



INSIDE  
**SCHOOL  
SHOOTINGS**  
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

*presented by* **CONCEALED CARRY**  
MAGAZINE





**» SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER THE MASSACRE**

in Newtown, Connecticut, my 7-year-old son asked me if I thought something like that could happen at his school, which happens to be a private Catholic school in my home city. I assured him that nothing like that would ever happen here, and that even if a bad guy did get into his school, our police department was so good and so fast that they would stop the bad guy before he hurt anyone. Of course, I was lying to him. I feel a bit more confident in my answers when I assure my son that terrorists will never again take over airplanes and fly them into buildings, but for that answer, I have a bit more to fall back on considering the response the nation took after 9/11 compared to its response after Newtown. After 9/11, the U.S. met the threat by installing sophisticated body scanners at airports, hardening cockpit doors with impenetrable steel, creating an Armed Pilot program, and expanding the armed Air Marshal program. The terrorists of 9/11 were fairly confident that if they couldn't bluff their way into the cockpit, they'd be able to breach the door, where they'd find a defenseless crew tucked into their very own "gun-free zone." Today, Al-Qaeda knows that even if a cockpit door could be breached (however unlikely), there is a high probability that the terrorist's last memory would be a muzzle flash as an armed pilot shot him in the face. A 9/11 response was needed after Newtown, but today, most of our schools remain as unprotected as they were the day before the Newtown tragedy. Too many public and private establishments remain undefended and even advertise that fact with "gun-free zone" signs, letting potential criminals or mass murderers know that no one there will stop them. We remain a nation where even members of the most virulent anti-gun groups have grown to not only accept, but expect, armed guards to protect our banks, our museums, our airports, our politicians, and our celebrities, yet they somehow find the thought of armed guards protecting our schools and our children abhorrent. In the words of John Caille (who pens "Defcon 1" for *Concealed Carry Magazine*), "If that's not misplaced priorities, I don't know what is."

# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT SCHOOL SHOOTERS?

After the single lesson of 9/11, the nation went on a war footing and changed the way we protect our airports and our airplanes. But after the lessons of Columbine, Virginia Tech, and Newtown, the anti-gun forces have continued to ignore the obvious failure of “gun-free zones,” and instead continue to propose a host of anti-gun bills including renewed limits on magazine capacity and bans on sporting rifles, believing that the passage of these bills would limit future carnage of school shooters. But assuming that any limitation on gun type or magazine capacity would have limited or avoided the carnage caused by these shooters would be like assuming that the 9/11 attacks could have been avoided if box cutters had been banned before the attack. In this three-part series, I’ll not only be looking at the magazine capacity argument in detail, I’ll also look at whether “gun-free zones” figure into the planning of these mass murders and whether victim response can affect the outcome. I’ll summarize this series with a four-point plan designed to eliminate the scourge of these murderers once and for all.

To start, let’s take a look at the magazine capacity argument.

Magazine Capacity	Reloads Required per Minute	Rounds per Minute at a Moderate Rate of Fire
5 rounds	11	55
10 rounds	7.5	75
30 rounds	3.3	100

» The table above shows how many rounds can be fired per minute with a moderate rate of fire of two rounds per second and a moderate reload rate of 3 seconds per magazine change. An experienced shooter would be able to fire at approximately twice this rate.

## IS MAGAZINE CAPACITY THE REAL KILLER?

It seems that before the blood is done drying after mass shootings, the anti-gun movement renews their rallying cry that the reason these monsters are able to murder so many victims in a short period of time is because of the rate of fire en-

abled by magazine capacities larger than five or ten rounds, and by the nature of semi-automatic firearms. So that begs the question, exactly how many rounds can be fired per minute when using magazine capacities of five rounds, 10 rounds, or 30 rounds, and, would a lower round capacity have affected the outcome at any mass shooting? To help answer that question, I ran a series of live fire tests using magazines topped off to those different round counts and using a moderate rate of fire of two rounds per second, and a moderate magazine change rate of three seconds. The results are in the table below left.

Having those baseline numbers, the “it’s the magazine” crowd would have a strong argument if it could be demonstrated that mass shooters who used 30-round magazines had achieved a rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute or more, but unfortunately for them, the facts don’t support their argument. The table below shows the actual rate of fire for the four most notorious school shooters. It clearly shows that their actual rate of fire is not only dramatically below what’s possible with a moderate rate of fire us-

including the shooting at the Century Theater in Aurora, Colorado and the shooting at Fort Hood.

## WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

So here’s what we know—every recent mass shooter going back to Columbine and including the deadliest shootings at Virginia Tech and Newtown has shot at a rate of fire less than 60 percent of what’s achievable with five-round magazines, and not more than 30 percent of what would be possible using 30-round magazines. Even James Holmes (the Aurora theater shooter) who had a 100-round magazine achieved a rate of fire no more than eight to 14 rounds per minute, which is less than 15 to 25 percent of what would have been possible if he had brought five-round magazines and left the 100-round magazine at home. Lanza, who entered Sandy Hook Elementary with ten 30-round magazines, didn’t even take advantage of the larger capacity before reloading—three magazines were unused, and four others were left with 10, 11, 13, and 14 rounds remaining.

So here’s the problem with the magazine capacity argument: these killers

Shooter	Location	Dead	Rounds Fired	Time	Rounds per Minute
Seung-Hui Cho	Virginia Tech	30	174	11 minutes	15
Adam Lanza	Newtown	26	154	5—9 minutes <sup>1</sup>	17—31
Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold	Columbine	13	188	47 minutes	4
Jeff Weise	Red Lake	7	45	9 minutes <sup>2</sup>	5

» <sup>1</sup>Police records indicate that Lanza shot his way into Sandy Hook Elementary at 9:35 a.m. and at 9:40 a.m. (5 minutes after the shooting began) the last shot was heard, which is believed to be Lanza taking his own life. Police entered the school four minutes later, at 9:44 a.m. (9 minutes after the shooting began). Police also reported that they believe Lanza fired one round approximately every two seconds. <sup>2</sup>All 7 of Weise’s victims were killed within 3 minutes, yet Weise went on to shoot and wound 5 other victims for another 6 minutes for a total of 9 minutes of shooting before Weise took his own life.

ing 30-round magazines, they are all less than 60 percent of a moderate rate of fire when using five-round magazines.

That same rate of fire is reflected in other mass shootings outside of schools,

are not using a high rate of fire; they’re not even using a moderate rate of fire. Their rate of fire could be described as sluggish, no faster than a lever-action or bolt-action rifle. While the anti-gun

Shooter	Location	Dead	Rounds Fired	Time	Rounds per Minute
James Holmes	Aurora	12	70	5—9 minutes <sup>3</sup>	8—14
Nidal Malik Hasan	Ford Hood	13	214	10 minutes	21

» <sup>3</sup>The timeline of the Aurora Theater shooting indicates that Holmes opened fire at 12:37, the first 911 call was received at 12:39 (2 minutes after the shooting began), the first police arrived on the scene at 12:41 (4 minutes after the shooting began), police began to surround the theater by 12:42 as witnesses reported that there was still “someone actively shooting” inside (5 minutes after the shooting began) and Holmes was apprehended outside the back of the theater at 12:49 (9 minutes after the shooting began).

crowd describes their rate of fire as being attainable only with “military-style” firearms and “high-capacity” magazines, their rate of fire is at or below one very well known military firearm, which advertised a sustained rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute. The problem is, that firearm was the lever-action Henry Rifle, popular among Union soldiers in the Civil War. Let me say that again—the rate of fire for the six shooters profiled above was no faster than the very first repeating rifle, put into service 150 years ago.

So if these shooters aren’t depending upon magazine capacity or a high rate of fire to kill as many victims as possible, what are they depending upon to virtually guarantee their success? Looking at the tables containing the statistics on the six shooters again, the answer is obvious. It’s not magazine capacity; it’s the uninterrupted time these shooters have in gun-free zones.

### TIME IS THE KILLER

The large number of victims killed during school shootings is not occurring because of magazine capacity or a high rate of fire, it is occurring because these shooters have each had 5 to 9 minutes or more of uninterrupted time to commit their murders before police are able to commit to an interior response. While the response time of police to the scenes of these crimes is often commendable (the police arrived outside the Aurora theater an amazing 90 seconds after the first 911 calls came in), arriving on the scene is one thing; entering the building

to stop the shooter is another. While the Aurora police were on scene 90 seconds after the first 911 calls, those calls weren’t made until 2 minutes into the shooting, and the police didn’t apprehend Holmes until 9 minutes after the shooting began. This isn’t a knock on the police; it’s the reality of what happens when the only good guys with guns are coming from miles away, and who require at least several minutes to formulate a plan once arriving on scene.

In the “gun-free zones” of our nation’s schools, these shooters don’t just believe, they *know* that a counter-attack will only come from the outside, and they’ll get a loud and dramatic warning of the upcoming counter-attack as they hear sirens approaching from all directions. Those sirens tell them that they have at least another four minutes or more to kill any remaining victims before police will enter the building. Again, they know that no counter-attack will be launched from within the school walls. It isn’t just what they believe; it’s what they know to be true. And so do we.

### ARE “GUN-FREE ZONES” PART OF THE PROBLEM?

Much has been made of whether mass shooters gravitate toward gun-free zones, and whether the elimination of schools as gun-free zones could have an effect. The anti-gun crowd has done much to try to dispel the notion that these killers seek out schools or other locations that ban guns; one anti-gun group even tried to dismiss the argument that Fort Hood

was a gun free zone by claiming that the base police who flooded the area and exchanged fire with shooter Nidal Malik Hasan proves that Fort Hood was not a gun-free zone after all. But claiming that arriving police means an area isn’t a gun-free zone (even though soldiers on base were barred from carrying personal firearms by base policy) is the argument of an idiot. It doesn’t even deserve a response. Instead, let’s look at the facts—and John Lott, author of *More Guns, Less Crime* and *The Bias Against Guns* has them. “With just one single exception (the attack on congresswoman Gabby Giffords in Tucson in 2011) every public shooting since at least 1950 in the U.S. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns.” Lott further notes that James Holmes, the Aurora theater shooter, had at least *seven* movie theaters to choose from, all within a 20 minute drive of his home and all that were showing *The Dark Knight Rises*. The Century Theater that Holmes settled on wasn’t the closest, but it happened to be the only theater that posted “NO GUNS” signs, while the other six theaters had no such declaration. Those “NO GUNS” signs let Holmes know that he’d get the 5 to 9 minutes he needed.

Regardless of what the anti-gun movement tries to push, the fact is that mass shooters actively seek out soft targets, and the vast majority of schools are soft targets. No history of a mass shooter fighting their way through hardened security exists. Signs, school policies, state statutes, glass doors, unlocked doors, and unarmed staff do not create hardened targets. What they create instead is the perfect environment for these deranged individuals to successfully carry out their plans. If we change the environment, we stand a chance at changing their plans.

Just ask Al-Qaeda.

**Next:** *Can victim response make a difference during mass shootings?*



# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT SCHOOL SHOOTERS?

## PART TWO: CAN VICTIM RESPONSE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

**IN PART ONE**, I addressed the issue of “magazine capacity” head-on to determine whether a reduction in magazine capacity would have affected the outcome at any mass shooting (the answer is no) and I also looked at whether “gun-free zones” figure into the planning of these mass shooters (the answer is yes). In Part Two, I’m going to look at whether victim response can affect the outcome, and in the next issue, I’ll summarize this series with a four-point plan designed to eliminate the scourge of school shooters once and for all.

### **SCHOOL LOCK-DOWNS, OR, “HOW TO MAKE AN EASY TARGET”**

While preparing this article, I called my 11-year-old son Jack into my home office and asked him to explain to me how “lock-downs” worked in his school. Jack said that the lock-down would be announced over the loudspeakers, and that his teacher would lock the door, cover the window, and then, “We all gather on one side of the room.”

“Like a big target?” I asked.

Jack answered with a sad smile, “Yeah, sort of like a big target.”

I continued, “What would you do next if you knew there was a shooter in the school?”

Jack was momentarily stumped, but he replied, “Nothing, we just wait in our classroom and hope that the shooter goes to someone else’s classroom instead of ours.”

Jack made that last comment without ill-intent or meanness, but it struck me as incredibly sad that the best hope my son would have if a shooter entered his school would be that some of his schoolmates would die instead of him while waiting for the po-

lice response. The idea of having students actively participate in defending the classroom had never entered the mind of the school administrators, and instead they seemed to be relying on the “hope” that local law enforcement would end the attack before any students were harmed. In Part One of this series, I pointed out how futile that hope actually is. So that begs the question, have the intended victims at any mass shooting affected the outcome by their own actions, including whether they chose to fight back or flee? And, what is the profile of the typical mass shooter during the incident itself? Are these firearms experts? Are they novices? Are they making intelligent tactical choices, or are they making major blunders that can be exploited?

Let’s start with the second question first. While much has been said about the profiles of these shooters *before* the shootings (and to be honest, I don’t give a rat’s ass whether these shooters are loners or spent their spare time playing “Grand Theft Auto,” all I care about is that they’re killing our kids), not much has been reported about their profiles *during* the shootings. Here’s what we know:

BY MICHAEL MARTIN



• These shooters typically have some familiarity with firearms, but are not experts. Most recently bought or stole the firearm and have little or no practice. When their firearm malfunctions, they typically switch firearms rather than clear the problem. Reloads are slow, or magazines are dropped during the reload attempt.

• The shooters fire at what could be termed a sluggish rate of fire—in most cases, no faster than is attainable with a bolt-action or lever-action rifle.

• Not since Charles Whitman shot and killed 16 people from the clock tower at the University of Texas in 1966 have school shooters used precise aimed fire. Instead, they target victims at “point shooting” distances.

• The shooters typically have a complete lack of situational awareness and make no use of their environment. They are either focused on chasing down a specific victim or methodically moving down a line of victims rather than identifying and using cover or watching angles of approach. (They’re not “watching their six.”)

• They will typically abandon one set of targets for an easier set of targets.

• They do not have an escape plan.

• They will commit suicide when one of two things happens: they run out of victims, or they believe they are about to be shot by armed responders.

The facts above can be exploited to save lives, including the fact that these shooters will give up one set of targets for an easier set of targets. To demonstrate that and to show how victim response has affected the outcome, let’s take a look at one of the most infamous school shootings, which occurred at Virginia Tech in April of 2007.

## VIRGINIA TECH: A CASE STUDY

As I explained in Part One, Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho was able to murder 30 students and teachers by taking advantage of 11 uninterrupted minutes in the “gun-free zone” of Norris Hall. During his 11-minute siege, Cho entered or attempted to enter five separate classrooms, as shown in the diagram on page 9. You’ll note that the classrooms are grouped by how the students responded to Cho’s attack. Group One shows classrooms where the students and professor proactively defended their classroom from the outset by barricading the door; Group Two shows classrooms that did not proactively mount a defense during any moment of the at-

tack; and Group Three shows classrooms where students failed to initially form a defense but who regrouped and then actively worked to barricade their classroom door. That diagram clearly shows that the outcome was not consistent among the five classrooms, and that when students and their professors actively mounted a defense, their chances of survival dramatically improved—and not by just a small margin. This is a classic example of how mass shooters will switch from one set of targets to another set of targets. The students in classroom 205 didn’t need to disable or kill Cho; all they needed to do was to delay his entry long enough for him to become frustrated and move on to a new set of targets. Cho knew the clock was ticking, and he wasn’t about to waste more than a few seconds trying to gain access to any one classroom. The result was that everyone in classroom 205 lived.

## DEFENSIVE VERSUS OFFENSIVE RESPONSE

Although the students and professors in classrooms 204, 205, and 207 took (or eventually took) defensive action by barricading their classroom doors, no evidence exists showing that any student in any classroom took any offensive measures, such as throwing objects at Cho, striking him with objects, or attempting to tackle him. One student from room 211 was even quoted as saying that he was “waiting for it to be his turn” to be shot. Although that student heard Cho reload three times, he failed to use that opportunity to flee the classroom or to make a counter-attack on Cho, and instead decided to continue to wait for it to be “his turn” to die. Please understand that I am not blaming the victims by this analysis; rather, I’m simply attempting to understand what we might take away from the volumes of data that were recorded about this incident. If anything, the evidence points out that our schools’ “zero tolerance” policies have so systematically conditioned our nation’s students to never fight back that the outcome of these shootings is a forgone conclusion. That has to change.

Virginia Tech isn’t the only mass shooting where potential victims failed to fight back offensively. During the Aurora, Colorado Theater shooting, many survivors were quoted as saying that they sent out tweets or texts, rather than calling 911. Although

shooter James Holmes’ firearm jammed and he was unable to clear it, no one did so much as throw a bucket of popcorn at him as he switched to a secondary gun.

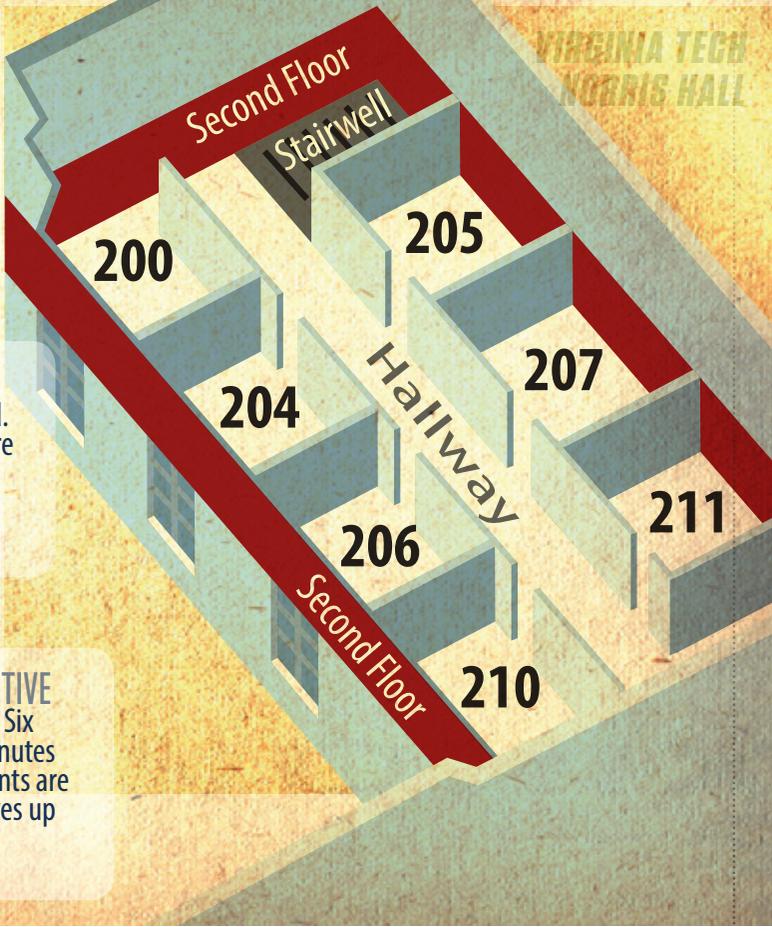
So how about mass shootings where the victims did fight back offensively? In case after case, it can be shown that an active response by bystanders can end these mass shootings early, effectively saving countless lives. Examples include:

• May 21, 1998, Thurston High School, Springfield Oregon. Recently suspended student Kip Kinkel enters the school with two pistols and a .22 caliber rifle. Kinkel fires a total of 50 rounds from his rifle, striking 37 people and killing two. When Kinkel attempts to reload, student Jacob Ryker (who has already been wounded) tackles Kinkel, and six other students join in to assist. The seven students restrain Kinkel until police arrive on the scene. Although Kinkel was carrying a total of 1,127 rounds of ammunition, the proactive and aggressive counter-attack by students ended the attack after Kinkel had fired less than five percent of his total ammunition supply.

• January 16, 2002, Appalachian School of Law. Shooter Peter Odighizuwa shoots and kills a student and two faculty members, but is then stopped by students Tracy Bridges and Mikael Gross, who retrieve their personal firearms from their vehicles.

• December 9, 2007, New Life Church, Colorado Springs. Shooter Matthew Murray opens fire in the church parking lot, injuring three people and killing two. After entering the church, Murray is shot multiple times by Jeanne Assam, a concealed carry permit holder and security volunteer. Police reports indicate that after being seriously wounded by Assam, Murray killed himself with a shotgun. Police reports also indicate that Murray had in his possession over 1,000 rounds of ammunition and that approximately 7,000 people were on the church campus at the time of the shooting. The actions of Jeanne Assam undoubtedly saved countless lives.

• January 8, 2011, Tucson Arizona. Shooter Jared Loughner fires 31 rounds into a crowd attending a constituent meeting hosted by Representative Gabrielle Giffords at the La Toscana Village mall just outside of Tucson, Arizona. When attempting to reload, Loughner drops the magazine. While one bystander fights Loughner for the dropped magazine, three other bystanders tackle Loughner to the ground,



GROUP ONE

» PROACTIVELY FOUGHT BACK

**Room 204:** The professor and one student are killed.

**Room 205:** No one is killed.

**3 dead**

GROUP TWO

» DID NOT PROACTIVELY FIGHT BACK

**Room 206:** The professor and nine students are killed. Two more students are wounded. Only two students are uninjured.

**Room 211:** The professor and 11 students are killed.

**22 dead**

GROUP THREE

» INITIALLY NOT PROACTIVE, THEN BECAME PROACTIVE

**Room 207:** The professor and four students are killed. Six students are wounded. Cho leaves, and returns two minutes later. Cho attempts to reenter the room, but two students are barricading the door with their hands and feet. Cho gives up and leaves.

**5 dead**

including 74-year-old retired Army Colonel Bill Badger (who is wounded), Joseph Zamudio, and Roger Sulzgeber. Although six innocent people lost their lives during this shooting, far more would have been injured or killed if it weren't for the proactive and aggressive actions of Loughner's potential victims.

**WHAT WE'VE LEARNED**

An active response by potential victims affects the outcome. That active response might be barricading a door, fighting back, or running away, but in all cases, survival jumps exponentially. Fighting back as a team significantly affects the shooter's ability to continue his attack. Those facts are reflected in the Department of Homeland Security's new program on "Surviving an Active Shooter." Never heard of the program? That's not a surprise, because the program openly advocates fighting back, which isn't something that the national media is likely to help promote. The program teaches that there are three things you can do that will make a difference during an attack: Hide, Flee, or Fight. The Hide, Flee, Fight program teaches that if evacuation or hiding out are not possible, then action should be taken against the shooter. The program states:

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her.
- Throwing items and improvising weapons.
- Yelling.
- Committing to your actions.

While the program doesn't specifically take a stance one way or another on whether firearms in the hands of potential victims would change the outcome, it is significant that the Department recommends fighting back at all. Had this approach been taught to the students at Virginia Tech, it's likely that even if Cho hadn't been incapacitated by his potential victims, any aggressive action on the part of the students would have disrupted Cho's plans long enough for law enforcement to make entry. Remember that the typical length of time that mass-shooting events last is only five to nine minutes, or in Cho's case, 11 minutes (since he had chained and padlocked several doors). The students in classrooms 204, 206, 207, and 211 didn't necessarily need to incapacitate Cho—all they needed to do was to buy themselves several minutes of time to allow law enforcement to make their entry (as did the students in classroom 205).

What could they have done? As soon as it was apparent that a shooter was in the building, the students could have immediately piled tables, chairs, bookshelves, or any other barrier objects in front of the door. Each student could have then picked up a chair, a book, a coffee mug, their shoes, or any of the hundreds of other objects that would have been in the classroom. If Cho was able to breach the barriers and enter their classroom, the students could have thrown these objects at his head and torso, screaming at the top of their lungs, committing to their actions until the threat was over. If Cho went down still in possession of his firearms, the students could have beaten him into unconsciousness with chairs or their fists. Sound pretty brutal? The alternative wasn't just brutal; it was the deaths of 30 innocent people.

**Next:** What should change? A four-point plan to eliminate the scourge of school shootings once and for all.



# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT SCHOOL SHOOTERS?

## PART THREE: WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

**IN PART ONE**, I addressed the issue of “magazine capacity” head-on to determine whether a reduction in magazine capacity would have affected the outcome at any school or other mass shooting (the answer is no). I also looked at whether Gun-Free Zones figure into the planning of these mass murders (the answer is yes). In Part Two, I looked at whether victim response made a difference in any mass shooting; in other words, does it make a difference when potential victims fight back? The answer is a resounding yes, which reflects the Department of Homeland Security’s new program on “Surviving an Active Shooter.” The program teaches potential victims of a mass shooting to “Hide, Flee, Fight.” (Yes, believe it or not, the U.S. Government is telling you that you don’t need to be an easy victim.) In this article, I’ll summarize this series with a four-point plan designed to eliminate the scourge of school shooters once and for all.

### A FOUR-POINT PLAN

So we’ve learned a lot from school and other mass shootings, but that begs the question, what should change? Well, a lot should change.

**Point #1: Harden School and Classroom Doors.** Let’s face it: the security at most of our nation’s schools is not just poor...it’s abysmal. Two years after Sandy Hook and seven years after Virginia Tech, if you were to ask your local school administrators the types of questions on my school security checklist (Pg. 13), you’d most likely receive an answer of “no” for every question, or a look of embarrassment. While we don’t necessarily have the money to institute airport-level security at school entrances, we do have the money to plug these major gaps in security. If you are a parent or a teacher, take a copy of this checklist to your school and ask your school administrators to answer these questions. Unless every answer is a resounding “yes,” you’ll need to make the argument that these items can no longer be delayed or ignored. Lives literally depend on it.

Although all of the items on the checklist are important, simply hardening up the main entrances of schools will have an effect—FEMA reported that 74 percent of mass shooters enter their target zone through the front door, as was done at the four school shootings I profiled in my first article. Although Sandy Hook Elementary did have a “security door” blocking entry from the lobby to the interior of the school, that security door was made of glass. While it was good for appearances, it had no effect on actually stopping shooter Adam Lanza as he shot his way through it. Other good intentions that ultimately failed at Sandy Hook included the fact that a lock-down was never called from the front office, predominantly due to the fact that the shooting began just outside the office doors. That indicates that schools must have multiple methods of ordering a lock-down, which might include launching a prerecorded message initiated by pressing a necklace fob worn by multiple staff throughout the school.

BY MICHAEL MARTIN



The final failure at Sandy Hook was the most devastating. Although all of the classrooms did have lockable doors, the locks required that a key be used, even when locking the door from the inside. In the aftermath, it was discovered that all of the classroom doors were locked, except for classrooms eight and ten, the two classrooms where Lanza murdered the majority of his victims, and that keys were found on the floor next to one of the murdered teachers. Any delay in locking the classroom doors may be fatal, and looking for a key creates just such a delay. Lock-down drills must not only be procedurally correct, they must also be fast. How fast? A good test for every teacher in every school would be to see how quickly a healthy runner could sprint from the closest school entrance to your classroom. If that can be done in five seconds, then you have four seconds to get your students into the classroom and secure the door.

While the defensive measures listed in the checklist might sound ineffective (a determined attacker should be able to eventually breach a locked door, right?), remember from my first article in this series that school shooters know that they'll have just five to nine minutes to complete their attack before the police will make entry. Delaying a shooter for even one to two minutes is enough to either force the shooter to move on to try a different target or to end their life. The students in classroom 205 at Virginia Tech didn't need to delay shooter Seung-Hui Cho for hours or even minutes. When Cho was unable to breach the door that students had barricaded with tables, he gave up in seconds and moved back to the classrooms where no such barricades had been erected. If Virginia Tech had installed deadbolts and back-up locks on their classroom doors, it's very likely that every student in classrooms 204, 207, and 211 would have survived, and—if the school had instituted Point #2—it's very likely that many of the students in classroom 206 (the first room attacked) would have survived as well.

**Point #2:** Teach Students to Fight Back. During lock-down drills, students must be taught to do more than simply huddle on one side of the classroom. Instead, they must be taught to fight back, and fight back aggressively, if a shooter enters their classroom. During lock-down drills, schools must implement (or teachers can improvise) counter-attack plans by instructing students to spread out, pick up any object, and hold it back in a "thrower's stance" in

preparation for an attacker making entry. For younger kids, the object might be a book, a stapler, their shoes, or a glue stick. Older students should be taught to pick up chairs or other heavier objects. Any object thrown at an attacker will break his momentum, which may cause him to back out of the classroom. Schools should go as far as acting through simulated counter-attacks by providing students with soft rubber objects that can be thrown at mock attackers making entry through the door. Not only would that exercise make lock-down drills less frightening, it would also begin to build the proper neural pathways that not only is fighting back okay, it is necessary and expected. For junior high through college kids, students should be taught to defend and attack as a team, by immediately locking the door and barricading it with the designated cabinet or bookshelf, and striking the shooter with hardened objects to the head and torso if he makes entry. If you're a teacher, you'll also need to include a baseball bat or other incapacitating tool in your classroom. If a shooter enters your classroom, you not only have the legal right, you have the moral obligation to use deadly force to stop him. Huddling with your kids on one side of the classroom whispering "everything is going to be okay" is not living up to that obligation.

**Point #3:** Arming Educators. If we really want to stop school shooters in their tracks, we must institute an "Armed Educator" program, similar to the "Armed Pilot" program. Allowing school staff to carry concealed firearms as official security is a sensitive topic, so I'm ready to propose a number of compromises on the issue, including:

- Requiring weapons retention and advanced handgun training in addition to state-mandated concealed carry training for participants in the program. This could be modeled after the Armed Pilot program, but should not require more than two weeks of training.
- Passing a physical agility test to enter the program.
- Securing firearms in Level III holsters to minimize the fear that unruly students might attempt to grab the firearms.
- In addition to including traditional firearms and ammunition in the program, I'd propose that Simunition firearms and ammunition be included as well. This option would certainly attract more educators into the program, and mass shooters are unlikely to know the difference between the sound

of or pain inflicted by Simunition rounds versus live rounds. (If you've ever been hit by a Simunition round, you know what I mean.) We need to keep in mind what the end game of these shooters is: the moment they believe a counter-attack is occurring, they'll end their own life.

Interestingly, there may be another significant benefit of allowing educators to choose Simunition firearms over traditional firearms: knowing that they will only inflict pain rather than death (on the shooter or innocent bystanders), they may be much more likely to immediately commit to a response rather than hesitating as they might with a traditional firearm and ammunition. Picture what might have changed at Sandy Hook if Principal Dawn Hochsprung and School Psychologist Mary Sherlach had closed in on Lanza, firing Simunition rounds at his head and torso as fast as their fingers could pull the triggers instead of simply shouting "Stay put!" as Principal Hochsprung was reported to have done. Lanza would either have ended his life immediately, or he would have collapsed into the fetal position as his body was wracked with impact after painful impact. Even if Lanza had recovered his senses long enough to continue his attack, the disruption of his momentum would certainly have bought the teachers in classrooms 8 and 10 enough time to lock their doors, and it could have bought the police the few minutes they needed to make entry.

So why haven't we implemented a program like this already? It's because the anti-gun crowd and liberal politicians (is there a difference?) want you to believe that a physically fit teacher wearing a level III holster who's been trained in weapons retention and use of force is more dangerous to your children than a school shooter who walks through the front door loaded down with multiple firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. We need to politely disagree.

**Point #4:** End Gun-Free Zone Policies at schools. Finally, we need to reverse public policies and public statements of schools as "gun-free zones" once and for all. While the "Armed Educator" program takes a massive step in this direction, our ultimate goal (which, admittedly, will require more time) needs to be the elimination of schools from the "banned location" lists on state concealed carry laws and the repeal of the "Gun-Free School Zones Act" of 1990. The "No Guns Allowed" sign is what drew Aurora theater shooter James Holmes to that par-

# SCHOOL SECURITY CHECKLIST

## FRONT DOORS:

- Is there a secured door that visitors must be cleared through before entering the school? Can the door withstand gunshots? Can the door be bypassed or are all visitors funneled through this entrance?

## LOCK-DOWN PROCEDURES:

- Who can initiate a lock-down? Can it only be initiated from the front office, or are multiple methods of initiating a lock-down available? Can teachers initiate their own lock-down if they hear what they believe is gunfire or if they see an intruder?

## CLASSROOM DOORS:

- Do the doors have a deadbolt that can be secured quickly, with no key?
- Do the doors have a back-up lock such as a hotel-style throw over lock, a Door Jammer, or a similar security doorstop?
- Are the classroom's windows security windows with embedded laminate?
- Can the windows be quickly and completely blocked with a shade or curtain?

## BARRICADES:

- Do classrooms have barricades, such as movable cabinets or bookcases, which can be quickly pushed or dropped in front of the door?



ticular theater, when other theaters were closer to his home, and our nation's schools all carry that same virtual blinking neon light stating, "No one in here will stop you." Which sign do you think would cause these mass shooters to reconsider their plans: a "No Guns Allowed" sign taped to a glass door, or a sign declaring "Multiple armed personnel on the property will use deadly force to protect our children and our staff" taped to a reinforced steel door?

Now the reality check. Nothing will convince school boards to institute any of my four points, so here is my plan to stack the argument in our favor. I'd like to challenge every concealed carry instructor in the country to do three things: first, offer a free class at least once per year to any teacher, school administrator, school staff member, or school board member who is willing to learn. Second, if you have school-aged children, let it be known that you're a concealed carry instructor and provide an open invitation for any parent at your children's school to take a class from you for free. You might give up a few dollars, but you'll be doing your school an incredible service. Third, include the data points from this series in every class you teach. I've captured everything in this series in a PowerPoint presentation—email me at michael@uscca.com and it's yours. I'm a huge believer that education is key to winning this argument, and if we educate from within, the blanket statements of "guns in schools are bad" or "we need to balance security with access" are going to begin sounding more and more ridiculous. The more teachers and parents who are educated with these facts, the more likely

it is that one or more of them will stand up and hit the B.S. buzzer the next time they hear, "It's the magazines" at their next PTA or teacher development workshop.

At those types of meetings, the typical argument from school administrators against securing schools and allowing armed personnel on the premises is twofold: 1). Schools need to balance security versus access, and 2). Armed personnel will scare children. Those arguments are bunk. No one makes the "access versus security" argument about airplane cockpits, or the secure area of airports. Children also know the difference between a gun in the hands of a bad guy and a gun in the hands of a good guy (and teachers are included in kids' version of a "good guy" list). A gun in the hands of a bad guy equals danger, while a gun in the hands of a good guy equals safety. Similarly, children aren't afraid of lockable doors or other active security measures. Those things say, "This place is secure. You'll be safe here." A trip through security and the sight of armed police at the airport doesn't frighten children; if anything, it brings on a sense of comfort, especially if your children are aware of 9/11. How secure would your children (or you) feel if the extent of airport security was a "No Guns Allowed" sign posted at each entrance and a glass cockpit door?

Finally, think about how this argument would change if it were Al-Qaeda committing these crimes instead of unbalanced domestic terrorists. The argument of magazine capacity would dry up overnight, and any politician voting against an "Armed Educa-

tor" program wouldn't have to wait until the next election to be booted from office—they'd be thrown from office in mass recall elections supported by both Republicans and Democrats.

If we implemented my four-point plan across the nation, we'd very likely find that mass shootings at schools would simply end, and here's why: school shooters want to commit their horrible crimes and then end their lives painlessly by their own hands. That's not just a theory of mine; the FBI agrees. 42 percent of all mass shooters and 90 percent of school shooters commit suicide on-site. Their planning goes something like this: A) Record and upload a vile video to YouTube or write a rambling manifesto, explaining why they hate the world. B) Enter a gun-free zone and shoot as many innocent children as they can in five to nine minutes. Continue shooting until they hear sirens. C) Die painlessly by their own hands. Implementing these four points will either get these shooters to give up their plan entirely, or just skip part "B" and go directly to part "C." I don't care which route they take, I just want them to skip part "B."

When these potential murderers understand that they have no hope of breaking through secured school or classroom doors, know that their mission will end in utter failure, and realize that their death will be agonizing as they're shot by multiple armed school personnel, then—and only then—will this national nightmare end.



# Take Control

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