

**THE PREMEDITATIVE BEHAVIOR BEHIND SCHOOL SHOOTINGS COMMITTED BY  
JUVENILES**

**BY**

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**DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents. I could not have accomplished what I have accomplished without their unyielding support and encouragement.

**ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS**

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What causes a child to decide to bring a weapon to school, and open fire on their peers and teachers? Are these shooters 'mentally ill' as the media portrays them to be, or is there more to the story? What is the profile of these types of shooter? While examining the lives of 10 of the most infamous school shooters in the country, this study seeks to determine if these acts of violence are premeditated or are they a spur of the moment decision. The shooters, Eric Harris, Barry Loukaitis, Drew Golden, Dylan Klebold, Kip Kinkel, Luke Woodham, T.J. Lane, Evan Ramsey, and Jeffrey Weise are profiled into one of three separate typologies: psychopathic, psychotic, or traumatized.

## Chapter 1

### THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

#### Problem Statement

For the past several decades, school shootings, due in, main part, to the media, appear to be on the rise. Since the media coverage, after such a tragic event, is so strong, it may raise concerns for parents sending their children to school every day. For days after a school shooting, news stations heavily cover the story, glorifying the act. Rarely, the topic of premeditation is discussed. Is a school really a safe place to send a child? Empirical evidence indicates that schools are among the safest places for children, compared to their homes and neighborhood environments (Muschert, 2007). Since schools are considered to be safe, what causes a child to decide to bring a weapon to school and open fire on their, seemingly, innocent fellow students and teachers? Do children plan these events out or are they more spur of the moment acts of violence?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to determine whether school shootings are premeditated events, do they involve extensive planning on the part of the shooter, or are they random acts of violence. If premeditation can be determined, perhaps warning signs can be found. By determining warning

signs, future attacks could be prevented. School rampage shootings throw people's lives out of kilter and convince them the world is a menacing place (Fast, 2008). Parents and students have come to believe schools are no longer safe, murderous children have become commonplace, and American culture has slipped another rung in its descent into barbarianism (Fast, 2008).

### **Research Questions/Objectives**

Previous research focuses on shooter typology, this study will focus on behaviors prior to the shooting. It is expected, through this study, to find there are different types of shooters, as previous research suggests, and the planning, or lack of planning, will depend on the type of shooter. Planning would involve the shooter having previously thought about committing the attack and mapping out an idea of how the attack would take place (i.e. an escape, acquiring the weapons, having a target, etc.). The types of shooters include psychopathic, psychotic, and traumatized. If there is a psychotic shooter present, it is thought there will be less planning than if there is a psychopathic shooter present. Also, if the attack was done with a "team", two shooters present, it is believed more planning went into the shooting.

**Delimitations**

Only a handful of previous shootings will be researched for this study. All shootings will have been committed by a juvenile. The reasons behind the shooting will not be studied, unless they are important to the premeditation behind the act. Only the shootings in which the student attended, or had attended, the institution will be studied. Attacks where the shooter attacked a school they did not attend will not be studied.

**Assumptions**

There is a lack of research regarding the planning behind rampage school shootings. It would be beneficial for more research to be conducted regarding this topic. Previous research appears to be accurate regarding mental illness and school shootings. This study will open more dialogue about the premeditative behaviors before an attack.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

- Rampage school shooting - for it to be a rampage school shooting, the incident must: a) take place at a school or a school sponsored event, b) involve multiple targets, c) the targets must be random or have symbolic importance to the

shooter, and d) the perpetrator must be currently enrolled or have been enrolled in the school.

- Premeditation - the act of planning something (particularly a crime) beforehand.
- Psychopathic shooter - profoundly narcissistic, arrogant, and entitled; they lacked empathy and met their needs at others' expense.
- Psychotic shooter - suffered from schizophrenia or a related disorder. They are out of touch with reality to varying degrees, experiencing hallucinations or delusions.
- Traumatized shooter - endured chronic abuse as children. They grew up in violent, severely dysfunctional homes.
- Bullying - refers to a pattern of behavior that includes insults, taunts, harassment (including sexual harassment), stalking, threats, intimidation, or physical assault.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The seemingly random and senseless deaths of teenagers and teachers in the middle of a school day, for no comprehensible reason, is far more shocking and gets far more attention than the less extreme acts of violence that happen in schools every

week (O'Toole, 2000). Every day, children endure a form of bullying from their fellow classmates. The bullying could be anything from physical violence, to emotional abuse. However, these acts receive little to no attention until something drastic is done by a student. Even though adolescent violence, generally, is at a low since 1993, the media attention they garner makes it appear they are at an all-time high. When the media covers a school shooting, whether the act was premeditated is rarely discussed. More often than not, the issue of the availability of guns, the issue of bullying, and the child's mental state and issues typically brought up. The issue of why is seldom discussed. It seems they prefer to blame guns or mental illness, rather than trying to truly determine the cause. The present study will research and attempt to determine whether school shootings lack premeditation or involve extensive planning on the part of the shooter. It is believed the planning, or lack thereof, of school shootings stems from the type of shooter engaging in the violent acts, whether they are psychotic, psychopathic, or traumatized type shooters.

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is important to state, facts about school shootings are easy to obtain, what weapons were used, how they were acquired, who was shot, etc. It is impossible, though, to be able to know



and understand the minds of the shooters and why they committed such a tragic event (Langman, 2009). This study will focus on rampage school shootings. The definition of rampage school shootings that will be used for this study will be, that of Newman et al. (2004) for it to be a rampage school shooting, the incident must: a) take place at a school or a school sponsored event, b) involve multiple targets, c) the targets must be random or have symbolic importance to the shooter, and d) the perpetrator must be currently enrolled or have been enrolled in the school. It is also important to state, there is no perfect profile of a shooter. Each shooter is unique; however, they can share similar characteristics.

There have been extensive studies done on school shootings. The United States Secret Service (Secret Service) and the United States Department of Education (ED) joined in a collaborative study to look at incidents of planned violence in the nation's schools (Pollack, Modzeleski, & Rooney, 2008). This study (Pollack, Modzeleski, & Rooney, 2008) had ten key findings, as follows:

- Incidents of targeted violence at schools rarely were sudden impulsive acts.
- Most attacks did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.

- There was no useful or accurate “profile” of students who engaged in targeted violence.
- Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Moreover, many had considered or attempted suicide.
- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.
- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement interventions. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.
- Prior to the incident, other people knew about the attacker’s idea and/or plan to attack.

Statistically speaking, it was found, 93 percent of the perpetrators exhibited concerning behavior prior to the attack (Pollack, Modzeleski, Rooney, 2008), which could signify a majority of these incidents could have potentially been avoided. It was also found, at least one other person had some type of knowledge of the attacker’s plan in 81 percent of the incidents

and more than one person had such knowledge in 59 percent of the incidents (Pollack, Modzeleski, Rooney, 2008). These statistics suggest a level of planning for these attacks. For the sake of this study, there are three categories of shooters:

psychopathic, psychotic, and traumatized. It is important to note, this does not mean these are the only shooter typologies, they are the only typologies being studied in this study. In most of the cases studied for this study, many of the shooters showed a few of the key findings listed above.

### **RAMPAGE ATTACKS**

There are five categories of school shootings: target shootings, government shootings, terroristic shootings, mass shootings, and rampage shootings (Mongan, 2013). The focus of this research study is rampage attacks; however, it is important to know the definition of all five types of shootings, simply to know the differences between the types of shootings. The only similarity between the five different shootings is they take place at a school or school event.

- Rampage school shootings are defined as school shootings that: take place on a school-related public stage before an audience; involve multiple victims, some of whom are shot simply for their symbolic significance or at random; and involve one or more shooters whose are students or former

students of the school (Newman, Fox, Harding, & Mehta, 2004)

- Targeted school shootings are not random, and are typically not symbolic at the societal or world level (Mongan, 2013).
- Terroristic school shootings are usually random and symbolic at the highest level (Mongan, 2013).
- Government shootings are random, but the purpose is almost always to restore peace (Mongan, 2013).
- Mass shootings are the most like rampage shootings. In a rampage attack, the shooter has previously attended the school and are staging symbolic attack on the school (Newman et al., 2004), on the other hand, mass shootings do not share this connection, the shooting is choosing a location at random.

Research has found several possible causes to rampage attacks. The first is the availability of guns. This is not believed to be able to explain school shootings. The acts of the few that abused the guns cannot be blamed on the culture, because the acts themselves are contrary to the prevalent social norm of law-abiding use of firearms (Langman, 2009). A second reason is psychiatric medications. Some have claimed that medications have such powerful side effects, they drive children to murder (Langman, 2009). Even though all medication has side effects, the case against psychiatric medications often is

exaggerated beyond the available evidence (Langman, 2009). Another reason is how detached the shooters are from their school. Statistically speaking, shooters are often above-average students who are not struggling in school. The image of school shooters as alienated students who had no connection to, or involvement with, their school is not accurate (Langman, 2009). In many cases, the student was well adjusted, with a group of friends, and some joined clubs (or groups) at school. Media violence is also thought to be a trigger for school shootings. Media violence, however, cannot explain school shootings because the clear majority of people exposed to media violence do not become murderers (Langman, 2009). It is said, however, violence in the media can desensitize people. By regularly playing violent video games, or watching violent movies often, the child can become used to seeing violence and begin seeing it as a norm. Acting out the violence they have become so accustomed to can become a fantasy of theirs. Additionally, a clear connection can be made between school shootings and depression (Langman, 2009). The view that many school shooters are loners is not correct, however many of the shooters did feel very lonely (Langman, 2009). Previous research suggests there are specific types of shooters. According to Langman (2015), there are three psychological types of school shooters; psychopathic, psychotic, and traumatized. Psychopathic shooters are profoundly

narcissistic, arrogant, and entitled. These shooters lack empathy and meet their needs at others' expense (Langman, 2015). On the other hand, psychotic shooters suffer from schizophrenia, or a related disorder. They tend to be out of touch with reality to varying degrees, and experience hallucinations or delusions (Langman, 2015). Typically, psychotic and psychopathic shooters come from well-functioning, unbroken families (Langman, 2015). In contrast to the previous two shooters, traumatized shooters, endured chronic abuse as children. They grew up in violent, severely dysfunctional homes (Langman, 2015).

### **PSYCHOPATHIC SHOOTER**

The first typology of shooters is psychopathic shooters. To truly be able to understand a psychopathic shooter, one must first understand and know about psychopathy. Psychopathy reflects the following characteristics: impulsivity, a lack of guilt or remorse, pathological lying and manipulateness, and a continual willingness to violate social norms (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). It is said, 1% of the general population may be classified as psychopaths, however, they comprise 15%-25% of the prison population and are responsible for a markedly disproportionate amount of serious crime, violence, and social distress in every society (Hare, 1996). In layman's terms, psychopathy refers to people who repeatedly commit criminal acts

for which they feel little or no remorse (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). Characteristically, psychopaths have distinct personality traits. They tend to be superficial, lack empathy and are selfish and irresponsible, they place blame on others for their misfortunes, and offer excuses for their behavior, they are deceitful and manipulative, yet charming and glib (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). The personality pattern associated with psychopathy has not proven more useful than it has in predicting and understanding human violence (Heilbrun, 1979). The literature about psychopathy and violence fails to provide any convincing evidence that the psychopathic personality mediates violent behavior (Heilbrun, 1979). This means, there are plenty of people with psychopathic personality traits who do not commit violent crimes. A prior act of violence was the only thing that allowed for the predictions of further violence (Heilbrun, 1979).

Psychopathy is not a diagnosable disorder. The closest official diagnosis is antisocial personality disorder, but even that is not synonymous with psychopathy (Langman, 2015). When one hears the word "antisocial", he or she often thinks of the person's social skills. They may even think antisocial refers to someone who is introverted or unsocial (Langman, 2009). Someone who is antisocial is usually anti-society meaning he or she does not operate by the rules of society (Langman, 2009). This may

include laws, customs, common decency, and a consideration for the rights and feelings of others (Langman, 2009). Basically, there is a disregard for morality and a lack of empathy.

Psychopaths are said to be egocentric; meaning they live for themselves and meet their own needs with no regard for the impact their behavior has on them (Langman, 2015). Psychopaths are, also, usually egotistical, with an inflated sense of their own importance and self-worth (Langman, 2015). They are said to lack a normal capacity for empathy, guilt, and remorse (Langman, 2015). They experience joy when they are inflicting pain on others, also referred to as being sadistic. Psychopaths are also chronic liars and are very good at impression management.

Impression management means they make a good impression while holding their true intentions (Langman, 2015). Psychopaths march to the beat of their own drum; they have no regard for social norms, morality, ethics, or the law (Langman, 2015). Because of this, they tend to have a difficult time with authority. Among the more famous, or well-known, of the psychopathic shooters are four names: Eric Harris, Barry Loukaitis, and Andrew Golden.

These shooters were motivated by revenge for perceived wrongs, by their pursuit of fame, by the desire for power or domination, and by seeking a sadistic thrill (Langman, 2015). Their self-righteous entitlement, devastating lack of empathy, and callous disregard for human life mark them as psychopathic shooters



(Langman, 2015). All four of these shooters exhibited the characteristics of a psychopathic type shooter as stated above.

### **Eric Harris**

On April 20, 1999 Eric and Dylan planned their attack on Columbine High School. Dylan was Eric's partner and best friend (he will be discussed later in the study). The two arrived at Columbine High School just after 11:00 am the morning of the attack. They were carrying two duffel bags filled with propane bombs, which they brought into the crowded cafeteria (Lieberman, 2006). They placed the bombs, then went outside to wait for the bombs to explode, but a faulty connection prevented them from detonating (Lieberman, 2006). The two boys then stormed the school with two sawed-off shotguns, a Hi-Point 9mm carbine, an illegal TEC-DC9 semiautomatic gun, and a cache homemade bombs (Lieberman, 2006). Eric began the massacre at the top of the staircase by killing Rachel Scott and injuring Richard Castaldo (Lieberman, 2006). Meanwhile, Dylan was firing at other passing students and heading downstairs. Eric turned toward the open field, and the baseball diamond, where he shot and wounded another student (Lieberman, 2006). A school Deputy arrived on scene and began exchanging gunfire with Eric. While Eric was exchanging fire with the Deputy, Dylan was still firing at

other students. One of the boys, it remains unclear whether it was Dylan or Eric, shot a teacher in the back (Lieberman, 2006). At this time, Eric and Dylan entered the library. Eric began the shooting in the library followed by Dylan. Together, the two boys shot the 8 people who had entered the library in hopes of escaping their gunfire. At one point Eric looked he looked under a table where a girl cowered in fear, Harris said "Peekaboo", and shot her (Langman, 2015). Because of the way Eric was holding his gun, the recoil hit him in the face resulting in a bloody, possibly even broken nose (Lieberman, 2006). A total of 23 people was shot in the library. After the boys left the library, they headed back to the cafeteria to inspect their bombs (Lieberman, 2006). They then headed back to the library, but everyone who had been able to move, had fled, leaving only 3 victims remaining in the library (Lieberman, 2006). Eric then lit a Molotov cocktail, and then they committed suicide (Lieberman, 2006). In total, Eric, took 8 lives and injured 13 people. Between Eric and Dylan, 13 people were killed while another 24 were wounded.

Eric Harris was born on April 9, 1981. Many who knew Eric growing up say he was a great kid and was very respectful towards his parents. Growing up, Eric and his family moved several times, causing Eric to jump around

from different schools. Children ages six to 17 who had experienced six or more relocations were at serious risk for developing behavior problems (Fast, 2008). Eric also suffered from a congenital disorder called *pectus excavatum* or "funnel breast", a condition where the sternum is sunken into the chest (Fast, 2008). Medical textbooks emphasize that children with this condition are reluctant to appear bare-chested in public and are often ridiculed by their peers for their unusual appearance, and poor physical endurance (Fast, 2008). Eric underwent a couple surgeries at the ages of 12 and 13 to correct the problem. Eric was described as a *self-hating narcissist*. He liked to write "*Ich bin Gott*", German for "I am God" however Eric did not believe he was God, but he felt godlike compared to virtually everyone else (Langman, 2015). Harris's condescending and contemptuous attitude dominates his journal, yet there were glimpses of a self-conscious side to him (Langman, 2015). Eric had a grandiose self-concept, apparently in response to feeling inadequate (Langman, 2015). This idea can be described in an idea called the *compensatory narcissist* - one who compensates for his insecure identity with an image of superiority (Langman, 2015).

Eric's love of control and power dominated his writings. In his writings, he wrote about his feelings when he purchased his first gun; "I am [expletive] armed. I feel more confident, stronger, more God-like" (Langman, 2015). He also stated without guns, he was just "the weird looking Eric kid" (Langman, 2015). Eric also wrote longingly about his desire to rape and torture people (Langman, 2015). He would refer to himself as a "crazy [expletive]...rapist" and wrote about wanting to overpower girls and get them into a vulnerable situation through impression management: "Who can I trick into my room first? I can sweep someone off their feet, tell them what they want to hear, be all nice and sweet, and then [expletive] 'em like an animal" (Langman, 2015). During the attack at the high school, when Eric and Dylan were in the school library, Eric was laughing. This was sheer sadistic glee, getting a kick out of killing people (Langman, 2015).

Eric and Dylan began, with a group of their select close friends, undertaking "Rebel Missions" (Fast, 2008). The identities of the other boys in the group were not made public, however, they went by the names KIBBz, Excaluber, Jester, and Imaginos (Fast, 2008). They would stage acts of mischief and vandalism on neighboring homes, then Eric would boast about it on one of his websites (Fast, 2008).

The first mission was setting off firecrackers. They put a large assortment of firecrackers in a tunnel at around 1:00 am and then set them off (Fast, 2008). In another mission, they vandalized the home of a past friend. After the missions, the boys would get drunk on hard liquor (Fast, 2008). Seeing as how the boys were all under-aged at the time, this, too, was illegal.

In his senior year, Eric, along with Dylan, were suspended for hacking into the school computers (Fast, 2008). Eric and Dylan also broke into a van and stole a briefcase, sunglasses, and about \$400 worth of electric equipment (Fast, 2008). The boys were questioned when an officer had found them a few miles from the van, acting suspicious, and ended up confessing to the break-in and theft (Fast, 2008). The boys were referred to a juvenile diversion program, in lieu of jail time, since it was their first offense (Fast, 2008). During this time, Eric's parents sent him to a psychiatrist. Eric admitted to the psychiatrist he had feelings of anger, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The doctor prescribed him Zoloft for his depression, but later changed over to Luvox (Fast, 2008). Eric's autopsy revealed he had a therapeutic level of Luvox in his blood, refuting speculation he had stopped taking the medication period to the shooting (Fast, 2008). If Eric

had taken himself off his medication, against doctor approval, he could have gone into a deeper depression as a result. However, there is no way of knowing if this medication was the cause of the attack.

### **Barry Loukaitis**

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1996, Barry Loukaitis, dressed in all black cowboy outfit, entered his Algebra class and shot Manuel Vela, Mrs. Caires, and two other students, while holding the rest of the class hostage (Langman, 2015). Prior to leaving his home that morning, he watched several minutes of the movie *A Fistful of Dollars* leaving the movie cued to the scene in the film when one of the characters stands over a victim victoriously while holding up his rifle (Fast, 2008). Minutes before leaving, he slid the barrel of his father's rifle into the right pocket of his baggy pants, collected his father's handguns, slung three ammunition belts across his chest, and put ear-plugs and speed loaders in his pockets and left for school (Fast, 2008). After walking to school, Barry entered Frontier Junior High school at 2:00 PM (Fast, 2008). His fifth period Algebra class had already started. He entered the classroom, slid the rifle out of his pocket, and began shooting (Fast, 2008). Barry held the class hostage for 15

minutes, before finally releasing them and giving himself up to the police (Fast, 2008). Barry was tried, convicted, and sentenced to two consecutive life terms plus 205 years of prison (Fast, 2008).

Growing up, Barry was said to be outgoing and popular. He had served on student council in sixth grade, and had numerous friends visit him at his house (Langman, 2015). In seventh grade, Barry became more withdrawn and reportedly had a bad temper and would hit walls in anger (Langman, 2015). It would appear, Barry's mood changes coincided with his parents' marital problems, as well as the onset of puberty (Langman, 2015). During middle school, Barry was said to be arrogant and intimidating (Langman, 2015). He loved watching violent movies. A favorite quote of Barry's came from the movie, *Natural Born Killers* and stated: "Murder is pure. People make it unsure" (Langman, 2015). Barry often talked about his desire to kill someone before he died and said, "it would be cool to kill people...to try to get away with it" (Langman, 2015). Barry was said to have felt superior to his peers and viewed murder as a way of eliminating inferior people (Langman, 2015).

Barry felt very hostile towards two authority figures at his school, who also happened to be married to each other; Mr. and Mrs. Caires. Mrs. Caires was his algebra

teacher and Mr. Caires was the vice principal. Mr. Caires had reportedly given Barry detention, two days before the shooting, for repeated tardiness (Langman, 2015). One of Barry's victims was Mrs. Caires, along with a student named Manuel Vela. It was reported Barry had liked Vela's girlfriend and it is likely Barry killed him out of jealousy (Langman, 2015).

During the time Barry held the class hostage, he was said to have been at ease and when the police wanted to negotiate with him, he reportedly was not afraid but annoyed (Langman, 2015). A detective noted Barry was acting shockingly calm and had showed no remorse for the events that had taken place (Langman, 2015). His taped confession was very matter-of-fact, and after giving his confession, he curled up in his cell and had a nap (Langman, 2015). A psychiatrist who had interviewed Barry after the attack noted that his "eerie, weird icy-cold emotion...gave me the willies" (Langman, 2015).

### **Andrew Golden**

On March 24, 1998, Andrew "Drew" Golden and Mitchell Johnson opened fire on their school. During the end of the lunch hour, Drew entered the school, pulled the fire alarm, and quickly made his way to a sniper position among the



trees near the school (Langman, 2009). Drew and Mitchell waited in the trees until everyone began to file out of the school, they then began to open fire on the students and faculty.

Drew grew up as the only child of two postmasters. He was reportedly the "center of their world" (Langman, 2009). Firearms were a huge part of Drew's world growing up. His grandfather worked for the state fish and game commission and hunted often (Langman, 2009). Drew's parents were leaders of the Jonesboro Practical Pistol Shooters Association (Langman, 2009). Because of his family's interest in firearms, Drew handled guns from a very young age; he received a rifle for his sixth birthday (Langman, 2009). When around his parents, and other family members, Drew was said to be a good boy, he cursed frequently, which his father and grandfather found endearing (Langman, 2009). He was not a discipline problem in school either. When Drew was away from his parents and teachers, however, he showed a different side of himself. Neighbors said he was a "little demon", "mean-spirited", and "evil-acting" (Langman, 2009). He was said to have been hostile, aggressive, and threatening towards other children (Langman, 2009). Cats had a way of disappearing around Drew. Based on interviews conducted by Dr. Katherine

Newman, Drew's parents were "defensive when he got in trouble and actively intervened to prevent Westside Middle School from using what administrators regarded as appropriate punishment. If Drew did poorly in a particular class, or got in trouble with one teacher, his family just arranged for him to be moved to another" (Langman, 2009). From early on, Drew did not appreciate or respect authority. Drew was able to persuade Mitchel Johnson in joining him in the rampage attack they committed on their middle school.

#### **PSYCHOTIC SHOOTER**

Another typology of shooters is a psychotic shooter, not to be confused with the psychopathic shooter. Very little attention has been given to psychotic shooters, even though many school shooters are said to be psychotic. A common misconception regarding psychotic individuals is they are not able to function. Psychotic people can be highly functioning. It is important to understand that school shooters can go to school, do their homework, play sports, and yet be psychotic (Langman, 2009). The term psychotic means to be "out of touch with reality"; however, they can be in touch with reality in most areas, but out of touch in particular ways (Langman, 2009). People can be psychotic by hallucinating or having delusions.

Hallucinations are sensory experiences that are not grounded in real events (Langman, 2009). Hallucinations typically involve hearing voices that are not real. Delusions are false beliefs and there are two types of delusions common among school shooters: delusions of grandeur and paranoid delusions (Langman, 2009). Psychotic symptoms are not necessarily constant or debilitating (Langman, 2009). It is important to note, as research suggests, psychosis is not the inability to engage in purposeful action (Langman, 2015). Psychotic symptoms vary greatly between individuals. Symptoms may be chronic or episodic, broadly debilitating or narrowly problematic (Langman, 2015).

The psychotic symptom all the boys in the study share is paranoia. Along with paranoia, the psychotic shooters also had a mix of other symptoms, including delusions of grandeur and hallucinations (Langman, 2009). All the shooters also had different levels of social impairment. An example of some of their social impairment is they had friends and acquaintances and were involved in their school activities, however, their journals made it clear they felt desperately alone, isolated, and miserable (Langman, 2009). These individuals were deeply suffering even though they could present reasonably well in public (Langman, 2009). The social detachment they experienced was made worse at times by their paranoid delusions, and caused

a profound sense of alienation (Langman, 2009). The life of a psychotic shooter was rough. They did not measure up in their families, or school, and were a disappointment to their parents (Langman, 2009). They were socially awkward and though they had friends, they felt alone. The psychotic shooters were, typically, suicidal depressed and full of rage at the unfairness of life (Langman, 2009). Because of all of this, they hated themselves, the world, and especially those who appeared to have everything going for them (Langman, 2009). Moreover, they lack resilience, supportive relationships, and other assets that would compensate for their deficits (Langman, 2009). They often knew they were losing touch with reality, but they were afraid of embarrassed about what was happening that they hid their symptoms (Langman, 2009). Because they hid their symptoms, many did not realize they were suffering so until it was too late.

The school shooters discussed in the present study will all have suffered from a schizotypal disorder, though psychotic symptoms can occur with several other diagnoses, including major depression and bipolar disorder (Langman, 2015). Juveniles who are suffering from psychotic symptoms often are deeply confused about who they are. They struggle with the fundamental questions of whether they are human, and, if they were human, who are they? (Langman 2015). Psychosis among school shooters is rarely discussed in the media, yet it is a significant factor in many

rampage attacks (Langman, 2009). It is important to note, not all school shooters suffer from psychotic features. Some of the better known psychotic school shooters are Kipland Kinkel, Dylan Klebold, and Luke Woodham.

### **Kipland Kinkel**

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Kip got a call from a schoolmate who, knew about Kip's obsession with guns, thought he might want to purchase a .32 Beretta pistol which the boy had stolen from a friend's father (Fast, 2008). The next day, Kip bought the gun for \$110. The owner of the gun became aware of his missing gun and alerted the school. Kip, and the boy he bought the gun from, were arrested and Kip was charged with two felonies: possessing a firearm in a public building and receiving a stolen weapon (Fast, 2008). Kip's father picked him up from school and took him home. At around three o'clock that day, Kip came out of his room with his .22 caliber rifle and shot his father behind the left ear, he then dragged the body into the bathroom and covered him with a sheet (Fast, 2008). Kip waited for his mother to return home from work, when she did, he met her in the garage and shot her six times before dragging her body into the basement and covering her with a sheet (Fast, 2008). The next morning, May 21, 1998, Kip went to school with his .22 caliber and 9mm taped to his chest, his hunting knife

taped to his leg, and a bag full of ammunition. He wore a trench-coat to hide the Ruger rifle and his two pistols he was carrying (Fast, 2008). While walking towards the cafeteria at Thurston High School, Kip shot two people. Upon entering the cafeteria and after a nine-minute shooting spree, one was dead, one was fatally wounded and 25 more were injured (4 of whom were injured during the stampede trying to leave) (Fast, 2008). A member of the wrestling team was able to tackle Kip to the ground and, with the help of four others, was able to subdue him until the police arrived. The police arrived and immediately cuffed Kip and took him to the police station. In the police station, Kip was acting out and trying to get the police to shoot and kill him to no avail.

Kipland "Kip" Kinkel was born on August 30, 1982. Kip struggled with school and suffered from learning disorders (Fast, 2008). Kip's parents and teachers decided to delay starting school for a year hoping it would allow him to mature a bit and grow physically and emotionally. Once he had begun school, he was placed on a behavioral management plan because of aggressive acts on the playground and his cruel teasing of classmates (Fast, 2008). Kip was said to be hyperactive, insecure, extremely sensitive and likely to have temper tantrums from his earliest years, he cried

easily and was smaller than most boys his age (Langman, 2015). When Kip was in middle school, his parents decided to send him to a psychologist, Dr. Hicks, hoping the psychologist could help Kip work out some behavioral issues.

Even though Kip's parents had forbidden toy guns and soldiers and even Bugs Bunny cartoons while growing up, his father bought him several guns and weapons. He purchased, for Kip, 2 BB guns, three knives; and on his twelfth birthday, a 336 Marlin, a gun that he had received from his father as a boy (Fast, 2008). His dad also bought him a 9mm Glock 19, a semiautomatic weapon and a Ruger .22 caliber semiautomatic rifle [Kip was allegedly keeping the Ruger in his bedroom at the time of the shooting] (Fast, 2008). Kip's dad kept all the guns locked up in a safe and only allowed Kip to use them under his supervision and together they took a gun safety course. Kip secretly purchased a sawed-off shotgun from one friend and a .22 caliber pistol from another during the summer before he entered high school, weapons he kept hidden in his bedroom (Fast, 2008). Kip also accumulated many knives. Kip was suspended twice from school. The first suspension was for kicking a classmate in the head and the second time for throwing a pencil at a boy (Fast, 2008). When Kip began high school,

he often spoke to his friends about fantasies of putting a bomb under the bleachers during a pep rally and blocking the doors; about *hitting* the cafeteria with his .22; about joining the army so he would know how it felt to kill people (Fast, 2008).

After being arrested, Kip went through psychiatric exams. After these exams, it was said, Kip suffered from two mental disorders: paranoid delusions and auditory hallucinations (Lieberman, 2006). In a psychological evaluation conducted by Dr. Orin Bolstad, Kip reported he began hearing voices when he was in the sixth grade (Langman, 2009). He reported the first time he heard a voice it told him, "you need to kill everyone, everyone in the world", it also told him, "you are a stupid piece of [expletive]. You aren't worth anything" (Langman, 2008). From this point on, Kip heard voices that urged him toward both homicide and suicide. Kip's ideas on where the voices came from where: 1) he was hearing the devil, and 2) the government might have put a computer chip in his head, with satellites transmitting messages to the chip (Langman, 2009). Kip reportedly stated he had three different voices in his head, voices A, B, and C. Voice A was loud and authoritarian and told him what to do, Voice B made derogatory statements to him, and Voice C repeated what the



other two said or commented on them (Langman, 2008). Kip tried many things to make the voices stop, including exercise, watching television, and punching himself in the head (Langman, 2009). Kip was very aware that being crazy would lead to ostracism at school and be a major disappointment to his parents; this prevented him from getting the help he so desperately needed. Kip also experienced visual hallucinations. He told stories about a man who allegedly lived nearby and drove a car with bullet holes in it (Langman, 2009). Kip was so afraid of this man that he said he bought a stolen gun because he needed protection in case the man came after him (Langman, 2009). Kip's parents also, allegedly had emotional outbursts on him. In addition to the outburst from his parents, Kip was genetically predisposed to psychological problems. Mental illness was very common on both sides of his family. Thus, Kip inherited a genetic predisposition to mental illness from both parents, in addition, he was the misfit of his family and could not live up to his parents' expectations or his sister's example (Langman, 2009).

### **Dylan Klebold**

On April 20, 1999 Eric and Dylan arrived at Columbine High School just after 11:00 am. They were carrying two

duffel bags filled with propane bombs, which they brought into the crowded cafeteria (Lieberman, 2006). They placed the bombs, then went outside to wait for the bombs to explode, but a faulty connection prevented them from detonating (Lieberman, 2006). The two boys then stormed the school with two sawed-off shotguns, a Hi-Point 9mm carbine, an illegal TEC-DC9 semiautomatic gun, and a cache homemade bombs (Lieberman, 2006). Eric began the massacre at the top of the staircase by killing Rachel Scott and injuring Richard Castaldo (Lieberman, 2006). Meanwhile, Dylan was firing at other passing students and heading downstairs. Eric turned toward the open field, and the baseball diamond, where he shot and wounded another student (Lieberman, 2006). A Deputy arrived on scene and began exchanging gunfire with Eric. During this time, Dylan was still firing at other students. One of the boys, it remains unclear who it was exactly, shot a teacher in the back (Lieberman, 2006). Eric and Dylan entered the library. Eric began the shooting followed by Dylan. Together, the two boys shot 8 people (Lieberman, 2006). At one point Eric looked under a table where a girl cowered in fear, Harris said "Peekaboo", and shot her (Langman, 2015). Because of the way Eric was holding his gun, the recoil hit him in the face resulting in a bloody, possibly even broken nose

(Lieberman, 2006). A total of 23 people were shot in the library. After the boys left the library, they headed back to the cafeteria to inspect their bombs (Lieberman, 2006). They then headed back to the library, where everyone who had been able to move, had fled, leaving only 3 victims (Lieberman, 2006). Eric then lit a Molotov cocktail. They committed suicide (Lieberman, 2006). The two boys together took thirteen lives plus their own, and left twenty-three others injured (Lieberman, 2006).

Dylan was described as an unusually shy and insecure child who lacked confidence to initiate activities (Langman, 2015). It was said Dylan experienced some social anxieties. It was not uncommon to read about his loneliness, emotional suffering, and insecurities in his journal (Langman, 2015). He came from a seemingly loving family consisting of his mother, father, and older brother. The attack on the school came as a complete surprise to Dylan's whole family.

### **Luke Woodham**

On October 1, 1997, Luke Woodham killed his mother in their home, drove her car to school, shot his former girlfriend and her best friend and then opened fire on others (Langman, 2015). Luke then got back into his

mother's car and tried to drive away, but was blocked and apprehended by local police (Langman, 2015).

Luke was born in Pearl, Mississippi, on February 5, 1981. He had an older brother who, allegedly, tormented him and abused him throughout his childhood (Fast, 2008). His father abandoned his family when he was in second grade (Fast, 2008). Due to his father leaving, Luke's mother had a difficult time supporting the family. Her parenting was, at times, neglectful, at other times overly intimate, obsessional, punitive, and occasionally sadistic (Fast, 2008). She seemed to find glee in tormenting her son. On one occasion, Luke's mother forced him to eat food out of the trash can after she caught him throwing away scrap food (Fast, 2008). On another occasion, when she caught him smoking her cigarettes, she forced him to smoke two packs in succession, until he threw up on the floor (Fast, 2008). Luke was often teased at school because he was overweight, socially inept, and wore glasses with thick lenses (Fast, 2008). He briefly dated a girl, named Christy Menefee, but she broke up with him due to his overly controlling nature, and his mother uncomfortably chaperoning their dates (Fast, 2008). Luke met a high school senior by the name of Grant Boyette. Grant appeared to be a Christian in public, but when alone with his group of friends, leaned towards

antisocial tendencies (Fast, 2008). Grant was the leader of the Kroth, a peer group that Luke affiliated with, whose interests included Hitler, the occult, black magic, and Satanism (Langman, 2015). Grant took it upon himself to teach Luke his violent ways. Together they took part in the vicious and sadistic killing of Luke's pet dog, Sparkle (Fast, 2008). Towards the end of September 1997, Luke had planned to kill his mother so he could use her car, take his brother's gun to school, and kill Christy Menefee, along with some other people (Fast, 2008). It was Luke's hope that the incident would end in a shootout with the police where he would be killed. On September 30, Luke asked his mother if he could borrow her car, but she refused. The next morning is when he killed her in a violent and sadistic manner, left a long suicide note, quoting Nietzsche, and proceeded to the school where he killed Christy, and her good friend, and wounded seven others (Fast, 2008).

Prior to the attack, Luke wrote, "I am not insane!" afterward he claimed demons influenced him to commit murder: "I remember I woke up that morning and I'd seen demons that I always saw...They said I was nothing and I would never be anything if I didn't get to that school and kill those people" (Langman, 2015). Luke was said to have

been so odd, disagreeable, and generally frightening that his teachers kept their distance (Langman 2015).

### **TRAUMATIZED SHOOTER**

The final typology research has found is the traumatized type shooter. It is the belief that most school shooters come from terrible family lives, research shows this is not correct. There is a subgroup of shooters that come from a traumatic background, however. It is important to distinguish what trauma is. Trauma can be defined as a dangerous or disturbing situation that may be life threatening or that causes intense fear for one's safety (Langman, 2015). Trauma can be done directly to the victim, or can be witnessed by the victim. In many cases, the trauma leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Physical abuse can cause both physical and emotional pain, but the emotional pain often lasts much longer (Langman, 2015).

Traumatized shooters were not simply abused children but experienced multiple difficulties that caused unstable, overwhelmingly stressful lives (Langman, 2015). Research shows, a single trauma can have a profound impact on a child; the traumatized type shooters endured multiple traumas (Langman, 2009). Typically, shooters from this category come from a lower socioeconomic background. This type of shooter experiences significant distrust and loss within their families (Langman,

2015). They usually had lost a parent whether it was through separation, divorce, prison, brain damage, or death (Langman, 2015). In some cases, the parent was present physically, but were emotionally absent because alcoholism and drug addiction. Children in these types of families often had to be relocated and changed caregivers, adding to the instability and uncertainty they already felt in their lives (Langman, 2015). In most cases, these students were traumatized by physical and sometimes sexual abuse.

All the boys mentioned in this study were emotionally and physically abused at home; two of them were also sexually abused (Langman, 2009). Physical and sexual abuse can have devastating consequences, including anxiety, rage, depression, and suicide (Langman, 2009). Trauma can affect a person's identities and relationships. They may have a sense of being damaged and have trouble relating to others (Langman, 2009). The ability for these kids to trust is affected, as well as their ability to love and feel connected to others (Langman, 2009). On top of traumas, traumatized shooters lived with ongoing stresses and significant loss (Langman, 2009). Parents who suffered from substance abuse was a norm for these traumatized shooters. Parents who are substance abusers can seriously impair family functioning (Langman, 2009). Continuously moving from place to

place harms these kids. Often, they end up in foster care and embark on a path of drug addiction.

The life of a traumatized shooter is not an easy one. Their world is unpredictable. Parental alcoholism and bad tempers meant the boys never knew what each day would bring (Langman, 2009). They moved from one family member to another and back again from one foster home to another (Langman, 2009). They lacked stability in their lives. They may have had to endure sexual abuse on top of their physical and emotional abuse. They lost their parents to separation, jail, and death (Langman, 2009). These boys were depressed to the point of contemplating suicide and self-mutilation (Langman, 2009). They smoked marijuana. Which studies show that approximately 60% of arrestees test positive for marijuana use and that marijuana is the drug whose metabolites are more frequently found in arrestees' urine (Taylor and Bennet, 1999). This suggests there could be a link between marijuana usage and criminal behavior. Their social skills were not great, so they were often teased by their peers (Langman, 2009). Despite all of this, they were not crazy or evil, just deeply wounded (Langman, 2009). A few known traumatized shooters are Thomas Lane, Evan Ramsey, and Jeffrey Weise.



**Thomas "T.J." Lane**

On February 27, 2012, in the cafeteria at Chardon High School, T.J. Lane began shooting at about 7:30 a.m. A surveillance video showed T.J. shoot four male students with a .22 caliber handgun (Langman, 2015). A football coach/teacher chased T.J. from the cafeteria and out to his car. The police arrested T.J. outside the school near his car (Langman, 2015). T.J. shot 5 students, killing 3, in his attack.

Thomas T.J. Lane was born on September 19, 1994. T.J.'s parents never married, but they had a rough relationship in which both were charged with domestic violence (Langman, 2015). In one case, when T.J. was seven, Mr. Lane was imprisoned after he "verbally abused and physically attacked a woman over a period of nine hours in the presence of three young children" (Langman, 2015). T.J. was allegedly one of the three children present for this attack. Because of the violence and chaos that was T.J.'s parents, he was mostly reared by his grandparents. At first, T.J. was said to have been an outcast who was bullied, but multiple people who knew him said this was not true (Langman, 2015). He reportedly had friends and was not picked on and was said by many to be a nice young man who

was easy to talk to (Langman, 2015). Initially, reports said he did not know his victims, since he did not attend Chardon High School. This was found to be not true, he had known some of the victims since middle school (Langman, 2015). The best guess as to the motive of this shooting is one of the victims was dating T.J.'s former girlfriend. T.J. walked over to the table where this boy was sitting and opened fire on him and his friends (Langman, 2015). After the shooting, Lane fled the school, but was chased down by a teacher. He was arrested outside the school without incident.

### **Evan Ramsey**

On February 19, 1997, Evan Ramsey entered his high school in Bethel, Alaska and opened fire, killing 2 and wounding 2 others. Evan was the second of three brothers and was born and lived in Anchorage, Alaska until he was five. When Evan was five, his father went on an armed rampage because the publisher of the *Anchorage Times* did not print an advertisement he had paid for (Langman, 2015). Mr. Ramsey also believed the publisher had his apartment set on fire in an attempt to kill him (Langman, 2015). He was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Evan's mother, Carol, following this incident, began to drink

heavily and neglected her children. Her boyfriends were occasionally brutal with her and her sons. The boys were soon referred to family services, and placed in a series of ten foster homes during the next three years (Fast, 2008). Eventually the boys found a home with the district superintendent of schools, Sue Hare. She traveled often, and left the boys alone with her other adopted children, one of who was, in violation of the law, a convicted pedophile (Fast, 2008). During Evan's time in foster care, he was said to have been both physically and sexually abused (Langman, 2015). In one of the homes where Evan stayed, an older boy assaulted Evan, leaving bruises on his face and neck (Langman, 2015). The boy also molested Evan and urinated in his mouth (Langman, 2015).

Growing up, Evan was said to have been a goofy kid with acne and an explosive temper (Fast, 2008). He was rebellious with teachers, and frequently served detention or was absent from school (Fast, 2008). Evan attempted suicide at the ages of 10 and 14. Towards the beginning of February in 1997, he received a call from his father announcing he had been released from prison, Evan began to plan another suicide attempt (Fast, 2008). It was while he was smoking marijuana one night, with his two freshman friends, that his friends convinced him that if he was

committing suicide, he might as well kill some other people and become famous because of the magnitude of his crime (Fast, 2008). The three boys spent the next few days planning the event and warning their friends.

On the day of the shooting, Evan brought his foster bother's shotgun to school he had concealed beneath baggy pants and a parka (Fast, 2008). He shot and killed a student whom he had disliked, the principal, and wounded others (Fast, 2008). Students described him as laughing and just going crazy during the incident (Fast, 2008).

### **Jeffrey Weise**

On March 21, 2005, Jeffrey Weise killed his grandfather, who was a police officer on a reservation, and his grandfather's girlfriend at their home (Langman, 2009). Jeffrey then took his grandfather's police firearms and bullet proof vest and drove the police cruiser to the school, where he gunned down a security guard as he entered the school (Langman, 2009). Once inside, he killed five students, one teacher and wounded seven other people (Langman, 2009).

Jeffrey was born to Native American parents, Joanne Weise and Daryl Lassiter Jr. They were not married when Jeffrey was born and remained unmarried. When Jeffrey was

three months old, his mother, who lived in Minneapolis, gave him to his father, who lived on the reservation at Red Lake, Minnesota (Langman, 2015). Following three years where he lived with his father and his grandparents, Jeffrey moved back to Minneapolis, to live with his mother. Reports suggest Jeffrey's father was a drinker. He was reportedly a nice guy when he was sober, which was not often, and a mean drunk when he took to the bottle (Langman, 2015). Jeffrey's father ended up killing himself during a police standoff with tribal police, his father was one of the officers trying to resolve the standoff (Langman, 2015). Jeffrey was only eight years old when this occurred. The reason behind the standoff is unclear. During this time, Jeffrey lived with his mother, her husband, and their two children. Jeffrey's writings showed life was not great for him with his mother; he wrote, "My mom used to abuse me a lot when I was little. She..used to drink excessively too. She would tell me I was a mistake, and she should say many..things that it's hard to deal with them or think of them without crying" (Langman, 2015). Jeffrey was also disciplined by being locked out of the house, locked in the closet, or made to kneel for hours in the corner (Langman, 2015). Joanne was arrested once for driving while intoxicated and again for misdemeanor assault (Langman,

2015). She was also involved in a drunk driving car accident, with her cousin, who was killed in the accident, while Joanne sustained brain damage (Langman, 2015). Joanne's husband separated from her and took their two children, leaving Jeffrey (Langman, 2015). During a two-year period, Jeffrey lost his father to suicide, his mother to brain damage, and his stepfather and half-siblings to separation (Langman, 2015).

#### **PREMEDITATIVE BEHAVIORS**

In the judicial practice, it has been determined that the premeditation means the fulfillment of two conditions: on one hand, the decision making which must precede in time the material activity, and on the other hand, this decision, previously made, must be materialized in certain activities or preparation of the crime, such as obtaining information, acquiring the means, seeking accomplices, stalking the victim, drawing the victim into a trap, etc. (Marit & Dan, 2011). Put simply, premeditation means forethought behind the act.

Premeditated aggression can be viewed through the lens of social-cognitive learning theory. In this theory, aggression is behavior that has been acquired through acquisition of rewards that follow it (Swogger, Walk, Christie, Priddy, & Conner, 2015). Premeditated aggression is less common and less closely

tied to general psychopathology than impulsive aggression, but is associated with psychopathic personality traits (Swogger et al. 2015). According to Swogger et al. (2015), psychopathy involves deficient emotionality that may contribute to the capacity for premeditated aggression. It has also been found that the link between psychopathy and premeditated aggression has been demonstrated in youth and adults across several measures of premeditated aggression (Swogger et al., 2015). Feelings of uncertainty intensify people's emotional reactions to situations and events that one can control arouse more preparatory emotions than do events that one cannot control (Burns, Caruso, & Bartels, 2012). Because the experience of negative emotion itself may lead to heightened assessments of intentionality, actors or actions invoke the most negative affect elicit the most blame for harmful events and negative behavior elicits more blame when it is seen as intentional rather than unintentional (Burns, Caruso, & Bartels, 2012). This means, when there is more negative thought and emotion present, premeditative behavior is more present. The commitment of a crime is characterized by premeditated intention. This means both the analysis of all variations of being committed as well as its preparation, regardless if the preparation takes the form of some materials acts - acquirement of instruments or collection of information (Marit & Dan, 2011). Acquiring the

tools and knowledge to commit the acts counts as premeditative behavior.

### **SCHOOL RAMPAGE SHOOTER**

Most murders are unplanned, spontaneous, and occur when anger and fear produce violent behavior in response to an imminent threat (Fast, 2008). What does this mean for school rampage shooters? A mass murder, "the intentional killing of multiple victims by a single offender within a 24-hour period," are rare events (Fast, 2008). This style of aggression is typically "predatory": planned, purposeful, and without emotion (Fast, 2008). Per a study by Katherine Newman, a Princeton sociologist, there are five conditions common to school rampage shooters: socially marginalized, suffers from psychosocial problems, follows cultural scripts, he flies beneath the radar, and he has access to guns (Fast, 2008). A shooter who is socially marginalized is the brunt of bullying, teasing, the target of negative rumors, and other exclusionary behavior (Fast, 2008). If the shooter suffers from psychosocial problems (such as learning disorders, psychiatric disorders, dysfunctional families) magnifies the impact of the marginality (Fast, 2008). If the shooter follows cultural scripts for problem solving, he buys into the machismo mythology of violence as a problem-solving strategy (Fast, 2008). If the shooter flies



under the radar, his seriously problematic behavior goes unidentified by the traditional gatekeepers: the teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers (Fast, 2008). Finally, if the shooter has access to guns, he will have the means to create such a catastrophe.

### **BULLYING AND SCHOOL SHOOTINGS**

When a school shooting occurs, whether the shooter was bullied is often a topic of conversation. For the sake of this paper, the definition will follow Dr. Peter Langman's (2009) definition using three elements: 1) the bully has more power than the victim. This could be through larger size, greater strength, superior confidence, or force of numbers; 2) Bullying involves physical abuse or intimidation through threats. The victims are made to fear for their safety. This means that being teased about one's clothes is not bullying; and 3) Bullying involves a pattern of behavior. Being pushed one time does not constitute a pattern of physical harassment.

The idea regarding bullying is that the shooter was a victim of bullying and was seeking revenge on their tormentors. Per Dr. Peter Langman, the issue is a bit more complex than that. The shooters were not simply seeking revenge on their tormentors. According to Langman (2009), the geography of rampage attacks poses a challenge to the idea that bullying

causes shootings. Shootings have occurred across the United States in several states, including Minnesota, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Arkansas. The occurrence of shootings in larger cities is lacking, for example, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York City. Nearly all rampage school shootings have occurred in small towns, suburbs, or rural areas (Langman, 2009). The lack of rampage school shootings in major cities suggest shootings are not simply the response to bullying, because surely bullying occurs in big cities as well (Langman, 2009). Also, it is hard to accept that rampage attacks are committed in retaliation for bullying because the perpetrators rarely shoot anyone who harassed them (Langman, 2009). Typically, specific victims have not been targeted, but when they were, it was girls who had rejected the shooters rather than the bullies who tormented them (Langman, 2009). In some cases, the shooter was never bullied, but rather was the one doing the bullying.

Regarding the typology of the above shooters and bullying, psychopathic shooters were often bullies and often not victims of bullying (Langman, 2015). The opposite was true for psychotic shooters, they rarely picked on others, but were often the one being picked on (Langman, 2015). The shooters who were most mistreated at home were also most likely to be mistreated at school as well (Langman, 2015). The bullying and victimization

of psychotic shooters was about equal (Langman, 2015). At least 40 percent of shooters experienced peer harassment at some point in their lives (Langman, 2015). In a study conducted by the United States Department of Education, the findings showed about 28 percent of students ages twelve to eighteen reported being bullied in the last six months (Langman, 2015). On the other hand, another study showed, 54 percent of the shooters teased, harassed, stalked, threatened, or intimidated others (Langman, 2015). Based on these statistics, school rampage shooters appeared to bully rather than get bullied. Langman (2015), assures this does not mean bullying is never a factor in school shootings, for many shooters it was one more problem on top of many others.

#### **MENTAL ILLNESS AND SCHOOL SHOOTINGS**

The research regarding school shooters is not extensive. Some research states, up to 60% of perpetrators of mass shootings in the United States since 1970 displayed symptoms including acute paranoia, delusions, and depression before committing their crimes (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015). Mental illness is often a main topic in the media after a school shooting. Notions of mental illness that emerge in relation to mass shootings frequently reflect larger cultural issues that become obscured when mass shootings come to stand in for all gun crime

and when "mentally ill" ceases to be a medical diagnosis and becomes a sign of violent threat (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015). Mental illness and mass shootings are a popular topic and professionals are often divided on the issue. One psychiatrist, Dr. Torrey, claims "about half of...mass killings are being done by people with severe mental illness, mostly schizophrenia, and if they were being treated they would have been preventable" (60 Minutes, 2013). According to Metzl & MacLeish (2015), there is little evidence supporting the notion that individuals diagnosed with mental illness are more likely than anyone else to commit gun crimes. It is also stated by scholars, who study violence prevention, that mass shootings occur far too infrequently to allow for the statistical modeling and predictability - factors that lie at the heart of effective public health interventions (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015). The media tends to portray schools as a dangerous scary place for children where bullies torment them and school shootings are a very real danger. Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the School Crime Supplement, suggests there is virtually no difference between the rates of criminal victimization in schools in 1989 and the rates of victimization in 1995 (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). This means violent deaths are a rare event in the school settings, and less than 1% of the homicides and suicides among school-age children occur in or around school grounds (Mulvey & Cauffman,

2001). Statistics also show the rate of violent crimes committed by juveniles remains low during the school day, but spikes at the close of the day and declines throughout the evening hours (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001).

Many of the school shooters who were diagnosed with mental illness, were not diagnosed until after the shooting. Depression and schizophrenia, or one of its variants, are particularly common with school shooters (Newman et al., 2004). Depression and schizophrenia are typically in their early stages, and lack some of the symptoms that manifest themselves later in life (Newman et al., 2004). Mental illness does not usually manifest until the person is in their early twenties. Due to the stigma that comes with mental illness, young people often try to conceal their troubles and hide their symptoms (Newman et al., 2004). In a study of 102 adult and juvenile rampage killers conducted by the *New York Times*, "33 of the offenders killed themselves after their crimes. Nine tried or wanted to commit suicide, and four killed themselves later. Nine were killed by police officers, sometimes referred to as 'suicide by cop'" (Newman et al., 2004). Despite all of this, due to the number of adolescents who are depressed and suicidal, mental illness cannot be viewed as a straightforward predictor of rampage school shootings (Newman et al., 2004). Per the National Institute of Mental Health, up to 8.3 percent of adolescents

suffer from depression, and in 1996 suicide was the third leading cause of death for people aged fifteen to twenty-four and more than two million Americans suffer from schizophrenia (Newman et al., 2004). These trends dwarf the number of rampage attacks in schools, and for this reason one must treat the relationship of mental illness to these attacks with caution (Newman et al. 2004).

### **ROOT OF VIOLENCE**

The roots of a violent act are multiple, intricate, and intertwined with a mix of factors that vary according to the individual and the circumstances (Vossekuil et al. 2002). Understanding violence after it has occurred is extremely difficult. Trying to assess a threat and keep it from happening is even more difficult (Vossekuil et al., 2002). Adolescent violence, generally, and homicides have decreased since 1993 (Vossekuil et al., 2002). However, the senseless deaths of teenagers and teachers in the middle of a school day, for no comprehensible reason, is far more shocking and gets far more attention than the less extreme acts of violence that happens in schools every week (Vossekuil et al., 2002). According to Vossekuil et al. (2002), trying to determine a checklist of warning signs to detect a potential school shooter can be

dangerous by unfairly labeling many nonviolent students as potentially dangerous or even lethal.

There are certain behavioral traits to look for that can be regarded as warning signs, though it is important to note, if the assessment shows evidence of these characteristics, behaviors and consistent problems in all four areas, it can indicate the student may be fantasizing about acting on a threat, has the motivation to carry out the violent act, or has taken steps to carry out a threat (Vossekuil et al., 2002). Some of the traits to look for, regarding personality traits and behavior are: low tolerance of frustration, poor coping skills, lack of resiliency, failed love relationship, injustice collector, signs of depression, narcissism, alienation, dehumanizing others, lack of empathy, exaggerated sense of entitlement, attitude of superiority, exaggerated or pathological need for attention, externalizes blame, masks low self-esteem, anger management problems, intolerance, inappropriate humor, seeks to manipulate others, lack of trust, close social group, change of behavior, rigid and opinionated, unusual interest in sensational violence, fascination with violence filled entertainment, negative role models, and behavior that appears relevant to carrying out a threat (Vossekuil et al., 2002). There are also family dynamics to look at, as well, per Vossekuil et al. (2002) such as: turbulent

parent-child relationship, acceptance of pathological behavior, access to weapons, lack of intimacy, student "rules the roost", and no limits or monitoring of televisions or internet. The school dynamics also must be looked at. Some of the school dynamics are: student's attachment to school, tolerance for disrespectful behavior, inequitable discipline, inflexible culture, pecking order among students, code of silence, unsupervised and computer access (Vossekuil et al. 2002). The final dynamic to watch is the social dynamics. Some examples of the social dynamics are: media, entertainment, technology, peer groups, drugs and alcohol, outside interests, and the copycat effect (Vossekuil, 2002). Based on the traits listed above, it would appear many school rampage attacks are thought out and planned, rather than random acts of passion.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY**

There is much debate regarding whether schools need more security to keep their students safe. A Gallup poll conducted in August 2000 found that 26 percent of American parents feared for their children's safety at school (Newman et al., 2004). Twenty-nine percent of high school students polled by the ABC News in March 2001 said they saw some risk of an attack at their school, but immediately after the columbine attack, 40 percent saw some risk (Newman et al., 2004). The strong media coverage and the



string of attacks on schools raised fear in many people. Despite what the media was reporting, and what people believed, in reports issued in July 1998 and April 2000, the nation was reminded that school is still the safest place for a child to be (Newman et al., 2004). Even during the 1998-1999 school year, when attacks were at a high, the chances of dying in school from homicide or suicide were less than one in two million; the rate of out-of-school homicides alone was about forty times higher (Newman et al., 2004).

Youth violence increased drastically in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is said boys are more likely to commit violent acts than girls, and almost all violent offenders first manifest their tendencies between the ages of fourteen and eighteen (Newman et al., 2004). Race, gender, and age are major risk factors for violence, but among these three factors there are several more. Some of the other violence risk factors for youths include: domestic violence and abuse, weak family bonding and ineffective supervision, lack of opportunities for education and employment, peers who engage in or accept violence, drug and alcohol use, gun possession, and individual temperament (Newman et al., 2004). It appears youths brought up in inner-cities and lower income areas tend to be more at risk of violent behavior. The increased availability of guns, the crack cocaine epidemic, and the culture of violence are all reasons why violence peaked

in the late 1980s to early 1990s (Newman et al., 2004). Despite these findings, inner-city schools remain to be a safer place for youths than the streets they live on; students are three times more likely to be assaulted by a weapon in the neighborhoods where they live than in the schools they attend (Newman et al., 2004). On the other hand, suburban and rural shootings almost always happen on school grounds (Newman et al., 2004). In a rural setting, schools are one of the few public stages where an attention-seeking shooter can create a spectacle (Newman et al., 2004). A city holds more meaningful places than simply a school setting.

The most current data, according to Muschert (2007), about victimization in schools during the 2004-2005 school year indicated that non-fatal incidents were many times more common, including victimization rates of 33 thefts, and 22 violent crimes, including four serious bile the crimes, per 1000 students. In addition to this, fatalities in schools are very rare. Only about one in 2,000,000 school-age youth will die from homicide or suicide as school each year (Muschert, 2007).

### Chapter 3

#### METHOD

##### Participants

Rampage school shooters will be studied. Ten teens who committed a rampage school attack will be extensively studied. The youth included in this study are:

Eric Harris was 18 years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colorado. Barry Loukaitis was 14-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Frontier Junior High School in Moses Lake, Washington. Andrew Golden was 12-years-old at the age of the attack. The attack occurred at Westside Middle school in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Kipland Kinkel was 15-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon. Luke Woodham was 16-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Pearl High School in Pearl, Mississippi. Thomas "T.J." Lane was 17-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Chardon High School in Chardon, Ohio. Evan Ramsey was 16-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Bethel High School in Bethel, Alaska. Jeffrey Weise was 16-years-old at the time of the attack. The attack occurred at Red Lake High School in Red Lake, Minnesota.

Eric Harris, Barry Loukaitis, Andrew Golden, Kip Kinkel, Dylan Klebold, and Thomas Lane were all Caucasian males. Evan Ramsey and Jeffrey Weise were both Native Americans. The boys ranged in age from 11 to 18 years of age.

### **Design**

The design being used to conduct this study is a multiple case study. A case study is a process or record of research in which detailed consideration is given to the development of a particular person, group, or situation over a period of time (Merriam, 1998). A case study can also be explained as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Merriam, 1998). Since ten different shooters were studied, this would be considered a "multiple case study". Each different case was extensively examined and analyzed.

### **Procedure**

Numerous books and scholarly articles about rampage school violence will be read and analyzed. The back-story of each child will be considered. The boys' childhoods, upbringing, parent involvement, school-life, friendships, interactions with violence, and access to firearms will be considered. The goal is

to determine whether these acts were planned out, or were simply acts of passion and randomness. The results of this study will determine whether school shootings are premeditated or not. A document analysis of each cases was conducted, particularly what lead up to the events of the shootings.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

The type of shooter engaging in the attack determines the level of planning behind the act. If there is a psychotic shooter present, it is believed there will be less planning than if there is a psychopathic shooter present. Instances where there is a "team" would require more planning than single shooters.

#### **PSYCHOPATHIC SHOOTER**

Psychopathic shooters were profoundly narcissistic, arrogant, and entitled; they lack empathy and met their needs at others' expense (Langman, 2015). A student with a psychopathic personality may react with fury to anything that seems like an insult (Langman, 2015). The concept of psychopathy repeatedly demonstrates a relationship to risk of repeat criminality and violence in offender and patient populations (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). Typically, psychopathy refers to people whose repeatedly commit criminal acts for which they feel little or no

remorse (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). Psychopaths tend to lack empathy and are selfish and irresponsible, they blame others for their misfortunes and offer excuses for their behavior, they are deceitful and manipulative, yet appear charming and glib at the same time (Fulero & Wrightsman, 2009). Dr. Robert Hare developed the Psychopathy Check List-Revised (PCL-R) to measure psychopathy. Understanding the dynamic in psychopaths is essential because it sheds light on why psychopaths felt justified in killing girls who rejected them, teachers who failed them, or anyone else who frustrated the gratification of their desires (Langman, 2015). Psychopaths have several core features, according to Dr. Langman (2015): first, psychopaths are egocentric - they live for themselves and meet their own needs with no regard for the impact their behavior has on others; psychopaths are also often egotistical, with an inflated sense of their own importance and self-worth; they lack a normal capacity for empathy, guilt, and remorse. Moreover, psychopaths are also chronic liars.

### **ERIC HARRIS**

The attack on Columbine was very well thought out and planned by Eric and Dylan. The first gun the boys purchased for use in the attack was a TEC DC-9 assault pistol. A co-worker of Eric and Dylan's introduced them to Mark Manes at a gun show, he had claimed he could get the above-mentioned

gun for \$500 (Fast, 2008). The boys purchased the gun that evening. The boys then attended a gun show that was held monthly, in Denver. Dylan and Eric visited the show on a Saturday and found the weapons they wanted, but were turned away by dealers because they were not yet 18 (Fast 2008). The boys returned Sunday with their 18-year-old friend Robyn Anderson. Robyn purchased three guns for Eric and Dylan: a Stevens 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun, a Savage-Springfield pump actions 2-gauge shotgun, and a Hi-Point model 995 carbine rifle, each from a different dealer (Fast, 2008). Robyn also purchased four ten-round clips for the carbine and 250 nine-millimeter rounds to fill the clips, 15 twelve-gauge slugs, 40 shotgun shells, and two switchblade knives (Fast, 2008). It was after the gun show Dylan told Robyn that he had sawed down the barrel of his shotgun to make it fit in the drawer of his dresser, when sawing off the barrel of a shotgun creates a wider spray of pellets, making it more lethal (Fast, 2008). There was video footage found of the boys doing target practice with their new guns. At one point, in January, Eric's father found a pipe bomb in a box with sundry bomb-making materials, he confiscated it, but later returned the box (Fast, 2008).

Recordings were found later of Eric and Dylan recording their final month of preparation prior to the attack, the tapes were later named, "the Basement Tapes". The content of the Basement tapes falls into several categories: their sadness and anger about the way they were treated during childhood, their skill at deceiving people, a variety of narcissistic beliefs, some of them bordering on the delusional, and finally, they document their cleverness in preparing the bombs, procuring the weapons, and planning the event (Fast, 2008). While documenting their sadness and anger about their childhood, Eric describes moving around the country with his family, from one military base to the next, starting from zero, socially, at every location (Fast, 2008). He also speaks about the ridicule he receives from his classmates regarding his face, hair, choice of shirts, and him in general (Fast, 2008). When they speak about their deceptive skills, they gloat paver how easily they fooled their parents (Fast, 2008). The boys also spoke about how their lives will become art, and their killings will constitute some kind of "masterpiece" bringing them fame and inspiring people all over the world to anarchical and revolutionary behavior (Fast, 2008). The last thing the document is their preparation for the event. At one point, they show off all



their weapons in Eric's room. In this video, they show 21 pipe bombs, most of them six-inch segments of galvanized steel pipe packed with gunpowder and laced with nails and BB pellets; and 29 "crickets" or "grenades", small bombs fashioned from the kind of CO2 cartridge used in seltzer bombs (Fast, 2008). At the time of the attack, they had constructed 27 pipe bombs, and 48 "crickets"; seventy-six of the devices were later found in and around the school, 13 rigged to blow up their cars, eight more pipe bombs remained in their homes as souvenirs (Fast, 2008). There were also 11 one-and a half gallon propane bombs and two 20-pound propane bombs and seven red plastic gasoline cans of various sizes were filled with 40 gallons of jellied gasoline, a crude form of homemade Napalm (Fast, 2008). There are recordings showing Eric and Dylan performing dress rehearsals, and records trips in Eric's car to buy supplies for the attack (Fast, 2008). Despite all of this, throughout this time Eric and Dylan were scrupulous about concealing their homicidal and suicidal plans (Fast, 2008).

### **BARRY LOUKAITIS**

It was when Barry entered junior high that things began to change. From eighth grade on he occasionally told classmates about how much he hated people, particularly

gang members, and how he would enjoy going on a killing spree (Fast, 2008). Barry also, allegedly, threatened to kill some students, and asked others if they thought they deserved to die (Fast, 2008). During the time when Barry began to withdraw from his peers he would spend time in the library reading gun magazines and violent literature and videos. On the day of the attack, Barry dressed in all black, slid the barrel of his father's rifle into the right pocket of his baggy pants (Fast, 2008). Barry also collected his father's handguns, slung three ammunition belts across his chest, put earplugs and speed-loaders in his pockets and left for school (Fast, 2008). During his attack, Barry focused his attention on a few key people: Mr. and Mrs. Caires, and Manuel Vela. Mr. Caires was the school's vice principal and had given Barry detention two days prior to the shooting (Langman, 2015). Mrs. Caires was his wife and Barry's Algebra teacher, he had talked about his hatred towards her and made threatening comments about her (Langman, 2015). Manuel Vela was dating a girl that Barry had liked, but had rejected him. During the attack, Barry shot Mrs. Caires and Manuel, along with two other students, before holding the class hostage (Langman, 2015).

**ANDREW GOLDEN**

Andrew, or Drew, persuaded a peer to take part in antisocial behavior, convincing his thirteen-year-old friend, Mitchell Johnson to join him in a school rampage (Langman, 2015). In the days before the attack, Mitchell began talking about the crime they had planned (Fast, 2008). Mitchell told a friend that he was going to kill all the girls who had broken up with him (Fast, 2008). On the morning of the attack, Mitchell stole his mother's minivan, which he had packed with camping supplies, a hammer, and a propane tank, intending to cut open the gun safe where Drew's father kept his firearms (Fast, 2008). The boys were unable to get the safe open, so they settled for the weapons that were unsecured in the house: a two-shot derringer, 3.8 snub-nose, and a .357 Magnum (Fast, 2008). They next went to Drew's grandfather's house where they were able to acquire three powerful rifles, four handguns, and a thousand round boxes of ammunition (Fast, 2008). When they finished loading the van, it held, along with the weapons, sleeping bags, a camouflage jacket, an insulated camouflage vest, a military duty belt with a ten inch special purpose knife, a crossbow, hunter's camouflage netting, a pair of seven Doc Marten boots, assorted ammunition, a machete, a survival knife, four other knives,

a tent and backpack, a portable radio, a plastic toolbox filled with packaged foods, the propane torch they had used on Drew's father's gun safe, and Mitchell's hunter-education card (Fast, 2008). It was after the shooting that Mitchell told his mother that they had planned to drive the van to Ravendon where Drew's family owned some land (Fast, 2008). Drew had planned to hide out, camp out, and eat the packaged food (Fast, 2008). The boys were going to return home after a few weeks to admit their crime, apologize, and be forgiven (Fast, 2008). The attack consisted of Drew pulling a fire alarm, causing everyone to evacuate the school, the boys then gunned people down from a hill overlooking the school (Langman, 2015).

### **PSYCHOTIC SHOOTER**

Psychotic disorders include schizophrenia, schizotypal, and other disorders related to psychosis (DSM-V). These disorders are defined by abnormalities in one or more of the following domains: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thinking (speech), grossly disorganized or abnormal motor behavior (including Catatonia), and negative symptoms (DSM-V). Psychotic symptoms vary considerably and may be chronic or episodic, broadly debilitating or narrowly problematic (Langman, 2015). Delusions are fixed beliefs that are not amenable to

change in light of conflicting evidence (DSM-V). Delusions are said to be "bizarre" if they are clearly implausible and not understandable to same-culture peers and do not derive from ordinary life experiences (DSM-V). The distinction between a delusion and a strongly held idea is sometimes difficult to make and depends in part on the degree of conviction with which the belief is held despite clear or reasonable contradictory evidence regarding its veracity (DSM-V). Hallucinations are perception-like experiences that occur without an external stimulus (DSM-V). They are vivid and clear, with the full force and impact of normal perceptions, and not under voluntary control (DSM-V). Hallucinations may occur in any sensory modality, but auditory (hearing voices) are the most common in Schizophrenia and related disorders (DSM-V). Disorganized thinking is typically inferred from the individual's speech; the individual may switch from one topic to another (DSM-V). Abnormal motor behavior may manifest itself in a variety of ways ranging from childlike "silliness" to unpredictable agitation (DSM-V).

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V (DSM-V), the essential feature of schizotypal personality disorder is a pervasive pattern of social and interpersonal deficits marked by acute discomfort with, and reduced capacity for, close relationships as well as by cognitive or perceptual distortions

and eccentricities of behavior. Individuals with schizotypal personality disorder often have ideas of reference (i.e. incorrect interpretations of causal incidents and external events as having a and unusual, meaning specifically for the person) (DSM-V). These should be distinguished from delusions of reference, in which the beliefs are held with delusional conviction (DSM-V). These individuals may be superstitious or preoccupied with paranormal phenomena that are outside the norms of their subculture (DSM-V).

The characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia involve a range of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dysfunctions, but no single symptom is pathognomonic of the disorder (DSM-V). Schizophrenia involves impairment in one or more major areas of functioning and if the disturbance begins in childhood or adolescence, the expected level of functioning is not attained (DSM-V).

The essential feature of major depressive disorder, according to the DSM-V, is a period of at least two weeks during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities. In children and adolescents, the mood may be irritable rather than sad (DSM-V). The individual may also experience the following symptoms: changes in appetite or weight, sleep, and psychomotor activity; decreased energy; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; difficulty

thinking, concentrating, or making decisions; or recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation or suicide plans or attempts (DSM-V).

### **DYLAN KLEBOLD**

The attack on Columbine was very well thought out and planned by Eric and Dylan. The first gun the boys purchased for use in the attack was a TEC DC-9 assault pistol. A co-worker of Eric and Dylan's introduced them to Mark Manes at a gun show, he had claimed he could get the above-mentioned gun for \$500 (Fast, 2008). The boys purchased the gun that evening. The boys then attended a gun show that was held monthly, in Denver. Dylan and Eric visited the show on a Saturday and found the weapons they wanted, but were turned away by dealers because they were not yet 18 (Fast 2008). The boys returned Sunday with their 18-year-old friend Robyn Anderson. Robyn purchased three guns for Eric and Dylan: a Stevens 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun, a Savage-Springfield pump actions 2-gauge shotgun, and a Hi-Point model 995 carbine rifle, each from a different dealer (Fast, 2008). Robyn also purchased four ten-round clips for the carbine and 250 nine-millimeter rounds to fill the clips, 15 twelve-gauge slugs, 40 shotgun shells, and two switchblade knives (Fast, 2008). It was after the gun show Dylan told Robyn that he had sawed down

the barrel of his shotgun to make it fit in the drawer of his dresser, when sawing off the barrel of a shotgun creates a wider spray of pellets, making it more lethal (Fast, 2008). There was video footage found of the boys doing target practice with their new guns. At one point, in January, Eric's father found a pipe bomb in a box with sundry bomb-making materials, he confiscated it, but later returned the box (Fast, 2008).

Recordings were found later of Eric and Dylan recording their final month of preparation prior to the attack, the tapes were later named, "the Basement Tapes". The content of the Basement tapes falls into several categories: their sadness and anger about the way they were treated during childhood, their skill at deceiving people, a variety of narcissistic beliefs, some of them bordering on the delusional, and finally, they document their cleverness in preparing the bombs, procuring the weapons, and planning the event (Fast, 2008). While documenting their sadness and anger about their childhood, Dylan talks about his anger and resentment towards his brother, Byron, who humiliated him on several occasions (Fast, 2008). He also complains about how his extended family, his grandparents, aunts, uncles treated him like an outcast (Fast, 2008). When they speak about their deceptive skills,



they gloat over how easily they fooled their parents (Fast, 2008). Dylan recalls a time in his room, when he was trying to conceal his sawed-off shotgun beneath his leather duster, his parents had walked in and noticed nothing (Fast, 2008). Dylan recalls his mother spotting the handle of his gun sticking out of his gym bag and assuming it was his BB gun (Fast, 2008). The boys also spoke about how their lives will become art, and their killings will constitute some kind of "masterpiece" bringing them fame and inspiring people all over the world to anarchical and revolutionary behavior (Fast, 2008). The last thing the document is their preparation for the event. At one point, they show off all their weapons in Eric's room. In this video, they show 21 pipe bombs, most of them six-inch segments of galvanized steel pipe packed with gunpowder and laced with nails and BB pellets; and 29 "crickets" or "grenades", small bombs fashioned from the kind of CO2 cartridge used in seltzer bombs (Fast, 2008). At the time of the attack, they had constructed 27 pipe bombs, and 48 "crickets"; seventy-six of the devices were later found in and around the school, 13 rigged to blow up their cars, eight more pipe bombs remained in their homes as souvenirs (Fast, 2008). There were also 11 one-and a half gallon propane bombs and two 20-pound propane bombs and seven red

plastic gasoline cans of various sizes were filled with 40 gallons of jellied gasoline, a crude form of homemade Napalm (Fast, 2008). There are recordings showing Eric and Dylan performing dress rehearsals, and records trips in Eric's car to buy supplies for the attack (Fast, 2008). Despite all of this, throughout this time Eric and Dylan were scrupulous about concealing their homicidal and suicidal plans (Fast, 2008).

#### **KIPLAND KINKEL**

As well as the weapons Kip's father bought him, Kip secretly purchased a sawed-off shotgun from one friend and a .22 caliber pistol from another during the summer before he entered high school, weapons he kept hidden in his bedroom (Fast, 2008). Kip also accumulated many knives. Kip was suspended twice from school. The first suspension was for kicking a classmate in the head and the second time for throwing a pencil at a boy (Fast, 2008). When Kip began high school, he often spoke to his friends about fantasies of putting a bomb under the bleachers during a pep rally and blocking the doors; about *hitting* the cafeteria with his .22; about joining the army so he would know how it felt to kill people (Fast, 2008).

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Kip got a call from a schoolmate who, knew about Kip's obsession with guns and, thought he might want to purchase a .32 Beretta pistol which the boy had stolen from a friend's father (Fast, 2008). The next day, Kip bought the gun for \$110. The owner of the gun became aware of his missing gun and alerted the school. Kip, and the boy he bought the gun from, were arrested and Kip was charged with two felonies: possessing a firearm in a public building and receiving a stolen weapon (Fast, 2008). Kip's father picked him up from school and took him home. At around three o'clock that day, Kip came out of his room with his .22 caliber rifle and shot his father behind the left ear, he then dragged the body into the bathroom and covered him with a sheet (Fast, 2008). Kip waited for his mother to return home from work, and, when she did, he met her in the garage and shot her six times before dragging her body into the basement and covering her with a sheet (Fast, 2008). The next morning, May 21, 1998, Kip went to school with his .22 caliber and 9mm taped to his chest, his hunting knife taped to his leg, and a bag full of ammunition. He wore a trench-coat to hide the Ruger rifle and his two pistols he was carrying (Fast, 2008). While walking towards the cafeteria at Thurston High School, Kip shot two people. Upon entering the cafeteria and after a

nine-minute shooting spree, one was dead, one was fatally wounded and 25 more were injured (4 of whom were injured during the stampede trying to leave) (Fast, 2008). A member of the wrestling team was able to tackle Kip to the ground and, with the help of four others, was able to subdue him until the police arrived. The police arrived and immediately cuffed Kip and took him to the police station. In the police station, Kip was acting out and trying to get the police to shoot and kill him to no avail.

The Kinkel family had an extensive familial history of mental-health problems. Kip began hallucinating at the age of 12 (Langman, 2015). Kip said, of the voices he heard, one was authoritarian and commanding, a second was very critical of him, and the third repeated what the others said (Langman, 2015). Kip also suffered from delusions he believed the United States was facing an imminent invasion by China and sought to arm himself in preparation for the attack (Langman, 2015). He also believed there was a plague imminent; he wanted to stockpile supplies for when society broke down (Langman, 2015). Finally, Kip believed he had a computer chip in his brain and wondered if the chip broadcast the voices he heard (Langman, 2015). It was discovered at the attack that Kip suffered from schizophrenia. He saw a psychiatrist and a psychologist for

depression prior to his attack, but he deliberately kept his psychotic symptoms secret to avoid the stigma of being "crazy" (Langman, 2015).

### **LUKE WOODHAM**

Luke had apparently threatened to commit suicide twice, telling friends that he would use guns from his dad's collection (Fast, 2008). He was dissuaded both times, by friends. Soon after the breakup with his girlfriend, Christy, Luke met Grant. Killing seemed to preoccupy Grant as a means of problem-solving (Fast, 2008). Over the next several months, the boys became increasingly closer. On one incident, a neighbor witnessed Grant and Luke beat Luke's dog with a stick, just to see how the dog would respond to it (Fast, 2008). The boys killed the dog at a later date by drowning him, Luke noted it was his first kill (Fast, 2008). According to a friend of Christy, Luke began stalking her and on several occasions, threaten to "put a bullet" in her head if she didn't date him (Fast, 2008). A few days before the shooting, Luke described how he was going to kill his mother so he could take her car to school, he went on to explain how he would use his brother's gun to shoot Christy and some others (Fast, 2008).

On the morning of the attack, Luke woke up early and murdered his mother, he stabbed her and bludgeoned her repeatedly before suffocating her with a pillow (Fast, 2008). By the time, Luke was finished with his mother, she had a crushed jaw, a brain contusion, seven stab wounds, and eleven slashes to the body (Fast, 2008). Following the murder of his mother, he cleaned up the mess he had made, he cleaned the blood stains off the walls, washed his jeans and bloody towels in the washing machine, showered, and cleaned and bandaged the knife cuts he had gotten on his hands, before he composed a last will and testament five pages long (Fast, 2008). In the letter, he justified his actions. He ended the letter with, "Wednesday 1, 1997, shall go down in history as the day I fought back" (Fast, 2008). After he finished his letter, he got his father's .30-.30 Marlin hunting rifle from the attic, and filled the pockets of his trench coat with shells. and drove himself to school (Fast, 2008). It was there, he shot Christy and her friend, followed by 10 others. Nine months after the attack, Luke told a jury that the morning of the murder he had been awoken by visions of red-cloaked demons with glowing eyes, he also told the court that he had recalled taking a knife, a baseball bat, and a pillow to his mother's room while hearing the voice of an older teenager

in his head, goading him on, yet he had not recollection of killing her (Fast, 2008).

### **TRAUMATIZED SHOOTER**

Traumatized shooters tend to come from broken homes and were victims of multiple types of abuse. While a single trauma can leave a huge impact on a child, these traumatized shooters endured multiple traumas (Langman, 2009). TJ witnessed his father brutally attack a woman for hours. Evan was beaten by a succession of violent men whom his mother lived with as well as by a boy in foster care (Langman, 2009). Jeffrey was beaten by his mother and mistreated by the men his mother became involved with (Langman, 2009). Physical abuse and sexual abuse can have lasting effects on children including anxiety, rage, depression, and suicide (Langman, 2009). Traumatized school shooters were not simply abused children but experienced multiple difficulties that cause unstable, overwhelmingly stressful lives (Langman, 2015). In psychology, a traumatic event is a horrendous or disturbing situation that may be life threatening or that causes intense fear for one's safety (Langman, 2015). The trauma may be something done directly to the child or something they witnessed happening to someone else (Langman, 2015). This being said, the major criteria for these shooters to have had to meet in order to be classified as traumatized was directly witnessing trauma,

directly experiencing trauma, and dealing with multiple types of trauma in their short lives.

**THOMAS "T.J." LANE**

On February 27, 2012, in the cafeteria at Chardon High School, T.J. Lane began shooting at about 7:30 a.m. A surveillance video showed T.J. shoot four male students with a .22 caliber handgun (Langman, 2015). A football coach/teacher chased T.J. from the cafeteria and out to his car. The police arrested T.J. outside the school near his car (Langman, 2015). T.J. shot 5 students, killing 3, in his attack.

Thomas T.J. Lane was born on September 19, 1994. T.J.'s parents never married, but they had a rough relationship in which both were charged with domestic violence (Langman, 2015). In one case, when T.J. was seven, Mr. Lane was imprisoned after he "verbally abused and physically attacked a woman over a period of nine hours in the presence of three young children" (Langman, 2015). T.J. was allegedly one of the three children present for this attack. Because of the violence and chaos that was T.J.'s parents, he was mostly reared by his grandparents. At first, T.J. was said to have been an outcast who was bullied, but multiple people who knew him said this was not true (Langman, 2015). He reportedly had friends, was not



picked on and was said by many to be a nice young man who was easy to talk to (Langman, 2015). Initially, reports said he did not know his victims, since he did not attend Chardon High School. This was found not to be true. He had known some of the victims since middle school (Langman, 2015). The best guess as to the motive of this shooting is one of the victims was dating T.J.'s former girlfriend. T.J. walked over to the table where this boy was sitting and opened fire on him and his buddies (Langman, 2015). There appears to be no evidence of Thomas planning this attack on his peers (Langman, 2015).

#### **EVAN RAMSEY**

Evan was said to have been an object of ridicule rather than a source of fear, because of this, students would often provoke him just to see him explode (Fast, 2008). Evan's peers would often call him spaz, brain dead, or retarded. Evan had an explosive temper that he struggled to control, due to the ridicule he received. When Evan lost his temper, he would throw trash cans, or books, toss a chair, or push aside a teacher who tried to restrain him (Fast, 2008). Evan also was known to get into fights, particularly one of the culprits who teased him incessantly, Josh Palacios (Fast, 2008). Due to the

difficult early childhood he endured, and the relentless teasing he dealt with, Evan lived a life of misery. During the months before the shooting, a series of events further contributed to his misery: the girl he had been dating for months broke up with him without warning, and he received a phone call from his father, who had recently been released from prison (Fast, 2008). It was at this time, Evan began planning his suicide.

Evan had made two new friends that year, James and Matthew. The three boys spent hours walking the boardwalks of the town they lived in, smoking unfiltered Camels with marijuana mixed in, and playing *Doom* (Fast, 2008). Initially, Evan had wanted to bring a gun to school to frighten the kids who picked on him and then kill himself, in the courtyard (Langman, 2009). Evan told his two friends about his plans, instead of talking him out of it or going to an adult for help, they convinced him to turn his suicide into a murdering spree (Langman, 2009). Evan's hit list originally had three names on it, but with the other boys' help, it grew to 14 names (Langman, 2009). To convince Evan to do the attack, he was told he would become famous: "[My friend] said that my face and name would go across the world. He said I'll become famous. He said lots of people will know about me. He said I should live the

fame" (Langman, 2009). It was one of these friends that taught him how to use a 12-gauge shotgun. The conversation about killing himself occurred several days before the attack, and he was taught to use the gun the day prior to the attack (Langman, 2009). The day before the attack, Evan called several of his friends inviting them to gather the following morning in the library, located on the mezzanine overlooking the lobby, where they could observe Evan's activities without exposing themselves to harm (Fast, 2008). It is unknown whether any friends did go to the library to watch. He also wrote two letters, one was crumbled up and discarded, the other was left on his desktop for his foster mom, Sue (Fast, 2008). Witnesses described Evan's demeanor during the attack as "gleefully evil" (Fast, 2008).

#### **JEFFREY WEISE**

Like Evan, Jeffrey had a difficult childhood. He reportedly drank and used marijuana. At one point, he became depressed and engaged in self-mutilation, using the metal end of a pencil to scratch himself (Langman, 2015). When he was 15, he attempted suicide by cutting his wrists (Langman, 2015). He was intrigued by the Nazis and Hitler and joined an online discussion forum about them. Jeffrey

was said to have been well-liked by his peers (Langman, 2015). Whether or not Jeffrey was teased vary greatly. His grandparents from both sides allege he was teased relentlessly, while some peers deny him being a target of teasing (Langman, 2015). Due to his size, over six feet tall and over 200 pounds, it is hard to believe he was an object of ridicule. After his suicide attempt, Jeffrey tried to turn his life around, but due to the fact he was constantly juggled around from relative to relative, he found it difficult (Langman, 2015). It is unknown why Jeffrey was not attending his school at the time of the attack. He continued to be depressed (Langman, 2015). A few months before the attack, Jeffrey wrote: "I'm starting to regret sticking around, I should've taken the razor blade express las time...Well, whatever, man. Maybe you've got another shuttle comin' around sometime soon?" (Langman, 2015). A few weeks after that comment, he wrote: So [expletive] naïve man, so [expletive] naïve. Always expecting change when I know nothing ever changes. I've seen mothers choose their man over their own flesh and blood, I've seen other choose alcohol over friendship. I sacrifice no more for others, part of me has [expletive] died and I hate this [expletive]. I'm living every man's nightmare and that sing fact alone is kicking my ass, I

really must be [expletive] worthless. This place never changes, it never will. [Expletive] it all" (Langman, 2015). A couple of Jeffrey's friend reported having heard him say that it would be cool if he shot up the school and he discussed with his best friend for months about carrying out some kind of attack (Langman, 2015).

Jeffrey carried out his long-planned attack on March 21, 2005. He killed his grandfather and his grandfather's girlfriend, at their home (Langman, 2009). Jeffrey then took his grandfather's police firearms and bulletproof vest and drove the police cruiser to school, where he gunned down a security guard and entered the school, he then killed five students and one teacher and wounded seven other people (Langman, 2009).

Each shooter, apart from T.J., planned their attack, to some extent. Each shooter had thought about bringing a weapon to school, and using it. Additionally, each of the shooters had informed someone else of their plans to attack their school, however, they were not taken seriously. While not all attacks were as extensively planned as others, there was some sense of "planning" or thought involved (i.e. Acquiring the weapon).

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

This study attempted to understand the premeditative behavior behind rampage school attacks by studying ten past cases dating back to the early 1990's. In it, a multiple case study was conducted in which the behavior that was noted leading up to the attack was examined.

A consistent theme among the cases was that each attack was, partially, planned. By reading past research about each shooters' psychological profile, family history, and childhood history it was determined whether there was premeditated thought or behavior. Each shooter had thought about an attack and considered bringing a weapon to school.

Another consistent theme found in the studies was each shooter told at least one individual they were planning on committing an act of violence on a person (or people) at the school. In every case, the people the shooters confided in, did not take the threat seriously and ignored the threat. By ignoring the threat, it allowed the shooter to act out his attack.

It is important to note, the three types of shooters discussed in this study are not necessarily the only types of shooters, and not all shooters will fit perfectly into one of these typologies, and some may even fit into multiple

typologies. Most people who are psychopathic are not mass murders, most psychotic individuals do not commit murder, and most traumatized people never kill anyone (Langman, 2009). Although the typology is a step forward in understanding the shooters, the labels themselves do not explain why these youths became killers (Langman, 2009).

### **Limitations**

The sample of this study was relatively small. Ten shooters were profiled for this study, ideally, more cases should be studied for a more conclusive outcome.

Secondly, geographically, the sample could have covered more areas. The attacks were all within the United States, and predominantly in the north-western part of the country, with a couple in the south-eastern corner.

### **Future Research**

There is very little research regarding premeditative behavior behind school shootings. There is also little research on premeditative behavior in juvenile subjects. Additional research needs to be conducted regarding the premeditative behavior of school shooters and juveniles in general. We need to look beyond the typology for additional factors that make the

shooters different from other psychopathic, psychotic, or traumatized people.

### **Implications**

This study does not mean that any juvenile who is psychotic, psychopathic, or traumatized will bring a gun, or weapon, to school with them. This study is showing different behavior patterns to look for in juveniles to, hopefully, spot a shooting before it occurs. Since the majority of these shooters spoke about their plans prior to their attack, yet no body alerted authorities, perhaps schools and parents can begin dialoging with their children about speaking up if they see, or hear, something.



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