

Mass Shootings Webinar: Attacker Types and Threat Assessments



August Vernon





Introduction

- A rapid, safe and successful response to these chaotic situations requires planning and preparation. 4 to 8 minutes.
- The likelihood of a mass violence incident is low, BUT officials must prepare for these situations.
- Recent mass shootings and active shooting incidents have and continued to demonstrate the need to prepare private, local, regional, state and federal agencies to plan for, prevent and respond to these events.

Introduction

- Need to really look beyond the condemnation of senseless acts of violence, the need for gun control and explanations of why really bad things happen to really good people.
- Classroom sessions are usually 4 to 8 hours and cover topics such as threats, types of shooters, pre-planning, multi-agency responses, crisis communications, lessons learned, recovery efforts, etc.
- **NOT ENOUGH TIME TO COVER ALL MATERIALS FOR ALL AGENCIES! FOCUS ON SOME OF THE THREATS!**

TERMS

- US Department of Justice (DOJ) Definition

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has developed a working definition of "mass violence," which is "an intentional violent criminal act, for which a formal investigation has been opened by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or other law enforcement agency, that results in physical, emotional, or psychological injury to a sufficiently large number of people as to significantly increase the burden of victim assistance for the responding jurisdiction".

- Generally, **mass murder** is also described as a number of murders (four or more) occurring during the same incident, with no distinctive time period between the murders.
- These events typically involved a single location, where the killer murdered a number of victims in an ongoing incident.
- *DHS: Active Shooter* is an “individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in confined and populated areas”.

Threats

- It appears that the “bad guys” (criminal elements and extremist threats) are more determined, violent and heavily armed than ever before.
- Crisis situations such as active shooters and attacks on law enforcement are occurring with more frequency.
- No two incidents are the same. Factors ranging from the shooters motive, targets, funding, weapons, knowledge of the location, security measures, response times and number of staff and visitors can all influence the outcome of an incident.

THREATS

- Attackers in mass violence incidents may act out of a sense of anger or revenge because of some perceived persecutions, slights, injustice or have some other individualized motivation such as a desire for notoriety, political or religious based concepts.
- Majority of these incidents are planned while a very limited few may be spontaneous, carried out in a sudden fit of rage.
- Successful execution of some of these types of attacks require some form of or even extensive pre-operational surveillance and detailed planning by the attackers.

THREATS



- Most types of hate and extremist groups can provide a magnet to individuals planning some type of mass violence attack or a foundation for their extremist ideology whether that is personal, religious or political.
- Although it appears from the surface that the majority of these attacks are random acts of violence committed by lunatics, will find that some of the individuals who commit these acts are rational and sane human beings who are deeply committed to a cause whether personal, religious or political.
- So deep is this commitment, they feel they are justified and are willing to go to any extreme in ensuring the achievement of their goals.

THREATS

- **Injustice Collectors!**

- Mass violence incidents can be sophisticated in the degree of planning and execution that goes into them.
- Many of these mass violence suspects have trained, prepared, armed themselves and have a detailed plan in place.
- However, they can easily be carried out by an individual or individuals with minimal planning, few resources and limited training. They will most often utilize readily-available weapons such as pistols, shotguns, rifles, knives or homemade explosives (HME).



Video Games

- Grand Theft Auto 4
“Hospital Massacre”
- Call of Duty “Airport
Massacre”
- School Shooter:
American Tour 2012
(Stopped for now)



- 04/16/08 – I wish I could start feeling normal. I wish I could shoot up the school and get away with it and still get my national recognition. That's how much I hate most of these people here. I hate them divinely.
- 04/18/08 – I could kill anyone without feeling bad because society sucks.

Russell [TCMI]



"
**NATURAL
SELECTION**

Male
16 years old
South Bend, Indiana
United States

Last Login: 4/22/2008

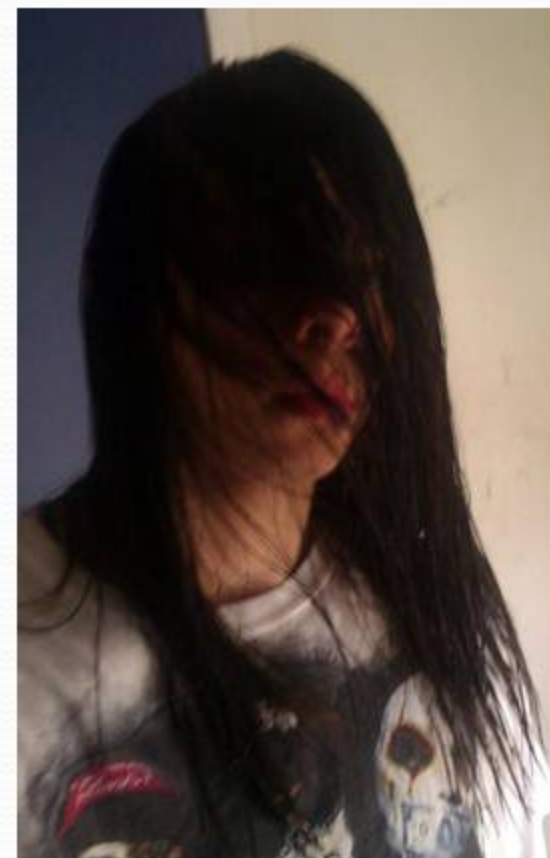
Mood: optimistic 😊



***“First day of school, last day of my life!
F**k the world!”***



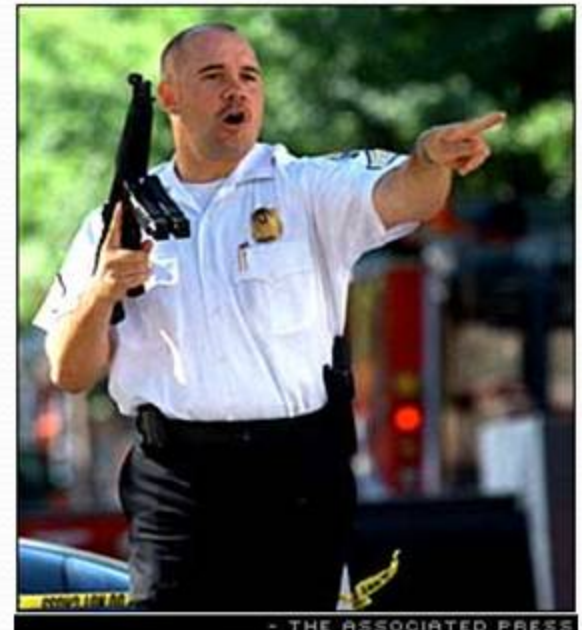
August Vernon



INSIDER THREAT

Types:

- DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE
- DISGRUNTLED STUDENT
- LAYOFFS/REDUCTIONS
- BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS
- MENTAL HEALTH (undiagnosed and/or untreated)
- DESIRE FOR NOTORIETY/FAME
- POLITICAL/RELIGIOUS
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- GLOBAL



Workplace Violence Attack Motivators

- Irrational behavior 26%
- Criminal Behavior 10%
- Interpersonal Conflict 15%
- Dissatisfied with service 19%
- Unknown 7%
- Personal Problems 8%
- Upset with discipline 12%
- Fired, laid off, prejudice 3 %

PERSON MOST LIKELY TO COMMIT TARGETED VIOLENCE

- FIXED SET OF IDEAS
- PRIOR HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: WORKPLACE, DOMESTIC HISTORY VERSUS LIMITED FOR SCHOOLS.
- PERCEIVED WRONGED
- HAS A PLAN
- AVAILABLE TO INFLICT INJURY - WEAPONS
- SUICIDAL WILLINGNESS TO DIE IN VIOLENT ASSAULT



INTELLIGENCE vs. EVIDENCE

Intelligence (PREVENTION):

- a. analysis of available information (indicators/communications)
- b. predicting future activities and events

Evidence:

- a. determine guilt/proof
- b. occurs after the incident





Threat Assessments

- **Large percentage** of mass shooting/active shooter events begin with a warning or threats. Usually not specific.
- Threats can be alarming behavior, statements, actions or physical items (weapons, plans, “death lists”, obsessions, art, websites, videos, blogs, web searches, or notes).
- The threat assessment process is based on several factors such as behavior, activities, history, intent, willingness and capability.
- FBI statistics show that in **81%** of school targeted violence incidents, there was “leakage,” or other persons who had knowledge that something was going to occur.

Bomb Threats

There has never been a bomb found in an American Classroom based on a phone tip?

- Stated in the *Gift of Fear* by Gavin DeBecker

Never evacuate a school or facility based solely on a phone call???

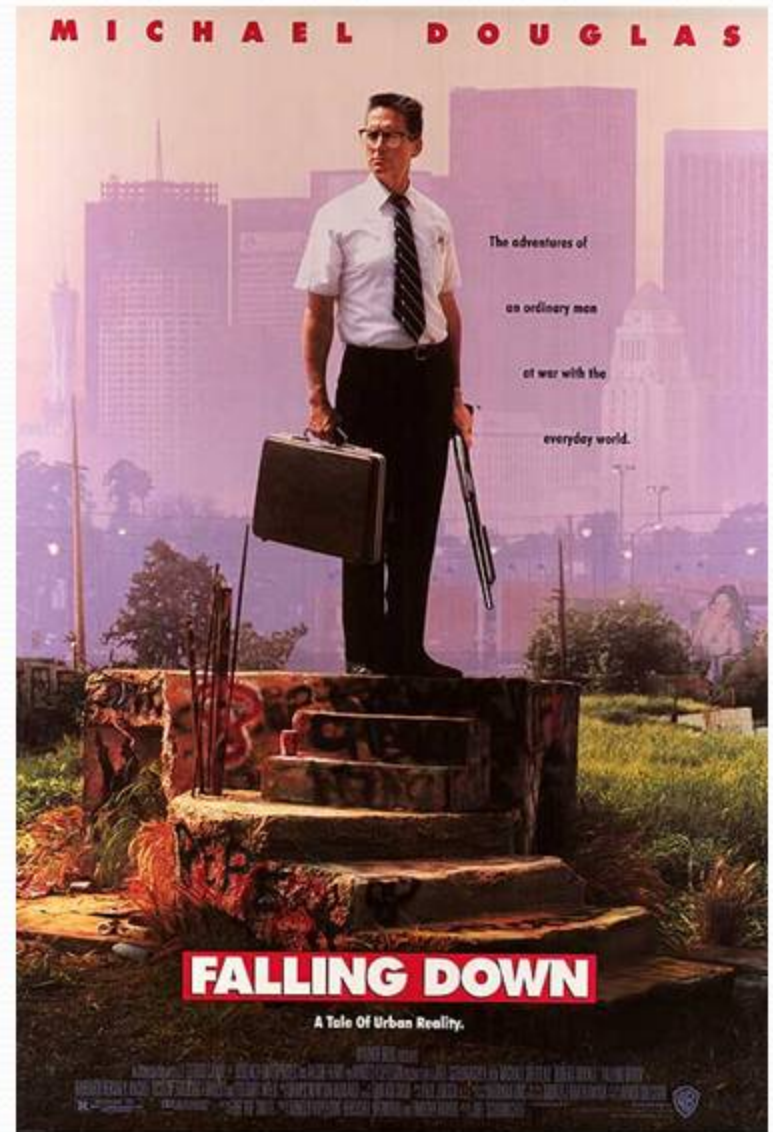
Leading Security Concerns....

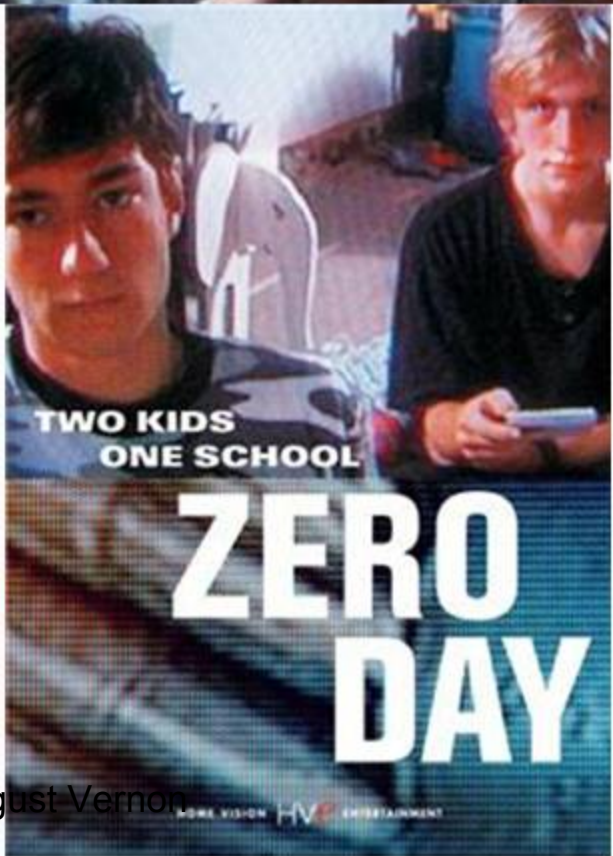
Domestic violence, domestic violence, domestic violence!

- Leading cause of death in the workplace for females in the U.S.
- 1 out of 20 women will be the victim of a stalker.
- If a female employee says she is in fear, have a plan.

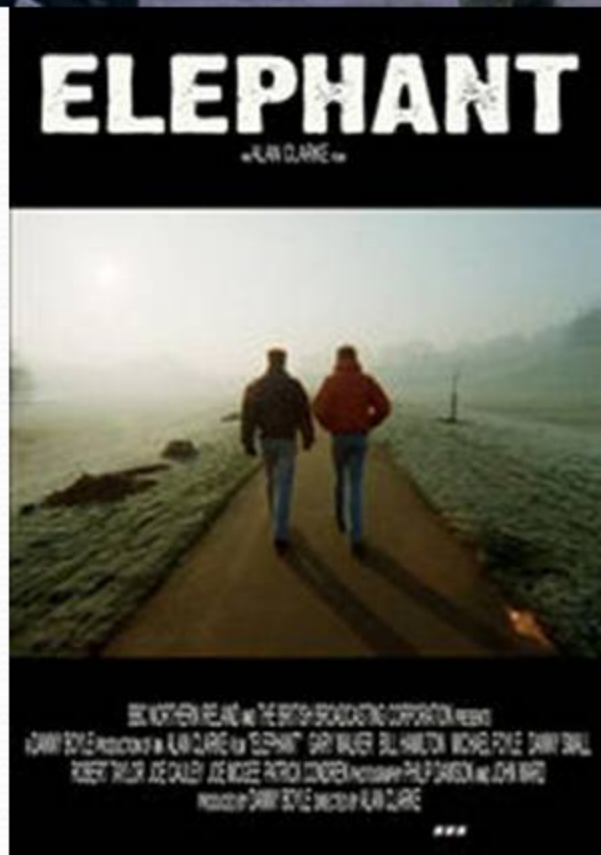
“Falling Down”

- William Foster
- Recently Divorced
- Restraining Order
- Recently Fired
- Vet
- “Snaps”
- Social Issues
- Suicide by Cop
- **Empathy for Williams**





August Vernon



“Rampage” 2010



August Vernon

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF A WORKPLACE PERPETRATOR

- White Male - ???
- 30 - 50 years old - ???
- Problem Employee
- History of Violent Behavior
- Intimidates Others
- Possible Drug Abuse
- Possible Alcohol Abuse



POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF A PERPETRATOR

- Obsessed with guns, gun magazines – (obsessed!)
- Interested/discussed in past acts of violence in the workplace
- Makes open or veiled threats
- Obsessed with job (obsessed) but not a good employee
- Loner (no or limited support network of friends or family)
- **Other staff/management concerns (human tripwires).**



POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF A PERPETRATOR

- Verbal Threats
- Weapons to “show friends”.
- “US vs. THEM”
- “Get Even” Plans
- Can’t take criticism or critical thinking/discussion
- Holds a grudge (**injustice collectors**)



Killology Research Group

Col. Grossman, was a co-trainer with the Secret Service when they released their interim report on the profile of a school killer. It was not extensive for the simple reason that there is **no specific profile**. Only common actions.

The killers are white, Native American, African American, and Hispanic. They are upper class, middle class, and lower class. They are from broken families and intact families. While most are males, several are female.

There is no profile--although the FBI research says that a "**fascination with violent media**" is a common factor with all the school shooters.

School Massacres Summary

- Most school massacres are preventable.
- There is no profile. Only common actions, indicators and behaviors.
- 80% or more of school shooters plan on dying during the shooting. (Suicide or “suicide by cop”).
- Most common reason is revenge, along with instant fame and recognition.
- Shootings take place is anywhere (Catholic Schools, Public Schools, Private Schools, Rural Schools, Urban Schools, etc.)

School Massacres Summary

- Deadliest hour is first hour/period, second is lunch time.
- Two biggest safety factors: **SRO** and **ZERO** tolerance for bullying??
- TRANCE LIKE state, do not know what they are doing or hear you telling commands.
- Most school massacre killers have no history of violence.
- What to do: 1.) SRO or armed officers 2.) Tip Lines 3.) Fake Facebook or Social Media (check into this).

Social Media Landscape

Expressing

Publication



Discussion



Aggregation



Networking

Search



Niche



BtoB



Mobile



Tools



Social Platforms



Content



Social Games



Casual Games



Product



Place



Casual MMO



MOG



MMORPG



Sharing

Gaming

August Vernon



Mental Health Issues

- Official reports following both Columbine and Virginia Tech called for increased emphasis and spending on mental health in an effort to identify and get help for these future killers. **Fact: Services are down since these two incidents.**
- Mental health specialists estimate that between 50 and 70 per cent of all crime in America could be prevented through improved mental health programs.
- **School safety is not cheap; mental health is not cheap!**

RUN-HIDE-FIGHT

Look up video on Youtube!

City of Houston DHS Grant Funded

***Share at work, friends, family,
church.***

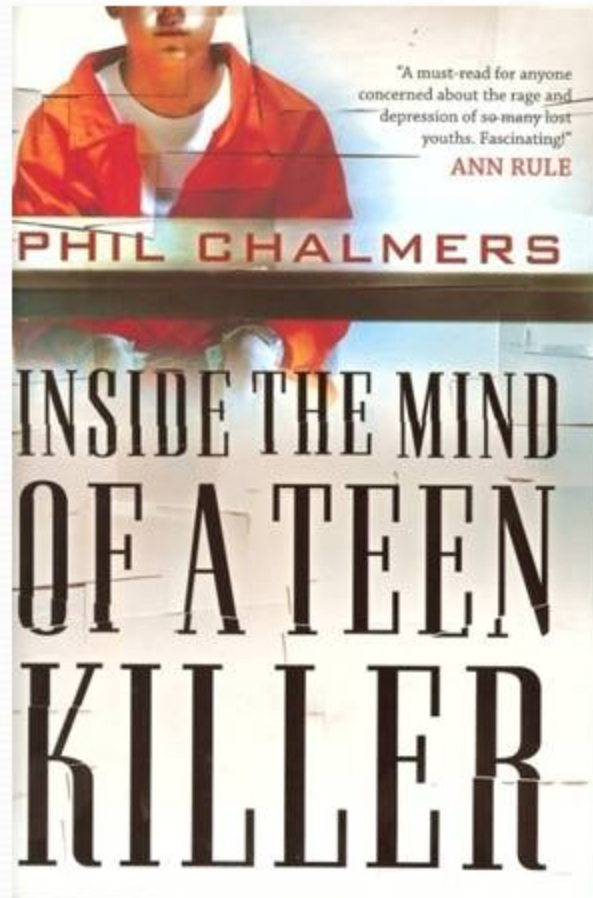
Facts of Life!

- Everyone is responsible for safety and security at the workplace. “All Hands On Deck”.
- There is no perfect solution for workplace safety.
- No magic formula for threat assessments.
- E-mail is NOT a primary means of communications during an emergency. OK for mass notifications. **FACE TO FACE.**
- “Call 911” is not a plan.
- Schools/Facilities do have a role to play in ICS.

Stopping Mass Violence Threats

- Your chances of detecting or learning about a mass violence incident or terrorist threat once they are on their way to their target, ***and*** successfully stopping them, are extremely slim.
- **Threat Teams, Intelligence and Information Gathering/Sharing—using every possible method—is the only real key to preventing most mass violence attacks and terrorist incidents.**

COLUMBINE



SHOOTER DOWN!

The Dramatic, Untold
Story of the Police
Response to the
Virginia Tech Massacre

JOHN GIDUCK

JD, MSS, PhD

Author of Terror at Beslan and The Green Beret in You

with **Major Joseph M. Bail, Jr.**

City of Chester, Pennsylvania SWAT Commander (ret)

FOREWORD BY BRAD THOR

*New York Times No. 1 Bestselling Author of
The Last Patriot, The First Commandment, Foreign Influence
and The Athena Project*

Questions???

Thank you and be safe!

