In the aftermath of violence conference – June 2014

The aftermath of Newtown: More of the same

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In the aftermath of the shocking school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, politicians and lobbyists seemed to engage in a lively debate about school security. The most visible suggestion was the National Rifle Association's proposal to place armed guards in every school. More progressive politicians who derided the NRA, including President Obama's administration, offered proposals that likewise sought to increase the presence of armed security in schools. Certainly these proposals differed, but they all sought to continue the securitization of American public schools witnessed over the past two decades, rather than advocate for real change in school safety. These responses offer important lessons about the difficulty of responding productively to tragedy, given the strength of institutionalized knowledge and politis

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Because mass violence against children can arouse strong reactions for citizens, one would think tragedies like school shootings are likely to lead to a search for answers and evidence-based interventions. In this paper we tell a different story: one in which politics, institutional inertia, and a lack of commitment – or access – to social science evidence impeded a nation's ability to enact meaningful, evidence-based reform.

Below we describe events that unfolded on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, U.S., when twenty-year-old Adam Lanza killed twenty young children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School – in addition to killing his mother and himself. The event was unprecedented in the U.S. in terms of the age of the victims and scope of the tragedy. Given the nature of the shooting, it provoked public fear, anger, and desire to prevent future tragedies. A variety of policy discussions and responses *could* have followed, including conversations about improving mental health care and social supports for students, or enacting community-based violence prevention programs. However, the primary foci were instead on gun control and armed security in schools.

Our goal is to describe this public response to Newtown and develop hypotheses to explain why we saw the response that occurred, rather than alternatives for which there is greater evidentiary support. Gun control and armed security were prominent policy suggestions and proposals because they fit within existing national debates, priorities, and policy-initiatives more so than mental health care, student supports, and violence prevention. We see Newtown as an opportunity to explore both the American public's readiness to consider criminological evidence as well as the ability of criminologists to offer meaningful contributions to these public debates. In an era of 'public criminology', in which many criminologists wish to make more significant contributions to public policy (Sparks and Loader 2010; Uggen and Inderbitzen 2010), it is crucial for criminologists to pay more attention to political and other institutional realities, such as those that made gun control and school security the primary points of discussion in the aftermath of Newtown.

The Event

On December 14, 2012, 20-year-old Adam Lanza entered Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and fatally shot twenty children and six adults. He also wounded two additional adults, prior to taking his own life in one of the classrooms of the school (Connecticut State Police 2013). According to the final report published by the Office of the Attorney General for the State of Connecticut (2013), all of the fatal and nonfatal shootings occurred with a rifle. Lanza took his own life with a pistol, though he was armed with additional handguns, a large supply of ammunition, and had additional firearms in his vehicle located on the premises of the school.

After shooting his way into the school building through glass windows located adjacent to the (locked) lobby doors, Lanza proceeded down the primary hallway away from the main office and reception area. Reports indicate the victims of this crime were chosen at random (Office of Attorney General 2013). The State Attorney's Office of Connecticut determined that Lanza was solely responsible for the killings, as he acted without the assistance of others, with no evidence to suggest that Lanza communicated his plans to anyone. The firearms were legally obtained by Lanza's mother, who Lanza killed the same day – in their shared home – prior to the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary.

Following the incident, Federal, state, and local investigators interviewed Lanza's family members, individuals who knew Lanza throughout his life, and former teachers and school personnel. Medical and background information about Lanza were also collected (Office of Attorney General 2013). According to these reports, Lanza had mental health issues that precluded his ability to live a 'normal life' in terms of his interactions with others (Connecticut State Police 2013). In 2005, Lanza was diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder, and physicians noted he lacked empathy, though he was of average intelligence and otherwise appeared normal (Office of Attorney General 2013). It is believed this condition worsened with age and ultimately led to extreme anxiety and discomfort with changes, noise, and contact with others (Office of Attorney General 2013: 40-41). However, Lanza's physicians indicated his mental health conditions could not have predicted the school shootings. Interviews with individuals who knew him well (while often contradictory) suggested that he did not display any aggressive or violent tendencies. Some who knew him well described him as normal and humorous, while others reported he was unemotional, distant, and remote (Office of Attorney General 2013: 31). No individual interviewed indicated there were any warning signs that Lanza was capable of committing the mass shooting.

Investigators were unable to determine what motivated Lanza to commit the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, though the investigation revealed that Lanza had a 'preoccupation with mass shootings' (Office of Attorney General 2013: p. 26) and a fascination with firearms. Lanza did not leave behind any notes or other forms of communication that indicated why he committed the school shootings at Sandy Hook. Lanza attended the elementary school for a brief period of time before his mother enrolled him in a neighboring school district, but that is the extent of the relationship between Lanza and Sandy Hook Elementary. While early media reports indicated Lanza's mother worked for the elementary school, further investigations revealed that was not the case (Farhi, 2012).

The Aftermath

Precedent

To begin to understand how the American public and legislatures responded to Newtown, it is helpful to consider its most similar predecessor: the massacre at Columbine High School, which was previously the most infamous shooting incident in an American school. On April 20, 1999, two students of Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado, walked through their school shooting fellow students and teachers before killing themselves. A total of 15 students (including the perpetrators) and one teacher were killed, with dozens of others being injured.

Immediately after the tragedy the public attempted to understand how two students could commit such violence. As Sternheimer (2006, 2007) notes, several high-profile politicians and news media outlets suggested that violent video games help explain Columbine and other school shootings. While the perpetrators were indeed devotees of violent, first-player shooter video games, the evidence supporting a causal link between violent games and actual violence is tenuous at best (Sternheimer 2007).

A second common and visible response to Columbine was to scrutinize the lax gun laws in Colorado and elsewhere that made it possible for the two teenagers (aged 17 and 18, though the 18-year-old was still 17 when the weapons were acquired) to obtain the arsenal they used in their massacre. The guns were purchased legally by friends of the perpetrators from private sellers at a 'gun show.'[1] No paperwork was required, and the purchasers only needed to show proof that they were over eighteen years of age. Almost immediately after the incident, proponents of gun control clamored for greater regulation and restrictions over firearm purchases, including those at gun shows. The following month, in May 1999, the US Senate narrowly passed a measure to require background checks for gun purchases at gun shows – but the law stalled in the US House of Representatives due to disagreement between proponents of gun control and more conservative opponents of gun control (Franken 1999), and ultimately, failed to pass.

A third response was to invest additional resources in school security through mechanisms such as surveillance cameras, police in schools (typically called "School Resource Officers", or SROs), security guards, locked entrances, and (less commonly) metal detectors. Importantly, schools across the US had already begun investing in criminal justice oriented security practices well before Columbine. The alteration of American schools through security and punishment strategies has been described in detail elsewhere (see Casella 2001, Devine 1996, Kupchik 2010, Lyons and Drew 2006), and is the result of longer-term processes such as neo-liberal governance (see Hirschfield 2008, Kupchik and Catlaw 2013) and the process of "governing through crime" (Simon 2007). Nevertheless, Columbine accelerated this trend by scaring school administrators, local politicians, and parents into thinking that school massacres were becoming more common (see Altheide 2002, Muschert 2007). It is ironic that schools often justify expensive surveillance cameras and armed security as being necessary in order to prevent another Columbine, despite the fact that Columbine High School already used both surveillance cameras in its hallways and armed law enforcement personnel prior to the event there, demonstrating their ineffectiveness as a deterrent (Kupchik 2010).

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[1] This is an event where private individuals get together, often in an exposition center or convention hall, to sell weapons to other private individuals.

Current Responses

Apparently the American public learned little between 1999 and 2012, since most responses to Newtown appear very similar to the reactions to Columbine, which focused largely on gun control and school security practices. The most visible and controversial immediate reaction to Newtown came from the National Rifle Association (NRA), one of the nation's most powerful lobbying groups and an important agent in the ongoing contentious national debate about firearms. On December 21, 2012, one week after the shooting in Newtown, the NRA held a press conference in which it outlined its proposals for how to better protect American schoolchildren.[2] After first claiming that violent video games, movies, television, and music with violence-suggestive lyrics bear some blame, NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre arrived at the heart of the NRA's message: that all schools need armed guards. He called on the U.S. Congress to fund police officers in all schools, and urged schools to hire additional armed guards from among the ranks of retired police, reserve and retired military personnel, firefighters and other trained security staff. LaPierre stated that 'The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.'

Several politicians and media pundits criticized and even ridiculed the NRA's suggestion as being out of touch – that the NRA's only solution to the problem of gun violence is to put more guns in schools. For example, consider the comments of Christine Quinn, the Speaker of the New York City Council and New York City mayoral candidate; she called the NRA's proposal "Some of the most stupid, asinine, insensitive, ridiculous comments I have ever heard in the public arena."[3] She was not alone. According to the coverage of the NRA proposal in the *New York Times*, "[the proposal] was met with widespread derision from school administrators, law enforcement officials and politicians, with some critics calling it 'delusional' and 'paranoid.'" (Lichtblau and Rich 2012; for coverage of the critical reaction in the UK see Rugg and Nye 2012). Even many who may ordinarily align themselves with the NRA expressed a critical reaction to LaPierre's comments, including John Lott, Jr., author of *More Guns, Less Crime* (Lott 2013, see also Williams 2012), and Michael Steele, the former Republic National Committee Chairperson, who called the comments "…haunting and disturbing." (McVeigh 2012).

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[2] For a transcript of this press conference, see http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/remarks-from-the-nra-press-conference-on-sandy-hook-school-shooting-delivered-on-dec-21-2012-transcript/2012/12/21/bd1841fe-4b88-11e2-a6a6-aabac85e8036_story.html

[3] Reported on CBS New York, December 22, 2012: http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/12/22/quinn-nra-plan-to-avoid-mass-shootings-is-stupid-asinine/

Based on the critical response to the NRA's proposal, one might assume that American citizens, policy-makers, law enforcement officers, and educators would be opposed to the idea of building an armed security force inside the nation's schools. Yet this is precisely the trend that has ensued since the 1990s, when schools across the US began to employ armed security guards and SROs (see Casella 2001). According to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2012* report, an annual report from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 69.8% of 12-18 year olds in a nationally representative survey reported having a security guard or police officer in their school in 2011; this represents an increase since 1999, when 54.1% reported a security guard or officer (Robers et al. 2013: 172).

Further, some of the politicians who seem to have been so offended by the NRA's proposal seem to at least tacitly endorse the buildup of security forces in U.S. schools. Consider, for example, the case of New York City, the largest school system in the U.S. Above we quote City Council Speaker Quinn's condemnation of the N.R.A.'s proposal. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg also expressed his indignation at the N.R.A. plan, calling it "…a paranoid, dystopian vision of a more dangerous and violent American where everyone is armed and no place is safe" (Rugg and Nye 2012). And yet New York City public schools have a dedicated division of the New York Police Department, the School Safety Division, with over 5,000 officers.[4] This means that the New York City public schools have a dedicated police force that is one of the ten largest police forces in the U.S. (see Reaves 2011), and that has been found to act in abusive and authoritarian ways toward children (Mukherjee 2007, Nolan 2011).

In January 2013 the Obama Administration outlined its response to Newtown. The President announced a series of 23 executive orders, including several new initiatives for improving the system of background checks before individuals may purchase guns, intended to screen out those with mental illness or criminal histories. These executive orders come with some funding but do not carry the weight of formal legislation, which must be passed by the U.S. Congress; as of this writing such legislation appears very unlikely.

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[4] For information on the NYPD School Safety Division, see http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/school_safety/school_safety_overview.shtml.

The President's response was largely a direct contrast to the N.R.A. in that it focused primarily on gun control. But it also included order #18, an order to "Provide incentives for schools to hire school resource officers." Thus, despite the seemingly opposite stances of the Obama Administration and the N.R.A., both support the idea of continuing to bolster the number of armed and uniformed police officers in the nation's schools.

Since Newtown, many states and municipalities have gone even further in following the N.R.A.'s suggestions by either considering or enacting new legislation to allow for more guns on school grounds. For example, in April 2014 the Florida House of Representatives passed HB 753, a bill that allows public school teachers to carry concealed weapons. The Bill was first proposed by State Representative Greg Steube in early 2013, weeks after Newtown. While it has not yet been (and likely will not be) passed by the Florida Senate, the House's passage of this Bill is a powerful illustration of the popularity of guns in schools (McGrory 2014). Laws allowing teachers or administrators to carry firearms were introduced in 33 states across the U.S., and enacted in 5 states, in the 9 months following Newtown alone (Severson 2013).

In sum, the Aftermath of Newtown seems to be more of the same response that was seen following Columbine: after scapegoating violent media entertainment, legislatures were unable to pass meaningful gun control laws, but schools accelerated their trend toward greater inclusion of criminal justice oriented security. The result is thus a continuation and expansion of existing school security trends. Despite discussions of gun control, particularly from the President, there has been no national legislation to further restrict firearm purchases or to increase regulation over their storage and use since Newtown. But there has been a push for more armed security (including SROs) in schools.

Evidence-based Approaches

As we describe above, the policy discussions following the Newtown shooting focused on arming school staff, implementing more security, and increasing the numbers of SROs. Despite the popular appeal of such security-oriented responses, our understanding of the effectiveness of such policies at preventing shootings is unclear primarily due to the rarity of school shootings. Because school shootings occur so infrequently, we do not know what specific school policies or practices are effective at preventing future tragedies.

Perhaps the most substantial study on this specific topic was conducted by Newman et al. (2004) and reported in the book, *Rampage*. Through extensive research, interviewing over 150 individuals affected by school shootings, Newman et al. (2004) uncover contributing factors to such events, including: youth having marginal statuses within schools that are exaggerated by individual vulnerabilities; students adopting narratives and scripts that promote armed attacks; school systems failing to recognize warning signs; and access to guns (see also Muschert 2007). Given that most shooters gave some indication of their plans to others, their analysis suggest the key to prevention is being able to recognize warnings and cries for help, and being able to intervene with appropriate measures. Newman et al. (2004) propose that more schools increase access to disciplinary and counselling based services while opening funding for more full-time SROs and mental health agents in schools.

Though SROs are trained to seek out and listen for such warning signs, Newman et al. (2004) do not explain why an officer might be better at earning sufficient trust of students so as to elicit such information, compared to a social worker or adolescent counselor. In fact, research on students' perceptions of police in schools is inconsistent. Though some studies find that students do trust police and might seek them out in case of fear or knowledge of an imminent attack (e.g. Kupchik 2010), others find that their presence increases students' fear (Bachman et al. 2011). It is not at all clear that more SROs would equate to a greater ability to detect and prevent school shootings through informant cultivation.

In another investigation of school shootings, the National Research Council commissioned numerous school case studies to examine the factors leading to and consequences of lethal rampages (Moore et al. 2003). The authors of these case studies urge policymakers to address the growing access to firearms. This extensive work also argues that school staff and counselors become more adept at identifying and preventing student marginalization and victimization. As prior research notes, such experiences may bring about depression, revengeful behavior, and – eventually – lethal action against others or themselves.

If one uses a wider lens and considers the securitization of schools as one aspect of a multi-tiered strategy to prevent student misconduct – including increasing arrests, suspensions, and harsher punishments for student misbehavior, overall – there is a larger and more consistent body of evidence. Research finds that these measures have negatively impacted school environments which, in turn, may contribute to deadly violence. For example, schools with harsher disciplinary practices experience higher levels of student resentment (Hyman and Perone 1998), lower levels of academic performance (Gottfredson 2001), escalated dropout rates (Nolan and Anyon 2004), and decreases in student engagement (Brady et al. 2007). Some studies suggest that harsh disciplinary practices may have the adverse effect of increasing student misconduct (Gottfredson et al. 2005, Mayer and Leone 1999, Na and Gottfredson 2013).

Of the research that exists, there is no clear evidence that the presence of armed guards or SROs can effectively prevent school violence (Cook et al 2009, Skiba et al. 2000). More critically, criminal justice oriented security measures can indirectly create a dangerous school setting by diverting much needed resources away from remedial educational and behavioral therapy (Kupchik 2010). More intense, invasive security practices are also correlated with higher reports of student victimization and fear (Bachman et al. 2011, Schreck and Miller 2003, Schreck, et al. 2003), as well as increased future criminality (Brady et al. 2007).

In contrast to the efforts taken by schools to adopt harsh punishments and criminal justice-oriented security, evidence on student misbehavior shows that creating a positive school social climate is substantially more effective at preventing student crime, including violence. Though definitions of school social climate differ, a positive school social climate is typically seen as one in which students feel respected, listened to, and valued parts of the school community (see Gottfredson 2001). Academically, enhancing a school’s climate has been found to increase students’ success, decrease achievement gaps, and increase graduation rates (Christle et al. 2007, MacNeil et al. 2009). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2013), establishing conducive learning conditions promotes pro-social bonds, increases levels of self-control, provides students with positive motivation to succeed in school, and aids youths’ social development (see also Zins and Elias 2007). Perhaps just as important, studies have shown that improving school climate increases the overall the security of the school. Specifically, greater levels of communication and cooperation between all parties establish conditions that promote a safe environment while reducing overall violence (Gottfredson 2001, Gottfredson et al. 2005, Steinberg et al. 2011).

Efforts to enhance school social climates often also include assisting students with mental health deficits, a problem common among mass school shooters (Vossekuil 2002). Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education (2014) highlights that supplying mental health support will better: identify students in need of assistance; provide them with tools to help cope with traumatic experiences; offer emotional support and guidance; and help schools respond to the emergency needs of students with mental health issues.

Though there is no research linking school climate specifically to mass school shootings, it seems reasonable that improvements in the school social climate would effectively deter these tragedies, for two reasons: 1) there is now a great deal of evidence showing that students misbehave less in general in schools with more positive social climates, and 2) it seems unlikely that students would commit mass atrocities in schools in which they feel like valued members of a community.

Finally, there is no reason to assume that the addition of firearms into school communities, whether concealed or not, will help prevent future gun violence in schools. Though research examining the relationship between the prevalence of guns and violent crime rates has produced competing findings (see Kleck 1997, 2005, Kleck and Patterson 1993; Sloan et al. 1988; Stolzenberg and D'Alessio 2000), little evidence stands to suggest that arming more school staff would likely reduce violent crime or further school shootings. Studies investigating concealed weapon laws also yield contradictory results, with studies indicating both a deterrent effect (Lott and Mustard 1997) and that more concealed weapons is associated with more violence (Ludwig 1998).

In sum, the evidence on student misbehavior suggests that increased security is unlikely to prevent a future Newtown. Though we cannot say conclusively that these strategies are unhelpful at preventing another mass shooting, this seems likely based on research about student misbehavior and school crime more generally. Rather, strategies that promote positive, pro-social behaviors are far more promising than the security-based response that has dominated the Aftermath of Newtown.

Why the Focus on Guns and Security Personnel?

Above we detail how the policy focus following Newtown been almost exclusively on the role of guns and formal security personnel and practices in preventing future school shootings, despite the fact that the evidence suggests very different strategies would have better chances of success. This of course begs the question, "why these responses?", to which we now turn. Here we offer hypotheses that apply insights from prior sociological and criminological work on both the role of criminological knowledge in the public sphere, as well as explanations for the rise of contemporary security policies.

The Gun Control Script

To begin, one must realize debates about gun control are central to American politics. Not only is the issue a source of great polarization between typically "pro gun control" liberals and "pro gun owners' rights" conservatives, it is also a common frame used to discuss and debate gun violence in the U.S. As evidence of the centrality of gun control debates, consider the fact that gun sales in the U.S. soared both after President Obama's election in 2008 and again after his reelection in 2012 – despite the fact that gun control was not a focus of either presidential campaign nor of his first term in office (see Allen 2012). Presumably, concerned gun owners began purchasing firearms out of concern that a progressive president would seek laws to limit gun ownership rights; yet, Obama offered no reason to expect this other than his identity as a liberal, which is commonly associated with gun control measures. In fact, his first term in office was labeled a "failure" by the gun control advocacy organization, the Brady Project, due to his inaction on the issue (Childress 2012).

At the same time, common responses to any mass murder in the U.S. include either calls for gun control or calls for more gun ownership (again consider LaPierre's comment "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.") We see this in the very recent (May 2014) tragedy in Santa Barbara, California, in which 22-year-old Elliot Rodger killed six young adults during a shooting rampage. Pleas from grief-stricken parents for stricter gun control to prevent future tragedies were met by (in the words of one well-publicized response) the claim that "Your dead kids don't trump my Constitutional rights."[5] Debates about guns – both efforts to limit the number of guns in the nation and efforts to facilitate gun ownership – offer a well-rehearsed template for responses to mass shootings. The Aftermath of Newtown followed this script.

School Security Trends

The response to Newtown was also predictable because it aligned with existing trends in efforts to maintain school security. As we discuss above, schools across the US have been fortifying themselves since the 1990s. It is now common to find SROs, (non-police) security guards, drug-sniffing police dogs, surveillance cameras, and locked gates at public schools at all grade levels and in schools across socio-economic strata (see Hirschfield and Celinska 2011). Guided by faith rather than evidence that more invasive security will protect children, and fueled by fear and insecurity (Simon 2007), schools across the U.S. had already invested heavily in security practices and personnel prior to Newtown. The increase in SROs in schools across the U.S. after Newtown was simply more of the same, as it followed the pattern of responses to fear for students' safety we have been witnessing for two decades.

The Role of Criminological Knowledge

In *The Culture of Control* Garland (2001) describes the declining influence of expert criminological knowledge in the 1970s, as the politicization of crime control and victims' rights movements took hold instead. Despite recent calls for criminologists to make greater efforts to participate in public discussions about crime, justice, and security (Loader and Sparks 2010; Uggen and

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[5] Joe "the Plumber" Wurzelbacher, who came to fame during the 2008 US Presidential election, published this open letter on May 27, 2014 on: http://barbwire.com/2014/05/27/open-letter-parents-victims-murdered-elliot-rodger/.

Inderbitzen 2010), social science research still exerts little influence over policy. School security is clearly no exception. To a school administrator or elected school board member, it is more important to be guided by public fears and assumptions about the efficacy of formal security, than to review and learn from evidence on what works to best protect students.

Certainly this problem is exacerbated by the fact that this body of evidence exists largely either in academic journals, which are fairly inaccessible to the public at large, or in the form of partisan arguments. The two most common such sources are the American Civil Liberties Union, which is dedicated to reducing security-oriented restrictions to students' liberties, and the National Association of School Resource Officers, which advocates for, collects dues from, and trains (thereby profiting from) SROs stationed in schools across the U.S. While these organizations may disseminate valid information, their clear alliances with predefined positions may limit their ability to inform readers who approach these issues holding a different perspective.

Conclusion

The aftermath of the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut offers important lessons about the difficulty of productively responding to tragedy. Though certainly more evidence about effective school safety policy is needed, prior research does offer some insight; the evidence strongly suggests that additional mental health professionals in both schools and communities, further restrictions on access to guns, and improvements to school social climates are promising strategies for reducing the likelihood of future school shootings. And yet as a nation, the U.S. seems to be largely committed to a very different response: *more* guns in schools, via both concealed weapons on school staff and increases in armed security and SROs. Further, given the zero-sum game of limited school budgets, funding for security forces will often come at the expense of programs that could improve mental health services, student counseling, or build more inclusive school social climates.

Given the shock and horror this tragedy produced among the American public, one would think that it would present a good opportunity for real change. But instead we only see more of the same – further movement towards the securitization of public schools that has been ongoing since the early 1990s. As we hypothesize above, partisan political battles hamper policy debates by offering rigid templates for discussion to follow. Gun control is a central political issue about which proponents of both sides are very passionate; it is entirely predictable that large-scale incidents of gun violence cause these debates to resume. Another reason for the lack of novel or evidence-based responses to Newtown is the institutional inertia that characterizes American schools. For over twenty years the ubiquitous response to fears about school crime and disorder has been more security, more punishment, and closer ties to formal criminal justice institutions (most visibly through police officers in schools). This inertia means that responses to Newtown mirror responses to Columbine and to the more mundane fears that characterize American’s anxiety about contemporary schools. Finally, even if politicians and school administrators intended to break from these well-rehearsed responses to tragedy and fears, they would likely have difficulty assessing the evidence on school safety. Criminologists and other scholars must do better at providing non-partisan, accessible guides to what we know (and what we still don’t know) about promising school safety strategies.

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