

SINCE TUESDAY THE MEDICAL EXAMINER HAS KNOWN HOW MANY ORLANDO VICTIMS WERE KILLED BY COPS

As I noted in another post, on Monday, Orlando's police chief said that it was possible that some law enforcement officers – that might include the four who initially responded to Omar Mateen or the nine SWAT team members who later did – had (accidentally) shot Pulse patrons.

Monday, Orlando Police Chief John Mina and other law enforcement officers offered new details about the shooting, including the possibility that some victims may have been killed by officers trying to save them.

"I will say this, that's all part of the investigation," Mina said. "But I will say when our SWAT officers, about eight or nine officers, opened fire, the backdrop was a concrete wall, and they were being fired upon."

A law enforcement source close to the investigation who asked not to be named said a crowd of up to 300 people and the complex layout of the dance club may have resulted in some patrons being struck by gunfire from officers.

Mina said his decision to enter the club with such violence was tough. "It was a hard decision to make, but it was the right decision," he said. "Our No. 1 priority is on saving lives, and it was the right decision to make."

[snip]

An off-duty police officer working at the club Sunday night was investigating

an underage drinker outside when he heard gunshots inside, according to the law enforcement source. The off-duty officer ran inside the club and traded gunfire with Mateen, backed up soon by three other police officers, the source said.

The officers fired at Mateen, who retreated into a bathroom toward the rear of the club.

"Those additional officers made entry while the suspect was shooting," Mina said. "They forced him to stop shooting and retreat to the bathroom where we believe he had several hostages."

I just want to clarify the timing of this statement. The medical examiner's office released a statement Thursday confirming that it had, as planned, completed all the autopsies by Tuesday afternoon. But because of the ongoing investigation, autopsy reports (like Mateen's 911 calls and all other public records) will not be released at this time.

- *Autopsies are required to be conducted in all cases of homicide. The Medical Examiner (ME) completed all autopsies on Tuesday afternoon, June 14.*
- *This is an active criminal investigation, therefore, the autopsy results and any reports generated will not be released at this time. This includes funeral home information.*

▪ *As of June 16 afternoon, all of the 49 victims have been released to a funeral home.*

According to the NYT, the office conducted 18 of the autopsies on Tuesday, which happened to be the day the city council confirmed the appointment medical examiner Dr. Joshua Stephany had held in interim form for a year.

Although he had been filling in for about a year, Dr. Stephany was officially made Orange County's chief medical examiner two days after the slaughter at Pulse. On his first real day on the job, his office completed 18 autopsies. He said he performed at least seven of the 49 autopsies. The exact number he is not certain of.

That would say the remainder – 31 victims – would have been done on Sunday and Monday. Perhaps they weren't all done by the time Mina made his statement, but a significant portion had to have been.

So when he said that some of the victims might have been killed by the cops, he presumably knew specific numbers to that point. The medical examiner has had a final count of how many victims were killed in the cross-fire since Tuesday.

None of that minimizes Mateen's guilt for setting off the melee. It just is a data point that the cops know, but aren't yet revealing, how many people the cross-fire killed.