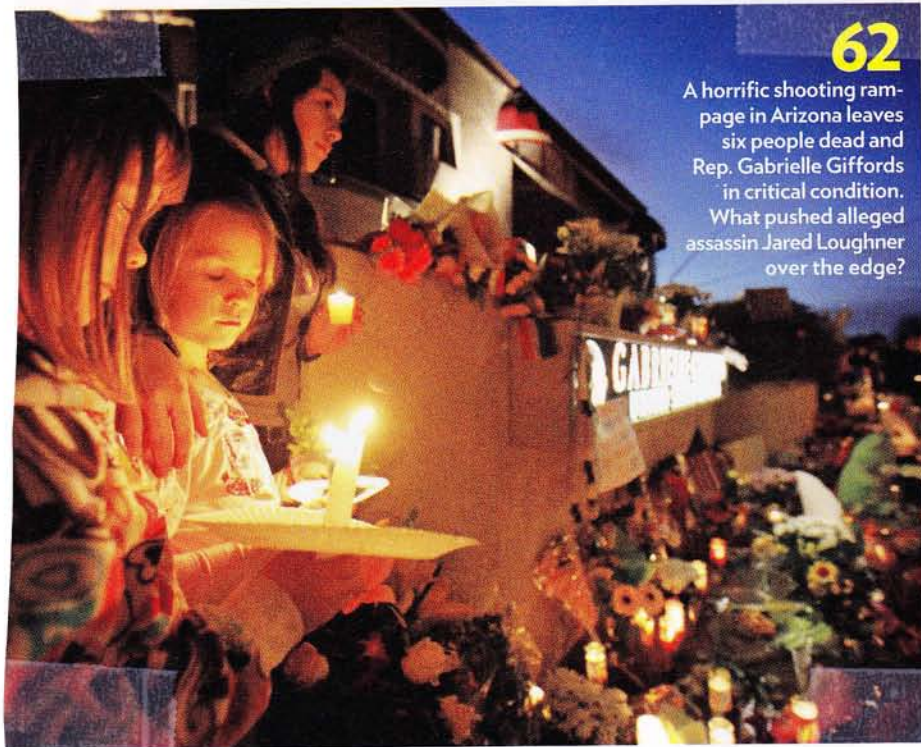


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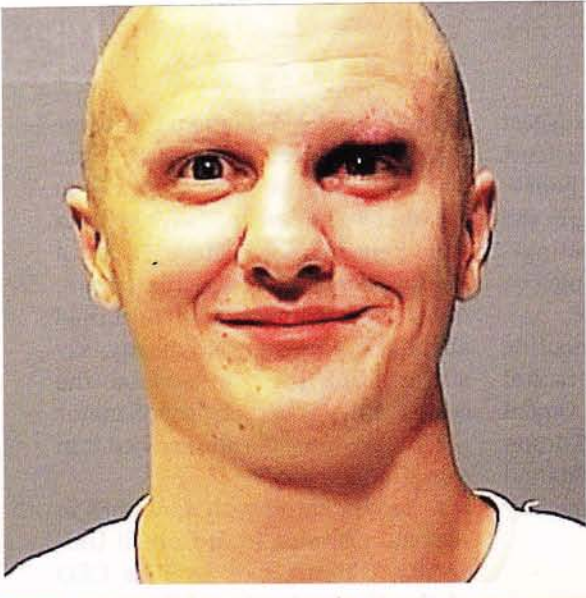
A horrific shooting rampage in Arizona leaves six people dead and Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in critical condition. What pushed alleged assassin Jared Loughner over the edge?



**ARIZONA
SHOOTING
TRAGEDY**



A CENTRIST POLITICIAN Giffords (on election night last year) is "a moderate, not a firebrand," says Rep. Raúl Grijalva. "She never acted in a mean way." Says Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand: "She has a way of bringing people together."



THE SUSPECTED SHOOTER
Loughner (in his mug shot) is a registered Independent who didn't vote in 2010. Below: Paramedics tend to a victim at the site of the Jan. 8 shooting in Tucson. Says one eyewitness: "It was like a war zone."



MURDER, MAYHEM— and HOPE

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords survives a bullet to the brain, but the horrific rampage in Tucson leaves six dead and raises a tough question: What pushed alleged gunman Jared Loughner over the edge?

Finding time to be in the same city, or even the same atmosphere, wasn't always easy for Gabrielle Giffords and her astronaut husband, Mark Kelly. But on Jan. 3 the couple joined two friends for wood-fired pizza at Mark's favorite restaurant, Matchbox, in Washington, D.C. Giffords, 40, an Arizona congresswoman who narrowly won re-election in November, "talked about the nastiness of the campaign she just came through," says her friend, New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who was there with her husband, Jonathan. "The debate is so negative, so aggressive, we both shake our heads at it." Even so, the rare double date was "lovely and fun," says Gillibrand. "And Gabby was really excited about the new year, about all the work she was going to do."

Just five days later, outside a Tucson supermarket where she was meeting constituents, a man raised a 9mm Glock to Giffords' head and shot her point-blank, then fired randomly into the crowd. The Jan. 8 attack left six people dead—among them a federal judge and a 9-year-old girl who'd just been elected to her student council (see box)—and injured another 14, including Giffords, who miraculously survived the gunshot and, at press time, remained in critical condition in the ICU. The shooting spree sent shock waves through the nation and its Capitol, where flags flew at half-staff and President Obama called it "a tragedy for Arizona and a tragedy for our entire country."

It also set off a fierce debate about the motives of the alleged gunman, a troubled 22-year-old named Jared Lee Loughner, and about the safety of elected officials in a poisonous political climate. Giffords, a Democrat known in Congress as a bright, cheerful centrist who is both pro-gun and pro-Obama health care, had no security at the event and "always wanted to be as accessible as possible," says Mark Kimble, an aide and a witness to the shooting. "She had no thought something like this could happen."

Now that it has, tough questions remain. What drove Loughner to show up at Giffords' Congress on Your Corner event? Police say they searched his parents' Tucson home and found evidence he may have long harbored a grudge against the congresswoman—including a letter she sent him thanking him for attending a similar event in 2007, and an envelope with "My assassination" and "Giffords" written on it. But while interviews with several people who

crossed paths with Loughner suggest he had an almost paranoid distrust of government—and that his behavior had grown more troubling in the weeks leading up to the shooting—Loughner has yet to enter a plea or discuss his motives with police.

What's clear is that the shooting followed the most contentious race of Giffords' career. Last March a vandal shattered the windows at her Tucson district office. She'd been shouted down at town hall meetings and, say

friends, received personal threats. "I'd ask her, 'Aren't you afraid?'" and she'd say, "No, we have to stand up for what we believe in," says Arizona state representative Steve Farley, a family friend. "She was the picture of courage." Giffords was concerned about the escalating animosity, say staffers, but she "understood the complexities of her job," says Senator Gillibrand, "and she approached it in a very human way."

A Tucson native with a master's in regional planning from Cornell University, Giffords took over as CEO of the tire and automobile company founded by her grandfather and served in the state legislature before winning election to Congress in 2006. "She is a machine, but she was unfailingly sweet and funny," says former Republican state legislator Jonathan Paton, who ran unsuccessfully for her seat in 2010. "People always dismiss her because they think she's just the sweet girl next door. But she's hard-working, and she gets the job done."

Giffords met Kelly, a NASA space shuttle pilot and commander who has been in space three times, on a cultural exchange trip to China in 2003. Both are physically active—Giffords loves hiking and Rollerblading—and were soon "smitten," says a close friend,



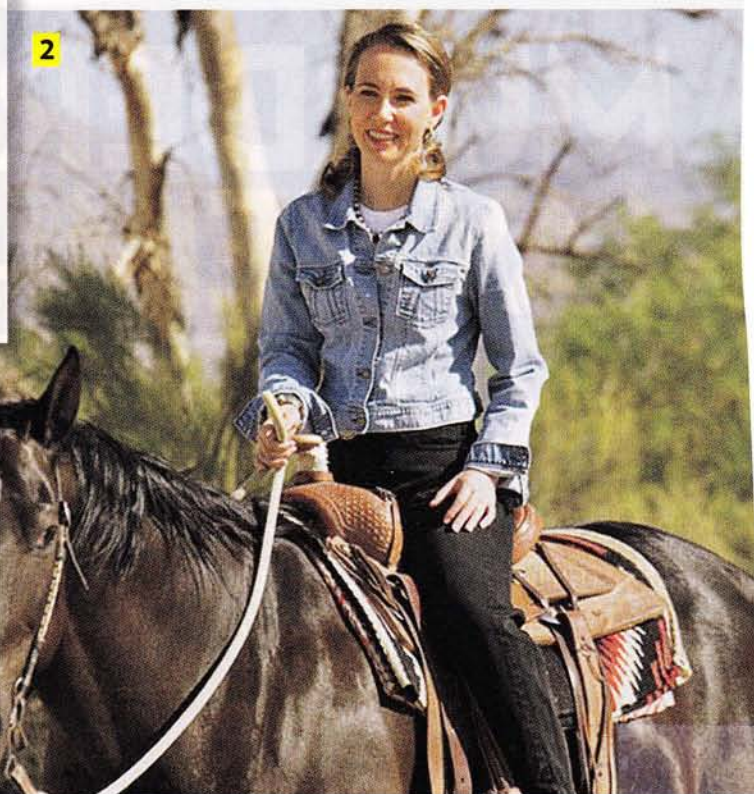
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A RISING STAR

(1) Giffords and Kelly on their 2007 wedding day. She's "beautiful, smart... and she laughed at my jokes," Kelly told *The New York Times*.

(2) "She's one of the fittest members of Congress," a friend says of Giffords (on horseback in 2006).

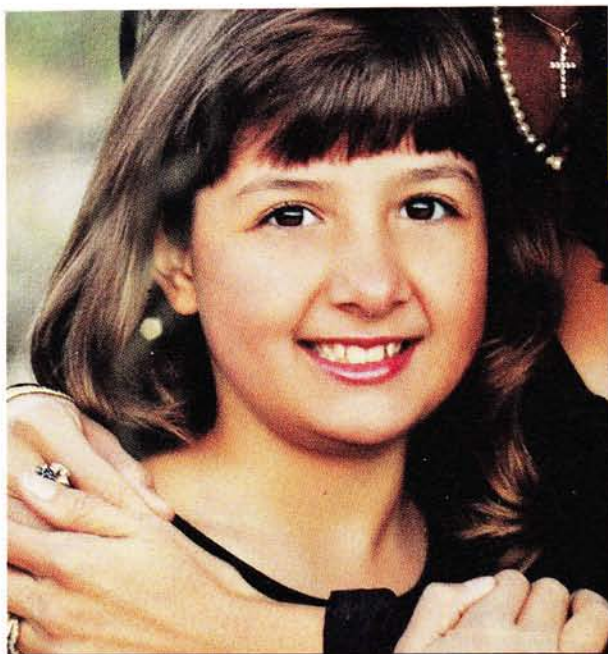
(3) Rep. John Boehner swore in Giffords on Jan. 5. Just a day before the shooting, she reportedly wrote to one colleague, "We need to figure out how to tone our rhetoric and partisanship down."



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SIX INNOCENT VICTIMS REMEMBERED

Christina Green, 9 | A straight-A student who played on an otherwise all-boys baseball team, Green refused to be defined by her birthdate: 9/11/01. Instead, says her mom, Roxanna, "she wanted to represent hope, peace, people coming together." Toward that end, Christina served on her school's student council, helped her grandmother raise funds for Obama and turned out to meet her local representative. "She liked the whole political process," says Roxanna.



Dorothy Morris, 76
A homemaker with two daughters, "Dot" Morris was "generous with her time, her friendship and her caring," says her friend Bonnie Royle. But Dorothy's heart belonged to her high school sweetheart, George, whom she married. "She just adored him, and he adored her," says JoAnn Newland, a Tucson neighbor. For George, a retired airline pilot who was also shot, she says, "it's going to be very hard to recover from losing her."

Phyllis Schneck, 79

A native of New Jersey, Schneck spent only winters in Tucson and "wasn't politically active," says her daughter Betty-Jean Offutt. So it seems sadly ironic that Schneck had made it a point to attend Gabrielle Giffords' meet-and-greet. Mostly, Schneck—who wed her high school sweetheart, Ernest, then outlived him after a happy 56-year marriage—devoted herself to her church and family. "She loved to cook and sew," says Offutt. "I don't think she had an enemy."



Gabriel Zimmerman, 30

Before the shots rang out, Zimmerman, director of community outreach for Representative Giffords, was busy interviewing visitors. "He felt it wasn't just a job, it was a life," says his friend Eric Alfey. Trained as a social worker, Zimmerman was a natural networker. "The longest I ever waited for a callback from Gabe was 11 minutes," says state representative Matt Heinz. On a sunrise hike last August, he proposed to Kelly O'Brien, a nurse, whom he'd planned to marry next spring.



Dorwan Stoddard, 76

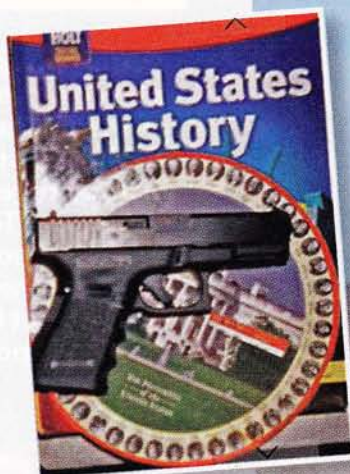
High school classmates Stoddard and Mavy Terry were both widowed, each with four children, when they reconnected. They married in 1996, then embraced life together. "Every spring," says Mike Nowak, minister of the Stoddards' Mountain Avenue Church of Christ congregation, "if they didn't go on a world cruise, they'd take off in their motor home and travel to every state." On Jan. 8, on hand to thank Giffords for doing a good job, Dorwan, a retired road-grader, hurled himself on top of Mavy as the shooting began then was fatally hit himself. Their time together, Mavy, 75, told Nowak as she recuperated from gunshot wounds to her legs, "was the best 15 years of my life."



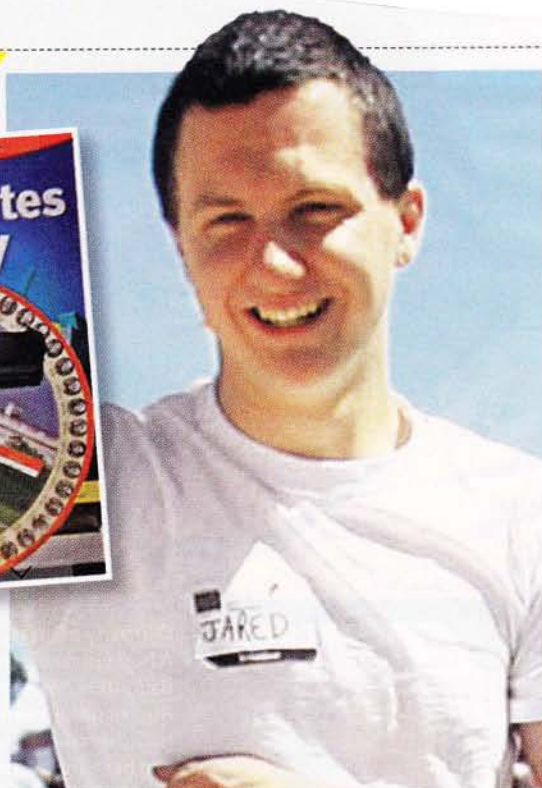
John Roll, 63 | In 2009, when death threats greeted his decision to allow a civil rights lawsuit by illegal immigrants against an Arizona rancher, Roll, chief federal judge in Arizona, proceeded with characteristic calm. "I didn't know about [the threats] until much later," says José de Jesus Rivera, an attorney involved in the case. Known for civility and fairness, Roll, a Republican and dad of three, had stopped to say hello to Giffords after attending Mass. "Politics didn't matter in terms of how he treated you," Rivera adds.

WARNING SIGNS *Jared Lee Loughner, 22*

It's impossible to pinpoint the moment Jared Lee Loughner's behavior slid from odd to downright sinister. In middle school, "he was the type of kid who didn't study but could skate by with good grades," says a former teacher. Classmates at Mountain View High remember his dark clothes, awkward manner with girls and his habit of reading while walking school halls. "He didn't even try to fit in," says a classmate. During one group activity in biology class, this source recalls, "he got really impatient because [the others] weren't as good" and moved his chair back to his desk. By last year his outbursts made his peers at Pima Community College so uncomfortable that his algebra instructor asked—repeatedly—to have him removed from his course. Another student in the class told reporters she feared Loughner would turn up in class with a gun. Sadly, that fear was not misplaced.



HEADED FOR TROUBLE? Loughner, who posted a gun photo on his MySpace page, said "crazy stuff," says a classmate.



FIGHTING TO LIVE "She was conscious; she wasn't speaking, but she was there," says intern Daniel Hernandez (red collar, with Giffords after the shooting).

Arizona state senator Linda Lopez, of the couple, who wed on an organic produce farm in 2007. Their schedules kept them apart much of the time—he works in Houston; she splits her time between Tucson and D.C.—but they often flew to be with each other at events. And Giffords doted on Kelly's two young daughters. "She

really loved those girls," says Lopez. They hoped to start a family of their own some time after Kelly returned from a shuttle mission in the spring. "They want to have children—at least one," says Lopez.

Kelly was in Houston on Jan. 8 when Giffords showed up at 10:00 a.m. for her event outside a Safeway super-

market. Jared Lee Loughner was there too. An only child, Loughner struck classmates at Mountain View High School as "an outcast," says one fellow student. "He wasn't like wearing a trench coat, but he definitely didn't have a lot of friends." Loughner enrolled at Pima Community College in 2005 and showed a strange interest in currency and the meaning of language—interests reflected in several strange YouTube videos he made before the shooting. "He said things that made no sense," says classmate Chrissy Duncan. "Crazy stuff."

In 2007 Loughner was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia (the case was later dismissed), and a U.S. Army official cited his drug use in rejecting his application to the military in 2008. Last year Loughner had five run-ins with Pima campus police for disruptive behavior, and school officials suspended him in September for making a video claiming the college was illegal and unconstitutional. Then, on Nov. 30, Loughner bought a semiautomatic 9mm Glock handgun at a Sportsman's Warehouse in Tucson. According to witnesses, Loughner pulled out that gun after

cutting the line 10 minutes into Giffords' Jan. 8 event. "He paused in front of the congresswoman and then started shooting," says Mark Kimble, who was standing a few feet away. "He fired multiple shots from three to four feet away, no more than that. Then he started swinging the gun around and firing at anyone who was near him. It was over in less than 20 seconds."

The gunman emptied his clip and killed six people, including Giffords' community outreach director, Gabriel Zimmerman, 30, and federal judge John Roll, 63, a friend who'd stopped by to see her. Daniel Hernandez, 20, a college student interning for Giffords, rushed to her side and propped her up so she wouldn't choke on her own blood. Doctors say he may have saved her life. "I stayed with her in the ambulance and tried

to be calm for her," he says. "I told her, 'Gabby, everything is going to be all right,' and I asked her to squeeze my hand if she understood. And she did. And when I mentioned her parents and her husband, she gave me an extra-tight squeeze."

Giffords was rushed to a Tucson hospital, where she remains in critical condition. Doctors said she was responding to simple commands, but that it's unclear how complete her recovery can be. Her husband, Mark, flew in from Houston the afternoon of the shooting to be with her. In a Phoenix courtroom on Jan. 10, Loughner was charged with five federal counts, including two for murder; he faces further charges in his next court appearance on Jan. 24.

Yet as families grieved for those

who died, and as hundreds of Giffords' colleagues from both parties gathered at the Capitol for a moment of silence on Jan. 10, a feeling of hope mixed with those of anger and sadness. "There wasn't any hatred or anyone calling for revenge," says Steve Farley, who was at the hospital. "On Saturday there was a candlelight vigil, and I said, 'You can't stop hope with a bullet.' And the whole crowd started chanting it. Gabby's family was watching down from the hospital room window. There was a feeling we can come out of this stronger. There was a feeling we can rise above it."

By Alex Tresniowski and Jill Smolowe.

Champ Clark in Tucson, Amanda J.

Crawford in Phoenix, Steve Helling in

Florida, Lorenzo Benet in Los Angeles and

Anne Lang in Austin

“HER STAFF IS IN SHOCK. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO... SHE'S A TOUGH PERSON AND A REAL FIGHTER. IF ANYONE CAN GET THROUGH THIS, SHE CAN” —GIFFORDS AIDE MARK KIMBLE



MOMENT OF SILENCE

Giffords' colleagues honored her and the other victims at the Capitol Jan. 10. Giffords "is a charmer," says former Arizona congressman Harry Mitchell. "She makes people feel comfortable."