Mass Shootings and the Media Contagion Effect

Jennifer Johnston, Ph.D. and Andrew Joy, BS

Western New Mexico University

Abstract

According to the latest FBI analysis, mass shootings in the United States have increased three-fold in just the last fifteen years (Blair & Schweit, 2014). Recent analyses of media coverage followed by copycat incidents indicate a media contagion effect (Garcia-Bernardo, et al., 2015; Towers, Gomez-Lievano, Khan, Mubayi, & Castillo-Chavez, 2015). Lankford (2014; 2015) and Meloy, Sheridan, and Hoffman (2008) found that most shooters desired fame and wished to emulate a previous mass shooter. Madfis (2014) suggests that rampage shooters, who are almost all White men in early adulthood seek power and dominance that they perceive is their right, but perceive they are being denied, for various reasons, by society. Profiles of shooters indicate that they are often socially isolated and suffer a pattern of ostracization or bullying, yet they tend toward narcissism (Fox & Delateur, 2013; Fox & Levin, 2013; Meloy, 2014). Many fantasize about revenge or murder, and that this type of fantasy is not unusual or "extreme." Buss's (2005) research indicates up to 90% of men fantasize about murder. What tips the scales from fantasy to reality? We would argue identification with prior mass shooters made famous by extensive media coverage, including names, faces, writings, and detailed accounts of their lives and backgrounds, is a more powerful push toward violence than mental health status or even access to guns. First proposed by Phillips (1983), the violent media contagion effect was largely ignored by criminologists and psychologists, but more recently the evidence of the power of copycat homicide is mounting. Computer models developed by mathematicians note that the events cluster in time and by region (Garcia-Bernardo et al., 2015; Towers, et al., 2015), according to mass and social media coverage. Also, as Phillips (1974) and Stack (2002) determined, celebrity suicides were followed by a sudden spike of suicides in the general population, so mass media agreed to cease reporting names and some details of suicides since 1994 (O'Carroll & Potter, 1994). Our

symposium panel of leading experts on this topic will examine the magnitude of the mass shooting media contagion effect, with an aim to suggest guidelines to the media about how, and how much, to cover specific details about the shooters with the aim of preventing a portion of mass murder.

Mass Shootings and the Media Contagion Effect

Introduction

Murder, it would seem, is in our blood. Research by noted evolutionary psychologist David Buss (2005) indicates that about 90% of men and a majority of women have had at least one vivid murder fantasy, although the degree to which each individual seriously considers acting on murderous impulses varies greatly (p. 8). Buss argues that the aggressive side of our nature is just an evolutionary directive, one of the many inborn methods by which we preserve ourselves, and to which we may owe our continued existence. Buss generally attributes aggressive acts as being mate-retention strategies, since shows of dominance are attractive to females—and we will present evidence that mass homicides in particular, motivated by a misguided attempt at highly visible dominance, and validation of it. Under the auspices of so-called "precarious manhood," the dramatic rise of these active shooter events may be the result of a contagion effect among an increasingly susceptible demographic in the midst of cultural shift away from historical precedents of a primarily patriarchal society. That is, almost paradoxically, newly-experienced societal disenfranchisement and extant expectations collide, and a path towards re-establishing a perceived lost dominance is reinforced by a vicious cycle of constant media coverage.

Our primary focus in this paper is on one particular type of homicide that is most influenced by media contagion: mass shooting of strangers in public places. Mass shooting takes the fewest lives of any of the types of homicides documented, but it also tends to engender the most fear in people due to the seemingly random nature of the events and inability to predict and prevent incidents (Fox & Delateur, 2013). However, prevention of many mass shootings may now be within our grasp as criminologists, media communications specialists, psychologists, and

contagion-modeling mathematicians converge upon a similar conclusion: a key motivator of the majority of mass shooters is the fame and power they perceive they will achieve for their crimes. Many hope to garner as much or more media attention as the mass shooters that came before them, and with whom they identify (O'Toole et al., 2014). The mass media has so far rewarded their efforts and naively believed that media could not possibly hold such sway over calculated killers, much less have the ability to stop some of their crimes. We will show how the media's misguided attempts to inform the public about these tragedies may ultimately be contributing to the perpetuation of them. In the past, warnings have been lost in the din of the "public's right to know," and First Amendment protections, but ulterior motives must now be called into question, too. Indeed, any attempt to curb the flow of information is likely to encounter considerable resistance, as the coverage of these events is recognized to significantly increase viewership and boost advertising (Schildkraut, 2014). However, a growing body of evidence now suggests that it may be in society's best interest for news organizations to better regulate both the amount and type of information that they supply, and it must ultimately be determined what it considers to be the value of human life. Fifty percent of news coverage focuses on crime alone, and mostly violent crime, despite other crime being much more common (Schildkraut & Elsass, 2016, p. 8), and a defense of the public's right to know then ignores much of the other newsworthy content that goes unreported in the wake of these tragedies' continual coverage. The state of the world and all the important events happening to people in it largely involves no crime at all. Where is the defense of our right to see, read, and hear that content? By the end of this review, a strong case will be built for media adoption of the Don't Name Them campaign which describes how media can easily inform the public of mass shooting related news without focusing any content on the name, face, history, manifestos or stated motivations of the shooter, denying them the

infamous legacy they desire, and thereby slowly drain away the remaining lifeblood that is sustaining future mass shooters.

Prevalence

In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) labels murders of at least three or more people at the same location or during the course of the same incident, in public places, unmotivated by political or religious terrorism, as "mass killing" (Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012, 2013). Various authors refer to the perpetrators of these crimes as mass murderers, mass shooters, rampage killers, school shooters, or, in the case when mass murder was intended, but victims were only injured or ultimately were prevented from being killed, as active shooters. Pete Blair's Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) research team at Texas State University-San Marcos collates and analyzes data on active shooting events for the FBI. They maintain a website with current data through 2015, and published the most recent report for the FBI titled "Active Shooter Incidents in the United States from 2000-2013" (Blair & Schweit, 2014). The weapon of choice is firearm in all but a couple of the 181 active shooter incidents (which includes attempts as well as injuries or fatalities) that have occurred in the U.S. since 2000 (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, n.d.), so the term "shooter" is apt. For the purpose of this paper, we will use the term mass shooter or rampage shooter to refer to perpetrators or attempters of this crime.

Other efforts to catalog the type and prevalence of mass shootings have been conducted, but either the authors did not have access to FBI crime data, or only parts of it that were publicly available, or they included home/family-based murders or terrorist plots in their datasets, when talking about prevalence of mass murder. For example, Shultz, Cohen, Muschert, & Flores de Apodaca (2013) determined that mass school shootings have gone down somewhat from the

early nineties to now, but they based their conclusion on data only from the Virginia Tech Review Panel, Appendix L and an article published in Slate.com, and they include "targeted shootings" in their data analysis. Targeted shooting indicates that the shooter had one particular victim in mind, such as a bully, teacher, or gang rival. Sometimes others were harmed in the attempt to shoot the target. Also, according to their dataset, Shultz et al. (2013) reported no rampage school shootings in 2009 and 2010, whereas the FBI active shooter dataset logged two incidents in educational settings in 2009: Hampton University, VA, April 26 (two wounded) and Larose-Cut Off Middle School, LA, May 18 (shot at teacher, but no one injured); and five active school shooting incidents in 2010: Inskip Elementary School, Knoxville, TN, February 10 (two wounded), University of Alabama-Huntsville, AL, February 12 (three killed, three wounded), Deer Creek Middle School, Littleton, CO, February 23 (two wounded), Ohio State University-Columbus, OH, March 9 (one killed, one wounded), and Kelly Elementary School, Carlsbad, CA, October 8 (two wounded). Despite the fact that the authors may have been unable to include all the rampage school shootings in their dataset, their tables still indicate a steady trend in number of specifically "rampage-type" shootings over the years 1990 to 2012, and a sharp increase in the number of deaths from rampage shootings. However, they concluded that rampage-type school shootings are "rare and sporadic events," against the backdrop of the very high rates of other homicides in America.

The Mother Jones magazine dataset has been cited by a number of authors, but its incidents prior to 2012 reflect the old definition of "mass" shooting as four or more fatalities. Since 2012, the data set has followed the new rule of three or more fatalities to classify as a mass shooting. If we were to update the dataset retroactively for just 2010, for example, then the ABB Plant shooting, St. Louis, MO (three killed, five wounded), the Penske Truck Rental shooting,

Kennesaw GA, January, 12 (three killed, two wounded), the Gas Station incident in Brooksville, FL, January, 14 (three killed, two wounded), the University of Alabama shooting, Huntsville, AL, February 12 (three killed, three wounded), and possibly the Yoyito Café incident, Hialeah, FL, June, 6 (four killed, three wounded) need to be added (Blair & Schweit, 2014). The last incident involved a primary target of the shooter's girlfriend, so Mother Jones would not have included it. They focused on non-family target incidents only, such as the one they did report for 2010: the Hartford Beer Distributor shooting in Manchester, CT, August, 3 (nine killed, two wounded). Despite not including all incidents with three fatalities, or even attempted fatality incidents, Mother Jones still concluded that mass shootings are on the rise since 1982. They also determined that the number of total casualties are increasing as well (Follman, Aronsen, & Pan, 2013, February 24).

Another useful dataset that some authors cite is the USA Today dataset (Overberg et al., 2013). USA Today claims to have found many inaccuracies in the FBI dataset (saying that the data is only 60% correct when all multiple homicides are considered) because they rely on self-reporting of local law enforcement. USA Today did not consult the ALERRT team's compilation of FBI and missing state data, but their dataset does help us point out some important discrepancies. In their list of "random" or rampage-type mass shootings, defined as four or more deaths of unknown victims since 2006, the USA Today data indicates that ALERRT left out one shooting in April, 2006 in St. Louis, MO, for example. Although one of the victims was the shooter's girlfriend, he later went to his workplace and killed two more people. For the purposes of discussing the rise in attempts at mass shootings, the ALERRT dataset is more complete than the USA Today dataset. In 2006, for contrast, ALERRT catalogs ten incidents, compared to only five incidents with the stricter four or more deaths criterion that USA Today collated for 2006. In

2007, USA Today logged three incidents. ALERRT logged those three, plus eleven more. In 2008, USA Today noted one incident in Santa Maria, CA on March 18 that ALERRT did not include, and it would qualify for an "active shooting" event. ALERRT added three other incidents not included in the USA Today dataset. ALERRT lists the same four incidents as USA Today for 2009, but adds fifteen more. USA Today logs three events in 2010, but one was arson, rather than firearm related, so ALERRT does not include it. Instead they list 24 events beyond the two firearm events reported by USA Today. Again, in 2011, USA Today lists one event not catalogued by ALERRT because no firearm was involved. Otherwise, the four firearm events listed by USA Today are noted by ALERRT, plus six others. In 2012, ALERRT logged 21 incidents and USA Today included only six of those on their list. Finally, in 2013, ALERRT detailed 17 incidents and USA Today covered four of those, but added one that did not involve firearms. It appears that the ALERRT data set is more comprehensive, due to inclusion of attempts and injuries, not just four or more fatalities, but we would argue that ALERRT should include incidents that do not involve firearms, or at least report on a separate category of mass killing with weapons or methods other than firearms. Also, they need to update their list with the two missing firearm incidents (April 18, 2006, St. Louis, MO; March 18, 2008 in Santa Maria, CA). We commend media organizations such as Mother Jones and USA Today who are fact-checking the law enforcement databases and helping create more accurate and comprehensive information for scholars to analyze. However, given that only two errors were uncovered, yet USA Today left out 74 incidents that meet our profile of a mass shooter or attempted mass shooter, we recommend that researchers base their analyses on the ALERRT dataset.

Fox & Delateur (2013) report that claims of a rise in mass shootings is a myth, as did Meloy (2014), and McGinty, Webster, Jarlenski, and Barry (2012). Fox & Delateur (2013) assert

that the spike in incidents (21), fatalities (90), and injuries (119) in 2012, was an anomaly. The authors noted that midway through 2013, that trend was not being repeated and "the tendency for bad years to be followed by better ones will hold true once again" (p. 6). Yet as the year played out, 2013 had 17 incidents with 44 people killed and 42 people were wounded. This was not exactly a reversal of a trend, though fewer fatalities and injuries occurred in the somewhat fewer incidents. Unfortunately, 2014 looked no better with 20 incidents and close to 100 people killed and 100 people wounded, and 2015 looked very similar to 2014 with an estimated 21 incidents, but data is still being collated (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, n.d.). ALERRT identified an effect size of $R^2=.64$, a strong effect, that explains and can predict the positive correlation between number of incidents and year (between 2000-2015). Blair's research team notes that the upward trend is due to level off, perhaps around 30 incidents per year, but of course the pressing question is whether we can intervene before that sobering number is reached.

When claiming that mass murder is not on the rise, Fox and Delateur (2013) and Meloy (2014) report aggregate mass homicides of three types, "random," familial, and gang or criminally motivated. These combined incident totals and related deaths have remained fairly stable since the 1970s. While true, it is not useful to combine statistics so that while two categories are steadily decreasing and one category is steadily increasing, aggregately, they balance each other out and erase the upward trend in rampage-type killings. When we become interested in prevention and intervention with each of the three types of mass murder, strategies are necessarily very different, especially when two are clearly going down and one is clearly not. Familial, and in particular intimate partner violence (IPV), is caused by a number of factors, most likely revenge on loved ones for perceived hurts or in rarer cases, need for power over others (Dutton & Corvo, 2006), early attachment issues, witnessing IPV, and history of conduct

disorder (Ehrensaft et al. 2003), or possibly disturbed "loyalty", as Fox and Delateur (2013) describe, such as a belief that the family is being saved from their miserable worldly existence by being killed. IPV requires interventions like couples therapy and family therapy with cognitive-behavioral focus and sometimes legal protective orders, whereas gang-related and criminally-motivated murder is usually caused by entrenched poverty and community issues which direct some to believe that the only way to get their fair share or get ahead is through crime (Roque, 2012). Generally, wide-reaching institutional and neighborhood improvements are needed to reduce crime rates and murder related to crime. Mass shootings in public places that are not crime or IPV motivated appear to be crimes to re-establish power or take revenge, not always on specific individuals, but often on groups or archetypes of individuals. These are the crimes whose incidence has increased three-fold in just the last fifteen years (since 2000), reaching a total of 209 incidents, with 641 deaths (Blair & Schweit, 2014). Compare that to journalist Ford Fessenden's New York Times article on the compilation of all rampage attacks in the fifty years prior to 2000, touted as one of the most comprehensive: 100 incidents, with 425 deaths (half the incidents in triple the years), and we must accept the unpleasant truth of a steep increase in this type of crime (April 9, 2000). In contrast, Meloy (2014) and the FBI note that other violent crime has steadily decreased over the last few decades. We present this distinction to highlight the importance of considering rampage shooters as a special case of mass shooting or any type of violent crime, and as such, the most susceptible to the influence of media and copycat crime.

It becomes clear that our definition and cut lines for what qualifies as a mass shooting is very important if we are all to engage in the same conversation, analyze the same data, and strive to make valuable recommendations about prevention or policy. Ultimately, our aim with this research is to reduce and prevent mass shooting crimes. If rampage shooters share a common

profile and/or a common motivation, both those who actually succeed with their plans and those whose plans are thwarted, then we need to include all attempted shooting incidents and any number of fatalities or wounded victims in our profiling analysis. The only dataset that provides that comprehensive information is the Active Shooter dataset maintained by ALERRT in partnership with the FBI. We will refer exclusively to this dataset and recommend that other researchers do the same when discussing mass shooters of the rampage type.

Profile

The characteristics and motives of mass killers is worth investigating, because of the varying power of effects external factors exert depending on the motives and background of the perpetrators of murder, as well as the differing approaches to prevention depending on motive and background. In examining the extant literature, there is a recurring theme of some reluctance to profile. One reason is that authors argue that extra-individual, or social/societal settings play a larger role in triggering or sustaining mass shooters than do intra-individual characteristics. Primary targets are, as Schildkraut and Elsass (2016) describe, "the usual suspects:" 1) the state of mental illness identification and mental illness confidentiality rights, 2) gun laws and generally easy access to guns for children and adults, and 3) American fascination with, and tendency toward violence in entertainment and real life. However, we will focus on intra-individual characteristics of shooters, because they seem particularly susceptible to the three primary extra-individual triggers listed above. Whereas other Americans live with sometimes inadequate mental health identification and intervention, liberal gun laws, and fascination with violence, including on the news, they are not influenced to commit mass murder. The mass shooters are influenced, we believe, due to personal characteristics. For example, there is a basic demographic similarity of shooters: Most are white, ostensibly heterosexual males, largely

between the ages of 20 and 50 (Blair, Nichols, Burns, & Curnutt, 2013; Fox & Levin, 2015; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Madfis, 2014; Meloy et al., 2004; Roque, 2012), and this is a fact that we will examine in greater detail later—its role in helping determine the at-risk population for the execution of mass homicide is significant.

However, it must also be acknowledged that, from the location of the attack to the more explicit motives behind it, the specifics of these crimes do vary. Consequently, taken as a whole, the exact mechanism behind all of these shootings clearly presents a problem, which is why specific instances must instead be considered. Fox and Delateur (2013) and Fox and Levin (2015) suggest that the act of murder, no matter the type of murder, proceeds from a particular mindset, and therefore an examination of the true prevalence of those willing to commit such an act, no matter scope, scale, or motive, should be considered conjointly. However, the authors do not explain what this unifying mindset is, and they parse murderer profiles along similar lines as other researchers. For example, they note demographic differences between mass murderers and other murderers, and they state that mass shooters see themselves as "victims of injustice" and they are predominantly motivated by revenge or power, rather than profit, terror, or misguided loyalty, as many other one-victim target murderers are.

On the other hand, it must also be recognized that narrowing of the pool of offenders could make profiling less precise. Another limitation of profiling mass shooters is the fact that information is rarely collected firsthand, a natural consequence of the common resolution of these events: In the 206 cases examined by ALERRT about 66% of the incidents between 2000 and 2016 ended in the death of the attacker. Not only is this not insignificant, but it presents considerable obstacles during the course of investigation, when a posthumous profile must be pieced together like an invisible puzzle, one in which we are never sure just how many pieces are

missing. However, from what we do know – from both the emerging puzzle, and from the "pieces" that have survived – some common threads do begin to emerge. All of the large assessments of mass murderers and public assassins agree that three characteristics are rampant: depression, social isolation, and narcissism.

Depression

In her threat assessment report to the FBI on school shooters O'Toole (2000) lists depression as a major predisposing factor. Meloy et al. (2004) echoed this finding in his team's analysis of school and adult mass shooters. Of adolescents, approximately one in every four had had earlier psychiatric treatment and 50% of the adult mass shooters had a history of psychiatric treatment, with one of the three primary diagnoses being depression. In a study of 83 assassination-determined individuals from 1949-1999, Fein & Vossekuil (1999) found that 44% had a history of serious depression and despair, including suicidal thoughts. And Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, and Modzeleski (2002) determined that 78% of the schools shooters they studied had thoughts of suicide or had prior attempts at suicide. Wike and Fraser's (2009) review of school shooters also points out that most adolescent shooters had thoughts of or attempts at suicide at some point before the attack. The percentage of suicides that occur as part of the resolution of an attack is also significant, and although almost always linked to depression, the motives for suicide can vary and warrant additional consideration (see Lankford, 2013 for a thorough discussion). Fox and Levin (2015) note that murder-suicide is "substantially higher" among rampage shooters than among other murderers (21% vs. 4%), Towers, Gomez-Lievano, Khan, Mubayi, and Castillo-Chávez (2015) reported that between 17-25% of the shooters in their study committed suicide (depending on dataset, school vs. mass shooter, and at least one person killed), and Lankford's (2015) analysis of 185 mass shooters found that 48% committed suicide

after the crime or engaged in "suicide-by-cop," which he linked to direct evidence of the shooters' underlying or prior depressive behaviors, statements, or writing.

In contrast, commonalities of other types of mental illness among mass shooters has not been substantiated. A small minority are psychotic (i.e. unable to distinguish reality from hallucinations or serious delusions), and a minority meet the criteria for personality disorder such as antisocial personality disorder. Among adolescent shooters it is harder to determine psychosis or psychopathy, especially personality disorder, since those diagnoses require longer time periods for verification, such as more than six months of ongoing psychotic symptoms for a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, and at least one year of symptoms beyond the age of 18 for a diagnosis of Antisocial Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Social Isolation

In addition to depression – or, perhaps, in relation to it – review of previous attacks also showed that there is both perceived and documented social isolation of mass shooters (Fox & Delateur, 2013; Levin & Madfis, 2009; Meloy et al., 2004; O'Toole, 2000; Rocque, 2012; Weisbrot, 2008; Wike & Fraser, 2009). This isolation is particularly noticeable where school shooters are concerned. For instance, Wike & Fraser (2009) determined that a high degree of social stratification, with a clear hierarchy among students, existed in schools that were ultimately victimized by one of their own. Meloy, Hempel, Mohandie, Shiva, and Gray (2001) noted that 70% of the 34 adolescent mass shooters they studied were characterized as "loners." In Weisbrot's (2008) analysis of 115 potential school shooters over nine years, she determined higher levels of threat were present in the most socially lonely or teased kids, and who were harboring secret retaliatory thoughts. She also determined that half of all the at-risk shooters that were referred to her were severely teased and "social loners." In some cases, this isolation may

be the consequence of the strong dimensions of trademark narcissistic behavior exhibited by these individuals. Although they did not study mass shooters per se, but assassination attempters and completers, Fein and Vosskuil (1999) made a point of saying that most of their subjects had difficulty building or maintaining relationships of any kind, and very few found any success at work or school. Fox and Delateur (2013) noted that many mass shooters exhibited a tendency towards externalized blame, even noting that individuals identified as being troubled and urged towards help, instead rejected any insinuation that the problem was with them. This tendency towards victimization as a rationalization for their crimes was also noted by additional researchers, with many finding paranoia, persecution, and resentment to be a common elements in the socially avoidant and/or narcissistic profiles of mass shooters (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010; Meloy et al., 2004; Wike & Fraser, 2009).

Narcissism

Pathological narcissism is a "sense of specialness that diminishes empathy for others" (Meloy, 2011, p. 82). The presence of narcissism is not to be considered as a singular trait, however, and it has been noted that the exhibiting of certain narcissistic behaviors can be used to feed into feelings of grandiosity and even convince others of society's unfair treatment of the individual (Meloy et al., 2004; O'Toole, 2000). These delusions of grandeur, and the desire for the recognition of others in it, should not be wholly surprising, though. Indeed, of these recurring traits, arguably the one most worthy of additional circumspection is the desire for fame. Meloy, Mohandie, Knoll, and Hoffmann (2015) write that from a psychoanalytic perspective, identifying with or copying the behavior of admired others is a primary defense of narcissistic individuals. Typical mass shooters want to believe they are as aggressive, as militaristic, or as "bad ass," if you will, as their weapon-wielding idols. Seeking fame keeps narcissism intact;

attaining fame, or the certainty that one will, is an effective anti-venom to the constant risk of the individual's low self-esteem or feelings of hopelessness seeping through the thin skin of narcissistic thinking and behavior. And, unfortunately, we find that a cross-cutting trait among many profiles of mass shooters is desire for fame. "Vulnerable narcissism may adequately explain the paradoxical picture of persons who have a grandiose view of themselves but are simultaneously so demoralized that their suicidal ideation is channeled as 'martyrdom' against real or perceived opponents," and "those who hate themselves and others so intensely as to seek mutual destruction" (Bombadilla, as cited in Lankford, 2014).

Psychological resolution

It is important to note that the three primary risk factors for mass shooters, social isolation, depression, and narcissism are integrally intertwined. Each feeds the other. We will show how desire for fame and aggrieved entitlement are such effective salves for the psychological wounds of isolation, depression, and narcissism that most mass shooters fantasize about both.

Fame. According to Fein (2014), notoriety was as much a central motive for many historical assassins as it is for the perpetrators of today's targeted violence, and in some cases manifested itself in the form of a desire for special attention, like celebrity recognition (Fein & Vossekuil, 1999). In a study of assassins, the second most common motive was for notoriety or fame, and among school shooters, seeking special attention or recognition was the third highest motivator (Vossekuil et al., 2002). This idea of fame as a key motivator may help explain why there is a surprisingly strong youth contingent among the perpetrators of mass shootings. Meloy et al. (2004) notes that many shooters seek status or importance through their crime, and looking at five shooters in depth, Serazio (2010) points to a misguided belief and desire for youthful

superiority, noting that many adolescents feel that their only option is to rise to fame as a hero, or go down in infamy as a villain, with no options in between. Bonanno and Levensen (2014) cite a "culture of narcissism" as also playing a role in current generations. Rocque (2012) seems to confirm this, noting that many school shootings have a sort of ceremony around them designed to bring fame, and that the perpetrators often make a spectacle of their suicides as well. Fame is again echoed as the ultimate goal of mass shooters by Lankford (2014), who suggests that the seemingly random nature of many shootings may instead be by design, and that both the act itself and its suicidal denouement has meaning in and of itself:

> Overall, a number of these attackers seemed to recognize that by committing acts of mass murder-suicide against random, innocent victims, they could combine the only surefire way for an average person to become famous with the only foolproof way to kill people and get away with it. After years of feeling like a failure, loser, victim, or outcast, they attempted to compensate through a desperate grasp for attention, social recognition, fame, and glory. But they also avoided the potential humiliation of arrest, detainment, and criminal punishment by committing suicide before they were caught" (p. 357).

We would argue that the desire for fame has become a primary motivator for especially "vulnerable-type" narcissistic individuals—those who hate themselves and others, and is a key distinguishing profile characteristic between mass shooters and other murderers, though Hagerty (2009) makes a strong case that many serial killers are also in it for the fame. The belief that fame is a very likely possibility for mass shooters skyrocketed since the mid-nineties, in correspondence to the emergence of widespread 24-hour news coverage on cable news programs, and the rise of the internet during the same period. CNN surpassed the "big three" broadcasters after the Gulf War coverage in 1991, and rang in a new era of hour-by-hour, day after day extravaganza coverage after OJ Simpson's car chase and trial. Would-be killers got the message that media were very interested in, and would broadcast all aspects of violence, including as many details of killers' lives, motivations, and methods as possible. In many ways, this need for fame feeds into a narcissistic belief of superiority, and a need to be recognized for

it. The common trend now is that killers send their writings, and photos of themselves and their weapons, directly to news organizations. The news programs gladly splash the writings and photos all over their broadcasts, all the while saying that they do it not to glorify the violence, but because the public has a right to know who did it and why they did it, visa vie their own words and pictures. In 2007, regarding the Virginia Tech shooter and broadcasting the copious documents and photos he sent to NBC, the network decided to only share a portion of the material in order not to give him too much attention or gratification, yet they claimed they felt it was so important to the public that not to share it was irresponsible journalism. However, afterward, NBC executive Steve Capus' statement, "It's not every day we get a story like this…It was extraordinary, and that's how we treated it" may belie the network's true position on the decision to report the killers' documents (Schildkraut & Elsass, 2016, p. 143). Mass shooters will also keep the world on message through their social media posts, which the mass media later spreads for them. Quotes from a number of mass killers below hauntingly illustrate their key motive of notoriety and underlying narcissism:

"I'll see you on National TV!" before the Tucson, AZ attack, Jan 2011 (Meloy, 2012)

"Just think tho, I'm gonna be fuckin' famous [sic]." Omaha, NE attack, Dec 2007 (Meloy, 2015)

"Like Eric and Dylan [we] will sacrifice our lives to fuck you…I am the anti-terrorist of America." From manifesto sent to NBC headquarters, Virginia Tech attack, Apr 2007 (Meloy, 2015)

Wife of Lee Harvey Oswald, "The most important thing for Lee was that he wanted to become famous. Idea number one. He was fanatic about it, I think. Goal number one." JFK assassination, 1963 (Meloy, 2015)

The Columbine High School (1999) shooters hoped Steven Spielberg and Quentin Tarantino would fight over the rights to their life stories (Lankford, 2012, December 17), and one of the killers wrote that he wanted "to leave a lasting impression on the world" (Levin & Madfis, 2009).

"…A man who was known by no one, is now known by everyone. His face splashed across every screen, his name across the lips of every person on the planet, all in the course of one day. Seems the more people you kill, the more you're in the limelight." From the Umpqua Community College, OR shooter, Oct 2015

"I will be sharing my story with as many people as possible…I have sent my story to all the major news organizations." Coeur D'Alene, ID attack, March, 2016 (Humphries, 2016, March 9).

Lankford (2016) attempted to quantify how many mass shooters explicitly state a motive of notoriety. He determined that 11% of the 225 shooters' statements he analyzed since 1966 were obviously fame-seeking. He used strict guidelines to improve the validity of his method, but acknowledged that many other mass shooters may have desired fame, but it could not be verified for certain, due to lack of direct quotes. Importantly, the group of explicit fame seekers were significantly younger than the control group and they killed and injured double the number of people as those shooters in the control group.

Reclaiming social capital. Levin and Madfis (2009) suggest attaining fame is a perfect way to regain social capital, in the minds of mass killers. The consequence-avoidance discussed by Lankford is especially important for its ability to tie into what may be considered a major catalyst in the perpetration of these mass homicides: the loss of social capital. After years of depression and social isolation, the loss of social capital (an event which places an individual in a

situation of perceived embarrassment or reduced status) may be the last straw—precipitating psychologically vulnerable individuals to execute mass homicides and regain social capital. Other authors, though not using the term "acute strain" or "loss of social capital," have come to similar conclusions (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Meloy et al., 2004; O'Toole, 2000; Rocque, 2012). If these events do provide a way to regain any lost status, reestablishing dominance in the most extreme fashion, then ending the rampage in suicide allows them to avoid the retribution and perspective correction from the society they hate—in essence, these killers believe that they are buying stock low, and selling high. This idea of social capital may also explain the near exclusivity of the demographics of shooters, too. At this point, there is irrefutable evidence that most perpetrators of mass shootings are white, heterosexual males (Blair et al., 2013; Madfis, 2014; Meloy et al., 2004). The very nature of this demographic profile holds many answers. Kimmel and colleagues were the first to suggest that being White and male and middle or upper class (suburban—as many of the school shooters they studied were) may convey a particular vulnerability to loss of social capital and, more importantly, a belief that one has been wrongfully cheated out of one's rightful dominant place—a white, middle class male, with all requisite privileges in American society. Kalish and Kimmel (2010) termed this feeling "aggrieved entitlement," and indicated that it likely underlies most mass shooters' primary motivation. Madfis (2014) went on to argue that heterosexual white males are best positioned for this strong sense of entitlement because they believe their status should take on special consideration, given the 'unfairness' of their loss of social capital. They seem unable to realize, or unaware of the fact that their social humiliations are neither uncommon, nor extreme when compared to other individuals, especially women, impoverished minorities, and marginalized homosexuals. Even taken in isolation, some elements of this profile may hold their

own answers. In particular, the almost exclusivity of male shooters is attributed by some to be the result of a socially-instilled need for validation, and the public demonstrations of manhood differ in American culture only in manifestation, and not necessarily spirit (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). Even specifically within the realm of non-gang-related school shootings, a correlation between a loss of social capital and the eventual attack by a white perpetrator has been noted (Rocque, 2012; Wike & Fraser. 2009). To some degree, this corroborating theory of social capital and demographics is backed up by the fact that these crimes are so rarely perpetrated by members of other races, which lack similar societal entitlement. Indeed, inner-city crime tends to be about specific strife between certain individuals, while school shootings and workplace killings of the variety discussed here are instead more random in nature, having a more "symbolic" target (Rocque, 2012).

Media Coverage

In a content analysis of hundreds of New York Times articles following 91 mass shootings (2000-2012), it was determined that the media focused much more heavily on the shooter than the victims. And for some reason, 26 of the cases received almost no media coverage. Schildkraut (2014) notes that media coverage focuses on the individuals involved for the first week, but by the second week begins focusing more and more on societal impact/causes. In the heavily covered cases this is true, but for the briefly covered incidents, a switch to broader social commentary occurs after the second or third week of coverage (pp. 147-148). Of the possible causes and solutions, gun control is a media focus in 80% of stories the last 4 years; it was the focus of about 40% of stories in the four years preceding that. In contrast, mental health issues were the focus of about 35% of the stories in the last four years, whereas they were the

focus of about 65% of the stories in the four years preceding. Violent media as a cause for the shootings was discussed in less than 2% of the stories across all eight years (p. 156).

Schildkraut and Elsass (2016) also express concern that extensive news coverage of mass shooters, their methods and motivations, inspires copycat killers because they essentially are given a blueprint to crime, and a glorified model with whom to identify and emulate in the pursuit of infamy. McGinty et al. (2014) found an increase in media coverage of mass shootings in their content analysis of newspaper articles and TV news report transcripts over time. They randomly sampled 25% of more than 5000 stories about mass shootings collected from 1997 to 2012, especially looking for themes of whether the media assigned blame to the mental health of the shooters or gun laws, and how long any one story was focused on (about two weeks).

Mass shootings are on the rise and so is media coverage of them. At this point, can we determine which came first? Is the relationship merely unidirectional: more shootings → more coverage? Or is it possible that more coverage → more shootings?

The media contagion effect

An interest in whether violent media content leads to increased aggression and violence has been a hallmark of psychological research, but one generally centered on fictitious portrayals of violence. The first scholar to track and make an attempt to identify whether realistic depictions of violence in media, such as prize boxing fights, directly led to increased homicides in following weeks was sociologist David Phillips. He had already identified a significant media influence on suicide after the media's hyper-attention to celebrity suicide, so examining a similar effect for homicide was a logical next step. He labeled this phenomenon "media contagion," based on the theory of cultural contagion (Phillips, 1980a). Critics discounted Phillips' evidence because it was correlational (Fox & Delateur, 2013; Stack, 1989), yet so was his suicide

contagion data, despite that it was taken seriously and replicated by later authors (Cantor, Neulinger, & De Leo, 1999; Phillips, 1974; Phillips, 1979; Stack, 2003). One concern could have been that he chose to analyze the effects of televised boxing matches rather than homicide news itself. Not until Cantor and colleagues in the late nineties, was media contagion of homicides, as a serious theoretical possibility, revisited. Cantor, Sheehan, Allpers, and Mullen (1999) noted that when Stack analyzed all homicide (rather than heavily publicized mass homicides) for media contagion, he did not find it. Instead, Cantor et al. (1999) suggested that the contagion likely only applies to mass murders, rarely individual homicides, which is what they found in their qualitative analysis of seven mass murder cases. Notably, four of the seven explicitly said their primary motivation for the crime was fame.

The copycat effect

The copycat effect could be considered a subcategory of the media contagion effect. Media contagion indicates that all coverage of mass shooters combined has an effect on potential shooters, seeding the belief that they will be rewarded with fame for their crime. The copycat effect refers to a would-be killer's emulation of a specific mass murderer and his methods. Authors have noted the copycat effect more often than the media contagion effect, but strangely, again, there was a long interval before Cantor's (1999) work was validated, despite Fein and Vossekuil's (1999) report on 83 would-be mass killers or assassins, who noted that evidence in their belongings or writings indicated that 38% of them emulated previous killers, O'Toole's (2000) report that the copycat effect is very common among school shooters, and psychiatrist Deborah Weisbrot (2008) who noted that a number of the would-be school shooters she evaluated (114 over nine years), mention a desire to copy the crimes of other shooters. Meloy et al. (2001) observed a possible copycat effect among the shooters who committed crimes from

1995-1999, the most recent incidents in that study, and again Meloy et al. (2004) consider

evidence of media contagion, as evidenced by regional clustering of shootings, a primary

consideration in threat assessment, in their study of adult and adolescent mass shooters. Fox and

Delateur (2013) noted the copycat effect in many mass shootings they reviewed. In her

qualitative analysis of mass shooters, Murray (2014) also determined that fantasies of infamy and

attention are a key aspects of the psychological identities of mass shooters, and that their

belongings and writings are filled with references to past murderers.

Finally, technology, sociology and media scholar Zeynep Tufekci resurrected the

homicide media contagion concern in two compelling editorial pieces directed at the news

media, as far back as 2012 and again in 2015, one in The Atlantic and one in the New York

Times, but it seemed to fall on deaf ears. Schildkraut and Elsass (2016) call for a serious

investigation into the copycat effect based on aggrieved entitlement and desire for fame, noting

that this motivation may be as important or even overshadow the 'usual [causal] suspects'

attributed to mass shootings (p. 143). This argument is speculative unless we can find a way to

test the media contagion effect with real media coverage and subsequent active shooter events.

Media contagion models

For compelling evidence, Towers et al. (2015) utilized a mathematical contagion model

that has been previously used to test whether the spread is "contagious" of stock market

decisions, viral YouTube videos, burglaries and infectious disease outbreaks, to test for the first

time, the "contagiousness" of media portrayals of active shooters. If the actual dates of shootings

fit the model that indicates time-related contagion, or the actual locations of shootings fit the

model that indicates regional contagion, and could not be due to chance, then we can determine

that current events have been directly influenced by past events, and we can predict the timing

and locations of future contagion. In fact, the authors did discover a temporal contagion among all datasets (USA today 4 or more deaths, Brady Bill 4 or more deaths, and Brady Bill school shootings) except one (Brady Bill 3 or fewer deaths). Moreover, the rate of mass shootings has escalated to, on average, one every 12.5 days in the United States, and one school shooting happens on average every 31.6 days. The most disturbing finding is that for every three incidents, at least one new incident is guaranteed, or copied, within 13 days. The contagion for school shootings is slightly weaker: for every four to five incidents, a new incident is copied within 13 days. The authors note that although it is clear a contagion is present, they cannot determine what caused the contagion based on the model alone, such as our assumption that the contagion is mass media coverage. They can only determine presence or no presence of contagion. However, it is hard to posit alternatives as to how one mass shooter learned of another mass shooter, other than through mass media. Added to that is that the authors did not find a spatial contagion, in other words, the model indicating a regional contagion was non-significant, so the authors speculate that information about shootings is happening nationwide, rather than regionally. A possibility is that news of shootings is spread through social media in addition to mass media.

To test that theory, and using a different method than Towers et al. (2015), Garcia-Bernardo et al. (2015) hypothesized that if mass shooting attacks are unrelated and evenly distributed, rather than clustered, there will be an equal probability that any one attack happens recently or much later than another event, and near or far from another event. They aimed to evaluate whether temporal and spatial relationships exist between attacks based on social media big data analysis. Fifty-seven billion tweets were analyzed, from which were extracted 72 million tweets with the word "shooting" in them, and about two million tweets with the words

"school shooting" or "mass murder" in them. The researchers then compared the social media data with a database of mass shootings incidents, including day and place of shooting. They selected the database used by Schulz et al. (2013), Everytown.org's database for 2014 (both of which are missing some events—see above), yet the authors still identified a strong contagion effect. When tweets about school shootings went beyond 10 per million, the probability of a school shooting in the next eight days went up to 50%. Nineteen days following the shooting, if tweets went beyond ten per million, the probability of another shooting went to 85%. Finally, if tweets went beyond ten per million in the 35 days following a shooting, it was nearly 100% likely that another shooting occurred. The authors also determined that school shootings are more influenced by social media than other mass shootings, however social media is still able to predict that the first ten days after an attack are most contagious for another attack, especially when tweets about mass shooting reach more than 45 per million. Also, unfortunately, the number of tweets about a shooting is linked to higher number of fatalities in the next few shootings.

These results support the findings of Towers et al. (2015), where the critical window in which school shootings are most contagious is the first 30 days, after, we assume, heavy media coverage. Taken together, these two studies provide definitive evidence of the copycat effect as well as social and mass media contagion, even when calculated using different mathematical approaches. Garcia-Bernardo et al. (2015) adroitly remind us that their results prove that "a small, violent sector of society confronts the remainder, fueled by [society's] own informational product." So, what can we do?

Responsible media coverage

In light of the evidence presented above, we must increase dialogue about a fourth, critical causal factor in the propagation of mass homicide. We can no longer discuss the 'usual suspects' only: gun laws, mental health, and violent media/entertainment in general, when we are discussing mass homicide prevention efforts. We also must not be incredulous that a potentially simple solution is available that could greatly reduce mass homicide, solely because it is too easy, too simple. We may not need to wring our hands in endless grief over tragic losses and bang our heads against the seemingly impossible wall of changing gun laws or redesigning the entire mental health system. Instead, we can agree to cut off the oxygen to one powerful flame of the fire that fuels mass shooters: undeserved fame. We are not the first to make this plea, but we would like to be the last.

There are other examples of what appear to be insurmountable social problems with deep roots and traditions in people's hearts, minds, and communities that have been unraveled in a fairly short time when sociologists or public health experts finally put their finger on the hot button variable that incites a cascade of change. Examples come from diverse countries and myriad dangerous practices: centuries old Chinese foot-binding practice made obsolete in a decade by harnessing the need for respect and decreasing shame (Appiah, 2010, October 24); decades old practice of Americans driving while intoxicated moving from social acceptance to social anathema in the span of a few years, and deaths reduced by more than half through harnessing social stigma and raising the drinking age
(https://report.nih.gov/nihfactsheets/ViewFactSheet.aspx?csid=24); after using the bathroom, hand-washing to prevent disease in Ghana, dramatically increased after a few ad campaigns that harnessed the power of disgust (Duhigg, 2008, July 13). If the mass media and social mediafess enthusiasts make a pact to no longer share, reproduce, or re-tweet the names, faces, detailed

histories, or long-winded statements of killers, we could see a dramatic reduction in mass shootings in the span of one to two years. Even conservatively, if the calculations of contagion modelers are correct, we should see at least a one third reduction in shootings if the contagion is removed. Given the profile of mass shooters, we believe levels of mass murder could return to a pre-1970s rate, where it becomes a truly aberrant event that although not eradicated, is no longer a common option that goes through the mind of every bullied, depressed, isolated, somewhat narcissistic man.

Don't Name Them

ALERRT, in conjunction with the FBI and victims' families, have developed a suggested approach for media outlets regarding reporting on mass homicide. This approach is of course voluntary for the media, but could be adopted in much the same way that the media chose to cease reporting celebrity suicides in the mid-nineties, when it was corroborated that suicide was also contagious. The Centers for Disease Control convened a working group of suicidologists, researchers, and the media that reviewed all the research to date on the suicide-media contagion and then made recommendations to the media. We can use their process as a template for our own recommendations and guidelines to help prevent mass homicide (O'Carroll & Potter, 1994). Cantor et al. (1999) examined suicide rates in a number of countries after the media and law enforcement adopted the recommendations and found that suicide rates declined in those countries, but not in countries that had not adopted the guidelines. Also, they noted a clear decline in suicide by 1997 in the United States, a couple years after the CDC recommendations were made. Stack (2003) concurred.

The "Don't Name Them" campaign and the "No Notoriety" campaign suggest that once killers are either dead or are captured, no names or likenesses of the killers should be given press

(www.dontnamethem.org). Names and likenesses are directly useful to law enforcement for many reasons: catching, booking, sending mass shooters to trial, as well as studying, profiling and tracking new potential shooters. While that information may be interesting to the public, it does not serve the public good to know it, nor does it give the public any information that could help intervene in or prevent future mass killings; as we have illustrated above, it seems to do the reverse. Scholars who develop psychological and sociological profiles of mass shooters also need access to some of the information about mass shooters to do their jobs, but the FBI often employs such experts, and shares their data with any scholar requesting information, if the case is not currently pending. Information is available, if people are willing to dig a little for it. Tufekci (2012, December 19) notes, "…these things will leak. But there is a big difference between information that can only be found if you really look for it and news stories that are blasted by every television station and paper in the country." Media sources are also welcome to report on aggregate trends, interview scholars or professionals in the field to inform the public about the overall problem of mass shootings, but the naming of specific killers adds no further knowledge for the viewer or listener on the topic, save that of sheer gossip.

Another recommendation to the media is to refrain from sharing photos, writings, "manifestos," personal likes and dislikes, family, work, and school history, or weapon preference of mass shooters with the public, especially given that many would-be killers identify in themselves similarities with the troubles of past killers, are inspired by their "bravery" and fame, are fascinated with the weapons and planning they did, and may even feel a competitive desire to surpass fatality counts of their homicidal idols. Don't Name Them urges the media to spend the same amount of air time on *victim's* names, likenesses, personal writings or histories, families, etc., as they now spend on killers. Also, the media could spend much more time on the heroic

efforts of bystanders and first responders who help quickly contain the rampage shootings and often risk their lives doing so. Follow up stories in communities that are grieving and rebuilding are also painfully absent, when compared to the rush to cover the new latest murdering spree. Journalism scholar Clayton Cramer advised that "violent crime of all types should be given attention, relative to other causes of suffering, [and] proportionate to its social costs," as far back as 1994. He warned journalists about the risks of media-induced harm, specifically copycat crime. They took no heed.

Geoff Ziezulewicz wrote "Can the Media Reduce Massacres?" for the Chicago Tribune in 2014, but used killers' names throughout the article (2014, July 23). Erica Goode and Benedict Carey of the New York Times published a recent article about mass homicide media contagion which references much of the material covered in this review article, but they chose to use mass shooters' names as well (2015, October 7). The Washington post published an article a few months ago, "Are mass shootings contagious? Some scientists who study how viruses spread say yes.," but led with huge photos of four mass killers under the title of the article. The next thumbnail image is a zoom in on four handguns (Rosenwald, 2016, March 18). Tufekci (2012, December 19) also recommends that details from law enforcement should be delayed, if released at all, and law enforcement should request that platforms remove social media content on killers. Tufekci later reminds media that the tone of their coverage must shift from "lurid and graphic" to "somber" (2015, August 27).

The media has come together before to work for good, to incite social change. They have done it, and they can do it. It is time. It is enough.

References

Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training. (n.d.). *Active Shooter Data*. Retrieved
from www.activeshooterdata.com.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
Disorders (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Appiah, K. A. (2010, October 24). The art of social change. *New York Times*, p. MM22.
Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/24/magazine/24FOB-Footbinding-
t.html.

Blair, J. P., Nichols, T., Burns, D., & Curnutt, J. R. (2013). *Active Shooter Events and Response*.
Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Blair, J. P. & Schweit, K. W. (2014). A study of active shooter incidents in the United States
between 2000-2013. Washington, D.C.: Federal Bureau of Investigations.

Bonanno, C. M. & Levenson, Jr., R. L. (2014). School shooters: History, current theoretical and
empirical findings, and strategies for prevention. *Sage Open, 4(1)*, 1-11.

Buss, D. M. (2005). *The Murderer Next Door: Why the Mind is Designed to Kill*. New York,
NY: Penguin Books.

Cantor, C. H., Neulinger, K., & De Leo, D. (1999). Australian suicide trends 1964-1997: youth
and beyond? *The Medical Journal of Australia, 171(3)*, 137-141.

Cantor, C. H., Sheehan, P., Alpers, P., & Mullen, P. (1999). Media and mass homicides.
Archives of Suicide Research, 5, 283-290.

Cramer, C. E. (1994). Ethical problems of mass murder coverage in the mass media. *Journal of
Mass Media Ethics, 9(1)*, 26-42.

Duhigg, C. (2008, July 13). Warning: Habits may be good for you. *New York Times*, p. BU1.

    Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/13/business/13habit.html.

Dutton, D. G. & Corvo, K. (2006). Transforming a flawed policy: A call to revive psychology

    and science in domestic violence research and practice. *Aggression and Violent Behavior,*

    11, 457-483.

Ehrensaft, M. K., Cohen, P., Brown, J., Smailes, E., Chen, H., & Johnson, J. G. (2003).

    Intergenerational transmission of partner violence: A 20-year prospective study. *Journal*

    of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71(4), 741-753.

Fein, R. A. (2014). "Assassins of rulers" (MacDonald, 1912). *Journal of Threat Assessment and*

    Management, 1(4), 225-227.

Fein, R. A. & Vossekuil, B. (1999). Assassination in the United States: An operational study of

    recent assassins, attackers, and near-lethal approachers. *Journal of Forensic Sciences, 44*,

    321-333.

Fessenden, F. (2000, April 9). They threaten, seethe, and unhinge, then kill in quantity. *New York*

    Times, p. 1. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/us/they-threaten-seethe-

    and-unhinge-then-kill-in-quantity.html?pagewanted=all.

Follman, M., Aronsen, G, & Pan, D. (2013, February 27). A guide to mass shootings in America.

    Mother Jones. Retrieved from http://www.motherjones.com/special-

    reports/2012/12/gunsin-america-mass-shootings.

Fox, J. A. & DeLateur, M. J. (2013). Mass shootings in America: moving beyond Newtown.

    Homicide Studies, XX(X), 1-21. 1088767913510297.

Fox, J. A. & Levin, J. (2015). *Extreme Killing: Understanding Serial and Mass Murder.* Sage

    Publications: Los Angeles, CA.

Garcia-Bernardo, J., Qi, H., Shultz, J. M., Cohen, A. M., Johnson, N. F., & Dodds, P. S. (2015). Social media affects the timing, location, and severity of school shootings. *arXiv preprint*, arXiv:1506.06305.

Goode, E. & Carey, B. (2015, October 7). Mass killings are seen as a kind of contagion. *New York Times*, pp. A21. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/08/science/mass-killers-often-rely-on-past-perpetrators-blueprints.html.

Haggerty, K. D. (2009). Modern serial killers. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *5*(2), 168-187.

Hoffmann, J., Meloy, J. R., & Sheridan, L. (2013). Contemporary research on stalking, threatening, and attacking public figures. *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*, 160-177.

Humphries, J. (2016, March 9). Suspect Kyle Odom claims shooting victim a 'Martian' on Facebook. *KXLY News*. Retrieved from: http://www.kxly.com/news/north-idaho-news/shooting-suspect-kyle-odom-mails-manifesto-to-media/38408886.

Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012, Public Law No. 112-265, 28 U.S.C. § 530C(b)(1)(M)(i). (2013).

Kalish, R. & Kimmel, M. (2010). Suicide by mass murder: Masculinity, aggrieved entitlement, and rampage school shootings. *Health Sociology Review, 19(4)*, 451-464.

Kellner, D. (2012). School shootings, crises of masculinities, and media spectacle: Some critical perspectives. *Studies in Media and Communications, 7*, 299-330.

Kimmel, M. S. & Mahler, M. (2003). Adolescent masculinity, homophobia, and violence random school shootings, 1982-2001. *American Behavioral Scientist, 46(10)*, 1439-1458.

Lankford, A. (2012, December 17). What drives suicidal mass killers. *New York Times*, The

Opinion Pages. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/opinion/what-

drives-suicidal-mass-killers.html?src=me&ref=general&_r=0.

Lankford, A. (2013). *The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage*

Shooters, and Other Self-destructive Killers. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lankford, A. (2014). Précis of the myth of martyrdom: What really drives suicide bombers,

rampage shooters, and other self-destructive killers. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences,*

37(04), 351-362.

Lankford, A. (2015). Mass shooters in the USA, 1966–2010: Differences between attackers who

live and die. *Justice Quarterly, 32(2)*, 360-379.

Lankford, A. (2016). Fame-seeking rampage shooters: Initial findings and empirical predictions.

Aggression and Violent Behavior, 27, 122-129.

Levin, J. & Madfis, E. (2009). Mass murder at school and cumulative strain a sequential model.

American Behavioral Scientist, 52(9), 1227-1245.

Madfis, E. (2014). Triple entitlement and homicidal anger: An exploration of the intersectional

identities of American mass murderers. *Men and Masculinities, 17(1)*, 67-86.

McGinty, E. E., Webster, D. W., Jarlenski, M., & Barry, C. L. (2014). News media framing of

serious mental illness and gun violence in the United States, 1997-2012. *American*

Journal of Public Health, 104(3), 406-413.

Meloy, J. R. (2011). Approaching and attacking public figures: A contemporary analysis of

communications and behavior. In *Threatening Communications and Behavior:*

Perspectives on the Pursuit of Public Figures. (Eds., C. Chauvin, ed., Board on

Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Meloy, J. R. (2014). The seven myths of mass murder. *Violence and Gender, 1(3)*, 102-104.

Meloy, J. R., Hempel, A. G., Gray, B. T., Mohandie, K., Shiva, A., & Richards, T. C. (2004). A comparative analysis of North American adolescent and adult mass murderers. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 22(3)*, 291-309.

Meloy, J. R., Hempel, A. G., Mohandie, K., Shiva, A. A., & Gray, B. T. (2001). Offender and offense characteristics of a nonrandom sample of adolescent mass murderers. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 40(6)*, 719-728.

Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldimann, A., & James, D. (2012). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 30(3)*, 256-279.

Meloy, J. R., Mohandie, K., Knoll, J. L., & Hoffmann, J. (2015). The Concept of Identification in Threat Assessment. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 33,* 213-237.

Murray, J. L. (2014). The mass killer's search for validation through infamy, media attention, and transcendence. In Michael Dellwing, Joseph Katarba, and Nathan Pino's *The Death and Resurrection of Deviance: Current Ideas and Research*, 235-251.

O'Carroll, P. W. & Potter, L. B. (1994). Suicide contagion and the reporting of suicide: Recommendations from a national workshop. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports, 43*, 9-18.

O'Toole, M. E. (2000). *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective*. Quantico, VA: Critical Incident Response Group, FBI Academy, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime.

O'Toole, M. E., Beresin, P. E. V., Berman, A., Gorelick, S. M., Helfgott, J. B., & Tobin, C.

    (2014). Celebrities through violence: The copycat effect and the influence of violence in

    social media on mass killers. *Violence and Gender, 1(3)*, 107-116.

Overberg, P., Hoyer, M., Hannan, M., Upton, J., Hansen, B., & Durkin, E. (2013). Behind the

    bloodshed: The unstold story of America's mass killings. *USA Today*. Retrieved from

    http://www.gannett-cdn.com/GDContent/mass-killings/index.html#explore.

Phillips, D. P. (1974). The influence of suggestion on suicide: Substantive and theoretical

    implications of the Werther effect. *American Sociological Review, 39(3)*, 340-354.

Phillips, D. P. (1979). Suicide, motor vehicle fatalities, and the mass media: Evidence toward a

    theory of suggestion. *American Journal of Sociology, 84(5)*, 1150-1174.

Phillips, D. P. (1980a). Airplane accidents, murder, and the mass media: Towards a theory of

    imitation and suggestion. *Social Forces, 58(4)*, 1001-1024.

Phillips, D. P. (1980b). The deterrent effect of capital punishment: New evidence on an old

    controversy. *American Journal of Sociology, 86(1)*, 139-148.

Phillips, D. P., & Liu, J. (1980). The frequency of suicides around major public holidays: Some

    surprising findings. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 10(1)*, 41-50.

Phillips, D. P. (1983). The impact of mass media violence on US homicides. *American

    Sociological Review, 48(4)*, 560-568.

Rocque, M. (2012). Exploring school rampage shootings: Research, theory, and policy. *The

    Social Science Journal, 49(3)*, 304-313.

Rosenwald, M. S. (2016, March 8). Are mass shootings contagious? Some scientists who study

    how viruses spread say yes. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from

    https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/are-mass-shootings-contagious-some-scientists-

who-study-how-viruses-spread-say-yes/2016/03/07/be44866a-df31-11e5-846c-10191d1fc4ec_story.html.

Schildkraut, J. V. (2014). Mass murder and the mass media: An examination of the media discourse on U.S. rampage shootings, 2000-2012 (Doctoral dissertation, Texas State University).

Schildkraut, J. & Elsass, H. J. (2016). *Mass Shootings: Media, Myths, and Realities*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Serazio, M. (2010). Shooting for fame: Spectacular youth, web 2.0 dystopia, and the celebrity anarchy of generation mash-up. *Communication, Culture & Critique, 3*, 416-434.

Shultz, J. M., Cohen, A. M., Muschert, G. W., & Flores de Apodaca, R. (2013). Fatal school shootings and the epidemiological context of firearm mortality in the United States. *Disaster Health, 1(2)*, 84-101.

Stack, S. (1989). The effect of publicized mass murders and murder-suicides on lethal violence, 1968–1980: A research note. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 24*(4), 202-208.

Stack, S. (2000). Media impacts on suicide: A quantitative review of 293 findings. *Social Science Quarterly, 81*, 957-971.

Stack, S. (2003). Media coverage as a risk factor in suicide. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 57(4)*, 238-240.

Towers, S. M., Gomez-Lievano, A., Khan, M., Mubayi, A., & Castillo-Chávez, C. (2015). http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/12/the-media-needs-to-stop-inspiring-copycat-murders-heres-how/266439/.

Tufekci, Z. (2012, December 19). The media needs to stop inspiring copycat murders. Here's

    how. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from

    http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/12/the-media-needs-to-stop-inspiring-

    copycat-murders-heres-how/266439/.

Tufekci, Z. (2015, August 27). The Virginia shooter wanted fame. Let's not give it to him. *New*

    York Times, The Opinion Pages. Retrieved from

    http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/27/opinion/the-virginia-shooter-wanted-fame-lets-not-

    give-it-to-him.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fzeynep-

    tufekci&action=click&contentCollection=opinion&region=stream&module=stream_unit

    &version=latest&contentPlacement=6&pgtype=collection&_r=0.

Van Brunt, B. & Lewis, W. S. (2014). Costuming, misogyny, and objectification as risk factors

    in targeted violence. *Violence and Gender*, 1(1), 25-35.

Vandello, J. A., Bosson, J. K., Cohen, D., Burnaford, R. M., & Weaver, J. R. (2008). Precarious

    manhood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95(6)*, 1325-1339.

Vossekuil, B., Fein, R. A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The Final Report*

    and Findings of the "Safe School Initiative": Implications for the Prevention of School

    Attacks in the United States. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.; United States

    Secret Service, Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.

    ED466024).

Weisbrot, D. M. (2008). Prelude to a school shooting? Assessing threatening behaviors in

    childhood and adolescence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent*

    Psychiatry, 47(8), 847-852.

Wike, T. L. & Fraser, M. W. (2009). School shootings: Making sense of the senseless. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14(3)*, 162-169.

Ziezulewicz, G. (2014, July 23). Can the media reduce massacres? *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-can-the-media-reduce-massacres-20150918-story.html.