

# Nation unfazed after tragic shootings

by Arjun Thakkar

It's practically an expectation these days to pick up your smartphone, open your preferred news app, and bear witness to a provocative headline about a recent act of violence.

News coverage has expanded to the point where an event and knowledge of the event are linked almost instantaneously. Sophomore Pranav Doradla explained how after the Las Vegas shooting occurred, he received a barrage of notifications on his iPad about the incident within minutes.

The expanded news coverage does help to initiate valuable discussions on the issue of violence.

Junior Celeste Carsello described her thought process after hearing about school shootings while in elementary school: "That was the first time it became truly apparent that there was a lot of hate in the world. I realized that people had easy access to something that could translate their hatred into killing any person, even if that person was a kindergartner," said Carsello.

Though this increased awareness empowers us as informed citizens, there's also a danger in the information's accessibility.

Shootings, like the one in Las Vega incite paranoia within the populace, creating unproductive hysteria that raises concern in situations where it can be excessive.

Sophomore Arjun Kaura noted



Browsing through notifications and skimming over violent events is a common situation for most Americans | Thakkar

how the influx of emotions after a shooting can cloud our judgement.

"It's important to distinguish reality from our perceptions. We sometimes think the probability of a shooting actually happening is higher than it really is," said Kaura.

Yet the hysteria that many feel after an incident is short-lived in the overarching experience of constantly hearing about these violent events.

What ultimately occurs through expanded news coverage and the disconnect between the hearing of and experiencing of an incident is the dangerous cultural trend of becoming desensitized to genuine acts of violence.

Doradla noted how "it feels like another [shooting] happens every week, making it all blur together.

I might just read the headlines and glance over it, but these are important events where people are dying. There is that desensitization because it just happens so often."

Carsello expressed similar sentiments. "My lack of reaction to hearing about a shooting frightens me more than the actual events of the shooting."

It seems that the more coverage there is of shootings, the less outrage students experience. "Whenever there's a shooting notification, I usually sigh and am saddened slightly, but it has become so common that it is rarely a shock," added senior Kirk Stewart.

Stewart attributed this desensitization partly to other mediums of entertainment.

"Reports of violence are usually accompanied by videos, which I always watch. Growing up playing video games and watching movies with blood and gore are also contributing factors. Americans have such easy access to violence that it has become desensitized in our culture."

Some students expressed a desire to take some kind of action in response to the violence. "I get a sense that we as citizens need to be doing something. In a way, it's motivating," added Doradla.

This could perhaps be accomplished by working to reform the very institution that we rely on for information, the media.

Stewart criticized how organizations choose to focus on the

hate in an incident rather than the response. "Often times the media focuses more on the shooter than the victims, which is telling of our society because we like to assign blame and avoid the emotional heartache attached with the losses in shootings. Shooters are also portrayed more as criminals than humans."

The issue, then, is how this provocative news coverage warps our viewpoint. Laboring over the details of the perpetrator is what perpetuates a culture of hatred and fear.

There's also a cause for concern with how readily many individuals ridicule shootings by joking about them. There's no doubt that it's done in jest, but the mass amount of 'school shooter memes' and other insensitive jokes are simply unacceptable ways to respond to violence.

By undermining the roots of violence without putting in the effort to truly understand, the incident is reduced to just that: a fact. A tragic statistic, and not much else. Something to note half-heartedly and then move past.

In response to the phenomenon of desensitization, Carsello argued that we should devote greater attention to the issue.

"We should care enough to really look at all shootings, big or small. We need to, especially because it's harder to glance over when you really see all the violence. Maybe then more of us might see how grave of a problem it truly is."

## The conservative side of gun ownership

by Jesse McCauley

Gun control is yet another controversial topic that divides our country into two halves. Some argue for stricter gun laws, and some will argue for more leniency with guns.

Typically, democrats are the ones looting for harsher gun laws, while republicans tend to believe that government should not have as much control over gun ownership.

Like all issues, gun control is not black and white. There are several arguments from both sides, as well as a range of beliefs.

Even within each party, the degree of each argument varies from person to person. Nevertheless, here are some of the arguments that pro-gun advocates often espouse:

"The Second Amendment protects my right to bear arms." This opinion may be the most popular. The US Constitution states, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" as part of the Second Amendment.

Many conservatives also view the Constitution as dead, meaning that the words of the Constitution are set in stone. They see guns as a constitutional right, and therefore dislike the idea of the government interfering with their right.

The Second Amendment also hints at another key argument: security. To some, more guns mean more protection. According to the National Rifle Association (NRA), guns are used for self defense 2.5 million times a year.

The Executive Vice President of the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, stated, "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

So, gun activists will argue for their right to self defense, and they believe guns are a key part of that.

One of the major points of



NRA Executive Vice President LaPierre speaking in 2015 | Gage Skidmore

controversy is what type of guns one should be allowed to own.

While some are concerned with the use of assault weapons, gun advocates argue that this infringes on their ability to hunt and participate in other recreational uses.

An assault weapon is "a semi-automatic firearm with the ability to accept a detachable magazine and two or more of the following: a folding or telescoping stock." Within the Republican Party, the view of which type of guns should be allowed also varies.

Another area of concern is who should be allowed to buy and own guns.

Those with a criminal record are restrained from buying guns. Gun laws proposed by the democratic side often include extensive background checks, past the criminal component. Republicans often argue that this is an invasion of privacy.

Background checks would mean that the government would follow name, address, medical history, etc.

This ties back to the Second Amendment. Conservatives may say that no matter what type of history one may have, it is unconstitutional to take away their right to own a gun.

But some conservatives do approve of more advanced background checks.

Acknowledging that the

government itself carry firearms through the police force and military, a restriction on guns worries conservatives because they believe that gives too much power to the government.

"If you look at why our Founding Fathers put it [the Second Amendment] there, they had lived under the tyranny of King George and they wanted to make sure that these free people in this new country would never be subjugated again and have to live under tyranny," said LaPierre.

Not only do conservatives want to protect themselves from other people, they also want to protect against a possible tyrannical form of government.

In addition, a popular argument in the Republican Party is that education on guns is more important than gun control.

They believe that if people are properly educated on guns, this will result in fewer accidental deaths. A reoccurring phrase is, "guns don't kill people, people kill people."

The list of arguments goes on, as this issue has proved to be controversial, especially with the continued mass shootings.

No matter what party one may identify with, it is important to acknowledge and discuss both sides. Without proper dialogue and education, it is difficult to feel secure.

## What to do in the event of a shooting

1. If you think you heard a gunshot, don't wait to confirm. Flee to a safe location as far as possible from the shooter. Running in a zig-zag pattern reduces your chance of being shot. Call 911 as soon as possible.

2. If you can't flee, protect yourself by barricading yourself in a concealed location. Grab something to defend yourself with, and hide behind a sturdy object. Remain as silent as possible.

3. DON'T pull the fire alarm. This exposes other individuals to the shooter.

4. If you are in a room with an active shooter, try to hide or escape if safe. If direct confrontation is unavoidable, use any nearby objects as projectiles and try to distract them.

Do your best to prevent the incident from happening in the first place. Alert the proper authorities at any and all suspicions, but do so discreetly without causing hysteria.

From Campus Safety Magazine