

Planned Parenthood Shooter To Stand Trial

The gunman accused of killing three people and wounding nine at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs was due to appear in court by video link from jail on Monday.

Robert Lewis Dear, 57, was expected to face multiple counts of murder and attempted murder. Planned Parenthood says reports he told investigators “no more baby parts” after his arrest showed he had an anti-abortion agenda.

Dear was to appear before a judge by video link at 1:30 p.m. MST (2030 GMT) from the jail where he is being held without bond.

About an hour before that hearing was scheduled to take place, Penrose-St. Francis Medical Center in Colorado Springs, where several of the victims were treated, was placed on ‘lockdown,’ local news station KKTV reported. It was not immediately clear what prompted that action.

As details emerged of the two civilians who died alongside a police officer in Friday afternoon’s rampage, more was learned about happened when Dear, a South Carolina native who moved to Colorado recently, stormed the building.

Ke’Arre Stewart, a 29-year-old Iraq war veteran was struck by a bullet outside the center after walking out to talk on his cellphone. Wounded, he ran back in to warn others to take cover, his brother told NBC News. Stewart died of his wound.

“I believe that’s his military instinct, you know,” NBC News quoted his brother, Leyonte Chandler, as saying. “... Before his time ran out I guess that was his main priority ... to help and save other lives.”

Planned Parenthood already was on heightened alert against threats of violence nationwide and some affiliates say they will scrutinize their security measures further.

Citing unnamed law enforcement sources, several U.S. media outlets said Dear made the “no more baby parts” comment to investigators after surrendering. Reuters could not independently confirm the reports.

Conservatives have accused Planned Parenthood, a nonprofit that provides a range of health services, including abortion, of illegally selling baby parts, an accusation it strongly denies.

While Dear’s reported remark could show a possible motive, the sources stressed in the reports that police were still not sure why the attack was launched. Authorities have declined to discuss a motive, saying the investigation continues.

Friday’s rampage is believed to have been the first deadly attack at an abortion provider in the United States in six years. The Colorado Springs center has been repeatedly targeted for protests by anti-abortion activists.

Officials with the U.S. Justice Department have joined the investigation by state and local authorities, raising the possibility the federal government could bring a terrorism or civil rights charge against Dear, or both. {eo}

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