



## **Suspect in Laguna Woods church shooting identified, additional details of investigation released**

**SANTA ANA Ca, (May 16, 2022):** OC Sheriff investigators today released additional details about the 68-year-old man arrested on suspicion of entering a Laguna Woods church and shooting multiple victims during a lunch banquet, including evidence that points to a methodical plan devised by the suspect to carry out his crimes.

On Sunday, May 15, 2022, investigators arrested David Chou, 68, of Las Vegas, on suspicion of murder and attempted murder after he entered Geneva Presbyterian Church in the 24000 block of El Toro Road and fired multiple rounds, striking six victims. At the time of the shooting, members of the Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, which has had a space at the church since 2009, were having a lunch banquet to welcome a pastor who had recently returned from Taiwan.

Five victims sustained gunshot wounds and were taken to local hospitals for treatment. The sixth victim, identified as Dr. John Cheng, 52, of Laguna Niguel, sustained multiple gunshot wounds when he intervened and tackled the suspect, allowing other church members to detain the suspect. The victims also were able to tie his legs with extension cords and confiscate two handguns from the suspect. Dr. Cheng, who was attending the lunch banquet with his mother, was pronounced deceased at the scene.

"Dr. Cheng was a loving family man, dedicated doctor and a beloved member of our community, and we send our deepest condolences to all who knew him," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner. "There is no doubt that Dr. Cheng's actions that day saved the lives of many other church members. He is a hero and will be remembered by this community as such."

Deputies arrived at the scene, arrested the suspect and provided lifesaving measures until paramedics with the Orange County Fire Authority arrived to provide advanced critical care.

Investigators believe the suspect may have traveled to the Southern California area on Saturday, May 14, 2022, and came to the church Sunday morning. During the lunch, the suspect is believed to have secured the doors to the building with chains and placed superglue into the keyholes. He then started shooting inside the building.

Investigators located three bags strategically placed in the building containing various items, including additional ammunition and four Molotov cocktail-type devices. The incendiary devices were collected by the OC Sheriff Hazardous Devices Section and will be analyzed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

OC Sheriff investigators worked with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to serve a search warrant on the suspect's residence. Investigators currently are processing multiple items of evidence, including electronic devices. In addition, evidence was collected from the suspect's vehicle, which was located in the church parking lot.



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Based on preliminary findings of the investigation, evidence collected, and statements from the suspect, investigators were able to connect the suspect to the shooting. It also was determined the suspect was upset about political tensions involving China and Taiwan.

“It appears this tragic incident was fueled by politically motivated hate, and that is something we do not tolerate,” Barnes said. “Orange County is a community that celebrates diversity and takes pride in being a place people feel safe to worship, work and live. While someone from outside our community has attempted to diminish these ideals through an act of violence, we remain united in our commitment to tolerance and acceptance.”

Additional evidence is still being processed and the investigation is ongoing. The Sheriff’s Department continues to work with the Orange County Fire Authority, ATF, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) on this incident.

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