, dispatchers are involved in these trainings. However, it became evident in this incident that many dispatchers have not received adequate training in the significance of certain terms that police and fire have been trained to use in an incident like this. For example, when the officer calling for fire to treat the chest wound victim stated that he was within the “warm zone”, this had clear implications regarding how fire would need to get to the victim. Unfortunately, the dispatcher that this was communicated to was not familiar with the importance of the term “warm zone”. As a result, fire personnel advanced to the victim without the benefit of force protection, which could have had catastrophic consequences. It is critically important that dispatchers are as familiar with these key terms as police and fire. This can be accomplished with increased and improved
training, and by ensuring that dispatchers are included in all critical incident training exercises.

- **Intrusion of press calls**: Command’s failure to establish a specific phone number for all media inquiries created a significant burden on dispatch/communications. A press hotline number must be established and clearly published very early on in an incident like this, so that emergency lines can remain dedicated to emergency services.

- **“En-Route”**: The request for mutual aid was broadcasted as a “Code 30”. This essentially means that all available county police units are requested to respond “Code 3” to assist. “Code 30” is only used in extreme emergency circumstances and should result in all available units responding to assist. Once this request was made, countless units came onto the frequency being used to manage the incident and advised that they were “en-route”. With over a hundred officers responding to the “Code 30” request, this took up critical radio air time that was needed by the units on-scene at the active shooter incident. There is no need for officers responding to a “Code 30” to advise that they are “en-route” on the frequency being used to manage the incident. If an agency requires their personnel to notify dispatch that they are responding to a “Code 30” that should be done on their own frequency, or through a call to their own communications center. The air must remain clear for units on-scene at an incident like this.

**Emergency Response Takeaways**

- **No replacement for heroism**: While there are many components in an effective response to a critical incident like this, none of them can replace the need for heroism and bravery. The first flow of police officers to arrive at YouTube Headquarters all displayed this courage as they immediately ran into what they believed to be an active shooter situation, without any delay or hesitation. If the shooter had still been firing at that time, this would most certainly have saved lives. Because these officers behaved in this way, the early public optic was one of appreciation as opposed to scrutiny. This heroism can only be expected from police officers that are inspired about the job they do. In the challenging environment that officers are required to operate in today, it is imperative that departments continually remind them of the critical role they serve and the immense importance of the calling that they have chosen. More focus must be placed on how we lift up and inspire our officers if we expect them to run into situations like this without hesitation.

- **Training**: To a person, when the first flow of officers were interviewed about their response to this incident, they credited their preparedness with enabling them to immediately engage without hesitation. Not only had these officers received ample and recent general training in active shooter response, but there was an active shooter
training exercise in this specific building within 90 days of this incident. Additionally, two SBPD Sergeants conducted briefing table top exercises regarding an active shooter at this exact building within 30 days of this incident. These combined factors provided the officers with some familiarity with the location, and some pre-planned approaches for responding to the incident. That being said, the response to this incident revealed that the active shooter training conducted at this site a few months prior had one significant shortcoming. This training exercise, like most of its kind, was very large in scope. Fire, EMS, OES, mutual aid, tactical units and more were all involved. We essentially brought out all of these resources, put them in a neat command post, then flipped the switch and started responding. We now know that the vast majority of active shooter incidents are over in 7-10 minutes. How agencies respond in this period of time is generally going to determine the outcome. In that timeframe, very few of the resources listed above are going to be available. As such, the outcome of this situation is likely going to be determined by the response of a small patrol team. This means that while it remains important to involve all of these entities in training, it is equally critical that we train the initial response in small groups that more closely resemble what is likely to occur in reality. We need to adjust these training exercises to ensure that they more accurately reflect the resources that will actually be available at various stages of the incident. This will incorporate the many parties involved, but will ensure that they are not involved before they are likely to actually be available. Another shortcoming of these training exercises was that we failed to recognize how involved YouTube’s private security teams would be in such an incident. Security heads were on-scene for the exercises, but the line level security personnel were not actively involved in the training. These groups have their own plans and procedures for active shooter, and it is critical for first responders to be aware of them. YouTube Security played an instrumental role in the handling of this incident, and they were invaluable to incident command. As such, we need to welcome these groups into our training exercises.

It was also evident that police and fire personnel required additional training in the concept of force protection. This training is often conducted with tactical units, but as mentioned above, those units are not likely to be available for the early rescues that are so critical to saving lives. Those rescues will likely be conducted by line level patrol officers and firefighters. As such, regular training in the use of force protection is critical.

As mentioned earlier in this AAR, there was a close, and arguably unavoidable, blue on blue situation in the early response. In an event like this, at a facility of this size, officers will be coming in from all different directions and entrance points. This makes the potential for blue on blue situations exceedingly high. There were also countless YouTube employees emerging from hidden spaces during the search, more often than not with objects in their hands. Both of these issues highlighted the extreme
importance of more regular training on weapons discipline in high-stress situations. More regular use of shoot houses and moving targets that present shoot/no shoot scenarios will be critical to accomplish this.

- **Equipment:** Many of the first arriving officers had plate carrier vests available to them in their vehicles. Not one of them donned their vest. Each of them explained that they considered putting on the vest as they arrived, but decided that doing so would take too much time. A great deal of priority has been placed on equipping every officer with a plate carrier vest, but it appears that their application in the early stages of an active shooter incident is questionable at best.

There is little doubt that the male victim’s life was saved by the arriving officer’s application of a sucking chest wound dressing. Of the first twenty officers on-scene, this was the only officer that had a sucking chest wound kit to use. Only three of those first twenty officers had tourniquets with them. As mentioned earlier, the active shooting portion of most these incidents tends to be over very shortly after police arrival. At that point, the most critical role police officers can serve is that of rescuers. To serve in this role however, they must be properly equipped, and properly trained. CA POST has already expanded the first aid training requirements for police officers, now every agency must ensure that each and every officer is equipped with a competent medical kit, containing tourniquets and sucking chest wound dressings at minimum. SBPD accomplished this within 60 days of this incident.

As is often the case in these active shooter scenarios, motor officers were among the first to arrive at YouTube. Motor officers tend to be on the street and are better able to navigate through traffic. This means that they will often be among the first officers on-scene. More often than not, the motorcycles ridden by motor officers are not equipped with rifles, as was the case at SBPD. This places motor officers in the dangerous circumstance of taking on an active shooter while armed only with a handgun. Motor officers are first responders first and foremost. They need to be properly armed and equipped. All SBPD motorcycles will now be equipped with rifles. Additionally, with motor officers arriving at these scenes notably sooner than patrol officers in many cases, it is clear that they represent invaluable force-multipliers in a police department. As such, not only does increasing the number of motor officers on a police force provide increased traffic safety for the community, but it can also result in shorter response times when every second is absolutely critical. The recommendation here is to expand the number of motor officers on the police force.

Another powerful force multiplier that has served a vital role in the response to active shooter incidents across the country are crime suppression teams. San Bruno did not staff a crime suppression team when this incident occurred, but other surrounding
agencies were quick to send theirs to assist. These teams consist of highly trained, motivated officers who are not burdened with responding to typical calls for service. As such, these teams are generally available to respond quickly when a critical incident occurs, and they are accustomed to working together as a tactical unit. These team members are also often in plain clothes, which provides another crucial tool available to Incident Command. Had San Bruno employed a crime suppression team when this incident occurred, it would have resulted in at least three more armed officers responding as a cohesive unit in the most critical early moments.

Being a smaller department, SBPD outfitted its supervisor vehicles to be mobile command centers. The rear of these vehicles is set-up with the essentials for early command of a critical incident. Unfortunately, these vehicles were well inside the hot zone right from the start of this incident. This meant that they were not available for use at the ICP, where they were needed. Regardless of agency size, all departments need a dedicated mobile command vehicle. This does not have to be a massive command vehicle that is built for protracted incidents. Those will arrive via mutual aid within hours in most cases. However, there needs to be a dedicated and available vehicle that can facilitate effective implementation of ICS until that support arrives.

In reviewing body worn camera footage from this incident, it was noted that several officers experienced some struggle removing their rifles from the rifle mounts. Further examination revealed that this was often due to the fact that as officers arrived, they immediately removed the keys from the ignition of their vehicles, then pressed the auxiliary button to release the rifle from the mount. These buttons do not function without the keys in the ignition, to ensure that rifles cannot easily be stolen from the vehicles. This functionality is essential, but it was clear that we need to train this habit of immediately removing keys from the ignition, out of our officers.

Despite the existence of stakeholder groups well before this incident, SBPD did not have access cards for any portion of YouTube Headquarters. Fortunately, YouTube Security personnel were aware of this, and despite significant risk, they staged at the access points to let officers in. Unfortunately, once officers were in, they were still unable to open the countless doors of the interior, without access cards. Several options for rectifying this situation were considered, including the placement of lockboxes containing access cards, and the placement of “go-bags” containing access cards at points of entry. Ultimately, the only solution that was determined to ensure the immediate access needed, was to place all-access security cards into each and every patrol vehicle. SBPD accomplished this within 3 days of this incident.

Tactical units found it difficult to plan operations without detailed maps of the building and surrounding property. In the aftermath of this incident, it was discovered that
YouTube possessed incredibly detailed digital floor plan maps that included critical information for an emergency response to their facility. YouTube willingly provided these maps to SBPD and they can now be instantly accessed within the CAD/RMS system being used in every patrol vehicle. This model has been used as a roadmap in accomplishing this with countless other buildings throughout the City.

Conducting coordinated searches of the YouTube building required 4-officer teams to work in close proximity to one another while armed with rifles. This exposed the reality that if any one of those officers had to fire their rifle, it would likely cause major eye and ear damage to the officers directly next to them. This problem has been documented in the past, but mostly as it pertains to tactical units. Most tactical units have turned to suppressed rifles to address this issue. As mentioned throughout this report, in the most critical minutes of an incident like this, it will be patrol units, not tactical units that are responding. As such, providing patrol units with suppressed rifles is critically important.

Immediate access to an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) would have been immensely valuable during this incident. As the first officers were arriving on-scene, they faced the daunting task of determining where to focus their efforts on a massive business campus. Having access to a UAS would have allowed these officers to quickly scan the entire campus and gather intelligence without compromising their safety. As the operation continued, a UAS would have provided Incident Command with a powerful overview of the operation and the ability to quickly check on intelligence as it was gathered. Additionally, use of a UAS would have enabled Incident Command to secure the airspace above the incident to keep its tactical operations more covert and secure.

- **Importance of response to the ICP/Staging Area:** It is certainly understandable that officers from outside agencies responding to this incident felt the need to go directly to YouTube Headquarters as quickly as possible. It is probably even true that this was appropriate in the very early stages of the event. However, this practice creates a significant issue in that Incident Command and Communications do not know who is on-scene, where they are, or what they are doing. Not only can this create obvious officer safety concerns, but at some point, all personnel on-scene must be accounted for. Accomplishing this can be time consuming and difficult if a large number of personnel have essentially self-deployed and failed to check in with the ICP.

**Incident Management**

- **Establishing the ICP early:** While the first Lieutenant on-scene initially responded to YouTube, he quickly pulled back and established the ICP. The mutual aid request that
followed meant that over a hundred officers from outside agencies were responding, so establishing the ICP early was critical. Additionally, the location chosen for the ICP was ideal, largely because it had been previously identified during training exercises at this site.

- **Increased Command Staff:** At the time of this incident, the San Bruno PD Command Staff consisted of: 1 Chief; 1 Commander; and 2 Lieutenants. In an incident like this, or the PG&E Pipeline Explosion that occurred in San Bruno in 2010, this quickly proves to be completely insufficient. While outside agency Command Staff are readily available to assist, it is critical to have a core team in Incident Command that is intimately familiar with the city having jurisdiction over the incident. These scenarios are very complex and proper handling requires that decision makers know all of the moving parts and stakeholders inside and out.

- **Unified Command established early:** Within a few minutes of the ICP being established, Fire joined Police there and Unified Command was in place. This was not only critical because of the need for Fire and Police to work together, but Fire tends to be much more adept at implementing ICS than Police. While the Police Lieutenant was the IC, he immediately relied upon the Fire BC to put ICS in place.

- **Failure to establish a separate staging area:** When the ICP was established, it also served as the personnel staging area. This was a mistake. The ICP quickly became crowded with line level personnel and was a busy, confusing mess. There were several points at which command personnel were discussing mission critical matters only to find outside agency officers, and others that were not a part of incident command, listening in. It is critically important for the ICP at an incident like this to be well-organized and secure. The only way to accomplish this is to create a separate staging area, and designate a Staging Officer. This was recognized by the second Lieutenant to serve as IC, at which point a separate staging area was established and a Staging Officer was appointed.

- **Importance of donning the ICS vests:** These vests serve a significant purpose and need to be used during a critical incident. When activities are rapidly evolving at the ICP, it is critically important for the people holding various ICS positions to be easy to locate and identify. As ugly as they are, the vests should be used whenever ICS is being implemented. In addition, an ICS board should be prominently displayed, listing out all of the positions being utilized and who they are staffed by.

- **Need for ICS flexibility:** This incident exposed the fact that ICS is not a one-size fits all solution, at least not if followed to the letter. ICS provided a solid framework to follow
in setting up incident command, but there were countless portions of it that were not needed for this event. It was fairly simple to establish an abbreviated version of ICS, but this creates some confusion when outside command staff members show up and want to know why some of the ICS positions are not filled or designated. SBPD identified the need to train on the use of multiple versions of ICS, so that it can more easily be customized for incidents like this one.

- **On-scene Tactical Dispatchers:** Having the dispatchers that are running communications for the incident at the ICP is of tremendous value to the IC and to overall operations. Having to make a phone call each time the IC needs to communicate with dispatch is cumbersome and time consuming. County Communications provided on-scene dispatchers within the first couple hours of this event, and they proved to be invaluable.

- **Welcoming private partners into the ICP:** YouTube quickly sent a few of their representatives to the ICP to offer their assistance. Specifically, they sent a member of their Executive Team, a Security Head, and an Attorney. In most cases, the ICP is restricted to sworn personnel only, and generally only those that are part of Incident Command. In an incident like this however, so much information was needed from YouTube, that having their staff at the ICP was of tremendous value. Even when YouTube pushed back on providing some information, the decision makers were present, and they were able to inform the IC of what would be needed to fulfill the request. Rather than having Communications reach out to YouTube representatives each time there was a need, we had them right there to help. While conventional wisdom might make this hard to accept, welcoming your private partner decision makers into your ICP can be of great benefit.

- **Full-Time Dedicated PIO:** Managing the media in an incident like this is very challenging and time consuming. Removing an active duty police officer from the incident to assign them as a Press Information Officer is problematic because all staff are truly needed to manage the incident. Additionally, assigning a Command Staff member to be PIO eliminates a critical asset in Incident Command. Having a full-time, dedicated PIO facilitates better media management without depleting crucial resources. Additionally, a full-time PIO should be able to leverage established relationships with the media, other PIOs and private partner media teams that can be leveraged immediately when a critical incident occurs.

**Miscellaneous Takeaways**

- **Well-trained Security Staff and other employees:** This incident was much more easily managed because of the tremendous job done by YouTube Security not only
in handling the incident itself, but in training and preparing all their employees prior to the shooting. This has prompted SBPD to work with other businesses within the City to help them engage in training and preparation similar to that of YouTube.

- **Written reports:** Regardless of their level of involvement, every officer that responds to an incident like this needs to complete a written report explaining what they did. This is critically important to the investigators as they attempt to piece together all the information for the report.

- **Failure to use SMC Alert:** While SBPD used social media to put out information about this incident early and often, it failed to use one of its most valuable tools in terms of public notification, SMC Alert. SMC Alert is a countywide system that allows members of the public to elect to receive public safety notifications. This system reaches thousands of people and is quite effective. The failure to use this system during this incident was simply an oversight.

- **Regular site visits by patrol:** As mentioned in the training section earlier in this report, one of the primary reasons that the first arriving officers went into the building so quickly and confidently was the fact that they were at least loosely familiar with the layout. This is not a new concept as beat officers have been popping into businesses on their beats to generate familiarity for generations. However, this is much more difficult with these large tech campuses because they are very secure and often not terribly welcoming of police presence. Understanding how important this familiarity is, SBPD now schedules periodic site visits for patrol officers, to most of the businesses within the City. In some cases, these are conducted before or after patrol shifts, allowing officers to attend in plain clothes and reduce the disruption to the business.

- **Fire alarm pulls at the site:** One of the YouTube employees fleeing the building during this incident decided to pull a fire alarm within a stairwell, thinking that it would help others to know to evacuate. Unfortunately, this resulted in a notification to County Communications, which immediately dispatched Fire assets to the report of a possible fire. SBPD had notified County Communications of the active shooter incident only moments before this fire alarm was received, and the dispatcher sending Fire to the alarm was not aware of the active shooter incident. As a result, Fire personnel were sent to a dangerous active shooter incident, believing that they were simply going to a fire alarm, resulting in a lack of personal protective equipment and intrusion into the “warm zone”.
• **Applying lessons learned to other businesses and sites:** This has been a huge undertaking, and it is far from complete, but it is very important that we apply lessons learned at one site, to the countless others in our cities. SBPD is taking a systematic approach to this, starting with the locations that seem to be the most likely targets, and building from there.
4. Closing

In summary, the response to the April 3, 2018 attack at YouTube Headquarters was handled effectively. Had it not been for the heroic actions of YouTube employees, dispatchers, police, fire, medics and countless others, the number of casualties could have been notably higher.

There were many aspects of the response to this incident that demonstrated the effectiveness of first responder training and preparation. At the same time, analysis of the response also revealed some shortcomings, and improvements that could be made, to make future responses even more effective. The aim of this AAR has been to identify and discuss both.

The hope is that by sharing this information with other first responder agencies, each can apply their own expertise to draw conclusions of value.

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