From Orlando With Rage: Attacked By Terrorists But NOT Terrorized

If you're a regular reader, you've probably read some of my articles; I usually write about fun, informational stuff but not today. I live in Orlando, the City Beautiful. The land of flip-flops and Mickey Mouse, beaches and motorcycles, college kids and retirees.

On Sunday, Orlando was ground zero for the largest mass shooting in US history. My city was attacked by an ISIS-affiliated terrorist, and I'm really pissed.

Sunday morning, I went outside to walk my dogs, still half-asleep, before I turned on my TV and learned that some no-good, nut job, wife-beating jerk had decided that it was his right to judge and lethally punish a bar full of innocent people just because he didn't like the way they lived. There were about 300 people inside Pulse Orlando, and over 1/3 of them were murdered or injured.

Pulse had a young following, so most of the dead were in their 20s and early 30s. Kids, really. According to reports, the shooter (I refuse to name him because he was just a lowly, cowardly sheep) scoped out Downtown Disney and Pulse. He chose the club because it was a "gay club".

While it's true that Pulse had a large LGBT following, it wasn't exclusively that, nor were all the victims gay. Even if they were, they sure as hell didn't deserve to be gunned down for it.

Orlando is my home as well as a prime destination for vacationers of all sorts. It's supposed to be a place of fun; a place where fantasies are real and dreams come true. Yes, I

realize that’s mostly an illusion created by commercialism, but to me, it’s true. Florida is my little slice of paradise and I’m enraged that some lowly hater spilled a river of blood in my streets.

What I’ve realized today is that the REAL illusion is the one of peace and safety that we all create.

I’ve known that security is an illusion for a long time now. That’s why I enjoy contributing to Survivopedia; I drink my own Kool Aid. I know that world-changing events are always just right around the corner, but on Sunday, I was shoved around that corner before I’d even had my morning coffee.

At least I was fortunate enough to live through the night; that’s more than what 49 of my fellow Orlandians were gifted with.

I’m sure that you’ve all been watching events unfold from afar, but let me bring it home a little bit for you. The news has been stating that they couldn’t release the names of all

of the victims until the families had been notified; the truth is that families couldn't be notified until the bodies were identified. Until just a few hours ago, they were still removing bullet-riddled corpses from Pulse.

For nearly 24 hours after the attack, Orlando Regional Medical Center was on lock-down just trying to handle the massive influx of wounded and dead kids. Nine died after arrival and several more are still in critical condition.

In total, 49 people were killed and another 53 were wounded. Three blocks around the club were blocked off for more than 24 hours so that bodies could be recovered without being filmed.

Just now, as I'm writing this piece, they released the name of the final, 49th victim: Stanley Almodovar III, age 23. He was a pharmacy tech described as humble and kind. He hadn't even started living before he was gunned down by a psycho.

11 members of the Orlando Anarchy, our women's football team, were there celebrating the end of the season with their friends and significant others. One of the boyfriends was killed. Another woman, a mother and wife, was there celebrating a birthday. Now she's dead. This isn't a faceless crime.

We Will Stay United

Over the years, I've sat in front of my television and watched as terrorists took the lives of people all over the world. I've felt a somewhat detached anger and sorrow for those people who lost so much, but there was always a certain degree of separation. Yesterday, that separation was shattered.

I've watched as my city has responded and I'm proud. O-Town is a pretty liberal place. Our culture is diverse and our politics, like the victims in this attack, run from one end of the rainbow to the other. We have die-hard bikers and hookah-smoking hipsters. Families visit Disney and business people

conduct corporate retreats.

The one thing that we all share is that this is our home and we've come together grandly. There was a desperate need for O-negative and AB-positive blood and people of all races, religions, and sexual persuasions stood in line for 8 hours to donate.

Families had nowhere to stay and hotels gave out free rooms. Restaurants gave free meals and volunteers donated countless hours of time. Business signs removed their ads and ran banners of support. Demonstrators stood on corners with signs declaring that we refuse to be drowned in despair.

We came together in love to fight the bloody results of hate. Our flags are flying at half-mast but we are still Americans; we refuse to buckle under the weight of terrorism.

Gun Control Is NOT the Solution

Sadly, our situation is not the first of its kind; we already have a precedent to follow. People are going to be shocked, then, inevitably, we're going to try to make sense of the senseless. The enemy seems like smoke, there then gone. How do

we fight that?

Whispers about gun control become roars because that's the only way some people can think of to prevent this from happening again. We look to things that we can control, because it's human nature in the face of tragedy. That's happening here already.

People on one side of the fence are screaming about the fact that the murderer, who had been interviewed twice by the FBI, bought his guns legally. Obviously (to them), gun laws need tightened.

People on the other side of the fence (me included) are wondering if things would have been different had even one person in that club been armed. We also keep saying again and again that **guns don't kill people; people kill people**.

Chicago has the tightest gun laws in the country, as well as the highest murder rates; how are those gun laws working out for them?

Gun regulation isn't the answer because the only people who are going to follow the laws aren't the ones who are going to go out and shoot people anyway. That seems to be a fact that people tend to overlook.

The bottom line is that nobody can stop hate. You can't fix crazy. No amount of immigration laws or gun laws, or regulations of any sort are going to stop somebody bent on committing heinous acts.

All we can do is be alert and be prepared. We can't let fear rule our lives but it would be naively stupid to think that something like this isn't going to happen again because, unfortunately, it will.

I'm glad the police killed the punk. My only regrets are that he killed so many before somebody got him and that his death

was so quick.

Orlando has its share of crime, but for the most part, I've always felt safe here. I still do; just now I'll feel a little safer when I'm carrying my 9 mil, because you can bet your bottom dollar that I'll be on high alert even as I continue to enjoy my life in the land of sandcastles and fairy princesses.

THAT is my right, and nobody is going to take it from me without a fight.

To all the friends and families of the victims of the Orlando shooting, you have my deepest sympathies. To everybody else, be vigilant.

On Sunday, this happened in my town; tomorrow it could happen in yours.

This article has been written by ***Theresa Crouse*** *for Survivopedia.*