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'I'm just a carpenter from Bend': Father who killed Silver Rail school shooter grapples with the aftermath

By Emily Cureton Cook (OPB) and Jen Baires (OPB)

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In an exclusive interview with OPB, Kaylub Giamanco, the man who fatally shot the teenage school shooter at Silver Rail Elementary, shares what he wants people to know about his experience.

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Kaylub Giamanco woke up and got his kids ready for school that Thursday like it was any other day. The family made breakfast and packed lunches. He and his wife spent a little extra time dressing up their two girls because Oct. 15 was picture day at Silver Rail Elementary.

Giamanco dropped the girls off as usual, then the 36-year-old carpenter headed to a job site northeast of Bend. He had brought a packed lunch in his truck, but when afternoon came around, he decided to go home instead to eat leftover tacos with his wife. He thought about running some errands on the way, but decided against it. He was four blocks from their house when he turned on Brentwood Avenue, the road running along the south side of Silver Rail.

In an exclusive interview with OPB, Giamanco described the series of seemingly insignificant decisions that brought him to that intersection at 12:58 p.m. that day — the same time a 16-year-old carrying a shotgun approached his children’s school. It was the packed lunch he didn’t eat, the masonry shop where he didn’t stop, the bolts he needed but didn’t buy, and the gun he says had just been “collecting dust” in his truck console.

Passing by the school that day, Giamanco spotted someone carrying a gun, followed

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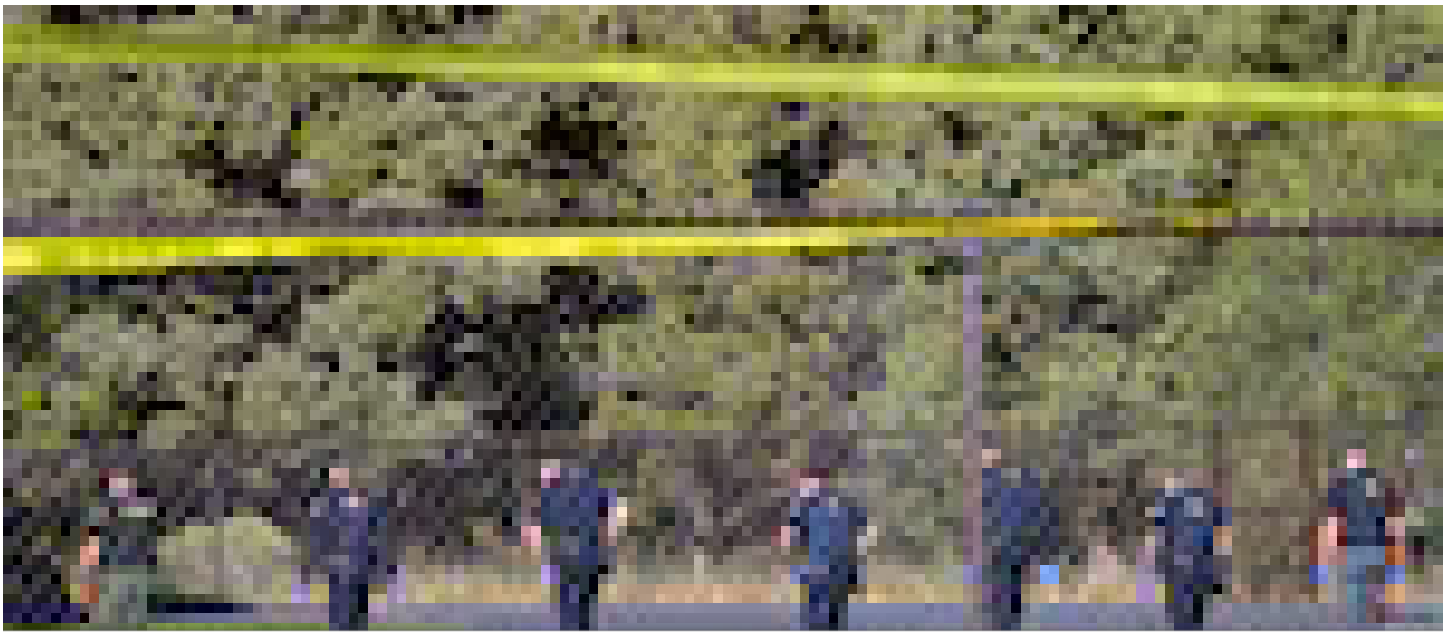
veterans. A lifetime that shaped Giamanco, he believes, and prepared him for what he would do next.

"I've always wanted to change the world, but I've felt small. I'm just a carpenter from Bend, Oregon. I was a nobody other than to my friends and family," he said. "I feel like if I'm going to have a voice, then I'll be damned if I'm not going to use it to change this world, to make it a better place."

"I'm sorry. I have to go in. People are going to die."

Right after he turned on Brentwood Avenue Oct. 15, Giamanco noticed a "man in black" holding a long gun. This must be a prank, or a BB gun, he remembered thinking. Then he saw the shooter fire twice at a red pickup truck and turn toward the school grounds to fire once more at a woman mowing the school's lawn.

When he saw the shooter throw the gun over the school fence before climbing it, "that's when panic fled into my brain, and that's when I opened my center console."



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FILE - Law enforcement crews search the field behind Silver Rail Elementary School, in Bend, Ore., Oct. 15, 2026.

Eleanor Moseman for OPB

His “heart dropped” for a second, he said, as he wondered if the .40 caliber handgun he rarely used would be there. It was. He got the magazine from a separate compartment and drove into the school parking lot while watching the shooter walk across the school grounds.

“I just was in full panic, like, ‘No, there’s children, there’s babies in there.’ I told my Siri to call 911,” he said. The dispatcher had questions for him, but he didn’t stay on the call to answer them.

“I said, ‘I’m sorry, I have to go in. People are going to die.’”

He hopped over the fence as the shooter was passing along on the opposite side of a wallball court, he said. Giamanco pursued while staying out of sight, shuffling along the court as the shooter reached the glass double doors to the school’s side entrance.

“I heard him fire two shots into the doors,” he said.

Giamanco ran from the wallball court to the building and got prone, moving on hands and knees along the windows.

“That’s when I started hearing children pleading for their lives and then I started hearing gunfire and I just started army crawling faster and faster and I told myself this is probably the last thing that I’m ever going to do.”



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FILE - Oregon State Police Forensics at Silver Rail Elementary School, in Bend, Ore., Oct. 15, 2026.

Eleanor Moseman for OPB

He crawled faster and faster, he said, until he reached a bottom window that had been shot out and crawled through it too. He stayed on hands and knees until he reached the special education classroom on his left. He re-racked his weapon to make sure a live round came out, “so that I knew that I was ready to go.”

When he peeked through the window of the classroom, he saw a teacher struggling with the shooter, both in profile to him.

“I knew that he did not know that I was there,” Giamanco said.

He swung the door open and stepped in.

“And I fired.”

The teacher and the shooter dropped to the floor. Then the teacher rose and sprinted from the classroom in fear, Giamanco assumed, thinking that he was a second attacker. He looked down at the shooter.

“He was scrambling for his weapon,” he said. “I looked at him and I shot him two more times to make sure that he couldn’t move because I was afraid of him shooting anybody else.”

By then, Giamanco could hear sirens. He went out of the classroom to look for the teacher who’d fled, then laid his gun on the ground and held up his hands as the first officer on the scene appeared, geared in body armor and wielding a rifle. Minutes had passed since he called 911 outside the school.

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"She was just like, 'Okay, baby, calm down. You did the right thing. You're a hero. You saved lives.' And I was just like, "I didn't save everybody. I didn't get them all.'"

"I want to apologize for not saving their babies"

Word of Giamanco's actions first circulated over the emergency dispatch: "shooter has been neutralized, possibly shot by a father at the school."

Giamanco's name was circulating publicly less than a day later.



FILE - Bend Police Chief Mike Krantz gets emotional while speaking during a press conference at Bend Municipal Court

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In the week that followed, Giamanco and his family have been inundated by reporters calling and knocking on their door, and by political advocacy groups hoping he will tell his story on their behalf.

Armed civilians stopping mass shooters is exceptionally rare. In 600 cases in the U.S. since 2000, it’s happened only a few dozen times. Experts who study mass shootings told OPB they were unaware if any of those had involved schools.

President Donald Trump called Giamanco “a great hero that went in and did the business.”

Giamanco has been thrust into the limelight, into politics and gun control debates. Deschutes County reported this week that applications for concealed handgun licenses are on the rise since the incident.

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Giamanco, who told OPB he’s an independent, says he’s not interested in anyone’s finger pointing.

“I teach my children that we love, we accept everybody,” he said. “I don’t want to make this a political situation.”

In the shooting’s aftermath, he’s just trying to sleep at night. After his family goes to bed, he lies awake.

“I relive, I see faces, I hear voices, I hear screams.”

He thinks about the teenager he shot.

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FILE - Kyle Ketchum, left, and Christina Edwards hold each other as they look at a makeshift memorial in front of Silver Rail Elementary School in Bend, Ore., on Oct. 16, 2026.

Eli Imadali / OPB

"Sometimes there's a child out there that didn't have the love that they deserved," Giamanco said. "But I do want to believe that if he had more love in his life and better parenting, that this could have been prevented."

He also replays the day in his head and wonders if he could have stopped him sooner and saved more lives.

"It was split second decisions while gunfire was going off, while children were losing their lives," he said.

He thinks about his gratitude for the teacher who wrestled with the shooter, who he says gave him the chance to make his shot without losing his own life. He still doesn't know her name.

"I would love to give her a hug because that's a real true hero," he said.

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“Meant to be here”



FILE - Kaylub Giamanco poses for a portrait in Bend, Ore., on Oct. 22, 2026. Giamanco shot and killed the shooter after he witnessed the 16-year-old entering Silver Rail Elementary School with a gun.

Saskia Hatvany / OPB

Giamanco knows he’s being called a hero. He said it’s getting easier each day to think of himself that way.

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He plans to teach his daughters to use guns.

"It's more dangerous to be afraid of a gun than it is to just be comfortable with one and know that they're there to either provide you food or to provide you protection," he said.

When Giamanco was 15, his father left his family.

"It was chaotic," he said. "We did not grow up wealthy, but my mother did everything she could to raise seven children, mostly on her own."

As the oldest of the seven, Giamanco realized they were all looking to him.

"I was young at the time. I wasn't a father," he said, but others kept telling him: "These kids are looking up to you. You lead by example. They watch everything you do."

Giamanco stopped hunting for a long time, starting when he was around 18. He studied geography at Central Oregon Community College before landing a carpentry apprenticeship through a family friend.

It was only years later, while building a restaurant in Redmond, that the client reintroduced him to guns, he said.

"He was highly decorated. He's had multiple tours in Iraq and he is an amazing gentleman," Giamanco said. "His platoon would come out to Bend and I built targets and walls for them."

The veterans offered to train him on using military drill and weapons, and the experience inspired him to own guns again.

"I felt like if I didn't have that training, I probably wouldn't be alive today," he told OPB.

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"I feel like I was put on this earth to do something more than just fix houses," he said.



Kaylub Giamanco sits down for an interview with OPB in Bend, Ore., on Oct. 22, 2026.

Saskia Hatvany / OPB

An idea has taken hold in the days since the Silver Rail shooting: a motocross race that donates all proceeds to schools for improving their safety. That could mean

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Since the shooting, the family has stayed at a hotel, then a vacation rental, he said, because they can see the school from their house. They’ve been trying to take their minds off the tragedy with homemade chowder and board games.

“My 5-year-old probably a hundred times a day comes up to me and just hugs me and says, ‘I love you, Daddy.’ And I hug her, I pick her up, and squeeze her as hard as I can. I say, ‘I love you too. You’re my world.’”

His 10-year-old daughter is more reserved. She knows what’s going on, he said.



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“That’s our job as parents to be here for children, to spend time with them, to show them our love and compassion,” he said, “So that they know that they have people in this world standing behind them.”

This story was written and reported by Emily Cureton Cook and Jen Baires, edited by Gillian Flaccus and Tony Schick, digitally produced by Frankie Benitez, with video and photos by Julia Reihs and Saskia Hatvany, and visual editing by Kristyna Wentz-Graff. The audio version was scripted and produced by Tiffany Camhi and edited by Michelle Wiley.

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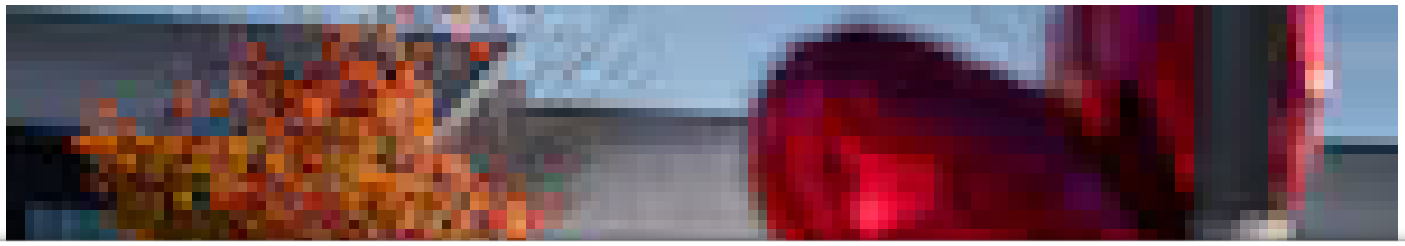
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Silver Rail Elementary remains closed indefinitely after a former student shot and killed four people in a special education classroom last week.

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Bend Police now say an additional student and adult escaped Silver Rail shooting unharmed

Bend-La Pine district officials say the alleged teen shooter last attended Elk Meadow Elementary, Pilot Butte Middle School and the former Bend Tech Academy.

Oct. 19, 2026



Bend dancers rally to support 7-year-old wounded in Silver Rail shooting

A dance recital for Saylor was among many weekend efforts as people in Bend searched for ways to

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In the first full day of loss, Bend learns more about Silver Rail shooting, mourns the victims

As Bend residents come together to mourn and ask what comes next, OPB journalists are in Central Oregon. This story reported updates and dispatches throughout Friday, Oct. 16, the day after the shooting.

Oct. 16, 2026

Tags: Central Oregon, Education, Law, justice and public safety

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