Young woman obsessed with Columbine found dead after frantic manhunt

DENVER (Reuters) - An 18-year-old Florida woman infatuated with the Columbine massacre was found dead of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound in Colorado on Wednesday after she touched off an extensive manhunt by making a "pilgrimage" to the state days before the 20th anniversary of the 1999 school shooting.

The body of Sol Pais, a student from Surfside, Florida, was found by authorities about 40 miles west of Columbine High School, at about 10:30 a.m. local time, said Dean Phillips, special agent in charge of the Denver office of the FBI.

Pais was found alone in a wooded area of Clear Creek County and appeared to have shot herself with the pump-action shotgun she had purchased after arriving in Colorado from Miami earlier this week, Phillips said at a news conference hours later.

Phillips said Pais had purchased three one-way plane tickets for successive days and flew to Colorado on the first, April 15th. "She went directly to the store to procure the weapon," he said. "There were concerns about her from the Miami locale when she was not around."

Denver area schools, which were closed on Wednesday while FBI agents, Jefferson County deputies and Colorado state troopers searched for Pais, were expected to reopen on Thursday with mental health counselors standing by.

Pais did not note any specific threats against Columbine High School, or any other target, but her "actions and comments" in the last week had raised alarm, Phillips said.

On April 20, 1999, two Columbine High School seniors shot and killed 12 classmates and a teacher, before committing suicide. Columbine is in Littleton, a Denver suburb that includes part of Jefferson County.

Since the massacre at Columbine, there has been a long string of U.S. school shootings, some inspired by copycats who have expressed fascination with the massacre or the teenage shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

Columbine was the second deadliest shooting at a school in U.S. history at the time. Now it stands fifth, surpassed by the 2018 massacre in Parkland, Florida, the shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012 and a 2007 rampage at Virginia Tech.

"Infatuated with Columbine".

"She made several comments to folks that we obtained through an interview, comments that were troubling with regards her infatuation with Columbine, the recognition the Columbine anniversary was coming this weekend," Phillips said of Pais.

Upon arriving in Denver from Miami on Monday, Pais bought a pump-action shotgun and ammunition, the FBI said at a news conference on Tuesday.

At that news conference, Phillips had described Pais' journey to the Denver area as a "pilgrimage" that represented a threat to Columbine.

Pais purchased the gun from a shop not far from Columbine after passing a background check, the dealer in Littleton said.

"We had no reason to suspect she was a threat to either herself or anyone else," said Josh Rayburn, owner of the Colorado Gun Broker. "We are very sorry to hear of the outcome in this situation."

Some 20 to 30 officers searched for her near the Echo Lake Campground in the Arapaho National Forest on Wednesday morning, after authorities received reports of a naked woman with a gun running through the woods, CBS4 in Denver reported.

No shots were fired by authorities as they closed in on Pais, the station reported, citing law enforcement sources.

Smart, socially awkward

A spokeswoman for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools said Pais was student at Miami Beach Senior High School and there was no threat to schools within that district.

The Miami Herald quoted Pais' classmates describing her as smart and socially awkward. "She was just bad at starting conversations," said Justin Norris, a senior at the school.

On Tuesday, an FBI bulletin said authorities lacked probable cause to arrest Pais but that law enforcement should detain her for a mental-health evaluation.

The sheriff's Twitter post, which included two photos of Pais, said she was wearing a black T-shirt, camouflage pants and black boots.

An online journal written by a woman who identified herself as "Sol Pais" contains numerous handwritten entries of despair and anger, peppered with images of weapons.

"Being alive is overrated," one entry reads, punctuated with an expletive, above a drawing of a handgun going off with the word "ready?" underneath.

A user on the National Gun Forum used the same screen name as the author of the blog in a series of posts starting in late March seeking advice on how an 18-year-old Florida resident could buy a shotgun in Colorado.

"I am planning a trip to Colorado in the next month or so and wanna buy a shotgun while I'm there and I was wondering what restrictions apply for me?" the first post read.

Guam Board of Registration for Professional Engineers, Architects, & Land Surveyors (PEALS)  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Agenda:

(1) Meeting Call to Order
(2) Complaint:  
A. Jose C. Benavente vs. Paul L. Santos Case # 2018-006  
(3) Adjournment

Date: Friday, April 26, 2019 Time: 3:00 PM  
Place: PEALS Board Conference Room, Suite 208, 718 N. Marine Corps Drive, Tumon, Guam 96913 (671) 846-3113/5  
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