

Hi everyone and thanks for stopping by this document to read these thoughts and hopefully gain some insights that can be applied to make our schools a little safer and our nation a little happier.

I wrote a 7-item list, off the top of my head, and posted it to Facebook on Friday 2-23-18, just out of sheer frustration with the tone and direction the national conversation was going after the latest mass school shooting at Parkland. It was just a Facebook post. I thought some of my friends would read it. That's it. I mainly just wanted an outlet to vent. I had no idea it would be shared over 80,000 times in the next 72 hours and bring so much attention.

I'm getting thousands of friend requests and hundreds of heartfelt messages and requests for assistance. I simply don't have time to get back to everyone, so this document is my way of placing the original list somewhere where it can be permanently hosted, printed, linked to, and shared outside of the chaos and flash-in-the-pan nature of a viral Facebook post. I will post the original list here, then elaborate and create a FAQ below. Please be patient, the bottom of the document will be growing over the next days/weeks as I budget some time to work on this. I do have a family and full time business to run, so please be patient with me as I continue to work on this as able.

Kindest Regards,  
Clint Fiore

\*\*\* Disclaimer: All thoughts shared here and on my facebook page are my own opinions and don't represent any organization or any organization I used to be employed by. Nobody is paying me to write my opinions. I'm not selling anything or asking for your vote. I don't currently work in education or the school safety field and am a self-employed small business owner. I am simply a concerned citizen and father that wants our nation to be a safer and happier place to live and send our kids to school in. I am also not responsible for the actions of others that choose to listen to or not listen to my advice. If you don't like my opinions or advice, you are welcome to ignore and disregard them- that's fine too.

Here's the link to the original post:

<https://www.facebook.com/clint.fiore/posts/10101395810027708>

Here's the text of the original post:

Defending guns is getting tiresome. The same impossible-to-implement gun-control ideas are trotted out after every shooting with a fixation on the scary object. Few of you on my friends list know I dedicated years of my life right after college to a program born out of Columbine that's the most effective at reducing school shooting tragedies and that I've traveled the country visit to middle schools and high schools in 30+ states speaking and doing work to make schools safer.

I am an expert on this school safety topic and also somewhat of an expert on guns as they're a big part of my life from also working in the hunting/outdoor industry for years and being a CCW holder, and well-trained gun owner and dedicated sportsman and shooter.

And I am friends with the top experts doing the best work in schools to make them safer, several of which were at the White House this week.

If anyone wants to talk actual solutions to make our children safer and school shootings less frequent, here's my suggestions on things that will actually work:

1) Fatherlessness needs to be addressed. Kids need dads- most shooters don't have an involved dad. Can we connect boys without fathers to father-figure mentors? This is also a theme in the inner-city, less-publicized, yet more-frequent gun crimes in minority communities.

2) Adults need to be held accountable. The Parkland shooting last week is 'Exhibit A' on that. Dozens of adults at the school, local law enforcement agencies, and even the FBI knew about this kid and what he said he was going to do. Another adult, the SRO on duty, could have stopped it while it was happening but never went in. How many adults around this situation will be charged with crimes like negligence or manslaughter for their blatant failures? My guess is zero. How many will lose their jobs? My guess is zero. Nobody does anything because you risk nothing by doing nothing and get in trouble if you take a proactive approach and try to do address things before the blood is spilled. This is up and down our education and law enforcement systems.

3) Boys need safe environments to fight and let out their physical aggression. Young men involved in physically violent sports like football, wrestling, karate, etc. typically do not become mass murderers. I feel like our present culture is trying to take the fight out of our boys, but it's still hard-wired into them. Where no healthy outlets for this natural aggression exist, unhealthy ones will take their place.

4) The role of pharmaceutical drugs in mass shootings needs to be thoroughly investigated. It's too common of a theme to be ignored as a potential factor. Too many of our kids are getting drugged up instead of getting the care they really need. Right on the labels of these mood-altering drugs are side effects like "Hallucinations- loss of contact with reality." and "Suicidal thoughts." Yet we don't immediately ask about the prescriptions these kids are on, instead focusing on what kind of gun they used.

5) Training kids to huddle together as stationary targets on the ground, HAS TO STOP. It's stupid and getting our kids killed in greater numbers during these events. If they can't get in a secured room separated from the shooter, they need to run or fight, period. Get

out the window or tackle the shooter etc are all way better things to teach. There are great programs to better train our kids on how to react to this threat.

6) Empower and encourage teachers and school administrators to have a plan, have the support of the district, and secure their classrooms the way they're comfortable with. Too many wonderful teachers with hearts of lions for protecting their kids are fearful bringing up their desires to their bosses whom will point to policy and liability concerns over common-sense solutions the teacher needs and wants. Teachers, if you don't get the support you need, do what you need to do anyways quietly. Damn the system. Keep our kids safe. There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer here, but all kinds of things could help like: ways to block/harden doors, weapons (gun or non-gun) to have a fighting chance if a shooter makes it through the door, and additional escape options like rope ladders for 2nd story windows teachers can deploy, etc. We can't have a cop everywhere and even if we do, there's no guarantee they won't be taking their sweet time outside like the Parkland SRO did while your class is in the crosshairs. Teachers are right there and the first line of defense and they need to think about it and take it seriously and not get in trouble if they do.

7) Finally, and most importantly, we need to improve the culture of our nation and our schools. We need to value human life highly. We need love. We need kindness. We need compassion. We need to look for the kids that are becoming isolated and need help and go help them. We need more than just anger at what's wrong, we need to celebrate the good stories and champions of kindness. Kids that care for one another don't kill each other. We need to touch the hearts of kids and train them up in morality and virtue- not just pack their heads full of information. This is exactly what we focused on when I worked for Rachel's Challenge, one of the top anti-violence programs in the country, and we saw tons of lives saved by changing the culture of schools from the inside out. (would-be-shooters with kill lists turning themselves in, gang members laying down their colors, suicides planned for that night canceled, etc.) Invite them to your school as a great way to start this cultural transformation.

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END POST

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Again, this was not a doctoral thesis. This was a simple Facebook post from a heartbroken dad grieving with the families of Parkland and sharing some ideas I thought might help other parents and teachers/administrators from other schools answer the burning question of "What can we do????". If I'd have known how big the post was going to go, I would have spent a lot more time on it. So please don't take my 7-item list too seriously or treat it as comprehensive or infallible.

I'd like to elaborate on each of the 7 points here, and also create a FAQ to address the common comments I found myself responding to over and over during the weekend's viral explosion of my post.

## Elaboration on Each Point

- 1) Fatherlessness. I strongly stand by this one. Look at the people committing school shootings and you'll see boys- boys without active dads in their lives. Of course you can find exceptions, but I believe this will be true in over 90% of incidents like this. Look it up if you don't believe me. Similarly, if you look up violent crime stats and incarceration of all kinds, you'll see this theme repeated. Fatherlessness is at epidemic levels. We need GOOD dads, and where there is no dad (or the dad is no-good), we need other male role models to be stand-ins. I've had many people say, "This is impossible! You can't fix fatherlessness!" - "But we *can* improve it!" is my response. Here are some ideas:
  - a) Good dads reading this: keep being a good dad, but also look for ways to be a stand-in for other kids with missing dads or bad dads. Take this personally! So many fathers are shirking their responsibility here that us good ones need to put in some overtime to help make up for the difference. Here's some practical ways:
    - i) Volunteer as a mentor with a group like Big Brother and Big Sisters. It's a fantastic organization with easy opportunities to be there for kids that are already pre-identified as needing a mentor. As little as once per month can make a huge difference in a boys' life. Many schools also are looking for dads and have mentorship programs. There's opportunities in every town, normally with a long waiting list of boys that need mentors. My town has a constant need for male volunteers and not enough step up.
    - ii) Adopt a child. Seriously, think about it. If your heart is moved to make the biggest difference here, I don't think there's a higher calling to fighting fatherlessness than becoming a full-time father to an orphan. I personally am hoping to step up and adopt one or two in the coming years and want to practice what I preach here. It's a big commitment, but every family I know that has adopted swears it was the best decision they ever made.
    - iii) Coach a local sports team. There's a huge need for this, and it's a lot of fun. Teach them the game and also sportsmanship and character along the way. You don't have to be a superstar athlete or sports strategist, you just need to care and show up and try.
    - iv) Take a boy without a father along with your family the next time you go camping or do an outdoor activity. Two days in the mountains or woods for someone that never gets to go and doesn't have a dad, can do as much good impact as two years of mentoring that kid inside their school in my opinion. Take him off his electronics, and out of his comfort zone and watch what happens!
    - v) Get more involved at your kids' school. Frankly, it's embarrassing how many PTA's and other parent groups at schools are pretty much exclusively mom-clubs. Go and invite your favorite fellow dad friend so you won't be the lone male and go wreck shop! =) Respect the ladies that

have stepped up where we haven't, listen to them first and foremost, but get in there and have some fun and let your voice be heard too.

- b) This one's a tricky one, but I'm gonna go there: Can we consider reforming our court systems and judges to not be so slanted against non-violent, non-criminal dads being able to see their kids after a divorce? Of course we need to protect moms and kids from bad and abusive dads that shouldn't be coming around- and I think we're doing a relatively-okay job at that. But, for example, I personally have a friend that's a cop and a great dad of two boys, no criminal record, who had a falling out with his wife, and he's barely to ever see his kids. He's a great dad and his kids are his life and heart. His poor relationship with his ex-wife shouldn't prevent him from barely seeing them in my opinion. I can't help but wonder, "How often is this happening?" It's bad enough that there's so many kids with dads that don't want to see them, which makes it extra heartbreaking when there are good dads out there that can't get access to their own kids due to court-assigned custody arrangements so heavily favoring moms even when the dads are non-violent and non-criminal and want to have more custody and time with their kiddos.
  - c) Can we celebrate great dads again in TV commercials, social media posts, movies and media? Can we make it cool to be a competent, kickass dad again? I feel like dads have been typecast as this useless, clueless, worthless, comedic, homer-simpson-like oafs across all forms of media for decades... and many are starting to match the stereotype. Not sure if it's a chicken or the egg thing, but c'mon moms get the hero treatment (AND THEY DESERVE IT, THEY ARE HEROS!), but there's hero dads as well. Let's celebrate them too!
- 2) Accountability for Adults. Okay, I readily admit I know the least about this topic out of all seven, but I felt very strongly about this one in light of how bad the adults and the system failed in this latest shooting. I strongly believe the Parkland shooting was preventable in advance- and many adults had the opportunity to prevent it based on the many, many blatant threats and warning signs (direct threats on YouTube, texts and social media, sending people pics of guns and saying directly he was going to be the next school shooter and threatening to shoot kids in the head via text messages etc in advance of the shooting, and him getting reported to law enforcement many times).

I don't all the answers here, but clearly our school administrators as well as local and federal law enforcement (FBI etc) knew about this young man and did not intervene effectively. At what point are adults responsible for not acting to protect our kids? It seems like the things Cruz did in advance of this shooting [were enough for arrest](#), charges (which would prohibit him from owning guns) and other interventions including psychiatric or criminal actions. I suspect many people dropped the ball, and I also

suspect there won't be accountability for them. Why? Because I rarely see accountability from adults that had the power and job to stop something but don't.

I also strongly feel like it could have stopped much sooner by the officers that stalled outside the school during the attack and didn't go in. These school shooters consistently fold the moment they're confronted with armed resistance- Columbine taught all law enforcement a new paradigm. They need to rush immediately to gunfire in schools to save lives. If a sworn officer is not up for the task and fails, costing the lives of the children they should be protecting, there should be consequences. And if officers were ordered not to go in by their leadership, those people should also be held accountable.

Let's review all of these systems and get better standards in place for those that are supposed to be protecting our kids, and have consequences for abject failure.

- 3) Boys needing physicality in their lives and outlets for aggression. I caught a lot of flack for this one, but I stand by it. Yes, girls can benefit from the same things too. No, not all boys need to play football or be a "jock" and I know there are exceptions to everything. (I can't believe the amount of disclaimers you have to say nowadays if you point out any differences between boys and girls). But boys are indeed more prone to aggression and violence (just like they have higher sex drives as well) and they need to be taught how to handle themselves properly on both fronts of their aggressiveness and sexuality and learn to behave like gentlemen. Being a gentleman doesn't mean abstaining from physicality or denying your hard-wiring exists. Gentlemen don't have to be in "fighting" sports like the ones mentioned, even things like just getting outside and hiking, doing yoga, are all helpful. Get them to use up that energy in healthy ways. Bonus points if you also give them community, camaraderie, teamwork, self-control, and sportsmanship along the way. Sports and physicality does a lot of good. I know there are many studies to support this- Google it. But the benefits are obvious if you ask anyone that's participated in physical pursuits. Even as a grown man I am much happier, more focused, more confident, and well-behaved when I get in an intense workout versus being sedentary.
- 4) Pharmaceuticals influence. I'm just recommending this be studied further. I'm no expert. It just seems so common that it could be a "where there's smoke, there's fire" thing and in my opinion it warrants further study. This hits very close to home for me. One of my nextdoor neighbors flipped out and killed his family and himself not long ago. This was a man I knew relatively well and had known for years. It was horrific and rocked my neighborhood and community. This was a beloved man with a sweet adopted son he nurtured through all kinds of hardship, and he loved that little boy with all his heart... he killed the young boy along with his sweetheart wife before mortally wounding himself and showing up incoherent at another neighbor's house crying and in hysterics. This man had injured his achilles tendon and had multiple painful surgeries within the last 2 months and was on painkillers and antidepressants according to family I spoke with. I

can't help but believe they played a role. I also believe many of the school shooters are taking mood-altering and antidepressant either at the time of the shootings, or near the time and have recently come off of them. Let's just look into it. Let's study it. Leave no stone unturned. I also believe we should have a right to know when a mass shooting happens, what drugs the killers were on or not so we can look for evidence and patterns.

- 5) If someone has a gun in a school and has a goal of racking up the highest body count possible, *make it as hard as possible for them*. Don't train your kids to be sitting ducks. The 9-1-1 recording I heard hundreds of times of the Columbine Librarian (bless her heart, she was unprepared and doing her best) screaming at her kids to "Get under the tables kids, UNDER THE TABLES!" still haunts me. Most kids that died at Columbine died under those tables in the library. Eric and Dylan proceeded to casually walk up to the tables and execute innocent kids as they cowered in fear, obediently following their panicked leader's orders. They need to be sprinting out doors and away from the school. Out of windows the other direction if there's a shooter on the other side of a door. Even a well-trained shooter struggles to hit a moving target sprinting at full clip. Most of these murderers are very unskilled shooters, preferring point-blank, stationary opportunities. Don't give them easy targets.

Another difficult to talk about but salient point, is you have a roughly 80% chance of living if you get shot by a gun where medical attention is available soon. Teachers and students need to know "if you're not dead, you're not dead, keep moving, don't let them shoot you again, keep fleeing, keep fighting." Hollywood conditions us to think it's all over if you get shot, but it's usually not. Don't give up. Never give up. Keep working for your survival and the survival of others as long as you have breath. You can do it. People have done amazing things even while shot. [Here's an example](#) of a 17 year old boy who single-handedly stopped a mass-shooting by tackling and subduing a 15 year old boy shooter in a crowded cafeteria, *after getting shot through his lung*. Incredible feats of courage have been performed by people shot multiple times all over the world. If you're not out of the fight, you're not out of the fight. Keep moving. Keep fighting.

Let's teach children where all exits are, and have them be quick to flee and escape, never huddle or wait. As a last ditch, fighting gives you a much better chance of survival if there's nowhere to flee and you find yourself trapped or cornered. If no other options to escape are possible, take the fight to the shooter. If anyone had been able to tackle Cruz or get an angle from the side or behind where you're not in front of the muzzle of his rifle and wrap him up in a bear hug- even without super-ninja fighting skills, the rifle is neutralized at that point and it's just kids fighting on the ground. If other kids joined in they could get the rifle away. We need to teach kids this is legitimately possible and a gun doesn't make someone invincible, and getting shot doesn't usually make you dead.

In any lone wolf (single attacker) mass shooting, if the attacker is simultaneously rushed

by 2-5 people, even if they're all unarmed, most likely the shooting will be over in moments. And one person alone even has a fair chance, especially if they initiate the action while the shooter is looking at another target or distracted by the chaos of the scene. Take him to the ground. Yell for help. Wrestle the gun away.

The more kids understand this stuff, the better chances they have at surviving. Adults, all this applies to you to, which brings me to point 6...

- 6) Teachers and school staff taking responsibility for their own schools' security. Even if lawmakers won't give you what you want. Even if it's not in the budget. Even if your administrative leadership doesn't want you to. Own it. Yes you, the only adult in a classroom full of littles, that means you. I'm sorry this is unpleasant. I'm sorry this sucks. I'm sorry we have to have this conversation. But please, go there in your mind, ask yourself, "What would I do? What could I do? What should I do?" and come up with some answers. If you don't take your mind there now, it will be too late if the wolf is at your door and your class is under attack.

Ideally, this will be from the top-down. Superintendents and Principals should be coming up with intelligent plans to deal with an active shooter situation, bringing in experts for help coming up with and implementing their school's plan as needed, and giving you the tools and training to deal with this situation and maximize your odds of survival.

If however your school administration chooses a really dumb plan, or takes a 'bury their head in the sand, hope for the best' approach, you need to realize you're on your own and still think of ways you individually can make your class a little more safe. Here are some ideas to help you get started, but please consult with someone in your life you trust with some fighting or life-saving experience to help you devise a strategy that you're comfortable with:

- a) Life saving first aid tools and skills. For example, learn how to apply a tourniquet and have a high quality one in your purse or classroom. They're not expensive and not hard to learn how to apply. Being able to stop bleeding from a gunshot to an extremity can save lives. This will keep a victim alive often until help can arrive. Most people shot don't die instantly and can be helped if you can stop catastrophic bleeding. I am not an EMT or pro in this area, but ask an EMT or firefighter, or doctor for advice and they'll be happy to help.
- b) Guns. Yes, the G-word. I'm going there. These shootings in progress 99% of the time stop the moment the 2nd gun shows up. (If guns freak you out, or if you hate them or are fundamentally opposed to them, stop reading this section and go to C now- I have ideas for you too.) If you're comfortable with guns, know how to safely operate them or are willing to learn, you should consider carrying one, *especially* if it's legal for you to do so. Ideally, school administrations will allow



permitted carry by trained staff. Just remember to keep it either on your body in a deep-concealment holster that adequately protects the trigger and hides it from view of students (they should never know, concealed means *concealed*), or securely under a lock to which only you have the key if concealing in a desk or elsewhere off-body at a school. If your school does not allow permitted concealed carry, but you are trained and comfortable doing so and wish they did... you have a grown-up decision to make. Consider the consequences if detected and likelihood of being detected (should be close to zero if you know what you're doing), and decide for yourself. Consequences vary wildly state to state and school to school for getting caught carrying. Do your research. Make your decision.

A sane adult, reasonably skilled with a handgun with one target to engage is indeed capable of neutralizing an insane teenager that's unfocused with hundreds of targets moving around them, even if the attacker is better equipped with a semi-automatic rifle (or a duffle bag full of guns). It's not the kind of gun that wins the fight, it's the person with the best skills and tactics that will usually win - especially if you can manage the element of surprise or attack from a flanking position or from the rear. Don't make it a fair fight. Don't announce yourself. Stop it as quickly and unfairly as possible.

These shooters generally want to kill, not to meet armed resistance, which is why they target schoolchildren and not police stations or gun shows. Many times when a shooter simply sees an adult with a gun prepared to fight, they flee or take their own life (don't count on this, be ready to fight and win, but it's a common occurrence). The less-known [Clackamas Mall Shooting](#) is an example where young man attacker with an AR-15 and hundreds of rounds of ammunition was confronted by a licensed concealed carrier with a common Glock handgun. The conceal carrier was carrying in a mall with no-guns-allowed signage and thousands of people inside, and likely ended a would-have-been mass killing by simply taking cover and taking aim at the attacker- who saw him and retreated to a nearby stairwell and immediately took his own life. There are lots of examples like this but they're harder to find and harder to prove 'what would have happened' and exactly how many lives were saved, since it's unprovable.

Another similar example in a school environment was [Arapahoe High School](#), where a SRO deputy sprinted immediately towards the gunfire as a heavily armed young man with a shotgun and molotov cocktails began an assault on the school. As the deputy approached, the gunman took his own life. The Sheriff, from the article, "He praised the deputy's response as "a critical element to the shooter's decision" to kill himself". Tragically one student died, but not 10, 20, or 30. This is what the Parkland SRO should have done yet failed to do.

When an armed adult sprints to the gunfire, the shooting is probably about to be over one way or another.

You know if you're capable of carrying and potentially utilizing a gun or not. If you're not, you're not. That's okay. Not everyone is. I'll never advocate an "arm all teachers!" approach. That would be foolish. If guns aren't for you, let's talk non-lethal or less-lethal options.

- c) Non-lethal. Could you stop a shooter with an AR-15 with pepper spray, a common hammer, or a taser? Actually, *it is possible!* You could bare-handed too potentially, but more tools give you more options. While your kids are escaping out the window or a back hallway, can you position yourself where the shooter can't see you, but he has to walk by you *extremely close*, like around a tight corner or on the other side of a doorway, crouched against the wall. If the muzzle of the rifle comes through where you're positioned to the side, it's time to pounce. A rifle can't shoot you sideways. Tackle. Or grab rifle with left hand while pepper spraying generously with right hand, then tackle. Or Tase and tackle. Either way you've now got a fight with often a smallish, disoriented boy that you can win, that's unable to shoot you easily and is suddenly partially blind or partially incapacitated. You're not up against Arnold Schwarzenegger as Terminator; usually it's an awkward, troubled boy. You can win that. Yes, you 120 pound female teacher. You legitimately have a chance. And if you can get into that struggle on the ground, keep fighting and yelling for help. Fight dirty. Fight for your life. You'll probably win. If you lose and get shot you'll probably survive. If you don't survive you'll probably save many, many lives of kids that you bought time to escape while you were engaged.

I know many teachers have died in these shootings. Very few died while tangled up with a shooter though to my knowledge. Most were heroically using their bodies to shield the students or draw fire their direction to buy students a chance to escape. Those teachers paid the highest price and are heroes. Getting tangled up with the shooter though, if you can pull it off, not only makes you a hero, but also maximizes your chances of more effectively saving kids' lives and surviving yourself as well. Distance is not your friend if you're unarmed or have a non-lethal tool or blunt object versus a firearm. You need to get behind cover and get them in close to you. If you're going to confront, be quiet and hide ready to pounce, and get past the gun and tangled up close.

- d) I've talked a lot about fighting, but escape should be the #1 option always. Know your escape routes. Get your kids out of harm's way! Get cheap glass breakers [like this off Amazon](#) if there's windows that need to be broken as a potential escape option if you're in a typical classroom with large windows but only one door. (Hey those babies look like they'd be handy in a fight too! But I digress...)

Also consider emergency escape ladders if on a 2nd or 3rd story staged in a cabinet or bag in your room that your kids can deploy and utilize.

- 7) Changing our culture. Like I said in my post, this is by far the most important point of all. Bring organizations like [Rachel's Challenge](#) or [Ambassadors of Compassion](#) to your school regularly. They're excellent. They can help train up your kids and staff and transform your culture.

What you want in your school culture is kindness, compassion, connectedness, community. You want your kids to be heat-seeking-missiles for opportunities to reach out to outcasts and those that are struggling with tough situations at home. You want mentally challenged kids in your school to be everyone's favorites instead of being picked on. Nobody eats lunch alone. You want bullies to be made fun of and kind kids to be the cool kids. Celebrate random acts of kindness. Train character. Teach virtues and values. That's the kind of culture that creates a safe environment. That's the kind of culture where kids don't want to kill each other.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (Here's where I'll attempt to answer the most common questions and responses I got from the thousands of comments on my original post):**

#### **Q: If you could write you list over again, what would be point #8?**

A: It would probably be the media's glorification of the killers. Every. Single. Time. It infuriates me. It encourages copy-cats and we know this for a fact! Some killers cite this first-hand that they want to be famous and they admired previous killers' notoriety. Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, even sent a full-on media kit to NBC, *and they aired it- basically following the exact desires and instructions of the killer*. I lost all faith in ethical media practices around school shootings after NBC's handling of Virginia Tech and all other networks following suit lockstep, not wanting to be one-upped by NBC and lose ratings. It's clear to me our mainstream media needs shape up. I don't know if this is achieved by Congress, the FCC, or just all of us refusing to watch their terrible coverage or give them a penny of our money until they change.

Media people reading this, the proper way to do this, if you're listening or care (which I'm pretty sure you don't), is especially for the first 72 hours to make the emphasis all about the victims, the heroes, and the responses to it, not wall-to-wall photos of the killers' deranged face 24/7. Most of the time we know very little about the killer and exactly how and why they carried out this horrendous crime the first 72 hours anyways. Do a thorough report on the killer and all the facts you carefully verified about the killer later, but don't give them the glory they want at the height of the shock immediately after the shooting.

#### **Q: Why can't we just get metal detectors?**

A: I think we need to consider all options on school security enhancements, but I'm a little surprised at how many commenters on my FB post were literally shouting things like, "THEY DO

THIS AT EVERY AIRPORT AND NOBODY GETS SHOT - WE NEED METAL DETECTORS AT EVERY SCHOOL!!!!” As if that was *the* answer that would solve this issue in one fell swoop.

Here’s the problem with metal detectors: *they’re only good at detecting metal*. They don’t actually stop anything from happening unless accompanied by security personnel. They need people to operate them, and furthermore, if you really want them to be useful- *armed people*. Because, what good would they be without an armed person who could stop a shooter if someone attempting to pass through it and commit a school shooting could just shoot the metal detector operator with no resistance? In many of these shootings, the students come to the door already brandishing their guns, so detection isn’t the problem. Security doors that can deny access to areas and contain a shooter and personnel that can stop a shooter may be better investments. However, metal detectors do have their place if you have the armed personnel to support them and want a more secure area or events- they’re just hard to make *the* solution for day-to-day entry and egress of all the millions of humans going into and out of all schools.

Many schools throughout the country I visited had thousands of students and dozens of doors. This would make metal detection at every point of entry unfeasible. Another couple of drawbacks are: If you reduce the number of doors at a school, you end up with fire hazards and traffic flow problems. (Imagine having to go through TSA security at an airport 4-6 times per day, every day, and you’ll get the idea of what some people are imagining putting their High School students through.) Also, I believe it’s been proven that students learn much better in positive environments than prison-like ones, and I hope in all this discussion we don’t forget the primary reasons we have schools in the first place (They’re not just places to keep kids from dying while their parents are at work.)

**Q: What about other security measures to control access and prevent shooters from being able to get in?**

A: Absolutely, we need improvements here. However, I want people to know there is no panacea when it comes to school security without turning our schools into prison-like fortresses. But even the most high-tech prisons and military installations with the best security systems money can buy are still useless without skilled, armed guards at the gates and on the walls. So nothing can be solved with hardware exclusively without considering the human side.

My favorite ideas here are simple, cheap, effective means of controlling doors that teachers, staff, and even students can operate. Classroom doors being reasonably strong with a strong locking mechanisms so any student can lock it from the inside are effective at keeping people out- then an override key so when the shooting is over, school staff or law enforcement can easily open from the outside/hallway. This would also mean if the occasional student prankster locked a teacher out of the classroom, the school could gain access back easily- but unwanted guests would not be able to. See someone bad coming? Lock the door. Simple, intuitive, and anyone can do it at almost any age. And a tone or word over existing intercom systems and a

little training could get every classroom to know there's a lockdown at the same time so everyone can take the appropriate action.

I hear many touting swipe cards or fingerprint readers at every door for every student. I'm on the fence here because those types of systems are very expensive and can be defeated as simply as a shooter following someone in, and many shooters are students anyways so they'd have their own ability to access. These systems could indeed help, but again aren't an end-all-be-all and have plenty of vulnerabilities. We need to make security improvements while being mindful of the tradeoffs with budgets and distraction from the mission of learning.

Other questions worth exploring when it comes to school designs are: How could we see a shooter coming sooner so as to spring into action and deny access before they get in the door? How could we contain a shooter to an area if they get inside? How could we evacuate students most efficiently?

**Q: Why do you think gun control is impossible?** They did it in Australia! We are the only developed nation in the world that has this problem!

A: This response is going to be kind of its own essay because I think this question deserves some time since it was so commonly asked of me. So here are some of the many reasons I think substantial, legitimate, Australia-style, gun control is impossible in the USA:

1. The quantity of guns that we have here is unfathomable to most people. We literally have more civilian-owned guns than humans here. We don't know exactly how many but it's probably 400-500 million guns in private hands in the USA and climbing fast. Australia, England, and others that instituted various gun bans didn't have the tiniest fraction of the amount of guns we have here. It's not fringe here. It's mainstream- beyond mainstream- common. It's estimated about 100,000,000 people own guns here, so that's 1 in 3 americans or probably around half of all adults, with an average of 4-5 guns each! China has a million people in their army. Wisconsin has a million people with rifles, just in Wisconsin! (I won't even *tell you* about Texas- but it's at least 10X that) With that many, there's no practical way to get rid of them. If you make them all illegal, guns will become kind of like marijuana- more expensive than if it was fully legal, but easy to get if you really want some in all 50 states. Guns are way more mainstream than marijuana and "all the kings' horses and all the kings' men" couldn't get rid of marijuana- but we did effectively fill all our prisons to the brim and spent 100's of billions trying to rid our nation of marijuana along our glacial-pace path to failing and giving up at it.
2. Our culture is unique. Our nation was literally birthed by civilians with rifles stickin' it to the man- and it's been in our Constitution and DNA ever since. It's not just the quantity of guns that's unfathomable, it's the quantity of *gun-lovers*. If you live in a blue state and don't own guns, don't need a gun, and none of your friends own guns... that's cool. No problem. *But that's not what the red states are like*. Seriously, half of the country is in

full-on-love with owning guns. You may not see any good reason to own guns, *but they do*. And it ain't just for hunting. It's for self protection, shooting sports, protection from foreign army invasion, and protection from government tyranny to name a few of the reasons they will cite. You may think they're all wrong and crazy and that those are all crazy reasons, and you may interpret the 2nd Amendment totally differently than them... but what you think doesn't matter to them. They believe it with all their hearts and the non-hunting reasons they want guns justifies their desire to own the kinds of "built-for-killing" guns you especially don't like. And they won't surrender them. They wouldn't 10 shootings ago and they won't this shooting. You can't hashtag-shame these people away. It's a deeply held view they won't compromise on. Many literally believe it's their "God-given right" to own firearms, so essentially changing their minds is as easy as changing their religion. Have you ever tried to make a Muslim not a Muslim or a Hindu not a Hindu? I bet you wouldn't try, because you know you likely couldn't. You may not understand everything about Muslims and Hindus. They may seem foreign and strange or wrong to you. But you should know they're really dug-in on their beliefs and hard to change. Such are the 100 million gun-loving residents of the USA.

3. Enforceability. That really is what 'did-in' Prohibition on alcohol. Good idea in theory maybe... Should save a lot of lives since alcohol is so dangerous... but there's a big problem. Nobody will comply with the law! Everybody just kept right on drinking just moved it underground. The nation became a nation of "scofflaws". There's not enough federal agents to enforce it, and states have limited resources and very little desire to enforce difficult-to-enforce laws that their states' citizens don't follow or agree with. The sheriff of my town in Texas for example, when asked after Sandy Hook during the big gun scare what he would do if Obama banned Semi-Auto's or AR-15's replied in effect, "We wouldn't enforce that. And if Feds came here and tried to confiscate y'all's guns, we'd set up roadblocks, turn them around, and run them out of here." Yep, he said that out loud into a microphone to a room full of 200-300 people. That would be the response of *most sheriffs in most states, and their Governors would back them up!*
4. But Clint, nobody wants to ban *ALL* guns, we just want to:
  - a. Take away automatic machine guns? Machine guns are already banned and inaccessible to all but the super-rich here, the kind where you pull the trigger and hold it down and it fires 'automatically'. Strangely, you used to be able to buy machine guns like the famous full-auto "Tommy Gun" with a 100-round drum magazine whenever you wanted, even through the mail, with no background checks, in a time when school shootings were unheard of.
  - b. Take away the AR-15, since it's an instrument of war? First off, the AR-15 is not a military rifle and not what our military uses. It's a civilian rifle that's the most common and popular rifle in the USA. It would be literally the hardest gun in the USA to get rid of for so many reasons this response could be its own essay.

There's probably tens of millions of them if not 100 million plus. People that like AR-15's don't own one of them, they have a full collection of them and put them together like lego sets. They're very common and have interchangeable parts from dozens of manufacturers so most gun people into AR's are constantly building them from component parts. We have no idea how many there are or who owns them all at this point, or how we could find and get rid of them.

- c. Take away semi-automatics since you don't 'need' them for deer hunting? Well the hunting argument doesn't hold water to the gun community for reasons described in point 2 above. But what you probably don't know is most guns in the USA are semi-automatic (one bullet shot per trigger pull, with no requirement to pump or cycle a bolt in between trigger pulls). Almost all pistols except revolvers are semi-auto (and revolvers are a very small piece of the pistol market now) and just as deadly in a school as an AR-15 (Virginia Tech was pistols exclusively and 32 killed for example, Fort Hood was pistols too), many common shotguns are semi-auto (and could be just as deadly as rifles in a school, if not more so, most Columbine deaths were by Shotgun during an 'Assault Weapons Ban'), and as I said in the point above, the most popular rifles in America are also semi-auto (the AR-15 is just one of hundreds of different types you don't know the names of that are just as deadly). The only way you could get rid of semi-autos in America is basically getting rid of all guns. Impossible. Unenforceable.
- d. Restrict magazine capacity to X number of rounds so a shooter has to reload more? Remember how many guns I said there were? Multiply that by 10 and that's probably how many 30+ round magazines there are in this country. Probably a billion plus. And they can be bought in bulk with no database of ownership or background checks. So there's literally a billion plus of them out there in this nation and we have no idea who owns them- but every gun owner I know owns a LOT of them. All banning them or stopping their sale would do is make them a little more expensive on the black market. Oh, and when I lived in Colorado they banned magazines of a certain size after the Aurora shooting. The cops there *do not enforce the new magazine limit ban and nobody cares. Colorado is 0% safer since the ban, it's still just as easy to get 30 round magazines there.* It would be the same nationally if you tried to do that nationally.
- e. Get more strict with our background checks? How will that help? Many of the worst mass shooters that legally purchased guns had a clean record. You can get as strict as you want but you won't catch people with clean records. Others that couldn't pass background checks just steal, kill/rob to get the guns they want, or purchase on the black market. That will still be the case after additional tweaks to the background check system. I do think it should be modified a bit though and the FBI be provided with more relevant info from local law enforcement- so they can catch people like Cruz. So I think some reform here is warranted and

possible (we need to connect more of our systems to share relevant information with the NICS database), but nothing that would overall make the gun situation in the USA less-dangerous substantially.

- f. Raise the age to buy all guns to 21? So a single mom of 20 years' age can't protect herself from her abusive ex-husband who says he's going to walk through that restraining order? So our brave 19-year-old servicemen and servicewomen that are allowed to fight and die for our country and we trust to operate tanks, missiles and Predator drones aren't allowed to exercise their second amendment rights here at home? That seems kind of silly. Also, even if you succeed, the legal age to drink is 21 and that doesn't seem to stop teens from getting their hands on alcohol. They're very resourceful when they want something commonly available in our country to law-abiding adults!

In summary, I hope the above illustrates I didn't just flippantly say, "That's impossible", with no knowledge of other countries or what's possible or not. I deeply and thoroughly understand guns, gun laws, and gun culture of the USA. Guns aren't going anywhere here. We must share this nation with guns and gun lovers, and if you want to experience the gun-free-ness of Australia, I'm sorry but you'll have to move to Australia. I strongly believe for all of these reasons that using all of our collective energy on the doomed task of going after guns could be better put to use on the other items I mentioned in my original list.

The good news is, the gun community also loves their kids and wants them and schools to be safe too, so you'll have plenty of allies with them to work towards the practical items I'm recommending on my list.

**Q: Are you a member of the NRA????** (I got this one a lot!)

A: No I'm not. I don't have strong feelings about them either way and don't understand why they're given so much credit. They only have 4-5 million members out of 100,000,000 or so gun owners in the USA (that's 4-5% of all gun owners for you non-math teachers). They're not in the top 25 of financial contributions to politicians- so they're relatively weak as far as 'buying politicians' goes. There's rarely any connection to the NRA by mass shooters and all mass shooters and murderers are roundly condemned immediately by the NRA and the gun community at large- *nobody is in favor of mass murder*. I have done some training with NRA instructors and find some of their training on firearms safety and programs useful for teaching people about gun safety. The NRA's only real political power is mobilizing their many members to call and write their politicians to take action- which they seem somewhat effective at. I think if you're anti-gun and obsessed with the NRA, you're probably giving them more credit and more power than they'd have without your railing on them.

**Q: What's your political angle then?** You sound like a Republican!



A: I have long lists of criticisms of both major political parties and don't cleanly fit into either camp. I have good friends I respect that are Democrats, Libertarians, and Republicans. But really, my political views are irrelevant. I'm just some random dude. I'm not running for political office or asking for your vote. You shouldn't care about my political opinions, and I think when it comes to school safety, we should put politics aside and work together. That's kind of the whole point of my original post.

**Q: Kids don't need fathers,** "I'm a single mom and my ex-husband is horrible which is why I left him, now we're better off, and my boys aren't murderers!!!! Why do you hate women??? Why do you think they're incapable of raising good kids???" (Saw quite a few variations of this in the comments)

A: Wow, I didn't think people were going to read that into my post, but just for the record, my two brothers and I were mostly raised by a single mom who did an awesome job raising us even though it was a huge struggle, and we all came out fine and aren't mass-murderers either. Of course it's possible. Of course you can do it without a dad. My mom and other single moms are my heroes. Nobody likes single moms more than me. (wait, that last part sounded a little weird... sorry honey) All I'm trying to say is when you look at those that *do commit violent school shootings* (not your kids, obviously) you'll see the fatherlessness problem staring right at you.

**Q: So girls don't need fathers, only boys do???**

A: What the heck? No. All the things I said about boys were just because I was talking about school shootings- which are pretty much exclusively committed by boys. Please stop making me put girl disclaimers on everything. Oh and I have three beautiful daughters by the way I'm very proud of- they have their own unique sets of challenges, trust me, but I don't have enough digital ink to cover them right now. Please. Please, give me a break with the girl comparisons and accusations.

**Q: So who are you, Mr. Expert? How are you so sure these are all the right answers? Are you a Doctor? Police Officer? Teacher? Psychiatrist?**

A: I'm none of those things. I'm just a guy with an opinion. Nobody could be an expert on all the diverse topics I've been discussing in this wide-ranging document. There are better experts than me in all of the areas I'm discussing. I do not wish to be a talking head "expert", or go speak and act like I know everything... I don't.

In my original post I called myself an expert, simply because I've spent an unusual amount of time on school safety related topics and studying school shootings. I don't carry around a bunch of credentials, but I feel like anyone's an expert in the things they spend years of time and focus on.

A little about me, I'm a Texan in my mid-30's. I'm a businessman. I'm married and have 4 beautiful kids. I met the Scott family about 16 years ago during college and was very moved by

the story of their daughter and how they were inspiring people to kindness and compassion in her memory. Rachel Scott was the first person killed at Columbine and will forever be one of my heroes even though I never had the pleasure of meeting her.

When I graduated school I moved to Colorado and pursued an opportunity presented to me by my friend Pete Vargas (the National Marketing Director of their school program) to help the Scott family launch “Rachel’s Challenge”, a new school program designed to tell Rachel’s story and transform the culture of schools for the better. I also became best friends and shared a home with Craig Scott, Rachel’s brother, during those years. Craig is the one you constantly see on TV being interviewed after school shootings. He’s been on Oprah, the Today Show, etc etc and is extremely memorable as one of the heroes of Columbine that came very close to dying in the library (had two guns aimed at his head), saw several of his close friends killed, lost his sister, and helped lead kids out of the library. Craig and I really connected and my friendship with him and the many deep conversations I’ve had with him, the training and mentorship I received from his father Darrell, and also friendship with his sister Dana, helped me understand what families go through.

I started out as a marketer for their new school program, and during my 3 year span working for their organization, it grew from just the family members of Rachel as speakers, to over 30 speakers and helped the organization reach their first 3,500,000 kids in schools (today they’ve reached over 25,000,000 students). I was setting up events, traveling with the family, and constantly going to conferences for teachers, principals, superintendents, and school resource officers where Craig, Dana, or Darrell would be a keynote speaker, and I’d be the guy in the back whom they’d say, “If you want us to come to your school, go talk to that guy Clint back there, and he’ll help you figure it out!”

This allowed me to have conversations with literally thousands of school principals and hear their biggest frustrations with school safety and culture, from all corners of our country. That’s all I did, every day, for years, was talk about this subject with the top experts in Education.

Eventually I was asked to become a speaker for the organization, and during the peak speaking times of September, October, and January, I would typically be on the road speaking as a presenter for Rachel’s Challenge. I led hundreds of school assemblies and student leadership training sessions. When I did leadership training, I would intentionally asked to have every ‘clique’ in the school, every type of student represented in our sessions, not just the “all-star good kids” you’d expect to get to spend time with the traveling presenter, and I had the privilege of discussing school culture with every kind of kid from every kind of state for several seasons of traveling and speaking/teaching with students. I did this in California, New York, Alaska, Kansas, Washington, Oregon, Georgia, Republic of Texas, practically every corner of the nation. I didn’t just speak, but I listened. Everywhere I went I would have one-on-one meals with guidance counselors, assistant principals, resource officers, etc. in between sessions. So I got a ton of benefit from hearing what all these people had to say about their schools and how to fix them.

I fell in love and got married to a beautiful girl I met in Colorado, we got pregnant, and I figured out traveling the country with a school program wasn't going to work with a new baby and family like it did when I was single. We moved to TX where I went into the business world and left my days of non-profit and education work behind me.

My business journey I've been on the last 10 years taught me a lot more I didn't know. I live in the central TX Hill Country region which is a beautiful area known for summer camps, hunting and recreation. In 2011 I left an insurance sales job to help a friend launch a business that manufactured hunting/outdoor related products. Again I found myself with a national marketing job that involved traveling throughout the country. Except, this time I wasn't going to schools, I was going to outdoor trade shows like SHOT show in Las Vegas, Great American Outdoors Show in Harrisburg PA, Dallas and Houston Safari Clubs, Archery Trade Association, NRA Conventions, etc.

I didn't sell firearms, but I owned them and became increasingly interested in them and went to all the same trade shows with the manufacturers and retailers that do sell them. I don't do anything halfway so when I got into guns, I really got into them. I got my conceal carry license then went to quite a few tactical training classes as well and learned to be proficient with pistols and rifles. I've had the pleasure to learn from some top instructors with military and law enforcement backgrounds in live fire classes. I've also participated in shooting competitions of various types (I'm not that great but I have fun). I'm now a bona fide gun, self-defense and tactical/defensive shooting nerd. Now when a school shooting happens, I feel like I have a better handle on not just the "why" it happened in the first place, but also "how" it could have been ended more quickly with less precious lives lost.

You know what kind of people I encountered in the hunting, shooting, and outdoor worlds? The same kind I did in the educational worlds. Wonderful, sweet people that deeply care for kids and want to see them safe and for them to be raised to be thoughtful and caring for each other. We all want our kids to do better than we did and to be a blessing to our nation and future.

Overall, between traveling for the non-profit, business, and personal travel I've been to 47 states and 8 countries and I meet wonderful people and find common ground easily with people everywhere I go. I find that people are more similar in real life when you're looking them in the eyes than they may appear on social media.

I believe that my experiences in these two worlds give me a unique perspective to be a voice of reason that can help bridge the gap between the partisan, political voices that seek to divide us and weaponize our opinions against each other for political agendas. We need to stop assuming people that believe differently than us on polarizing topics are "stupid" or "evil", *they're not*. I'm encouraging everyone reading this to just consider what I'm saying and look across at the other side of these debates and realize we all want the same thing- we just disagree on some of the "how" parts. That's okay. We still need to share this nation. And there's still a lot we can all agree on. Let's find those things and make a difference together.

**Q: Is everything you wrote here what Rachel's Challenge teaches?**

A: No, not at all. They don't do any teaching on physical school safety, security, or have any political opinions or talk about guns or violence at all really. (Anything you read here on that stuff is purely my own opinion.) It's a program every single school across the country should enjoy and focuses entirely on Point 7 of my original post- the one I said was most important- changing the culture of schools to be more kind and compassionate. If you want a school security expert, you'll have to look elsewhere. Rachel's Challenge gets to what I believe is the heart of the matter and has a wonderful gift of creating cultures of kindness in schools. Bullying drops dramatically after they come to a school, and kids that were outcasts become sought-after prizes for people to get to know. Rachel Scott lived the kind of life where she looked out for people and practiced random acts of kindness regularly. She wrote about it in her diaries but also really lived it. After she died, dozens of people came forward and told their stories about how Rachel did something small to help them and how it totally changed their lives. "You'll never know how far a little kindness can go." is one of my favorite quotes of hers.

If a student feels loved and cared for, regardless of whether not they have a father or play sports, or any of the other things I mentioned, they aren't going to hurt their classmates. That's why I again say, that's the most important part of safety. Love and kindness, literally can prevent this stuff from happening. Believe it or not it's true, and all of us that worked with and seen this program and message have experienced it.

**Q: Sounds like a bunch of bologna to me. How do you know this stuff works? Seems like wishful thinking to think kindness could stop violence.**

A: We tried our best to keep stats on things when I was at Rachel's Challenge, but you're right, it's exceedingly difficult to track "What didn't happen." As in: lives saved, school shootings prevented, etc. We will never fully know the impact we're making. BUT, each of us presenters pooled stacks and stacks and stacks of letters, e-mails, and social media posts from students telling us they were planning on committing suicide and changed their minds after hearing Rachel's story (they average 3 of these letters a week, have received thousands!). Last I checked there were also 7+ documented cases of kids that had the plans, motive, means, and desire to shoot up their school that turned themselves in and canceled their plan after hearing Rachel's message. I said "most effective" in my original post because I don't believe any other organization has as many first-hand testimonies of would-be-shooters turning themselves in and suicides prevented.

When you see it for yourself it's powerful. I'm typing this through tears right now remembering how many kids came forward just sobbing and deciding to turn their lives around after having their hearts touched. I've seen the hardest jocks, gang members, outcasts, and bullies come forward and apologize to kids they picked on or threatened. I saw a young gang member in L.A. literally put his 'colors' on the stage and leave his gang, even though he thought it would get him

killed, he didn't want to be part of a violent self-destructive group any longer. I've met kids that were shot, kids that shot kids, all kinds of interesting characters. All of them get moved and make positive changes. It wasn't uncommon for the assembly to go 20 minutes later than planned because students couldn't stop hugging their teachers after. It's powerful stuff this compassion stuff.

[break while Clint resumes his normal life for awhile... will come back for more Q&A later]