

Mass Shooting Prevention: What can Local Law Enforcement do?

Alycia Mary Shelton

School of Behavioral Sciences, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

Jason K. Ward EdD, Committee Chair

Dr. Brandon Simmons., Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Minimal research has been conducted on law enforcement's influence in the prevention of mass shootings. At this stage, researchers describe needing more information about mass shooting prevention tactics. Since minimal research has been conducted on law enforcement's influence on mass shooting prevention, the goal was to determine what they believe can be done. Guiding this study was phenomenology, the study of conscious experiences as they appear in the first person. Phenomenology has been crucial in the tradition of European philosophy throughout the 20th century (Smith & Spiegler, 2017). Law enforcement officers should be able both to critique current mass shooting prevention tactics and to provide guidance to identify prevention tactics.

Keywords: United States, mass shootings, background check, firearms, prevention

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband for supporting me throughout my doctoral journey. I could not have completed this dissertation without the extra time he spent keeping the house in order or without his constant encouragement and wisdom.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the victims of the Columbine shooting that occurred in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999. At the time of this mass shooting, I was in elementary school and was deeply impacted by the lives lost in this horrific shooting. I have been preparing to write this dissertation ever since. I hope that I can make a difference in the world with this dissertation and make a call to action to prevent further mass shootings from occurring. No one should ever leave their house wondering if they will come back alive.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge my dear friend Jeffrey Kirk for his dedication to our country as an Army veteran and later as a law enforcement officer.

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List of Abbreviations

Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT)

Comprehensive Background Checks (CBC)

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)

Gun Violence Restricting Order (GVRO)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)

National Rifle Association (NRA)

Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

POWER (Police Officer Wellness, Ethics, and Resilience)

Special Weapons and Tactics team (SWAT)

Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC)

Thematic Analysis (TA)

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

The research topic of this study is how local law enforcement agencies influence mass shooting prevention policies. The proposed study fills a current gap in the literature, which excludes law enforcement agencies from influencing prevention policies related to mass shootings. Right now, when a mass shooting occurs, four assumptions are made about why it occurred: that only the mentally ill commit gun violence, that a psychiatric diagnosis can predict whether an individual will engage in a violent crime, that mentally ill loners commit mass shootings, and that gun control will not prevent mass shootings (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015). Even though assumptions are made about why mass shootings occur, that does not mean that they are valid. The four assumptions that are made about why a mass shooting occurred are discussed in greater detail as the overview continues.

Mass shootings are a common occurrence in the United States. Current research indicates that over three-quarters of shooters legally obtained the firearms that they use (Follman, 2012). In some instances, mass shooters have both intentionally and unintentionally provided clues that they were planning a violent act. Before a mass shooting, and in situations where clues are provided, this is referred to as leakage. In a study conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations from 2000–2013, 56% of active shooters indicated before a shooting that they were either planning a mass shooting or had violent thoughts. Research has indicated that when leakage occurs, the public is reluctant to report concerning behavior to law enforcement. When there is trust in law enforcement, positive bystander behavior, such as reporting threats, is more likely to occur. When law enforcement receives reports about a potential violent act, they research the individual's criminal history and interview the individual as well. Law enforcement

is accustomed to being lied to, so even valid reports of impending violence may be overlooked as a result. However, when law enforcement has truthful information that they can investigate, they are successful in preventing mass shootings by having a rapid response (Lankford et al., 2019). Law enforcement, due to the extensive training they receive, could make a difference in mass shooting prevention tactics. The goal of this research is to further determine what both state and local law enforcement agencies believe can be done to prevent future mass shootings and loss of life. This chapter includes background information about the history of mass shootings, primarily theories as to why mass shootings occur and how they can be prevented. In the Situation to Self-section, I discuss why I am conducting this study. Later in the chapter there are individual sections discussing the problem, the purpose, and the significance of this study. The end of this chapter includes the common definitions and research questions used in this study.

Background

Mass murders are not a new form of homicide. Mass murders have been recorded as occurring as far back as the beginning of the 20th century. The only difference between the beginning of the 20th century and now is the frequency of mass murders that occur. In the beginning of the 20th century, it was recorded that a mass murder occurred once in a month's time. In the present day, mass murders are occurring once every ten days (Huff-Corzine et al., 2013). Historically speaking, there has been a significant increase in the frequency of how often mass murders, specifically mass shootings, occur. Moving on, the research that occurs after a mass shooting will be discussed.

Due to the number of mass shootings in the United States every year, research has been ongoing to determine why they occur. Research has also been conducted to determine what can be done to prevent future mass shootings. Research has been conducted on the mental health of

individuals engaged in mass shootings, how they obtained the weapon(s) used during the shooting, and what measures can be taken to prevent future mass shootings. However, none of the research has resulted in any resolution. Mass shootings continue to occur, and there is no understanding as to how future mass shootings can be prevented.

There have been theories as to why mass shootings have occurred and why they continue to occur. In 80% of recent school shootings, the shooter(s) obtained their firearms from family members or close relatives (Lee et al., 2020). Multiple data sources have also indicated that most guns utilized in mass shootings are obtained legally. Currently, United States federal law prohibits individuals from possessing firearms if they have been involuntarily committed, are determined to be mentally defective, or meet several other disqualifying criteria (Lankford et al., 2019). This has led to one theory that mass shootings occur due to easy accessibility to firearms (Miller & Bryant, 2021). Although this is not a theory that has been proven, more research may lead to it being conclusive. A discussion about the political systems theory that is grounding this study will be discussed next.

Grounding this study is political systems theory. Political systems theory incorporates causal connections between aspects of the belief system and the thought that belief systems are influenced by external factors. The necessary components of political belief systems theory can form by conceptualizing an individual's belief system as a network of connected attitudes and identities which, by way of interactions between the elements and external influences, produces the disparate phenomena in the belief systems literature. Political belief systems are beneficial in the study of social sciences to understand both the political and non-political behaviors of citizens (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). Understanding the reasoning behind a citizen or citizens' behavior is crucial to social psychology, which is what law enforcement needs to be able to

accomplish. Law enforcement should be able both to critique current mass shooting prevention tactics and to provide guidance about prevention tactics. The next paragraph goes into greater detail about the components of the political systems theory.

The political systems theory encompasses three components. The first component is that at least some citizens must be connected to the political system. Specifically, elements, such as attitudes are an example of what could be the connection. The second component is that one element must influence another. The last component is that any theory of the political system must allow for exogenous influence on the belief system (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). If not all components of the political system theory are followed, the theory will not succeed. Moving on, the discussion about the mentally ill being legal able to purchase firearms will be addressed.

Researchers have investigated the mentally ill's legal right to purchase firearms. Some researchers have concluded that only three to five percent of mentally ill individuals commit violent crimes. When the mentally ill commit violent crimes, they most often do not utilize firearms (Smith & Spiegler, 2017). United States federal law does not allow individuals who have been involuntarily committed to mental institutions to purchase firearms. However, individuals who have voluntarily checked themselves into one are excluded from this law (Jacobs & Jones, 2012). There is an opportunity to research this topic further to determine if it is politically correct to allow only the individuals that have voluntarily checked themselves into a mental institution to legally purchase firearms. The use of background checks for the purchase of firearms will be discussed further.

Studies have also examined the number of firearms used in mass shootings that had been purchased or obtained illegally or without a proper background check. There is widespread belief, from both the public and firearm owners, that mandatory background checks should take

place before the purchase of firearms. Population-level studies have found no evidence of the benefits of comprehensive background checks due to several reasons that are discussed below (Wintemute, 2019). Background checks are meant to prevent criminals, drug users, and the mentally ill from obtaining firearms. Since the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, billions of dollars have been spent on upgrading the computer systems utilized for background checks, but this has not made it easier to examine criminal records or prevent human error (Schmidt, 2015). There is an opportunity for further research on this topic, for there to be improvements made to background checks to ensure that firearms do not get into the wrong individual's hands. Transitioning on is the discussion regarding the origin of school shootings.

Historical Context

Mass shootings, specifically school shootings in the United States, increased in the mid-1990s. Since 1996, at least 60 school shootings have been documented. Before the mid-1990s, schools were considered safe havens for children, in which violence was unheard of. Many researchers believe that World War II started a revolution of increased violence and unrest in America. Before the 1950s, most schools did not have school resource officers. Since the 1970s, most schools have had at least one school resource officer throughout the year. Between the 1980s and the 1990s, school violence decreased. In the 1990s, there began to be more media coverage of school shootings (Siegel et al., 2020). The increase in school shootings could be a result of more media attention. There are theories as to why individuals choose to commit such acts of violence, but no theory has been proven. School resource officers are also not stopping individuals from engaging in school shootings. More research must be conducted to determine mass shooting triggers and prevention tactics. The social context section will discuss a recent mass shooting that occurred.

Social Context

On June 17, 2015, Dylann Roof committed a mass shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. After the shooting, a threat assessment was conducted on Roof to determine what led him to violence. Although not diagnosed with a specific mental illness, Roof was found to have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It has been determined that mass shooters who have ASD also have darker interests, such as an interest in violent video games. Mass shooters with ASD may have also experienced psychological trauma as children. Individuals with ASD may have a greater risk of becoming violent. This is because ASD co-occurs with illnesses such as substance abuse disorders (Allely & Faccini, 2018). However, not all individuals that suffer with ASD will become violent or commit a mass shooting. It will be discussed further the warning signs that led up to Roof ultimately committing this mass shooting.

Roof exhibited social communication struggles as a child and young adult, which led him to struggle to maintain healthy friendships and relationships. He also struggled with nonverbal communication and reading. Due to Roof's inability to connect to the world, he began to use drugs and alcohol, which eventually caused him to become disconnected from reality. None of this information was uncovered until after Roof committed the mass shooting in South Carolina (Allely & Faccini, 2018). This situation could lead to the assumption that warning signs were ignored and only discussed once he had already committed the mass shooting. The thought is that this mass shooting could have been prevented.

It is possible that this mass shooting could have been prevented if Roof's warning signs had been uncovered much earlier in life. Roof's story is just one example of an individual whose warning signs were missed or ignored. By the time he was further evaluated, it was too late.

More than likely, other mass shooters have had their warning signs overlooked. Before the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2017, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) had been notified about the shooter Nikolas Cruz. Before the shooting, Cruz had posted a comment online that he was going to be a professional school shooter. The comment was screenshot and sent to the FBI, but the FBI did not take any action due to their not having enough information to trace the individual who had published the comment (Crilly, 2018). This situation could lead to the assumption that the FBI did not do their due diligence in working to prevent this mass shooting. Further, mass shootings continue to make the news headlines.

Theoretical Context

In 2012, mass shootings were the leading news story across the United States. Mass shootings make the news while they are still in progress and while politicians, parents, professors, and other American citizens propose changes to prevent future mass shootings from occurring. They have proposed changes to gun laws, easier access to mental health care, and more security in schools. These individuals also make assumptions about why the shooting occurred and give the media a picture of who the shooter is or was (Fox & DeLateur, 2013). Despite discussions of prevention tactics, mass shootings continue to occur in the United States. More research needs to be gathered from experts in preventing crime and from law enforcement officers. Next, the theory grounding this study will be discussed.

The basis of this study is grounded on the political systems theory. The basis of political systems theory is that casual connections occur between aspects of the belief system and the external factors that influence it (Brandt & Slegers, 20212). Law enforcement officers' history is rooted in ideals of public safety and preserving civil liberties (Strah et al., 2023). Although

there is not a lot of current research regarding law enforcement officers and their influence on mass shooting prevention tactics, they can utilize their experience for this qualitative case study. Law enforcement officers have already fought for public safety, along with the preservation of civil liberties. They are needed for their expertise to influence mass shooting prevention tactics. The next section, the situation to self will address the motivation to conduct this specific study.

Situation to Self

The motivation for this study was to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Further motivation for this study was the understanding of the importance of law enforcement in society. This demonstrates how beneficial law enforcement is to the public and why its influence is needed for mass shooting prevention tactics. The epistemological assumption is that law enforcement officers can use their skills and knowledge to understand and evaluate how mass shootings can be prevented. Epistemology does not utilize beliefs, but rather the truth, to understand human behavior (Steup & Neta, 2020). This is a qualitative study guided by constructivism. Constructivism utilizes methods of world interpretation that people create to predict and interpret events (Ageeva, 2016). This qualitative study utilized local law enforcement officers to interpret why past mass shootings may have occurred to help influence future mass shooting prevention tactics. Moving forward, the problem statement that was leading this study will be discussed.

Problem Statement

The problem is that law enforcement officers are not involved in mass shooting prevention tactics. Mass shootings continue to occur worldwide, with varying perspectives as to how to address the problem with no resolutions having been adopted. Between the years 1999 and 2013, over 220 mass shootings occurred in school settings (Towers et al., 2015). With any

mass shooting, there are usually fatalities. In the United States, mass shootings involving firearms occur every two weeks. School shootings occur on average monthly (Towers et al., 2015). However, minimal research has investigated law enforcement's influence in the prevention of mass shootings. Instead, researchers have simply concluded that the public is hesitant to report concerning behavior to law enforcement, even if it could lead to a mass shooting (Lankford et al., 2019). For this qualitative case study, it is important to understand how local law enforcement agencies influence prevention policies related to mass shootings. The best possible outcomes of this study would be that law enforcement officers offer insight that has not been uncovered in the past and that better mass shooting prevention tactics are put into place. Next, the purpose statement behind this study will be addressed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Minimal research has been conducted on law enforcement's influence in the prevention of mass shootings. At this stage, researchers describe needing more information to uncover further mass shooting prevention tactics. Since minimal research has been conducted on law enforcement's influence in mass shooting prevention, my goal was to determine what they believe can be done. Political systems theory, which incorporates causal connections between aspects of the belief system and the external factors that influence it, guides this study. The necessary components of political beliefs systems theory can be identified by conceptualizing an individual's belief system as a network of connected attitudes and identities which, by way of interactions between the elements and external influences, produces the disparate phenomena in the belief systems literature (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). Law enforcement officers should be able both to critique current mass shooting prevention

tactics and to provide guidance to promote prevention tactics. In the next section, the significance of this study will be brought to light.

Significance of the Study

Mass shootings are common occurrences in the United States, although they should not be. This qualitative study created an opportunity for experts, specifically law enforcement officers, to provide their perspectives and to influence the prevention of mass shootings. The research may help to identify what actions need to occur to prevent future mass shootings and to utilize law enforcement officers' skills and knowledge to advance existing research into mass shooting prevention. Researchers have already investigated the warning signs that an individual may commit a violent act, but there was minimal research on law enforcement's perspective on prevention tactics (Lankford, 2018). Resulting from the quality of the data that was gathered from law enforcement officers, more mass shooting prevention tactics could be on the horizon. Furthermore, if the gathered data is properly utilized, an end to mass shootings could be near. If this study was not conducted, we would never know whether law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics, and mass shootings could continue without an end in sight. This study could be applied practically and could add value to society by making it a safer place. The remainder of chapter one will discuss the research question for this study, along with the definitions of commonly used words that occur throughout this dissertation.

Research Question

This study was designed to answer the following question:

RQ1. What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend that can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?

Definitions

The definitions are as follows:

Active shooter situation: An active shooter situation occurs when an active shooter actively engages in an act to kill an individual(s) in a confined, and usually populated, area (Phillips, 2020).

Mass shootings: The Federal Bureau of Investigations describes mass shootings as several murders, specifically more than three, that occur with no distinctive amount of time in between (Booty et al., 2019).

Mentally ill: Mental illness is defined as any diagnosable mental illness that involves significant changes to thinking, emotion, and behavior. Mental illness also includes distress and problems functioning in social, work, or family activities (Parekh, 2018).

Moral injury: Moral injury is when law enforcement officers either do or fail to do something that directly violates their core values (Blumberg et al., 2020).

National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS): The NICS is a computer system that is used to process background checks quickly and accurately. A combination of records is provided by local, state, and federal agencies. These records help to determine the eligibility of a prospective firearm purchaser by utilizing a swift background check (Wintemute, 2019).

Summary

In summary, the goal of this study was to understand how local law enforcement agencies influence prevention policies related to mass shootings. Research has been ongoing to determine why mass shootings continue to occur. Some mass shooters may have demonstrated warning signs that they would commit a mass shooting. However, despite the amount of research that has

been conducted on why mass shootings occur and how to prevent them, no resolution is in sight. The goal of this research was to determine what local law enforcement agencies believe can be done to prevent future mass shootings and more lost lives. Chapter Two includes a literature review that provides a background as to why this is an important research topic. Chapter Three discusses the methods that qualitative studies utilize. Chapter Four discusses the results of the study, and finally, Chapter Five analyzes the findings from the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss mass shootings, how to determine what actions can be taken to prevent them, and how law enforcement officers are relevant in preventing them. In the United States, mass shootings frequently occur. After a mass shooting occurs, cries for stricter gun laws sweep across the nation. Once the hype is over, Americans continue living their lives and the thought of stricter gun control leaves their minds. Then the cycle continues: another mass shooting occurs and the demand for stricter gun laws happens again. Stricter gun laws may not be the answer to preventing more mass shootings from occurring, but there needs to be more action to prevent them. The literature reviewed in this chapter covers the demand for firearms, background checks when firearms are purchased in America, mass shootings, how the public reacts after mass shootings, and how law enforcement is relevant in influencing mass shooting prevention tactics. The literature reviewed is organized thematically, with the chapter first discussing the theoretical framework and related literature and then concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

Guiding this study was the political systems theory. Political systems theory incorporates causal connections between aspects of the belief system and the external factors that influence it. The components of political beliefs systems theory can be identified by conceptualizing an individual's belief system as a network of connected attitudes and identities which, by way of interactions between the elements and external influences, produces the disparate phenomena in the belief systems literature (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). Law enforcement officers should be able

to both critique current mass shooting prevention tactics and to provide guidance to elevate prevention tactics.

In relation to the political systems theory, firearm legislation becomes a popular political discussion after a mass shooting. The topic of firearm legislation is fueled by media coverage of the latest mass shooting, followed by a public outcry about the need for stricter gun control. It has become predictable that after a mass shooting both gun rights advocates and gun control activists will speak out. Gun rights advocates, specifically the National Rifle Association (NRA) is known to rally for there to be less restrictions on purchasing firearms. The NRA's stance is that responsible citizens that carry firearms are what is needed in society to prevent mass shootings (Newman & Hartman, 2019). In the aftermath of a mass shooting, how firearm legislation is discussed, and gun rights advocates respond are examples of the political systems theory. These examples are a part of the political systems theory due to both internal and external factors that motivate individual opinions and how they are connected. When a mass shooting occurs, internal factors that motivate individual opinions are the victims of the mass shooting. The external factors that motivate individual opinions are how the shooter obtained their firearm.

Related Literature

Demand for Firearms

After a mass shooting occurs, there is always an immediate but temporary increase in firearm sales. Typically, after a mass shooting occurs, firearm sales increase for up to 6 months. The number of fatalities that occurred in the mass shooting correlate to how much firearm sales increase. The reasoning behind higher firearm sales after a mass shooting is explained by the fear that comes from the event (Pak, 2022). Mass shootings are typically random events that occur and leave the everyday citizen uncertain about when the next incident may occur. Another reason

that firearm purchases increase after a mass shooting is explained by reactance theory. After a mass shooting, research has indicated that some individuals may feel that their freedom will become limited, since there is always a demand for stricter gun control immediately following a mass shooting. As a result, some consumers and gun owners alike begin to fear that their guns will be taken away. Additionally, three-quarters of gun owners believe that owning firearms is essential to their freedom (Miller & Bryant, 2021). Due to these reasons, it makes sense that the reactance theory is in effect after a mass shooting. The use of background checks when firearms are purchased in America will be discussed next.

Background Checks when Firearms are Purchased in America

A mass shooting cannot occur without a firearm. The firearm used to engage in a mass shooting belongs either to the individual or to someone that they know. Regardless of who the firearm belongs to, engaging in a mass shooting is an illegal way to use a firearm. Background checks are in place to ensure that only law-abiding American citizens can legally purchase firearms. Background checks are not always effective in preventing a person who should not be purchasing a firearm from doing so. This section discusses how background checks are utilized, when they are not useful, and information about how to make them more effective.

Little research has been conducted on firearm background check applications and denials, which is unfortunate since there are many benefits to this research being conducted. If more research is conducted on firearm background check applications and denials, it could result in a significant benefit to both firearm policies and firearm practices. It is important to know who is applying for firearms and, in turn, who is being denied the purchase of firearms, which can add to the understanding of how change can occur in the current process. Garen Wintemute is one researcher who has discussed the problems associated with the current background check

process. Specifically, the problems associated with the current background check process is that there is incomplete data due to failed reporting, poor definitions of prohibiting events, insufficiently thorough background checks, and the release of firearms before background checks have been completed (Wintemute, 2019). To add to the value of what Wintemute uncovered in his research, a study about Comprehensive Background Checks was reviewed. Between the years 2013 to 2014, the states of Washington, Delaware and Colorado implemented the use of CBC. When CBC is required, background checks are required for both private sales and transfers (Castillo-Carniglia et al., 2018). As of 2018, when they study about CBC was conducted, there was not enough research to determine if the use of CBC is beneficial in preventing more mass shootings. Both past and present firearm policies and practices will be discussed next.

When it comes to firearm policies and practices, state and federal law vary in how these matters are handled. The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence's annual scorecard evaluates two studies on the relationship between state firearm legislation and firearm injuries. Consistently, these studies find lower rates of total firearm deaths, including homicides and suicides, and lower rates of firearm injuries in children in states that have more restrictive firearm legislation. Further studies have demonstrated that laws related to background checks, limitations on handgun possession, and transfer are also associated with lower rates of firearm deaths, including suicides and homicides. On the contrary, several studies have concluded that laws aimed at easing access to firearms are associated with higher rates of firearm injuries, including homicides. One specific study determined that the 2007 repeal of Missouri's permit-to-purchase law, which required firearm purchasers to possess a license verifying that they had passed a background check, led to an increase in firearm-related homicides (Simonetti et al., 2015). If more states look to enforce

CBC to prevent prohibited persons from acquiring firearms, there could be a significant decrease in the number of unauthorized individuals purchasing firearms. In the state of Illinois, it was reviewed that 42.6% of individuals that have committed homicides were convicted felons that were able to legally purchase a firearm from a private party (Castillo-Carniglia et al., 2018). Illinois is not a state in which CBC is required. The number of firearm applications that states are receiving on an annual basis are discussed further.

Multi-level longitudinal modeling was used in an ecological study design between 2005 and 2010. Researchers determined that both firearm applications and firearm denials increased significantly over five years (Mueller & Frandsen, 2016). Several variables were researched during this time, including race and gender. However, a five-year study like this has only been conducted once. More studies must be conducted to determine how many firearm applications are occurring, who is applying for firearms, and who is being denied firearms. There needs to be more data researched over a longer period of time. Longer studies could determine whether more individuals should be denied firearms and could ensure that no background check data is missed. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) could be utilized as a database to track how many firearm applications are occurring, who is applying for firearms, and who is being denied firearms (Sen & Panjamapirom, 2012). In the next section, it is discussed that background checks do not always ensure that firearms are staying out of criminal's hands.

A background check stating that an individual can legally own a gun does not mean that they should own one. The public supports background checks before the purchase of firearms. However, population-level studies have determined that background checks are not always beneficial in preventing gun violence. There is one exception: permit-to-purchase policies are beneficial in preventing gun violence, at least in population-level studies (Wintemute, 2019).

Although more research still needs to be conducted on the effectiveness of CBC, CBC is thought to reduce firearm violence due to extending background checks to private parties and transfers (Castillo-Carniglia et al., 2018). At this point in research, CBC has not been utilized to track this information. Next, the NICS will be discussed in greater detail.

Under the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993, all firearm sales that occur through a federally licensed firearms retailer became subject to a NICS background check in November 1998 (Castillo-Carniglia et al., 2018). The U.S. Attorney General created the NICS to process background checks quickly and accurately. The NICS computer system provides a combination of records from local, state, and federal agencies. These records help in determining the eligibility of a prospective firearm purchaser using a swift background check. The issue is that the supply of records given to the NICS is voluntary and dependent on individual state laws. There is also substantial variability in state laws regarding the various categories of prohibitory records that are included in background checks, including criminal history, restraining orders, mental illness, fugitive status, and misdemeanors. Past research has hypothesized that more background checks reduce prohibited persons being able to legally purchase firearms (Sen & Panjamapirom, 2012). However, there needs to be more research conducted on the effectiveness of background checks and how they can be improved. The concern about firearms getting into the wrong hands continues to be a hot topic and will be discussed further.

Whether firearms are getting into the hands of high-risk individuals will continue to be a concern for the American public since background check requirements vary by state. In addition to causing anxiety about future acts of gun violence, the aftermath of mass shootings results in American citizens wanting stricter gun control. Despite pleas from many American citizens, Congress has not made any changes due to a vocal minority that does not want new or stricter

gun laws. The lack of change in federal gun laws has caused state legislatures to enact their own gun laws. Most American citizens believe that background checks should occur regardless of who a firearm is purchased from. There has been little conversation regarding whether background checks should be required when selling a gun to a stranger or a third party. A study of 3,900 Americans found that 72% agreed that background checks should be required when selling a firearm to a stranger or a third party. Currently, federal law only requires licensed gun dealers to perform background checks. Only a few states require private parties to perform background checks (Hemenway et al., 2017). In this study, gun owners were oversampled. Some state gun laws have made it more difficult for high-risk persons to purchase firearms. Some state firearm laws have also been enacted to make it so that, regardless of the seller, all firearm purchases require a background check. Under federal law, only licensed firearm sellers require background checks (Vernick et al., 2017). Most states allow direct firearm sales between private parties when neither the seller nor the buyer is considered a prohibited person. Private-party firearm sales are not monitored, though, and since a licensed retailer is not involved, a background check is not required, and no record of the sale needs to be kept. More discussion about the importance of background checks for private sellers will be discussed.

Approximately 22% of all firearm transfers in the United States occur without a background check (Wintemute, 2019). Guns can fall into the hands of criminals when background checks do not occur. Federal and state laws need to be consistent with their background checks. All gun sellers should have background checks, regardless of whether they are licensed or private. High-risk individuals must also be identified and prevented from purchasing firearms. On December 14, 2012, the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting occurred, in which 20 first graders and six teachers were killed. After this mass shooting,

legislation was proposed to change gun policies. One of the legislative proposals was the Fix Gun Checks Act of 2013, which proposed that background checks be required for all private firearm sales. This act's proposal also encouraged allowing easier access to records to provide information about prohibited persons to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). However, the senate rejected this proposed legislation in a 54–46 vote (Krouse, 2013). There needs to be more research on this topic, specifically a study that investigates whether background checks for private gun sellers will prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands. California can identify high-risk firearm owners, which will be discussed next in greater detail.

There needs to be a continued focus on identifying high-risk firearm owners. The state of California has worked on efforts to prevent mass violence, and it has a database to identify high-risk firearm owners. If the state of California determines that a prohibited person owns firearms, its government will work to recover those firearms (Laqueur & Wintemute, 2019). There needs to be more research on the effectiveness of the database that California utilizes to determine if other states could benefit from utilizing it. Understanding the effective of the database that California uses is a benefit to society since firearm violence is the number one cause of premature death in the United States. Firearms cause 30,000 deaths every year, and 60,000 injuries (Browne, 2017). Having a database that identifies high risk firearm owners does not mean that mass shootings will stop occurring, but it is a step in the right direction to prevent future mass shootings. Moving on, a discussion about varying opinions regarding gun availability and ownership will occur.

There will continue to be differing opinions about gun availability and ownership. Individuals in favor of stricter gun laws believe that stricter gun laws are the answer to preventing future gun deaths. Gun rights advocates believe that gun owners can prevent more

homicides from occurring. The evidence shows that the availability of firearms in the United States results in more homicides (Stroebe, 2015). This information may be true, but more research needs to be conducted before such a blanket statement is made. After a mass shooting that occurred in Las Vegas in 2017 in which 58 concertgoers were killed, the shooter's weapon choice was examined. The shooter utilized high-power automatic and semiautomatic guns to shoot into the concert venue. A conclusion was made that the prevention of future mass killings should begin with making it more difficult to obtain semiautomatic firearms, especially ones that can be easily converted into automatic weapons. The federal government is very strict in controlling fully automatic weapons, but many semiautomatic weapons can be turned into fully automatic machine guns by their owners (Campion et al., 2017). A law to make it more difficult to obtain semiautomatic firearms will not go into effect overnight, but it is food for thought. Transitioning, legislation about gun legislation will be discussed.

Some American citizens believe that gun control will cause a decrease in violence. A city-level, cross-sectional analysis was conducted, in which 19 major gun laws were assessed to determine the impact that guns have on crime. The results showed that gun laws do not correlate with crime rates (Kleck et al., 2016). However, other studies have found a relationship between gun availability and homicide rates. Finally, some studies have indicated that gun availability, homicide, and gun homicide are not stable across nations but are contingent upon cultural and sociohistorical factors (Hurka & Knill, 2018). There is not enough evidence to prove whether gun ownership and gun availability have overall impacts on crime rates. More research is needed to determine what crime is being caused by guns. The next section of the literature review discusses mass shootings, the correlation between mass shootings and mental illness, and the prevalence of mass shootings in school settings.

Mass Shootings

If the average American were watching or reading the news today, they might come across some type of mass shooting in their hometown. This is because mass shootings, specifically in school settings, are common occurrences in America. The following section discusses mass shootings, more details about mass shootings in school settings, and mental illness. Mass shootings receive a significant amount of media attention due to their frequency. One study has considered a mass shooting to occur when at least three individuals are killed in a single event (Dalafave & Viscusi, 2021). However, there is no federal definition of what a mass shooting is. The closest definition of a mass shooting comes from the FBI, which describes it as several murders, specifically more than three, that occur with no distinctive amount of time in between (Booty et al., 2019). Because there is no concrete definition of what a mass shooting is, data and statistics regarding mass shootings are not always correct. That means that some data in databases regarding mass shootings are not correct (Booty et al., 2019). There needs to be a federal definition of what a mass shooting is, or wrong data may circulate on the internet. Next it will be discussed the correlation between mass shootings and mental illness.

There has been an ongoing conversation regarding the correlation between mass shootings and mental illness. The media is to blame for the thought that only those with mental illness commit mass shootings. Only a small percentage of individuals with mental illness inflict violence on others. When it comes to mental illness and gun ownership, the more significant concern is suicide. Concerns about potential gun owners are not being reported. This information is slightly confusing since much of the initial focus has been on the fact that the mentally ill do not commit mass shootings. Instead, the mentally ill are more prone to commit suicide. The media portrays a different case (Pinals & Anacker, 2016). Further regarding the discussion about

mental illness and violence is the thought that a lot of individuals suffer from mental illness. Just because an individual has been diagnosed with a mental illness does not mean that they are more prone to commit violence. Going back to previous conversations regarding mental illness and violence, most individuals with mental illness are not committing acts of violence (Glieb & Frank, 2014). More research needs to be conducted about the validity of if the mentally ill are committing acts of violence or not. Moving forward, other risk factors for violence are discussed.

Although mental illness could result in an individual committing an act of violence, having a mental illness is not the only indicator that an individual is more prone to violence. Research has indicated that it is not mental illness, but rather a history of violence or threats of violence, that can predict future violence (Kangas & Calvert, 2014). After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, public health experts proposed changes to aid in gun violence prevention. The proposed changes included universal background checks for gun purchasers, a ban on military-style assault weapons, a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines, and a plan to end gun trafficking. The NRA argued that mass shootings continue to happen due to the number of individuals who have untreated mental illnesses and that unregulated guns are not the reason. In turn, the NRA proposed that a national database be created to monitor individuals who suffer from mental illness (Swanson et al., 2015). There is much conflicting information regarding mental illness and whether mental illness alone is to blame for mass shootings. More research is needed into the individuals committing mass shootings and whether they have mental illnesses that could have caused them to commit mass shootings. Research has found two opinions on mental illness. One opinion is that untreated mental illness indicates that an individual is susceptible to committing an act of violence. The other opinion is that guns need to

be regulated for mass shootings to be prevented. However, there is not enough research to indicate whether one opinion is correct. Further, a discussion about the NICS will be discussed.

The federal NICS is limited in identifying individuals who pose a risk to society and who may not be properly vented and able to purchase a firearm (Honberg, 2021). It has been identified that individuals with mental illnesses do not pose a risk to others but only to themselves (Kangas & Calvert, 2014). There must be more consistent research into whether mentally ill individuals are a risk to others. While it is important to know whether they pose a risk to themselves, that should not be the primary focus of this research. In general, there should not be a specific focus on mentally ill individuals posing a risk to others if they do not.

Gun violence and mass shootings are prevalent in schools. The United States is the leader in mass shootings, specifically in school settings. Guns are easily accessible to youth in the United States. Some schools have implemented policies that have led to fewer instances of gun violence. Regardless of the gun policies that have been implemented, gun violence, specifically school shootings, has still been occurring. Other efforts have been implemented to try and prevent mass shootings, but they continue to occur. Although prevalent in the United States, mass shootings occur in all parts of the world (Flannery et al., 2021). The country of Australia has not been immune to mass shootings. After a mass shooting in 1996 that led to 35 individuals being killed, the Australian government made a swift change to gun policies. Australia banned rapid-fire long guns, implemented a program to buy this illegal gun from their citizens, and required that all firearms be individually registered to their licensed owners. Private firearm sales were also prohibited, and each gun transfer through a licensed arms dealer had to be approved only after the police are satisfied of a genuine reason for ownership (Chapman et al., 2015). In general, the United States need more research about how mass shootings can be prevented.

Children of both current and future generations are depending on today's research to help make permanent change so that future mass shootings no longer occur. Next there will be a discussion about the firearms used in mass shooting.

There was a quantitative examination of 634 firearms that had been used in hundreds of mass shootings. Different studies have identified variables related to why mass shootings occur, including the perpetrators' characteristics, what firearms were used, and how the firearms were acquired. When discussing what firearms have been used in mass shootings, it has been determined that most shooters bring at least two firearms (Greene-Colozzi & Silva, 2020). Assault weapons have been deemed to be the weapon of choice for mass shooters 37% of the time due to their ability to inflict the most injuries and fatalities. Experts in public health, criminology, and law all agree that a ban on assault weapons would result in less mass shootings (Siegel et al., 2020). There is a primary focus on firearms, but this research has been limited to discussing why mass shootings occur and the characteristics of the perpetrators. There needs to be more research into theories of why mass shootings occur and into the characteristics of the perpetrators.

After a mass shooting occurs in a school setting, there are consistent conversations regarding the need for stricter gun laws and a decrease in students bringing guns to schools. It is also stated that stricter gun laws give individuals a sense of security. Other research has indicated that stricter gun laws have not resulted in fewer guns or less violence (Ghiani et al., 2019). Little is known about the Gun Violence Restricting Order (GVRO). Under a GVRO, the government can legally remove firearms from individuals that have been deemed to be a threat to themselves or a threat to others (Saadi et al., 2020). As mentioned, little is known about GVRO and the effectiveness it has on preventing violence. More research is needed to determine how effective

stricter gun laws are, including a GVRO. Moving on, there will be a discussion about what the public feels causes mass shootings.

After multiple school shootings in the United States, it has been identified that the public does not understand why mass shootings continue to occur. This is mostly due to the different viewpoints between Democrats and Republicans. Also, non-gun owners identify a need for stricter gun laws. A survey was sent to the public, asking them what the cause of gun violence is in America. The influence of popular culture was what gun owners stated caused gun violence. Non-gun owners said that popular culture and gun availability were the main causes of gun violence (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2018). There needs to be more research into what gun owners believe causes mass shootings, with relevant data to support it. From a professional opinion, the federal government needs to have a national database that formally tracks mass violence. By having a national database that is formally tracking mass violence, more research can be done on understanding, responding to, and even preventing future incidents (Nagin et al., 2020). Having a national database to track mass violence does not mean that mass shootings will stop overnight, but it is a start to better understand all the aspects of the events that transpired. In the next section, the public's feelings about mass shootings will be discussed.

There has not been much research conducted on how the public feels after a mass shooting occurs. Research has indicated that anxiety is a reaction; however, there is little data to back this statement up. Forty percent of individuals reported not feeling anxious after a mass shooting (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2017). The most research that has occurred regarding the aftermath of mass shootings has been conducted on children. Children have been chosen to be researched since mass shootings in school settings have become extremely common. After a mass shooting, children have reported dealing with posttraumatic stress, suicide, depression,

substance abuse, and anxiety (Valentina et al., 2021). The reasoning behind the intense feelings that children have after a mass shooting could be attributed to the fact that they are still growing and developing. Nonetheless, no child should ever have to worry about being a victim of a mass shooting. In the next section, the discussion will continue about how the public reacts to mass shootings.

How the Public Reacts to Mass Shootings

The previous section of the literature review stated that there needs to be more research on how the public reacts to mass shootings. Additional articles discuss research that has been conducted to determine how the public reacts to mass shootings. This section of the literature review discusses how the public reacts to mass shootings. For about two months after a mass shooting occurs, the demand for firearms rises. The rise in firearm sales does not tend to occur near where the mass shooting occurred but instead in Republican states. The rise in firearm sales also seems to depend on whether the shooter was white or female, or whether the shooting took place in a rural setting. No other factors about the shooting matter. Further research has also determined that firearm purchases rise after a mass shooting because potential firearm owners fear that imminent and stricter firearm laws will prevent them from purchasing firearms in the future. They also fear that all firearms will be purchased and that potential owners will be unable to find firearms available to purchase. Multiple studies have correlated the aftermath of mass shootings to increased firearm purchases (Brock & Routon, 2020). Specifically, for up to six months after a mass shooting occurs is when the demand to purchase firearms is at its peak (Pak, 2022). This is important for individuals who believe that firearm availability is the reason there are so many crimes, violence, and deaths related to firearms. There needs to be more research on firearm availability related to the demand for firearm purchases after a mass shooting.

American citizens want to see an increase in school security. 1,100 Americans were commissioned to think about gun control and programming policies. A model-altruistic approach was taken with these individuals. The result was that the public agreed with stricter gun control and that anti-bullying and counseling programs should be more readily available (Lee et al., 2020). Although this is good guidance regarding public opinion, the 1,110 Americans were commissioned to think about gun control and programming policies. Commissioned means to be paid. It was not indicated whether the Americans who were a part of this study were swayed to give their opinion about stricter gun control. The public researched in this study did discuss that anti-bullying programs may be effective tools to prevent mass shootings, and that is one topic that does have actual research tied to it. In relation to anti-bullying programs being held in a school setting, there is evidence about the effectiveness of these programs. 14 anti-bullying school programs were assessed for their effectiveness. The conclusion was made that anti-bullying programs that lasted for less than the duration of the school year, and programs targeted to children aged 10 or less benefited the most from these programs. It may be beneficial for more schools to have anti-bullying programs if they do not have them already. In the next section, accessibility to firearms will be discussed.

This literature review has already covered studies that discuss stricter gun control. There is a need for stricter gun control, but guns still need to be accessible to individuals who have a legitimate purpose for using them. It makes a difference what type of firearm is being purchased (Cook, 2018). There are ongoing conversations about banning semi-automatic guns since they can easily be turned into automatic guns and cause more injuries and fatalities in mass shooting situations (Campion et al., 2017). Gun purchases need to be legal, but there should also be some limitations as to what guns can be purchased. The issue is that there is so much information

related to the purchase and usage of guns. There needs to be separate research conducted on each topic. The next section discusses more about the public's opinion about how to reduce firearm violence.

There continue to be studies regarding the public's opinion about reducing firearm violence. A disheartening fact is that more Americans have been killed by gun violence on American soil than in combat. Even though there is a call for stricter gun control, the United States has the least strict gun laws compared to the rest of the world. There needs to be a public health approach to gun prevention. The author's view on the public health approach includes prevention, a focus on populations and not just individuals, a systems approach, and the inclusion of individuals and institutions (Hemenway, 2017). Clinicians, researchers and advocates all believe that a public-health approach can establish the knowledge and know-how needed to prevent future mass shootings from occurring (Sathya et al., 2022). Recommendations to make changes to gun control and to prevent gun violence need to be based on facts, not just opinions. There needs to be more research done on the public health approach. More needs to be discussed about ending gun violence and having less talk about it.

This literature review continues the focus on preventing gun violence. There needs to be less talk about ending gun violence and more work to end it. The theme is that there is an ethical implication to ending gun violence. Because there is a severe lack of gun violence research, there are only opinions about what needs to happen. This is a call to action (Hills-Evans et al., 2018). Parents expect more to be done to further prevent gun violence. There is little research on how to prevent school violence. Six hundred parents were interviewed for their opinions on how to further prevent school violence (Payton et al., 2017). Although 600 is not a small number of individuals, it is not enough to make a compelling case to make a change. More individuals,

specifically parents, need to be researched to determine how to further prevent school violence. Still, though, there is a need to prioritize school safety. Federal, state, and local governments must be on board for this to be successful. A recommendation has been made for a safety partnership to determine the needs of each school before acting. Some individuals believe that arming teachers is the best option to protect students and teachers. However, firearms in the classroom risk lives and mental well-being. There are also concerns about proper firearm storage and teachers acting appropriately in the case of an active shooter. It needs to be determined whether the teacher or teachers can successfully prevent lives from being lost in the event of a mass shooting. However, determining this information would require more work and taxpayer money. Each school district will need to determine what is best for them in preventing mass shootings in a school setting. It was noted, though, that specifically public health students do not think that arming teachers is the answer (Rogers et al., 2018). Although there are great viewpoints about why arming teachers is not in the best interest of America's students, there should be a study conducted on individuals who do believe it to be the answer. In that scenario, there will be viewpoints from both sides and a value-based decision can be made better.

There are opinions about how mass shootings affect Americans. Many people think that the media elevates Americans' fear after a mass shooting occurs (Webster, 2017). Although this may be true, there needs to be more information about how the media impact's public opinion and feelings. Between the years 2017 and 2019, a mixed-methods study was conducted that included both qualitative and quantitative data. This data was obtained from survivors of interpersonal firearm violence. In total, 51 survivors were a part of the study. They stated that most of the violence that they had experienced could have been prevented if drug and gang activity had been better monitored (Halimeh et al., 2021). Although this study did not directly

research mass shootings, it still focused on firearm violence. While it discusses ways to further prevent firearm violence, more research could be beneficial in determining ways to further prevent firearm violence. The next section of the literature review discusses the training that law enforcement officers (LEOs) receive, the education that they receive, and how they are crucial in the prevention of mass shootings.

The Basics of Law Enforcement Training

Law enforcement officers receive training that aids in the efficiency of the agency they support. All law enforcement officers receive training from certified trainers, whether they work in a local, state, or federal capacity. Law enforcement officers must complete basic training before they receive specialized training. Basic law enforcement officers initially receive 19 weeks (about four and a half months) of training, not including field training (Hunt, 2013). In California specifically, law enforcement officer candidates must complete 664 hours (about four weeks) of training before graduating from the academy (Blumberg et al., 2019). Basic training for law enforcement officers is also known as the academy, which is like a boot camp where law enforcement officers learn the foundation of their role. Basic training also teaches law enforcement officers what they need to know to perform their regular job duties (Hunt, 2013). Research has demonstrated that the combination of lectures, theoretical classroom discussions, and simulated training enables law enforcement officers to be both highly skilled and knowledgeable (Blumberg et al., 2019). The regular job duties that law enforcement officers perform require both physical and psychological strength (Maupin et al., 2022). Basic training is mandatory for law enforcement officers to become certified. Throughout their careers, they continue to receive training to sharpen their knowledge and skills. On-the-job training is thought to be the most powerful weapon that a law enforcement officer can carry. However, basic

training and the continuing training that law enforcement officers receive throughout their careers also protect their reporting agency from civil litigation because of misconduct and rights violations. To further protect the agencies that law enforcement officers are associated with, every aspect of their training is detailed in a training log (Hunt, 2013). Research has already been conducted on the knowledge aspect of basic law enforcement training, but it would be more beneficial to have research on the training that law enforcement officers receive throughout their careers. Law enforcement officers are always the first responders at the scene of an active shooter situation. Research has indicated that training does not stop at the academy, but it would be beneficial to know more about the continuous training they receive. The next section will discuss the physical fitness training that law enforcement officers endure before they become police officers.

Physical Fitness Training

While in the academy, law enforcement officers work to develop their physical fitness. Studies have indicated that most academies focus on aerobic-based fitness, but that anaerobic-based fitness is proven to be more effective. If the job requires it, anaerobic-based fitness aids law enforcement officers conducting a victim drag or a wall climb, two physical activities that law enforcement officers may need to complete to either prevent a mass shooting or to engage with an active shooter. Anaerobic-based fitness includes power and strength training, whereas aerobic-based fitness focuses on formation runs and bodyweight exercises. Academies are more inclined to focus on formation runs and bodyweight exercises due to the lack of fitness equipment available and because of the large class sizes. Research has concluded that focusing on anaerobic-based fitness leads to greater physical development during the academy. Furthermore, law enforcement officers who achieve greater physical development during their

time at the academy are more likely to be resilient to physical decline throughout their career (Maupin et al., 2022). The physical demands of being a law enforcement officer predisposes them to high rates of injury and therefore requires them to have adequate fitness levels to effectively perform their unique occupational tasks (Maupin et al., 2022). Due to the physical demands of law enforcement officer jobs, academies across the United States could benefit from incorporating anaerobic-based fitness. As law enforcement officers continue their careers in law enforcement, they could also benefit from utilizing anaerobic-based fitness in their daily fitness regimens. Research has investigated the benefits of law enforcement officers receiving physical fitness training at the academy, but there could be benefits from more research on how law enforcement officers maintain their physical health. Thus far, research has indicated that officers have greater physical development during the academy. The question is whether officers are required to maintain a certain level of physical fitness throughout their careers. The assumption would be that a physically fit officer has a greater chance of engaging successfully with an active shooter.

Effective Policing

It is essential that law enforcement officers not only receive training (for arrest and control, defensive tactics, driving, and firearms) but also develop psychological skills. The psychological skills that law enforcement officers should receive training in include cognitive, emotional, social, and moral skills. In general, effective policing should use a combination of physical, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills. Most of a law enforcement officer's career involves non-life-threatening duties, such as managing car accidents. When a law enforcement officer needs to handle an active shooter situation, the psychological skills that they learned become useful. Eighty-one percent of academies across the United States provide stress

management and stress prevention training, which could assist law enforcement officers with the skills that they need to handle an active shooter situation. Academy training is not standardized across the United States, though, and all academies could benefit from having stress management and stress prevention training. Research has also demonstrated that law enforcement officers could benefit from more training in the areas of ethical standards, diversity, communication skills, motivation, decision-making, problem-solving, human relations, self-control, discipline, and organizational skills (Blumberg et al., 2019). Due to the risk that law enforcement officers have of decreased mental and physical health, mindful meditation has been recommended as additional training. Mindful meditation is proven to reduce aggression and improve well-being (Khatib et al., 2022). Although recommended, it would be beneficial to know whether officers are receiving training on these topics and how these skills benefit them in the field. In the next section, there will be a continued conversation about the psychological health of law enforcement officers.

Law enforcement officers remain psychologically healthier when committed to the ethical principles of being effective officers. Also, law enforcement officers who have completed an extensive wellness program focusing on boosting resilience are less likely to have a lapse in their ethics. Wellness and ethics cannot be discussed separately but must be addressed as though they were the same entity. This is because the principles of wellness and ethics are connected. The Police Officer Wellness, Ethics, and Resilience (POWER) perspective was designed to address effective policing. Using the POWER perspective, law enforcement officers can learn to combat emotional exhaustion and overcome the unhealthy amount of anxiety, depression, and anger that their job can cause. Having strong mental health can help law enforcement officers avoid engaging in misconduct, such as moral injury, which occurs when a law enforcement

officer either does or fails to do something that directly violates their core values. In conjunction with the POWER perspective, most law enforcement agencies have implemented psychological services in the form of a wellness unit. Wellness units are designed to help law enforcement officers with psychotherapy, guidance, and support. The effort made by law enforcement agencies to improve and build upon the overall wellness of officers is noble. However, for it to be truly effective, officers must commit to continuing to improve their overall wellness and to have strong ethics (Blumberg et al., 2020). Ethics can also be applied to the safety of the job. For law enforcement officers, safety ethics means that they value safety by preventing risky behaviors and accepting responsibility for safety (Kim & Song, 2021). For future study, it would be beneficial to know how officers are held accountable for the ethics that they display on the job. Beyond having ethics, more of the skills that are needed to be effective as a law enforcement officer will be discussed.

The Skills Needed for Law Enforcement Officers

Being a law enforcement officer can be mentally challenging. Formal education beyond high school is not considered the sole factor in whether a law enforcement officer will be effective in their job. However, research has determined that law enforcement officers who have prior job experience are more effective. The thought is that law enforcement agencies should have education requirements in place for all new recruits to ensure that they are effective in their jobs, regardless of their educational or work backgrounds. The cognitive skills that should be taught at the academy include decision-making, judgment, impulse control, attention to safety, conscientiousness, dependability, adaptability, and flexibility. One way to test these skills is through a use-of-force assessment to determine whether the law enforcement officer is using proper force (Blumberg et al., 2019). The proper use of force continues to be a controversial

topic surrounding law enforcement agencies. It is safe to assume that law enforcement officers are committed to only using force when necessary. There are conversations about law enforcement officers receiving specific training about the use of force (Cojean & Taillandier-Schmitt, 2020). A suggestion for use of force training if it does start occurring is to go over different scenarios with law enforcement officers and discuss whether force should be needed or not. In general, more studies could benefit officers by researching how effective their training is when they determine whether to use force. Moving on will be a discussion about the emotional challenges of being a law enforcement officer.

In addition to being mentally challenging, being a law enforcement officer can also be emotionally challenging. Newer law enforcement officers may struggle with the emotional impacts of the job, whereas seasoned law enforcement officers may have more resiliency due to the trauma and human suffering that they have already witnessed. Regardless of tenure or the extent to which they have witnessed trauma and human suffering, all law enforcement officers can benefit from more emotional regulation and stress tolerance, which allow them to maintain their composure and stay in control during an emergency. Regardless of their tenure, all law enforcement officers can learn to have greater emotional regulation and stress tolerance, which in turn can make them more effective at their jobs (Blumberg et al., 2019). Emotional regulation and stress tolerance ties directly to the need for law enforcement officers to build resilience. As of 2022, research has demonstrated that there are few mental health resources available to law enforcement officers. Due to the lack of mental health resources available, law enforcement agencies often find themselves in a deficient to promote wellbeing. By not promoting and engaging in mental health resources, law enforcement officers are at risk of being mentally unfit for duty. Current mental health resources for law enforcement officers are more often than not

reactive, rather than proactive. A successful mental health program would always have counseling available and for leadership to fully understand the mental health needs of their agency (Taylor, 2022). Further research should determine the benefits of emotional regulation, stress tolerance, and resiliency. Additional discussion will include the importance of emotional intelligence.

Concerning law enforcement officers being more effective at their jobs, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is another useful skill. EI is how individuals recognize and understand how their emotions impact their behavior. EI also involves individuals being able to control impulsive feelings and successfully manage their emotions. EI individuals also understand the emotional cues that another individual possesses without allowing their own emotions to take over and control their behavior. Lastly, individuals with EI can maintain positive relationships, have clear communication, influence other individuals, be good team players, and manage conflict well. Law enforcement officers who have higher EI have been proven to handle stress better, leading to lower levels of stress and better work performance (Blumberg et al., 2019). Beyond handling stress better, EI may also allow law enforcement officers to be more successful at de-escalating citizens that are in crisis. Possibly the most challenging aspect of a law enforcement officer's job is being able to control both their fear and anxiety when faced with danger to themselves or others (Magny & Todak, 2021). Beyond what is already known about the benefits of EI, it could also be beneficial to know how EI has helped officers to be more effective in active shooter situations. In the next section, the social challenges of being a law enforcement officer will be discussed.

Being a law enforcement officer is socially challenging. Daily, law enforcement officers are faced with the challenges of working with members of the community. Law enforcement

officers often bring their work home, which can strain their friendships or relationships. Research has indicated that the academy should do a better job of training and helping law enforcement officers with the stress that the job entails. Mental health resources are available for law enforcement officers, but the academy should have more training to better prepare officers (Blumberg et al., 2019). The longer that an officer is in the field, the more prevalent it is that they are to experience new mental health conditions or see current mental health conditions become worse. Community members recognize that officers have a stressful and demanding job, yet there is still a stigma about officers receiving the mental health support that they need (Velazquez & Hernandez, 2019). Officers should be able to receive the mental health support that they need without there being a stigma about it. Further, more discussion should occur regarding the mental health resources that are available to officers. The social skills that law enforcement officers need to be effective will be discussed next.

As mentioned, the academy could have a more robust training program for law enforcement officer cadets, specifically focused on the social skills needed to be an effective officer. The *Peace Officer Psychological Screening Manual* states that the social skills that law enforcement officers need to be effective include social competence, teamwork, and assertiveness. Social competence is a social skill in which enforcement officers communicate with others respectfully. Teamwork is a social skill in which law enforcement officers work together effectively to achieve a common goal. Assertiveness is a social skill in which law enforcement officers act without hesitation to control a situation calmly, even in a dangerous or adverse situation (Blumberg et al., 2019). Although training is provided to officers, there is only so much time to train everything that is needed to know to be an effective officer. Therefore, it is important that in the United States, 38 of those states require psychological evaluations to

determine an applicant's suitability for law enforcement duties. Additionally, 98% of law enforcement agencies that serve communities of 25,000 or more conduct preemployment psychological evaluations of applicants (Detrick et al., 2016). More studies would be beneficial in determining the impact of social competence, teamwork, and assertiveness, along with the benefits of preemployment psychological evaluations. Lastly, moral skills needed for officers will be discussed.

The last skill that law enforcement officers need is moral skill. Law enforcement officers face bribes in which individuals try and get out of being arrested. Moral skills can be both trained and strengthened. Integrity is a fundamental psychological skill that law enforcement officers need to be effective. Integrity includes the attributes of honesty, impartiality, trustworthiness, and following laws, regulations, and procedures. Spirituality also coincides with moral skills. Law enforcement agencies must support any religion that their officers choose to follow. It is also important that law enforcement agencies support non-believers but also promote spirituality, which can help officers maintain their sense of purpose. Spirituality can also reduce stress and prevent burnout (Blumberg et al., 2019). To reiterate the moral skills that officers need, it is important to recognize that moral skill also involves the components of moral sensitivity, moral reasoning, moral motivation and moral character. Moral sensitivity breaks down the ethical decision-making process that officers encounter. Moral reasoning, which has also been deemed as the most important of moral skills, is the mental process in which different moral arguments are considered. Moral motivation and moral character are essentially one in the same since they are needed to make difficult decisions and act accordingly (De Schrijver & Maesschalck, 2015). It would be helpful for researchers to determine how moral skills have been proven to be the most effective for officers. In the next section, how officers handle stress will be discussed.

How Law Enforcement Handles Stress

When it comes to responding to a mass shooting, how law enforcement handles stress should be reviewed since a mass shooting is a stressful situation. It has been identified that officers are the most successful at handling the stress that comes from their job by both identifying and receiving social support (Singo & Shilubane, 2022). Beyond social support, the identification of stress and how officers handled it have been researched. Seven studies were conducted to determine the correlation between gaze control, training, and anxiety in high-stress law enforcement situations. All the studies concluded that law enforcement officers who were highly trained could better control their gaze compared to law enforcement officers who were not trained or were newly trained. Under pressure, visual perception skills and overall performance are greater when there is strong expertise and knowledge. In a high-stress situation, training that includes reality-based scenarios and quiet eye training has the greatest impact on gaze control and decision-making. Even if a law enforcement officer is faced with a harmless threat, gaze control can enable them to recognize danger and firearms. Strong gaze control and eye movement also correlate to stronger visual perception skills. Quiet eye training also allows law enforcement officers to have better shooting anxiety and control their anxiety in high-stress situations (Heusler & Sutter, 2019). High-level quiet eye training is understood. However, a study discussing quiet eye training in more detail would allow non-officers to understand its significance. Tactical emergency casualty care (TECC) is important in the field, and thus important to be discussed next.

Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Training for Law Enforcement Officers

Military personnel receive TECC to prevent the deaths of individuals suffering from external hemorrhage due to severe injury. The military utilizes tourniquets, combat gauze, and a

nasopharyngeal tube. In the civilian population, an external hemorrhage is a preventable death, with training. Training in TECC for law enforcement officers and other first responders became known in the year 2011. The goal of implementing this training for law enforcement officers and other first responders is to utilize military TECC for the civilian population. Law enforcement officers and other first responders are familiar with active shooters and mass casualty situations. Tourniquets are effective to control bleeding and to prevent individuals involved in a mass shooting incident from dying. An increase in mass shootings has resulted in emergency response planners needing to rethink their tactics to prevent as many lives from being lost as they can. Research has proven that with proper use, tourniquets are useful for both the military and civilian populations. Law enforcement officers are also generally the first individuals on the scene of a mass shooting incident and can properly utilize tourniquets immediately, if necessary, resulting in bleeding being controlled (Rothschild & Mathieson, 2018). It is not just officers that need-to-know basic lifesaving techniques, but regular citizens as well. The Stop the Bleed campaign was created by the American College of Surgeons with the goal to reduce morbidity and mortality in hemorrhage. After a mass casualty incident, regular citizens could utilize life-sustaining support to decrease morbidity and mortality. As a part of the Stop the Bleed campaign, when faced with a hemorrhagic emergency, regular citizens would learn how to distinguish life-threatening from non-life-threatening bleeding and to apply pressure. After learning these life-sustaining skills, 60% of individuals were able to properly apply a tourniquet (Melmer et al., 2019). Beyond regular citizen learning life-sustaining skills, a study discussing how often tourniquets are utilized in an active shooter situation would be useful in knowing how helpful they are.

Law Enforcement Officers' Role with Active Shooters

After the 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, the catalyst for what prepared law enforcement officers for an active shooter changed. In 2002, training centers were created for officers, one being the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center. From 2002 to 2019, ALERRT trained 130,000 first responders from over 9,000 agencies (Martaindale & Blair, 2019). This is important because when an active shooting event occurs, attention is drawn to law enforcement officers and how they handle the situation. In an active shooter situation, law enforcement officers are also instructed to minimize personal danger while balancing it with the cultural standard of being brave. Research was conducted to determine how law enforcement officers view their role in an active shooter situation, with a goal of helping law enforcement administrators create policies and training help law enforcement officers respond appropriately in active shooter situations. Discussing their role as a law enforcement officer, one officer stated that it is their solemn duty to not fear any potential danger to their life or career advancement when potentially lethal force is necessary. He stated that it is part of his sworn mandate to endanger himself to protect another citizen and that it is a component of his virtue to sustain risks in protecting good from evil. When entering an active shooter situation, law enforcement officers know that they will face danger and that someone is trying to kill or has already killed innocent people. Therefore, law enforcement officers cannot wait to engage with an active shooter before further action is taken. Officers are trained to engage the shooter as soon as possible so that lives are saved. There was a time when special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams were sent to stop an active shooter. The public does not approve of waiting for SWAT to arrive in an active shooter situation, feeling that the shooting needs to be contained as soon as possible to reduce the number of victims. Now, the thought is

that having even one officer should expedite locating the shooter, engaging with them, and stopping the shooting from escalating (Phillips, 2020). It would be good to know the number of active shooter situations in which one officer has effectively engaged the shooter and what techniques they used. The risks of engaging with an active shooter will be discussed next.

Entering an active shooter situation does not come without risks. Prior to the mass shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, local law enforcement agencies used to wait until their SWAT arrived to enter a hostile situation. This was due to the thought that SWAT had additional hostile and team training (Martaindale & Blair, 2019). In a study of 160 active shooter situations, officers were killed in the line of duty in 46.7% of the shootings that they responded to. Due to the risks in responding to an active shooter situation, law enforcement agencies have considered waiting for three to four officers to respond to a scene. However, the potential for there to be more victims is greater the longer that officers wait to arrive on the scene. On the contrary, it is far more dangerous for a solo officer to respond alone. When facing any sort of danger, the public expects officers to assume some level of risk. Law enforcement agencies are continuously working to improve training and change policies because they recognize this reality. Despite the danger that a situation may pose to officers' safety, it is fair to assume that the public expects them to accept the risk to their life. If an officer does not respond as the public expects them to, law enforcement agencies receive backlash and scrutiny (Phillips, 2020). This topic is challenging to discuss because of the sensitivity around the topic. A study on how much officers contribute to society beyond active shooter situations may help the public have a better understanding of their role. From the beginning of their careers as cadets, officers are taught to defend the innocent and fight evil. In more recent years, law enforcement agencies have received increased scrutiny due to individuals who have died because of their use of force. No one is

perfect, and that includes law enforcement officers. The public puts great emphasis on situations that go wrong and in which officers used force resulting in a life being lost. There must be a continued focus on how much law enforcement is needed in the community. The last part of the literature review will discuss how law enforcement has previously handled active shooter situations.

Law enforcement agencies quickly realized that it is not effective to wait for multiple officers to arrive at the scene before entering the hostile situation. Agencies had to look at balancing the safety of their officers and addressing the hostile situation at hand. That is when agencies decided to move away from active response teams that were composed of two or three officers. Instead, agencies started having one officer respond to a mass shooting to prevent even more innocent lives being lost. Having fewer officers on scene responding to a mass shooting meant putting officers at greater risk of being injured or killed themselves, but agencies felt that it was the best thing to do for the public (Martaindale & Blair, 2019). In 2014, a report from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) was released. The report was put together after a national conference at which conversations regarding past active shooters were discussed. The report discusses how law enforcement officers handled previous active shooters, along with suggestions on how to handle any future active shooter situations. The PERF suggested that active shooter situations are much more manageable and easily diffused when multiple officers are on the scene. Officers are also more effective when they utilize their semiautomatic weapons, as opposed to their patrol-issued rifles. The last, and by far the most important, aspect of the report indicated that law enforcement officers need the training to assess a scene and their tactical resources for a few seconds before deciding what action they need to take (Phillips, 2020). All of the discussed training should be what law enforcement officers need to effectively

handle an active shooter situation. Moving on will be the summary of Chapter Two, the Literature Review.

Summary

In conclusion, Chapter Two has discussed the demand for firearms, literature related to background checks when firearms are purchased in America, mass shootings, how the public reacts after mass shootings, and how law enforcement influences mass shooting prevention tactics. To summarize the literature discussed in this chapter, after a mass shooting occurs, firearm purchases increase, parents demand more action to prevent gun violence in school settings. In the research study, I will investigate whether law enforcement officers should influence mass shooting prevention tactics because they are specifically trained to handle both physical and psychological situations. Chapter Three discusses the methods used for the qualitative study.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics. This qualitative study aimed to answer the following question: What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend that can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings? Prior to conducting this study, permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since this qualitative study was approved, law enforcement officers were interviewed. The data collected has been documented and analyzed to better understand how mass shootings can be prevented. This study was conducted due to ongoing mass shootings that continue to occur in the United States. Over three-quarters of the shooters legally obtained the firearms that they used (Follman, 2012). This chapter discusses the design of the study, the research questions that were utilized, the setting and participants of the study, and how the overall study was conducted.

Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics. A qualitative study is a research methodology in which a phenomenon is investigated in a real-life context. In a qualitative study, single individuals, groups, or events are investigated to understand the causes of underlying principles (PressAcademia). The goal of this study was to interview law enforcement officers and receive their perspectives on how mass shootings could be prevented. The best possible outcome of this qualitative study was that law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics and prevent more lives from being lost.

The approach to this study was to understand how law enforcement officers believe mass shootings can be prevented. Law enforcement officers were interviewed to understand their perspectives on mass shooting prevention tactics. The goal of the research question was to understand law enforcement officers' perspectives on mass shooting prevention tactics, their influence on local policies, and whether mass shooting prevention tactics can be permanent and long-lasting. Law enforcement officers were the population studied.

Basic qualitative studies are beneficial in obtaining reliable data from individuals who are subject matter experts. Basic qualitative studies also allow a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis. A basic qualitative study is the best choice for this research since it can analyze a specific scenario and obtain detailed information about it (Rebolj, 2013). All interviewees were subject matter experts in crime prevention. Since law enforcement officers were interviewed, the data received was analyzed to determine that there was consistent and trending data. Based on the consensus of the data collected, I could recommend that specific mass shooting prevention tactics be put in place.

Research Question

The research question for this qualitative research addressed a gap in the literature, in which law enforcement officers have not been utilized to influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Political systems theory supports this research question by utilizing the skills and knowledge of public figures such as law enforcement officers to influence mass shooting prevention tactics. This research question also supported the problem statement: that mass shootings continue to occur without an end in sight. Finally, this research question also supported the purpose of this qualitative case study: to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. The best outcome of utilizing this research question

was that law enforcement officers would be able to influence mass shooting prevention tactics and prevent more lives from being lost.

This qualitative study was designed to answer the following question:

RQ1. What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?

Setting

The ideal setting of this qualitative study was in person, at the law enforcement officers' place of business. For this qualitative study, interviews were conducted in the form of a Microsoft teams call. The thought behind conducting interviews in person was to be able to connect with study participants in person. However, it was more convenient for all parties involved to conduct interviews in the form of a Microsoft teams call. Most interviews occurred between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Due to work schedules, some interviews occurred after the hours of 5:00 pm due to the interviewees request.

Participants

This qualitative study was successfully executed by law enforcement officers being the studied population. Law enforcement officers were the ideal population due to their daily interactions with the public and their current involvement in responding to mass shootings. Law enforcement officers were the ideal population, as they are also familiar with community dynamics and could provide advice on investigative issues. Finally, law enforcement officers have unique skills and knowledge that only their job allows them to have, including an extensive understanding of the criminal justice system, investigative skills, an inquisitive nature, access to community safety resources, and knowledge of potentially criminal behavior (Okada & Pollard, 2021). The target population of the qualitative study was law enforcement officers. The

participants all worked for a sheriff's department in the west-central region of the United States. Law enforcement officers that had at least five years of service were asked to participate. Law enforcement officer participants also had at least five years of service, so that they had enough experience in the field to provide a strong perspective on my research question. Law enforcement officer participants were women and men who worked in the field or at the local jail. For this qualitative study, typical case sampling was used. Typical cases were selected for the sampling design with the help of key informants like knowledgeable participants who know what is typical (Shaheen et al., 2019). By both identifying and utilizing participants as discussed, this qualitative study was effectively executed. In the next section, the procedures involved with conducting this study will be discussed.

Procedures

To be compliant in the conducting of this qualitative study, appropriate steps were taken. Before conducting this study, the research site was authorized, and committee approval and institutional review board (IRB) approval was received. To receive IRB approval for conducting this study, the IRB application was completed. The IRB approved the conducting of the study, resulting in the ability to implement the study. All the data has been collected, analyzed, and the remainder of the dissertation was completed.

Recruitment for this qualitative study occurred once the IRB approved the study. I was in contact with a law enforcement officer who worked in a law enforcement agency in the west-central region of the United States. Since the study has been approved, his assistance was offered in finding prospective participants who worked at his law enforcement agency or in the area. Once he found prospective participants, he gave me their email addresses or had them contact me. Then, I contacted the prospective participants to utilize them for my qualitative study.

I met with prospective participants over a Microsoft teams call and via email to determine whether they met the criteria of having at least five years of service and experience working either in the field or at the local jail. After it was determined that prospective participants met the study's parameters, they were given the option to conduct the interview in person or via Microsoft teams. After participants were chosen, they were given the consent form indicating that they agreed to participate in the study and that they agreed to be recorded for accurate data to be received and analyzed. Before beginning the interviews, participants were given a detailed description of the study. During the actual interview process, all interviews were recorded. To accurately transcribe the interview data, the recorded interviews were typed out verbatim. After all interviews were completed, interviewees were given an overview of the data I received and how it was used for my study.

The Researcher's Role

My role in this qualitative study was to develop a research question, establish a setting for the study, find and recruit participants, conduct and document the study, and implement and analyze its results. IRB approval was granted before I conducted this study. Participants were given a detailed description of the study prior to being asked study questions. At the time, participants had the opportunity to opt out of the study if they decided that they no longer wanted to participate. Once participants agreed that they wanted to continue with the study, they were asked to sign a consent form and to be recorded so that accurate data could be received and analyzed.

I needed to ensure that I was counteracting bias, which could be challenging due to a researcher's desire to have a specific outcome for their study and due to the temptation to persuade participants to have specific thoughts about the research question. Researchers must

reduce the urge to sway their participants either way, to ensure that the study data is truthful (Ellsworth, 2021). Countering bias in my study was not challenging. Although I have a great amount of respect for law enforcement, I did not have a professional or personal relationship with the law enforcement officer who assisted me in finding and recruiting prospective participants. I had conversations with the law enforcement officer, and he assisted with the recruiting of prospective participants from his agency. He chose to help me find and recruit participants from other agencies located in the west-central region of the United States. I did not know any law enforcement officers that worked at his specific agency. At this agency, I did not have any professional or personal relationships with any of the officers, either.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, data was collected using three methods, including interviews, two focus groups with at least four participants each, and a questionnaire. Different participants engaged with each of these three methods. Participants were determined for each of the three data collection methods by purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a specific interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interview data was collected via a Microsoft teams call. The interviews were recorded, and notes will be taken. The goal for interviews was to last at least 45 minutes, with some interviews lasting over 45 minutes. Data collection in the form of a focus group occurred on two separate sessions. Both focus group sessions included the number of participants that were determined in the procedures section of the dissertation. Data collection also occurred through a questionnaire that was emailed to participants. The rest of this section will explain in detail how the data was collected and analyzed.

1. Identify law enforcement officers who met the qualifications to participate in the study.
Invitations to participate in the study were sent to 90 law enforcement officers. Only participants that were needed were utilized. The goal was to have 20 to 30 law enforcement officers participate in the study, but participants will be utilized as needed. In the case of this study, 20 law enforcement officers were enough. 8 officers were interviewed, 4 officers participated in the questionnaire, and 8 officers were utilized for the focus groups. The reason behind inviting 90 officers to participate, with the thought that fewer will participate, was due to data saturation. Data saturation is not about the numbers, but the depth of the data. Interviews and focus groups were utilized as a part of the study, both of which are effective data collection methods. Interviews are effective when participants are asked the same questions. Focus groups are most effective when they include six to 12 participants, so that the groups are small enough to generate more conversation and have a more diverse group (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Utilizing interviews and focus groups for data collection methods should assist with data saturation.
2. Provided participants with an overview of the study.
3. Participants were given the opportunity either to ask questions or to opt out of the study.
4. Participants were asked to sign a consent form that gave their agreement to participate in the study and to have their interviews recorded.
5. The study was sent to participants who opted to participate via email and given seven days to complete it.
6. Interviews were scheduled for at least 45 minutes for participants who opt for in-person and Microsoft teams interviews.

7. Once all interviews were completed in person, via Microsoft teams, or via email, participants were given a copy of the answers to their interview questions.
8. Interview data was analyzed.
9. Write the study once it has been determined that enough trending data has been collected.

Data Collection Formats

For the three collection methods, participants were different for each method. This was to ensure that participants were not asked the same questions more than once. For interviews, each participant was interviewed via Microsoft teams for at least 45 minutes. Ideally, all interviews were to be conducted in person, but it was easier for participants to have interviews conducted via Microsoft teams. All interviews were recorded, and notes were taken. Interviews occurred in a structured format and conducted on a one-on-one basis. Data collection in the form of a focus group occurred in two separate sessions. Both focus group sessions included different participants that were determined by following the procedures section of the dissertation. The goal of the focus groups was to generate discussion amongst participants, with the goal of uncovering data that could be used for the qualitative case study. Data collection in the form of a questionnaire was emailed to participants.

Perspective

1. What role do you think law enforcement officers could have in mass shooting prevention?
2. What do you believe could be done to stop active shooter (mass shooting) incidents while they are actively occurring?
3. Are there any specific policies that are already in place that you believe could be modified to further prevent mass shootings?

4. Are there any specific policies that are already in place that you believe are ineffective in further preventing mass shootings?

For this qualitative study, participants were asked to share their perspectives about how local law enforcement can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. The goal of these interview questions was to answer my research question “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” The best possible outcomes of this study would be that law enforcement officers offer new insights and that better mass shooting prevention tactics are put into place.

Data Analysis

Since all interview data has been collected, the recordings of the interviews have been reviewed and transcribed word for word. Interviewees were given an overview of the data that I received and informed about how the data was utilized in my study. The data was reviewed to identify themes. Enough themes in the data were identified, so more law enforcement officers did not need to be interviewed. If this was not the case, the same recruitment would have needed to occur for law enforcement officers who have at least five years of service and experience working either in the field or in a jail.

When it comes to data analysis, Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke’s thematic analysis method (TA), which reiterates important aspects of data analysis, is important. Regarding the application of method and theory, it is important to be explicit, thoughtful, and deliberate. Reflexive practice is important in understanding assumptions and positioning. It is important to reflect on and identify my assumptions. Finally, the quality of data analysis matters. I needed to understand what I am doing, why I am doing it, and what the criteria are for doing it well (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Further, thematic analysis was particularly beneficial for this qualitative study

since my research question was not just meant to understand personal experience and sense making (Braun & Clarke, 2021). My research question is “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” Law enforcement officers were able to utilize real world experiences that they have encountered to be able to give value added professional opinions. Law enforcement officers also utilized their professional knowledge to make recommendations to aid in the hope of potentially reducing future mass shootings. I successfully utilized Braun and Clarke’s TA method by being purposeful when analyzing data. By being purposeful in analyzing my qualitative study data, I also needed to evaluate my assumptions and positioning when necessary. The quality of my data analysis matters, too. I needed to ensure that I purposefully understood what I was doing, why I was doing it, and what the criteria was for doing it well. That said, I needed to review my data results multiple times to ensure that what I was analyzing was correct. The next section will discuss the trustworthiness of this qualitative study.

Trustworthiness

In a qualitative study, trustworthiness is described for the main qualitative content analysis phases from data collection to the reporting of the results. Regarding trustworthiness, every phase of the data analysis process is scrutinized, which includes the preparation, organization, and reporting of results. The three phases of the data analysis have the goal of ensuring that the reader understands that the qualitative study is to be trusted. A qualitative study can be trusted when the reader believes that the content analysis is reported correctly. Additionally, the researcher can gain trustworthiness by ensuring that they collect the most suitable data for content analysis. For a qualitative study to be relevant, the study must have trustworthiness. A qualitative study is proven trustworthy by being able to prove the theory

grounding the study, being transparent, has reflexivity, triangulation, raw data availability and data tables (Adler, 2022). For the purpose of this dissertation, the aspect of a qualitative study that makes it deemed trustworthy will be discussed in the terms of credibility, dependability and confidentiality, and transferability.

Credibility

In relation to a qualitative study, credibility refers to the truth of the data, the participant views, and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher. Credibility is enhanced by the researcher when they describe their experiences as a researcher and verify the research findings with the participants. If the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognized by individuals that share the same experience, a qualitative study is considered credible. The researcher should demonstrate engagement, methods of observation, and audit trails to support credibility when reporting a qualitative study (Cope, 2014). For credibility, all participants were asked the same interview questions so that the study received consistent data. All interviews were also recorded. The potential for researcher's bias was also avoided by ensuring that all participants received a copy of the information that they provided in their interviews. Participants were also given a copy of the analysis of the data that they provided in their interviews. This is referred to as member checking, and it is also beneficial validating, verifying, and assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Birt et al., 2016). Everything that is purposefully done by the researcher to have credibility was demonstrated.

Dependability and Confidentiality

Dependability refers to the consistency of the data over similar conditions. This can be accomplished when another researcher agrees with the decision trails at each stage of the research process. If the study findings are replicated with similar participants in similar

conditions, the study would be deemed dependable (Cope, 2014). Before agreeing to participate in the study, participants were given written confirmation of its purpose. It is also important that participants understood the contents of the study. Before conducting interviews, participants were also made aware of the interview questions. Per the consent form that participants needed to sign, they also received written confirmation that their identities remained confidential in the study. Values that are associated with confidentiality include autonomy, privacy and keeping a commitment. Achieving the principle of confidentiality, however, requires the researcher to possess certain personal and professional attributes that include honesty and respectfulness to the participants in the study (Petrova & Camilleri, 2016). Having honesty and respectfulness in the study should be accomplished easily.

Transferability

Transferability refers to findings that can be applied to other settings or groups. A qualitative study would have met this criterion if the results had meaning to individuals that were not involved in the study. Another assurance that the qualitative study meets the criterion to have transferability is when readers can associate the results with their own experiences (Cope, 2014). The data collected was also recorded. During Zoom interviews, notes were also taken. To ensure that data is valid, participants were provided with the data that they gave me before I utilized it for the study. Participants were also given a copy of the analyzed data that was interrupted by the data they provided in their interviews. This is referred to as member checking, and it is also beneficial in validating, verifying, and assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking also allows participants to be a part of the study more by seeing the analyzed data before it is utilized for the final study. In the next paragraph, the ethical considerations associated with the study will be discussed.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain confidentiality, no names were utilized in this study. Due to there being five interview questions, Microsoft teams interviews did not take longer than 45 minutes unless participants had more to add. Before the interviews, participants were given interview questions to ensure that they agree with them. After reviewing the interview questions, participants who did not wish to continue with the study had the opportunity to opt out. In the situation of this study, one participant opted to not continue with the study after reviewing the interview questions. It was also specified in the consent form that participants could have voluntarily opted out of the study at any time.

This study followed the Belmont report, with the purpose of protecting the rights of all participants. By giving the opportunity to opt out at any time, the study followed the first principle of the Belmont report, which is respect for people. Participants were also given an overview of the study before signing the consent form, following the principle of beneficence in the Belmont report. Finally, all participants received the same interview questions, following the principle of justice in the Belmont Report (Miracle, 2016). By following the Belmont report, the study was respectful, had beneficence, and justice. In the next section, a summary of Chapter Three will be discussed.

Summary

As stated in the summary of Chapter Three, the purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics. It was also discussed that 20 law enforcement officers were utilized for this qualitative study. The research question for this study was “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” This chapter also

discussed that the participant interviews occurred via Microsoft teams. Participants had their interviews recorded and were asked four questions. Once all the interviews were completed, participants received a copy of the information that they provided during their interviews. For this study, participants also received information regarding how their data was analyzed. Chapter Four includes the findings of the interviews.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Basic qualitative studies are beneficial in obtaining reliable data from individuals who are subject matter experts. Basic qualitative studies also allow a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis. A basic qualitative study is the best choice for this research since it can analyze a specific scenario and obtain detailed information about it (Rebolj, 2013). The qualitative data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. Chapter four begins with the descriptions of the 20 selected participants. Further into Chapter four, findings from the collected data and the research question responses will follow.

Participants

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Current Role	Tenure in Law Enforcement
Mark	SWAT Officer in Charge	20 years
Steve	Tactical Team Leader	11 years
Lisa	Sheriff's Deputy	6 years
Wesley	Sheriff's Deputy	10 years
Beth	Sheriff's Deputy	10 years
Josh	Sheriff's Deputy	5 years
Brian	Tactical Team Operator	7 years
Joy	Sheriff's Deputy	5 years
Liz	Sheriff's Deputy	5 years
Montgomery	Tactical Team Operator	7 years
Jose	Vehicle Operator	5 years
Tammy	School Resource Officer	10 years
Benjamin	Team Member Trainer	11 years
Rodney	Team Member Trainer	11 years
Edith	Sheriff's Deputy	30 years
Steven	Sheriff's Deputy	17 years
Matt	Counter-Operator	10 years
Joel	Counter-Operator	10 years
Mike	Vehicle Operator	6 years
Stuart	Vehicle Operator	6 years

Mark

Mark is currently a SWAT Officer in Charge. He has been working in SWAT, at the same law enforcement agency for the past 20 years. Prior to working in SWAT, Mark was in the United States Marine Corps for 10 years. Mark is incredibly enthusiastic about the work that he is doing. To date, Mark has responded to multiple mass shootings in his state. In the handling of mass shootings, Mark stated multiple times throughout our interview that law enforcement agencies need “personnel, equipment, doctrine, training, and leadership” to manage a mass shooting incident as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Steve

Steve is currently a SWAT Tactical Team Leader. Steve has worked at the same law enforcement agency in SWAT for the past 7 years. Prior to working in SWAT, Steve was a patrol officer for 4 years. Overall, Steve’s tenure in law enforcement is 11 years. Throughout our interview, Steve discussed that minimizing the amount of blood and life lost is dependent on law enforcement’s response time. He also believes that schools can help to minimize the amount of loss in a mass shooting by regularly practicing active threat drills. He also further stated that mass shootings are a ‘multivariate problem where the variables, even the number of variables change in each instance.’

Lisa

Lisa has worked as a sheriff’s deputy for the same sheriff’s office for the past 6 years. Lisa is now a patrol officer, but she started her career working in the county jail. Criminals held in the county jail committed a wide variety of crimes, including shoplifting, attempted burglary, and domestic violence incidents. Now that she is a patrol officer, she responds to similar crimes.

Prior to working in civilian law enforcement, Lisa was a military police officer for 6 years in the United States Army. Lisa spent the end of her military career working in K-9. Lisa hopes to work in K-9 in the civilian law enforcement sector one day.

Wesley

Wesley has worked as a sheriff's deputy for the past 10 years at the same law enforcement agency. Wesley does not have military experience, but he came from a military family. Wesley's father was a member of Security Forces in the United States Air Force for 22 years. Wesley wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and joined the civilian sector of law enforcement after college. Wesley has his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, with the hopes of moving up the ranks of law enforcement.

Beth

Beth has worked in law enforcement for the past 10 years as a sheriff's deputy. Beth has only worked at her current law enforcement agency for the past 5 years. Throughout our interview, Beth indicated that the Red Flag Law is a big step in the right direction for the safety of the public. Beth was not hesitant to say though that the Red Flag Law is not perfect and that individuals need to know when they should say something to law enforcement about a concern that they have. She further said that in previous mass shooting incidents that the Red Flag Law could have been beneficial, but that the Red Flag Law is still new and that both civilians and law enforcement are still navigating the law.

Josh

Josh has worked in law enforcement for the past 5 years as a sheriff's deputy, and for the same law enforcement agency. Josh has spent his time working in the county jail. Prior to working in the civilian law enforcement sector, Josh was in the United States Army for 20 years

as a military police officer. When Josh retired from the Army, he did not hesitate to become a part of civilian law enforcement. Josh graduated from the Police Academy 1 year after retiring.

Brian

Brian is currently a SWAT Tactical Team Operator. Brian has worked in SWAT for the past 7 years, and at the same law enforcement agency. Brian is working on his master's in criminal justice. Brian has strong thoughts about what can occur to prevent more mass shootings from happening. Three prevention tactics that Brian pointed out were related to preventing mass shootings in a school environment. Brian believes that all schools need a school resource officer, that law enforcement needs to collaborate closely with school districts on threat assessments, and that we need to work to get vulnerable individuals mental health help.

Joy

Joy is currently a sheriff's deputy that has worked at the same law enforcement agency for the past 5 years. Prior to her deputy role, Joy was in the United States Air Force for 8 years. While in the Air Force, Joy was a part of Security Forces. Joy is an advocate for mental health. In relation to how the mental health of a potential shooter matters, Joy stated "Being isolated is not healthy."

Liz

Liz has worked as a sheriff's deputy for the past 5 years. Last year Liz transferred to a different law enforcement agency. Liz currently works in the county jail, but she is hoping to become a patrol officer soon. While she awaits being able to become a patrol officer, Liz is working on her bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Liz plans to retire as a deputy.

Montgomery

Montgomery has worked in law enforcement for the past 7 years as a Tactical Team Operator. Montgomery moved to a different state last year, so he is working at a different law enforcement agency than the one he started at. Since moving to his new agency, Montgomery has already responded to multiple active shooter incidents. Montgomery believes that law enforcement and the public need to have a partnership to better work to prevent future mass shootings. Montgomery wants to be a SWAT Officer in Charge one day.

Jose

Jose has worked in law enforcement for the past 5 years. During his tenure in law enforcement, Jose has worked at the same agency as a SWAT Vehicle Operator.

Tammy

Tammy has worked in law enforcement for the past 10 years. Tammy has worked at the same agency for the past 10 years, but during her tenure she has had multiple roles. Tammy started working for the sheriff's department in the county jail. Tammy transitioned to being a patrol officer after 3 years. After 3 years as a patrol officer, Tammy transitioned to working as a school resource officer.

Benjamin

Benjamin currently works as a SWAT Tactical Team Trainer. Benjamin has worked for the same agency for 11 years, having 1 year as a SWAT Tactical Team Trainer. Benjamin has two distinct thoughts about preventing mass shootings. Benjamin believes that architectural design could make it harder for a potential mass shooter. Benjamin specifically stated, "As far as prevention, making places harder to essentially assault will make a difference." Benjamin also believes that threat assessments in school environments are effective.

Rodney

Rodney is a SWAT Tactical Team Leader. Rodney has worked for the same agency for the past 11 years, having 1 year as a SWAT Tactical Team Trainer. With his agency, Rodney is currently the back up trainer. Prior to being the back up trainer, Rodney was a part of the SWAT active threat team for 10 years.

Edith

Edith has worked as a sheriff's deputy for almost 30 years. Edith was a military spouse, which allowed her to work at multiple law enforcement agencies throughout her career. At her current agency, Edith has worked there for close to 10 years. Edith believes that she will retire from her current agency in a few years. Edith has responded to more than a handful of active shooter incidents in her career. When discussing mass shooting statistics, Edith stated, "This problem is a mental health problem coming out as a murder problem. The majority of the perpetrators have broken families and are a symptom of society."

Steven

Steven is currently a sheriff's deputy. With over 17 years of experience, Steven has worked at multiple law enforcement agencies. Like most deputies, Steven started his work in the county jail. Steven has worked as a patrol officer for the last 14 years. Steven believes that there needs to be more target hardening, and that gun free zones are promoting mass shootings and mass casualties.

Matt

Matt is currently a SWAT Counter-Operator. Matt has worked in SWAT for the past 10 years, and at the same agency. Prior to working in SWAT, Matt was in the United States Army for

8 years. Matt was a member of Special Forces, and he feels that his military experience has helped him be successful in the civilian sector of law enforcement.

Joel

Joey is currently a SWAT counter-operator. Joel has worked in SWAT for the past 10 years, but he moved to a new agency 4 years ago. Joel also moved from one state to another. The crimes that occurred in his former state were not as severe as the current crimes he responds to now. Due to the change in his experiences, Joel feels that he is still learning a lot about his role as a SWAT counter-operator.

Mike

Mike is a SWAT Vehicle Operator that has worked at 2 different agencies since transitioning from the United States Army to civilian law enforcement. Mike was in the Army for 12 years, with his law enforcement tenure being 6 years.

Stuart

Stuart is a SWAT Vehicle Operator. He has worked at the same agency since he transitioned from being a firefighter to law enforcement 6 years ago. Stuart enjoyed being a firefighter, but he wanted to be a first responder in a different capacity. Prior to law enforcement, Stuart was a firefighter was almost 15 years.

Results

Upon completion of this qualitative case study, seven themes were uncovered. Substantial data analysis, synthesis, and evaluation occurred prior to these insights being generated. The seven themes uncovered were prevention tactics, mental illness, school resource officers, target hardening, active threat training, mass shootings are a multivariate problem, and response time matters. These insights were uncovered through the completion of interviews, focus groups, and

questionnaires. 20 law enforcement officers took part in my study as participants. 8 participants were utilized for interviews, 4 participants took part in the questionnaire, and 8 participants were about of the focus groups. After the results of the study are discussed, the remainder of this section will discuss the themes that were uncovered, any contradicting data that was found, and my own analysis of the data that participants provided. My analysis that will be provided was derived from the conversations that occurred with law enforcement officers who participated in my study.

Theme Development

Since all interview data have been collected, the recordings of the interviews have been reviewed and transcribed word for word. Interviewees were given an overview of the data that I received and informed about how the data was utilized in my study. The data was reviewed to identify themes. Enough themes in the data were identified, so more law enforcement officers did not need to be interviewed. If this was not the case, the same recruitment would have needed to occur for law enforcement officers who have at least five years of service and experience working either in the field or in a jail.

When it comes to data analysis, Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's thematic analysis method (TA), which reiterates important aspects of data analysis, is important. Regarding the application of method and theory, it is important to be explicit, thoughtful, and deliberate. Reflexive practice is important in understanding assumptions and positioning. It is important to reflect on and identify my assumptions. Finally, the quality of data analysis matters. I needed to understand what I was doing, why I was doing it, and what the criteria was for doing it well (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Further, thematic analysis was particularly beneficial for this qualitative study since my research question was not just meant to understand personal experience and sense

making (Braun & Clarke, 2021). My research question is “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” Law enforcement officers were able to utilize real world experiences that they have encountered to be able to give value added professional opinions. Law enforcement officers also utilized their professional knowledge to make recommendations to aid in the hope of potentially reducing future mass shootings. I successfully utilized Braun and Clarke’s TA method by being purposeful when analyzing data. By being purposeful in analyzing my qualitative study data, I also needed to evaluate my assumptions and positioning when necessary. The quality of my data analysis matters, too. I needed to ensure that I purposefully understood what I was doing, why I was doing it, and what the criteria was for doing it well. That said, I needed to review my data results multiple times to ensure that what I was analyzing was correct.

Theme 1: Ineffective and Effective Prevention Tactics

Table 3

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Prevention	Modifying Firearm Background Checks	“I don't think that modifying the background check would make a single bit of difference in mass shooting prevention.”
Talk	Safe2Tell	“I know that they've been able to get a lot of in, thank God, most of the time it's, you know, they're able to vet it out and find out, it was just talk.”
Background Check	Red Flag	“I know that they've been able to get a lot of in, thank God, most of the time it's, you know, they're able to vet it out and find out, it was just talk.”
Relationship	Community	“We're fortunate enough that we have a great relationship with our fire department.”

Modifying Firearm Background Checks. It was through the utilization of interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires that participants highlighted an ineffective mass shooting prevention tactic. If an individual intends to commit an act of violence with a firearm or other type of weapon, they will more than likely do their best to ensure that it happens. This means that if a firearm is unavailable to commit an act of violence the individual may look at utilizing another type of weapon to commit an act of violence. However, in recent mass shooting history all mass shooting suspects had access to firearms, both legally and illegally. Two days prior to the Uvalde Texas mass shooting that occurred in 2022, the two firearms that were used during the shooting were legally purchased. A few years before the Uvalde Texas shooting, a 17-year-old took his father's legally purchased firearm from his closet and utilized it to commit a mass shooting in Sante Fe Texas. These are only two examples in which firearms were legally and illegally acquired for use in a mass shooting.

Concerning this qualitative study, the consensus amongst law enforcement officer participants was that modifying background check requirements does not aid in preventing mass shootings. Firearms that are used in an active shooter situation may have been acquired in multiple ways, including legally after passing a background check, given to the assailant as a present, or stolen by the assailant. There have been recent mass shooting cases in the United States in which an individual passed a background check and committed a mass shooting shortly after. Other recent cases include the mass shooting suspects being given the firearm that they utilized in a mass shooting as a present. Finally, stolen guns were acquired because of parents or other family members who did not properly store their firearms. If an individual wants to purchase a firearm, then they will need to complete a background check. After the background check is completed, the waiting period is three days before a decision is made as to whether the

individual can purchase the firearm. The firearm background check process could delay a potential shooter from committing a mass shooting sooner. Ultimately though, if an individual is denied the purchase of a firearm, that does not mean that they will not steal a firearm or commit an act of violence another way. Guns do not kill people; people use guns to kill people. The same goes for acts of violence. People commit violence, not the object that is used to commit the violence. Rodney specifically stated, "I don't believe that background checks are very closely related with mass shootings." Mark stated "I don't think that modifying the background check would make a single bit of difference in mass shooting prevention, and the reason is you can't control who can get their hands on guns simply by a background check. That's an unrealistic expectation. In fact, most of the crimes we deal with on a regular basis are stolen firearms." Joel added "There's only so much we can do as a, as a society, to legislate safety and precaution." Lisa concluded by stating "Guns aren't the problem. It's people that are the problem, and that's guns in the right hands."

Although the consensus amongst officers was that modifying firearm background checks would not aid in preventing mass shootings, some of the contradicting data that I received was that background checks "exist outside pretty much the realm of law enforcement." Other contradicting data included the comment "I don't know that I can give you a very relevant or insightful answer on this first question." I do believe that the contradicting data that I received is valid. Law enforcement officers all have different roles in their respective agencies, which explains why there could be varying opinions about modifying background checks. I also understand the sentiment that discussing firearms is a sensitive topic.

Safe2Tell. Interview answers addressed the theme that Safe2Tell could be an effective prevention tactic. Safe2Tell is a federal law that started in 2019. Under this law, states are given

funding for schools to have an anonymous way for school threats to be reported. Threats of school violence can anonymously be reported, along with bullying and threats of self-harm. Students and non-students alike can report potential school threats. Further, under Safe2Tell, the goal is for there not to be a fear of retaliation for reporting a threat since all information is reported anonymously. In relation to preventing mass shootings in school districts that are a part of the county that his agency responds to, Wesley stated “I think the biggest thing they've had is the Safe2Tell.” Wesley further stated, “I know that they've been able to get a lot of in, thank God, most of the time it's, you know, they're able to vet it out and find out, it was just talk.” I am grateful to hear that so many school districts have gotten mass shooting threats reported to Safe2Tell, and that they were found to not be true threats. It helps me to be confident in Safe2Tell if a mass shooting threat is reported, deemed to be true, and ultimately prevented as a result. As a parent, it is reassuring to me to know that Safe2Tell is an active law that is in place to help prevent mass shootings and other types of violence from occurring. Children should feel that they have an avenue to report threatening behavior, text messages, or even social media posts without the fear of being retaliated against. It is also comforting to know that law enforcement feels that Safe2Tell is an effective prevention tactic. Unfortunately, mass shootings in a school setting have occurred since Safe2Tell was put in place in 2019, but not all school districts in the United States have the Safe2Tell program.

Red Flag. In relation to more effective prevention tactics, the theme of red flags was uncovered. Beth indicated “I think when you look at all of the active shooter cases that have occurred, and through the after-action reports that I've read, it's not like out of the blue, this person decided I'm gonna get a handgun or an automatic weapon, I'm gonna go, and I'm gonna mow down my school. It's been building over time and it gets missed by students, teachers,

friends, parents. I mean, it's like these red flags going off like crazy.” In recent years, there have been multiple mass shootings that have occurred that have indicated that red flags were missed or overlooked. Prior to committing a mass shooting that occurred in 2022, the mass shooter was hospitalized for a psychiatric evaluation due to a mental health law in New York. Before the shooter was psychiatrically evaluated, in school he wrote a concerning response about murder and suicide. Per the Red Flag law that the state of New York has in place, his firearms should have been confiscated. In regard to the mass shooting that occurred at an Aurora Colorado movie theater in 2012, the shooter “passed a background check, maybe a red flag would have helped in that instance.” Before the Aurora Colorado shooting, the shooter was seeking psychiatric treatment. Receiving psychiatric treatment alone is not a red flag, and it did not cause him to fail a background check or have an outsider report a red flag that may have been identified. I think the consensus from law enforcement that there are red flags before a mass shooting occurs should be a message to all readers. Red flags could be an extremely effective prevention tactic if the individuals who notice them act. Acting on a red flag could mean talking to the individual exhibiting the red flags, communicating with their parents, friends, or teachers about the noticed concerns, submitting an anonymous tip to Safe2Tell, or even reporting the concerns to law enforcement. When it comes to noticing red flags, I believe that they may not be addressed because the individuals noticing them do not know who to report their concerns to. There could also be a perception that they could be overanalyzing the red flags, or that the individual would not commit something as horrendous as a mass shooting. There is not a solution in place for everyone to feel comfortable addressing red flags. I do believe that talking about them in this format is a productive start and could bring more awareness to the importance of addressing red flags.

Community Partnership. Another theme that was uncovered through the utilization of interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires is the importance of a community partnership. Benjamin spent an extensive amount of time discussing the partnership that his agency has with the local fire department and Emergency Medical Services. In relation to having community partnership, Steve stated “We're fortunate enough that we have a great relationship with our fire department. We have fire paramedics fully integrated with our SWAT team. That was our start and that kind of brought the two departments working closely together in higher risk situations and now we have an excellent relationship, and we work over the years very closely on active threat.” Steven stated, “What is effective is good training, good doctrine, integration with fire.” Further, Matt discussed working with the community to bring awareness to active threat situations, and how to handle them. Matt stated “The community has to be prepared for this type of thing to happen. Like schools, they do drills in the schools and when they do drills and they have a shooting, there is significantly less harm versus those that don't. And it's the same, businesses should do the same.

When I go to teach them, they're too worried about offending people with the information or they're too scared that it's upsetting. I get putting out a warning if you got PTSD, you don't wanna be there. I get that piece, but everyone else should probably be there. What we do for drills isn't even running around with a mask and a gun shooting, right? It's just a cold drill. There's no shooters. There's no nothing. It's just practicing. Hey, we're gonna pretend the guy came in your building right now, and then they test their alert system. Lock your door, see if they actually lock, you know, real basic stuff. People can think what will you do and if we solve that piece of it, we'll drastically reduce the impact and if we reduce the impact, they reduce the response, we reduce casualties.” In an active shooter incident, having a community partnership

could significantly minimize the casualty count. Additionally, there will be an increased awareness about how to respond if an active shooter incident occurs. I am not sure if all businesses partner up with law enforcement to have a plan in place in the unfortunate situation that an active shooter incident occurs, but I believe that they all should. Ignorance is not always bliss, and it is better to be prepared than to have an incident occur that no one is ready for. Further, working together as a community shows a united front and helps to bring neighbors closer together. Strength is a result of numbers, and this could be the case when a community partners up to prevent mass shootings.

Theme 2: Mental Illness

Table 4

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Red Flag	Mental Illness	“Mental illness is not a precursor for an individual to commit a violent act, but it could make an already bad situation even worse for an individual.”
Violent Act	Mental Illness	“In turn, the mentally ill individual could decide to act out their feelings by committing a violent act, such as a mass shooting.”

Stemming specifically from the utilization of focus groups, it was presented that the theme of mental illness could be a risk factor for a potential active shooter incident. Brian stated, “Most active shooters give some sort of indication.” In addition to this statement, Brian also stated that in relation to the Aurora Colorado movie theater shooting, “Maybe a red flag would have helped, but he passed a background check.” Mental illness is not a precursor for an individual to commit a violent act, but it could make an already bad situation even worse for an individual. In turn, the mentally ill individual could decide to act out their feelings by

committing a violent act, such as a mass shooting. Concerning the shooter who committed the Aurora Colorado movie theater shooting, he was regularly seeing a mental health therapist. Before the shooting, he displayed some concerning behaviors, along with stating that he had some distorted thoughts. Due to the client and therapist confidentiality agreement that was in place, his therapist did not report his behavior or thoughts to law enforcement. As far as what Brian said about the mass shooter passing a background check, there were red flags about the individual's mental health that could have been addressed and potentially could have prevented this tragedy. Additionally, exactly one year after the Aurora Colorado mass shooting, a mass shooting occurred in Washington D.C. In the case of this mass shooting, the mass shooter was recently receiving mental health treatment. He also had a violent history in which he shot his gun two times out of anger, but no action was taken against him. The mass shootings that occurred in Aurora Colorado and Washington D.C. are examples of individuals that had a mental illness and ultimately turned violent. With all of this being said, it is important to highlight that having a mental illness does not mean that an individual will become violent. Other risk factors that could be associated with a higher risk of violence could include bullying and social isolation.

Further discussing the theme of mental illness, it is evident that this theme has ties to the subtheme of red flags. As mentioned, an individual with a mental illness is not automatically at risk to commit a violent act. However, having a mental illness could make an individual more vulnerable to experience feelings of loneliness and depression. Feelings of loneliness and depression have been found to be contributing factors for previous mass shootings. More than likely there were red flags associated with these mental health symptoms that were overlooked before a mass shooting.

Theme 3: School Resource Officers

Table 5

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Kids	School Resource Officers	“As a society, we haven’t chosen to protect our kids.”
Schools	School Resource Officers	“Frankly, to balance both sides of what people are concerned about with law enforcement in schools, I personally would be OK if law enforcement officers weren't allowed to charge kids unless it was a felony.”

It was generated from interviews that school resource officers are crucial for schools. About prevention, Tammy stated “There is not an answer to everything, but I think school resource officers in every school, building relationships with kids, doing threat assessments, hopefully get some kids some help before they get to this point, obviously. As a society, we haven’t chosen to protect our kids. It is concerning.” In addition to what Tammy said, Mike stated “Frankly, to balance both sides of what people are concerned about with law enforcement in schools, I personally would be OK if law enforcement officers weren't allowed to charge kids unless it was a felony, in schools or a violent crime, you name the threshold basically. I don't think cops need to criminally charge every kid for petty things. That's not why they're in schools.” Further, Joy stated “The visible presence of school resource officers, uniformed police officers does actually help quite a bit.” With the unfortunate number of school shootings that are occurring, I feel that school resource officers should be a priority to have at all schools. Going off what Tammy said, it is unsettling that there are still school districts that choose to not make student safety a priority. I moved my daughter to a new school this year primarily because her former school only had a school resource officer there for 10% of the time. For the other 90% of

the time, the school resource officer was present at another school that was for grades 6-12th. My daughter is in elementary school, but that does not mean that her former school was immune from a school shooting occurring. At my daughter's new school, the school resource officer does exactly what Tammy discussed. The school resource officer focuses on building relationships with the students, but also the parents as well. Further, I believe that children should build healthy relationships with law enforcement and have a positive perception of them.

Theme 4: Target Hardening

Table 6

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Prevention	Target Hardening	"As far as prevention, making places harder to essentially assault will make a difference."
Respond	Target Hardening	"I think it's been several incidents that the assailant picked the place that didn't have somebody ready to respond."
Guns	Target Hardening	"There's a universality that they occur, with the vast majority in what are declared gun free zones."

Through the utilization of interviews and focus groups, the theme of target hardening was uncovered. To quote Mark, his response was "As far as prevention, making places harder to essentially assault will make a difference." Stuart stated, "I think the biggest preventative tactic that we could enforce would be to not make ourselves such an easy target." Steven stated, "But I do think when it comes to schools, daycares, churches, if you started with architectural design or even modify the existing buildings to a small degree, you could make it harder to assault." Liza added the following "I think it's been several incidents that the assailant picked the place that didn't have somebody ready to respond." Benjamin concluded with what I feel was the most impactful comment made about target hardening. "Another thing that I just cannot get my mind

around is when you look at a lot of these incidents, there's a universality that they occur, with the vast majority in what are declared gun free zones. They are somewhere where the person that's going to do it has a reasonable expectation that they're not going to encounter any resistance. Businesses or entities can or are allowed under the law to post that they do not want firearms on their private property premises. But they're supposed to abide by that, you know? Go put their gun in the car. If you have a movie theater and you put plasters of signs everywhere that say this is a gun free zone, I think, I think you're out of your mind." I do not believe that Benjamin is not incorrect in his thinking. If the locations of where mass shootings have occurred were looked at, schools would be listed high up on the list. I personally always feel safer when I know that guns are allowed in an establishment, even if only individuals with concealed carry permits are allowed to carry, or if I am in an open carry state.

Theme 5: Active Threat Training

Table 7

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Hypervigilance	Active Threat Training	"I am not saying that I need to create a hypervigilance mindset in educators and students."
Community	Active Threat Training	"The community has to be prepared for this type of thing to happen."

Resulting from interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, active threat training is a theme. Beth had thoughts related to active threat training in a school setting. In relation to active threat training in schools, she said "I am not saying that I need to create a hypervigilance mindset in educators and students. Time and distance expands your reactionary gap. We expect the response to be more efficient, and the loss of life to be smaller." Active threat training does not just need to occur in a school setting. Matt added the following regarding businesses "The

community has to be prepared for this type of thing to happen. Like schools, they do drills in the schools. When they do drills and they have a shooting, there is significantly less harm versus those that don't. Businesses should do the same.” Active threat training will not prevent a mass shooting from occurring, but the training will help prepare establishments if one was to occur. In the unfortunate situation that a mass shooting occurs, hopefully the establishment that was attacked was ready, resulting in less lives lost. This theme ties into the subtheme of having a community partnership, because it takes a community effort to be prepared for the unthinkable. Rodney discussed that he has partnered with multiple businesses so that he can make sure that they are prepared. Further, I do believe that if an individual planning a mass shooting knows that their intended target has experienced active threat training that they might think twice about picking that location. Prevention is key, and thinking ahead will always have its benefits.

Theme 6: Mass Shootings are a Multivariate Problem

Table 8

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Problem	Mass Shootings are a Multivariate Problem	“Multivariate problem where the variables, even the number of variables change in each instance.”
Prevention	Mass Shootings are a Multivariate Problem	“Again, I look at the prevention side and what we do in the act of is limited because there's so many variables that happen.”

Specifically, because of the focus groups that were conducted, the theme that mass shootings are a multivariate problem was determined. In relation to recent school shootings, Jose said mass shootings are a “multivariate problem where the variables, even the number of variables change in each instance.” Additionally, Montgomery stated “Again, I look at the

prevention side and what we do in the act of is limited because there's so many variables that happen. The best we can do is have good lockdown procedures and response and training.” In addition to what Jose and Montgomery stated, the overall conversation regarding the general tactic to prevent mass shootings is that they are a complex issue. Wesley mentioned that mass shootings have led to copycat shootings. Wesley’s comments added value to this theme based off the reasoning that no two mass shootings are exactly alike, some cause copycats, locations change, and targets change. Likewise, it is not possible to prevent every type of scenario that may occur. This is an unfortunate fact to state. This theme ties to the other themes that have already been discussed due to the reasoning that all of the prevention tactics that can be thought of will not prevent every type of mass shooting scenario. I agree with Montgomery’s thinking, and that the best we can do as a society is have good lockdown procedures, quick response time, and effective training.

Theme 7: Response Time

Table 9

Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Theme	Sample Quotes
Timeline	Response Time	“They were ready for that. That tells me that timeline is so fast, there's no way they responded from off site into a big public, you know, Carnival festival kind of event with all the crowds running in all directions.”
Attack	Response Time	“He's gonna have a really rude awakening about 10 seconds into his little attack.”

Through the utilization of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, it was uncovered that there is a theme that response time matters. In an active shooting situation, Mark discussed that one way that his agency and surrounding agencies work to prevent more lives being lost is

by having a fast response time. Mark brought up that there was a chili fest in California a few years ago in which there was an active shooter incident. As a result of law enforcement presence physically at the event, the shooter was killed within 2 minutes, and with minimal casualties. Mark said immediately “They were ready for that. That tells me that timeline is so fast, there's no way they responded from off site into a big public, you know, Carnival festival kind of event with all the crowds running in all directions.” This event inspired Mark within his own agency. Mark worked with the agency in California that worked the chili fest and learned that they have been having law enforcement on scene at big events for at least 7 years. Now whenever Mark’s city is having an event, such as a county fair, there is law enforcement present. Mark concluded his thoughts regarding this question with “It's in the big picture. Cheap insurance to know that if anyone ever gets in their head, Hey I wanna harm some people. Where can I go? Oh look there's this event at the park this weekend that's expected to draw 800 people. Let me go there and get my body count. He's gonna have a really rude awakening about 10 seconds into his little attack.” As a public citizen at a large event, I feel secure knowing that there is law enforcement present. I also believe that law enforcement presence could make a potential active shooter think twice before committing a violent act.

Research Question Response

The participants of this qualitative case study were law enforcement officers that demonstrated an extensive amount of knowledge about how to minimize the number of casualties in an active shooter situation. 20 law enforcement officers participated in interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. Through these data collection formats, the themes of ineffective and effective prevention tactics, mental illness, school resource officers, target hardening, active threat training, mass shootings as a multivariate problem, and response time

were identified. This qualitative study was designed to answer the following research question “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend that can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” The rest of this chapter will discuss the responses received from participants that resulted in the answer to my research question.

Central Research Question

For this qualitative case study, the central research question was “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend that can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” The participants’ perspectives involved the themes of ineffective and effective prevention tactics, mental illness, school resource officers, target hardening, active threat training, mass shootings as a multivariate problem, and response time. Multiple participants cited that modifying firearm background checks would be an ineffective prevention tactic. On the contrary, multiple participants agreed that Safe2Tell, noticing and responding to red flags, and having a community partnership could be effective prevention tactics. In relation to mental illness being a contributing factor to why mass shootings occur, most participants agreed that mental illness is not the sole reason as to why an active shooter incident could occur. However, mental illness is a risk factor. School resource officers could conduct threat assessments and build relationships with children, which ultimately could aid in prevention tactics. Target hardening involves architectural design modifications, along with the elimination of gun free zones. With a lot of the participants working in SWAT, active threat training was a common aspect of my discussions. Participants discussed that they have helped the community with active threat training, with the overall emphasis being that businesses, schools, and big events need to be prepared for an active shooter situation. The consensus amongst participants was that mass shootings are a multivariate problem, with responses that included mass shootings being a

complex issue. Prevention options are limited because of the variables associated. The final theme of response time had participants speaking to a known law enforcement fact that the faster law enforcement is on the scene of an active shooter incident, the greater of a chance there is to save more lives.

In relation to responses received from participants that focused on what policies law enforcement believes can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings, Matt said it best in regards to the importance of having a community partnership and active threat training. He stated, “People can think what will you do and if we solve that piece of it, we'll drastically reduce the impact and if we reduce the impact, they reduce the response, we reduce casualties.” Matt’s thoughts focus on reducing the number of casualties in the situation that a mass shooting occurs. Mass shootings are a multivariate problem though, and preventing them all together appears to be an impossible task. Jose said mass shootings are a “multivariate problem where the variables, even the number of variables change in each instance.” Additionally, Montgomery stated “Again, I look at the prevention side and what we do in the act of is limited because there's so many variables that happen. The best we can do is have good lockdown procedures and response and training.”

Summary

The themes that were presented in this chapter illustrate the need for effective prevention tactics, mental illness being acknowledged as a risk factor, the need for school resource officers in all schools, target hardening in the sense of modifications to architectural design and elimination of gun free zones, along with the need for active threat training, recognizing that mass shootings are a multivariate problem, and finally that response time matters. Participants helped to solidify that law enforcement can make recommendations for the potential prevention

of mass shootings. Additionally, it was demonstrated that law enforcement is more than capable of making recommendations to aid in the minimization of casualties in an active shooter situation. It was also made clear that participants have a strong desire to protect and serve their local community. In Chapter five, I will discuss my interpretation of the study results, along with recommendations for further research.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. This is the final chapter of the dissertation, which is unique since I will be sharing my own interruptions and ideas about the data that I collected. This chapter will start with a summary of the study findings. The rest of the chapter will include a discussion of the study findings and the implications considering the relevant literature and theory. Methodological and practical implications will be discussed, along with an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

For this qualitative study, 20 law enforcement officers participated in interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. Through the collection of this data, the themes of ineffective and effective prevention tactics, mental illness, school resource officers, target hardening, active threat training, mass shootings as a multivariate problem, and response time were identified. This qualitative study was meant to answer the research question of “What policies do local law enforcement officers recommend that can be implemented to reduce the potential for mass shootings?” It was through the themes that were uncovered, that this research question was answered, as demonstrated in the remainder of this section. An ineffective prevention tactic was disclosed to be the modification of firearm background checks, whereas effective prevention tactics included the Safe2Tell program, identifying and addressing red flags, and having a community partnership. Mental illness is not a precursor for an individual to become an active shooter, but it could be an additional risk factor. The consensus amongst officers was that school resource officers are crucial for schools. Target hardening, along with active threat training needs

to be a priority for all businesses, schools, and other establishments. Mass shootings are a multivariate problem in which at any time the variables could change at any time. Finally, the consensus was that response time matters. Faster response time could result in fewer casualties. In the next section, the study findings in relationship to the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two will be discussed.

Discussion

Prior to this qualitative study occurring, minimal research had been conducted on firearm background check applications and denials. Additionally, some Americans believe that gun control will cause a decrease in violence. A city-level, cross-sectional analysis was conducted, in which 19 major gun laws were assessed to determine the impact that guns have on crime. The results showed that gun laws do not correlate with crime rates (Kleck et al., 2016). Upon completion of this study, the consensus amongst study participants was that modifying background check requirements would not correlate to a change in gun related violence.

In relation to mental illness, there has been an ongoing conversation regarding the correlation between mass shootings and mental illness. The media is to blame for the thought that only those with mental illness commit mass shootings. Only a small percentage of individuals with mental illness inflict violence on others. Instead, most individuals with mental illness are not committing acts of violence (Glieb & Frank, 2014). My study findings diverged from previous research. Stemming specifically from the utilization of focus groups, it was presented that the theme of mental illness could be a risk factor for a potential active shooter incident. Further, although mental illness could result in an individual committing an act of violence, having a mental illness is not the only indicator that an individual is more prone to

violence. Research has indicated that it is not mental illness, but rather a history of violence or threats of violence, that can predict future violence (Kangas & Calvert, 2014).

In relation to gun violence, prior research has indicated that parents of school age children expect more to be done to prevent overall gun violence (Payton et al., 2017). This qualitative study generated the consensus that school resource officers could be instrumental in preventing gun violence in a school setting. The consensus amongst study participants was that school resource officers could potentially prevent school violence. School resource officers are most useful in a school setting when utilized to build relationships with students, conducting threat assessments, and ensuring that at risk students receive professional help before they reach the point of wanting to bring a firearm to school and inflicting harm on others. Further, the Safe2Tell program was discussed by study participants as being effective in preventing school violence, with students feeling secure in providing tips. The discussion about Safe2Tell adds to prior research in parents of school age children wanting more to be done to prevent overall gun violence.

Before the completion of this study, the public indicated that it is important to them that law enforcement responds quickly to an active shooter incident. Specifically, a shooting needs to be contained as soon as possible to reduce the number of victims. Even one officer should expedite locating the shooter, engaging with them, and stopping the shooting from escalating (Phillips, 2020). The results of this study demonstrated that participants agree that in an active shooter incident, response time matters. The faster that law enforcement responds to the scene of an active shooter incident, the greater the probability of few casualties.

Guiding this study was the political systems theory. The political systems theory incorporates causal connections between aspects of the belief system and the external factors that

influence it. The components of the political beliefs systems theory can be identified by conceptualizing an individual's belief system as a network of connected attitudes and identities which, by way of interactions between the elements and external influences, produces the disparate phenomena in the belief systems literature (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). Law enforcement officers should be able to both critique current mass shooting prevention tactics and to provide guidance to elevate prevention tactics. As demonstrated in the study results, study participants shared both effective and ineffective mass shooting prevention tactics. Effective mass shooting prevention tactics that were discussed include having a community partnership, recognizing and taking action on red flags, and the Safe2Tell program. The discussion was that an ineffective mass shooting prevention tactic could be to modify current firearm background check policies. Despite all of the knowledge and expertise that law enforcement shared in this study, it was not uncovered if law enforcement is actually being utilized to share this information with political influencers. It could have been uncovered if law enforcement is actually being utilized as subject matter experts in the field of mass shooting prevention tactics if a different population of participants were interviewed.

Novel contributions of this study include providing guidance on what mass shooting prevention tactics could be effective. Effective mass shooting prevention tactics that were uncovered in this study include having a community partnership, recognizing and taking action on red flags, and the Safe2Tell program. Further, law enforcement discussed the importance of target hardening. Target hardening is a matter of modifying current architectural designs, making it harder for a potential assailant to assault. Finally, gun free zones can do more harm than good. Gun free zones could make it easier for a potential assailant to assault a heavily populated location in which the opportunity for a high casualty count is probable.

Implications

Guiding this study was the political systems theory. The political systems theory incorporates causal connections between aspects of the belief system and the external factors that influence it. The components of the political beliefs systems theory can be identified by conceptualizing an individual's belief system as a network of connected attitudes and identities which, by way of interactions between the elements and external influences, produces the disparate phenomena in the belief systems literature (Brandt & Slegers, 2021). The study findings demonstrate that law enforcement has a lot of knowledge and expertise that is not being properly utilized. Previous research has not indicated that law enforcement has both the knowledge and expertise to be a part of political influence in preventing mass shootings. Upon review, it appears that the reasoning behind not including law enforcement in mass shooting prevention tactics is due to the lack of research that has occurred. By not utilizing law enforcement in mass shooting prevention tactics, the theoretical implication is that the public is not being properly protected. Law enforcement could be aided in preventing mass shootings or contribute to a fewer number of casualties in an active shooter incident. Policymakers need to take into account the benefits of including law enforcements knowledge and expertise when working on creating laws that target gun violence prevention.

The empirical implications that were drawn from this study include the observation that law enforcement genuinely cares about the general wellbeing of the public. This empirical implication was demonstrated through the interaction with every study participant and how they responded to the study questions. Study participants discussed throughout the course of interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires that a community partnership is vital in preventing mass shootings. This thought process from law enforcement demonstrates that they feel that if

their respective agencies work with the community that mass shootings may be prevented or that a fewer number of casualties could occur in an active shooter situation. Additionally, participants discussed that as a society we are not doing enough to protect our children. The consensus amongst study participants was that school resource officers are imperative in protecting our children in a school environment. Finally, participants discussed the importance of active threat training being provided to businesses, churches, schools, and all other public entities. Law enforcement wants the public to be prepared for an active shooter incident.

From a Christian worldview, human beings are sinful. The only perfect person to ever walk the Earth was Jesus, and he did so for about 33 years. Only one study participant gave an indication that their interview responses were based on a Christian worldview. This study participant discussed that he feels that mass shootings, and all types of violence occur because of a lack of morals and a lack of appreciation for life. Not only do I agree with his comments, but I would add to this further to say that there is an overall decline in Christianity in America. Recently my pastor stated that since the Covid pandemic occurred in 2019, the United States has seen a steady decline in church attendance. Being a Christian is dependent on believing that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and that we are saved as a result. Beyond being saved, there is an aspect of Christianity that focuses heavily on the moral compass and the overall gratefulness for everything that has been given to us. Lacking morals and having a lack of appreciation for life does not correlate to living a Christian life.

This study provides a call to action for further mass shooting prevention tactics. Law enforcement participants have identified what prevention tactics should occur. First, there needs to be a community partnership between law enforcement and businesses, churches, schools, and all other public entities. Law enforcement needs to work with the community to teach active

threat training. The community needs to be open to collaboration for this partnership to occur. Some law enforcement agencies already work with the community to teach active threat training. Additionally, school officials should ensure that all students have access to Safe2Tell and a school resource officer. Finally, mental health resources need to be readily available for everyone, not just for school age children.

Delimitations and Limitations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how law enforcement officers could influence mass shooting prevention tactics. Law enforcement officers were the ideal participants due to their daily interactions with the public and their current involvement in responding to mass shootings (Okada & Pollard, 2021). I was purposeful in choosing law enforcement participants to utilize for my study due to the knowledge and expertise that they could provide me. The participants also all worked for a sheriff's department in the west-central region of the United States. The location of my participants was also purposeful so that my study was not too broad in the area that I chose. Finally, the participants were required to have at least five years of service working as a law enforcement officer to ensure that they had enough experience to provide a value-added interview, contribute to a focus group, or answer a questionnaire.

Initially when I started to recruit study participants, I struggled to find willing participants. Even though law enforcement officers respond to mass shootings, other types of participants may have been helpful. My target population for participants was not broad enough. I could have looked to interview military members that were either a part of the military police or military members that were in special operations jobs. With opting to study law enforcement officers, not all agencies were open to allowing a doctorate candidate to interview them. One

agency told me that they were too busy to allow me to interview their officers. Another agency was initially onboard until they saw the questions that their officers were going to be asked. The reasoning behind saying no to my study was due to the thought that my questions were too broad and not specific enough. One particular agency did not like how my questions were worded. With that being said, I should have reviewed my interview questions more before utilizing them for my study to ensure that law enforcement would want to answer my questions. I feel that the limitations of my study, specifically related to the interview questions that I asked could have impacted my study. For the most part, a lot of participants focused on school shootings, and not general mass shootings. Additionally, I think that I may have not gotten as detailed responses about mass shooting prevention tactics due to the concern that I received regarding the questions that was I asking.

Recommendations for Further Research

Considering my study findings, a recommendation for further research is how effective Safe2Tell has been in the reporting of potential mass shooting threats. Additionally, further research would be beneficial in knowing how many of the potential mass shooting threats made to Safe2Tell were credible. Dependent on the additional research findings, the recommendation could be made for Safe2Tell to be a mandatory program in all schools throughout the United States. Another study finding uncovered the importance of school resource officers. Further research could be utilized to deep dive into all of the benefits that school officers provide, to include mass shooting prevention. Dependent on the research findings, the recommendation could be made that every school should have a school resource officer. In regards to the study finding that target hardening could prevent mass shootings, it could be beneficial for further research to include the study of the impact that businesses that are not considered gun free zones

have on mass shooting prevention. An additional study topic that could be considered is the number of individuals that openly carry their firearms in these establishments and the number of individuals that choose to conceal carry their firearms in these establishments. In relation to the limitations that my study had, further research could include expanding the study population to military members that have specialty jobs, such as special forces or military police. By increasing the number of participants that could take part in research, more information could be uncovered about how to prevent mass shootings. Finally, the delimitations of my study made it so that only participants from a certain part of the United States could participate. To expand upon my study, further research could include interviewing law enforcement that is located in all parts of the United States. Law enforcement interviewed from different parts of the United States would have their own unique population, which would include varying crime types and crime rates.

Summary

My study findings led to theoretical, empirical, and practical implications. By not utilizing law enforcement in mass shooting prevention tactics, the theoretical implication is that the public is not being properly protected. Law enforcement could be crucial in aiding to prevent mass shootings or contributing to a fewer number of casualties in an active shooter incident. Previous research has not indicated that law enforcement has both the knowledge and expertise to be a part of political influence in preventing mass shootings. Upon review, it appears that the reasoning behind not including law enforcement in mass shooting prevention tactics is due to the lack of research that has occurred. Since conducting my study, law enforcement has now been utilized to provide their guidance on what they believe can prevent mass shootings or contribute to a fewer number of casualties in a mass shooting situation. Regarding practical implications,

policymakers need to take into account the benefits of including law enforcements knowledge and expertise when working on creating laws that target gun violence prevention. Further, school officials should ensure that all students have access to Safe2Tell and a school resource officer.

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Appendix A.

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 11, 2023

Alycia Shelton
Jason Ward



Dear Alycia Shelton, Jason Ward,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the

consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP

Administrative Chair

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B.

Informed Consent

Title of the Project: Mass Shootings Prevention: What can local law enforcement do?

Principal Investigator: Alycia Shelton, Doctoral Candidate, School of Behavioral Sciences,
Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a current law enforcement officer with at least five years of service, working in the West-Central region of the United States, and working in the field or at the local jail. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this research study is to understand how law enforcement officers can influence mass shooting prevention tactics. When it comes to law enforcement's influence in the prevention of mass shootings, there has been minimal research conducted.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an in-person or via zoom, audio- and video-recorded interview that will last approximately 45 minutes.
2. Participate in a virtual, audio- and video-recorded focus group that will last approximately 45 minutes.
3. Complete a questionnaire, which should take approximately 10-20 minutes.

4.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include suggested modifications to current mass shooting prevention policies.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then deleted. The researcher/the researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Alycia Shelton. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Jason Ward, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [REDACTED].

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your

records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix C.
Recruitment Letter

Dear Law Enforcement Officer:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree. The purpose of my research is to [REDACTED], and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a current law enforcement officer with at least five years of service, working in the West-Central region of the United States, and working in the field or at the local jail. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, in-person or virtual, audio- and video-recorded interview (45 minutes), participate in a virtual, audio- and video-recorded focus group (45 minutes), and complete a questionnaire (10-20 minutes). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please email me at [REDACTED] for more information or to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign and return the consent form to me prior to the interview.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Appendix D.

Transcripts

***Note – Transcript has been modified for confidentiality purposes.**

....

1h 13m 22s

Shelton, Alycia Mary started transcription

SM

Shelton, Alycia Mary 0:04

Yeah. OK.

Awesome.

So the first question would be, do you believe that modifying firearm background check requirements could result in better mass shooting prevention tactics?

If you do believe in modifying current firearm background check requirements, what changes do you believe should be made?

All.

There's a a large number of cases in which the people either stealed in that they either break other laws in the acquisition, like again, I always mention my first response was ... In that case, they had an adult make illegal already illegal straw purchases for those juveniles.

He did comply with the law.

That was in effect at the time in the late 90s, which included a background check, and he passed it so that would not have prevented that one.

If you go down the list of a lot of these incidents that I'm familiar with and the Rev after actions on a very few of these cases, would anything have tripped up?

Would have shown up in the background that would have prohibited the person.

The other factor is you know that's a snapshot in time, so if somebody goes to buy a firearm, passes the background check, and then not immediately.

Right.

Say they're not in a mental health crisis, but a year later they decide to go do something.

The background check is gonna be uh.

Water under the bridge that that occurred a year ago.

The other factor I think with emerging technologies like Ghost guns.

Uh, you know, I, in my opinion, it's kind of silly like here ..., the governor just signed up a law banning those cuts.

Well, again, you could print, you could print items with the 3D printer at your at your house.

You don't have to go through a federally licensed firearm dealer to acquire them, and some of the other parts you can buy on Amazon or buy in any hardware store.

So I think that that horse is kind of left that barn as far as background checks. If we were going to add to them and there might be other things, maybe it's not mass incidents of mass violence, maybe it's, you know, run of the mill crimes aren't robberies are, you know, domestic violence or something else that might be benefit. I'm not philosophically opposed to background checks. I've done it countless times in my life when I bought firearms. Obviously I have quite a number of them for for work, and I've always been a gun guy, so I I don't have an issue with those per se. I'm just not sure how they would expand them. A lot of the talk you hear from the people that are for that they wanna do it for like private sales or transfers. Some of that range is into silly. For example, I had an uncle that passed away at his. My aunt is widow gave me those guns. You know again that the notion that I should go through a background check for the 75th time in my life seems kind of odd. It may make more sense, actually, if you're gonna do that, you have some kind of almost like a fast passes for TSA where you know, you go through it and unless something changes, you know we do that. The government doesn't for other things like commercial drivers license they they periodically run their names through a system and see if you have what they call any red flag events that have happened. OK, this one you know other things that would would potentially affect your CDL status that could do something similar to that, and as long as you have that good standing, you don't have to keep going through it. But so I'm kind of, you know, politically neutral on them. I just don't think that's the be all and end all solution. There's just too many exceptions and other ways to get guns. When you look at the data of who's actually been involved in these in these crimes, it would not have stopped the vast, vast majority of these incidents. That's great. Thank you. And I have to tell you and I I think it's OK to say this, that I agree with you. Umm, so thank you for that. Alright, that was very detailed. So I will tell you too, with me recording, it's also doing a transcript as well. So I'll be able to take exactly what you're saying. So thank you. And did you have anything else that you wanted to add about that or did you want me to just keep on rolling and go to the next question?

Yeah, right.

For the next.

OK, wonderful.

Thank you.

Are there any specific thoughts you have regarding how law enforcement can influence mass shooting prevention tactics?

Yeah, but when it comes to prevention.

I want you to stop.

That has to be done in advance, right?

So you're not gonna prevent something the moment of or 20 minutes before.

There's a variety of things you can't.

Some of it are things like that and again this goes back to 911.

There was a A, you know the tag phrase Homeland Security used when it came to terrorism was see something say something.

There are certain threat indicators that may occur prior to an attack that officers as well as citizens should be aware of the issue with that always is most of these guys, when you look at actual incidents, they don't look the majority do not come to the attention of law enforcement.

There are a minority who have the issue is what they come to the attention for has nothing to do with the attack that they engage in.

So we deal with criminality every day.

We deal with violent criminals every day.

It's like looking for a needle in a stack of needles, trying to figure out which person may or may not have the potential to do something like that.

The the the biggest BB quiet positions potentially see that close friends and family.

Now, some of these folks, if you look at the data, are socially isolated.

They don't have close relationships with friends or family.

That's part of their overall issue with disgruntlement with society and misery and depression and all those things that probably point this direction.

But there's plenty of other cases where family members did perceive changes in behavior, and I think again, that's just kind of a public education.

I know the Secret Service puts out that annual report and they give you some commonality of trades.

These folks, I just don't think you know.

Again, I'm are media, I believe fails us again and again and again.

They wanna report on these issues when it, in my opinion, is consistent with a with a narrative that they already have in their in their mind, and when it doesn't comport to that narrative, they don't want to cover it or talk about it.

So despite the fact that Secret Service points that out every year gets very little attention, I know we go over it and like our Citizen Academy, I've I've done briefings on

it at different public events that I've done.

But again and again, some of those things on there like where we talked the other day I think are can be controversial.

I I think there's a much higher than average propensity for heavy marijuana use.

I think there's a lot of these cases where they're already on some kind of antidepressant medication, pharmaceuticals.

How that may or may not affect them in that direction?

I don't know, probably something that should be studied, but I think knowing what those indicators are, they enable us certainly more than then operating at the dark wood to to potentially see a person who is heading down that road.

But the biggest thing I think we could do was when in terms of our policies or our practices is to deal with Community groups, particularly those that are vulnerable to target historically targeted violence attacks.

So like if I agency we have an initiative we're working on right now with houses of worship of all denominations.

Those are certainly targets when you look historically at those and it's an effort to again educate those folks, line them up, there's a whole variety of resources from the federal government and the state government.

As far as bottle policies, they can adopt how they should structure their.

Mass violence.

It could be a tornado come through, you know, on a Sunday.

Will you have 1000 people there?

How are you gonna deal with that disaster?

So it's basically all hazards, mitigations that includes and targeted violence.

So doing that, advance the schools, we do a lot of work with.

We have a lot of ..., uh high schools, middle schools and we have Rovers.

That go ohd to around elementary schools.

So the target hardening we worked on with the school district is another key factor and they're closed.

Well, they're not.

That's at the top.

Sorry, going up few minutes please.

Ohh no worries.

They have like film on the the the bullet resistant film on the Flyers, double double glass.

Foyers that all the school buildings that have to be remotely opened by school staff.

I.

He's for to everything for first responders, electronic and metal, including maps of the facility.

Hang on one second.

I'm gonna pull up here to give my.

I'm good, Sir.

Thank you.

2008, OK.

It's my mother's, my mother, and I think it's.

It's it's an all wheel drive.

Thank you, Sir.

So much time.

Alright wow, this is awesome.

Anybody hearing me?

OK, no worries, Sir.

Do what you need to do.

Sure.

So that's the biggest in my mind, preventative.

And I I think in our agency, we've done a pretty good job, but obviously that doesn't guarantee anything.

So target hardening, educating the public.

I even believe in and I've done this, we share what our regional the ... area is regional response protocol is so that people are aware this is the kind of stuff.

This is what we're gonna do if one of these events happens.

Right.

OK.

That's that's a lot of what I've already found already too, to be honest with you.

So that that's really good that you you thought that and I'm trying not to ask you any additional questions because I already gave you the ones I was going to go through, but I would just say it also if I may ask though it's it sounds like you think we need to use the information we already have like you said from the Secret Service and make sure that the different areas are reviewing that and looking at it it, I mean is that OK to ask that's?

What?

No worries.

Yeah.

OK, hopefully you compare me.

It's like super loud near.

Ohh no, it actually I I hear a little bit of an echo, but it's it's pretty good.

So no worries, I I feel bad you have stuff going on and you want it to talk today, but I hope you know how appreciative I am of it.

One second, no worries.

And you better else.

Yes, Sir.

Can you hear me OK?

Sorry about that.

Ohh no you.

So that's super loud in here.

I will tell you really you don't need to apologize.

It's totally fine.

I I honestly feel bad that you can enjoin the initial meeting so.

Ohh.

It's never had a missions.

Ohh OK so just give you a missions and not metro area so OK and stuff you have to do the retittle a car up here.

What kind of car is it?

OK.

Almost done.

Super quick.

It's like nobody in line.

That's awesome.

And I speculate my silly booths that you're right between two machines.

That's fine.

Did you all?

Here.

OK.

No worries, Sir.

Good.

We're back on, no worries.

But correct.

No problem. Good.

Hey, all right.

Yes, Sir.

Like I said, a false, efficient admissions shirt I've ever done.

I think today they always stay on the website.

Don't go like the last week of the month, but God guess I could time.

OK.

Yeah.

No, that's awesome. OK.

Traffic.

I basically target hardening.

Educating your community will use some of the like.

You know Ellis Model Alert program where we teach the run hide fight to businesses, to school Staffs to you know, citizens in our Citizen Academy.

I think those are the things you do in the front end to prevent them from happening or

mitigate the consequences.

Uh, because they do happen.

OK.

Thank you.

And and like I said, if it's OK to ask because I did not originally ask you this, so don't feel like you have to answer it.

Do you can you share more about the Citizens Academy or no?

Because that's something that's completely new to me.

Yep, it's all absolutely open.

So we run a citizens Academy twice a year.

It runs for.

They're gonna slap because they should know this.

Nothing happened.

Believe it's every Tuesday and Thursday night for three hours for five weeks, and then there's two Saturday sessions.

One where they go to arrange.

They get a demo of a lot of our ohh lethal type weaponry and slot vehicles.

Canine demos.

Stuff like that.

And then they get to go through scenarios in our shoothouse with simunition, the little paint pallet training routes.

So we put them through scenarios where they kind of see right now obviously we we do stuff where you know the bad guy, you know really rapidly pulls out his wallet and of course the citizens, you know, freaked out.

Shoot him and then they go ohh like yes.

So you know, basically trying to educate people as best we can about our agency, agency culture, agency practices and law enforcement in general.

So I historically prior to my current job, I was the swap manner for about five years and when I redid the curriculum for the slot portion I put in there because like I mentioned, when we first talked, I'm on some regional committees for up here that works on this.

What are regional active threat Response protocol is?

I don't think there's anything.

There's nothing secret or tentacle in there, in my opinion, it says law enforcement, fire, EMS are gonna do the following in the following orders, and it's been my experience.

And if you teach people that they it gives them a, a, a sense of relief that a we do in fact have plans or how to respond to these things, that there is regional cooperation.

So we're not gonna, you know, sit on the sidelines or something happens in in ... and go, oh, well, that's their jurisdiction and stuff.

Our problem it's a it's a metro wide multi agency.

First come first serve response.

That's been worked out in advance, and of course I cover the amount of training that our folks get on on that topic.

So usually the commentary, I give back is it is. It makes people feel better that there is some thought.

That's been put into this so kind of a plan.

Obviously, the big the big one recently that had everybody on Edge was the response because it was reminiscent of ...

Everybody you know, I won't say directed to stand down, but no clear guidance coming from command on aggressively pursuing that suspect and allowing him to have either time to kill or injure more people or allow time to pass so that the people who have already been injured will bleed to death or or go into shock and die until a Border Patrol tactical team got there and basically said why is everybody shading around and they just went in and and killed the suspect.

So, you know, trying to reassure people that that we operate like 4, ... operates, we don't operate like you've all done.

School district police operate, and that seems to kind of reassure people.

We cover that too with, you know, businesses when we do the run, hide, fight training, part of it is here's our regional response protocol that you could expect if something happens at your place of, of work or business.

So you know your job is to run hide and if absolutely necessary, fight and within you know ten 1520 minutes there should be, you know, dozens and then eventually hundreds of officers pouring into that scene.

So I that that seems to have some effect.

I don't know if it has any preventative effect.

I've never had anybody come to tell me.

Hey I was thinking about doing a, you know, a an active shooter situation.

But you talked me out of it by explaining, you know, what the response would be.

Obviously, I've never had that, but I think arming people with that information and a it reassures them a little bit and be it gets the word out.

Then you know we are in this day and age.

We are ready to respond to that if it occurs in our, in our service area.

Now I I love that though, and thank you so much for explaining that, because I think that ties in directly to just my research question.

So what policies do local law enforcements recommend can be implemented?

Well, I will tell you and I'll ..., I have never heard anything about a citizens Academy and I think it is fantastic because I mean me as a civilian, I feel like I would feel safer and more secure knowing everything that happened.

And I think that's super important and gives law enforcement even more credibility.

And I like the whole thought process about why you were doing it.

So that's kind of just my two cents, but I I think that really I think that does tie in

because it can prevent a mass shooting because you're educating the public and if it gets out that there's all of these, you know academies going on that can help just regular citizens.

It truly may help somebody think twice about doing something.

So I think I think that you're on to something there and that that's really interesting to me.

And I can do more research on Citizens Academy as well, and I think I'm gonna add it to my dissertation because that's that's fascinating.

And I'm really happy to hear that you guys are doing that and it sounds like you've had a lot of of play into making it happen.

So I really I appreciate what you're doing.

So that's just kind of my two cents.

So thank you, bought.

100,000 is half million that we serve and we probably have a few 1000 followers on any given social media platform.

So part of the issue with that stuff is when we put it out, it's on our website, right?

And then when when there were two months out, they start putting it out on our Twitter and Facebook and whatever.

Hey, you wanna go?

Since Cademy you know scan this QR code and fill out an application.

But the vast majority of people you know, I I always find people are like, oh, I didn't know you did that.

Well, we do it.

... does it little to police.

Does it ...?

Like everybody does, and for all I know,

Me too.

You just have to like kind of seek it out just because of that.

We did.

It's apparently they don't run like front page ads in the, you know, the ... paper.

You know, they just kind of put it out on their on their social media and hopefully enough pick people pick it up, we fill them every time.

I think our CAP is 25 people and I've been involved with them since 2006.

I don't remember one.

We've never filled usually a well more applicants than we have seats, so we used to do 1A year.

Now we do 2A year during COVID we did 3A year because they were virtual.

That wasn't nearly as interesting.

I don't think for people, but it was pretty easy on our end logistically to do it over teams or go to meeting or whatever.

So the biggest thing though I would say in that is a lot of agencies have a philosophy where they are not open about, it's just part of the law enforcement culture.

I've never agreed with that, so even other things like we have armored bear cats, we take them out to public events to show people we put them out at our open house.

We'll take one out to the ...

Our view is there's nothing secret about this.

It's a Ford truck with an armored box on it, but you have a segment of the population that hears, you know, the cops have armored vehicles and they think kind of like a famously during a Ferguson riots couple years ago.

Don Lemon on CNN was calling the panx.

While they're nothing like a tank, they're not even remotely close to what any tank that's ever existed.

Going back to the personal form, it's a metal box.

It's no different than the Loomis truck that picks up your money from the bank, but we get that reaction for people time and time again.

They climb inside of it and go ohh.

It's just a like a truck to carry people like, yeah.

What?

What did you think it was right?

Like they expected, as machine guns pointing in all directions or something.

So we do the same thing with our citizen.

You gotta be.

Unless something is a A directly a a tactic that we think we need to safeguard, we share stuff.

If I ain't see what the public and even a lot of the tactics to be honest, it's nothing you can't see playing Call of Duty or or going on the Internet and watching you know you can watch videos right now from journalists embedded and in the ward Ukraine.

And you can see the basically you know, contact and cover, uh.

Bounding Overwatch tactics that we utilize a law enforcement.

There's nothing you're keeping from the public by saying, oh, we can't share that with people.

But a lot of agencies keep that stuff super tight.

They keep their armored vehicles, their specialty equipment, in the garage until something happens.

Nobody even knows they they have it.

So we're the opposite.

We put that stuff out there publicly.

Very, very upfront and tell people this is what we have.

This is why we have it.

This is why we need it, and if people have questions or concerns, we answer those questions and concerns.

So our active threat response is just one of those things in my agency that that we are very upfront about.

Nice.

Thank you.

No, I honestly don't think ... has that.

But I will tell you, I actually went to a touch of truck with the ... today and I I got to see their the trucks that have the bulletproof glass and things like that.

So it does sound like a ... is very open as well.

And you're totally right.

Like why by shouldn't people know about this?

And I think that, but I think the whole citizens Academy, I'll, I will tell you now.

I mean, I still have some ways to go with my study, but I'm going to put it as a recommendation that everywhere should have a citizens Academy because I think that that will make a huge difference for people.

And you said a lot of great stuff and a lot of it.

I already have have thought about it, but I'm really all about that Citizen's Academy, so I want you to know that now because I'm putting that in there as a recommendation when I actually write this all up.

So thank you.

OK, alright.

So third question, if you could change any current mass shooting prevention tactics, what would you change?

Plans.

Any attention tactic? I.

Yes, Sir.

I'm just.

Yeah, all my experience, almost ... years is in the ... area, but I do have friends and relatives in other parts of the country.

The biggest thing I would change is if maybe so much attacked it, but it's the culture in law enforcement going back to what I already mentioned that is opaque, that does not. Guess I should back up one step.

There's a mentality, I think in a lot of places that that's pop the odds of that happening and they really are right.

Like we tell, I tell other parents of my kids school, right?

Whenever one happens throughout the country and they're like, oh, you know, they go on Facebook or next or whatever G ohm, Y kids to school tomorrow, like lady the the odds of you of your kids being injured or killed in the car accident on way to or from school on any given day is higher than than being injured or killed in a shooting at your kids school.

Right, just playing the odds so it doesn't mean we should prepare for it.

Just for you know, again, you gotta have a relative relative risk, right?

There's rattlesnakes in the world, but I don't avoid walking my dogs, just on the off chance that around snake.

By by being the ankle.

Right, I take that reasonable risk and if I encounter my dog starts barking at something in the weeds, I I give it a wide berth, right?

The case it's arousing, so that kind of mentality is the first part, right?

The public, I think, overestimates the odds and frequency based on media.

Ohh data, do you?

Law enforcement agencies tend to do the opposite.

They know very well what the Staffs are and that it's very low probability on any given day that one of those is gonna happen, particularly in smaller communities, right?

They just go.

It's not going to happen and so they kind of stick their head in the sand is if they therefore don't have to do anything about it.

And I don't, you know, I don't wanna scare those guys, but it's like, you know, if you look kind of like in the Emergency Management world, you kind of look at things in terms of capabilities and capability gaps.

So we've been successful doing that with elected leaders, ... or other contract entities like we do Mercy Management Services for ... for a little bit.

At some point you go to the the leadership at the elected officials, you say, do you want me to be able to prevent and or if one occurs, respond to it successfully.

Uh candle at active thread incident and they will say absolutely.

Of course we do.

OK, because you want me to have that capability, these are the things I need to do that right, the equipment I need the personnel I need and the training I need.

And so your decision to fund those things is part and parcel of your decision to have that capability.

You can't unless you're doing Unicorn math.

You can't tell me you want me to have a capability and then refuse to support any of the things that we need in order to actually have that creates that capability gap.

So when a lot of agencies, the first obstacle to the capability gap is they they don't even really believe that they need to have the capability to respond.

We have some small municipalities and in our county, and I think they're they're view is well if anything like that ever happened.

The bigger agencies are gonna swoop in and and they know what to do and they'll they'll handle this, which is probably realistically, what's gonna happen.

But you know, trying to preach that word to them that that you should still send your folks.

So if you're with that like we invite.

Surrounding agencies the the small cities departments to our annual active threat training that we do in our department, right, we do these huge scenarios.

We use school or a big corporate building that's empty, you know, we'll have, you know, 50 to 80 deputies there at a time once 10 more.

Right.

So we'll put that out to the small PD.

Hey, if you want to get your guys trained, we don't charge you a dime.

Just send your guys on any of the following Wednesdays.

You know, we'll train, we'll train your people.

So that's the the first thing I would change is people have to get out of the mindset that it isn't gonna happen here because if you go back and look at anywhere it has happened, everybody could be said the same thing.

There was absolutely no reason to believe that ... was gonna happen in unincorporated ... when and where it did absolutely nothing to indicate that that was gonna happen.

You know on the macro level that would have been perceived by people.

Now in, in retrospect, maybe some things that should have queued the parents in that there was something wrong with their with their sons, but again, nothing that would have suggested on the scale of what happened.

And I think a lot of these incidents have been read after actions and even manifestos of the the people who commit them, they they go to great lengths to to conceal these these plans from people.

In other cases they they are obviously struggling and having issues and they they hit some of those target indicators where there's a, you know, rapid change in behavior, they're depressed, they're antisocial, they're not interacting with people, they've got a fascination all of a sudden with, you know, maybe one that's been a long lasting with guns and violence, you know, but a lot of times, the actual, the final steps, the acquisition of weapons and and the planning and plotting is is is kept secret.

So the bottom line is that can happen anywhere, at any time in our society.

Nobody is immune and agencies need to stop thinking it's not gonna happen here.

And then the second step is once they acknowledge it, care.

The fact happen here, they need to have that discussion with ohh with those political leaders in their in their jurisdiction and be honest with them about things.

So like for example I use you, ...

I just happened to get.

I was going before our board accounting Commissioners on another issue and I was kind of, you know, even positive to turn in the night before thinking of how I was gonna

explain my, my, my points.

It was a request for funds that we used for some of this equipment.

Uh, uh, and I just happened to get lucky because the chair of the board, as soon as I went up for my turn.

You've already had just happened, and she brought up people.

The the incident you've allowed.

And so I I just scrapped everything I planned on saying and and I kind of laid out kind of off the top of my head, which I've since used.

So I think makes a lot of sense that there's five things you really need to respond to.

One of those incidents and handle them.

You don't have to be perfect in all five areas, but you have to be adequate and if you're weak in any areas, you have to be stronger enough than others that they overcome and and those five things are personnel, equipment, training, doctrine and leadership.

You have to have those five things, so once this agency says, you know what, we gotta get our head out of the sand.

It can't in fact, happen here.

That's the first step to try to prevent.

It is to to be ready for it.

So you can speak intelligently about that through your to your public, so you can farm people with information that they could potentially see one coming and prevent it or mitigate the the consequences of it if it does occur.

And then the second thing is you gotta look at those five categories and go the to have the capability to respond.

I have to make some effort in those five areas.

What does that look like?

Where are we today and what and where are we going?

So if you live in a small municipal, you know bedroom community where the bread butter for your officers is, you know, traffic enforcement and you don't really do a lot of tactical stuff, you don't even really have, you know, burglaries or officers or clearing residences, you might have a really heavy lift on training to go from what they do every day for what you're gonna need him to do in one of these cases, you might have plenty of, you know, radars and lasers and and ticket books.

Do you have a rifle rated Arbor plates for the officers to wear?

Do you have Shields?

Do you have adequate firearms?

Do you have suppressors?

So again, a lot of people, if they're not done, people they don't, they don't think of these things.

A lot of the times the fire alarms that go off in schools that cause more panic potentially have people go from hiding in classrooms to well, but what do we do now?

Do we evacuate?

You know, potentially more victims come in the hall.

It hampers the response of law enforcement once you get in there because you can't hear a lot of that is just from off gassing of the of the weapons and the the auditory report echoing around that.

But the overpressure in those narrow confines, but again, thanks to TV and James Bond and other people, people think of votes as silencers, not suppressors.

They don't understand their point.

Holographic sites, right?

Like unlike the movies.

But there's no wider, very few whiter pops that there are guys that do that they're into that.

They spend every free moment in their life.

The range they do it competitively and so on, but the average officer of you know, he shoots when is in the apartment, has him trained or qualified.

So those red dot sites, especially on long guns, make you much more accurate, especially if you're in close confines and there's other innocent parties around.

So when I look at video like from ..., I see, you know, read the report and I see 400 tops and I see Shields and play carriers and have quality equipment.

I go well, they got personnel.

They got equipment, they they came out in the news that they had training.

They just did a big exercise at that school a month before on spring break of multi age exercise.

I don't know what the quality of that training was.

Obviously, we could question that, but clearly they've had some well, that gets created doctrine and leadership.

What is the doctrine in the in that?

.. Community clearly.

It's not neutralize the bad guy and then get the medics in there promptly because they didn't do that.

And again, if you didn't have that doctor, but you had solved leadership that got on the radio and said, hey, guys, get in there with neutralize the suspect and get those medics in there ASAP.

You you could have overcome some of that, but the complete lack of of clear doctrine and the complete lack of leadership doomed their response, despite the fact that they had adequate personnel that they had equipment and that they had training.

So and that could be a big ask.

I get it.

All this stuff is equipment.

We're kind of like the military.

There's a handful of companies that that makes this gear that we use, so they kind of gauge us, you know, and it gets more and more expensive every year and it's always a hard ask when budgets are limited.

Your keyboard old bridge, all that other stuff to say.

Hey, you know, Commissioners or hey, City Council, I need \$50,000 to buy the Shields that we may never actually use, but are gonna ride around in the back of supervisor cars. But if we have this big hairy incident, I'm gonna absolutely need those.

And if I don't have them, officers may hesitate to go down that hallway because they know they don't have the protection the the technical ability to protect themselves if they get in a close range, gunfight with a bad guy operating with all modern weapons. So all that stuff has to come together and you know it starts, I think with mindset mentality.

You have to understand it can't happen here.

You have to understand that you need to have that capability and then you have to telligent they go about communicating that to elected leaders.

Uh can be, and again, being realistic, I'm not saying every small department with twenty

officer needs, you know, armored vehicles and whatnot.

But on the big picture of plate carriers are pretty pretty inexpensive.

Big picture in the ..., we even have them and they made us friends as well.

Even our firefighters have ballistic helmets and body armors so that they can once we go into a scene and can protect it with our guns, they can come in and they have that level of personal protection as well.

That's all been you, you know, bought with federal government grant money and so on. So that kind of stuff is absolutely essential.

That's I I would say what I would change, I don't know that there's a tactic per se.

I just think the common, sadly the commonality is a lot of agencies don't have any tactics because they don't see it as a realistic event that's gonna happen in their service area.

And that's the biggest thing we have to change.

No, that that's great information.

So yes, thank you.

I tried to.

I tried to be high level with my questions so that you can interpret it as you see fitting and I think that that was a really it's a it's a good answer.

UM, you definitely know what you're talking about, by the way.

Very impressed.

I got the right person.

Umm I have.

Are you OK?

I've I have one other question.

I know we've been talking for a while.

OK.

OK.

OK.

OK, I'm supply will hold.

The white oak building.

OK.

We will not be till five, OK.

So the last question, are there any mass shooting prevention policies in place right now that you feel are effective and I'll I'll add this to your point as well, it can be maybe something that's like that's out there already that somebody wrote down that's in stone or something that's kind of implied as well.

So whatever you feel like would be effective already.

I feel like you've kind of answered this, but if you wanna add to it I'll I'll just give you the opportunity then quickly on prevention.

You actually don't know many other smarter commentators than me that have said something.

The effect of we live in a post fact world today where people wanna operate based on emotion and feelings and they're, you know, my lived experience when there is a a lot of macro data on this question.

So preventing it just on the issue, simply and only of preventing it.

Uh, I already mentioned things like target hardening.

Another thing that I just cannot get my mind around is is when you look at a lot of these incidents, there's a universality that they occur.

Uh, it's fast.

Vast majority in in what are declared or defacto gun free zones, they are somewhere where the person that's going to do it has a reasonable expectation that they're not going to encounter any resistance and whether that's a business that puts up signage that says, you know, no guns here in ..., obviously in our concealed handgun.

Process businesses or entities can or allowed under the law to post that they do not want firearms on their private property premises and the the weapon holder is supposed to not, of course at all do.

But they're supposed to abide by that, you know?

Go put their gun in the car.

So if you have a movie theater and you put plaster of signs everywhere that say this is a gun free zone, I I think I think you're out of your mind.

You're asking for somebody to come in there and then they know because again, most of these guys, they found, you know, they don't do this in the dark.

The guy that commits one tomorrow will have done extensive Internet research on other people who've done other mass attacks previously.

A lot of them idolize, and they kind of there's a hierarchy based on body count, right?
So the ... and ... from ...

They talk.

You know, they they got a pretty good body count, so they're at the top, they're at the, they're towards the top of the pile, but ones that get the the mass casualties are the ones these disturbed people tend to idolize and want to emulate.

So they will go somewhere where they can make mass casualties.

They're not shooting up army bases for the most part, that we have an occasional attack.

That was a terrorist attack before good in ... a couple years ago.

But again, that was by a soldier who knew that what areas to go to where you didn't go to the firing range and do it where everybody has a weapon in their hand and ammunition in their pocket, you know, he went and did it at the whenever the PX or the somewhere he knew that there was a little likelihood of of fire.

So I don't understand that as a societal policy, I I truly don't.

The I I would say just you know be silent remain remain, have it, remain a mystery so that these guys don't know what they're gonna necessarily walk into.

They can't necessarily go well.

I can.

I can do whatever I want for five or 10 minutes until the cops get here, and then I'm gonna be in a gunfight.

We know and a lot of these cases, they either end by the police, either around the suspect killed, the suspect, a lot of them they killed themselves and a bunch of others, they actually leave the they managed to get away from the scene and you have to find them later, like the guy in .

He just went home.

So they they, you know, got with us those who said who the shooter was and then they went to his house and they arrested him there.

There's a variety of those, but when you look at the data that we have about what the indicators are, it it always breaks my heart when I see an incident where I think like the guy in ... was like this, he was trying to get the family to get him guns.

They said no because they knew he was disturbed, so he went.

He waited till he was, I think 19 or 8.

Whatever he did, he waited and had another way to get him.

It makes you wonder, had that family reached out to local law enforcement and again, which sometimes can be difficult because what's the crime right there may not be a crime.

And saying hey, my son or my grandson's acting really weird and all of a sudden he's asking his grandpa to buy guns were right that that may not necessarily be a crime or be an indication of anything other than that he's a weird individual and he wants to exercise his constitutional rights.

So you know what agencies do with that?

I think then again you may put somebody on your radar, somebody that you need to be aware of.

Maybe there's a mental health intervention.

We have a ... responder program, mental health correspondent programming My ... where anytime we have mental health related calls, these are these are employees of the ... where civilians.

They're mental health professionals.

They all have masters and and clinical something and we go there and make the scene safe and make sure there's no danger.

And then they roll in and they talk to the person.

And they try to get them to avail themselves, which is kind of the requirement in our society.

A lot of things we can't compel people unless they're in immediate crisis, but they do a very good job.

These these ladies are talking them into seeking out either in service or outpatient services.

So I think that's part and parcel of a prevention and something agencies can do.

Again, the person still has to come to our attention by some means.

So you know in in the real world, I think the person who lives alone in isolation doesn't have close friends or family plots.

One of these attacks prepares for it keeps it to themselves.

I don't know necessarily how you prevent it other than the target hardening of any

location where people gather.

Another thing I do with my MC, I started this when I'm SWAT commander.

If we have any large public gathering, we have a contingent of SWAT officers there as what we call a QRF quick response force.

And I copied this.

There was an attack.

I'm gonna forget the town and county.

Forgive me several years ago we're talking maybe 2014 or 15 in ... at a chili fest and just being in this business for as many years as I have, when the when the data first came out even was public available guy shows up and he pulls out a gun and he starts shooting people at her chilling fast and he won't get like 3 people and he was dead in like 2 minutes tilled by the officers and immediately I said they were ready for that.

That tells me that timeline is so fast, there's no way they responded from off site into a big public, you know, Carnival festival kind of event with all the crowds running in all directions.

And did that, so I reached out to that.

I wanna say it was Ventura

And they said Yep for about 7 or 8 years.

Every time we have a large public event, anything more than 500 people, we have a four person contingent from our SWAT team.

That is there simply and only to respond to targeted violence.

And so I started doing that in my jurisdiction as well.

So any bank events that we have in the city is in general at their city center are County Fair that draws, you know, I think they're big day every year's about a 10,000 person event, Broncos training camp, the their facilities right next to ours.

We have officers ready to go and again you might see a couple officers at normal patrol uniform and they're there to hand out stickers to kids and, you know, talk to anybody.

If there's a problem or somebody pushes somebody, but what they may or may not see is, some guys in green uniforms working around somewhere, they're simply there to immediately respond if any violence occurs.

And again, hopefully it never happens.

Maybe it never will.

And again, I have the full support of my political leadership and the county and the cities, because when I explained it to them, I say maybe I'm wasting a little bit overtime money.

But I don't care, right?

It's in the big picture.

Cheap insurance to know that if anyone ever gets in their head.

Hey I wanna harm some people.

Where can I go?

Ohh look there's this event at the ... this weekend.

That's expected to draw 800 people.

Let me go there and get my body count.

He's gonna have a really rude awakening.

About 10 seconds into his little attack.

So and again, I don't keep that secret, right?

I tell our guys, I don't care if you're visible.

You don't have to take the BearCat armored vehicle, park it right there.

Let people come up and look at it.

Just just keep your gear.

Yeah.

You know, within arms reach and your primary focus isn't there to intervene and you know, two drugs pushing each other.

You're.

You're there to intervene in any any targeted violence attack, so I think that's another another piece of prevention that agencies can do at large public events.

Obviously, we can't do that to every bar or restaurant every, you know, every place there's ten twenty 5000 people, but you can certainly, you know, have those things in place where you have it available for your community.

For businesses, yeah, they reach out to us, we're willing to provide training to them and their staff on the run, hide, fight training, we we cover that or citizens Academy.

As far as our our regional protocols, we we have the equipment, we have the training, we cooperate and do exercises and training with our regional partners including fire and EMS on that response in my mind, all those things factor into prevention.

And again, I don't know if there's anybody in my community that's thought about doing one that looked at all that and said, you know what, I'm not gonna do that or I'm not gonna do it here and either stopped or he went, you know, to some town in another state where maybe they weren't ready.

So that's kinda how I how I have approached it over the years and and you know if I see another idea that's the other thing when I say I'm a dirt and I'm kind of obsessed about this topic any after action report on any instant around the country official or unofficial.

As soon as I can get my hands on that I I look at that.

Sadly, they all kind of said the same thing.

The problems on the cops are always command control.

Communication, but sometimes if they're a big thorough after action, it will cover things like that, right?

Like what have the school district done in advance to harden the target, where those measures defeated by the suspect or just they didn't exist?

I think we have to look at the macro data on past attacks and arm ourselves with that knowledge and respond rationally based on data, not emotionally based on how how we feel.

Everybody can agree these things are tragedies, and if we could wave a wand and make one never happen again, absolutely, we would do that.

But then we have to come back to Earth to be realistic and say, how are we actually going to make sure that we have safe communities?

You are awesome.

I wouldn't be friends with you.

No, on on, on a, really.

On a serious note though, this is all wow like it's it's really nice to talk to somebody in your position with so much knowledge and expertise when here I am like slowly little Air Force medic that's trying to be a comic counselor.

That is like I'm very against gun free zones and everything you talked about is really that that's a problem right there.

You've given me so, so much I can use with everyone I've already talked to already.

I don't even feel like I need these pops and more people.

Seriously.

OK.

Yeah.

Or they're both mutants with with subordinates.

So they may send it further, but I send it to ... and ... in ...

Both are are ... plus year veterans.

They've responded with the multiple incidents up here in the area.

... was our the active traffic manager for for several years, so they may still reach out to you and give you now.

I think what you're gonna hear from ... guys, they're gonna tell you exactly what I told you.

Because again, the weirdest thing in law enforcement is culture, right?

And you probably saw this in the ..., right?

My ... was an ... vet.

I was a ...

The .. has a culture, some would say it's kind of it's almost a religion, right? Which I.

OK, I'll, I'll give it that.

It has some cult like properties much more than safety

When I listen to my dad tell stories, I'm like, you know, the 60s and the in the ...

But the ... has a culture.

The ... has a culture.

The name the has a culture.

You can enter subordinate units.

They have a culture, right?

So a little bit different at the ... than it is at the ...

So there are ... law enforcement agencies in the United States, depending how you count.

Officers to some people count fed.

Some people count like TSA.

There's somewhere between ... and a ... individuals, right?

Men, women.

Black, white, gay, straight.

Every part of the spectrum in in that profession.

Every one of those ... the culture for good or ill, some have effective, you know, service, oriented, professional, constitutional, policing cultures.

Others, as we know from news stories, absolutely do not.

I'm fortunate I've never had to work there, so I think if ... reach out to you, you're going to hear a lot of the same stuff, because our agency has built this since...

Those old farts like me that went there that day and were told to stand outside when we wanted to go in because the guys and leadership didn't have doctor, didn't know that swagat tactics to deal with those kind of things.

And they wanted to treat it like a, you know, kind of a hostage barricade standoff.

Those of us that were frustrated by that event.

.. some years ago kind of incorporated that and and have been thoughtful about it ever since.

So I think that's why we're a little bit different because it's in the culture, it's in the DNA of grapple county when you've all to happen, we happen to be in the middle of our inservice month and I still teach our our supervisors, the, the, the Doctor piece and the commanders and ... and just for fun, just just so I could hear them say it, we get a little safety briefing case.

They're gonna be using send guns.

Everybody goes to that, then the start.

So ... will break off with me and ... person.

And I just shouted out the group I said, hey, let me ask everybody if if we have one of these events and that that day and and you may have heard the military, you know, ... that comes from ...

I never heard that.

Actually it's it's actually from World War Two.

It's from a fighter ace named ... by aren't in the

It's called.

It's how you respond to to basically crisis or attack.

It's a observe.

Orient, decide, act, and his whole concept was if you know and I think of fighter pilots, right, a message should it appears up and behind you. Right?

Yeah.

First of all you have to observe it.

If you don't ever observe that, you just gonna shoot you from behind and your your toast, right?

Yep.

Once you observe it, you have to Orient towards the threat.

Rank your your mind and it's the mental process you go through seeing.

It doesn't stop it, right?

So you have to, uh, there's a message sent over there.

Then you have to change your entire orientation from.

I'm just flying along on a lovely day to I'm about to be in a family encounter with an enemy.

Then you have to make a decision about what tactics you're going to apply.

And finally, you have to act.

And of course, with human Physiology, if you're hung over and you didn't get a good night's sleep and you didn't get a good breakfast and you kind of get a cold, like all these things can affect from the from the observed fades to the app phase, maybe two or three seconds, right?

Maybe 5 seconds if you're not feeling it today.

Well, that's the difference between life and death for fighter pilots.

That was just one point.

So the phrase we used in the tactical community is you get inside the other guy's OODA loop, right?

I can get inside my adversary Zulu.

I can win if you can get inside mine.

He can win.

So I I asked everybody there if I if I'm if I'm in condition black meaning I'm I'm having a stress reaction to what's company.

You know, they're airing on the radio that we have a we have a an act of violence going on right now.

And even though I'm the ..., and even though I've been there almost ..., and even though I got all this background was swaddles there, there's nothing to say that I can't

just.

I'm just gonna use a cloacal phrase.

I can't ship the bed, right?

I can't.

Just like wig out and and lock up.

And I'm not saying anything on the radio.

So I said, if I go into a condition black and I pointed to one of the shards and ... is in condition black, if ... doesn't get on the radio and say anything if Lieutenant person, what are you guys gonna do?

And fifty guys and gals in unison said stop the violence.

That nice desk that's that was a concept that goes back to the Prussians in the 1840s. Commanders intent.

You don't need my permission.

That's that doctor piece of those five things I talked about.

Your job is to go in there and stop that violence.

Capture that guy.

Kill that guy.

Bloom, that guy.

Get in the rested.

Trap them in a little room somewhere.

We decides to commit suicide.

Make him decide he's not gonna get his body count.

Run out the other door and fleet.

I don't care which one of those things it is.

We're gonna stop that lens and I don't need to get on the radio and tell you that you already know that because we've trained it into your little DNA.

Your little copy DNA in the, you know, six months, two years, 10 years that you worked at....

So it was kind of nice.

I did that a couple times with the next training just so just to see what it when everybody would say and make sure I didn't have a group would be like, I don't know, there's the captain does the tools to do anything.

We just sit around and wait like.

No, that's not what we do.

Here we don't sit around and wait.

We go right and my job is the captain is to get on the radio and manage that, that going manage that response, right, but it it you don't need my permission to do your job and save lives ever.

So I I think a lot of agencies are lacking in that you've all to kind of prove that point.

I was just thinking that military, just like the military in the absence of orders, right.

Our military doesn't just take it upon itself to act.

There's orders that that come down through the chain of command, but the the we also teach to our officers and NCO's take the initiative, right?

Once you have that commanders intent that says, here's the mission, right?

We're gonna clear out ... or whatever, right?

Every small unit leader goes that.

That's the commander.

It's that now they take it upon themselves to implement effective tactics in order to do that.

And so that I think is kind of kind of lacking around the country, but that's a big piece that, that, that needs to be there.

Fortunately, the ... I can speak to cause I've been involved up here for so many years in July, that training that is the the concept of nine out of 10 officers up to the ...

So I I just think that needs to you know get get out to the rest of the country.

No, that that's awesome.

I hope, I hope I hear from them, because I want, I want a theme, I want a theme where I'm like, hey, I talk to ... in this region and they all agree.

And they've seen it work.

That's what I want, so I hope they do.

I hope they do reach out and hopefully you tell them that this wasn't too painful and umm, but really I I mean really, that's the.

What did you say?

I'm sorry after happy to do it, I go problem, but talking about this update, anybody in the list, I don't think you're weird.

I really appreciate it.

There are very few studies really on the ... I just talked to a guy the other day.

He's got a he's got his doctor and he was a retired now, but he's a ... in ... and he wrote a A, a pretty fascinating his doctoral thesis.

But it's it's just about the law enforcement response when they happen.

So you know it's not the the macro picture that gets into the prevention or mitigation pieces at all.

It's when we respond.

Right, there's always the top three, top four challenges we face and and maybe there's some effective techniques we can do that to mitigate thought.

Salt.

Yeah, they're, they're there's really not a lot.

But I I think that's out there.

Hopefully there will be more going forward and again they just had one in .. with a guy don't know if you saw that well, Islamic guy who went to a park and and with a knife and started stabbing children in their strollers.

So you know, as we look at incidents of mass violence, they've had a number in ... where they used vehicles, right?

They just, I find out a market day in the, you know, charge a big truck through the through the town square.

It doesn't have to involve a firearm, and I think sadly in the United States, so people, for political reasons, try to turn it into a gun issue.

It's not a gun issue if if these people wanna body count and they're deranged, they're gonna get a body count by another means.

... has had a bunch of these with knives or other ends, who happens frequently on in trains or train stations, and they'll get 10201015 people that they'll kill before the ... police can can shoot the suspect.

So I've never believed it's not a gun issue, it's a, you know, it's a mental health.

It's a something with our society where people are disaffected, depressed, not connected, don't have hope, you know, don't have outlets that that people used to have across the board.

But the technology?

The efficiency of weapons is not the issue, it's it's something else.

No, absolutely.

I I I agree with everything.

Well, I want, I mean we've been talking for about a little over an hour.

I I hope if it's, I feel like I've already asked a lot from you, but if you don't mind asking your buddies to reach out because I would love to have additional insight and if they share half of what you shared, I mean this is phenomenal information and I I do wanna give out the offer to if you want me to contact you when my dissertation is done and they say hey, you have it, it's done.

And if you would like to read it, I would.

I would love to send.

It's gonna be long.

I'm already at ... pages and that was before my ..., but no worries, that's fine.

I have several, believe it or not, you know we have the G drive folder in our compute in our computer for our service.

So we tenants to it's not like the motor control information and any time I have papers, dissertations after action reports up, I drive the crazy with this stuff all the time.

Hey, here's a new.

You know, whatever.

There's a doctoral dissertation on acting threatening you guys should read it right, and even if they're horrible, like, you know, sometimes just wanted to read.

But.

And let's read the ... executive summaries.

Right.

Or, you know, some part and it's to see the data table something, but I think more often than not, the guys actually do read it and then it just info that's filed away in the back of their head, they they use it at some point and they never use it.

But, but you know, information is always power.

So the more we have, the more data we have on on both for I would actually love to let me know when you communicate are done and I'll remind those guys next week, ... actually ... next week.

I'm rich.

I think he's around the ohh, no worries.

I'm.

I'm not in interrupt you space.

Well, thank you.

And in all sincerity, really, I mean, I think you're phenomenal.

Thank you for everything that you've that you've done and it's been, it's truly been my pleasure talking to you and I'm really excited to take what you and other folks have given me and put it out there.

And I really hope that something comes from this and that there can be some sort of positive impact, even if it's one step at a time like something you and I talked about.

This something has to change.

Yeah.

Now I can wave a wand.

I don't know if you ever ready or something in Israel.

They they actually have a national policy they call societal resilience it.

It's pretty impressive if you ever get a chance to hear anybody from the ... national police or or ..., they're they're kind of Secret Service message.

Speak on it because they don't have, you know, they're such a tiny country.

They're so outnumbered by people who want to destroy them.

Unlike us, we'll spend 20 years arguing over things here right in ..

They they put together a task force.

They come up with practical it's not finding the sky, you know.

Nonsense with the politics aside, they get everybody in a room from all factions and they come up with practical stuff.

And then they don't have anymore.

... had school attack in ...

They haven't had a second one since.

I can see that is this the top right?

Every single school has an armed ... security element.

That building?

Everyone, every time the kids have an athletic practice or a sporting event or sucking the those security guys are there.

They have one event where ... tech terrorist attack in school and they got together and said how do we prevent this from ever happening again.

And they implemented that and is it expensive to pay, you know, ...guys or ... to hang out every single school in the country?

Sure.

Would it be ... times more expensive and are huge country with you know we span a continent, we got ... million people as realized, ... million people.

Absolutely.

But again, what's the cost of not doing and even as to how they respond to stuff, they make a big deal about.

We were.

I was in a training last year with a ... policeman.

He was talking about a suicide bombing on a bus and he said within ... minutes they had the road open because they don't do the thing where you shut everything down for ... hours and the media, helicopters circle and you spent three days talking about it on CNN.

You know, they're equivalent of CNN because they would never get anything done right. That that's how frequently those happens.

So it's like when we have an insult like that, the police respond, then, then the metrics, then the, then the fire guys, right.

And then they actually in the ... religion, they have a a group that they they believe you have to pick up all the, you know, fingers and toes and and body parts for proper burial. And then the fire guys come in and hose it down.

They told the bus off they open the road well, it's like we we don't exactly the same thing.

You guys have got, including crime scene photos and you know, somebody fluid drone and digitally mapped it like we do all that, we just do it very, very quickly so that the roads back open for rush hour because we don't want our entire country to break down in a, you know this gets maybe in the mental health realm of resiliency, right?

We can't have the entire country breakdown.

You know, ringing their clothes and hair over the latest attack, we have to be resilient and saying, OK, they did this, they killed some people.

It's unfortunate we will warn them we will miss them.

We will bury them and then we we will figure out who committed this act and we will. We will go get them back, but we're not gonna allow our entire society to break down on this.

I would love if I could wave a wand to get more of that mentality here in the United States, but sadly, I don't think I've well.

We're obviously different people or things just haven't gotten bad.

Maybe that's the alternative of of people aren't being practical yet about this.

Natural part of it disturbs me.

There's still so many people who wanna be ideological or dull sophistical instead of practical about things we can do tomorrow to keep an event from happening on Sunday, right?

Absolutely.

Absolutely.

Well, Sir, phenomenal.

Thank you so much.

Alright, well I hope you have a great 1A safe weekend and nice weekend and take care.

OK.

OK. You too.

Alright, thank you.

Bye Sir.

● **Shelton, Alycia Mary** stopped transcription