

## Security Experts Weigh In on Las Vegas Shooting

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Security as we know it for hotels and concerts is over.

After Stephen Paddock broke two windows out of the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino and fired down upon 22,000 Route 91 festival attendees killing 59 people and injuring 500 more, security staffs, federal agencies and industry experts are already trying to figure out how to evolve solutions so that something like this never happens again.

*Security Today* spoke with four industry experts, Patrick V. Fiel, President of PVF Security Consulting, Jerry Blanchard, CEO of Protus3 Security Consulting and Rick Amweg and Paul Denton, Consultants with Security Risk Management Consultants about the shooting and how this attack will impact the security industry.

**SECURITY TODAY:** The most recent reports state that 59 people were killed and over 500 more were injured in the shooting on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Why do you think the shooting was particularly deadly?

**AMWEG:** “Deadliness,” which is the “kill rate,” or the number of fatalities during the course of the event is dependent on a couple of factors. First, the amount of time the shooter has to commit the act; second, the efficiency of the shooter (how accurate he is, how efficient he is, etc.); and third, the shooting field, otherwise known as how target-rich the environment is.

In this case, first and foremost, the shooter had the opportunity to plan his attack. He chose a strategically superior position by gaining high ground from the hotel overlooking the concert venue. His location away from the venue gave him more time to perpetrate his attack before being subdued. The types of weapons he chose provided maximum firepower; and the number of weapons he had gave him additional opportunity to sustain nearly continuous fire.

Overall he was able to achieve a tactical advantage and he had a very target-rich environment. Additionally, the victims had essentially no place to seek cover from the shooter.

**FIEL:** Everything was in the shooters favor, location, large crowds, open view, and his type of weapons and ammunition.

**ST:** Police have confirmed that Paddock checked into the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on September 28 and stayed at the establishment in the days leading up to the shooting. In your opinion, could the security staff at the hotel have done anything to prevent the attack?

**FIEL:** We can always Monday night quarterback and try to blame someone. There is no plan that is 100 percent foolproof and that every act of terrorism cannot be prevented; however, the damage inflicted by an attacker can at least be minimized if businesses have proper safeguards.

**AMWEG:** I think the main question that will evolve from the evaluation of the processes in place at the hotel is, "How could someone get that number of weapons past the desk and to a room within the hotel?" Factors that contribute to that process are that the shooter had been at the hotel for a few days before the shooting; and understanding that some weapons can easily be broken down and carried in a luggage bag.

**BLANCHARD:** It would be interesting to know how many trips this person made into and out of the hotel to bring in his weapons and ammunition; if the video system had an analytics program at the edge to make the determination that it might have been an

excessive amount of back and forth, he might have been approached before the shooting.

**ST:** Do you think there were any security measures that the hotel overlooked?

**BLANCHARD:** I certainly don't have all the answers, but I don't know that there is anything that could have been done about this short of the hotel checking all the bags of people who stay at the facility.

**FIEL:** I can't speak on what security measures were in place at the hotel, however in my opinion all hotels need to work with security experts to enhance their security measures.

**AMWEG:** It's much too early to tell, but likely the answer is "No." Since we don't know what security measures were in place, we don't know if any were overlooked.

**ST:** There is a lot of talk in the mainstream media that hotels should be considered soft targets and that they are not usually given proper security due to the hospitality industry's wish to keep their establishments inviting. Do you believe hotels can be considered soft targets?

**FIEL:** Let's discuss what a soft target is: "A soft target is a relatively unguarded site where people congregate, normally in large numbers, thus offering the potential for mass casualties." In this case it was an outdoor concert. The shooter utilized the hotel room for his deadly attack. Hotels, schools and hospitals are considered to be soft targets.

**AMWEG:** First, the hotel was not the target environment. That said, hotels generally have security measures in place that are conducive to a customer-friendly experience. Many security processes that are currently in place are "invisible" to customers, but effective none the less. Because of this incident I think that hotels will be under the microscope concerning how they screen customers, not only at initial check-in, but throughout their stay.

**ST:** This isn't the first time we have seen an attack like this in the U.S. and around the world. Just last year 49 people were killed in a nightclub in Orlando. Just a few months ago a bombing outside a concert in Manchester killed another 22 people. Are we making steps to protect these outdoor venues and hotel spaces or are we slow to adapt hardened procedures?

**DENTON:** Large event/venue security managers have been well ahead on the issue of protective measures and fan/patron safety. Assessments, operational plans and strategic planning generally occur at these types of events. I can't comment specifically about this concert venue because I don't know their processes. More specifically, music events may be a new target. Outdoor festival areas are more difficult to protect. In some cases, the venue may not be configured specifically for those types of events. Rather, the venue may be temporarily configured for a restricted access event. That's not to say this venue was temporarily configured for the concert. Typically, outside venues may have fewer access points, providing for fewer opportunities for egress. Things like temporary fencing may contribute to a lack of egress opportunities. In this case lack of cover may have also contributed to the number of fatalities.

Conscientious planners are assessing their overall security operations plans. As the threat paradigm changes, those in charge of event security have to modify their approach to evolving threats.

**FIEL:** In my opinion we are not doing enough to protect the visitors of these venues. Unfortunately in the United States we are always reactive, rather than being proactive.

**BLANCHARD:** There is just not an easy answer; that is the challenge.

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