

Report from the [Crime Prevention Research Center](#)

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# The Myths about Mass Public Shootings: Analysis

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Revised



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### **Abstract**

Mass public shootings, where the shooter intends to commit mass murder in a public place, has not “exploded” over the last five years, as frequently claimed in the media, either in terms of the number of attacks or the number of people killed. Indeed, the evidence points to a slight decline in attacks. These mass public shooters differ from other mass killers in many systematic ways. They usually die at the scene of the crime. And over half are known to have suffered from mental illness prior to the attack. The killers also carefully plan out their attacks: almost all take place where civilians are not allowed to defend themselves. The typical attack involving so-called “assault weapons” is no more deadly than those involving other types of weapons.

Everytown’s recent analysis of mass shootings is riddled with errors. Mistakes are made on the number of mass shootings as well as the extent of mental illness, the killers’ ages, and even where the attacks occurred. Those errors occurred because they did not do a complete news search on each case. They made simple accounting errors and included cases that did not fit their claimed criteria (4 or more shooting deaths). Also, their arbitrary definition of “assault weapons” seems chosen to obtain the results that fit their ideological agenda. Their numbers should not be relied on for any type of policy analysis.

## I. Introduction

In this report, the CPRC looks at mass public shootings since the beginning of 2009. We focus on the attacks that have particularly terrified Americans – the mass shootings in public places. The point of such crimes is to kill people and creating as much carnage as possible to obtain media attention. We focus exclusively on shootings, excluding such attacks as the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing. To study these horrific events, we exclude gang fights and shootings that occur in connection with some other crime, such as robbery.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that deaths from gang fights aren't important, but that what motivates and deters "mass public shooters" is quite different from gangs fighting over drug turf.

The CPRC also re-evaluates Everytown for Gun Safety's recent findings on mass shootings.<sup>2</sup> We show that just 25 of their 110 cases resemble such mass shootings as Sandy Hook in 2012 or Washington Navy Yard in 2013, where the shooter intended to kill as many people as possible. Everytown greatly exaggerated their number by including gang killings and shootings as part of some other crime (robberies etc) as well as residential killings involving families.

CPRC's evaluation found Everytown's discussion contained numerous other errors. Everytown's claims were flawed as to the extent of mental illness, the age of the killers, and even where the attacks occurred. Those errors occurred because they did not do a complete news search on each case. They made simple accounting errors and included cases that did not fit their claimed criteria (4 or more shooting deaths). Also, their arbitrary definition of "assault weapons" seems chosen to obtain the results that fit their ideological agenda.

Those who engage in the widely publicized mass public shootings are in some regards similar, such as age and type of weapons used, to those who commit the more frequent non-public mass shootings. But there are also some important differences in where the attacks occur, the types of people who commit the attacks, and how the attacks are committed.

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\* We would like to thank Rujun Wang for her helpful research assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Some, such as the New York Times, refer to the attacks being studied here as so-called "rampage" killings. This is the same way "mass public shootings" were defined by John R. Lott, Jr. and William Landes, "Multiple Victim Public Shootings," Social Science Research Network, October 19, 2000 (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=272929>). Ford Fessenden, "They Threaten, Seethe and Unhinge, Then Kill in Quantity," New York Times, April 9, 2000 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/us/they-threaten-seethe-and-unhinge-then-kill-in-quantity.html?pagewanted=all>). Politifact and CNN also define these mass shootings in the same way (see <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2014/jun/13/everytown-gun-safety/have-there-been-74-school-shootings-sandy-hook-clo/> and <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/11/us/school-shootings-cnn-number/>).

<sup>2</sup> Everytown For Gun Safety, "Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings," July 2014 (<http://crimepreventionresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/everytown-mass-shooting-analysis1.pdf>).

## II. An overview

From January 2009 through the middle of July 2014, there were 25 mass public shootings where at least four people were killed with a gun (4.5 per year). A total of 180 victims died, averaging 7.2 dead per attack. In two cases, police officers were killed (8%). The average shooter was 36 years old. At least half the time there was a clear indication of mental illness before the attack.

Everytown's report casts a much wider net. Its broader definition finds 110 mass shootings with 560 dead during the same five-and-a-half years, an average of 20 attacks per year. The average attack in their sample is slightly less lethal (5.1 versus 7.2 deaths). The larger number of cases and the lower lethality are not particularly surprising given that the Everytown cases are overwhelmingly residential killings, within families as well as gang murders. Their killers are slightly younger and far less likely to have a prior diagnosis of mental illness (10%).<sup>3</sup>

There are numerical errors and incorrect classifications of events that work towards supporting Everytown's conclusions. These types of errors have been revealed numerous times in the past in different studies done by Everytown and other Bloomberg funded studies. For instance, after the CPRC pointed out in Fox News that Everytown grossly inflated the number of school shootings,<sup>4</sup> others such as CNN, Politifact.com, and the Daily Caller noted the same problem.<sup>5</sup> While Everytown claimed 74 school shootings occurred between the Newtown, Connecticut shooting in December 2012 and June 2014, Politifact put the number of "incidents such as Sandy Hook or Columbine in which the shooter intended to commit mass murder" at 10. Many cases were simply unconnected to the school and/or took place outside of school hours. Others involved gangs, drug dealing, or robberies. Politifact rated Everytown's claim as "mostly

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<sup>3</sup> Their report fails to report the ages of 18 murderers (see Appendix). Including those additional murderers slightly lowers the average age of murders.

<sup>4</sup> John R. Lott, Jr., "Bloomberg's latest stats on school gun violence ignore reality," Fox News, February 17, 2014 (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/02/17/bloomberg-latest-stats-on-school-gun-violence-ignore-reality/>).

<sup>5</sup> Ashley Fantz, Lindsey Knight and Kevin Wang, "A closer look: How many Newtown-like school shootings since Sandy Hook?" CNN, June 19, 2014 (<http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/11/us/school-shootings-cnn-number/>); Lauren Carroll and Molly O'Connor, "Have there been 74 school shootings since Sandy Hook? A closer look at a tricky statistic," Politifact.com, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2014/jun/13/everytown-gun-safety/have-there-been-74-school-shootings-sandy-hook-clo/>); and Jason Howerton, "'Wow': Journalist Attempts to 'Debunk' Anti-Gun Group's List of 'School Shootings in America Since Sandy Hook' — Here's What He Found," The Blaze, June 10, 2014 (<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/06/10/wow-journalist-attempts-to-debunk-anti-gun-groups-list-of-school-shootings-in-america-since-sandy-hook-heres-what-he-found/#>).

false.” The same points were been made by CPRC as early as February 2014.<sup>6</sup> Yet, despite all these analyses, Everytown has consistently refused to correct its errors.<sup>7</sup>

Similar problems have been found with their other studies. Those studies claim to show firearms research plummeted after a NRA backed amendment to the Federal budget in 1996; that police officers and the general population support more gun control; and that women in the US are particularly at risk from gun violence.<sup>8</sup>

As we will see, attackers who try to kill students at a school are quite different from gang members fighting over drug turf or residential murderers who kill family members. For example, in the latter case, not only are there fewer potential victims in a home. Further, in many cases – such as where a father might be killing his wife and young children -- his physical strength so greatly exceeds his potential victims’ that a gun is not even necessary to commit the murder.

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<sup>6</sup> John R. Lott, Jr., “Bloomberg's latest stats on school gun violence ignore reality,” February 17, 2014 (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/02/17/bloomberg-latest-stats-on-school-gun-violence-ignore-reality/>).

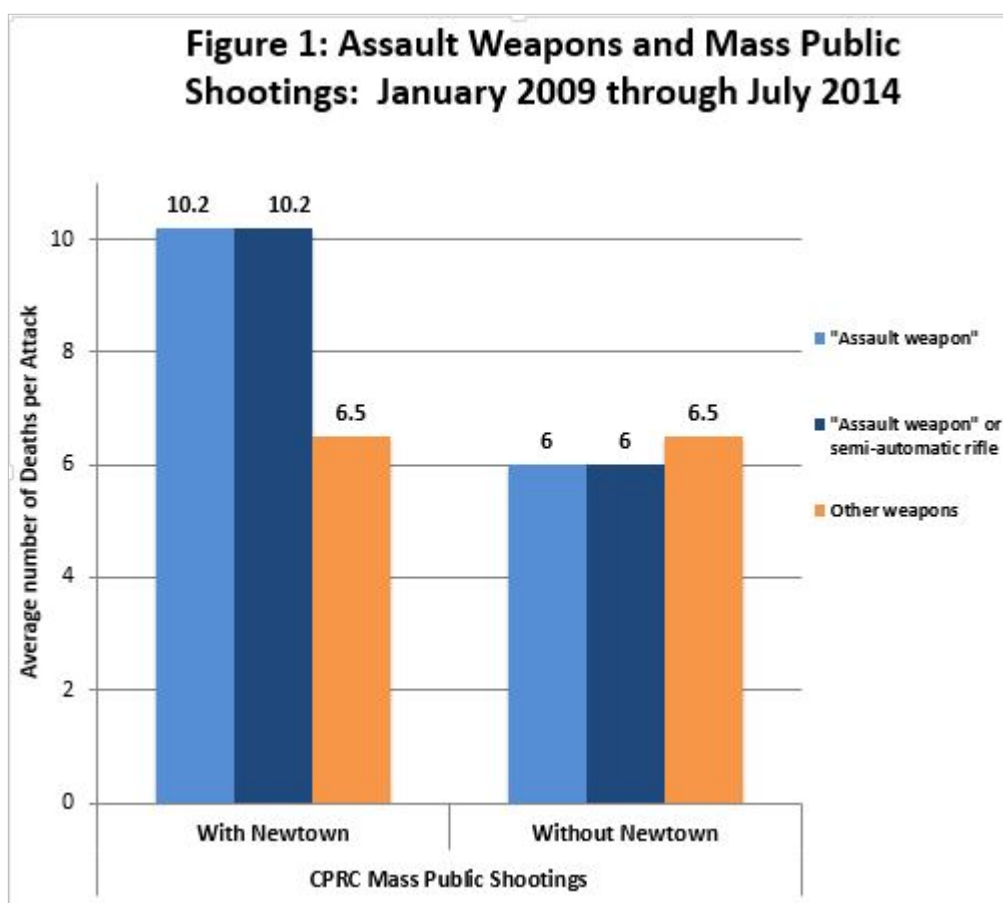
<sup>7</sup> Many of the mistakes pointed to here also apply to a similar report by another Bloomberg group, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, that was released in 2013 ([http://johnrlott.tripod.com/Mayors\\_Against\\_Illegal\\_Guns\\_Public\\_Shootings.pdf](http://johnrlott.tripod.com/Mayors_Against_Illegal_Guns_Public_Shootings.pdf)).

<sup>8</sup> Crime Prevention Research Center, “What set of ‘facts’ about guns does Moms Demand Action point to first?,” June 4, 2014 (<http://crimepreventionresearchcenter.org/2014/06/what-set-of-facts-about-guns-does-moms-demand-action-point-to-first/>).

### III. "Assault Weapons" and Mass Public Shootings

It may seem obvious that using assault weapons would result in far more victims than if other types of guns had been used. After all, firearms such as the AR-15 and the AK-47 are "military-style weapons." But the key word is "style"—they are similar to military guns in their cosmetics, not in the way they operate. The guns covered by the original federal assault weapon ban were not the fully automatic machine guns used by the military, but semiautomatic versions of those guns.

The civilian version of the AR-15 uses essentially the same sorts of bullets as small game-hunting rifles, fires at the same rapidity (one bullet per pull of the trigger), and does the same damage. The civilian version of the AK-47 is similar, though it fires a much larger bullet—.30 inches in diameter, as opposed to the .223 inch rounds used by the Bushmaster. The civilian version of these guns is hunting rifles. They have just been made to look like military weapons.



So are there more fatalities when "assault weapons" are used? Mass public shootings vary greatly and averages can be misleading. Except for the tragedy at Newtown, the typical attack with an assault weapon actually results in slightly fewer deaths than shootings with other types of guns. That one attack greatly skews the results as Adam Lanza used an assault weapon to kill

26 people at the Sandy Hook Elementary School as well as his mother. When all mass public shootings are counted, the average number killed with assault weapons is 10.2 per attack versus 6.5 in a non-assault weapon attack. Excluding the Newtown shooting, assault weapons are actually associated with slightly fewer fatalities -- 6 versus 6.5.

We use Everytown's classification of what is an "assault weapon." But, as just noted, how Everytown defines "assault weapons" is fairly arbitrary. Including semi-automatic rifles makes no difference when looking at our analysis of mass public shootings, but it is important for Everytown's analysis of mass shootings.

As mentioned, the Everytown numbers include all mass shootings, not just those committed in public places. They claim there are 7.7 deaths per attack with "assault weapons" versus 4.7 with other firearms. There are some errors in their math as well as erroneously including stabbing deaths in order to meet the criteria of four or more murders.<sup>9</sup> The results are particularly sensitive to how Everytown arbitrarily defines what is an "assault weapon."

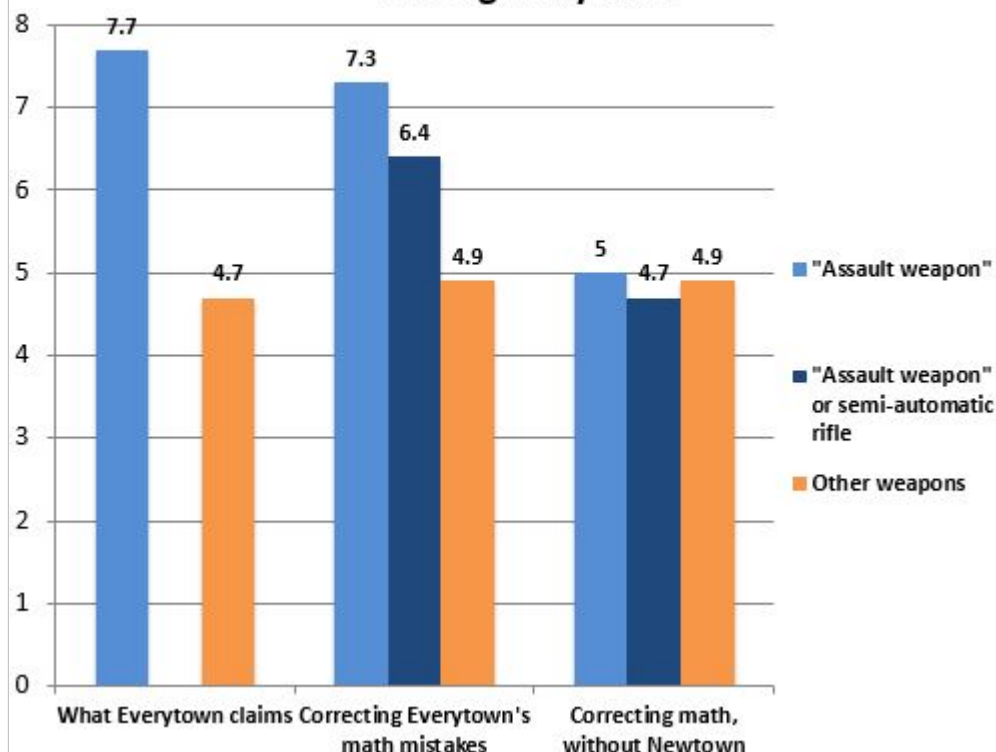
Correcting their math error in computing their averages slightly reduces the difference between deaths per attack with and without "assault weapons" (now the gap is 7.3 to 4.9). If one also includes semi-automatic rifles (rifles that can fire bullets as rapidly as the so-called "assault rifles"), the number of deaths for their cases falls to 6.4.

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<sup>9</sup> As to cases not meeting Everytown's criteria, take the four murders by Gevante Anderson in Raytown, Missouri in 2009. One of the four victims clear wasn't shot. Seven-year-old Gerard Clemons was stabbed 131 times. Ten-year-old Amir Clemons was shot but it appears that the 40 stab wounds are what killed him. Justin Kendall, "Genante Anderson guilty in Raytown quadruple homicide," March 29, 2011 (<http://www.pitch.com/FastPitch/archives/2011/03/29/gevante-anderson-guilty-in-raytown-quadruple-homicide>). There is also some question regarding Chiew Cahn Seavang's murder of four people in Catawba, NC and one in Utah in 2009. The killings were apparently the result of a drug deal gone bad, but at least a couple of the four deaths in North Carolina involved stab wounds. ("Mom and three kids killed in North Carolina," KOLOTV.com, March 18, 2009 (<http://www.kolotv.com/news/nationalnews/headlines/41478007.html>) and Associated Press, "Suspected Drug Dealer Sorry for Role in Slayings," NBC News, March 19, 2009 ([http://www.nbcnews.com/id/29776989/ns/us\\_news-crime\\_and\\_courts/t/suspected-drug-dealer-sorry-role-slayings/](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/29776989/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/suspected-drug-dealer-sorry-role-slayings/))).

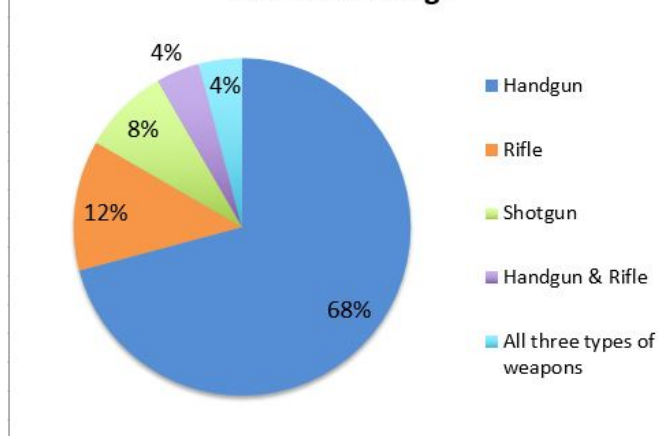


**Figure 2: Assault Weapons and Mass Shootings, re-evaluating Everytown's claims: January 2009 through July 2014**



Everytown's results are entirely driven by one case – the Newtown tragedy. When Newtown is removed from the sample, the average number of deaths per attack when an “assault weapon” is basically the same as when other types of guns are used (5 versus 4.9). When the broader measure of “assault weapon” and semi-automatic rifles is actually associated with slightly fewer deaths per attack than other guns (4.7 to 4.9).

**Figure 3: Weapons used in Mass Public Shootings**



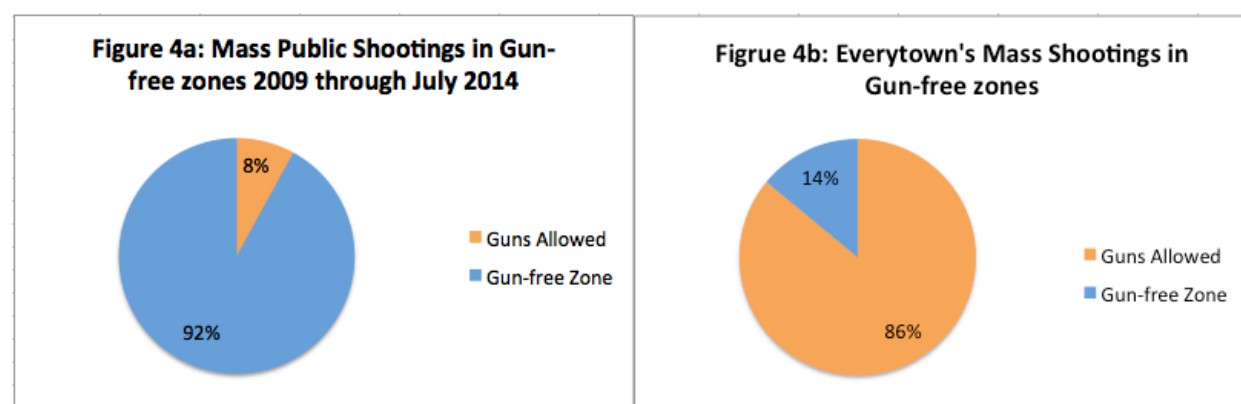
It is possible to break down the types of weapons more precisely than simply whether “assault weapons” were used, and this breakdown indicates that similar weapons were used in both public and non-public mass public shootings. Handguns were used in 68% of mass public shootings. These numbers are similar to those reported for the broader set of cases presented by Everytown, at least in the cases where the weapon used was identified, with 67% involving handguns, 10% rifles, and 7% shotguns

#### IV. Gun-Free Zones

Are areas where civilians cannot carry guns for protection more likely to attract criminals? The Everytown report claims that 86% of mass shootings occur in places where guns are allowed. But their high figure is primarily driven by their inclusion of attacks in private homes.<sup>10</sup> Everytown also makes numerous errors in identifying whether citizens can defend themselves. Thus, they ignore rules that prevent general citizens from carrying guns (e.g., not acknowledging that Los Angeles County issued only 240 concealed handgun permits to very wealthy donors out of an adult population of 7.6 million adults). They ignore that allowing police to carry guns is not the same thing as letting civilians defend themselves. They fail to separate out gang-related attacks (see Appendix for a complete list of their errors). They also mistakenly rely on news reports to determine whether guns were banned in an area. Unfortunately, the media virtually never mentions that attacks occur in gun-free zones.

But the issue over gun-free zones has always focused on non-gang attacks in public places. Gang fights over valuable drug turf or criminals committing robberies are entirely different from incidents where killers engage in mass public shootings to obtain publicity. Mass public shooters intend to commit suicide, but they also want attention. They realize that the more people killed, the more attention they generate.

Since 2009, only 8 percent of mass public shootings have occurred in places where civilians are allowed to defend themselves. Since the only attacks in places that have allowed civilians to carry concealed handguns have occurred over the period of time that Everytown covered since January 2009, the true probability is less than that.



The summer of 2014 clearly illustrated how mass public shooters pay attention to whether people with guns will be present to defend themselves. Elliot Rodger, who shot to death three people in Santa Barbara, explained why he picked his target. His 141-page "manifesto" shows how he worried someone with a gun would stop him before he was able to kill enough people. He wrote: "Another option was Deltopia, a day in which many young people pour in from all

<sup>10</sup> In these residential attacks by family members, the attacker may likely know whether a gun is owned in the home or where the gun in the home is stored.

over the state to have a spring break party on Del Playa Street. I figured this would be the perfect day to attack Isla Vista, but after watching YouTube videos of previous Deltopia parties, I saw that there were way too many cops walking around on such an event. It would be impossible to kill enough of my enemies before being dispatched by those damnable cops."<sup>11</sup>

In June 2014, the Canadian mass shooter, Justin Bourque, also understood the importance of gun-free zones. On his Facebook page, Bourque posted comics poking fun at how gun-free zones make these crimes possible. One depicted a completely defenseless victim pleading with a man pointing a gun at him: "But wait ... there's a GUN BAN in this city ... you can't do this, we passed a law!" The gunman is shown thinking to himself: "Great, another one of these fruit loops."<sup>12</sup> Bourque knew that no civilians would be able to legally carry a gun to stop him. Since the 1970s, Canada has banned permitted concealed handguns.

The killer at the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shooting in July 2012, provides another example. He lived within a 20-minute drive of seven movie theaters that were showing the premier of the Batman movie.<sup>13</sup> He could have simply chosen the theater that was closest to his apartment or the one with the largest auditoriums in the state. Instead, he picked the single theater where guns were banned and the victims would be defenseless.

There is a good reason for attackers to avoid those places where victims can defend themselves. Concealed carry permit holders have stopped attacks at schools and other places before police arrived. That includes shootings in Pearl, Miss., and Edinboro, Pa., and colleges like the Appalachian Law School in Virginia. It has happened in busy downtowns such as Memphis; in churches such as the New Life Church in Colorado Springs; in malls in Portland, Ore., and Salt Lake City; and outside an apartment building in Oklahoma.

Mass public shooters avoid places where victims can defend themselves. After all, how quickly people can arrive with a gun to stop the attack reduces the number of likely victims and the publicity that the killer will be able to get.

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<sup>11</sup> A copy of the manifesto is available here (<http://abclocal.go.com/three/kabc/kabc/My-Twisted-World.pdf>). One limit on having police at the scene of these attacks is that police in uniforms are readily identifiable and thus likely to be the first victims. If there are only a couple of police present, they might not be able to dissuade the killer from attacking.

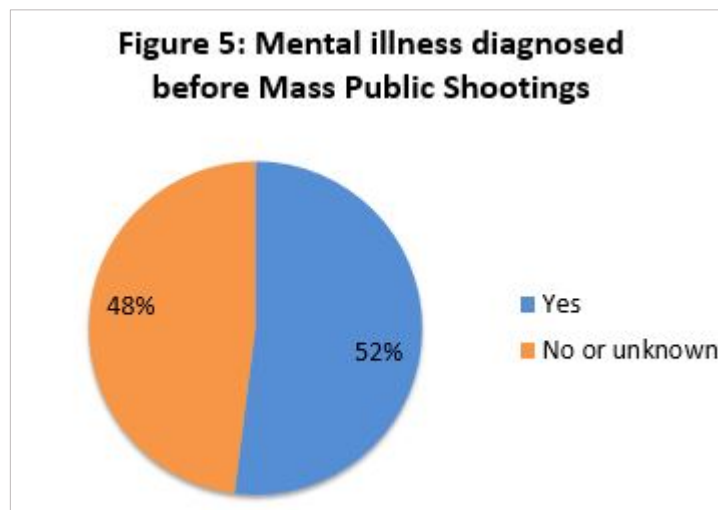
<sup>12</sup> Crime Prevention Research Center, "The Moncton, New Brunswick Shooter: Another killer who clearly understood the advantage to him of gun-free zones," (<http://crimepreventionresearchcenter.org/2014/06/the-moncton-n-b-shooter-another-killer-who-clearly-understood-the-advantage-to-him-of-gun-free-zones/>).

<sup>13</sup> John R. Lott, Jr., "Did Colorado shooter single out Cinemark theater because it banned guns?" Fox News, September 10, 2012 (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/09/10/did-colorado-shooter-single-out-cinemark-theater/>).

## V. Mental Illness

### A) Mass Public Shootings

About half of mass public shootings (52%) involve cases where the mental health of the shooter was brought to the attention of a medical practitioner, school official, or legal authority prior to the shooting. That rate is extremely similar to what the New York Times found in their analysis of mass public shootings over the 50 years from 1949 to 1999.<sup>14</sup> The result also confirms something that we have known for a long time – it is very difficult for psychiatrists to identify mass public shooters.



When the Santa Barbara killings occurred in May 2014, mental health again became a central focus. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) pushed for more resources on mental health “to make sure that these kinds of horrific, insane, mad occurrences are stopped and the Congress will be complicit if we fail to act.”<sup>15</sup>

But the killer, Elliot Rodger, had already been receiving top-quality mental-health counseling for years.

One of his psychiatrists, Dr. Charles Sophy, is nationally known and is the medical director for the LA County Department of Children and Family Services.<sup>16</sup> Rodger had, in fact, been seeing multiple psychiatrists. Some blame the sheriff’s deputies for not doing more to investigate an

<sup>14</sup> The NY Times analysis concluded: “At least half of the killers showed signs of serious mental health problems.” Ford Fessenden, “They Threaten, Seethe and Unhinge, Then Kill in Quantity,” New York Times, April 9, 2000 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/us/they-threaten-seethe-and-unhinge-then-kill-in-quantity.html?pagewanted=all>). However, the New York Times sample is quite problematic. Fessenden admitted that they had concentrated mainly on cases for the years after 1994. For the early years, they had only retrieved the “easily obtainable” cases. He said that there was nothing magical about the number 100, but it had simply seemed like a convenient number at which to stop searching. John R. Lott, Jr., *The Bias Against Guns: Why Almost Everything You've Heard About Gun Control Is Wrong* (Regnery Publishing, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> “Face the Nation Transcripts May 25, 2014: Blumenthal, Thune, Kinzinger,” CBS News, May 25, 2014 (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-transcripts-may-25-2014-blumenthal-thune-kinzinger/>).

<sup>16</sup> Elliot Rodger, “My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger,” (<http://abclocal.go.com/three/kabc/kabc/My-Twisted-World.pdf>).

initial complaint, but Rodger's psychiatrists ultimately had the responsibility to ensure he had the proper treatment.<sup>17</sup> It's not obvious how more money would have helped.

It's very common for mass killers to be seeing psychiatrists before their attacks. Cases include Ivan Lopez (the recent 2014 Fort Hood shooter), Adam Lanza (Sandy Hook elementary), James Holmes ("Batman" movie theater) and Seung-Hui Cho (Virginia Tech).<sup>18</sup>

For Lopez, the Army psychiatrist who last saw him found no "sign of likely violence, either to himself or to others."<sup>19</sup> In Holmes' case, while his psychiatrist warned University of Colorado officials about his violent fantasies, she "rejected the idea" that the threat was sufficiently serious for him to be taken into custody.<sup>20</sup>

Seung-Hui Cho was deemed "an imminent danger to himself as a result of mental illness." Yet he was determined not to be "an imminent danger to others as a result of mental illness." The judge stated it was not necessary to have him involuntarily committed.<sup>21</sup>

Again, these prominent mass killers certainly didn't lack mental health care. The problem was that even top psychiatrists failed to identify them as real threats.

Yet psychiatrists have strong incentives to get the diagnosis right. Besides their own professional pride and desire to help, they have a legal obligation to inform authorities of a threat. Families of those killed by Holmes sued his psychiatrist for not recommending that Holmes be confined. Similar legal action may face Rodger's psychiatrists.

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<sup>17</sup> Philip Rucker and Robert Costa "In Elliot Rodger, authorities in Calif. saw warning signs but didn't see a tipping point," Washington Post, May 25, 2014 ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/sheriff-calif-shooter-rodger-flew-under-the-radar-when-deputies-visited-him-in-april/2014/05/25/88123026-e3b4-11e3-8dcc-d6b7fede081a\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/sheriff-calif-shooter-rodger-flew-under-the-radar-when-deputies-visited-him-in-april/2014/05/25/88123026-e3b4-11e3-8dcc-d6b7fede081a_story.html)).

<sup>18</sup> Crime Prevention Research Center, "Why we shouldn't depend on mental health professionals to detect mass killers: Elliot Rodger's slipping "under the radar" is hardly rare," May 26, 2014 (<http://crimepreventionresearchcenter.org/2014/05/why-we-shouldnt-depend-on-mental-health-professionals-to-detect-mass-killers-elliott-rodgers-slipping-under-the-radar-is-hardly-rare/>).

<sup>19</sup> Craig Whitlock and Carol D. Leonnig, "Fort Hood shooter had psychiatric issues but showed no 'sign of likely violence,' officials say," Washington Post, April 3 2014 ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/fort-hood-shooter-showed-no-sign-of-likely-violence-official-says/2014/04/03/d6d39986-bb30-11e3-9a05-c739f29ccb08\\_story.html?tid=pm\\_world\\_pop](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/fort-hood-shooter-showed-no-sign-of-likely-violence-official-says/2014/04/03/d6d39986-bb30-11e3-9a05-c739f29ccb08_story.html?tid=pm_world_pop)).

<sup>20</sup> David Wagner, "James Holmes' Psychiatrist Just Got Sued for Not Having Him Locked Up," The Wire, January 15, 2013 (<http://www.thewire.com/national/2013/01/james-holmes-psychiatrist-just-got-sued-not-having-him-locked/61042/>).

<sup>21</sup> Ned Potter and David Schoetz, "Va. Tech Killer Ruled Mentally Ill by Court; Let Go After Hospital Visit," ABC News, April 18, 2007 (<http://abcnews.go.com/US/print?id=3052278>).

The psychiatric profession is aware that it is very difficult for mental-health professionals to accept that a patient could pose a serious violent threat.<sup>22</sup> They tend to deny it to themselves. In other words, psychiatrists frequently underestimate threats to safety. The problem is severe enough that a whole academic literature is devoted to it. Explanations include psychiatrists trying to prove their fearlessness or that it's also simply hard to predict these extremely rare outcomes.

## **B) Mass Shootings**

Everytown reported that mental illness was noted in only 10% of the killers before they engaged in their attacks. This ridiculously low number is not just the result of inclusion of residential and gang shootings, but also by failing to identify cases where mental health was a clear factor.

Regarding just mass public shootings, here are examples of mental illness that Everytown failed to mention in their report.

- Ka Pasasouk, murdered four people in Northridge, California, December 2, 2012: "In March 2011, while in prison for the methamphetamine conviction. Pasasouk underwent a psychiatric evaluation because of concerns regarding his behavior."<sup>23</sup>
- Wade Michael Page, murdered six people in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, August, 5, 2012: "the suicide scare of 1997 would have been enough to alert Army doctors that Page had mental illness and was unfit for duty, said John Liebert, a psychiatrist who does fitness exams for the military and has written an academic text on suicidal mass murderers."<sup>24</sup>
- Maurice Clemmons, murdered 4 people in Lakewood, Washington, November 29, 2009: Five weeks before these murders, a court-ordered mental health evaluation was completed and it reported that Clemmons hallucinated about "people drinking blood and people eating babies, and lawlessness on the streets, like people were cannibals."<sup>25</sup>
- Robert Stewart, murdered eight people in Carthage, North Carolina, March 29, 2009: "Stewart suffered from mental illness including depression and borderline personality disorder, and that he had been taking regular doses of the prescription sleep aid Ambien

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Friedman, "Why Doctors Can't Identify Killers," Massachusetts General Hospital, May 27, 2014 (<http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/why-doctors-cant-identify-killers/>) and Arthur Berg and John R. Lott Jr., "Why psychiatrists can't stop mass killings," New York Post, June 1, 2014 (<http://nypost.com/2014/06/01/why-psychiatrists-fail-in-stopping-mass-killers/>).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Rushford, "Under realignment serious criminals are classified as 'low risk'," Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, December 27, 2012 (<http://www.cjlf.org/releases/12-27.htm>).

<sup>24</sup> Meg Kissinger, "Friend of Sikh Temple shooter feared what he might do," Journal Sentinel (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), August 9, 2012 (<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/friend-of-page-feared-what-he-might-do-426edmg-165668826.html>).

<sup>25</sup> Sean Robinson, "A long saga of crime," The Olympian, December 1, 2009 (<http://www.theolympian.com/2009/12/01/1054714/a-long-saga-of-crime.html>).

far in excess of the recommended limit. Combined with *prescriptions for an antidepressant and anti-anxiety drug . . .*”<sup>26</sup>

- Major Nidal Malik Hasan, an Army psychiatrist, murdered thirteen people at Fort Hood army base, November 5, 2009: Hasan exhibited many strange behaviors, but nothing was done about him because of fear that they would appear to be discriminating against a Muslim. “He also told colleagues at America’s top military hospital that non-Muslims were infidels condemned to hell who should be set on fire. The outburst came during an hour-long talk Hasan . . . gave on the Koran in front of dozens of other doctors at Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington DC, where he worked for six years before arriving at Fort Hood in July. . . . One Army doctor who knew him said a fear of appearing discriminatory against a Muslim soldier had stopped fellow officers from filing formal complaints.”<sup>27</sup>

There are several other cases that could also be classified as involving mental illness, but they did not involve mental health professionals. Among them was Jeong Soo Paek. His sister described her “brother’s mental health as deteriorating in the 2006 paperwork [six years before the attack], noting that he was suicidal.”<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Jiverly A. Wong, who killed 13 people in Binghamton, New York, sent “a two-page delusional rant to a Syracuse television station saying the police were spying on him, sneaking into his home and trying to get into car accidents with him.”<sup>29</sup>

Overall, it is very clear that Everytown did a very sloppy and incomplete job of identifying cases of mental illness.

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<sup>26</sup> Tom Breen, “Robert Stewart Sentenced To Life In Prison For Nursing Home Slayings,” Associated Press, September 4, 2011 ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/04/robert-stewart-sentenced-nursing-home-slayings\\_n\\_948309.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/04/robert-stewart-sentenced-nursing-home-slayings_n_948309.html)).

<sup>27</sup> Nick Allen, “Fort Hood gunman had told US military colleagues that infidels should have their throats cut,” The Telegraph (UK), November 8, 2009 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6526030/Fort-Hood-gunman-had-told-US-military-colleagues-that-infidels-should-have-their-throats-cut.html>).

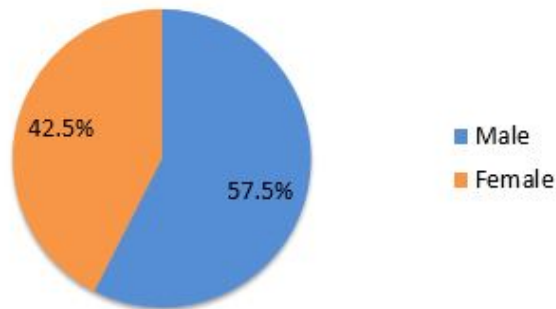
<sup>28</sup> Josh Green, “Spa victim foreshadowed violence in ‘06 restraining order,” Gwinnett Daily Post, February 24 2012 (<http://www.gwinnettdaily.com/news/2012/feb/23/police-id-4-victims-shooter-in-spa-killing/>).

<sup>29</sup> Manny Fernandez and Nate Schweber, “Binghamton Killer Kept His Fury Private,” New York Times, April 11, 2009 ([http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/nyregion/12binghamton.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/nyregion/12binghamton.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&))

## VI. Other Characteristics of Mass Public Shootings

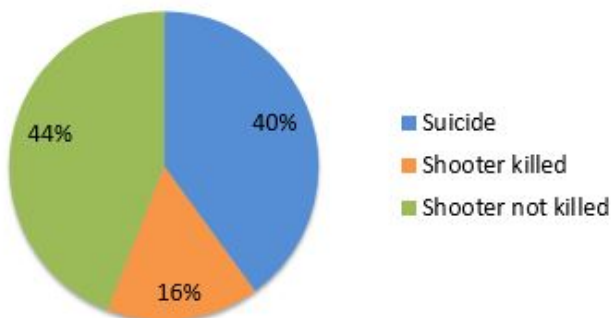
Data on mass public shootings allows us to examine both the victims and what happens to the killers themselves.

**Figure 6: Victims from Mass Public Shootings**



Male victims were somewhat more common in mass public shootings than female victims (57.5% to 42.5%). For all mass shootings, Everytown claimed that females were slightly more likely to be victims (51%).

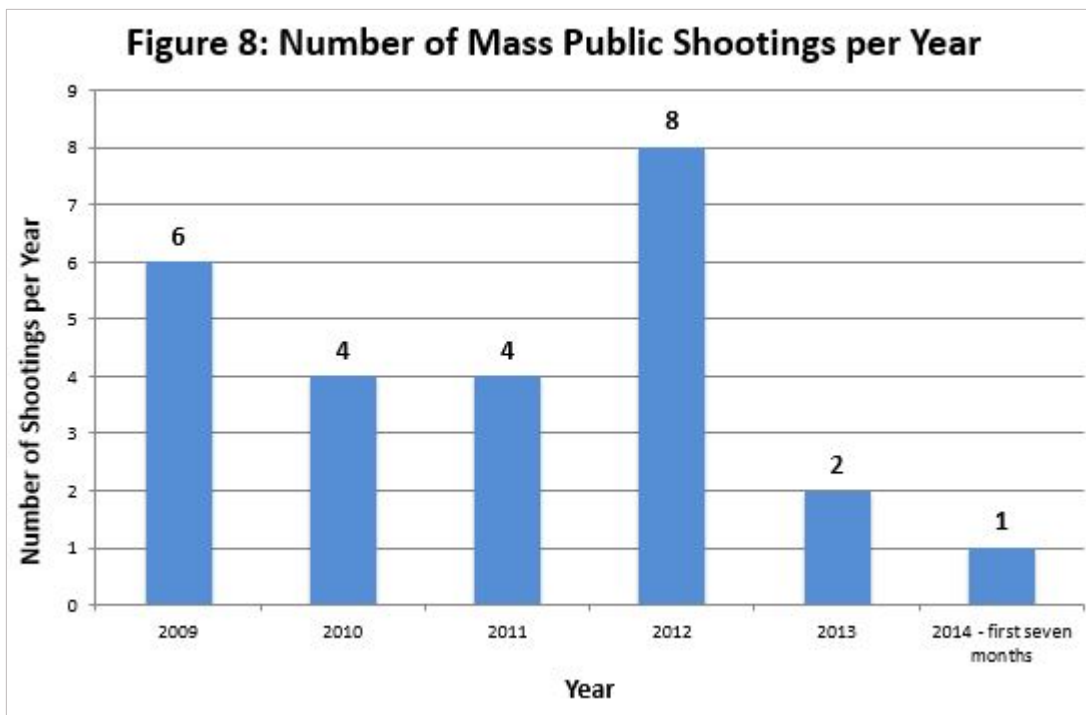
**Figure 7: Did the shooter die in the Mass Public Shooting?**



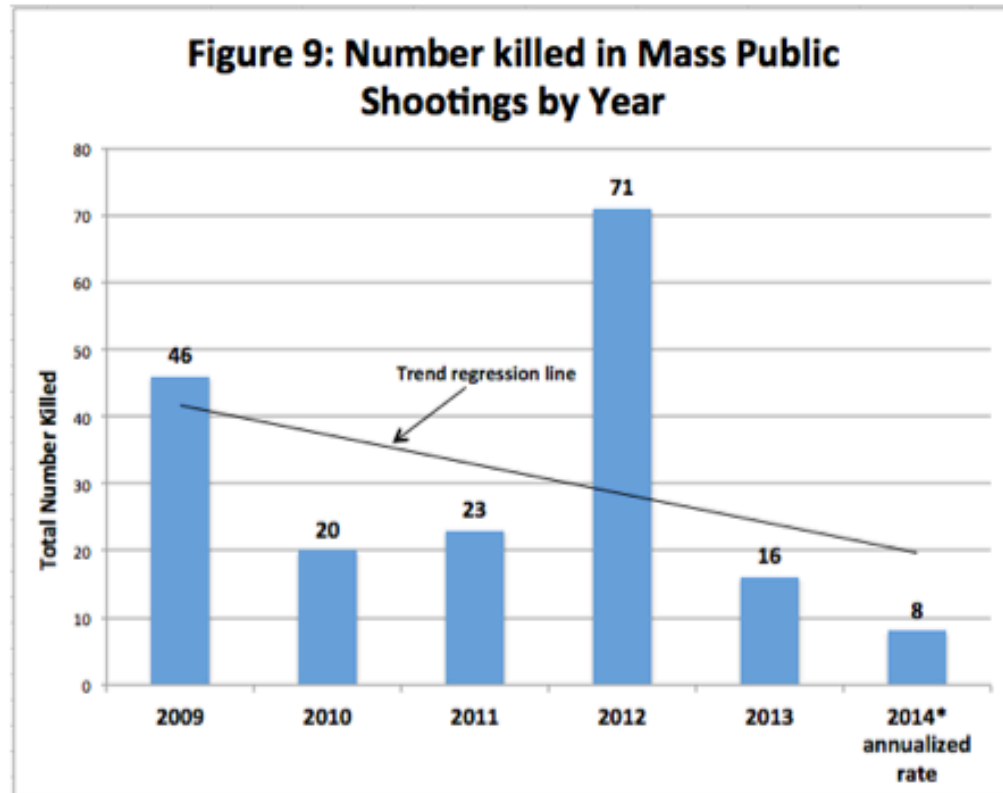
Perpetrators of mass public shootings died during their attack 56% of the time (40% of killers committed suicide and 16% were killed by others). Looking at all mass shootings, Everytown only collected data on the number of shooters who committed suicides (42% Everytown to 40% reported by CPRC), not on the number of shooters who were killed by others.



There have been 25 mass public shootings since 2009. While attacks peaked in 2012, they have been below average in 2013 and so far in 2014.



There have been 180 people killed in mass public shootings since 2009. While the number killed peaked in 2012, the number killed has been below average in 2013 and so far in 2014.



## Conclusion

Mass public shootings, where the shooter intends to commit mass murder in a public place, has not “exploded” over the last few years, as frequently claimed in the media. These shooters differ from other mass killers in many systematic ways. They usually die at the scene of the crime. And over half are known to have suffered from mental illness prior to the attack. The killers also carefully plan out their attacks: almost all take place where civilians are not allowed to defend themselves. The typical attack involving so-called “assault weapons” is no more deadly than those involving other types of weapons.

Everytown has done an abysmal job in putting together their data on mass shootings. They have failed to accurately identify everything from the attackers’ mental illness and even age as well as whether attacks took place where guns were allowed. We have not tried to analyze all of their claims, so there may well exist other mistakes in their data. The mistakes pointed to here also apply to a similar report by another Bloomberg group, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, which was released in 2013.<sup>30</sup> Their numbers should not be relied on for any type of policy analysis.

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<sup>30</sup> See our Appendix on Everytown’s errors in identifying gun-free zones.

## Appendix on missing data on age of killers

In eighteen cases, Everytown fails to provide information on the killer's age for a long list of people. This data was readily available and without collecting it there is no reason for them to believe that their claims about the age of these killers could be correct. For the ages that they report, the average age is 35.33. Including these has only a very small effect lowering the average to 34.7.

- Darrell Bellard, who killed four people in Lanham, Maryland in 2010, was 43. Everytown's list doesn't even mention that Tkeisha Gilmer, 18, joined him in committing the murders (<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/08/07/maryland.arrests/index.html>).
- David Cornell Bennett, Jr, who killed four people in Parsons, Kansas in 2013, was 26 (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/police-hunt-suspect-kansas-mom-3-children-found-dead-article-1.1530073>).
- Bryan Eugene Sweatt, who killed five people in Callison, South Carolina in 2013, was 27 (<http://heavy.com/news/2013/10/bryan-e-sweatt-greenwood-sc-murder-suicide/>).
- Charles Everett Brownlow, who killed 5 people in Terrell, Texas in 2013, was 36 ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/29/texas-killing-spree\\_n\\_4172729.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/29/texas-killing-spree_n_4172729.html)).
- Michael Guzzo, who killed four people in Phoenix, Arizona in 2013, was 56 (<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/10/28/phoenix-family-killings-may-have-been-spurred-by-barking-dogs-cops-say/>).
- Guadalupe Ronquillo-Ovalle, who killed four people in Rice, Texas in 2013, was 33 (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/mother-gunned-husband-sons-texas-authorities-article-1.1466168>).
- Mary Ann Holder, who killed five people in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2011, was 36 (<http://www.wbtv.com/story/16101818/st> and <http://murderpedia.org/female.H/h/holder-mary-ann.htm>).
- Everett Conant, who killed four people in Wheatland, Wyoming in 2011, was 35 ([http://www.wyomingnews.com/articles/2011/07/09/news/01top\\_07-09-11.txt](http://www.wyomingnews.com/articles/2011/07/09/news/01top_07-09-11.txt)).
- David Laffer, who killed four people in Medford, New York in 2011, was 33 ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/10/david-laffer-sentenced-to\\_n\\_1086514.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/10/david-laffer-sentenced-to_n_1086514.html)).
- Gaylin Leirmoe, who killed four people in Ammon, Idaho in 2011, was 26 ([http://idahostatejournal.com/news/local/article\\_ec3d6922-7d7c-11e0-85bc-001cc4c03286.html](http://idahostatejournal.com/news/local/article_ec3d6922-7d7c-11e0-85bc-001cc4c03286.html)).
- Lovell Mixon, who killed four people in East Oakland, California in 2009, was born in 1982 (<http://murderpedia.org/male.M/m/mixon-lovelle.htm>).
- Adrian Burks, who murdered four people in Kansas City, Kansas in 2009, was 37 (<http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/Kansas-Man-Sentenced--172145741.html>).
- Alan M. Atwater, who killed his wife and three children in Oak Harbor, Ohio in 2011, was 31-years-old (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/portclintonnewsherald/obituary.aspx?pid=150402027> and <http://www.toledoblade.com/Police-Fire/2011/04/17/bodies-found-inside-Oak-Harbor-home-Copy.html>).

- Samuel Conway (23), Marvin Lamar Stringer (22), and Jeremy Pickney (23) killed five people in Arkansas in 2009 (<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2009/nov/20/authorities-shoot-kill-suspect-5-pearcy-deaths/>).
- James Harrison, who killed four people in Graham, Washington in 2009, was born in 1974 (<http://www.mahalo.com/pierce-county-murders/>).

### Appendix: Mass Public Shootings

Key	
<b>M</b>	<b>Males killed</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Females killed</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Handguns used</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Rifles used</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Shotgun used</b>
<b>H&amp;R</b>	<b>Handguns and Rifles used</b>
<b>All 3</b>	<b>Handguns, Rifles, and Shotguns</b>

Attacker Name	Date	State	Not part of some other crime	4 or more killed in public	M	F	H	R	S	H&R	All 3	Mental Illness
Sherie Lash a.k.a Sherie Roads	02/20 /2014	CA	Yes	Yes	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Aaron Alexis	09/16 /2013	DC	Yes	Yes	9	3	0	0	1	0	0	1
Kurt Myers	04/13 /2013	NY	Yes	Yes	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Adam Peter Lanza	12/14 /2012	CT	Yes	Yes	9	18	0	0	0	0	1	1
Andrew John Engeldinger	09/27 /2012	MN	Yes	Yes	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Wade Michael Page	08/05 /2012	WI	Yes	Yes	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
James Holmes	07/20 /2012	CO	Yes	Yes	8	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ian Lee Stawicki	05/20 /2012	WA	Yes	Yes	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
One L. Goh	04/02 /2012	CA	Yes	Yes	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jeong Soo Paek	02/20 /2012	GA	Yes	Yes	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Scott Evans Dekraai	10/12 /2011	CA	Yes	Yes	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	1
Eduardo Sencion	09/06 /2011	NV	Yes	Yes	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tan Do	06/23 /2011	TX	Yes	Yes	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jared Loughner	01/08 /2011	AZ	Yes	Yes	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Riccardo McCray	08/14 /2010	NY	Yes	Yes	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rick Odell Smith	08/03 /2010	CT	Yes	Yes	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

<b>Gerardo Regalado</b>	06/06/2010	FL	Yes	Yes	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nerses Arthur Galstyan	04/03/2010	CA	Yes	Yes	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Maurice Clemmons	11/29/2009	WA	Yes	Yes	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Nidal Malik Hasan	11/05/2009	TX	Yes	Yes	10	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Marcos Chavez Gonzalez	11/01/2009	NC	Yes	Yes	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Jiverly A. Wong	04/03/2009	NY	Yes	Yes	2	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
Robert Stewart	03/29/2009	NC	Yes	Yes	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lovelle Mixon	03/21/2009	CA	Yes	Yes	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Probably shouldn't be included												
Ka Pasasouk	12/02/2012	CA	Yes	No/ “unlicensed” boarding home, 2 killed “outside”	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1

**Appendix: Everytown's Missing Cases: Cases of Mass Public shootings where at least two people killed**

Year	Month	Day	City	State	Attacker Name	Killed in public	Wounded	
2000	3	2	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	Ronald Taylor	2	3	Restaurant School
2013	8	11-21	Omaha	Nebraska	Nikko Jenkins	2	1	neighborhood
2000	4	28	Mount Lebanon	Pennsylvania	Richard Baumhammers	5	1	county mental health office / Restaurant



## **Appendix on Everytown's errors in identifying gun-free zones**

Everytown for Gun Safety's recent report on mass shootings contains many errors. In addition, it muddies the discussion on mass public shootings by including shootings in private homes along with ones in public places, and the vast majority of the cases they include are in private homes. But there is a distinction between what motivates mass public shooters who are committing their crimes to get media attention and those who engage in attacks in private residences.

There are only two mass public shootings since at least 1950 that have not been part of some other crime where at least four people have been killed in an area where civilians are generally allowed to have guns. These are the International House of Pancakes restaurant in Carson City, Nevada on September 6, 2011 and the Gabrielle Giffords shooting in Tucson, Arizona on January 8, 2011.

Thus, while CPRC's research and that by Landes and Lott looks at Mass public shootings (focusing on the killings where the point of the attack is simply to kill as many people as possible), Bloomberg's numbers overwhelmingly involve killings that have occurred within residences.

Here are some general points about how to classify mass public shootings that have occurred in gun-free zones.

- 1) A lot of work is involved in obtaining information on whether the attacks occurred in gun-free zones. This includes calling the businesses or other facilities involved. But many times those organizations are uncooperative and in those cases much time is spent contacting individuals in the area of the attack and asking them if they can provide pictures or other information on the facilities. Indeed, the media virtually always refuses to mention whether the attack occurred in a gun-free zone.

Unfortunately, Everytown for Gun Safety/Mayors Against Illegal Guns did not do this work, and they have also inaccurately stated, ignored, or simply missed facts that are readily available in news stories.

- 2) What motivates mass public shootings where the killer is trying to kill or injure as many people as possible to get publicity is quite different from what motivates robbers or gang fights (see Lott and Landes). The issue of gun-free zones is particularly important for mass public shootings.

- 3) The word "public" is also key to these cases. Shootings that occur in people's homes will often involve killers who know if guns are owned in the home. And if there is a gun in the home, the killer will know who has access to it.

- 4) There is also the distinction between right-to-carry and may-issue laws. If virtually no one, especially no civilian, is allowed to get a concealed handgun permit as occurs in most may-issue jurisdictions, the area is essentially a gun-free zone.

### **Examples Bloomberg's Everytown organization incorrectly reports as mass public shootings and/or shootings in gun-free zones**

The Bloomberg discussions are indented and put in block quotes. After the quotes there is an explanation for why they shouldn't be counted as mass public shootings. The Bloomberg report doesn't number these events, but we will assign numbers just to make them easier to reference.

1) **Terrell, TX, 10/28/13:** The shooter shot and killed his mother, his aunt, two acquaintances, and a store clerk in a spree of attacks before he was captured by police. He killed the first four victims in their respective homes and the final one — the clerk — at Ali's Market on W. Moore Avenue, apparently in an attempt to rob the store. Shooter Name: Charles Everett Brownlow Jr. Gun details: Unknown Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The shooter had a criminal record that prohibited him from possessing firearms. He was convicted of burglarizing a vehicle in 1996, a Class A misdemeanor, and convicted of felony burglary in 1997. In 2008 he was served a three-year sentence for unlawful possession of a firearm and in 2011 he was convicted of misdemeanor assault against a family member. Not a gun-free zone: The manager of the Ali's Market reported that customer's are allowed to carry firearms in the store.

**FACTS:** There was not a mass public shooting at Ali's Market. Only one person was killed at that store. Permitted concealed handguns can deter many attacks from occurring and can limit the harm that does occur. But permit holders aren't expected to limit the harm for those attacks that do occur to zero. Permitted concealed handguns deter mass shootings because they can limit the harm and take away the incentive that these killers obtain from their warped desire to get media attention.

2) **Washington, DC, 9/16/13:** The alleged shooter, who was a civilian contractor and former non- combat military, killed twelve and wounded three more in an attack on Building 197 at the Navy Yard. Shooter Name: Aaron Alexis, 34 Gun details: The shooter arrived with a shotgun and also obtained a handgun from one a security guard that he killed. Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Two days before the incident the shooter passed a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) at the licensed gun dealer Sharpshooters in Lorton, VA, and purchased the shotgun. Prohibiting criteria: The shooter had been arrested at least three times including: in September 2010 in Fort Worth, Texas for shooting a firearm into a neighbor's apartment; in August 2008 in Dekalb County, Georgia for disorderly conduct; and in 2004 in Seattle, Washington for shooting out the tires of another man's vehicle. But court records do not indicate he was convicted in any of these cases, and this record did not prohibit him from buying guns. He had also received treatment for mental health conditions at two VA hospitals beginning in August, 2013 following an incident where he called Newport Rhode Island Policeto report hearing voices. But these incidents did not rise to the level of prohibiting from buying guns. And during his military service he was reportedly cited on at least eight occasions for

misconduct ranging from traffic tickets and showing up late for work to insubordination, extended absences from work, and disorderly conduct. On account of this the Navy sought to offer him a “general discharge” but he was ultimately honorably discharged through the early-enlisted transition program in January 2011. Not a gun-free zone: There were armed guards at the Washington Navy Yard, and the shooter was familiar with the premises, so he did not select it as a target on the presumption he would not face armed resistance. In fact, the shooter reportedly used a gun that he took from a guard after killing him.

**FACTS:** Whether one is looking at the attacks at the Washington Navy Yard or Fort Hood, letting military police carry guns is much different than letting other soldiers protect themselves. While military police tend to be at the entrances to military bases, they largely patrol the rest of the base in the same way that police patrol a city. One no more expects military police to instantly arrive at the scene of a mass public shooting than one expects police to arrive at one. In Alexis’ attack, since he worked at the Navy Yard, he knew what entrance to go to that would have only one guard and that is where he went. For related discussions see [here](#) and [here](#).

3) **Crab Orchard, TN, 9/11/13:** The shooters killed a woman and three teenagers, apparently during an attempted robbery during a marijuana exchange. The victims’ bodies were discovered in a car parked along the side of the road in the Renegade Mountain resort community near Crossville. Shooter Name: Jacob Allen Bennett, 26 and Brittany Lina Yvonn Moser, 25 Gun details: Handgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: Bennett was prohibited from possessing firearms. In 2010 he received a 6-year prison sentence for charges of theft, forgery, and possession of a handgun during a felony, but was paroled on March 4, 2013. The Cumberland County sheriff’s office estimated they had previously arrested Bennett five times. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no evidence that permit holders were prohibited from carrying guns in this area. In Tennessee, concealed weapons would be prohibited only if the county or municipality declared itself a gun-free zone.

**FACTS:** This shooting was part of another crime, a robbery of illegal marijuana (see point 2 in the introduction). It was not a mass public shooting where the point of the crime was to kill as many people as possible so as to obtain media coverage.

4) **Herkimer, NY, 4/13/13:** The shooter killed two people and critically wounded one at John’s Barber Shop and then killed two more people at Gaffey’s Fast Lube, a car care facility. He was killed by responding officers. Shooter Name: Kurt Myers, 64 Gun details: According to the police superintendent, Myers used a shotgun. Additional guns and ammunition were found by emergency crews after Myers set fire to the apartment. Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: There is no reason to believe Myers was prohibited from possessing a gun. He was arrested in 1973 for drunk driving. Not a gun-free zone: Gaffey’s Fast Lube does not have a specific policy prohibiting guns and allows permit holders to carry concealed weapons on the premises. John’s Barbershop did not reopen

following the shooting but the owner of a neighboring business did not recall the barbershop having any explicit firearm policy or ban, which would have been required to prohibit customers from carrying guns on the premises.

**FACTS:** New York is a may issue state, not a right-to-carry state. We don't yet have the number of civilian concealed carry permits, but they seem to be extremely rare. The possession of a handgun in New York State requires a NYS Pistol Permit. In 2012 there were only 154 permits issued to own a pistol in Herkimer county. Over the previous five years, there were 667 permits issued, though not all over those permits own a handgun would have been active at the beginning of 2013. When talking to the pistol permit office, Lott was told that there were zero restricted licenses that allowed people to carry for business purposes (concealed carry licenses that allow a business owner to carry in the course of doing business) and zero restricted for self defense purposes (e.g., a woman who is being actively stalked).

**Report from February 2013:** At this point, the Everytown for Gun Safety report mainly repeats cases previously discussed by Bloomberg's Mayors Against Illegal Guns on MASS SHOOTING INCIDENTS, JANUARY 2009-JANUARY 2013.<sup>31</sup> An earlier report on the problems with their claims about the attacks not being in gun-free zones was never corrected. Here is the analysis of these previous cases.

5) **Geneva County, AL, 3/10/09:** The shooter killed ten, including four members of his family, before killing himself. Shooter Name: Michael Kenneth McLendon, 28 Gun details: Bushmaster AR-15, SKS Rifle, Shotgun, and .38 Pistol Ammo details: Police recovered additional ammunition from his vehicle after the shooting. Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The shooter had no criminal record and there is no indication he was prohibited from owning a gun. Not a gun-free zone: It was lawful to carry a firearm in the public intersection and gas station where two of the individuals were shot.

**FACTS:** Nine people were killed by McLendon. In the first shooting in a house on Pullum Street, five people were killed. There was also a second shooting in another home that left two people dead. Neither were public places. It is true that two individuals were killed in separate public places as McLendon was driving along, but that is not a multiple victim public shooting in which at least four are killed in a public place. However, MAIG's report implies that all these shootings occurred in a public places.

6) **Lakewood, WA, 11/29/09:** The shooter killed four police officers in a Tacoma Coffee shop, eluding police for two days before being killed as he fled. Shooter Name: Maurice Clemmons, 37 Gun details: When he was killed, he was in possession of the handgun of one of the officers he had killed. Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The shooter was prohibited from purchasing a firearm, having been charged with at least 13 felonies across two states. He had posted bail for

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<sup>31</sup> A copy of that report is available here  
([http://johnrlott.tripod.com/Mayors\\_Against\\_Illegal\\_Guns\\_Public\\_Shootings.pdf](http://johnrlott.tripod.com/Mayors_Against_Illegal_Guns_Public_Shootings.pdf)).

raping a child just six days before the attack. Not a gun-free zone: The police officers were armed at the time of the shooting.

**FACTS:** Lott and Landes didn't define gun-free zones in terms of whether police were allowed to carry guns, but whether private citizens are able to readily obtain concealed handguns for their protection. What is important is that the coffee shop was posted to prevent concealed carry permit holders from carrying. Presumably MAIG understood this point and that is the reason why they focused on police officers being able to carry in this venue. Obviously, however, on-duty police can carry any place. The problem for uniformed police is that they provide an easily identifiable target and it is easy to take them out. Possibly if the attacker had to worry about permit holders who he could not identify, it would have dissuaded him from attacking. While Lott had checked when this event originally occurred, he reconfirmed this information with Dave Workman who lived nearby via email on January 8, 2013.

**7) Carthage, NC, 3/29/09:** The shooter opened fire at a nursing home where his estranged wife worked, killing eight and injuring three before he was shot and arrested by a police officer. Shooter Name: Robert Stewart, 45 Gun details: .357 Magnum handgun and Winchester 1300 shotgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: The guns were acquired legally from a local sporting good store. Prohibiting criteria: There is no indication the Stewart was prohibited from owning a gun. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no indication that the property-owner forbid carrying of firearms on their property.

**FACTS:** This facility informed Lott in April 2009 that they did not allow guns in the facility for either the people living there or the staff. He called up to ask what their policies had been before the attack.

Here are places listed by Bloomberg's group that may have allowed people with permits to carry in places but that made it extremely difficult or impossible for civilians to get a concealed handgun permit.

**8) Boston, MA, 09/28/10:** The shooter killed four and wounded one during a drug-related robbery. Shooter Name: Edward Washington, 33, and Dwayne Moore, 35, were both charged in the killings. Washington was acquitted. In Moore's first trial, the jury deadlocked 11-1 in favor of his guilt, but he was later convicted in a retrial. Gun details: 40-caliber Iberia handgun and 9mm Cobray semiautomatic. The Cobray has not been recovered, but the weapon was identified based on recovered bullets and shell casings. Ammo details: 14 rounds fired Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: Unknown Not a gun free zone: A person with a Massachusetts Class A license could lawfully carry a firearm in this area.

**9) Buffalo, NY, 8/14/10:** The shooter opened fire on a group of people outside a bar, killing four and wounding four others. Shooter Name: Riccardo McCray, 24 Gun details: Unknown Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: McCray had been arrested earlier that year on felony drug charges and the previous year for having a loaded rifle in his car. If he was found guilty of either crime,

he would have been prohibited from possessing firearms. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no indication that it was unlawful to carry a firearm in the area.

**10) Northridge, CA, 12/2/12:** The shooter arrived at an unlicensed boarding house on Devonshire street, reportedly in search of his girlfriend, and after a dispute shot and killed four people outside. Shooter Name: Ka Pasasouk, 31 Gun details: semiautomatic handgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The shooter was prohibited from possessing guns, having been convicted for car theft and felony robbery. While on probation in September 2012, he was arrested again for possession of methamphetamine. According to the district attorney, a prosecutor then released him on probation over the objection of probation officials, who believed he posed a threat to the safety of the community. Not a gun-free zone: Permit holders were not prohibited from carrying guns in this area.

**11) East Oakland, CA, 3/21/09:** The shooter used a semiautomatic handgun to kill two police officers after they stopped his car and then fled on foot to an apartment where he killed two SWAT officers with an assault weapon and injured a third before being killed by police. Shooter Name: Lovelle Mixon Gun details: 9mm semiautomatic handgun and SKS assault-style rifle Ammo details: Police said the assault weapon had a high-capacity magazine. Gun acquired: The shooter took part in a home invasion robbery in Modesto, CA, on February 21 2009 in which a rifle was reported stolen. Police did not comment on whether the stolen rifle was the one used in the shooting. Prohibiting criteria: The shooter had a lengthy criminal history, including a conviction for armed battery, which would have prohibited him from possessing a gun, and he was on parole for assault with a deadly weapon at the time of the shootings. Not a gun-free zone: Two of the victims were shot on a public roadway — the 7400 block of Macarthur Boulevard in East Oakland — where no state law would have prohibited a citizen with the appropriate permit to carry a gun. All of the police officers killed in the incident were armed.

**12) Medford, NY, 6/9/11:** The shooter killed four people at a pharmacy, Haven Drugs, and stole thousands of hydrocodone pills before fleeing in a vehicle. During the trial he acknowledged that he and his wife were addicted to prescription medication. Shooter Name: David Laffer Gun details: A .45 caliber handgun was used in the shooting. Several other legally registered guns were also recovered from the shooter's home. Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The gun was legally registered to the shooter, and there is no evidence he was prohibited from possessing a gun. But five months before the shooting, Suffolk County Detective Kenneth Ripp investigated an identity theft claim made by the shooter's mother, who said the shooter had stolen her debit card. After questioning the shooter and his mother, Ripp advised the Suffolk County Pistol License Bureau that the shooter was dangerous and that his guns should be confiscated. Despite Ripp's report, the guns were not removed. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no evidence that Haven Drugs posted a sign or had a policy prohibiting the carrying of

firearms. Current employees declined to comment.

**13) Brockport, NY, 2/14/09:** The shooter killed a nurse in the Lakeside Memorial Hospital parking lot and a motorist who intervened, and wounded the motorist's girlfriend. The shooter had been fired from the hospital after the nurse filed a sexual harassment complaint against him. He then drove 50 miles and killed another nurse — who had filed a similar complaint against the shooter — and her husband in their home. Shooter Name: Frank Garcia, 34 Gun details: .40 caliber Glock handgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: There is no evidence that the shooter was prohibited from owning a gun. However, he had applied for concealed carry permits and been denied three times. In his 1995 application, he omitted information about his criminal record — including arrests for criminal possession of a weapon, assault, and harassment. In 2001 and 2006 he made further omissions, and was evaluated as lacking moral character. But in 2007 a judge reversed the denial and granted Garcia a concealed weapon permit. Not a gun-free zone: We found no indication that permit holders were prohibited from carrying guns in this area at the time of the incident.

**FACTS:** All these cities either forbid or make it incredibly difficult for law-abiding citizens to carry concealed handguns for protection. In Boston, it is so bad that even off-duty and retired police are regularly denied unrestricted license to carry permits. Northridge, CA is part of Los Angeles County, which refuses to issue permits to regular citizens. In September 2011, there were 240 permits in all of Los Angeles County when the population was about 7.6 million adults. That equals a permit rate of 0.0032%. In addition, the attack was at a residential dwelling, not a public place.

By contrast, we estimate that there are 10.82 million permits in right-to-carry states with an adult population of 161 million — that is permit rate of about 6.7% (209 times the rate of permits issued in Los Angeles).<sup>32</sup> (This doesn't include the six states that allow carrying concealed handguns without a permit, and these states presumably have higher rates of carrying.) In these May Issue states, the general population is simply not able to carry a gun for protection.

Similarly, East Oakland, California is part of Alameda County. In 2010, Alameda County had granted concealed handgun permits to 75 people out of 1,182,534 — a permit rate of 0.006%.

Just as with Herkimer, NY; Medford in Suffolk County, New York, and Brockport in Monroe County, New York were similarly very restrictive in issuing may issue permits. In Suffolk County, the police and sheriff's departments each handle permits in half of the permits for the

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<sup>32</sup> This discussion updates the number of permits listed in our July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 report entitled "Concealed Carry Permit Holders Across the United States" (<http://crimepreventionresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Concealed-Carry-Permit-Holders-Across-the-United-States.pdf>). Updated information on the number of permits is available here (<http://johnrlott.blogspot.com/search/label/numberpermits>).

county. For the sheriff's office, Robert E. Draffin (the Suffolk County Sheriff's Freedom of information officer) informed us that there were 569 sportsman permits (limited to carrying to or from a shooting range or to go hunting) and 79 business permits (where a business owner is allowed to carry only in the course of doing business). For the police department, Inspector Derrocco (613-852-6000, ask for pistol permit department) noted the department "virtually never gives out permits for anything other than sportsman to carry to and from the range and for premises and dwellings." Given that there are about 1.2 million adults in Suffolk County, even assuming that the police department issued permits at the same rate as the sheriff's office, this implies a permit rate of about 0.1 percent and virtually none of these permits would have allowed a concealed handgun to be carried in the pharmacy where the attack occurred.

**14) Oak Creek, WI, 8/5/12:** The shooter killed six people at a Sikh temple and injured three others, including a responding police officer, before killing himself. Shooter Name: Wade Michael Page, 40 Gun details: 9mm semiautomatic handgun Ammo details: Page reportedly bought three 19-round magazines when he purchased the gun. Gun acquired: Page acquired the gun at a local gun shop a week before the shooting. Prohibiting criteria: Page was involved with the white supremacist movement but he does not appear to have been prohibited from purchasing a gun. Federal officials investigated Page's ties to supremacist groups more than once prior to the shooting, but did not collect enough evidence to open an investigation.

**FACTS:** From FoxNews.com: "No guns [were] allowed in the temple," Kulbir Singh, an attendee of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin, told FoxNews.com. "Everyone knows that it's not allowed, anywhere in the temple."

**15) Norcross, GA, 2/22/12:** The shooter returned to a Korean spa from which he'd been kicked out after an altercation, where he shot and killed two of his sisters and their husbands before committing suicide. Shooter Name: Jeong Soo Paek, 59 Gun details: .45 caliber handgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Police reported that he acquired the gun legally. Prohibiting criteria: Paek does not appear to have been prohibited, although he had allegedly served two months in jail for assaulting his sister six years earlier. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no indication that the property owner forbade possession of a firearm on their property.

**FACTS:** Lott spoke with someone at the spa after the attack and was told that the killer knew "nobody there had a gun." The person at the spa indicated that they were sure that neither the sisters nor their husbands had guns at the spa and that the killer who was the brother of the women knew that was the case. While the official policy at the spa isn't clear because the conversation was very short, the important thing was that the killer knew that there were no guns for people to defend themselves there. This was a small family owned establishment so it is most likely that this was the official policy of the family. Note that they have the wrong date on this event. (UPDATE: Mayors Against Illegal Guns originally claimed that this event occurred on February 22nd, but the event actually occurred on February 20, 2012. After Lott wrote his analysis, they corrected the date but did not update their discussion of gun-free zones.) Note also that the business has since closed.



**16) Hialeah, FL, 6/6/10:** The shooter killed four women, including his wife — who had just separated from him. He injured three others before shooting and killing himself. The shooting occurred in Yoyito-Cafe Restaurant, where the shooter's wife was employed as a waitress, and in the parking lot immediately outside. Shooter Name: Gerardo Regalado, 38 Gun details: .45 caliber handgun Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: The shooter had a concealed weapons permit. Prohibiting criteria: There is no evidence that the shooter was prohibited from owning a gun. However, relatives said the shooter had abused and terrorized women in the past, and had been imprisoned in Cuba for a particularly violent incident, but he did not have a criminal record in the United States. Not a gun-free zone: We could find no indication that guns were prohibited in this area. Guns are prohibited in Florida restaurants only in areas primarily devoted to the serving of alcohol.

**FACTS:** Strangely, while Bloomberg's group mentions that the restaurants that get 50 percent of their revenue from alcohol, they didn't actually get an check whether that was the case for this restaurant, which apparently was at the time a very popular venue for parties serving alcohol. If Bloomberg's group had checked, they would have found that it was a gun-free zone.

**17) Washington, DC, 3/30/10:** Three gunmen killed four and wounded five in retaliation for another murder. Shooter Name: Nathaniel D. Simms, 26; Orlando Carter, 20, and unnamed 14-year-old juvenile Gun details: An AK-47 assault rifle and 9mm and .45-caliber handguns Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Prohibiting criteria: The adults were reported to have lengthy criminal histories, which prohibited them from purchasing guns, and the 14-year-old was too young to purchase or own a gun.

**FACTS:** This is one case where Bloomberg's Everytown doesn't include this as a place that allows guns (obviously DC completely bans the carrying of concealed handguns), we include it here simply as an example of one of the many cases where they are including what are pretty obviously a drive-by gang shootings. Even the DC police chief, Cathy Lanier, indicated that it was a "gang retaliation." The AK-47 was used to spray bullets into a group in another gang's territory in retaliation for another murder. We are focused on cases identified by Everytown as occurring in gun-free zones, but gang shootings, while are obviously quite different from the types of mass public shootings that garner national attention.

**18) Mount Airy, NC, 11/1/09:** The shooter killed four people outside a television store before eventually surrendering to the police. Shooter Name: Marcos Chavez Gonzalez, 29 Gun details: Assault rifle Ammo details: Unknown Gun acquired: Unknown Not a gun-free zone: It was lawful to carry a firearm in the area of the shooting.

**FACTS:** Indications are that the attack was part of gang related crime. As explained above, that would exclude it from the mass public shootings done specifically to harm people as distinct from other types of violent crime.

## Academic advisory board

**Chair of the Board: William M. Landes** is the Clifton R. Musser Professor Emeritus of Law and Economics, and Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. Mr. Landes has written widely on the application of economics and quantitative methods to law and legal institutions, including multiple victim public shootings, hijacking of airplanes, and the bail system. Landes has been an editor of the *Journal of Law and Economics* (1975–1991) and the *Journal of Legal Studies* (1991–2000), is past president of the American Law and Economics Association, and is a member of the American Economic Association, the Mont Pelerin Society, and the Council of Economic Advisers of the American Enterprise Institute. He is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

## Members

**J. Scott Armstrong** is a professor at the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is internationally known for his pioneering work on forecasting methods. Most recently, his research activities have involved forecasting for terrorism and conflicts. He is author of *Long-Range Forecasting*, the most frequently cited book on forecasting methods. He is a co-founder of the *Journal of Forecasting*, the *International Journal of Forecasting*, the *International Symposium on Forecasting*, and [forecastingprinciples.com](http://forecastingprinciples.com). He is a co-developer of new methods including rule-based forecasting, causal forces for extrapolation, simulated interaction, structured analogies, and the “index method.” In addition to forecasting, Professor Armstrong has published papers on survey research, educational methods, applied statistics, social responsibility, strategic planning, and scientific peer review.

**Arthur Z. Berg, M.D.** is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and former member of the APA Violence Task Force. He was founding Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Beverly Hospital (emeritus) and former Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. A recent article that Dr. Berg had in the *Wall Street Journal* on multiple victim public shootings is available [here](#).

**Tim Groseclose** is the Marvin Hoffenberg Professor of American Politics at UCLA. He holds appointments in the political science and economics departments at the university. In 1987, he received his B.S. in Mathematical Sciences from Stanford University. In 1992, he received his PhD from Stanford’s Graduate School of Business. He is the author of over two dozen scholarly articles as well as the book **Left Turn: How Liberal Media Bias Distorts the American Mind**. Given the extensive media bias on guns, Professor Groseclose’s expertise on identifying media bias will be important. He contributes to the blog, [www.Ricochet.com](http://www.Ricochet.com), and is an active tweeter at @Tim\_Groseclose ([https://twitter.com/Tim\\_Groseclose](https://twitter.com/Tim_Groseclose)). You can learn more about him and his writings at [www.timgroseclose.com](http://www.timgroseclose.com).

**Jonathan M. Karpoff** is the Washington Mutual Endowed Chair in Innovation Professor of Finance at the University of Washington Foster School of Business. Karpoff has published pathbreaking research on the topics of corporate crime and punishment as well as corporate governance. He is the associate editor for the *Journal of Finance*, *Journal of Financial Economics*, *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, *Management Science*, *Managerial*

and Decision Sciences, and The North American Journal of Economics and Finance. He has received a long list of academic awards.

**Joyce Lee Malcolm** is the Patrick Henry Professor of Constitutional Law and the Second Amendment at George Mason University Law School. She has a Ph.D. in history and is internationally known for her books **Guns and Violence: The English Experience**, Harvard University Press (November 24, 2004), and **To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right**, Harvard University Press (March 2, 1996). **Guns and Violence** provides a comprehensive history and examination of changes in murder rates in England from the middle ages to the current day. She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and she has held positions at Princeton University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Cambridge University. Malcolm also served as the Director, Division of Research Programs for the National Endowment for the Humanities during 2005-2006.

**Scott E. Masten** is Professor of Business Economics and Public Policy in the University of Michigan Stephen M. Ross School of Business, where he has been a faculty member since 1984. A leading scholar in the area of transaction cost economics, Professor Masten's research focuses on issues at the intersection of law, economics, and organization. In addition to his primary appointment, he has held appointments as the Louis and Myrtle Moskowitz Research Professor in Business and Law at Michigan, John M. Olin Faculty Research Fellow at Yale Law School, John M. Olin Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Virginia Law School, and Visiting Professor in the University of Michigan Law School. He was President of the International Society for New Institutional Economics in 2008-09, is a co-editor of the Journal of Economics & Management Strategy, and serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Law, Economics & Organization and Managerial and Decision Economics

**Carl Moody**, Professor of Economics, William & Mary. Professor Moody has published extensively on the relationships between guns, crime and imprisonment in such academic journals as Criminology, Homicide Studies, the Journal of Law and Economics, the Journal of Legal Studies, and the Journal of Quantitative Criminology. He teaches mathematical economics and econometrics.

**J. Mark Ramseyer** is the Mitsubishi Professor of Japanese Legal Studies at Harvard University Law School. Prior to coming to Harvard, Mark held tenured positions at the University of Chicago and UCLA and visiting positions at such places as the University of Tokyo, University of Virginia, Tel Aviv University, and University of Haifa. Among the vast array of topics that he has studied, he is an expert on the Japanese legal system including criminal law. In the field of criminal law and procedure, he has studied the relation between prosecutorial behavior, prosecutorial budgets, and conviction rates; the structure of the Japanese judiciary and its effect on the adjudication of politically charged cases; the relation between judicial background and the imposition of the death penalty; and the relation between court structure and conviction rates.

**Paul H. Rubin** is the Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Economics at Emory University, and Editor in Chief of Managerial and Decision Economics. He has been president of the Southern

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