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Chapter 13

Where There's a Will There's a Way: Examining the Possible Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Incidents of Mass Violence in the USA

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ABSTRACT

“Where there’s a will there’s a way” is a proverb that simply means if someone is determined to do something, he or she will find a way to accomplish it regardless of obstacles. Unfortunately, this is very true for those who wish to commit acts of violence wish to commit acts of violence. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on incidents of mass and multiple victim violence in the US. More specifically, what impact did efforts such as stay-at-home/shelter-in-place orders, telecommuting options for workers, school closures, cancellation of large public events, and the suspension of non-essential travel have upon the extent and characteristics of mass violence.

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INTRODUCTION

It is hard to argue that the quality of life for most Americans has not weakened and declined since the arrival of COVID-19 in early 2020, probably 2019. The coronavirus pandemic has impacted many different aspects of daily life including social wellbeing, mental health, and the economy. But while prosperity in the United States has been on the rise for more than a decade, it remains unevenly distributed in that many factors that have been at play have greatly been exaggerated during the pandemic. These factors were things such as increases in unemployment rates, suicides, drug overdose deaths, and poor self-reported mental health. This appears to be the backdrop with an unprecedented increase in the number of mass shooting beginning in January of 2021.

During 2020, mass shootings had largely been absent from headlines during the coronavirus pandemic, those deaths unfortunately replaced by victims of the virus. But during the same time, gun violence in general killed nearly 20,000 Americans, according to data from the Gun Violence Archive (retrieved from <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>), more than any other year in at least two decades. An additional 24,000 people died by suicide with a gun. This type of death in 2020 outpaced the next-highest recent year, 2017, by more than 3,600. So, gun violence remained a major issue, it's face just changed, for the time being.

Many argue that the pandemic more than likely fueled increases in gun related violence in several ways. The spread of the virus hampered many anti-crime efforts, and the required shutdowns compounded unemployment. This all occurred at a time when schools and other community programs were closed or forced to move to an online format. While beyond the scope of this chapter, the apparent growing collapse of public confidence in law enforcement that followed the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota and myriad other high profiles examples of police brutality also contributed. These issues (Khubchandani and Price, 2021) also contributed greatly to a massive surge in firearm sales.

On average (retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>), there was one mass shooting of some type every 73 days in 2020, compared with one every 36 days in 2019 and one every 45 days in 2017 and 2018. The slowdown interrupted what had been a five-year trend of more frequent and more deadly mass shootings. That gun violence increased overall even as mass shootings declined underscores the fact that those high-profile events account for a relatively small share of firearm deaths.

DEFINITIONS OF MASS SHOOTINGS

In the United States, there are several different, but common, definitions of mass shootings:

- The Congressional Research Service defines mass shootings, as multiple, firearm, homicide incidents, involving 4 or more victims at one or more locations close to one another.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation does not define “mass shooting” as its own term; it only defines a “mass murderer” as someone who kills four or more people in one location, and that does not necessarily have to be with a firearm.
- The Gun Violence Archive (GVA), a leading organization on the topic, uses this definition, as does the Giffords Law Center.

Therefore, the most useful definition of a mass shooting, then, is as a single incident in which four or more people are shot or killed. A mass shooting typically occurs in a single place and time but can include multiple locations near each other. That is the definition used by the authors in this chapter.

The problem then becomes, what definition does one use to get a complete list of this type of violence in the United States. Those working on this subject simply chooses one of the above definitions, alters it to meet their needs, and then conducts research to find events which fall under their definition. The result of this is that is very difficult to compare lists given the varying definitions. Moreover, trying to compare decades of these events is almost impossible. The best a researcher can do is to given detail on which events were included and those that were not.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MASS SHOOTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

There are a few general assumptions that most often arise after a mass shooting occurs:

- mental illness causes gun violence
- psychiatric diagnosis can predict gun crime
- shootings represent the deranged acts of mentally ill loners
- any form of gun control will not prevent mass shootings
- most perpetrated by someone who was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm
- most perpetrated by someone who displayed prior warning signs

- incidents often intermingled with acts of domestic violence
- most are far deadlier when they involve assault weapons and high-capacity magazines

It can be argued that each of these assumptions are true in particular instances. But many believe that these assumptions are often based on existing cultural stereotypes and anxieties about matters such as race/ethnicity, social class, and politics. The following is a brief overview of some of these assumptions.

Mental Illness Causes Gun Violence

The ongoing focus on mental illness causation (Metzl and MacLeish, 2015) in the wake of recent mass shootings reflects a decades-long history of more general debates in psychiatry and law about guns, gun violence, and “mental competence.” There have been some very high profile horrific mass shootings that involved perpetrators who were suffering from various forms of mental illness. These have driven the large percentage of people who believe that there needs to be much more concern over restricting people with diagnosed mental illnesses such as not being allowed to own weapons and potentially having their mental health professional being required to reveal confidential information about their therapy.

In reality (Silva, 2020), there is very little evidence based research which supports this common belief. Most research actually finds the opposite that less than 3% to 5% of United States’ crimes involve people with mental illness, and the percentages of crimes that involve guns are lower than the national average for persons not diagnosed with mental illness.

Psychiatric Diagnosis Can Predict Gun Crime

In the United States, popular and political discussions often focus extensively on the impact of mental illness as a cause of a mass shooting once one occurs (McGinty, Webster, and Barry, 2013). Details revealed after many incidents do often involve some prior warning signs about the possibility of violence, but they most often are not signs of mental illness. Many in the media have stated that, “Guns don’t kill people, the mentally ill do.” Others will call the perpetrators “delusional killers”. This has resulted in several states passing bills that require mental health professionals to report “dangerous patients” to local officials. Legislation in several states now mandates that psychiatrists assess their patients for the potential to commit violent gun crime.

Supporters of these types of laws argue (Strawser and Kennedy, 2021) that they provide important tools for law enforcement officials to identify potentially violent

persons. History suggests, however, that psychiatrists are inefficient gatekeepers in this regard. Data supporting the predictive value of psychiatric diagnosis in matters of gun violence is thin at best. Psychiatric diagnosis is largely an observational tool, not an extrapolative one. Largely for this reason, research continues to suggest that psychiatrists using clinical judgment are not much better than laypersons at predicting which individual patients will commit violent crimes and which will not.

Any Form of Gun Control Will Not Prevent Mass Shootings

The mantra that gun control “would not have prevented Newtown” is frequently cited by opponents of such efforts (Burton, Logan, Pickett, Jonson and Burton, 2021). This contention generally assumes that because most of the weapons used in the most recent mass shootings were purchased through unregulated private sale or gun shows, gun control in itself would be ineffective at stopping gun crime. And, that gun purchase restrictions or background checks are in any case rendered moot when shooters have hidden mental illnesses.

While it is assumed that no one wants another mass shooting, much less one at an elementary or high school, it is widely acknowledged by persons on all sides of the gun control debate that there is no guarantee that the types of restrictions almost always voted down by the U.S. Senate, based largely on background checks, would prevent the next mass crime.

It is difficult to argue though that the ease of accessibility to high powered large capacity assault weapons do not make a mass shooting much worse. Even though it is difficult to argue this fact, many do. But the argument never seems to focus on this fact, it just focuses of the freedoms which are, depending on one's interpretations, availed to all Americans under the 2nd Amendment. This argument sadly simply consumes and rational public discourse on the issue.

ANALYSIS OF MASS SHOOTINGS

The following charts were derived from public record reports of mass shootings occurring in the United States between January of 1984 to August of 2021. Additional criteria used is below:

- The perpetrator took, or attempted to take, the lives of at least four people
- The killings were carried out by a lone shooter (except in the case of the Columbine High School massacre and the Westside Middle School killings, which involved two shooters)

- The shootings occurred in a public place or a large event which was inside but moved outside
- Crimes primarily related to gang activity or armed robbery are not included, nor are mass killings that took place in private homes (often stemming from domestic violence)
- Perpetrators who died or were wounded during the attack are not included in the victim tallies

Chart of all Mass Shooting Incidents Used

The following is a table of all mass shooting incidents (based on the working definition of the authors) used in the charts presented below. There were 306 incidents identified during this time period.

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
August 20 1982	8	3	Texas
June 29 1984	6	1	Texas
July 18 1984	22	19	California
August 20 1986	15	6	Oklahoma
April 23 1987	6	14	Florida
February 16 1988	7	4	California
January 17 1989	6	29	California
September 14 1989	9	12	Kentucky
June 18 1990	10	4	Florida
October 16 1991	24	20	Texas
November 1 1991	6	1	Iowa
November 14 1991	5	5	California
May 1 1992	4	10	California
October 15 1992	5	0	New York
July 1 1993	9	6	California
August 6 1993	4	8	North Carolina
December 7 1993	6	19	New York
June 20 1994	5	23	Washington
April 3 1995	6	0	Texas
February 9 1996	6	1	Florida
December 14 1996	4	1	Colorado
September 15 1997	4	3	South Carolina

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
December 18 1997	5	2	California
March 24 1998	5	10	Arkansas
March 6 1998	5	1	Connecticut
May 21 1998	4	25	Oregon
April 20 1999	13	24	Colorado
July 29 1999	9	13	Georgia
November 2 1999	7	0	Hawaii
September 15 1999	8	7	Texas
December 30 1999	5	3	Florida
December 26 2000	7	0	Massachusetts
February 5 2001	5	4	Illinois
July 8 2003	7	8	Mississippi
September 16 2003	12	8	DC
December 8 2004	5	7	Ohio
March 12 2005	7	4	Wisconsin
March 21 2005	10	5	Minnesota
January 30 2006	8	0	California
March 25 2006	7	2	Washington
October 2 2006	6	5	Pennsylvania
April 16 2007	32	23	Virginia
December 5 2007	9	4	Nebraska
February 12 2007	6	4	Utah
May 12 2007	3	0	Ohio
October 7 2007	6	1	Wisconsin
February 7 2008	6	2	Missouri
February 14 2008	5	21	Illinois
June 25 2008	6	1	Kentucky
March 29 2009	8	3	North Carolina
April 3 2009	14	4	New York
November 5 2009	13	31	Texas
November 29 2009	4	1	Washington
August 3 2010	9	2	Connecticut
January 8 2011	6	13	Arizona
September 6 2011	5	7	Nevada
October 12 2011	8	1	California
February 21 2012	5	0	Georgia

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
April 2 2012	7	3	California
May 20 2012	6	1	Washington
July 20 2012	12	70	Colorado
August 5 2012	7	3	Wisconsin
September 27 2012	7	1	Minnesota
December 14 2012	27	2	Connecticut
March 13 2013	5	2	New York
April 21 2013	5	0	Washington
June 7 2013	6	3	California
July 26 2013	7	0	Florida
February 20 2014	4	2	California
April 3 2014	3	12	Texas
May 23 2014	6	13	California
October 24 2014	5	1	Washington
June 11 2015	3	1	Wisconsin
June 15 2015	9	1	South Carolina
July 16 2015	5	2	Tennessee
October 1 2015	9	9	Oregon
October 31 2015	3	0	Colorado
November 27 2015	3	9	Colorado
December 2 2015	14	21	California
February 12 2016	49	53	Florida
February 20 2016	6	2	Michigan
February 25 2016	3	14	Kansas
July 7 2016	5	11	Texas
July 17 2016	3	3	Louisiana
September 23 2016	5	0	Washington
January 6 2017	5	6	Florida
April 18 2017	3	0	California
June 5 2017	5	0	Florida
June 7 2017	3	0	Pennsylvania
June 14 2017	3	2	California
November 1 2017	3	0	Colorado
November 5 2017	26	20	Texas
November 14 2017	5	10	California
October 1 2017	58	546	Nevada

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Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
October 18 2017	3	3	Maryland
April 22 2018	4	4	Tennessee
February 14 2018	17	17	Florida
January 28 2018	4	1	Pennsylvania
June 28 2018	5	2	Maryland
March 9 2018	3	0	California
May 18 2018	10	13	Texas
November 7 2018	12	22	California
November 19 2018	3	0	Illinois
October 27 2018	11	6	Pennsylvania
September 12 2018	5	0	California
September 20 2018	3	3	Maryland
September 6 2018	3	2	Ohio
January 23 2019	5	0	Florida
January 24 2019	3	1	Pennsylvania
February 15 2019	5	6	Illinois
May 31 2019	12	4	Virginia
July 28 2019	3	12	California
August 3 2019	22	26	Texas
August 4 2019	9	27	Ohio
August 31 2019	7	25	Texas
December 6 2019	3	8	Florida
December 10 2019	4	3	New Jersey
February 26 2020	5	0	Wisconsin
March 16 2020	4	0	Missouri
March 16 2021	8	1	Georgia
March 22 2021	10	0	Colorado
March 31 2021	4	1	California
April 15 2021	8	7	Indiana
May 26 2021	9	1	California
May 26 2021	9	0	California
May 30 2021	1	4	Alabama
May 30 2021	0	4	Illinois
May 30 2021	3	20	Florida
May 30 2021	3	20	Florida
May 31 2021	1	5	Ohio

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
May 31 2021	0	4	Missouri
May 31 2021	0	4	New York
May 31 2021	0	4	New York
May 31 2021	1	5	Ohio
May 31 2021	0	4	Missouri
June 2 2021	0	4	Ohio
June 2 2021	0	6	Ohio
June 2 2021	0	4	Arkansas
June 4 2021	1	3	Michigan
June 5 2021	2	2	Indiana
June 5 2021	0	9	Louisiana
June 6 2021	0	5	California
June 6 2021	0	8	Illinois
June 6 2021	0	4	Missouri
June 6 2021	1	4	Utah
June 6 2021	0	4	North Carolina
June 6 2021	0	8	Ohio
June 6 2021	3	6	Florida
June 7 2021	3	3	Florida
June 7 2021	0	6	Ohio
June 8 2021	0	5	Texas
June 8 2021	1	3	Tennessee
June 8 2021	1	4	Tennessee
June 10 2021	1	3	Michigan
June 10 2021	0	4	New York
June 11 2021	2	6	Georgia
June 11 2021	1	3	North Carolina
June 11 2021	2	2	Washington
June 12 2021	3	4	Ohio
June 12 2021	0	5	Ohio
June 11 2021	0	5	Texas
June 12 2021	1	9	Illinois
June 12 2021	1	13	Texas
June 13 2021	1	3	Kentucky
June 13 2021	1	6	Ohio
June 14 2021	2	2	Michigan

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
June 14 2021	2	2	Georgia
June 14 2021	1	3	Florida
June 15 2021	5	3	Illinois
June 15 2021	0	5	Illinois
June 15 2021	3	2	Alabama
June 16 2021	1	5	Maryland
June 17 2021	0	4	Virginia
June 17 2021	1	3	Ohio
June 17 2021	0	4	New Jersey
June 17 2021	2	2	North Carolina
June 18 2021	0	5	Minnesota
June 19 2021	1	4	Alaska
June 19 2021	0	4	New Jersey
June 19 2021	2	4	Louisiana
June 19 2021	1	7	California
June 20 2021	1	4	Colorado
June 20 2021	1	4	Indiana
June 20 2021	0	8	Texas
June 20 2021	1	3	Ohio
June 20 2021	1	10	Florida
June 20 2021	1	3	New Jersey
June 20 2021	1	3	Virginia
June 20 2021	3	5	California
June 21 2021	0	4	DC
June 21 2021	3	4	Missouri
June 23 2021	0	4	Illinois
June 23 2021	0	4	Illinois
June 23 2021	0	4	New York
June 23 2021	2	2	Alabama
June 24 2021	1	4	Florida
June 25 2021	0	4	Ohio
June 25 2021	0	5	New York
June 25 2021	0	4	Illinois
June 26 2021	1	3	Illinois
June 26 2021	1	3	Texas
June 26 2021	1	3	Alabama

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
June 27 2021	1	3	Illinois
June 27 2021	1	5	Illinois
June 27 2021	1	10	Illinois
June 27 2021	0	4	North Carolina
June 27 2021	3	1	Tennessee
June 30 2021	0	4	Illinois
June 30 2021	0	4	Louisiana
June 30 2021	1	3	Delaware
June 30 2021	3	1	Texas
July 1 2021	0	7	Illinois
July 1 2021	2	2	Virginia
July 1 2021	2	4	South Carolina
July 2 2021	0	4	Virginia
July 2 2021	1	4	Pennsylvania
July 2 2021	1	4	Illinois
July 3 2021	0	4	Illinois
July 3 2021	1	3	Georgia
July 3 2021	3	1	North Carolina
July 3 2021	0	4	Pennsylvania
July 4 2021	0	8	Texas
July 4 2021	0	4	Illinois
July 4 2021	0	4	California
July 4 2021	0	5	Illinois
July 4 2021	1	3	Illinois
July 4 2021	1	4	Nebraska
July 4 2021	0	5	Texas
July 4 2021	3	3	Texas
July 4 2021	0	4	Missouri
July 4 2021	0	4	Ohio
July 4 2021	2	7	Nevada
July 5 2021	1	3	New York
July 5 2021	2	4	Illinois
July 5 2021	1	3	California
July 5 2021	1	11	Ohio
July 8 2021	0	4	Connecticut
July 9 2021	0	4	California

continued on following page

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
July 10 2021	1	3	Ohio
July 10 2021	0	4	Massachusetts
July 10 2021	0	6	Pennsylvania
July 11 2021	1	5	Texas
July 12 2021	0	4	New Jersey
July ` 12 2021	0	4	New York
July 12 2021	2	3	Pennsylvania
July 13 2021	0	4	Indiana
July 13 2021	1	6	Michigan
July 14 2021	0	5	Illinois
July 14 2021	0	5	Illinois
July 14 2021	2	2	Delaware
July 15 2021	1	4	Montana
July 15 2021	0	4	Massachusetts
July 15 2021	1	5	Texas
July 16 2021	2	4	California
July 16 2021	1	5	DC
July 16 2021	1	3	Illinois
July 16 2021	1	3	South Carolina
July 16 2021	1	4	Pennsylvania
July 16 2021	0	4	New Hampshire
July 17 2021	1	6	Oregon
July 17 2021	0	6	Illinois
July 18 2021	0	4	North Carolina
July 18 2021	1	3	California
July 18 2021	3	2	Texas
July 18 2021	1	4	Florida
July 18 2021	4	3	Arizona
July 18 2021	1	3	Ohio
July 19 2021	0	4	Illinois
July 19 2021	0	6	New Jersey
July 20 2021	4	0	Texas
July 21 2021	0	5	Illinois
July 21 2021	0	8	Illinois
July 21 2021	2	3	Illinois
July 21 2021	1	4	Maryland

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Where There's a Will There's a Way

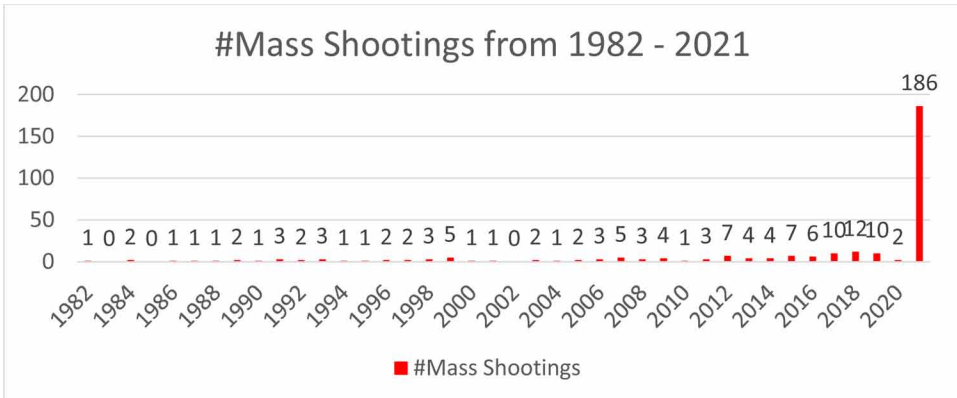
Month Date Year	Deaths	Injuries	State
July 22 2021	1	5	Texas
July 23 2021	2	4	California
July 23 2021	0	4	South Carolina
July 23 2021	2	2	South Carolina
July 24 2021	2	3	Georgia
July 24 2021	0	4	Ohio
July 24 2021	0	6	Texas
July 25 2021	2	3	Washington
July 25 2021	5	1	California
July 25 2021	0	5	Illinois
July 25 2021	0	6	Michigan
July 28 2021	1	3	Alabama
July 28 2021	0	4	DC
July 28 2021	1	4	South Carolina
July 29 2021	0	4	Iowa
July 29 2021	3	2	Pennsylvania
July 31 2021	1	3	Illinois
July 31 2021	0	5	Indiana
July 31 2021	0	5	Kentucky
July 31 2021	2	2	Michigan
July 31 2021	0	10	New York
July 31 2021	1	5	Ohio
July 31 2021	0	5	Ohio
August 1 2021	1	3	Louisiana
August 1 2021	0	5	Louisiana
August 1 2021	0	5	Rhode Island
August 1 2021	1	3	Texas
August 2 2021	0	9	South Carolina
August 2 2021	3	1	South Carolina
August 3 2021	1	3	Illinois
August 4 2021	0	4	Pennsylvania

Mass Shootings each Year from 1982 to 2021

The following chart represented all mass shooting events that occurred from 1982 to August of 2021.

Where There's a Will There's a Way

Figure 1.

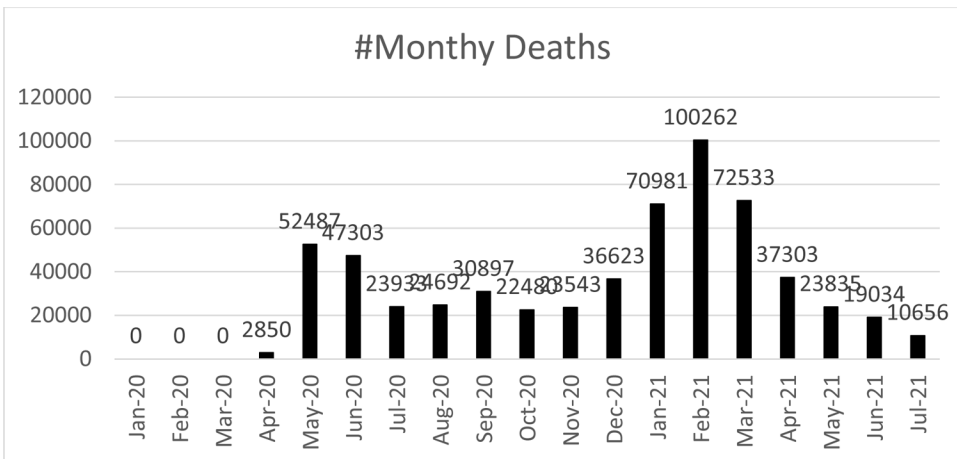


The chart is extremely skewed given the unprecedented increase in the number of mass shootings in the United States Beginning in January of 2021.

Reported Deaths from COVID-19

This chart is an overview of the number of reported COVID-19 related deaths each month from January 2020 to July of 2021.

Figure 2.

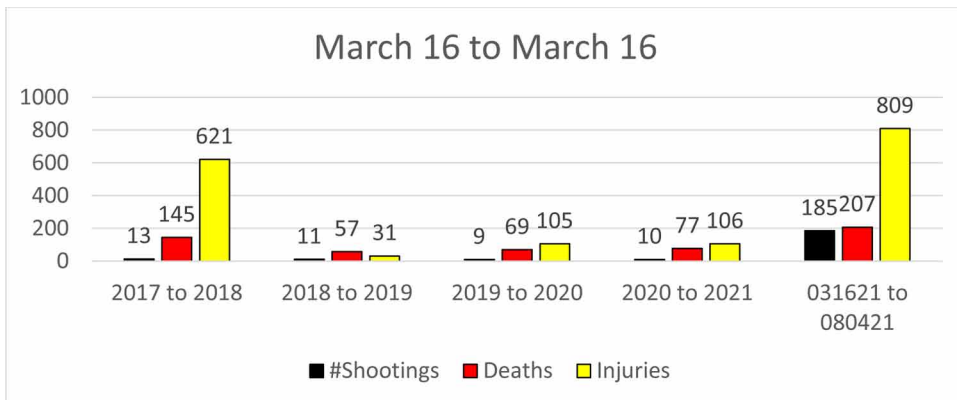


The chart shows the massive number of deaths for each month. It also show the decrease once the vaccinations were made available to the public.

Mass Shootings, Deaths, and Injuries (March 16, 2017 to March 16, 2021)

The following chart represents the number of mass shootings which occurred between March 16, 2017 and March 16, 2021. The events have been divided in this way to compare various points of when “lock down and stay at home” orders originated. The first national orders began in mid-March of 2020 and, for the sake of this chapter, through March of 2021 when masks mandates and recommendations were beginning to be changed for those who were fully vaccinated. It was hoped that by separating the incidents in this fashion an analysis could reveal changes during these times. The chart also compares the number of shootings with the number of deaths and injuries.

Figure 3.

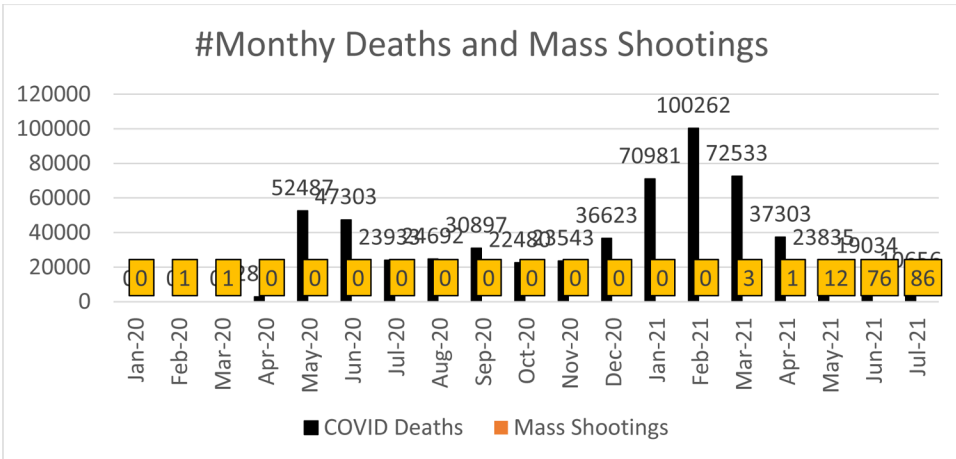


The chart reflect what all the charts reflect, that there was definitely a lull in the number of mass shootings during the “COVID year” of 2020, but the ones that did occur had a larger number of deaths and injuries. As all charts will show, the number of mass shootings increased exponentially beginning in 2021.

Reported Deaths from COVID-19 and Mass Shootings

The following table represents a comparison of the monthly reported deaths due to the pandemic in the United States in comparison to the number of mass shooting events.

Figure 4.

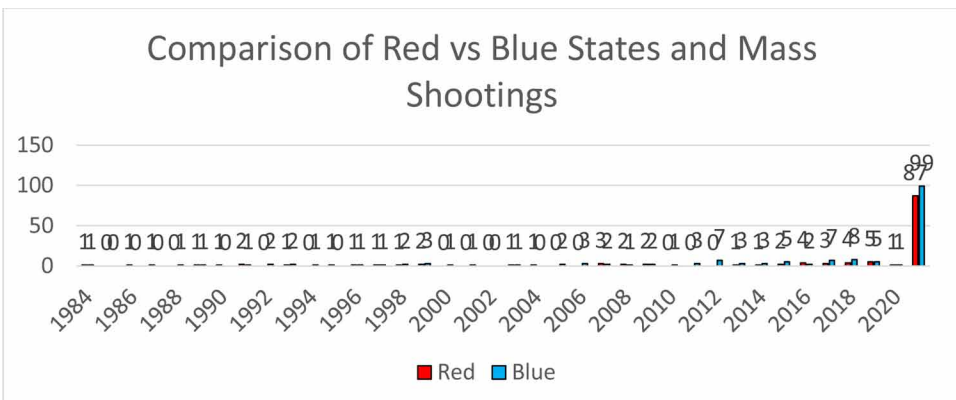


It is apparent that the number of mass shootings greatly decreased during the most intense pandemic months.

History of Mass Shootings for “Red vs Blue States” in 2020 Presidential Election

Just for means of comparison, the following chart is a comparison of the number of mass shooting with occurred from 1982 to 2021 in the “Blue” versus “Red” states. The states were divided by how the electoral college voted in the 2020 presidential election.

Figure 5.



Interestingly, there were slightly more mass shooting in the “Blue” states over the “Red” states. The majority of this can be attributed to the extremely large number of events in the State of Illinois each year.

The Red vs Blue States in the 2020 Presidential Election

Table 1.

Red States	Blue States
Louisiana	Arizona
Kansas	California
Mississippi	Colorado
Arkansas	Connecticut
Alaska	DC
Florida	Delaware
Wyoming	Georgia
North Carolina	Illinois
Ohio	Maine
Utah	Maryland
Alabama	Massachusetts
North Dakota	Michigan
Montana	Minnesota
Kentucky	Nevada
South Carolina	New Hampshire
Texas	New Jersey
Missouri	New Mexico
South Dakota	New York
Iowa	Oregon
Tennessee	Pennsylvania
Idaho	Rhode Island
Oklahoma	Vermont
West Virginia	Virginia
Indiana	Washington
Nebraska	Wisconsin

PROGRESSION OF COVID-19 RESPONSE IN 2020

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) dominated everyone and everything across the planet in 2020. As the year ended, the United States surpassed 20 million infections from SARS-CoV-2, and more than 346,000 deaths. Globally, cases rose to 83,832,334 and 1,824,590 deaths. The following is a list of how the pandemic evolved and progressed through that first year, ultimately resulting in the arrival of life saving vaccines.

This is an updated look at how the pandemic progressed throughout 2020.

- January 9: WHO Announces Mysterious Coronavirus-Related Pneumonia in Wuhan, China
- January 20: CDC Says 3 US Airports Will Begin Screening for Coronavirus
- January 21: CDC Confirms First US Coronavirus Case
- January 21: Chinese Scientist Confirms COVID-19 Human Transmission
- January 23: Wuhan Now Under Quarantine
- January 31: WHO Issues Global Health Emergency
- February 2: Global Air Travel Is Restricted
- February 3: US Declares Public Health Emergency
- February 10: China's COVID-19 Deaths Exceed Those of SARS Crisis
- February 25: CDC Says COVID-19 Is Heading Toward Pandemic Status
- March 6: 21 Passengers on California Cruise Ship Test Positive
- March 11: WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic
- March 13: Trump Declares COVID-19 a National Emergency
- March 13: Travel Ban on Non-US Citizens Traveling from Europe Goes into Effect
- March 16: Dr. Gordon A. Crews, having been thrown out of his girlfriend's apartment that afternoon, witnessed the first bar (Shamrock Bar and Grille) to be closed to outside customers at 5:00pm by a state in Lexington, KY.
- March 17: University of Minnesota Begins Testing Hydroxychloroquine
- March 17: CMS Temporarily Expands Use of Telehealth
- March 17: Administration Asks Congress to Send Americans Direct Financial Relief
- March 19: California Issues Statewide Stay-at-Home Order
- March 24: With Clinical Trials on Hold, Innovation Stalls
- March 25: Reports Find Extended Shutdowns Can Delay Second Wave
- March 26: Senate Passes CARES Act
- March 27: Trump Signs CARES Act into Law
- March 30: FDA Authorizes Use of Hydroxychloroquine
- March 31: COVID-19 Can Be Transmitted Through the Eye

- April 8: Troubles With the COVID-19 Cocktail
- April 16: “Gating Criteria” Emerge as a Way to Reopen the Economy
- April 28: Young, Poor Avoid Care for COVID-19 Symptoms
- April 29: NIH Trial Shows Early Promise for Remdesivir
- May 1: Remdesivir Wins EUA
- May 9: Saliva-Based Diagnostic Test Allowed for At-Home Use
- May 12: Death Toll Likely Underestimated, Fauci Testifies
- May 21: United States and AstraZeneca Form Vaccine Deal
- May 28: US COVID-19 Deaths Pass the 100,000 Mark
- June 4: Lancet, NEJM Retract COVID-19 Studies on Hydroxychloroquine
- June 10: US COVID-19 Cases Reach 2 Million
- June 16: HHS Announces COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Will Be Free for Some
- June 18: WHO Ends Study Into Hydroxychloroquine
- June 20: NIH Halts Trial of Hydroxychloroquine
- June 22: Study Suggests 80% of Cases in March Went Undetected
- June 26: White House Coronavirus Task Force Addresses Rising Cases in the South
- June 29: Gilead Sets Price for Remdesivir at \$3120
- June 30: Fauci Warns New COVID-19 Cases Could Hit 100,000 a Day
- July 2: States Reverse Reopening Plans
- July 6: Scientists, Citing Airborne Transmission, Ask WHO to Revise Guidance
- July 7: CMS Plans to Pay More for Home Dialysis Equipment
- July 7: US Surpasses 3 Million Infections, Begins WHO Withdrawal
- July 9: WHO Announces COVID-19 Can Be Airborne
- July 14: States With COVID-19 Spikes Report Greatest Health Insurance Coverage Losses
- July 14: Early Moderna Data Point to Vaccine Candidate’s Efficacy
- July 15: New Hospital Data Reporting Protocol Prompts Concern
- July 16: US Reports New Record of Daily COVID-19 Cases
- July 20: Diagnostic Delays From COVID-19 May Increase Cancer-Related Deaths
- July 21: Vaccines from AstraZeneca, CanSino Biologics Show Promising Results
- July 22: HHS, DOD Announce Vaccine Distribution Agreement with Pfizer and BioNTech
- July 23: Antibody Levels Drop After First 3 Months of COVID-19 Infection
- July 23: Antibody Cocktail May Treat, Prevent COVID-19
- July 27: Moderna Vaccine Begins Phase 3 Trial, Receives \$472M From Trump Administration

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- July 27: Senate Introduces HEALS Act
- July 29: FDA Grants Truvian EUA for Rapid Antibody Test
- August 3: New US Pandemic Phase; US to Pay Sanofi, GlaxoSmithKline \$2B for Vaccine
- August 4: Rural Hotspots Face Lack of Intensive Care Unit Beds
- August 7: Talks Stall on Second Relief Package
- August 11: Trump Administration Reaches Deal with Moderna
- August 12: Severe Obesity Increases Mortality Risk From COVID-19
- August 13: Biden Calls for 3-Month Mask Mandate
- August 15: FDA Approves Saliva Test
- August 17: COVID-19 Now the Third-Leading Cause of Death in the US
- August 23: Convalescent Plasma Is Cleared for Use by FDA
- August 24: Remdesivir's Clinical Benefits Questioned
- August 25: CDC Changes Testing Guidance, but Later Reverses Itself
- August 26: FDA Grants EUA to Abbott's Rapid Test
- August 28: First Known Case of COVID-19 Reinfection Reported in the US
- September 1: US Rejects WHO Global COVID-19 Vaccine Effort
- September 3: Steroids Reduce Mortality in Severe Cases; Sanofi, GSK Begin Human Vaccine Trials
- September 3: Bioethicists Weigh in on Equitable Vaccine Distribution
- September 8: AstraZeneca Halts Phase 3 Vaccine Trial
- September 14: US Airports Stop Screening International Travelers
- September 14: Pfizer, BioNTech Expand Phase 3 Trial
- September 14: NIH Launches Investigation into Halted Astrazeneca Trial
- September 15: CDC Reports on Spread of COVID-19 at Restaurants
- September 16: Trump Administration Releases Vaccine Distribution Plan
- September 17: Europe Reports Rising COVID-19 Cases
- September 21: CDC Pulls Guidance Saying COVID-19 Transmission Is Airborne
- September 21: Johnson & Johnson Begins Phase 3 Vaccine Trial
- September 23: A New, More Contagious Strain of COVID-19 Is Discovered
- September 25: Midwest States See Increase in COVID-19 Cases
- September 28: Global COVID-19 Deaths Surpass 1 Million
- September 29: HHS to Distribute 100 Million Rapid Tests to States
- September 29: Regeneron Announces Positive Results for Monoclonal Antibody Treatment
- October 2: Trump, First Lady Test Positive for COVID-19; Trump Enters Hospital
- October 5: Trump Leaves Hospital, Continues Receiving Treatment

- October 8: NEJM Criticizes Trump's COVID-19 Response; 39 States See Case Spikes
- October 8: More Americans Trust Biden to Lead Health Care System
- October 8: White House COVID-19 Outbreak Grows to 34
- October 9: US Signs Deal with AstraZeneca
- October 12: Johnson & Johnson Halts Vaccine Trial
- October 15: US Cases Spike Again; Studies Connect Blood Type and COVID-19 Risk
- October 19: Global Cases Top 40 Million
- October 22: FDA Approves Remdesivir as First COVID-19 Drug
- October 23: AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson Announce Restart of COVID-19 Vaccine Trials
- October 28: CMS Issues Vaccine, Treatment Coverage Rules
- November 4: US Reports Unprecedented 100,000 Cases in 1 Day
- November 5: Study Predicts Difficulties in Nationwide COVID-19 Immunity
- November 9: President-Elect Biden Announces COVID-19 Transition Team; Pfizer Publishes Vaccine Results
- November 9: FDA Issues EUA for Eli Lilly's Antibody Treatment
- November 11: Indoor Venues Responsible for Much of COVID-19's Spread
- November 16: Moderna Reveals Vaccine Efficacy Results
- November 16: FDA to Move Rapidly on EUAs for Pfizer, Moderna Vaccines
- November 17: Fauci Highlights the Need for Long-term Follow-up of COVID-19 Effects
- November 18: Pfizer, BioNTech Vaccine Is 95% Effective
- November 20: Pfizer, BioNTech Submit EUA Application; CDC Warns Against Holiday Travel
- November 23: AstraZeneca Reports Vaccine Is 90% Effective; FDA Grants EUA for Second Antibody Treatment
- December 10: FDA Advisory Panel Recommends Pfizer, BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine
- December 11: FDA Agrees to EUA for COVID-19 Vaccine from Pfizer, BioNTech
- December 17: FDA Panel Backs Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine
- December 18: FDA Signs Off on EUA for Moderna's COVID-19 Vaccine
- December 21: New COVID-19 Variant Circling the UK
- December 23: US Buys More Pfizer Vaccine
- December 28: Novavax Starts Phase 3 Trial of COVID-19 Vaccine
- December 29: First US Case of New COVID-19 Variant Found in Colorado
- December 30: UK Approves Emergency Authorization for the AstraZeneca and Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine

- December 31: US Falls Short of Goal to Give 20 Million Vaccinations by Year End

FINDINGS

The major finding of this very brief research is simple – the only impact that COVID-19 had on mass shootings is that it removed potential victims from public places. Due to lockdown and stay at home orders, people were not in malls, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and public streets. The victims of the mass shootings that did occur had moved indoors and the violence followed them.

Another finding, much more anecdotal in nature, is that people are simply becoming “meaner” in the United States. There seems to be no trust in anything or anyone anymore. There is no trust in the media, the government, or any public official or figure. Conspiracy theories run rampant and many disregard “science” and live in very small echo chambers where misinformation and falsehoods replace unbiased truths.

Today, people are having physical fights at school board meetings at school board meetings when discussing the requirement of face masks as children look to return to school. Flight attendants are having their teeth knocked out by passengers after asking them to wear a face mask. Politicians are inciting riots and attacks on other politicians with hateful remarks over social media. While there has always been differences between the “Blue” and “Red” states, they have now become indicative of very frightening and dangerous trends of replacing discourse with physical assaults between those that live there. With all of this, why would one be surprised to see the unprecedented increase in the number of mass shootings.

The final finding is that America, while always a violent country, it is also a mean one.

CONCLUSION

With 24/7 news coverage, there seems to be breaking news alerts daily about a new mass shooting somewhere in the United States. This country is not the only country with mental illness, domestic violence, or hate filled racist ideologies, but no nation has the number of mass shootings. But this country also has the weakest gun laws and highest gun ownership.

Given the media attention given to mass shootings, it would appear that they are the largest form of gun violence but in reality, it is just the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of these types of deaths come from other forms of violence.

Nevertheless, because of the high number of casualties and extensive and horrific media coverage associated with them, each mass shooting draws much more attention by the general public.

One would think that such attention and concern would allow for a productive national discussion, but instead it just becomes fodder for political and social adversaries. Instead, there needs to be rational and unbiased examinations of the complex interrelations between gun related crimes, mental illnesses, social economic issues, and wide availability of high powered assault weapons. This combined with a deteriorating interest in discussing anything in a rational manner by people with varying political views, the future is bleak.

As the title of this chapter states, “where there’s a will, there’s a way,” violence will always be an option for some people who wish to address an issue. But is sadly appears that there is a growing percentage of people who are developing this “will”. American society has always tried to address the “way” with law enforcement, security measures, and incarceration. Maybe it is time to focus on the “will”.

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