

Obama pushes gun control after SC church shooting

by TGM Staff

The arrest of Charleston, SC, mass shooting suspect Dylann Storm Roof, 21, about 12 hours after nine people were gunned down during a Bible study may open a new debate about gun control laws on several levels.

That much seemed certain when President Barack Obama, speaking to reporters, stated, "I don't need to be constrained about the emotions that tragedies like this raise. I've had to make statements like this too many times. We don't have all the facts but we do know that once again innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun."

The suspect reportedly got a .45-caliber handgun as a 21st birthday gift in April from his father. But Roof reportedly had already been in trouble with the law on drug and trespassing complaints.

Roof has confessed to carrying out the attack, CNN reported on June 19, citing unnamed law enforcement officials. One official reportedly told CNN Roof said he wanted to start a race war as well.

South Carolina state law prohibits the carrying of firearms in churches and other established religious sanctuaries, even by people who have been licensed to carry, unless authorized by church officials. The location of this mass murder was once again in a supposedly "gun free" zone.

Published reports say the suspect allegedly let one woman live so she could tell what happened. There have been other unconfirmed reports about what the gunman allegedly said after he stopped shooting.

Almost immediately, Second Amendment activists began wondering on social media how long it would take before the gun prohibition lobby jumps in with calls for more gun control. Because of Obama's statements, they didn't have to wait long.

In his remarks, the president stated, "Let's be clear. At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn't happen in other places with this kind of frequency. At some point, it's going to be important for the American people to come to grips with it."

The state recognizes permits/licenses from 20 other states, so long as they are resident licenses. For example, a Florida license held by a Washington resident is not recognized. The state recognizes Florida licenses, but not Washington licenses.

Several published reports say Roof was identified by a relative. He was apparently spotted in North Carolina, and police were tipped off. The arrest happened in Shelby, about 250 miles northwest from Charleston, and about 50 miles west of Charlotte.

South Carolina's existing gun laws did not prevent the shooting, which reportedly is being investigated by the Justice Department and FBI as a possible federal hate crime. However, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley told NBC's "Today" show on June 19 that she would prefer to see Roof tried on state charges and that she believed state prosecutors should pursue a death sentence.

Among the nine people killed was Pastor Clementa Pinckney, a prominent and respected South Carolina Democrat state senator. He was one of three men who died in the shooting, which also took the lives of six women.