



# Columbia Mall Shooting

January 25, 2014

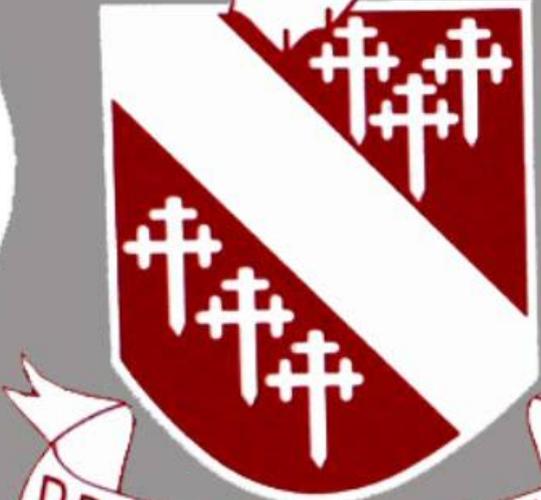


William J. McMahon  
Chief of Police  
Howard County Police Department

HOWARD  
COUNTY

MARYLAND

911



PRO BONO PUBLICO

INTEGRITY

PRIDE

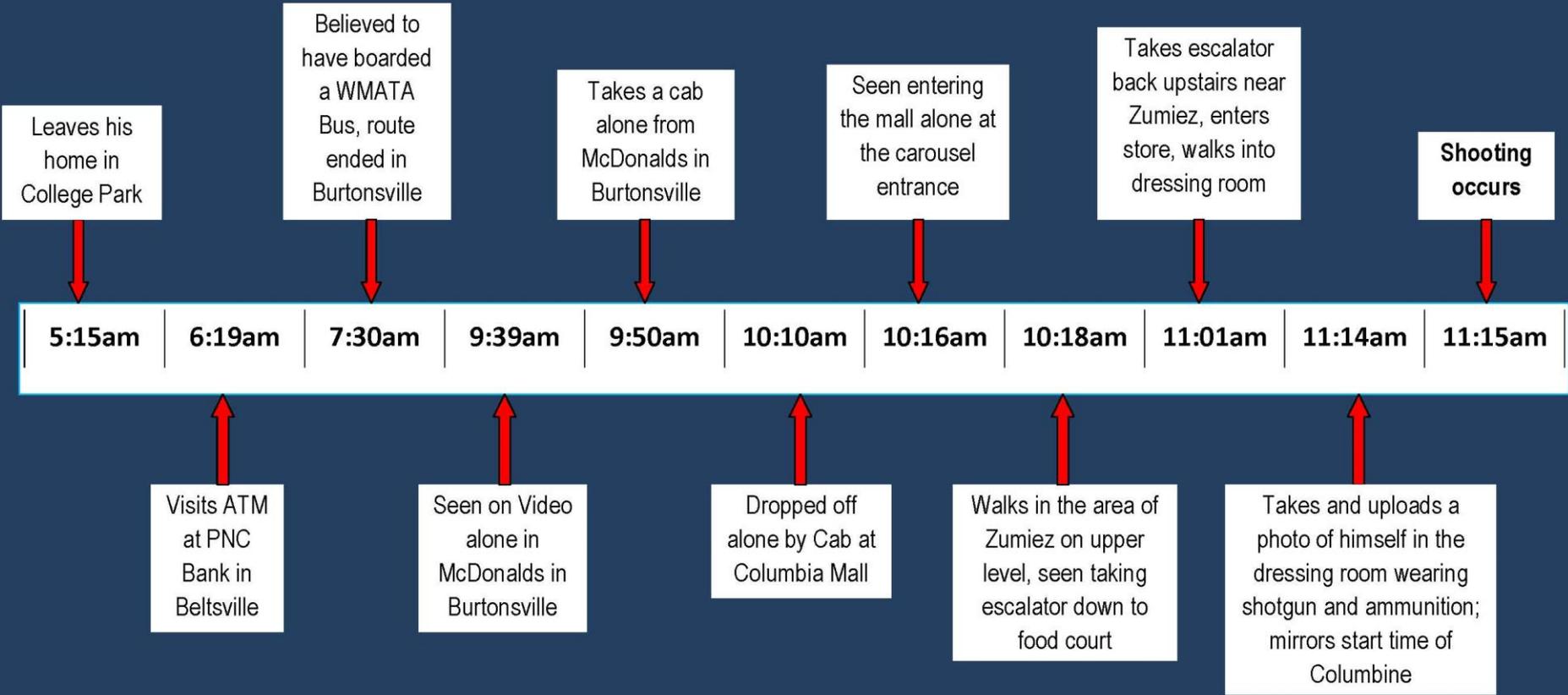
COMMUNITY



**Saturday**  
**January 25, 2014**



# Columbia Mall Shooting January 25, 2014





# PNC Bank 6:19 a.m.



Transaction #4420  
5800000

01/25/2014 06:18:41.17  
ATM PA 1427  
DMF-Chestnut-Hills

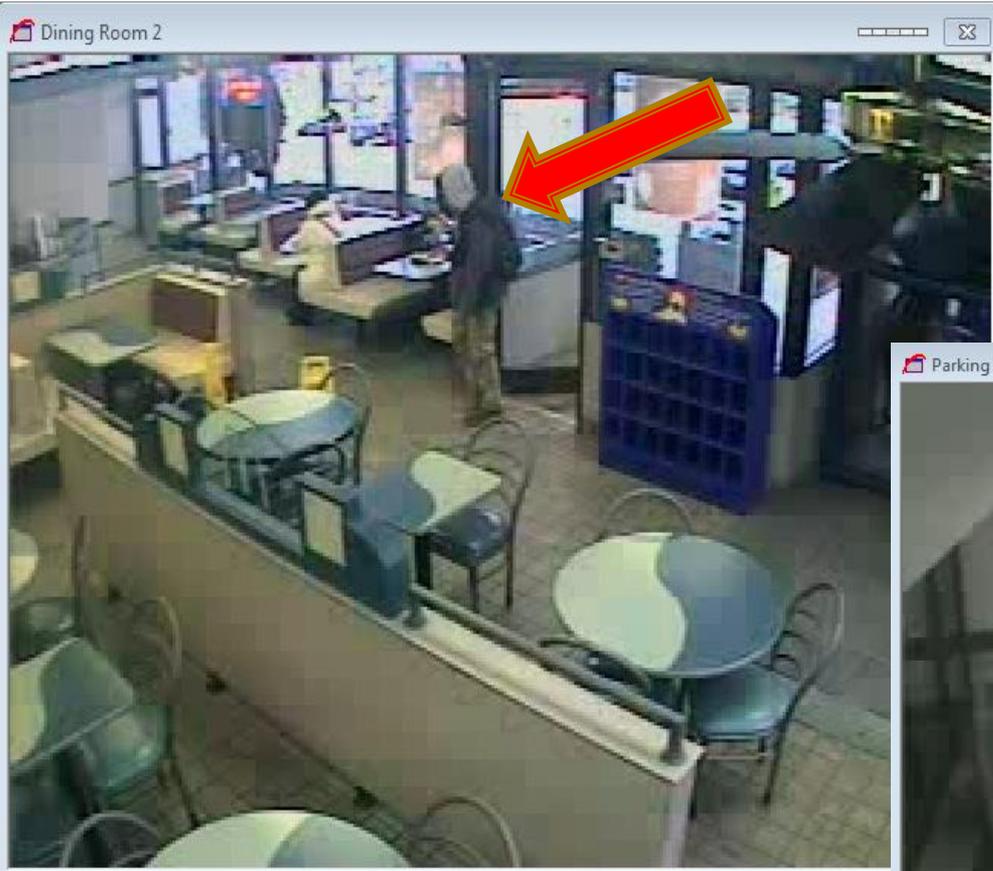


01/25/2014 06:19:23.21  
ATM PA 1427  
Surveillance  
PNC-Chestnut-Hills



# Burtonsville McDonald's

9:39 a.m.





# Dropped Off at the Columbia Mall at 10:10 am





# Entering the Mall

10:16 a.m.





# Takes Escalator to Food Court 10:18 a.m.





# Walking Towards Zumiez 's 11:01 a.m.

5. CARIS



2014-01-25 11:08:11



# Zumiez Dressing Room

## Uploaded to Tumblr

11:14 a.m.

**“I had to do this.  
Today is the day. On previous days I  
tried this I woke up with anxiety,  
regret and hope for a better future  
this day I didn't, I woke up felt no  
emotions no empathy no sympathy.  
I will have freedom or maybe not.  
I could care less.”**



# Shot Progression





# Uncommon Factors

- 911 Center Received 493 Calls in the First 45 Minutes
- Chief McMahon on the Air
- Special Operations Commander on the Air
- Criminal Investigations Bureau and Tactical Team Working in the Area



# Command Operations

- Special Operations Commander – Initial Command
- Deputy Chief of Operations Arrived - Assumed Command
- Crowded Command Post
  - Commanders
  - Mall Managers
  - County Executive
  - OEM
  - PIO





# Columbia Mall Response Plan

- Formulated As a Joint Effort Between HCPD and Management At The Mall In Columbia 2007
- Mall Divided Into Color Coded Zones
- Zone Color Appears in Our CAD and On Officers MDT's
- Training For Such Incident Has Occurred
  - July 2007
  - April 2013



# Columbia Mall Response Plan







# Columbia Mall Shooting: Using Social Media in a Crisis



- Began tweeting right away about confirmed shooting
- PIO en route



**Howard County Police**  
@HCPDNews

There has been a shooting incident at the Columbia mall. No additional details yet. PIO en route. Will update ASAP.

Reply Delete Favorite More

RETWEETS 432 FAVORITES 53 [avatars]

8:50 AM - 25 Jan 2014

Related headlines

- Três pessoas morrem em tiroteio em shopping nos Estados Unidos**  
Terra Noticias @TerraNoticiasBR
- Au moins trois morts dans une fusillade près de Washington**  
La Presse @LP\_LaPresse

Reply to @HCPDNews



**Mike Conneen** @MikeConneen · Jan 25  
#BREAKING RT @HCPDNews There has been a shooting incident at the Columbia mall. No additional details yet. PIO en route. Will update ASAP.

Details Reply Retweet Favorite More



**Sheldon Dutes** @SheldonDutes4NY · Jan 25  
RT @HCPDNews: There has been a shooting incident at the Columbia mall. No additional details yet. PIO en route. Will update ASAP.

Details Reply Retweet Favorite More



**Melissa Mecija** @10NewsMecija · Jan 25  
RT \*@HCPDNews: There has been a shooting incident at the Columbia mall. No additional details yet. PIO en route. Will update ASAP.\*

Details Reply Retweet Favorite More



**Nikki Burdine** @NikkiBurdine · Jan 25  
RT @HCPDNews: There has been a shooting incident at the Columbia mall. No additional details yet. PIO en route. Will update ASAP.

Details Reply Retweet Favorite More



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Using Social Media in a Crisis

- **Contacted staff to be available**
- **Another person to monitor social media**
  - Correct wrong information
  - Dispel rumors
  - Respond to reasonable questions
  - Staff to text my cell directly
- **Duplicate all information on Facebook**



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Media and Public Outreach

- **Three audiences:**
  - **Media**
  - **People inside the mall**
  - **General Public**



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Outreach to Media

**Howard County Police**  
@HCPDNews

**MEDIA STAGING NEAR SEARS STORE**

View translation

Reply Delete Favorite More

RETWEETS 51 FAVORITES 10

9:32 AM - 25 Jan 2014

Reply to @HCPDNews

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**Howard County Police**  
@HCPDNews

Next live media briefing at mall is scheduled for 4 p.m.

Reply Delete Favorite More

RETWEETS 50 FAVORITES 9

10:53 AM - 25 Jan 2014

Reply to @HCPDNews

**Kyle Carmean** @Fox5Kyle · Jan 25  
@FOX29philly \*G@HCPDNews: Next live media briefing at mall is scheduled for 4 p.m.\*

**Nicole McFarland** @nicole\_mcf · Jan 25  
Hopefully without dude trying to get 15-min of fame RT @HCPDNews: Next live media briefing at mall is scheduled for 4 p.m.

**Erika Gonzalez** @erika\_news · Jan 25  
NEW! @HCPDNews: Next live media briefing at mall is scheduled for 4 p.m.\*

**Jordan Goldstein** @JordanGoldstei4 · Jan 25  
@HCPDNews am ready to find out who it was.

**Shelley Broderick** @sagekateri · Jan 25  
@HCPDNews Excellent use of Twitter to keep everyone informed with current info! Other PIOs are watching and learning from you!

**Shelley Broderick** @sagekateri · Jan 25  
@HCPDNews Excellent use of Twitter! You provided accurate info as you got it. Regional PIOs area watching and learning from you. #smem

**André Chung** @achungphoto · Jan 25  
@nicole\_mcf didn't see presser. I missed that nutcase. Where do

**Howard County Police**  
@HCPDNews

#HoCoPolice have been on-scene at the #ColumbiaMall all night, getting ready for press conference in one hour

Reply Delete Favorite More

RETWEETS 29 FAVORITES 16

5:33 AM - 26 Jan 2014

Reply to @HCPDNews

**Ken Ulman** @kenulman · Jan 26  
RT @HCPDNews: #HoCoPolice have been on-scene at the #ColumbiaMall all night, getting ready for press conference in one hour

**Pat McConnell** @skonesam · Jan 26  
@HCPDNews um... shouldn't they have been investigating a double murder?

**Leah L. Henao** @lshwithan · Jan 26  
@HCPDNews which local station will be broadcasting the press conference? Thanks! #columbimall

**twin** @dontee02 · Jan 26  
@HCPDNews what channel is the press conference

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# Columbia Mall Shooting: Outreach to People Involved

**Howard County Police** @HCPDNews

People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely.

226 Retweets, 26 Favorites

9:19 AM - 25 Jan 2014

Related headlines  
Video and Tweets on Maryland Shopping Mall Shooting  
NYTimes Lede Blog @thelede

Reply to @HCPDNews

**Kate Ryan** @KateRyanWYOP - Jan 25  
Direction from police: "@HCPDNews: People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely."

**Russ Ptacek, WUSA9** @RussPtacek - Jan 25  
Breaking - 3 dead - @HCPDNews: People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely.

**Kitty Alva** @HeyKitty - Jan 25  
"@HCPDNews: People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely."

**Carrie Heath** @dmrheath - Jan 25  
"@HCPDNews: People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely."

**Lindsay Wallingford** @CatorLindsay - Jan 25  
ColumbiaMallShooting RT @HCPDNews: People inside mall are being asked to stay in place until police can clear each area safely.

**just ice no chaser** @bigtez11 - Jan 25  
\*@RussPtacek: Breaking - 3 dead - @HCPDNews: People inside

**Howard County Police** @HCPDNews

Police are in mall to clear people out safely. Mall is believed to be secure, but people inside should wait for police.

445 Retweets, 74 Favorites

9:36 AM - 25 Jan 2014

Related headlines  
Video and Tweets on Maryland Shopping Mall Shooting  
NYTimes Lede Blog @thelede

Reply to @HCPDNews

**Shawn Yancy** @ShawnYancy - Jan 25  
"@HCPDNews: Police are in mall to clear people out safely. Mall is believed to be secure, but people inside should wait for police."

**Russ Ptacek, WUSA9** @RussPtacek - Jan 25  
Breaking: Mall believed secure. MT @HCPDNews: Police are in mall to clear people out safely, but people inside should wait for police.

**Andrew Blankstein** @anblanx - Jan 25  
"Police are in mall to clear people out safely. Mall is believed to be secure, but people inside should wait for police" via @HCPDNews

**Veronica Johnson** @VJohnsonNBC4 - Jan 25  
Keeping warm will be a big issue. MT @nbcraon "@HCPDNews Police clearing people out safely. Mall is believed to be secure

**Trixy Wh** @trixywh - Jan 25  
"@HCPDNews: Police are in mall to clear people out safely. Mall is believed to be secure, but people inside should wait for police.

**Howard County Police** @HCPDNews

People who left behind items in mall call 410-730-3302, or go to PNC, 30 Corporate Circ 12-5 today.

74 Retweets, 4 Favorites

7:02 AM - 26 Jan 2014

Reply to @HCPDNews

**Rachel Duncan** @RachelfromABC2 - Jan 26  
RT @HCPDNews: People who left behind items in mall call 410-730-3302, or go to PNC, 30 Corporate Circ 12-5 today.

**Ken Ulman** @kenulman - Jan 26  
RT @HCPDNews: People who left behind items in mall call 410-730-3302, or go to PNC, 30 Corporate Circ 12-5 today.

**Luke Lavoie** @LukeHoCoTimes - Jan 26  
"@HCPDNews: People who left behind items in mall call 410-730-3302, or go to PNC, 30 Corporate Circ 12-5 today."

**Monica R.** @monirow - Jan 26  
@HCPDNews I work in the PNC building. Do u forseee anything that will prevent us from getting to our offices 2mww?

**Sunny** @sunshinemom23 - Jan 26  
@HCPDNews Does this include personal items left inside stores?

**Amanda** @mommiesarelight - Jan 26  
At the #ColumbiaMall RT @HCPDNews: People who left behind items in mall call 410-730-3302, or go to PNC, 30 Corporate Circ 12-5 today.

**Howard County Police** @HCPDNews - Jan 26



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Outreach to General Public



Howard County Police

@HCPDNews

This flyer distributed around  
#ColumbiaMall tonight to stores.  
Did you see him, know him? Call  
police 410-313-3200.  
[pic.twitter.com/wNbplsRuUs](http://pic.twitter.com/wNbplsRuUs)

Reply Delete Favorite More



RETWEETS 91  
FAVORITES 10



2:17 PM - 26 Jan 2014

Flag media



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Correcting Misinformation

- **Correcting wrong information**
  - **Leaks, other agencies**
  - **Rumors**
  - **Mistakes**



Motive of shooting is unknown. Not determined to be domestic or any other cause at this time. Any other reports are complete speculation.

Reply Delete Favorite More

RETWEETS 146 FAVORITES 24 [avatars]

12:39 PM - 25 Jan 2014

Related headlines

Q&A: Police spokeswoman Llewellyn on social media during Colum... The Baltimore Sun @baltimoresun

Reply to @HCPDNews

Nikki Burdine @NikkiBurdine - Jan 25 RT @HCPDNews: Motive of shooting is unknown. Not determined to be domestic or any other cause at this time. #ColumbiaMallShooting Details Reply Retweet Favorite More

tish @tbone4eva - Jan 25 @HCPDNews just need my family home they are still being held there my son is only 6 im sure he was scared Details Reply Retweet Favorite More

Cam Thompson WNEW @CamThompsonWNEW - Jan 25 MT @HCPDNews: Motive of shooting unknown. Not determined to be domestic or any other cause at this time. Other reports are speculation. Details Reply Retweet Favorite More

Damian Hammontree @damianhammontree - Jan 25 @tbone4eva Hang in there - can't be easy, I'm sure. They'll be home soon. Details Reply Retweet Favorite More

Jack Eyemoney @jackeyemoney - Jan 25 @HCPDNews you guys lie all the time, the idea that we should believe you is pure #BS. protect us, but dont you dare try and control us



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Correcting Misinformation



**“Reports claiming to know motive complicate,  
confuse Columbia mall coverage”**

NBC reported that shooting was 'domestic,'  
but police say they know of no relationship

By David Zurawik  
The Baltimore Sun



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Committing to Social Media

- PIO and organization leader have to work side-by-side
- Second person monitoring social media
- Keep up communication, even if no updates...say so
- Yes, it's a big responsibility, but better for the agency and the PIO in the long run.
- Might as well try to control the chaos!



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Social Media by the numbers

In 24 hours:



- Followers on Twitter: 5K to 20.5K
- Followers (“Likes”) on FB: 10K to 15.6K
- Total FB reach: 204.8K users



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Public and Media Reaction



“Police provided an innovative way on how to use Twitter to quickly and accurately get the word out.

It separated speculation from fact, and established itself as the authority on what was confirmed and what was not.”

**-Baltimore Sun Editorial**



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Traditional media

- **Did not abandon traditional media outreach**
  - First live press conference two hours after incident
  - Three additional live press conferences followed in two days
- **Traditional press releases**
- **Social media was an additional tool to communicate with the media and our community**





# Columbia Mall Shooting: Being the news source

- **We are our own news room**
  - **Verified**
  - **Most updated**
  - **Simultaneous info to media and public**
  - **Correcting misinformation**
  - **Commitment from PIO**



## Columbia Mall Shooting: Being the news source

- Media need immediate info during crisis
- “Real time” is the expectation—if we don’t someone else will
- Organization evolves with community’s needs
- Gives us the power to tell our own story



## Columbia Mall Shooting: Being the news source



Final press conference, 3/12/14



## Columbia Mall Shooting: Being the news source

- Final press conference, 3/12/14, six weeks after shooting
- Simultaneous release of photos & documents on social media, live tweeting
- Releasing info in open investigation, bringing closure



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Correcting Misinformation



## “WBAL apologizes for reporting on Columbia Mall shooting”

'We regret the mistake' and any 'hardship' it caused families of victims, station says

By David Zurawik  
The Baltimore Sun



# Columbia Mall Shooting: Using Social Media in a Crisis

**Capt. John McKissick**

**[jmckissick@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:jmckissick@howardcountymd.gov)**

**Sherry Llewellyn**

**[stllewellyn@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:stllewellyn@howardcountymd.gov)**

**Twitter:**

**@HCPDNews**

**Facebook:**

**www.facebook.com/  
HowardCountyPoliceDepartment**