

Where is safe? Teens becoming numb to continuing violence

By **Gabby Bishop and Greta Reel**

 @TheHyphenNews

Current seniors at Jeffersonville High School weren't alive when the Columbine High School shooting took place 19 years ago. Now, teens are more used to the school violence than ever

In America, the average gun homicide rate is around 13,000 people a year, which is over 25 times the average of other high-income countries. Since the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012, over 400 people have been shot in more than 200 school shootings nationwide.

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- Evening News and Tribune Editor
Susan Duncan

To students in today’s society, school shootings are no longer the tragic massacre of peers -- people with lives and families -- but another statistic in their common world.

So the question is: are Americans becoming numb to the consistent violence, and is the media unintentionally glorifying shootings with constant coverage?

Susan Duncan, editor for the *Evening News and Tribune* doesn’t believe the news is causing romanticization. However, she agrees that gun violence isn’t as surprising anymore.

“You’ve lost the shock factor,” Duncan explained, referring to shootings. “There’s an initial shock, but then there’s also that ‘Oh my gosh, here we go again.’

“But I think to point to the media as unintentionally glorifying, I think that’s a falsehood,” she continued. “If people are getting desensitized, it’s not because we’re writing stories about it -- it’s because these things are happening.”

Jeffersonville High School radio/TV teacher Tim Dench thinks teens are becoming desensitized to gun violence.

“Teenagers nowadays think nothing of shootings,” Dench said. “Years ago, when there was a robbery, a shooting, or some crime, it usually involved a 30 or 40-year-old

adult... Now (it’s people) in their young 20s and a lot of times even into their teens; and the younger generation, they think nothing of using guns.”

Dench believes constant coverage of massacres may glorify guns, but the media has to cover it due to First Amendment rights.

“It is news. It’s not good news, but news is news, and it’s the job of the media to report the news,” he continued.

Jeff High sophomore Hailey Lathan believes she, too, is becoming numb to consistent violence.

“So much violence is going on in today’s world it seems as if the world wouldn’t be normal without it,” Lathan said. “I think media is bringing somewhat more awareness to school shootings, though some kids find it as an excuse to make a joke of it.”

According to Duncan, though, the news media should not be seen as the only blame to this desensitization. With most of the world on social media apps like Twitter or Facebook, being able to argue is easier than ever.

“There’s an anger that you see on social media that if it were one-on-one interactions, you wouldn’t see. It has empowered the worst in us... People feel that they can just go after people,” she said.

Even though media could be considered a major factor for desensitization, it can also be seen as a way to show people the terror of these shooting. For example, videos of the Parkland, Fla. shooting spread like wildfire through social media. This first person point-of-view insight showed the true horror of what it is like to be a victim in a school shooting.

“You saw it, heard it, felt it from the inside that time. You could hear the terror, you could hear the screams, you could hear the gunfire,” Duncan said. “I remember seeing one angle of a student who had clearly... dove to the dirty, dusty floor to try to stay alive.”

School shootings have become a national epidemic, though one that people have the power to stop. It’s up to Americans to resolve it, and Duncan thinks the recent shooting in Parkland, Fla. will mark a change.

“I think (it’s) kind of a different dynamic that we’re seeing this time,” Duncan said. “This time it didn’t happen to little kids; it happened to kids who can think for themselves and take actions for themselves.”



Bella Bungcayao (Hyphen staff):

“It’s a huge problem that in my lifetime, I’ve seen the face of the largest mass shooting in the history of our country change multiple times. Sitting around saying, ‘Guns don’t kill people, people kill people’ won’t decrease any of the casualties. A balance of mental-health care reform and limiting who has firearms is the way to go to watch these numbers slow.”



Micah Rodrigues (sophomore) :

“I feel gun control is necessary and that we should have more of it. What I mean is that people under the age of 21 shouldn’t be allowed to buy a gun, let alone an automatic or semi-automatic rifle. If a person isn’t allowed to purchase alcohol until they’re 21, then how come an 18-year-old can buy an AR-15? Pistols are for defense, shotguns and regular rifles can be for hunting, and AR-15’s are for killing. Bottom line.”



Stephanie Detzer (English teacher) :

“I am not opposed to people owning guns; however, they should be considerably more difficult to purchase. Also, I don’t believe civilians should not have access to assault rifles. There is no need for them in everyday life. The laws we have now are putting people in danger, and something needs to be done.”

School security in limelight following Parkland

By Kyle Sanders

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With school violence fresh on the minds of high school students and parents, all eyes are on Jeffersonville High School, and how the school is making an effort to prove to its community how safe it really is

In an era marked by tragic school shootings, school safety continues to become a hot button topic.

It started on April 20, 1999, when two teenagers at Columbine High School in Colorado planted explosives and shot students, killing 12 and one teacher in the process. This event in 1999 thrust school safety into the national spotlight, which has now grown into a wildfire almost two decades later.

After recent events at Marjory Douglas Stoneman High School in Parkland, Fla. and multiple other high schools across the country, school safety has become a top-tier priority.

At Jeffersonville High School, there are multiple aspects and measures that go into every school day to ensure the safety of students. Take just a few steps into Jeff High, look up, and there is at least one camera in the area, maybe more.

“Having extra eyes in the sky would make me feel safer,” said senior Brennan Schansberg. “(It helps) knowing that there will be more evidence against the culprit if an incident does occur.”

Cameras allow for video surveillance that can be helpful in watching over staff, students and visitors in the building. The recordings help ensure the safety of people in the building, and can be useful in identifying illegal actions, and the perpetrators of those actions.

Additionally, the video surveillance gathered can be useful if the matter goes to court.

According to Assistant Principal Charles Marshall, Jeff High has “a substantial amount of cameras” in and around the high school, as well as additional ones that have been added within the past few years. But not everyone thinks they’re as helpful as they may seem.

“I don’t think the cameras help ensure the safety of students at all,” said teacher Mark Felix. “I think they help show which students are doing wrong after the fact. We don’t have someone sitting down there watching monitors at all times.”

In addition to cameras, locked doors are vital to the safety of students and staff. While all teacher classrooms lock automatically when the door is closed, doors that lead outside of the school can be crucial to the safety of students. Locked doors can lead to keeping the students and staff safe, while giving the perpetrator a more difficult task of getting into classrooms.

Just days after Parkland, principal Julie Straight took to the morning announcements to plead with both students and teachers to keep the outer doors closed at all times during the school day. Traditionally, the only way to enter JHS from the outside is through a key fob, or to have the front office buzz visitors in.

“Keeping doors locked is extremely important for



Following the Parkland, Fla. shooting, threats of violence were made against Jeffersonville High School. With both parents and students on high alert, some were signed out of school early once the threat was circulated on social media. The front office saw more than 700 absences during the day. *photo by Sam Gatewood*

the safety of individuals within the school,” said senior Haley Adams. “It is essential that students stop opening side doors for outsiders to enter into the school without going through the safety system school has in place.”

But even when all of these precautions fail, JHS has taken to more direct practice to ensure the safety of all.

“It is essential that students stop opening side doors for outsiders to enter into the school without going through the safety system school has in place.”
- senior Haley Adams

A few times a year, the school practices lockdown drills, where students and staff must find the safest way to stay hidden in case of a school shooter.

These practices, though, aren’t only at Jeff High. Lockdown drills are very keen at Southwestern High School in Shelbyville, Ind., which has been dubbed the Safe School Flagship and “Best Practice Solution” by

the Indiana Sheriffs' Association.

Southwestern has implemented an emergency fob, which sets off a school-wide alarm and notifies local law enforcement. Students are taught to barricade themselves in a corner, out of view of a potential shooter, behind a locked, bullet-proof door.

“I guess everybody does it (the lock down drill) differently,” Felix said. “Basically you use common sense and make sure you can get to safety. If you can get out of the building, get out. If you have to fight back as a last resort, fight back.”

And still there is one more important aspect to school safety: a school’s resource officers. In the case of Jeff High, that is officer Rusty Settles.

The National Association of Resource Officers (NASRO) is made up of school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and school safety professionals working as partners to protect students, faculty and staff, and their school community. School resource officers, like Settles, are in the school all day, watching the hallways and watching the actions of students.

As school tragedies continue to occur throughout the country one thing will continue to be of utmost importance, making sure students return home safely each and every day.