

## Urban, Youth, and School Violence

James Alan Fox  
Northeastern University

Protecting Youth from Gun Violence Conference  
January 21, 2020

1

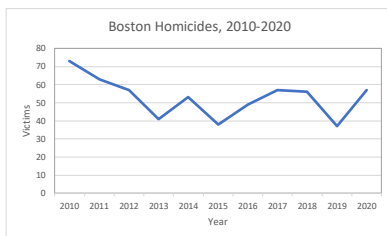
## 2020 was bad for COVID-19 deaths and murder

- More teens and adults with lots of unstructured, idle time away from school or work
- Spike in gun sales for defensive purposes, but used offensively; and concern for Democrat restrictions
- Conflict over Black Lives Matter, mask wearing, and stay-at-home orders
- But is it a trend?

City	2020	2019	%Chg
Milwaukee	191	98	95%
Minneapolis	81	47	72%
New Orleans	194	120	62%
Atlanta	150	95	58%
Chicago	748	481	56%
<b>Boston</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>54%</b>
Memphis	290	191	52%
Houston	321	225	43%
New York	437	314	39%
Philadelphia	469	346	36%
St Louis	261	194	35%
Los Angeles	343	257	33%
San Francisco	45	34	32%
Dallas	245	199	23%
Washington	197	165	19%
Detroit	327	274	19%
Kansas City	174	151	15%
Baltimore	321	333	-4%

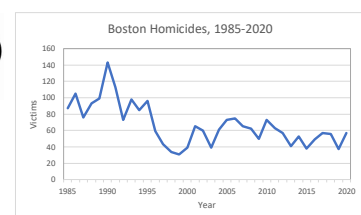
2

## Myopic thinking: Newton's law



3

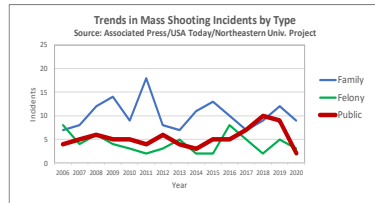
## Compare to the bad old days



4

### One silver lining to pandemic

- No mass public shootings with 4+ victims killed since March 15
- Most large public venues shuttered
- Everyone has suffered, not just the would-be assailants



5

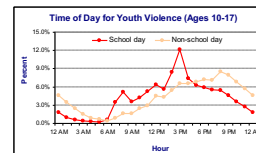
### Why all the stats? ... The power of data

After the Republican sweep of Congress in 1994 with Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America," prevention became taboo in the Clinton Administration.

And I ask you to dramatically expand our support for after-school programs. I think every American should know that most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3:00 in the afternoon and 8:00 at night. We can keep so many of our children out of trouble in the first place if we give them someplace to go other than the streets, and we ought to do it.

President Bill Clinton

State of the Union address, Jan 27, 1998

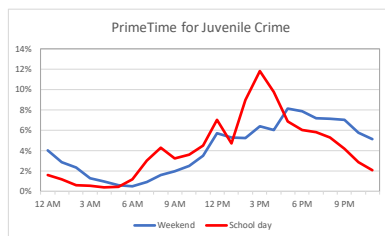


6

### Trouble after school

43% of youth violence victimization on school days occurs from 2 pm until 6 pm

Also, drug use and teen pregnancies peak in the after school hours.



7

### The positive functions of gangs

- For youngsters, gangs fulfill many common needs
  - Status
  - Belonging to something special
  - Camaraderie and acceptance
  - Praise
  - Protection
  - Excitement and profit
  - Opportunity for advancement
- Our task is to fulfill the same needs in more constructive ways



8

## The Principles of Prevention

- Prevention should have an emphasis on the prefix "pre."
- Patience is more than a virtue; it is a requirement.
- No program is successful all the time or for all individuals.
- Prevention should take a multi-faceted approach.
- Prevention is significantly cost-effective.

9

## "I want to go to my graduation, not to my grave"

### Majority of U.S. teens worry a shooting could happen at their school

% of teens saying they are \_\_\_\_\_ about the possibility of a shooting happening at their school

	Very worried	Somewhat worried	NET
All teens	26	52	57
Boys	22	29	51
Girls	28	36	64
White	20	31	51
Black	27	34	60
Hispanic	37	36	73

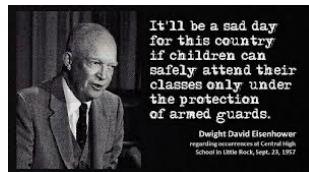
Note: Whites and blacks include only single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to net total due to rounding.  
Source: Survey of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted March 7-April 12, 2018.  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



10

## School shootings: Easy solutions that don't work...

- Target hardening
  - Fortress climate promotes fear
  - Not conducive to learning
  - Waste of scarce resources
- Inside locks on classroom doors
- Armed teachers and guards
- Search social media for red flags
- Active shooter drills



11

## The New "Duck and Cover"

- State legislatures are mandating lockdown/active shooter drills
- Prepare or traumatize?



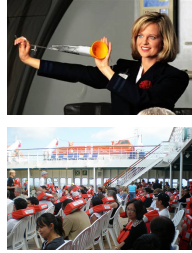
If you see the flash, duck and cover!

12

### Lessons from the airlines, the cruise lines, and history



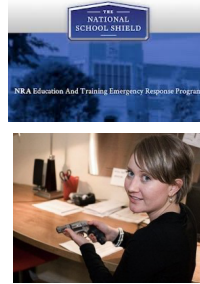
If you see the flash, duck and cover!



13

13

### Myth: Armed guards/teachers will protect students and provide a deterrent



"Alright, I'm ready for the showdown."

14

14

### Back to school apparel

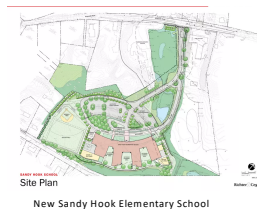


15

15

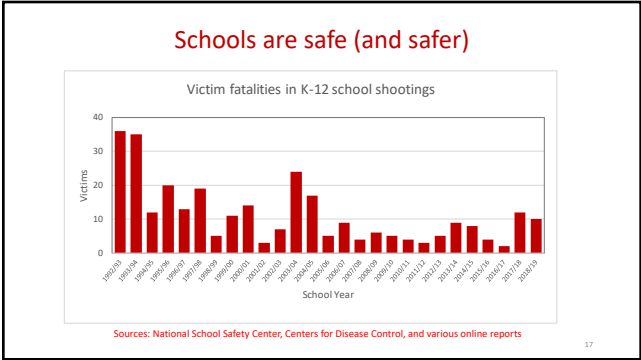
### What will work

- Unobtrusive security (e.g., acoustic sensors, environmental design)
- More teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, and smaller classes



16

16



17



18