

Media Release

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VIRGINIA TECH INVESTIGATION – FINAL PRESS BRIEFING

BLACKSBURG – Virginia Tech Police Chief Wendell R. Flinchum and Virginia State Police Superintendent, Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, hosted a final press briefing Wednesday, April 25, 2007, at the Virginia Tech Holtzman Alumni Center.

They were accompanied by representatives from the Blacksburg Police Department, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, FBI and ATF, as well as the Honorable John Brownlee, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia.

"I wish to thank and acknowledge the staffs of each of these agencies as they have been intimately involved in this case," said Col. W. Steven Flaherty, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police. "They have put forth long hours every day since tragedy struck the Virginia Tech campus April 16. Their professionalism, expertise and remarkable dedication clearly demonstrate the cooperative nature of this investigation."

"On behalf of the entire Virginia Tech Police Department, I extend my most sincere sympathies to the victims and their families. Words cannot express the sorrow and emotion that we feel as a result of the tragedy that enveloped our campus last week," said Chief Wendell R. Flinchum, Virginia Tech Police Department. "The perseverance and strength of the families, victims, and community throughout this difficult time have been an inspiration to everyone. This includes those men and women of my department, and the other law enforcement personnel working on this investigation."

"I want to publicly recognize and commend the men and women of my department and officers from the other agencies who responded to this tragedy and for their valiant efforts that day," said Chief Flinchum. "Virginia Tech Police and the University are committed to seeing our campus community recover and thrive as we move forward."

The following is a summary of **Chief W.R. Flinchum, Virginia Tech Police**, remarks as provided during the press conference:

Shortly after 7:00 a.m., residents in West Ambler Johnston Hall hear noise coming from the room of Miss Emily Hilscher. A resident in the dormitory goes to find a Residence Adviser about the commotion within Miss Hilscher's room.

By 7:20 a.m., a rescue call comes in to the University Police's administrative phone line reporting someone falling out of a loft or bed. This was not a 911 emergency call.

Within 2 minutes, a Virginia Tech police officer is at the dormitory and making his way up to the fourth floor. Upon arrival, the officer discover Miss Hilscher and Mr. Ryan Clark in the dorm room. Both had been shot.

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STATEWIDE MEDIA CONTACTS:

VSP HQ	Richmond	Culpeper	Appomattox	Wytheville	Chesapeake	Salem/Roanoke	Fairfax
Ms. C.Geller	Sgt. Cunningham	Sgt. Tyler	Sgt. Cooper	Sgt. Conroy	Sgt. Carr	Sgt. Carpentieri	Sgt. Licklider
(804)674-2789	(804)553-3494	(540)829-7713	(434)352-3403	(276)223-4242	(757)424-6827	(540)375-9598	(703)323-4515

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Virginia Tech police immediately begin investigating. To assist with the crime scene, interviewing of potential witnesses, and security of the residence hall, University police immediately notify Blacksburg Police and request their assistance. The fourth floor is secured and officers are canvassing the building for clues and potential witnesses.

Shortly into the investigation, a potential suspect is developed. It is believed that this individual is no longer on campus and so begin the process of locating this person. Virginia Tech police put out a BOL (Be On the Lookout) to area law enforcement for this person's vehicle.

His vehicle is spotted off campus and stopped. Officers begin questioning this individual to see if he can provide any insight into what had just taken place at the residence hall involving Miss Hilscher and Mr. Clark.

Meanwhile, more law enforcement resources from local and state agencies are arriving on scene to assist with the residence hall investigation.

During the process of interviewing the young man, a 911 call reporting gunshots being heard in Norris Hall is received by police at 9:42 a.m.

Officers respond immediately to Norris Hall and attempt to enter the building. However, the doors had been chained from within. Virginia Tech and Blacksburg officers breach the doors and move inside by shooting the lock. As they move through the building they hear shots being fired from a floor above them. They hear the last gunshot as they are going up the stairwell to the second floor.

Cho Seung-Hui's shooting rampage inside Norris Hall lasted approximately nine minutes. From the first 911 call at 9:42 a.m., it took the officers only about three minutes to arrive in the area of Norris Hall. Just five minutes later the entry team officers had reached the doors, breached the chains, and made it to the second floor.

As the teams were making entry, Blacksburg Police Chief Kim Crannis and I were at another entrance with bolt cutters that were brought to Norris Hall to break through the chains holding the doors closed.

Our concern at this point is stopping the gunman and saving lives. By this time we had local and state law enforcement responding from all over the area, as they had heard the dispatch calls over their radios.

I would like to take this chance to recognize the incredible acts of heroism by those first few officers on scene, and the students, staff and faculty inside Norris Hall.

In previous press briefings, Colonel Flaherty and I have already described this as the most horrific scene we have ever encountered in our collective years in public safety. So, you can only imagine what those first officers came upon when they got to the second floor.

There were more than 50 students, staff and faculty injured and killed. The two Tactical Team medics on the entry team immediately staged and began triaging the injured.

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There's no telling how many lives these two men from Virginia Tech and Blacksburg police agencies saved that morning. As the victims were being recovered and rescued, these two medics were searching for victims, treating wounds, extracting victims, rendering first aid, and guiding the officers on scene.

In addition, the initial officers responded to those slipping into shock and were able to keep them focused and calm through conversation and first aid.

Officers were able to determine that faculty, staff and students had blocked classroom doors using furniture and in some instance their bodies to prevent Cho from entering their classrooms. These individuals and their courageous actions make them true heroes.

The officers' rapid, coordinated efforts were remarkable and, again, saved the lives of those students and faculty traumatized by the unspeakable horrors they had just endured.

The gunman was found by officers in a classroom among his victims. A 9- millimeter handgun and a 22-caliber handgun were found near his body. At this stage of the investigation, officers have determined that Cho fired more than 170 rounds within Norris Hall.

At this time, there is also no evidence to link Cho to the bomb threats made on the campus in the weeks prior to the April 16 shootings.

The following is a summary of **Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent**, remarks as provided during the press conference:

Based on the incredible amount of evidence collected from the first and second crime scenes, witness interviews, and search warrants, state, federal and local investigators have been able to learn some of the steps Cho took in preparation for the tragic events of April 16.

Investigators have determined that Cho purchased a 22-caliber handgun through a Blacksburg gun dealer from a supplier in Wisconsin in February of this year. He then purchased a 9-mm handgun from a Roanoke gun dealer in mid-March.

All indications from the evidence collected at this point confirm that Cho did practice shooting at local firing ranges since he purchased the firearms. We're not going to identify those ranges as we are still investigating leads.

We know Cho was familiar with Norris Hall as he did have classes in that building. He did barricade the building to prevent anyone from escaping...and to make it more difficult for police to get inside and stop him. From the inside, he chained shut each of the buildings' three public entrances.

There has been much speculation as to where Cho purchased the chains, locks and ammunition. Investigators have identified the businesses from which these items were purchased. However, in fairness to those businesses we are not identifying them by name.

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At this point in the investigation there is still no link between Cho and his first two victims at West AJ. However, we are continuing to examine and pursue evidence regarding this issue. Witness statements do place Cho at West AJ prior to 7 a.m. Monday waiting near one of the entrances. The evidence also indicates that he returned to his residence hall following the first shootings that morning. The videos he mailed to NBC later that same morning, we now know were made prior to April 16...and not between the two shooting incidents.

Ballistics tests conducted by the ATF lab in Maryland confirmed that the 9-mm handgun used in the first crime scene at West AJ was also one of the two weapons used at the second crime scene at Norris Hall.

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NOTE: There will be no further press briefings by law-enforcement officials concerning this case. Media are encouraged to monitor the Virginia Tech (www.vt.edu) and/or Virginia State Police (www.vsp.virginia.gov) Web sites for any new information that should develop through the course of the ongoing investigation.

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