

ABC World News Now

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Alleged Night Club Shooting Facing Judge Today; Lawyer Says Suspect Facing Hate Crime Charges is Non-Binary]

RHIANNON ALLY: Now to Colorado. The suspect in that attack on an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs, is set to face a judge today.

ANDREW DYMBURT: A public defender revealed overnight that the alleged shooter is nonbinary. The 22 year old had a troubled upbringing and was reportedly bullied in high school, and there are new details this morning on their grandfather. The suspect in the massacre at a Colorado Springs nightclub heads to court today as we learn that they identify as nonbinary. Court documents show Anderson Lee Aldrich uses they/them pronouns. They are accused of killing five people and wounding several others inside the LGBTQ nightclub.

COLORADO 4TH DISTRICT JUDICIAL ATTORNEY MICHAEL ALLEN: If this is in fact a hate crime, then it's important for us to signal to the world that we don't tolerate hate crimes in this community.

DYMBURT: A family friend says the 22 year old was bullied as a teen, which they believe contributed to Aldrich's decision to change names in 2016 months after a website surfaced specifically targeting Aldrich. ABC News viewed an archived copy of the website, which makes vulgar comments about the then-teenager's weight and ABC News has learned Aldrich's grandfather is former California Assemblyman Randy Voepel, who once compared the January 6th riots to the American Revolution and has voted against LGBTQ legislation. It comes as a new poll from GLADD shows 72 percent of transgender people and 48 percent of the LGBTQ community say the political environment makes them fear for their personal safety.

DAVID MCRAE: It's just surreal to think that, Like, this happened at a place that we were calling our home bar, you know. Like, A place that was local and tight knit.

BYMURT: Meanwhile, we're learning more about the heroes who stopped the shooter, including Navy sailor Thomas James, who is now in stable condition after subduing the shooter and the White House says President Biden has now spoken to Richard Fierro, the Army veteran credited with disarming the shooter. A company that analyzes extremist behavior online says since the shooting in Colorado Springs last weekend, there's been a substantial and concerning surge in anti-LGBTQ chatter.